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Girard Contests Nietzsche: A case of Misplaced Resentment - Dionysos and the Crucified

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**Bangor University, Wales UK
School of History, Law and Social Sciences
(Philosophy and Religion)**

THESIS

**GIRARD CONTESTS NIETZSCHE:
A Case of Misplaced Resentment – Dionysos and the Crucified.**

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DEDICATION:

In memory of my mother Thérèse Woelfell (1925—1946), who died in childbirth, an innocent victim of the Nazi era at the end of World War II. In honour of my paternal grandfather, Dr. Nikolai Blaskow who, in the late 1930s succumbed to typhoid whilst treating patients in Macedonia.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.

September 2021

ABSTRACT

The focal point of this thesis is the psychopathological notion of *ressentiment*. It was a term, which arose in Alexis de Tocqueville's France appropriated and pressed into service in a distinctive almost petulant way by a newly emerging German nation shaped and forged by Prussia's Otto von Bismarck and Wilhelm II's *Realpolitik*. It designated an attitude of scornful superiority in the face of other strong colonial competitors such as France, Belgium, Italy, Britain, and America. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) identified it as the root of all evil, as infecting an emerging modernity and, with it, every human discipline (including philosophy and science), agency (including religion and politics), and every person (including himself). *Ressentiment*, as Nietzsche saw it, turned people away from the things that really matter, and so condemned them to ask questions that he believed would finally prove to be irrelevant to the main concerns of life.

Ressentiment is also the pivotal point on which the contest between Nietzsche and the mimetic theorist René Girard (1923-2015) is overturned. It provides a useful focal point to compare and contrast their apparently opposing viewpoints, out of which, we discover a powerful reconciliation of their thought that gives rise to important insights into our own violent and unpredictable times. In this study, I argue that when the insights of Girard's mimetic and scapegoat theory are combined with Nietzsche's understanding of the psychopathology of *ressentiment* we are furnished with powerful diagnostic tools to unravel the cycles of contagion and violence that are entangled in human experience.

The study begins with an exploration of Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment* and ascertains whether he became a victim of that same psychopathology. Here I counteract claims made by Girardian scholars who perpetuate the idea that Nietzsche's mental state (his 'madness') was present from the start thereby compromising the integrity of his life's work. I consider the extent to which Nietzsche's ideas about *ressentiment* have a vital and effective traction in the 21st century.

I then address Girard's questionable use of literature to support the mimetic and scapegoat theory, which underpins his idea of *ressentiment*, and how his privileging of Christianity and his perceived pessimistic view of human nature sets him apart from Nietzschean philosophy and secular discourse more generally. There I argue that Girard profoundly misunderstands Nietzsche's ideas of the 'Anti-Christ' and the 'death of God', a misunderstanding that has significant repercussions for his wider treatment of the Nietzsche project.

While the first part of my thesis examines the respective theories of *ressentiment* propagated by Nietzsche and Girard, the second part seeks to combine their essential elements and to demonstrate the usefulness of this combination for making sense of human behavior. Here I test my theories against two case studies: the Rwandan Genocide of the last century and William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as the Bard's most mature analysis of the Sectarian Catholic-Protestant Wars and its impact on the national psyche. I argue that Nietzsche's *psychopathology* of *ressentiment* combined with Girard's *mimetic* and *scapegoat theory* yield a rare breadth and depth of explanatory power. This rich combination includes the application of Girard's insights into (i) the foundation event/foundation story (the founding murder); (ii) pacific mimesis versus acquisitive mimesis; (iii) *reconnaissance* versus *méconnaissance*, and (iv), the scapegoat mechanism;

and Nietzsche's (v) revaluation of values; (vi) *amor fati*; (vii) the master-slave syndrome; viii) 'will to truth', 'will to power'; (ix) eternal recurrence; (x) the *agonistic* economy; (x) "Das Phantom von Ego", as false transcendence, and—(x) his three-tiered perspective on leadership: the artist, the philosopher and the saint.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None of this would have happened if it were not for Dr Alan Cadwallader's encouragement and his endorsement of my proposal to the University. Previously, it was by his invitation that I had joined the Australian Catholic University's Canberra Scholars Group, of which I have now been a member for over eight years. When I moved to Victoria to take on the Head of RaVE (Religion and Values Education based on the UK Peter Vardy Model) at Gippsland Grammar in Sale, Dr Rapin Quinn, Honorary Fellow, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy kindly invited me to continue that association albeit at a great distance, which thankfully Zoom was soon to bridge. At this monthly gathering, I have been honoured and privileged to offer several forty-minute Papers, followed by an hour-long Q & A. Here I also gained some brilliant insights from scholars at ACU and ANU (Australian National University).

During those early days, Dr Sarah Bachelard and Alan Cadwallader's encouragement prompted me to take my interest in Girard and Nietzsche to a more formal level. Consequently, I decided to take the possibility of a PhD on Nietzsche and Girard more seriously especially after Professor Scott Cowdell also had encouraged it. At this point Professor David Tacey, whom I had met at previous Conferences, recommended Dr Lucy Huskinson at Bangor University Wales, UK as being the ideal Chief Supervisor for Nietzsche. It was a recommendation that has proved indispensable to the PhD's completion. What I appreciated most about the guidance Professor Huskinson offered, was the skill with which she allowed me to find the direction of the thesis and my own voice. Her patience with my 200,000 words leading up to the thesis proper, was truly exemplary. For this I am forever grateful, as I am to Professor Cowdell for having introduced me to the insights of René Girard in the first place, and for his guidance in choosing the focus of the thesis on *ressentiment*—not to mention his highlighting of the issues raised from a Girardian perspective about Nietzsche and Girard's different approaches to that notion. At the recent Purdue University 2021 Conference on *MT* and *AI* the quality of Professor Cowdell's final plenary keynote address confirmed his world standing as a leading academic on Girardian theory. It is to his colleague Professor Wayne Hudson, that I owe my Chapter on reading *ressentiment* through a literary lens. With the *ressentiment* thesis in my sights, his impromptu interrogation right at the start brought to mind one of Shakespeare's last works, *The Tempest*. It was a text I had studied for my matriculation examination. As I pursued my theme, I marvelled at how apposite that totally unrehearsed choice was. For it was under the closest scrutiny of the last five years (accompanied by much astonishment) that its protagonist Prospero, emerged as the quintessential man of *ressentiment*. Professor Hudson's advice to never lose sight of Nietzsche's beginnings (*BT* and the Greek Tragic Vision) and the intellectual German, European, even American context which he tapped into and adapted. That, and the admonition to ensure that individual publications of the Nietzsche project are never interpreted in isolation but always aligned with the whole. And how could I fail to mention my mentors Friedrich and René and the countless hundreds of scholars from whose shoulders I glimpsed the meaning of their deep insights.

Professor Cowdell's location at the *Centre for Christianity and Culture* under the aegis of Charles Stuart University, and the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology (PACT) meant that I was invited by the Right Reverend Professor Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Centre, to occupy a desk there with other scholars, until my move to Victoria as Head of Religion and Values Education at Gippsland Grammar School, Sale Victoria. His friendship and encouragement over the years have been deeply appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Susanna Pain, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, for her support, and so many friends and family who cheered me on. Without their collective support the thesis would have lapsed. Meantime it was our Cathedral cat Annie who in lockdown pandemic days, entertained and inspired us with her antics and care of the neighbourhood. Happy indeed was the day she adopted us and the many lockdown days she 'purred' me on.

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KSA Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke Studiensausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols. Berlin and New York/Munich: Walter de Gruyter/Deutscher Taschebuch Verlag, 1967-1977 and 1988.

KSB Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke Studiensausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols. Berlin and New York/Munich: Walter de Gruyter/Deutscher Taschebuch Verlag, 1975-1984.

The following edition abbreviations are also used:

BAW Friedrich Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften, 1854-1869*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, Karl Schlechta, and Carl Koch, 5 vols. [1933-1940]. Munich: Beck, 1994.

KGB Friedrich Nietzsche, *Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975—.

KGW Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinano, then Volker Gerhardt, Norbert Miller, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, Karl Pestalozzi, and the Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaft, 40 vols. In 9 sections. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1967—.

W Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta, 3 vols. Plus bibliography. Munich: Hanser, 1966.

For individual works by Nietzsche, the following abbreviations are used:

<i>AC/A</i>	<i>The Anti-Christ</i>
<i>AOM</i>	<i>Assorted Opinions and Maxims</i>
<i>BGE</i>	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>The Case of Wagner</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Daybreak</i>
<i>EH</i>	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
<i>GS</i>	<i>The Gay Science</i>
<i>HA/HH</i>	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
<i>NCW</i>	<i>Nietzsche contra Wagner</i>
<i>TI</i>	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
<i>UM</i>	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
<i>UW</i>	<i>Die Unschuld des Werdens</i> [extracts from <i>Nachlass</i> , untranslated]
<i>WP</i>	<i>The Will to Power</i>
<i>Z/TSZ</i>	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Note: for more detailed designations in the German translations of Nietzsche's publications, see Bibliography under *Nietzsche, Friedrich*.

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Introduction

***Ressentiment*: a secondary literature review of and introduction to, Nietzschean and Girardian theoretical, religious, historical, philosophical, and psychological perspectives**

***Ressentiment* in the land of ‘No’ transfigured into a ‘Yes’**

This “bringer of glad tidings” died as he had taught – not to “redeem men” but to show how one must live. This practice is his legacy to mankind: his behavior before the judges... before the accusers and all kinds of slander and scorn – his behavior on the cross. He does not resist, he does not defend his right, he takes no step to ward off the worst; on the contrary, he provokes it. And he begs, he suffers, he loves with those, in those who do him evil. Not to resist, not to be angry, not to hold responsible but to resist not even the evil one – to love him.

Der Antichrist, 35. November 26, 1888, Nietzsche writes to Paul Deussen, “Meine *Umwertung aller Werthe* mit dem Hauptitel ‘Der Antichrist’ ist fertig.” “My *Revaluation of Values* under the main title ‘The Antichrist’ is finished.” (KSB 8, 492).

I saw myself as already dead, and all of a sudden I was resurrected. The most miraculous part for me was that my intellectual and spiritual conviction coincided exactly with the period prescribed by the Church for the penitence of sinners, with three days of grace left over – the most important of all – perhaps to allow me to reconcile with the Church in peace before Easter.

Cited by Wolfgang Palaver in *René Girard’s Mimetic Theory*, translated by Gabriel Borrud, (Michigan State University Press, *East Lansing*, 2013), 7 – *Quand ces choses commenceront*, 190-194.

A.1 The nature and scope of the thesis: speculative, intuitive, based on reason and argument, supported by two major case studies

Certain aspects of the thesis may be characterized as speculative and intuitive, characteristics which require explanation:

(A) given that both Nietzsche and Girard are wedded to the importance of the genealogical dimension of their work which is *ipso facto* a speculative intellectual exercise in as much as we cannot exactly and indisputably *know* the origins of our morals and our nature as *homo sapiens*, this despite immense advances in evolutionary psychological theory; consequently, such discussions are consigned to an area of on-going disputation—one which also defines the context in which *ressentiment* must be understood

(B) given the complexity of the issues under consideration regarding the textual interpretation of our theorists' works vis-à-vis *ressentiment*, and the broader problems which are raised in religion, psychology, human development and the problematic of modernity, here too speculation must take its place alongside pure reason

(C) given that both theorists stray across many disciplines (in Nietzsche's case, choosing, literary genres such as aphorism, satire, parable, drama among others, and in Girard's case, his use of literary and religious texts to prove his theory) such practices too must inevitably raise important epistemological questions related to how honest we are about what we know and how we interpret what we know—an honesty often contested by the dishonesty of a *ressentiment* which from a position of vulnerability continues to assert *its* rightness and strength

(D) given that the thesis' arguments are developed in conversation with many interlocutors from various disciplines including philosophy, cultural theory, literary theory and theology all of which are impacted by *ressentiment* in one way or another in so far as each field of inquiry establishes its own set of competing criteria for what is important and of value to itself and to humanity, this too generates areas for further contestation

(E) given that the thesis encompasses a wide-ranging intellectual and ethical exploration of current issues in cultural, psychological, literary and religious studies in order to validate the importance of *ressentiment's* on-going relevance in the 21st century, a defence is called for if only because Girard and other theorists would dispute the relevance claimed for it by Nietzsche

(F) given that Nietzsche's notoriety as a thinker who is 'difficult' to interpret, and his texts (both published and unpublished) considered by many scholars as fragmentary and unsystematic in character—such reception also calls into question whether those texts could ever be considered to qualify as legitimate philosophical 'projects'; I shall argue, taking my cue from the most recent research (which sets aside spurious speculations concerning Nietzsche's madness) and Christa Davis Acampora's use of the term 'project,' I have elected to use the term 'project' to designate my reading of Nietzsche's work as a 'coherent work'—one which reveals a Nietzsche, who as he encounters new ideas, and deals with personal challenges (the breakdown of his friendships, for example), is not so much thereby contradicting himself, as changing his mind and allowing those ideas to grow

to maturity as his thinking evolves—and certainly this is not a case (from my reading) of a Nietzsche driven with *ressentiment*, but one who honestly declares it, over many years of self-reflection.

As for the thesis' intuitive insights, let it be said that these arise from not only the speculative discussions outlined above but also the invitation and hints issued by Nietzsche himself (the challenge as to whether we have understood him, for example), and whether we have known him for who he is, whether we have interpreted him by taking all of his writings into account, indeed whether we accept the notion that the person of the philosopher and the discipline of philosophy are indivisible).

Daniel R Ahern in *The Smile of Tragedy* (2012) provides an interesting account of what it might mean to follow such a challenge—its unsettling of the 'safe' academic ways of doing philology, and later of doing anything academic, be it psychology, philosophy (ethics and morals especially) or history—or religion for that matter, an innovative approach whereby *The Birth of Tragedy* alienated Nietzsche from his philological colleagues of the day and continues to bewilder, disconcert, discomfort and yet intrigue us and inspire us today to re-consider the value of speculative philosophy, theology and religion. For Nietzsche claims that he found another way of understanding the ancient world: 'I have sought to find a way, into which I have perhaps found a new way' (*TI* X 1; cited *Ibid*, 1). The 'perhaps' invites speculation, calls us to 'follow the trail.' Ahern notes how that trail often "dissolves into fragments of youthful unpublished text... [that] leave nothing but a hint or, at best, a guess," along with, "familiar, fairly well-defined markers" (*Ibid*).

What Ahern discovers in *BT* I have found to be true of Nietzsche's published and unpublished works as a whole—that they are inherently speculative (inviting speculative responses and, dare I say it, intuitive responses). And by this, I mean, attempting to follow those hints as best one can and by responding to them—testing them to see whether we have understood the key notions of Nietzsche in their overall context i.e., a context whose primary intention is the re-valuation of *all* values, indeed, an intention that requires us to be honest and positively inventive and like the Jewish midrash, enables us to ask hard questions of our knowing, of the stories we tell ourselves and others; an intention implacably opposed by *ressentiment* whose vulnerability thrives on a risk-averse lifestyle. Of course, even here, as we shall see in the following chapters, *ressentiment* is able to weave

its own re-valuation of values, but despite its claim to build up culture constructively actually weakens it and breaks it down in a process for which ‘decadence’ is Nietzsche’s descriptor.

This thesis, then, from a speculative and intuitive perspective, attempts to follow a trail¹ which unfolds as we engage with it to reveal what I shall argue are the ‘familiar, fairly well-defined markers.’ These include first and foremost Nietzsche’s adherence to **the Greek tragic-comic vision before Euripides**, and with it the importance of **the Dionysian and the Crucified**, an essentially religious and philosophical view of the world. Secondly, and closely connected, the **Greek agonistic economy**. Thirdly, **the will-to-truth, the will-to-power**. Fourthly, the **eternal return of the same**. Fifthly, the notion of ‘**amor fati**.’

I posit that each of these elements are not just co-dependent (i.e., in the sense that if you leave any one of them out, the others are thereby diminished) but must also be understood in certain ways for that co-dependency to *be* coherent and comprehensible. What those ways are will emerge with their exposition in the following chapters, and without each and everyone of those elements in place, I shall argue, our understanding of *ressentiment*, indeed of Nietzsche’s life work, will always be deficient.

Which leaves us with the issue of how all this impacts on the central question of Girard’s contest with Nietzsche and how the genealogical dimension of their focus relates to that case. This whole question of course is treated in Chapters 1-3 in considerable detail with passing references to it throughout the dissertation. What follows here is an introduction to its implications for *ressentiment*—the thesis’ core business, and how the dynamics of speculation and intuition open up Nietzsche’s ‘polemic’ on the genealogy of morals, which he himself (counter-intuitively) suggests is attached to the question first and foremost of the extent to which we know ourselves, as much to do with an ‘elasticity’ of our self-awareness (which we might name ‘wisdom’) as it is to the ‘plod-along’ of knowledge.²

¹ Daniel R Ahern, *The Smile of Tragedy*, (PSU, 2012), 2 notes further along the trail that, ‘The more I “proceeded,” however, the more it seemed that Nietzsche pointed to things he purposely refused ... to “define.” I mean, he seemed to signal a certain comportment or attitude that he would not “explain.” Hence... I often ended up lingering over those measured gaps, his guesses, his little wells of silence, the old laurels of ellipses, the jokes with an em-dashed punchline, as well as those provocative sentences that dare you to finish them. Overall... the famously labyrinthine feature of Nietzsche’s “philosophy” ... purposely web of breaks and of secret bridges running through the main themes of his thinking.’

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality, A Polemic* (ed.) Keith Ansell-Pearson, tr. Carol Diethe (Cambridge University Press, 2007), Preface: “We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers and with good reason. We have never looked for ourselves, - so how are we ever supposed to *find* ourselves? [...] – who of us

It is therefore unsurprising that one of Nietzsche's most mature works focuses on the 'genealogy of morals' and *ressentiment*. By lifting the notion of *ressentiment* out of its immediate context in *The Genealogy of Morals*, my thesis attempts to show what I believe is how that notion is developed throughout Nietzsche's productive writing career. That is, the idea that *ressentiment* is *not* just to be identified with a particular 'weak' class of people which rises to social and cultural dominance through the influence of 'institutional' Christianity, but constitutes a universal, psychological trait in human nature. Certainly, both Nietzsche and later Girard concede that *ressentiment* (Nietzsche) and 'mimetism' (Girard) possess a strong predilection for violence, self-deception and deceit, and self-aggrandisement. But this concession by both our theorists certainly should not cast them in the role of 'perennialists' i.e., those given over to a resignation to something intractably violent and narcissistic in human nature, and that nothing can be done about it—as some readers are inclined to believe. Nietzsche's whole life's work was dedicated to 'overcoming' these 'origins' in order to 'become' something better – hence his commitment to the Greek comic-tragic vision and his investment in the notion of the *agonistic* economy as stated above and developed throughout the thesis.

And as for Girard, even though he too, at times betrays a certain pessimism about mimetism (i.e., the human capacity to overcome its destructive potential), he nevertheless has a counter-mechanism to combat that other mechanism of the scapegoat *viz. pacific mimesis (as opposed to acquisitive mimesis)*. In other words, both theorists gaze into the abyss of the human all too human fatal flaws as mentioned, and conclude, that unless human beings engage in a serious re-valuation of values (Nietzsche), a concerted re-set of a mimetism which is wired up for recurring cycles of violence (Girard), we will fall into an abyss of self-destruction, as described in the political analyst Stan Grant's recent coverage of the WEC's latest risk assessment. He writes: 'The World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report makes dire reading. Will we listen this time?': 'That's the fault line of our world:

ever has enough seriousness for them? Or enough time? I fear we have never really been 'with it' in such matters: our heart is simply not in it [...] We remain strange to ourselves out of necessity, we do not understand ourselves, we *must* confusedly mistake who we are, the motto 'everyone is furthest from himself' ['Jeder ist sich selbst der Fernste' which is a reversal of 'Jeder ist sich selbst der Nächste' 'Everyone is closest to himself' i.e. 'Charity begins at home' " (p.3)., but better translated (my own paraphrase) as 'Everyone when it comes to themselves, is at the greatest distance [from themselves – implied]; a reversal of 'Each person is himself (sic) [inference: 'should be'] his own neighbour [as one 'next to himself']].

autocracy versus democracy... A more volatile, divided world... on a potentially devastating collision course,' (2021-2022). This suggests that part of the re-valuation of values, and an integral component of a mimetic re-set, is to recognize that morals, even ethics *themselves* can so easily be weaponised in such a way as to contradict the very values they claim to uphold.

Closing Remarks:

A speculative, intuitive and reasoned approach, then, has brought us to a reconciliation of Girard and Nietzsche's theoretical approaches by means of which *ressentiment* and mimetic desire are seen to be universal, and through their closeness and working in parallel enable a diagnostic and prognostic which will be demonstrated in detail in the Rwandan genocide, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* case studies. The former, developed in a contemporary setting, the latter in Shakespearean times, the harbinger of an emerging modernity. These case studies allow for a full exposition of how *ressentiment* and mimetic desire complement one another.

A brief account drawn from history and another of Shakespeare's plays, *Othello* will serve to bring this introductory piece to a close, especially as it relates to the genealogy of morals, and why all religions, all values (including even 'compassion'), all disciplines, are justifiably subjected to the closest scrutiny, especially religion named the 'false sacred' by Girard and 'the twilight of the gods' by Nietzsche.

The historical example based on an article by Tadd Fernee draws attention to the Akbarian 'Universal Peace' (Sulikul) Experiment in 16th century Mughal India.³ I have selected this moment in the 16th century for the light it sheds on the issues raised. First and foremost, the simple truth that humanity regardless of its specific intellectual and religious commitments, is afflicted by the same scourge.

At a time when Europe was wracked by Christian in-fighting, and not just Protestant versus Catholic, but even Catholic versus Catholic as evidenced in the Inquisitional campaign of Catholic purification in Spain—and Protestant versus Protestant conflict with the persecution of Anabaptists, a little-known conflict had also broken out between Islam and Hinduism in the Mughal state. Fortunately, Emperor Akbar was well served by philosophers

³ "The Quarrel of the Universe let it be": the Akbarian 'Universal Peace,' New Bulgarian University, *Academia Letters*, June 2021.

in his court who espoused “obedience to the dictates of reason,” which inspired him to launch a social experiment encouraging ‘universal peace’ (Ibid, 1). These philosophers were joined by the Court historian Abul Fazl who championed an “earnest search for truth,” to dispel “the darkness of the age by the light of universal toleration,” (Ibid). He affirmed the genuineness of his commitment by publicly confessing his regret regarding the forced conversions by which followers of the Brahmin religion with much shedding of blood were by fear compelled, “to adopt the faith of our ancestors,” (Ibid, 8). As a sign of good faith, the regime restored converted mosques to Hindu temples. And even more, an all-religions symposium to which Sunnis, Shi’as, Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians and Christians were invited, was offered. Regrettably, the experiment failed. Theologians “quarreled fiercely,” historians were divided on ideological and theological differences, with Fazl accused of “throwing doubts on the authority of prophets and Imams... utterly denying the existence of demons and angels, and mysteries and signs of miracles,” (Ibid, 33).

These moments of brief respite from sectarian conflict occurred not long after the St Bartholomew Night Massacres in France (1572) following the Religious Wars in Europe when 30,000 people were murdered in a single night (Ibid, 42). Akbar’s vision was carried on by his great grandson, Dara Shikoh (1615-1690) who advocated for the mingling of Two Oceans (Majma-ul-Bahrain), declaring religions, “separate in name, but in essence one with God,” a mighty ocean which transforms itself, “into drops, waves and bubbles,” (Ibid, 48). But that doesn’t end the cautionary tale with its many ironies. Shikoh himself waged a war against his fundamentalist brother Aurangzeb in the name of “uprooting the bramble of idolatry and infidelity from the realm of Islam,” (Ibid).

One of the on-going concerns of Nietzsche from his youth to this his latest publication *GM* has always been his preoccupation with the problem of German culture and the possibilities for cultural renewal (Gillespie, Callan, 2012: 255) and not just restricted to the recently unified nation of Germany. Nietzsche’s on-going interest was in the factors which decide the flourishing of cultures, and those which lead to their decline. Foremost in his thinking was the role of *ressentiment* in inhibiting the flourishing of cultures. The Universal Peace experiment and its failure highlights the central role that religious resentment plays and how its impact affects public policy, thus endorsing the understanding that *ressentiment* is a universal problem, not just a German problem. Fernee (2021)

concludes his brief overview and assessment with the observation that despite the experiment's failure in the end the conclusion was reached that, all religions presented divergent paths to a single existential truth. Thereafter, he notes, there was, 'a willingness to reform tradition based on moral norms *independent* (my italics) of any specific religion,' (Ibid, 49), which is exactly, I posit, what Nietzsche was after with his provocative *GM*, which following *BGE* could well have earned the same reception as being "a dangerous book" ("gefährliches Buch") (Josef Victor Widmann, *Der Bund*, a Swiss Journal). But as we have seen, the danger is to be found more in the human susceptibility to resentment, duplicity, and violence. Nietzsche's 'amor fati' is all about an honesty which embraces the truth and reality that our morals, laws, ideals, and even misconceived theories (how easily they can turn in on themselves and abort progress). His thinking is that without this kind of realism we miss the mark. Which is to say, Nietzsche's notion of the 'will-to-power' must be accompanied by the 'will-to truth,' as illustrated by Pompey the Great's Mediterranean solution below.⁴

Finally, the reception of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* along with Girard's Mimetic Theory and the scapegoat in my reading of it has often been met much as Al Gore's 'inconvenient truth' regarding climate change—with denial, especially as those theories expose the reality of our human vulnerability to misinformation, to deception and self-deception. It may therefore surprise some readers that one of the two case studies should be based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Apart from the fact that both our theorists draw on Shakespeare's deep understanding of mimetism (Girard and Nietzsche) and *ressentiment* (Nietzsche and Girard), the relevance of Shakespeare is that he too speculated and intuited that in his times when internecine, sectarian wars (and wars of aggrandizement) were forever erupting around him, he was witnessing (an apocalyptic vision which Nietzsche and

⁴ Pompey the Great's resolution of land and sea piracy is an example of the kind of realism called for. When he was given the commission to solve a problem which brought Rome to its knees because of a catastrophic grain shortage from North Africa due to piracy he divided up the Mediterranean (including tracts of land 50 miles inland from the coast) into key sectors with generals in charge under his overarching *Maiestas Potestas*. His analysis could have been simplistic: i.e., piracy = vagrancy = men of ill repute (i.e., immoral, and irredeemable), and could so easily have led to a purely 'will-to-power' solution involving the crushing of the pirate nests by sheer military might. Instead, Pompey asked the big intuitive question: why do pirate nests exist? The answer was *not* self-evident: here we have men driven by economic necessity. That was *the truth* of the matter. It was a 'will-to-truth' resolution working in collaboration with 'the will-to-power': i.e., that Rome should offer land for agriculture to men and their families who just needed economic security. And thus, only if the offer was refused would military action be taken. This brilliant solution led to the creation of, or at least was the necessary foundation for, the *Pax Romana* which Augustus solely accredited to himself.

Girard shared) the emergence of a conflicted modernity with consequences of great danger for the future of humankind.

I conclude this section with a cameo drawn from *Othello*. There could be no better example than Iago of *ressentiment's* duplicity, acquisitiveness, and violent intention. Iago's frustrated desire for power, for love and for recognition find no better scapegoat than Othello who enjoys the very aspirations which have eluded him. Resentment that a black man should have won the love of a white woman (Desdemona) finally spills over into a desire for some kind of retribution to make up for his deprivations. It comes in the form of a lie and a simple deception: that Desdemona is cheating on Othello. But while this analysis of Iago shows aspects of the mimetic theory and the *ressentiment* pathology, it does not address the question of how "Mitleid" (translated as 'compassion,' a defining word which is given greater access in the German of 'suffering with,' 'sharing' another's 'sadness') could, under the lens of Nietzsche's genealogy of morals, be 'twisted' into something ultimately so abhorrent.

In *Othello*, Shakespeare looking through the lens of mimetism and *ressentiment* discovers the same alarming propensity for our values and morals to turn in upon themselves—from something positive and constructive into a terrifying agency of chaos—given the slightest push of a sudden rush of blood (Nietzsche is big on seeing the emotional valences behind even the driest and most innocuous of intellectual concepts, and the most righteous moral sentiments). Othello, a black man living in a whiteman's world, has risen to prominence by virtue of military competence and prowess. For that utility the powers that be make allowance for his blackness (a Moor) and his religion (Muslim). Iago, the 'Christian' man of *ressentiment* who feels himself side-lined, resolves literally to play on Othello's insecurities—plays on them as Shakespeare's metaphor suggests: a stringed instrument which Iago will put out of tune to subvert Othello's passion into hatred. Othello the man of war, comfortable in the land of physical conflict, yet uncomfortable and unsure of himself in the country of love, and of whiteness and of Christendom, falls easy prey to the suggestion that this Christian white woman's love is only conditional in the moment, and *of course* will inevitably succumb to a love more compatible with its surroundings. All of that great passion of love in the moment of betrayal (the discovery of the unnamed lover's handkerchief), locks into its opposite, a hatred given over to destruction: the hands of

caress in an instant become the anger driven fingers that strangle the life of its first and greatest love.

This would be a 'decadence' merely to be consigned to great fiction, a great tragedy, were it not for the madness played out in Melbourne and London during the 'Black Lives Matter' demonstrations. In Melbourne, police had to separate anti-racists in a park from kicking a right-wing racist extremist to death. In London a year later, as if to confirm that this is a universal problem, a black man was splashed on the front cover of every London tabloid carrying a white Right-Wing extremist on his shoulders, whom he had saved from being kicked to death on the steps of Parliament. Here, Nietzsche's Phantom von Ego, immortalized in Chris Nolan's *Batman Begins* and the Scarecrow who through a toxic delusion-inducing spray distorts people's thinking into imagining a hooded stranger out to destroy them, emerges to haunt us. This is what lies at the heart of Nietzsche's *GM*.

Father James Alison in his series *Jesus the Forgiving Victim, Listening for the Unheard Voice*, Book One, *Starting human, staying human*,⁵ makes the powerful observation that 'texts can be made to mean more or less whatever it is you want them to mean,' and that reading them is not so much a question of "What does the text say," as it is the more pertinent question, "How do you read it?", or even more pertinently, "Who is your rabbi?", "Through whose eyes do you read this text?" Nietzsche advocates us treating life and its experiences as multiple lenses through which we view and make sense of its meaning. And the finishing point is always in Father Alison's words, 'starting human, staying human,' and in Nietzsche's words, 'human all too human.' If we look through only one lens, we miss the complexity of the meaning of what lies before us.

And not just the lens through which we look, but also the flexible, adaptive thinking routines that come with those lenses: the speculation, the intuition and the reasoning which emerge from them. Whereas *speculation* opens the problem up, *intuition* serves to make the connections (paying attention to the coordinates which will steer us across open seas to safe anchorage), and the kind of *reasoning* which will test the assumptions upon which it is based: in effect the lenses of Nietzsche's philosopher, artist, and saint.

⁵ (DOERS Publishing website: <http://www.doerspublishing.com>) 2013, 44-45.

Let Bishop Desmond Tutu's legacy, as conveyed in these familiar extracts from a recent compilation of his public pronouncements in honour of his passing, explicate the importance of Nietzsche's *GM* (PBS NewsHour, 26 December, 2021):

"Much depends on your attitude. If you are filled with negative judgment and anger, then you will feel separate from other people. You will feel lonely. But if you have an open heart and are filled with trust and friendship, even if you are physically alone, even living a hermit's life, you will never feel lonely." "There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."
 "We are fragile creatures, and it is from this weakness, not despite it, that we discover the possibility of true joy." "Be nice to whites, they need you to rediscover their humanity."

And Lord Dunsany (Selections from the Writings of Lord Dunsany (1912, edited by W.B. Yeats) admonition highlights the clarity of mind which will prevent us from prejudging what we see:

Be open to the night...
 Pray with open hand, not with clenched fist...
 Shapes loom out of the darkness, uncertain and unclear:
 but the hooded stranger on horseback emerging from the mist
 need not be assumed to be the bearer of ill...
 The night is large and full of wonders...

A.2 The psychopathology of *ressentiment*: why it is the focal, pivotal point for this thesis in the global pandemic and climate emergency

When you say 'resentment' people are immediately interested. If you use the term *ressentiment*, the eye of the inquirer glazes over. But the French more accurately conveys what the emotion of resentment is. It means much more than the English where it infers a mild but often manageable irritation. Its history, its evolution as a word goes back to French pre-revolutionary and then, post-revolutionary times where it carried both positive and negative connotations and only later acquired its fixed reputation as a destructive and self-destructive pathology. Max Scheler writing in 1912-15, defines its reception as understood and incorporated in the German language in the 19th century and, more importantly, points to how the word might have been understood by Nietzsche. I think the Preface to the translation of Louis A. Coseriu, based on the 1915 text, takes the meaning a step further: it helps us through its subtitle to understand *the context* in which the word was used, "Das

Ressentiment Im Aufbau der Moralen” (*Ressentiment*, [as it used in explaining] the evolution/(literally: “the building up,” “construction,” of Morals):

We believe that [] Christian values can very easily be perverted into resentment values and have often been thus conceived. But *the core of Christian ethics has not grown on the soil of resentment*. On the other hand, we believe the *core of bourgeois morality*, which gradually replaced Christian morality ever since the 13th century and culminated in the French Revolution, *is rooted in resentment*. In the modern social movement resentment has become an important determinant and has increasingly modified established morality.

In modern French the literal translation of “re,” in *ressentiment* is as with *reconnaissance* (same as in the English to ‘re’-peat, ‘re’ learn’), contains the sense of ‘to feel’, or ‘to know’ respectively, ‘over, and over again’. So: *ressentiment*, meaning to ‘feel over, and over again’ to the point where those negative feelings ‘build up’ to boiling point (revenge); in the latter *reconnaissance* which we will also have occasion to re-visit in later chapters, there is the literal sense of ‘knowing someone over, and over again,’ to the point where we ‘re-cognise’ others for who they truly are. Nevertheless, to modern ears, the word ‘resentment’ does not seem strong enough, or important enough to carry much weight.

That is until now.

I could not be writing at a more opportune time. Fintan O’Toole’s stunning assessment of the Trump era throws more light on the sense and substance of the meaning of *ressentiment* than any etymology ever could.⁶

My purpose in these first sections is to use this most up-to-date source to demonstrate from the outset how Nietzsche and Girard’s theories and their terms of reference might play out in a contemporary setting. In this case, the context is the current Covid-19 global pandemic, the climate change emergency and the Trump administration’s failure to address them.

As far as I know, O’Toole is unacquainted with the notion of *ressentiment* and yet unwittingly his analysis, with clinical precision applies how Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and René Girard (1923-2015) might have addressed the Trump era. President Trump’s off-handed comments, his tweets and ‘entertaining’ one-liners draw attention to one of *ressentiment*’s most extraordinary skills—its great talent for denial. O’Toole’s opening ambit

⁶ Under the title ‘Democracy’s Afterlife’ (‘The New York Review of Books’, December 3, 2020/Volume LXVII, Number 19, pp.4-8)

starts with Trump's first remonstrations when it became clear that the 'election was still very much alive'. He highlights Trump's astonishing declaration that in fact the election was 'a dead thing, over and done with,' and that, "Frankly we did win this election" (Ibid, 4). As before the previous election (2016) so now, Trump (whom I shall dub Nietzsche's 'man of *ressentiment*'), never accepts the result of the vote even when he is winning despite Hilary Clinton's securement of the more 'popular' vote! O'Toole humorously notes that Trump according to the five stages of grief, now finds himself stuck in the second stage of anger: a quiet (perhaps not so quiet) passive-aggressive anger, so typical of *ressentiment*. The disputed defeat, observes O'Toole, 'suits him almost as much as victory,' because it 'vindicates' a 'self-pity,' that encourages his supporters to believe, 'that everything is rigged against them' (Ibid, 4), two manifestations that Nietzsche would say, are the trademarks of *ressentiment*.⁷

Another feature of O'Toole's analysis, which vindicates Nietzsche's insights into *ressentiment* as pathology, is its inclination to thrive in especially religious microclimates. Of course, it can survive quite well in many other climes, most notably, secular climes, something Nietzsche also detected as he bored deep into the heart of the pretensions of institutional Christianity and its fatal alliance with modernity and secularity. For him it was a betrayal as shameful, as the selling away of its soul to Imperial Rome. O'Toole, again quite oblivious to this connection, describes Trump's 'malignant presidency' as 'moribund, but also vigorously alive,' and then seizes upon religious language to define that presidency's state of being. He uses the metaphor of a 'death and resurrection narrative,' with its own 'Good Friday and Easter Sunday'— 'a grotesque parody of the Christian narrative.'⁸

O'Toole is quick to make the most of the fact that both out-going and in-coming Presidents are 'Christian,' albeit of different persuasions—Trump flirting with the Evangelical Right, and Biden a Roman Catholic, cast in the role of 'healer' and 'exorcist'

⁷ What needs to be noted here, is how quickly in recent days long standing resentments have boiled over into the storming of the Capitol and the breaking into its nerve centre with the loss of five lives and the vandalism of America's most hallowed democratic treasures. This demonstrates two things. First, the high degree to which *ressentiment* is embedded in revenge. Like a high-powered engine on 'idle' it waits for the foot on the accelerator to pump in the high-octane fuel of anger. Second, and most important of all, *ressentiment* thrives on paradox, ambivalence, ambiguity, and uncertainty, not to mention the ubiquitous 'fake news.'

⁸ Trump presents himself, O'Toole wickedly claims, as 'a Jesus-like self-sacrifice.' Here is a man who "died" 'was in the "tomb" of the Walter Reed hospital for three days and rose again and appeared to many.'

come to drive out ‘the evil spirits of suspicion and hate.’ Biden also is cast in ‘Christian speak’ as one who ‘carries the cross of the deaths of his wife and daughter in 1972 and of his son Beau in 2015.’ Like Jesus of Nazareth, O’Toole implies, Biden exudes ‘vulnerability’ (Ibid, 4). When Biden appeals to the American Dream (as he did at the virtual Democratic convention in August 2020), stating its strong connections with the ‘God-given ability’ to realise it, he brings to mind Nietzsche’s central thesis that ‘modernity’ and institutional Christianity, for better or for worse, are intertwined (‘In God We Trust’). And it is this state of self-delusion and self-deception which Nietzsche blames on *ressentiment*—that slave-herd state of mind with its sense of impotence imbued with a strong sense of entitlement. Of course, only the casual reader of Nietzsche would conclude that this pathological malaise is to be attributed by him solely to Christianity. The culprit for him is also the (neo-)Platonism for the masses which institutional Christianity has appropriated and passed on into mainstream modernity, (Blanton, 2014).

Here too, O’Toole picks up the threads. He does so by exposing *ressentiment*’s secular mask, in particular its political mask, which I name ‘the politics of *ressentiment*.’ Consider some of its tell-tale manifestations.

First, there is the Trump paranoia, ‘that stretches between what happened and what *really* happened’ (Ibid, 4)—in effect, this is Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* world of ‘phantasms.’ A world, a reality that only masquerades as reality, one well represented by the current interregnum in the United States, which O’Toole describes as afflicted by ‘a great variety of morbid symptoms,’ where something ‘old is dying, but we do not yet know what [it is]’ (Ibid, 4). An apprehension that Nietzsche keenly felt, as he observed the emerging Nation State of Germany, and an old Europe struggling to give birth to the ‘something else’ that became ultimately impossible: a genuine cosmopolitan meritocracy (Church, 2019). Something that, in O’Toole’s words, applies to the interregnum: a kind of ‘new’ that can neither be defined nor born’. O’Toole pitches it as a W.B. Yeats’ brave new world where, “We are closed in, and the key is turned/On our uncertainty,” (Ibid, 4)—the sort of impotence, isolation, unknowing and willful ignorance that *ressentiment* ‘knows’ all too well. The sort of failure that ‘must keep the promise pure, unadulterated by the complexities of reality’ (Ibid, 6).

Second, we have the staying power, the insidiousness of *ressentiment*’s destructiveness, in the way it uses its ‘disputed’ failure to try to wrest victory from the jaws

of defeat. It is a world where losing is not possible except it be at the hands of ‘someone’, or ‘something’ else. The road can never be a cul de sac—it can only be an ‘open road’ (in *The Matrix* jargon: the ‘highway’ to nowhere)—never a dead end. That is the lie it lives, in the secluded false transcendent ‘cell’ (“Vermauerung”) of its mind. Trump’s brand of politics, *ressentiment* politics, can only have a future, a never-ending ‘after-life’—and there, at the end of that road (*sic*), we find an existential paradox: Trumpism can never have a post-mortem either, marvels O’Toole, because it itself, ‘is a postmortem.’⁹ Elsewhere, O’Toole calls it ‘zombie politics’, ‘the life after death’ in this case of a party (Republican), which like the Gothic novel, tells us that ‘it is very hard to kill the undead’ (Ibid, 8). That is why, Nietzsche designated *ressentiment* as being the danger it is: it’s hard to kill it off.

Third, democracy’s existential sickness mirrors the ontological sickness of *ressentiment*. It is in these days becoming, or perceiving itself to become, a politics of the ‘minority.’ It struggles to ‘retain power’ by so embedding itself, institutionalizing itself, that ‘it can withstand the majority’s anger’ and in doing so attempts at all costs, not only to ‘evade the consequences of losing the popular vote’ but also ‘insofar as it can’, to make that lost election ‘irrelevant’ (Ibid, 6).

Fourth, from both sides of politics, Biden and Trump, O’Toole points out what Nietzsche would call the ‘coup de grâce’ of ‘moral,’ religious *ressentiment*. One which creates the feeling from a former position of weakness—now in a place of strength—to make the majority (who don’t believe) feel like outsiders who ‘cannot properly belong in the polity’ unless they do—believe. Indeed, to make ‘the majority’ feel ‘deficient in both patriotism and sanctity’ (Ibid, 8). The kind of guilt-inducing feelings *ressentiment* is so good at exploiting.¹⁰

Thus, *ressentiment*’s powerful presence and traction in the 21st century, becomes the pivotal point on which the contest between Nietzsche and the mimetic theorist René Girard’s case against him must be decided.

⁹ At its core, O’Toole claims this kind of politics is ‘necromantic’ (Ibid, 6), a summation that resonates strongly with Achille Mbembe’s (2019) *Necro-Politics* post-colonial analysis of the failure of French and European ‘democratic’ culture and civilization.

¹⁰ In the end it gets back to *ressentiment*’s talent for denial: for example, turning a ‘daylight delinquency’ (Ibid, 8) into a virtue.

In the Chapters to follow, I shall argue that Nietzsche's interpretation of *ressentiment* and how it applies, is not just 'correct,' but the one which Girard himself originally endorsed. The endorsement comes in one of his last works based on interviews with Benoît Chantre, *Achever Clausewitz, Battling to the End* (2010: 83). The context is a discussion of the Prussian war analyst Clausewitz's reasons for overlooking, 'the principles of reciprocal action and the escalation to extremes... the apocalyptic course of history.' Girard comments: "What is not made explicit, but is often the real engine of a theory, is what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*. I take this intuition a little further by saying that resentment, according to its mimetic definition, produces *misapprehension*, in other words, the sacred." Here Girard seems to acknowledge the central role that *ressentiment* plays, not just as 'the real engine of a theory' but also as an insight that is critical for any understanding of the '*misapprehension*' ("méconnaissance") whose outcome is the [false] sacred.

As we shall see, Girard went on to change that stance not just to one of implacable opposition, but also to make a case for Nietzsche as suffering from his own *ressentiment* pathology. In addition, Girard attempts to attribute to *ressentiment* other meanings, which Nietzsche never intended, and which really were never the case in the ways in which they were used and continue to be used today. I shall argue that the misinterpretation distracts us from the main game. As to the reasons for this volte-face on Girard's part, these we shall explore in the following chapters. I shall posit that it has more to do with Girard's perception of Nietzsche as an apostate: one who saw the truth of the Crucified but turned his back on him by following archaic religion, Dionysos and the path of self-divinization and self-destruction. I mount a counter-case for the sentiments which Nietzsche expresses in the epigraph—one of admiration for the one, the only 'true Christian' who overcame *ressentiment*—which is Nietzsche's actual locus, one confirmed by his innovative, self-reflective autobiography *Ecce Homo*, where he imagines himself in the place of Christ before Pilate.

The irony in all this is that both Girard and Giuseppe Fornari (2013) concede that Nietzsche had a deep understanding of the Christ of the Evangel. Fornari for his part admits that 'in the end.' Nietzsche was, 'much closer to Christ than many who would claim to be Christians,' adding, 'That is the final thought I would like to leave with the reader,' (Fornari

2013 [2002]: xvi). And Girard, who Fornari follows closely, is also forced to admit that Nietzsche was in Cowdell's phrasing of it, 'Like Dostoyevsky and Freud... a pivotal figure,' and that he was 'fully aware of the false sacred as only Christian revelation could have made him.'¹¹

Lampert *par contre* argues that Nietzsche as educator helps us to 'educate ourselves *against* our age—because through him we possess the advantage of really knowing this age' (1986: 245). And by 'age,' I take it, Lampert means human culture and civilisation in the current era. For it is culture and civilization, its well being, that is Nietzsche's overriding concern.¹² Nietzsche realizes that it is the health of the species, which is at stake, and that this, rather than any other priority, should be the focus of his philosophical project (Nietzsche: 1886: Preface, second edition, *The Gay Science*):

the problem [is that] of the total health, of a people, time, race or of humanity – to summon the courage at last, to push my suspicion to its limit and risk the proposition: [that] what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto was not at all 'truth' but rather something else – let us say health, future growth, power, life.

So far, I have established the meaning and relevance of Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment*. I shall now turn my attention to Girard's extraordinary insights into his shared interest with Nietzsche for humanity's violent religious origins, and the emergence of modernity. I have previously identified what common ground both theorists once seemed to occupy on *ressentiment* as the 'engine' of a theory, one which must qualify to be included in a definition of mimesis—a dynamic that produces a 'misapprehension' which finally reveals itself to be the [false] sacred.

I shall posit that Nietzsche's pathology of *ressentiment* sits firmly and squarely in the cycle of violence and the scapegoat mechanism as espoused by Girard—not only at its inception, but also along its full continuum. It is the enduring 'engine' that drives the cycle and the mechanism—not just desire, but *frustrated* desire. In the process, I shall have made an original contribution to both Nietzschean and Girardian scholarship. I do so by demonstrating that the two theorists can and must be reconciled, showing that the two

¹¹ Girard, again in Cowdell's summary of it, believed Nietzsche to have, '[remained] stoutly resistant to the offer of new life in Christ that would have ended his preference for the archaic sacred' (2018: 44).

¹² This is something, which I shall further explain at the end of this section and investigate in later chapters. I introduce it here by highlighting an important moment in Nietzsche's intellectual development.

theories by working together can generate powerful insights into the current crises,¹³ the political, social, and economic challenges facing the planet during these global climate change and pandemic emergencies.

A.3 Mimetic Theory (MT) and the Scapegoat: why they are inseparable companion theories for the *ressentiment* pathology

Some explanation must now be offered as to the nature of how these theories complement each other. First, we need to remind ourselves that Nietzsche preceded Girard in both the investigation into origins of culture, culture's indebtedness to religion and the importance of mimesis with his investigation into a long history going back to the *Symposia* of Plato, all the way back to the pre-Socratics especially Heraclitus and his critique of Homer and *poetics*. Nietzsche brings to that investigation his considerable skills as a philologist, and there is no doubt that Girard was aware of the foundation upon which Nietzsche was building. Second, while at first *ressentiment* bore the same meaning for both theorists, Nietzsche's tagging institutional Christianity with the *ressentiment* pathology label, meant that Girard (as one who had before Easter in his mature years 'reconciled' to the Church) felt duty bound to resist the Nietzsche version. The reality is, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapters, the two theorists, when the complete picture is pieced together, while arriving at similar conclusions about the origins of violence, its outworkings and its apocalyptic endgame as strongly connected to culture and the false sacred, do not just simply cover the same ground. Rather, they come with their nuanced and valuable contributions and work in complementarity with each other. At least that is what my research and reading have discovered. Indeed, the research shows that the two theories provide us with both a 'vocabulary' and a 'grammar' for understanding the origins and emergence of an intrinsically violent modernity culture.¹⁴

¹³ I contributed a Chapter essay, entitled 'The Fear of Being Wrong: A Conversation with James Alison', part of a trilogy, entitled *Kaleidoscope of Pieces, Anglican Studies on Sexuality*, (ed.), Alan H Cadwallader, (ATF Theology, 2016), 161-182 which I see as the beginning of this long PhD journey. The chapter proved to be a good exercise in determining whether or not I had grasped Girardian MT. In this, I acknowledge Father Alison and Professor Cowdell as great mentors, even though we might have to agree to disagree on *ressentiment* and its finer points.

¹⁴ I have chosen two sets of Girardian terms, which constitute the baseline of MT: (1) the foundation event, foundation story, the founding murder (2) and the scapegoat mechanism.

The terms ‘foundation event’, ‘foundation story,’ are elsewhere referred to by Girard as “the founding murder.” As for the the cover-up, it is described in the terms of a ‘dismembered’ story, an account proffered by the perpetrators, the victors. The victims (even survivors), of course, rarely if ever have a voice, unless an impartial investigation uncovers it and in uncovering it—re-members the ‘lost’ story.¹⁵ Girard also deploys another word for the telling of the story. It is ‘myth’ (not just one story but a collection of stories). It is a story that ‘indefinitely rehearses the founding mimetic crisis and scapegoat murder... in a disguised, allusive, artlessly artful way’ (“mystifié-mystifiant”). It is, in effect, the ‘self-deceiving deceptiveness,’ which tells the story from the perspective of the victimizers (our perspective not theirs), (Ibid, xxxii). They subconsciously cover over their complicity by diverting judgement and guilt onto another, not dissimilar to the *modus operandi*, as we shall see in detail in Chapter 1, of *ressentiment*.

The question is whether such insights might have any currency in O’Toole’s account? A useful starting point would be to cast the American Dream as such a foundation story. In this case one which purports to evoke (as an alternative to the “long national nightmare” of the Watergate scandal), the dream of a ‘God-given ability’ that will take the nation, claims Joe Biden at his Democratic Convention acceptance speech in August 2020, as far as their dreams, ‘will take them’ (Ibid, 6). The political rhetoric (a collection of myths of its own kind), of course, cover over the Democratic Party’s neglect of significant sections of the US population, a neglect which in the end wrested from that party, Hilary Clinton’s expected victory, and the anticipated breaking of the glass ceiling, in the 2016 elections. Those sections included, the rundown West Virginian coal mines, Detroit’s lost car plants and the despised, working-class people that came along with them, ‘the disenfranchised white people.’¹⁶ In effect, the American Dream as a foundation story follows the trajectory of all foundation stories, one of duplicity and violence, whether explicit or implicit current or lost, in the fog of time and obfuscation. What violence you ask? Nothing less than the

¹⁵ A concise re-telling of the foundation murder story is provided in *Can We Survive Our Origins, Readings in René Girard’s Theory of Violence and the Sacred*, (ed.) Antonello and Gifford, 2015: xxxi):

Ritual sacrifice installs at the heart of the common life a reenactment or replay of the founding murder itself. The ritual slaughter of a surrogate victim replicates as exactly as possible... the original scapegoat murder...

¹⁶ (Karen Ubelhart reflects, in Anthony Zurcher’s ‘US Election 2016 Results: A Democratic Party in disarray’ BBC News, accessed 19/12/2020, 12:16 pm).

overturning of truth and reason. O'Toole has no compunction in pointing out what was enunciated at the turn of the century by the New York Post in 1900 (there's not just one foundation... but foundations upon foundations on an original foundation), 'This—and no wooly appeal to benign power—is the sense in which the term should resonate now.'¹⁷ Both Biden and Trump 'deceive'/'seduce' the American public, driven by a strong sense of political survival. Either way, for whatever reason, both the lie and the violent intent at its core, are glossed over. Even Trump's 'truth,' "Sadly the American Dream is dead," is infiltrated by lies, "I will bring it back. Bigger, better, stronger than ever before" (Ibid, 6). Of course, need I say it, behind the masks, also lurks *ressentiment*. Resentment of Biden towards Trump, Trump's resentment towards Biden, both inwardly railing against what in their more honest moments they would confess as their *ressentiment* towards an unpredictable, disaffected, disenchanted often, indifferent, entitled decision-making public, who one is obligated to cajole, dragoon or entice to vote, never mind get to decide decisively—for *them*. Yet when corralled, that public refuse to be persuaded because, they 'do not agree with us on every issue' (Ibid, 6).¹⁸

What follows, is my extrapolation based on O'Toole's coverage. Girard would maintain that every country, every beginning, every culture at its foundation, has its equivalent of the foundation murder. From my reading of it, for Australia it is Captain Cook's "*Terra Nullius*" the great lie, which declared the land empty, and so justifiably fair game for occupation, and massacre if such occupation were ever to be contested. Of course, that would also have to be one more strand of the onion, which must be unraveled in US history. That is to say: what the American Dream has covered up, something not even mentioned by O'Toole—that the 'American' Indians who had preceded the white face invaders have been displaced, precluded from the Dream, and not so safely dispersed on reservations. Or the subject black slaves, who once released have been struggling ever since to persuade the American Dream, that "black lives *really* matter"—not just on paper. The other big

¹⁷ "Disconnected multimillionaires," it warned, "form the greatest risk of every republic" (citing Sarah Churchwell, in *Behold America* (2018). If they (tycoons, like Trump) had their way, "it would be the end of the American dream" (Ibid, 6).

¹⁸ Indeed, the whole foundational notion of democracy (my surmise, not O'Toole's) teeters like the ideology of communism once teetered towards collapse in East Germany. In the 1953 uprising in Berlin, which O'Toole observes unmasked the lie of the State, the bureaucracy unwittingly declared that "the people/Had forfeited the confidence of the government."

elephant in the room, of course, is the Civil War the only means by which such ‘democracy’ came into being—and once again to endorse Girard’s theory, the foundations are awash not just with black but also with white blood.

Back, then, to the application of the two theories and O’Toole’s coverage of what he calls ‘an infallible law’, that ‘force field of radical indecision’ that ‘liminal space’ (Ibid, 4). These theories, working in consort, are none other than the force field of Girard’s *mimesis*. It is a mimetic dynamic which has both the potential to unite a nation or tear it apart—the former in its positive guise, characterized by O’Toole as Seamus Heaney’s ‘longed-for tidal wave/Of justice’ (the principle upon which unity is built). The latter, as Yeats’ ‘closed in’ ‘uncertainty,’ where desire is divided in its intention (Ibid, 4), poised before unity and disunity, one which so easily slips into chaos.¹⁹

To bring this brief annotation to its conclusion, I cite Ward Blanton (2014) as a keen observer of modernity.²⁰ He takes us to another foundation myth, foundation ‘murder’ exposed by Sigmund Freud (who like Carl Jung) borrowed shamelessly from Nietzsche’s insights as the first psychologist. It is the myth of Western cultural memory of Moses, which Freud describes as arising from, ‘[t]wo distinct forces, diametrically opposed to each other [that] have left traces (“ihre Spuren”) on it’, (Ibid, 2014: 1; *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones). Here Freud’s diagnostic confirms Girard’s ‘foundation event/murder, foundation story/myth’ in a Jewish setting. The one force falsifies ‘the text in accord with secret tendencies (“geheime Absichten”), thus turning the text ‘into its opposite.’ The other force indulges its ‘relentless’ piety (“eine schonungsvolle Pietät”) to force the text (“über ihm gewaltet”) to retain its original meaning, ‘indifferent to whether the details fitted together or nullified one another.’ Freud then pursues an analysis that bears a remarkable resemblance to Girard’s methodology to expose foundation myths. Freud highlights ‘striking omissions’ (“auffällige Lücken”), disturbing repetitions (“störende Wiederholungen”) and palpable contradictions (“greifbare Widersprüche”). All of which amount to evidence of a concoction which in turn points to meanings that were never intended (“Anzeichen, die uns

¹⁹ Here we are treated to yet another set of ambiguities. ‘Justice’ like ‘unity’ is a loaded word. The justice of the victor is never straightforward (so powerfully illustrated in the evolution of the history of the modern state of Rwanda). The unity achieved, always open to question, and the victim not always innocent. While the ‘scapegoat’, by definition, is innocent, the victim’s status is still ambivalent especially if it arises from the mind of *ressentiment*, which plays the innocent victim to perfection.

²⁰ In his *A Materialism For the Masses, Saint Paul and the Philosophy of Undying Life*.

Dinge verraten, deren Mitteilung nicht beabsichtigt war”) —a ‘distortion’ (“der Einstellung”) of the text tantamount, Freud claims, to being ‘not unlike a murder’ (Ibid, 1)²¹, which has divested itself of the Jewishness most threatening to Rome, to wit the kind of threat played out in the Maccabean revolt.

O’Toole has thus done me a great favour in unwittingly endorsing Nietzsche’s *ressentiment*’s traction in the 21st century and validating Girard’s foundation event (‘murder’), foundation story (‘myth’/the great lie) as America prepared to welcome its new President and invited him to build on that foundation of the American Dream and its vaunted democracy. O’Toole leaves us with a ‘historic question that must be addressed.’ The question is, ‘Who is the aberration?’ Trump or Biden? It is a question which not only evokes Girard’s *mimetic* rivalry and its scapegoating, but also dramatizes Nietzsche’s mask wearing pathology of *ressentiment*. O’Toole even concludes his analysis with the very words, which have concerned us here: ‘resentment’ and ‘revenge’. However, it is how he attributes them to Trump and Biden and the ‘situation’ in which the United States finds itself, which reinforces the theorists’ findings. Both candidates are implicated. For all of Biden’s altruism and idealism, the Trump label as an ‘aberration’ will not stick: ‘this has been shown to be the wrong answer,’ writes O’Toole. The dominant power in the land, ‘the undead Republican Party’ has made, O’Toole claims, ‘majority rule aberrant’ and turned Biden supporters into ‘criminal voters’ (Ibid, 8). Political opportunism has thus ‘entrenched an anti-democratic [solid minority] culture’ which is defined by ‘resentment and revenge.’ The only outcome of which must be the ‘unbounded possibilities of an American autocracy,’ a reality to which Biden’s devout Catholicism, his belief in the ‘afterlife,’ may have blinded him. Nietzsche would have more than agreed with that, especially with this concluding O’Toole observation (Ibid, 8):

[Biden] needs to confront an afterlife that is not in the next world but in this one—the long posterity of Donald Trump.

²¹ Blanton transcribes Freud’s analysis to cover the myth of ‘all the powers of the West,’ and the narration of “Christian origins,” which he claims neither he nor Nietzsche took far enough (2014: 4). He too speaks of a murder, this time under the subtitle, ‘*On the Sacred Cement Shoes of Paul the Apostle*.’ Here he follows with great dexterity, how institutional Christianity, inspired by *ressentiment* arising from its powerless state before the might of the Roman Empire, to sink the real Jewish Paul into the river of oblivion by creating another kind of Paul, a Paul who has discarded all his Jewishness, in order to define Christianity as a new movement, friendly to Rome.

This thesis will hitherto call that ‘long posterity’ and ‘afterlife’ —the politics of *ressentiment*.

A.4 MT and the Scapegoat in collaboration with the psychopathology of *Ressentiment*: this Literature Review now addresses what is at stake if there is no collaboration ²²

The Literature Review, while exposing the issues that academia raises for each theorist, also reveals why it is essential (given the global emergencies) that the two theories work together to address those challenges. Naturally, the Review will also focus on the pivotal point on which the contest between Nietzsche and Girard plays itself out: the meaning and application of the term *ressentiment*.

Despite the significant concessions made by Girard and Fornari mentioned above, Girardian scholarship by and large appears to be intractably opposed to the Nietzsche project²³. These concessions go against the grain of what that scholarship claims elsewhere, most notably brought into the foreground in Tomelleri’s treatment of *Ressentiment* in the series *Breakthroughs in Mimetic Theory* (2015) which summarises the trend with which I have cause to engage in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. In sum, I shall argue that the re-definition of Nietzsche’s *ressentiment*, which is offered as a justification for its weakening and dilution, is entirely unjustified, and not just because substantial Nietzschean research contradicts it, but also because the realities of the global emergency amplify and confirm *ressentiment*’s toxicity and strength. In effect, the alternatives proposed by Tomelleri, Paul Doumouchel are unpersuasive (a) because they receive no support from the evidence, and (b) because the Christian orthodoxy, which undergirds it, is oblivious to that research.²⁴

²² Two challenges strongly suggest what those stakes are. Firstly, the question posed by *Can We Survive Our Origins?* (2015). Secondly, another question: are we condemned to ‘knowingly watch the coming of [our] own collective demise, or at least the demise of [our] civilisation’ (Rovelli: 2015)?

²³ Some scholars of course would debate whether the term ‘project’ can be attributed to Nietzsche’s works, as we have noted.

²⁴ In the end Tomelleri falls into the same pattern of contradiction as Girard and Fornari have done, by both praising and damning Nietzsche, an ambivalence that surely betrays the overarching case’s faultlines against Nietzsche. Tomelleri’s claim that Nietzsche’s thesis ‘is based on an idea of emotions as individual and private phenomena that exclude *a priori* the role of the other’ (2015: 153), is contradicted by the most recent Nietzschean research (See especially Church, 2015, and Acampora, 2013).

As we have seen from the O'Toole article and its analysis of Amercian democracy, Nietzsche's *ressentiment* stands up well i.e., it is *not* just based on 'individual and private phenomena' and furthermore it works well with other aspects of Girardian analysis.²⁵

I turn now to two other works listed in the same series which feature Tomelleri's *Ressentiment* (and will revisit them in the Conclusion) to underline how these weaknesses work against the process of bringing *MT* into the mainstream—especially its tendency in the name of 'orthodoxy' to privilege Christianity. The first is Per Bjornar Grande's *Desire* (2020), and the second example is Pablo Bandera's *Reflection in the Waves, The Interdividual Observer in a Quantum Mechanical World*, (2019) drawn from completely different fields of inquiry.

One only gradually becomes aware of the Christian polemical nature of the 'breakthrough' near the end when Bandera imposes the astonishing assertion that, 'the physicist is justified in claiming that his field deals with what is real... but he must ultimately look to God to know if his observations are true' (2019: 203). When the three titles in the 'Breakthroughs in Mimetic Theory' are considered together they do give the appearance of being a codename for a shameless "Christian apologetic," which assigns to Christianity's theism a privileged and superior status—not a good look for a theory wanting to cohabit with mainstream academia.

Nietzsche's Christian apologetic by contrast, I shall argue, because it is couched in the vocabulary and grammar of a theology of suspicion, (following the more acceptable path for academia of '*via negativa*'), fares much better. I shall further argue in Chapter 6 that his *imitatio Dei*, *imitatio Christi* manage do so without compromise. It is only Girard's misunderstanding, (beginning with *ressentiment*), which stands in the way of a reconciliation. For instance, his claim that Nietzsche's *ressentiment* is 'distorted by poor Nietzsche's illusion of possessing the strongest will to power, for no other reason than it was his excellent discovery.' And the additional claim that 'By default... thought that the law of

²⁵ I made a case for this in another peer reviewed essay: *Wondering about God Together, Research-Led Learning & Teaching In Theological Education*, (eds.) Ball and Bolt, SCD Press, in a Chapter entitled 'Reflections On The Experience of Wonder In Research-Led Learning, *In Company With Nietzsche and Girard* (pages 52-70).

ressentiment was not valid for him' (Tomilleri: 2015: xiii), is just simply unsustainable, and appears faintly ridiculous when set against the evidence.²⁶

The misappropriation arises in the section entitled 'Affective Memory and Christian Conversion' (111-128). Proust and his 'usefulness' to *MT*, and more, to Christian thinking, become painfully obvious. It is plain, that the 'Christian understanding of dying from desire' is the yard stick by which Proust will be assessed and valued, and, seeing that he 'seldom refers to redeeming life and time in any Christian sense' (Ibid, 111), he (Proust) must come under closer scrutiny. The 'redeeming' feature, it seems, is that Proust, by means of the narrator, 'sees through his own delusions.' And more, appealing to Girard, Grande now claims for Proust a 'process of dying from desire and regaining a new life' that resembles (even if it is not) 'a Christian conversion' (1965), something he later elaborates under the subheading "Proust's Conversion" (1987: 393-98).²⁷ This is evident when we go from Grande's, '[Girard] does not claim that Proust actually became a Christian', to his Girardian citation that, "Proust espouses the Christian structure of redemption more perfectly than the carefully planned efforts of many conscientious Christian artists."²⁸ Thus, the whole section is built on an assumption. That Proust's work is founded on an alleged espousal of a Christian structure, even if (Grande is forced to admit) there is not 'any affirmative reference to a Christian belief, 'no 'imitation of Christ' (Ibid, 114). And even if the work is possessed (my word) by 'an agnostic spirit of doubt,' the assumption must hold (Ibid, 115). However, Proust's inclusion in the pantheon of Girardian 'greats,' if it is to be sustained, must be based on pure surmise, and, as stated, is nothing more or less than a misappropriation—which becomes embarrassingly obvious in this stumbling explanation (Grande: 2020: 117):

Thus, Proust's understanding of his own creation cannot be seen as something alien to a Christian understanding of resurrection, and therefore this creation, although

²⁶ Per Bjornar Grande's misplaced orthodoxy, misappropriates Marcel Proust's work upon which his analysis majors. The foundation for Grande's thesis on desire (revealingly) is James 1: 14-15, which he endorses with the claim that James provides 'a more elaborate description': "But each person is tempted when he (*sic*) is lured and enticed by his (*sic*) own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death", which of course brings to mind 'The Fall.'

²⁷ Once more, in a familiar pattern of misappropriation, which will be later explored in the thesis, is where Girard praises even the most recalcitrant like Nietzsche as long as the 'moral' of the writing aligns with his 'Christian formula' (in this case Nietzsche's unique insight into the death of Christ—it's just that, in Girard's eyes, he does not go far enough).

²⁸ (*Proust: A Collection of Critical Essays*, II; cited Grande: 112).

not directly Christian seems to be born of the same spiritual knowledge that we might call the fruits of Christian love.

A patronizing and erroneous comment about a masterpiece that has other intentions in mind, which are never acknowledged because they have not been researched. Further, if love is love, and G-d is love, what makes 'Christian' love of greater worth than any other love, if love is truly love in and of itself? Not to mention that claiming a place of such superiority does nothing to endear Bandera's theory to a wider intellectual readership.²⁹ In effect, this chapter (echoing Proust) defines misappropriation itself as an 'idolatry' that 'confects pleasant fantasies' in the name of 'truth' when in fact it is nothing more than 'self-delusion,' 'narcissistic enjoyment' and 'self-valorisation' (Ibid, 2015: 23-24).³⁰

Summing things up to this point, my thesis posits that Friedrich Nietzsche's original diagnosis stands, despite the dismissiveness of some (Tomillerri, 2015; Fraser, 2002; Nussbaum, 1994). That the term he uses, *ressentiment*, borrowed from the French which he consistently employs in its original usage is because it is there that he finds resentment's original intensity (Kee: 1999: 64). Even in Nietzsche's own era (Small, 2001) *ressentiment* was always locked in with revenge. The fact that 21st century representations of resentment and revenge by virtue of the scale and intensity of its own crises claim to eclipse the 19th century is nothing more than a distraction. *Ressentiment* and revenge, whatever their scale and the mode of their delivery, be it a fist fight, a duel, cavalry engagement, total war, mechanized air, land and sea deployment of power, or the mutually assured destruction of a nuclear engagement, the dynamic of *ressentiment* and revenge—their entanglement, the way they feed off each other—remains the same.

In what follows, I lay out the most recent research on Nietzsche to highlight how much has been overlooked by Girardian scholars. What makes current Nietzschean research the more compelling, is that it does not aim to address the central role that *ressentiment*

²⁹ In my Conclusion I shall refer to the outstanding contemporary scholarship on Proust (*Proust and the Arts*, (eds.) McDonald and Proulx), which delivers a very different assessment from Girard's.

³⁰ Glenn Loughrey appraisal of white mob's enforcement of a superior Christian belief, is scathing. Its misappropriation of aboriginal art as presented by in *On Being Blackfella's Young Fella, Is Being Aboriginal* (2020: 41, basing his remarks on Bunyan, 2019) is starkly revealed:

Indigenous spirituality has to be replaced and continues to be replaced by Christianity, a fact that has doomed our form of being to a lingering extinction in its original way.

has played in Nietzsche's thinking, indeed is mostly oblivious to it. Nevertheless, unwittingly it builds up a case for it. The latest scholarship reveals a Nietzsche quite different from the one caricatured by his detractors, be they Girardian or any other branch, yes, even of Nietzschean scholarship.

This is where my investigation into *ressentiment* makes an original contribution to Girardian as well as Nietzschean scholarship. To the former (Girardian scholarship), for the first time, it offers a fresh interpretation of Nietzsche's *ressentiment* that so radically redefines his anti-God and Anti-Christ stance that it makes a strong case for the pathology's inclusion in the Girardian analysis of the mimetic and scapegoat dynamic of the contagion of violence in religion. When fully appreciated, such a reconciliation of the two theories is not self-serving, rather, it aims to re-invigorate both theories, by virtue of which, I shall argue, not only are their diagnostic and prognostic capabilities enhanced, their explanatory powers also are thereby expanded. Indeed, it shall emerge from my two case studies in Chapters 4 on Rwanda and *The Tempest* in chapter 5 that the two theories perform at their best when they combine—something that has already been prototyped in the earlier O'Toole exemplar.

The only thing standing in the way of collaboration, is a misunderstanding and so a misrepresentation on Girard's part, of *ressentiment*. My argument shall be that when we legitimately, validly, set this misconstrual aside, we have two theories working in partnership with each other to produce a most effective analytical framework, supported by the theories of other disciplines, to unravel the complex dynamic and cycle of violence: its origins, its development and its end.³¹

To Nietzschean scholarship, my research restores to balance an imbalance which has existed almost from the beginning. Whereas much is written about Nietzsche the artist and Nietzsche the philosopher, Nietzsche the saint has been virtually ignored almost as if such a title were an oxymoron. The reason for this, of course, is not difficult to find. Nietzsche himself eschewed the role of saint. However, it is only seldom if at all mentioned that this did not prevent him from including *the category of saint* in his list of 'exemplary individuals.'

³¹ Even more than this, they offer strategies for transformative political and social movements (see Blaskow, *Dynamics of Dissent, Theorising Movements For Inclusive Futures*, (eds.) Clammer, Chakravorty, Bussey, Banerjee, 'Ressentiment As False Transcendence, how transformative dissenting political and social movements can create inclusivity', (Routledge): 2020 105-124).

Church (2015) does so but very sparingly. In any case, those well read in Nietzsche should know better than to take Nietzsche's denials at face value. Indeed, the most recent scholarship (Meyer, 2019) confirms that such denials are an integral part of Nietzsche's dialectic *modus operandi*. Not that other scholars have not recognized the *via negativa* as his stock in trade—they just do not see it operating at the level of sainthood and his serious and constructive critique of the Lutheranism and institutional Christianity of his day.³²

A.5 The latest scholarship into the early Nietzsche period dispels any suggestion of the psychopathology and elitism claimed by some Girardian and Nietzschean scholars

After more than a hundred years of constant rigorous Nietzschean research, much has been accomplished to set the record straight. Naturally, it is impossible to represent the totality of that research. However, here are some of the more salient examples in as much as they have a bearing on the centrality of our theme: *ressentiment*.

First, there are many serious works that have sought to locate Nietzsche correctly in his period, from early attempts such as R. Hinton Thomas', *Nietzsche in German politics and society 1890-1918* (1983), to Robin Small's, *Nietzsche in Context* (2001), Groenewald & Buitendag in the context of 19th Century philosophy and theology (2015) and lately to A. Sommer's (2019), (2012) contributions. Second, exhaustive commentaries by Germany's top scholars, such as Jochen Schmidt's "Kommentar zu Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie*" (2012), and Andreas Urs Sommer's "Kommentar zu Nietzsche's *Der Fall Wagner, Götzen-Dämmerung*, (2012), and his masterful "Kommentar zu Nietzsche's *Der Antichrist, Ecce homo, Dionysos-Dithyramben, Nietzsche contra Wagner*" (2013). These commentaries (the list continues to grow almost monthly), once and for all close the door on lazy, misinformed or ideological readings of Nietzsche which suggest that 'madness' informed and degraded his philosophy. Third, there are rigorous peer reviewed volumes such as *A Companion to*

³² In Chapter 6 I shall argue for Nietzsche being a contemplative in the heterodox category of mystics, a category, which, controversially, lies outside the straight-lace Augustinian model and strays into erotic mysticism (Furey, 2012). In effect, I shall, as indicated in the title of my thesis, contend for a Nietzsche who is a prophet-mystic come to full term.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Life and Works, (2015 [2012]), (ed.) Paul Bishop and acclaimed and updated biographies such as Julian Young's *Friedrich Nietzsche, A Philosophical Biography*, (2011 [2010]) and Sue Prideaux's *I am Dynamite, A Life of Friedrich Nietzsche* (2018).³³

Many misrepresentations outside of Girardian analysis of Nietzsche's published works fall into the same trap of an appeal to the *Nachlass* alone. Alexander Nehamas (1985) much lauded in the eighties (and to this day) bases most of his claims on the *Nachlass*. He also shamelessly pedals his own agenda namely to demonstrate what would now be laughable that 'any effort to attribute a positive view of human conduct [to Nietzsche] ... is bound to fail' (1985: 8). He chose the *Nachlass* rather than draw on the more reliable historical evidence of the published works which lie outside the manipulation of Nietzsche's meddling sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche.

Setting aside, or at the very least being aware of such hollow claims, has meant that the real rather than the imagined Nietzsche is more likely to emerge. It also means that the case made against him to justify the rejection of his project on the grounds of madness and 'contradiction' is more likely to be exposed for what it is—speculation and unsubstantiated, at that. This of course, is not to say, that Nietzsche being human is himself incapable of unintended self-contradiction. Serious scholarship brings even those who admire and respect Nietzsche's genius to acknowledge its fallibilities as well.

For instance, Andreas Urs Sommer with good humour and much empathy, in the recent *The New Cambridge Companion to NIETZSCHE*, (ed.) Tom Stern (2019), in 'What Nietzsche Did and Did Not Read', by two well-chosen examples claims that in Nietzsche's method of reading, we discover first, someone who more imagines than speaks the truth of what he experiences.³⁴

In his investigative essay, Sommer explains Nietzsche's discovery of Schopenhauer as not just happening in one time period, drawing attention to two such moments, which demonstrate Nietzsche's healthy maturation as a philosopher (i.e., no evidence of the kind of 'malaise' so often claimed by Girard and Fornari and other Girardians (dealt with in Chapters 2 and 3). Sommer notes, for example, the young Nietzsche's remembrance of an

³³ These lay to rest some of the more speculative and fanciful accounts, such as those related to Nietzsche's illness (previously blamed on syphilis) and the reasons for his breakup with Wagner.

³⁴ In Sommer's Chapter, a collection of the kinds of readings and readers that have been attracted to Nietzsche over the years, is brought to light.

even younger Nietzsche as ‘victim of something... that overwhelmed and transformed his way of life’ (Ibid, 26). Here, it would seem, Nietzsche attributes to his reading its extraordinary power ‘to change his mode of existence.’ Yet, two years later the ‘experience of reading Schopenhauer is already treated ‘ironically’, represented as ‘the kind of thing that happens to young men just out of puberty,’ and, as Sommers observes, ‘the spell is already broken’ (ibid, 27). However, Sommer is also at pains to point out that this ‘secular epiphany’ has been ‘stylised.’ Thus, Nietzsche’s claim that up until then Schopenhauer was completely unknown to him ‘is not actually historically accurate.’ How do we know? Because Sommer claims, from notes Nietzsche took on a set of lectures entitled ‘General History of Philosophy’ given by Carl Schaarschmidt several months before, when he was still a student in Bonn. Sommer’s explanation is that Nietzsche’s re-collection of the bookshop encounter with Schopenhauer’s tome is intentionally ‘modelled on another famous scene in Augustine’s *Confessions* (VII 12)’ (ibid, 27):

in which Augustine, still procrastinating about deciding whether to convert to Christianity, hears a child’s voice saying ‘*tolle lege*’ (pick it up and read it). Augustine goes into the house opens the Bible at random and finds a passage in the *Epistle to the Romans* that moves him so deeply that he is immediately converted to Christianity and to the ascetic way of life. In Nietzsche’s version of this he does not hear the voice of God, but of a ‘demon’.³⁵

Sommer then samples another moment from the more mature Nietzsche in *Ecce Homo* [1888], in the third section of the chapter ‘Why I am so clever’ in his genealogy of himself. Here Sommer records a narrative that tries to show that Nietzsche’s ‘I’ ‘is fully in control of itself,’ where Nietzsche makes out that ‘reading’ has simply taken him away from himself, allowed him ‘to stroll through alien sciences and foreign souls,’ now not something that overwhelms him any more, rather something that allows him ‘to recover’ from his own ‘seriousness.’³⁶ In other words, the more mature Nietzsche delights in making fun of the younger self who shifts about 200 books a day on average, whereby he ‘eventually completely loses the ability to think for himself’ (cited, Ibid, 29). What scholar would deny

³⁵ The Augustine reference will take on new significance in chapter 6, where Nietzsche’s brand of asceticism/mysticism is explored and discovered to be one, which was practised in the Middle Ages.

³⁶ In other words, Nietzsche bills himself as a person alert to ‘foreign’ thoughts that ‘might climb over the wall’ to him secretly. The impression here is of a creative person, who has matured and now only ‘rarely reads.’

that this does not happen to her, if *she* is not careful to bring in measures to counteract such an over-dependence on the ideas of others to the detriment of one's own creativity?

The meticulous research of Daniel Blue's *The Making of Friedrich Nietzsche* (2016), as we shall see, reveals a cool-headed analytical Nietzsche. A portrait quite different from the Fornari portrayal which depicts an adolescent Nietzsche who 'wrote of his anguish at being left "orphaned and abandoned" (NW, I, 2, 10 [10], 260). A vulnerable Nietzsche, whose mind is filled with, 'rancour', 'compressed anguish', 'the dominance of self-repression.'³⁷ For Fornari everything in the juvenile period is filtered through the lens of a 'really powerful trauma' to have caused 'such distortion' (ibid, 26). In this, he is concerned to emphasise that in his focus on 'Nietzsche's relationship to his father and his family' he goes much further than Girard. Consequently, Fornari concludes that 'the structure of the trauma' once fixed, evolved into 'the principle' that governed 'his relationship to other people' ever after. A conclusion which does not match Nietzsche's closest friend Peter Gast's tribute to Nietzsche at his funeral: 'You were one of the noblest, the most genuine people, who have ever walked this earth' [cited in Curt Paul Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, 3 vols. (Munich: Hanser, 1978-79), 3:357)].

By contrast, to Fornari's jaundiced representation of Nietzsche's youth in the five volumes of juvenilia and three volumes of early letters, 'four if one counts the commentaries' (2016: 1), Blue discovers a Nietzsche who emerges from 'a self-conducted and self-conscious campaign to follow his own guidance.' In this process Blue observes, Nietzsche, 'cultivates the critical capacities and personal vision which feature so strikingly in his books' (2016: 2). Blue detects in this gradual evolution, from ages thirteen, sixteen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty-two and twenty-four in two-to-three-year intervals, not so much a narrative as a conceptual interest, both psychological as well as philosophical, with each autobiographical piece serving as a kind of Nietzsche 'report card' designed to assess his intellectual and critical progress (Ibid, 3). Even here, Blue is astonished to find an 'ongoing project' concerned with the 'latent self' and its 'complex drives and talents' (ibid, 4). In brief,

³⁷ A self-repression, claims Fornari, infiltrated by the demonic, "When I finished writing I broke into diabolical laughing ["diabolische Lache"] (Fornari: 2013: 27; Letter to Raimund Granier, July 28, 1862 *NSB*, vol.2, 362). We have in Fornari's eyes, the revelation of a 'mania' that wanted to resolve conflicts in noble and pathetic attempts to resolve them by dueling in his early university days at the university of Bonn. Fornari takes this as proof of Nietzsche's total incapacity to distinguish between 'the impulse toward friendship and the impulse to mortal combat', and labels it, 'absurd.'

these were studies in self-understanding, autobiographies through which Nietzsche attempts to unravel ‘who he was’, along the lines of the Humboldtian notions of “Bildung,” but so much more.³⁸

The conclusion, which becomes for the young man Nietzsche a dictum, is that one knows oneself by ‘actions, not by watching,’ and that ‘instinct is best’ (Ibid, 315)—sentiments that he carries into his more mature years. This arguably ‘most elegant and comprehensive autobiography... produced during his youth,’ finally arrives at a determination about the role of consciousness, and the question that is put to us is this. Asks Blue—did Nietzsche’s convictions about the nature of consciousness persuade him that personal autobiography was more inhibitive than conducive to either effective reflection or action? All in the quest for ‘becoming what one is?’ (Ibid, 317). And does all this entangled in the question of the past, constitute a mere distraction from what is actually happening in the moment the immanence (immediacy, the ‘now’—the “jetzt sein”, the “da-sein” of the later Heidegger perhaps?) of existence? That question will later in this thesis expose an unexpected correspondence with contemporary immanent transcendent ethics—exciting because we see in the early Nietzsche, the beginnings of that formation (“Bildung”), rather than Fornari’s degradation.³⁹

To summarise, in what way does this recent research on the early period bear on Nietzsche’s psychology and philosophy of *ressentiment*? Simply put, the research (here principally that of Sommer and Blue) clearly puts paid to the notion that trauma and madness stalked and impeded the young Nietzsche’s developing intellect, and ‘caused’ his descent into atheism and his later apostasy. I shall argue in Chapters 2 and 3, that this trajectory in Girardian thinking is driven by two assumptions. Firstly, the assumption that Nietzsche’s return to archaic religion and negation of God is occasioned by his fall into the very trap that he claims for Christianity’s demise i.e., its descent into the slave mindset of *ressentiment*. Secondly, the assumption that Nietzsche’s trajectory into increasing insanity is

³⁸ Blue’s investigation (‘a fund of German scholarship untouched by any biographies written in English’, Ibid, 11) ends at age 24.

³⁹ With reference to Nietzsche’s later modes of self-reflection, Blue notes that after 1869 ‘Nietzsche ceased to write personal autobiographies of the kind composed during his youth,’ but nevertheless kept, ‘memoranda’ and occasionally ‘recorded distant memories.’ When he *did* write other autobiographies such as, I would suggest, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (for Meyer: 2019 Nietzsche’s ‘personal tragedy’) and *Ecce Homo* are— ‘these took on a different form’ (Ibid, 320) i.e., ‘different’ in that these ‘different’ forms were mindful of the limitations of self-reflection.

caused not just by his betrayal of his so-called original insight into Christianity (that ‘Christ’s death was unique and different from other deaths, and quite unlike that of Dionysus’); but also, by his apostasy, driven by an unquenchable desire for ‘self-divination’. This is something which Girard, Fornari and some others, but not all Girardians (Lawtoo, 2013, with Poettcker, 2013, 2014, 2015) are more inclined to partially agree, partially disagree, the claim that this caused Nietzsche’s increasing undoing, his insanity, and his final collapse.

Another Nietzschean scholar who brings to light new material on Nietzsche’s early period is Jeffrey Church (2015). He takes our understanding of the Nietzsche publications to another level by demonstrating how many of Nietzsche’s most important ideas developed later were formulated in the early period. He highlights the fact that Nietzsche’s focus on ‘culture’ in his early work, is something he never abandoned in the quest for a “cultural meritocracy.”⁴⁰ Hence, argues Church, Nietzsche’s quest for exemplary human beings focuses on those uninfected by *ressentiment*, (designated “Masters”), such as artists, philosophers and saints (Ibid, 165), as opposed to those who drag cultures down (namely “Slaves” filled with *ressentiment*). These designations have nothing to do with nobility and plebeians in the strict political sense. This is Nietzsche ‘synthesising the best elements of a democratic and an aristocratic approach to culture’ (Church: 2015: 165). Which is to say, these designations refer to ‘different attitudes to life itself’—the former ‘masterful’ (i.e., capable to act) and the latter incapable of effective action: at worst, restricted or inhibited; at best, of wholesome effective action (Kee: 1999: 64).⁴¹

Church’s research again reverses the contention of many Girardians, and for that matter some Nietzschean scholars, that Nietzsche was aristocratic and elitist. Self-determination and sovereignty in terms of the will to power and in the context of the overriding notion of the “Übermensch” wrenched from their context are concepts that make Nietzsche out to be the perfect logician for the extreme right, and the fascist obsessed with the cult of power. What Church’s research has achieved is to restore those terms to their true context: Nietzsche’s quest for a meritocracy. And even here in what seems to be a

⁴⁰ That just as Acampora had established that ‘Nietzsche’s views of the *agon* shapes what he argues in his contestations with Homer, Socrates, Paul and Wagner’ (2013: 3), Church takes that analysis into the 21st century by showing that Nietzsche’s concerns were more than existential.

⁴¹ Essentially, I aim through this latest research to show that the great enemy of culture from Nietzsche’s perspective is the mindset of *ressentiment*, and that this abiding interest in culture puts Nietzsche and Girard on the same page.

purely political intention, we find that it is couched in religious terminology: ‘the ‘redemption of humanity;’ ‘redemptive vocation;’ the ‘theodicy of the morality of custom,’ a Kantian “Rechtfertigung,” for the production of this ‘exceptional individual.’ A redemption and an act of ‘righteousness’ which heals the divisions in the human soul.⁴²

Yet another reason, then, in the thrust of my overall argument, to believe that it is precisely *because* the mature Nietzsche builds on the younger Nietzsche’s positive ethical and political theories that we are entitled to believe we are seeing the development and flowering of a great intellect. Such that in the never-ending struggle of ‘overcoming’ *ressentiment* within himself and those divisive elements which are destined to bring the psyche down, Nietzsche strives to achieve the kind of ‘unity’ that produces ‘exceptional individuals’—exceptional individuals like Homer, Plato, Goethe and Shakespeare. Not for vain glory but for the striving of a dynamic that in overcoming chauvinism and exclusivity, ‘attaches human beings to communities’ (Ibid, 255).

A.6 Latest scholarship into the middle Nietzsche period continues to reveal his abiding interest in the Greek Tragic vision, one that runs in direct opposition to a *ressentiment* pathology

Only relatively recently has serious attention been paid to the so-called ‘middle period’. Research that connects the earliest works (including *The Birth of Tragedy*) with Nietzsche’s later works up to, and inclusive of the posthumously published work of *Ecce Homo*. Matthew Meyer (2019) Keith Ansell-Pearson (2018) among others have remedied the imbalance, and like the other scholarly appraisals (Blue, 2016), (Church, 2015) and (Sommer, 2019, 2013) of the so-called ‘early’ Nietzsche have provided new insights that steer us away from erroneous speculation to a much stronger foundation for settling the claims made for Nietzsche’s intellectual development. All of which represent him as a meticulous, clever, scrupulously honest but playful and inventive thinker far removed from the jaundiced, spiteful, oppressive, and finally destructive outlook of *ressentiment* which

⁴² Only this quest for wholeness makes sense of Zarathustra’s “profound dismay” as he walks among men as among the fragments and limbs of men”; “there are no human human beings” (2015: 234-236).

Girardian scholarship by and large attribute to him.⁴³ Nietzschean scholarship by contrast discovers a purity of joy, ‘a fullness of life’ that is so ‘filled’ that it is able to engage with all of life not just its beauty, but also its terror—the Greek tragic vision. Zorba the Greek in the film named after him on the occasion of his young son’s premature death comes to mind, when such fullness of grief can only be expressed by dance whereby an ineffable joy is released in the midst of grief. This is telling for our overall case—that Nietzsche has had to eschew the Christian language of his day, because it is too Epicurean, those “‘Christian[s]” who [are] actually only a kind of Epicurean’ (*GS*, 370). He chooses instead the language of Greek tragedy because it is from his perspective, more honest. Ansell-Pearson’s reading reveals a Nietzsche quite different from the ‘hard’ polemicist of the later texts, *BGE* (1886) and *GM* (1887). In the middle writings, he finds a Nietzsche who wants his readers to share in ‘the adventure of knowledge,’ a kind of ‘*via contemplativa*’ ‘to be cultivated in the midst of the speed and rapidity of modern life.’ He wants his readers to acquire ‘philosophical sobriety and coolness’ (*ibid*, 6), one which immerses itself in ‘the appreciation of the economy of life as a whole’ (*Ibid*, 7).⁴⁴

I think it is here that we can understand Girard’s impatience with the purist philosopher’s approach, because as we have seen from his observations, all of Nietzsche’s religious terms are transmuted into secular terms by them—terms stripped of their religious meaning. Whereas Nietzsche does the opposite. He submits secularity to a ‘transfigurational’ make over. A perfect example of what enervates Girard, is where Ansell-Pearson and others before him immediately associate the ‘transfigurational’ descriptor with the metaphor of ‘Epicurus’s garden’—a ‘philosophical greenhouse’ in which spirituality can thrive ‘safely’; where such a garden provides the meeting point for a community of ‘free spirits’ that gather for mutual edification and encouragement (*D* 174).⁴⁵

⁴³ For example, Ansell-Pearson’s search uncovers a Nietzsche in the much neglected ‘middle’ period who is taken by ‘Epicurean enlightenment’, with all its attendant ‘commitments’ (2018: 147).

⁴⁴ Here is a Nietzsche, claims Ansell-Pearson, where Nietzsche ‘truly becomes Nietzsche,’ one in repossession of himself, free of idealism (P. Franco, *Nietzsche’s Enlightenment*, xiv; cited *ibid*, 7). A philosopher in search of ‘a project of sobriety,’ one ‘committed to philosophical therapeutics in which the chief aim is to temper emotional and mental excess’, exposing false beliefs (*ibid*, 8, 9), one unafraid of a fear that has ‘prejudged and paralysed thinking’, the sort of thinking we have come to see in Nietzsche to be the epitome of *ressentiment*.

⁴⁵ Thus, whilst I enjoy Ansell-Pearson’s analysis and know that the Epicurean application is utterly warranted and demonstrable, to press the comparison too far (as in there is nothing with which to take exception to) is to struggle to make sense of the Dionysian, and so the spiritual and, yes, even true Christianity and true theism.

Not surprisingly, then, Ansell-Pearson posits the mature Nietzsche as ‘relinquishing’ ‘Dionysian intoxication’ for the ‘moderate pleasures and careful dosages’ (Langer: 2010: 67) of the Epicurean Master. This of course completely ignores Nietzsche’s later ‘Dionys and the Crucified’ obsession. Ansell-Pearson’s oversight is exposed in his closing observation that, ‘There are weaknesses in Nietzsche’s later appreciation of Epicurus’ (2018: 149), revealing, to my mind at least, not so much a weakness in Nietzsche as a flaw in Ansell-Pearson’s claim—that Nietzsche had relinquished Dionysos. What is more to the point is this. That both Epicurus and Dionysos serve as figures of thought for Nietzsche, not as a fixed and final commitment, but rather, as stated before, ‘capable of taking on different colours according to the requirements of the moment.’ I would add, some colours and some requirements more consistently used than others. That is why Nietzsche feels himself perfectly entitled to ‘accuse Epicurus of nihilism and of pursuing nothingness’ (Ibid, 149), but Ansell-Pearson commits himself to a settled position i.e., that Nietzsche has turned his back on Dionysos in favour of Epicurus, so must now dismiss this as ‘odd.’⁴⁶

Indeed, I shall later argue that Nietzsche’s sights are on to something far more complex. Something akin to what is proposed by Meyer (2019) in his *Dialectical Reading of Nietzsche’s Free Spirit Works*, but again goes much further even than that—something to which (in this literature review) I now turn.⁴⁷

My original contribution is to take Ansell-Pearson and Meyer’s excellent research further to include, Nietzsche’s ‘exemplary individual,’ the saint. In the following Chapters, I shall argue that the two, Dionysos and the Crucified can never be separated, indeed, that they form an integral part of Nietzsche’s revisionist view of Christianity. Which is to say, that this represents a methodology which he has adopted in the past. He makes use of his sources whenever they are *useful* to him. This is what he has done with Schopenhauer, with Socrates, Plato, Wagner and even, I suspect with St Paul. Everyone, and everything he

⁴⁶ In fact, in the end, he rejects Nietzsche’s later comparison of Epicureanism with Christianity as ‘misguided and unfair’, because ‘Epicurean philosophy is not founded on ‘fear and timid optimism’, but on fearlessness of God, ‘Punishment and the “Afterworld”’ (Knight: 1933: 431-45). It seems both Girard and Ansell-Pearson have missed the subtlety and double-edged nature for what Nietzsche is striving: a vision of a wholeness and perfection that lies beyond a simple and contrived/limited Epicureanism, and a simple, contrived and manufactured institutional Christianity.

⁴⁷ In my reading, Matthew Meyer’s is as close as it gets to pulling the whole Nietzsche canon together, except that he chooses to stay with the Greek tragic vision without accounting for the continuous thematic line, which includes the Dionysian-Crucified obsession.

encounters possess elements which can be pressed into service. However, equally, there are elements, which must be discarded when they fail to deliver. Like every good experiment, including thought experiments—when a hypothesis is tested and it fails, it must be set aside to make way for one that better matches the evidence. Only by means of this methodology, can we hope to arrive at a complete vision of life (if that is ever even possible, as we shall see with Ted Hughes’ attempts to reconstruct Shakespeare’s vision in Chapter 5).

The one vision that keeps coming up trumps, for Nietzsche at least, is the Greek Tragic Vision, the true Christ of the Evangel, and a Dionysos who morphs into Dionysus Zagreus—the two becoming one (a reconciliation of sorts as significant as the much-discussed reconciliation of Apollinian and Dionysian differences). Nietzsche tests what he sees by shaking out their meanings, until with the vehemence of Emile Zola’s “*J’accuse*” in defence of Alfred Dreyfus, the human tree and its idealism is shaken free of the false sacred. He strikes the tuning fork on the head of belief and conviction (secular and religious) in order to detect its tonal qualities, thus exposing its destructive dissonances, which, once located, are removed. It is then, that the true and pure sound of what IS—can be clearly heard. Intolerant as it is to ambiguity, symbol and allegory and the contradictions and paradoxes of life, such a project is impossible for the mind of *ressentiment*, the sort that falsely accused Dreyfus—a mindset far too risk averse, preferring the lie than the shame of truth.

Notwithstanding, what Meyer succeeds in doing where perhaps many others have faltered, is to expose an unbroken line of connection between *BT*, the early works, the *Free Spirit Works* and their dialectics through to the mature works, all the while demonstrating unity of theme and purpose and the repeating pattern of an argument which he names *dialectic*. It is a dialectic, which evokes the dialectic materialism of Marx borrowed from Hegel and Feuerbach.⁴⁸

I shall reconfigure the long line of vitalist thinking by noting that Nietzsche’s recurrence of the same, I suspect, taps into this dialectic as well. By this I mean (to borrow Marx’s terminology) Nietzsche sees all of life in a constant state of collision (*thesis* versus *antithesis*) producing an ever-changing *synthesis*. Same process, different outcomes. His

⁴⁸ Sufficient to say, that one can detect an exciting transformation/transfiguration of the dialecticism in Nietzsche’s writings, which also, in turn connect him with contemporary process philosophy, process theology, and even the most recent ‘insurrectionist theology’ of Blanton, Crockett, Robbins and Vahanian (2016).

take on the will to power (ed.) Höffe, 2021; Müller-Lauter, 'Nietzsche's Doctrine of the Will to Power': 155-200) also follows a similar course cf. 'the opposition of drives': 179). Unlike other readings, I define the eternal recurrence both as a *process* (as stated) and a *test* of the mindset truly aligned with *amor fati*. It is a mindset, which proves itself equal to adapting to change and confronting relentless adversity, capable of embracing life as it is. Which is another way of articulating the Greek Tragic Vision, one that will be given its full treatment in Chapter 5, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

What then is the line of connection which Meyer sees threaded through all of Nietzsche's work, via the intermediary of the 'free spirits,' their works and their dialectic? ⁴⁹

Whatever else it is, it is not something *ressentiment* is party to, because of its false dialectic and its commitment to a false transcendence, and dare I say it, a false sacred. From Meyer's findings we discover that this oeuvre follows the fault lines of overcoming, namely: 'the ascetic camel,' 'the dragon-slaying lion,' 'the Dionysian child' (Ibid, vii). Each stage, arguably, looping back on itself before its inexorable forward movement towards the goal of defining the exceptional individual who will become the 'philosopher', the 'artist' and the 'saint' of the future. Lampert (2017) focuses on artist. Pippin (2011) on the psychologist. Meyer notes that through this process of "Selbstaufhebung"⁵⁰ of the will to truth, 'it is clear that the philosophy of the future is a type of artist', the 'philosopher as artist', but a philosopher/artist of a particular Dionysian kind (Meyer 2019: 245; KSA 11:34 [201])—which is a euphemistic way of saying, it is the 'saint', but Meyer cannot quite bring himself to acknowledge that.⁵¹

A.7 Psychology and philosophy of *ressentiment* played out on a religious plane: my research posits a Nietzsche style of asceticism and mysticism

⁴⁹ Meyer (2019) calls for a paradigm shift 'for how we understand Nietzsche's larger oeuvre' (Ibid, 3). In doing so he offers a close study of *All Too Human* (1878), *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (1879), *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880), *Daybreak* (1881) and the *Gay Science* (1882).

⁵⁰ Literally, 'the lifting up of oneself.'

⁵¹ And there is more. We are not just talking individuals we are talking communities as well. That is the strength of Nietzsche's approach: he is not just thinking 'individual.' He is always thinking community and healthy nation building. For where there are exceptional individuals, free spirits, we also find a community willing to 'defy convention,' 'fearless in the face of death,' drawing their strength and inspiration from the long line of predecessors of vitalism, including Nietzsche's much-loved Heraclitus. It also, of course, includes the Greek Tragic Vision and the *agon*, familiar territory by now.

However, as we have observed, while Church and Acampora and many others, bring extensive scholarship to bear on how and why Nietzsche contests for such a specialised culture, they often miss the religious implications that come with such contestation, which a purely secular coverage of religious connotations is inclined to do. Here I am, let it be noted, only distinguishing the secular and sacred because that is the contemporary way of doing things. In the reality which Nietzsche spies through the lens of that great line of thinkers we have been examining, the sacred and the secular are two faces of the same coin, indeed, it is an assumption which is deeply embedded in the Greek Tragic and Comic Vision.

The claim which I make, will only surprise those who insist on a distinction to be made between the sacred and the secular. It is this: that Nietzsche not only valorises the artist and the philosopher and pays more than just lipservice to the ‘saint’—Nietzsche also advocates for a style of asceticism and mysticism that is seriously committed to an *imitatio Dei*, and even an *imitatio Christi*, unique to Nietzsche. It is an imitation in the mystical sense which embraces the material and the immaterial as one and the same.⁵² Nevertheless, while there are signs that the interest in and recognition of Nietzsche’s preoccupation with religion (in particular, Judaic monotheism) is growing amongst scholars, research on Dionysos seems to have stalled, a stasis this thesis aims to break.⁵³ Why is it so important to make this point? Simply to demonstrate that Nietzsche’s interest was a serious one drawing on sources that were at the cutting edge of the scholarship of his day. But even here also, where religion is the object of attention, all too often the inclination is to toe an invisible party line which robs Nietzsche of a genuine interest and concern for religion in its own right and not just as an adjunct to aesthetics, psychology and philosophy, certainly not merely an extension of his ‘God is dead’ preoccupation.⁵⁴ Saarinen’s original premise, however, will brook no compromise: that Nietzsche’s is a *psychology* of faith, and that his psychological

⁵² I investigate this more fully in Chapter 6. Here Kee’s *Nietzsche Against The Crucified* (1999) has been my inspiration, but I want to go much further than just his defence of Nietzsche’s religious thinking, which I know has been visited and re-visited by many scholars who come to it for different reasons and draw vastly different conclusions (Marion, 2001; Deane, 2006; Franck, 2012 among others).

⁵³ With this end in mind, I shall refer to Saarinen’s *Nietzsche, Religion and Mood* (2019), Gericke’s ‘The Hebrew Bible in Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Religion’ (2011), Groenewald & Buitendag’s ‘Who is the “God” Nietzsche denied?’ (2009), and Robert Luyster’s ‘Nietzsche/Dionysus: Ecstasy, Heroism and the Monstrous’ (2001).

⁵⁴ Sampsa Saarinen’s agenda, for example is clear: to prove that Nietzsche’s atheism is a radical atheism which brooks no dilution, and certainly tolerates no incursions from Christianity or theism under another guise be it Charles Taylor’s (2007) ‘metaphysical need’ or Julian Young’s (2011) Dionysian pantheism, and its sense of the holy and sacred.

thinking is ‘the most important force in his mature thinking.’ Nevertheless, his claim that the psychology of faith is of greater interest to Nietzsche than religious faith (2019: 240) is dubious. Saarinen seems determined to make a case for a resilience that can only be attained by radical atheism, one that ‘can deal with ambiguity that thrives on uncertainty’ (ibid, 241), the assumption being, that there can be no religion of any kind that is equally capable of such adaptability. Nietzsche’s Greek Tragic vision, I suspect challenges that claim.

I shall argue that Nietzsche’s main project is deeply steeped in a religious interest, because it is from this mainstream of religious human experience from its origins and from which *ressentiment* the number one enemy and duplicitous friend of culture formation emerged. My inference being, if you avoid the truth of that religious origin and its cultural vestiges, you will miss the main game. Nietzsche’s interest arises from his conviction that human cultural origins are rooted in religion. In this conviction, both Nietzsche and Girard are in agreement. I shall argue that to leave *ressentiment* and religion out of the discussion is not just to distort Nietzsche’s main project, it is to miss its point altogether, as everything about it hinges on the inclusion of *ressentiment* and religion. They cannot in Nietzsche’s thinking be disentangled without confounding the diagnosis and prognosis of the reasons for cultures’ flourishing and their demise.

In the chapters to follow (particularly Chapter 6) I shall contend for a perspective which avoids Taylor’s ‘irritating’ unsubtlety and his Dionysian pantheism. I shall argue that Nietzsche’s perception is very much concerned with a Christ of the Evangel, for the indeterminate G-d of Moses (the uncertainty principle comes to mind)⁵⁵, indeed a religion open to all humanity, a religion of inclusion and not of exclusion. I shall illustrate this universality and inclusiveness, by showing how Shakespeare and Nietzsche tap into the same rich vein of Greek *religious* mythology to analyse the cultural social and political problems of their day, when Christian (Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy) had failed so abjectly to resolve them. This will also be illustrated by a close study of the Rwandan genocide in Chapter 4, where a Catholic and Protestant majority perpetrated one of the most heinous genocides (allegedly a million dead in a 100 days), not to mention its resonances with the Nazi genocide where once again manipulation of Protestant and

⁵⁵ In the Coen brothers’ film, *A Serious Man*, the ‘uncertainty principle’ develops into a leitmotif of the story as it unfolds, strongly tied to ‘Hashem’, the name for the indeterminate G-d.

Catholic religious sentiments were played upon. That said, I utterly subscribe to Saarinen's frustration and his understandable offence taken by veiled 'Christian' approaches to Nietzsche's religious interest, from a position either of explicit or implicit superiority, calling into question the integrity of radical atheism. This is indeed a tendency, which I too have often encountered in the most diverse fields of Girardian scholarship (as I have previously explored in this Literature Review).⁵⁶

Notwithstanding, I agree with Saarinen's position that it is not a 'renewal of Dionysian religion' which Nietzsche intends (2019: 244). At the same time, however, I question an argument that claims to dissolve Nietzsche's 'Dionysus and the Crucified' into just a philosophy, though it is that as well—that is its uniqueness, and its genius—that it can be both. For the same 'Dionysus and the Crucified' also affirms that life is uncertain, is a problem, has a question mark (Ibid, 244; Hödl: 2009) and like Damocles' sword hangs over humanity's head. For Nietzsche's indeterminate G-d, I shall posit, is Mose's G-d who answers to the name, 'I shall be *who* and *where* and *how* I shall be'. And Nietzsche's Christ is also, like Nietzsche an Anti-Christ (Kee, 1999), one who stands with him against the fabricated Christ of institutional Christianity, as an institution in its worst guises which preys on people's weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the name of sin to solicit adherence.^{57 58}

A conduit for some kind of *rapprochement* between religion and Saarinen's radical atheism, I suggest, would be André Comte-Sponville's *The Book of Atheist Spirituality, An Elegant Argument For Spirituality Without God* ([2006]) 2008) and a close examination of Jean-Luc Marion's *The Idol And Distance, Five Studies* ([1977]) 2001) which features later.⁵⁹ Other conduits for *rapprochement* include Groenewald & Buitendag's (2009) reflections on the actual "God" who Nietzsche is denying. They maintain it all goes back to the "Gott ist tod [sic]! Gott bleibt todt [sic]! Und wir haben ihn getödtet [sic]!" (*Die fröhliche*

⁵⁶ From Pablo Bandera's *Reflection in the Waves, The Interdividual Observer in A Quantum Mechanical World* (2019) and the most recent offering of Per Bjornar Grande's *Desire, Flaubert, Proust, Fitzgerald, Miller, Lana Del Rey* (2020). I shall return to Grande in my Conclusion.

⁵⁷ For Nietzsche's indeterminate G-d, like radical atheism, dances with 'life's uncertainty', a 'joy that needs no convictions, that plays with convictions and finds joy in doubt and uncertainty' and 'ambiguity' (2019: 241).

⁵⁸ Yet, I must interrogate Saarinen on whether when it comes to the study of religion, the polarization of 'secular' and 'sacred' is at all helpful. As with the Greek tragic and comic vision of the world, as with all religions of integrity, such is a false distinction.

⁵⁹ There are also two other sources of inspiration. One that advocates a reconciliation between philosophy and literature in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy and Theory* (eds. Adamson, Freadman and Parker, 1998) and the other Sarah Bachelard's *Resurrection and Moral Imagination* (2014) which invites us to have philosophy and theology come back on speaking terms.

Wissenschaft: 1882; Nietzsche 1973: 159). Groenewald follows Schrift (1995: 126), who opines that “Nietzsche’s works call for a performative hermeneutics.” He also follows Schrift’s ‘solution’ to interpret Nietzsche in the light of his philosophical language (Klein: 1997: 50-55; Van Tongeren 2000: 51-103). By this is meant that we cannot understand it other than a reaction to his time, as an announcement of the death of the ‘god’ of modernity (Ward [1997] 1998: xxix; cf., (Macintyre & Ricoeur: 1969: 67-68). The argument here is that Nietzsche was addressing a crisis of (German) culture. This was the result of the enormous and fast expanding influence of Hegelian philosophy’. Here God had become ‘associated with’ *Weltprozeß* (Nietzsche: “Man hat diese Hegelisch verstandene Geschichte mit Hohn das Wandeln Gottes auf der Erde genannt, welcher Gott seinerseits erst durch die Geschichte gemacht wird” (my paraphrase: ‘Hegel’s version of history ‘they’ (man, ‘the modernists [the secularists] mockingly named God’s renewal in the world, whereby God for his part for the first time acted through history’ (Nietzsche: 1972a: 304; cf., Tassone: 2002: 64-68). Here it seems Nietzsche is making fun of those who believed that progress was purely and solely in the hands of technological development. The mocking tone resonates with the scorn of the atheists who laugh at the mad man who announces the ‘death of God’. Indeed, Groenewald deduces from this that Nietzsche’s parable targets the modernistic period’s belief in progress (Ibid, 146). So quite a different reading from Saarinnen’s exclusivist radical atheist interpretation.⁶⁰

While I do not exactly agree with Groenewald (I think he goes too far), as part of the Literature out there, it illustrates how even the most serious scholarship can differ radically, but mostly because little attention has been paid to the importance of *ressentiment*, the *agon* and the Greek Tragic Vision all of which are overlooked. What Groenewald gains by situating Nietzsche in his contemporary philosophical and theological setting, he loses by a too narrow treatment of Nietzsche’s wider concerns. It is an oversight this thesis seeks to rectify.

⁶⁰ Groenewald’s commentary goes so far as to suggest that, ‘Nietzsche did not *per se*, affirm or deny the existence of God’, but was reacting against ‘the Christian concept of God’ (cf. Haar: 1988: 157), and even adds that Nietzsche ‘was in fact looking for a concept of God that transcends modern atheism and theism’(Groenewald: 2009: 146)

1 Nietzsche's: '*amor fati*'

Nietzsche's '*amor fati*': *ressentiment* as a psychopathology to be overcome

Ressentiment: a psychopathology

How do we react to pain and loss? We turn most often to ways of thinking that justify and explain our distress, ways that console and give comfort. What if our suffering continues and deepens? What if the familiar ways of thinking fail to heal us? What if they come to feel not only ineffective, but injurious? And what if untold human energy and hope were invested in exactly the wrong ways to react and think about human affliction? What if these ways were called the flowers of the human spirit: philosophy, religion, and science?

Nicholas D. More *Nietzsche's Last Laugh, Ecce Homo as Satire*
(Cambridge University Press [2014]2016, 207)

I begin by observing that at least three basic assumptions underlie Nietzsche's philosophical projects: human existence is characterized by an ineradicable struggle; human beings seek meaning in the struggle of existence; and such struggle is tolerable, even potentially estimable and affirmable, insofar as it is meaningful... Nietzsche's views of the *agon* shapes what he argues and how [...] [including]... his contests with Homer Socrates, Paul and Wagner... [these help to]... explain what is an apparently paradoxical tension in Nietzsche's work, namely, that the agent as will to power both affirms overcoming resistance and remains mindful of the context in which any and all... successes are decisive and meaningful; that is, agents want both to win and to be perpetually overcoming, not simply to *have overcome*.

Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*,
(University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2013), 3

1.1 *Ressentiment*, derivation and usage of the term before, during and after Nietzsche —historical extension notes

Ressentiment, to restate, is a term which arose in Alexis de Tocqueville's France but was appropriated and pressed into service in a distinctive almost petulant way by a newly emerging German nation shaped and forged by Prussia's Otto von Bismarck, to designate a kind of posture of scornful superiority in the face of her strong colonial competitor, France, and the other colonisers—Belgium, Italy and Great Britain. It was Friedrich Nietzsche, however, who invested the term with a distinctive meaning which he not only discovered in one of Dostoyevsky's memorable characters in *Notes from the*

Underground—a stunning portrait of modernity’s peevish malaise: an ‘offended, beaten down, and derided mouse... [which] ... immerses itself in cold, venomous, and above all, everlasting spite’ (Dostoyevsky: 1864)—a peevishness which Nietzsche despised in the institutional Christianity of his day and held responsible for the worst features of Wilhelmine *Realpolitik* and its attendant nationalist, imperialist and anti-Semitic aberrations. In short, the German style democracy, infected by *ressentiment*, promised much but could only deliver a false transcendence: a strange world of phantasms (Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 1881: 105).⁶¹

Of even greater interest, is how in the world of socio-political analysis, the word has acquired different levels of meaning over time and continues to bear those meanings to the present day. This is of crucial importance in the light of Girard’s dismissive comment about *ressentiment*’s meaning in French today: ‘the word *ressentiment* seems designed to play this role [permanent frustration]’, to embrace the meaning it has been finally been given, not by a French writer, but by a German: Nietzsche’ (Tomelleri: 2015: x), not to mention Tomelleri’s further claim that there is no reason ‘to be scandalized by *ressentiment*. Not that *ressentiment* is good, but that it is ambiguous...’ (Tomelleri: 2015: xxv). In the discussion which follows, Nietzsche’s use of the term and modern French socio-political scholarship’s use of the term, together endorse the accurate description of a volatile frame of mind that is *more than* just a state of ‘permanent frustration’.

Starting with the current usage in ‘*Le Petit Robert*’, Jarrige points out, its old meanings, whose feelings and memories are laced with an animosity which continues into the modern period. This includes a sense of powerlessness, strong feelings of hatred, envy,

⁶¹ François Jarrige’s ‘Ressentiments, révoltes et histoires: in *Le ressentiment, passion sociale*’ (Presse univ. de Rennes, 2012) 77-93 provides an excellent guide for whether Nietzsche correctly both understood and applied a word whose usage had changed in a relatively short period of time. Jarrige (Université de Bourgogne, Centre G. Chevrier UMR 5605) first identifies how the word is commonly used by historians in association with protest movements and those great ‘syntheses’ focused on analysing ‘modern ideologies’ (“des grandes synthèses consacrées aux ideologies modernes” (HAL, archives-ouvertes, submitted on 9 April 2008, p.3). Here the meaning is often synonymous with ‘hatred and rancour’ (“de haine,” “de rancœur”), feelings which provoke reactions that are often violent and are associated with pre-industrial and even pre-revolutionary sentiments—strong feelings, claims Nicole Castan, aroused by the impact of social upheavals experienced in the lives of the most poor (cited (1980), 2012: 3). In modern times, it has come to be applied by modern historians (such as Philippe Burrin) who use it to define certain methods employed by the Nazis to arouse just such hatred and rancour against the Jews. He describes their strategies as a ‘diffusion of a culture of resentment’ (“la culture du ressentiment”) (cited (2004), 2012: 4), which arose out of the bitter experience of WW 1 and which in turn incubated and cultured a Nazi narrative of ‘apocalyptic hatred.’

and hostility. However, in the word's protracted evolution throughout the nineteenth century, it acquired other meanings as well.

First, there are its close ties with the experiences that came with the French revolution—a negative passion considered to be bad and dangerous (“mauvaise et dangereuse”). But it was also an ambivalent emotion, expressing both gratitude and injury (ibid, 5). For example, at the dawn of the revolution, the *Dictionnaire Critique de la Langue Française* 1788, under the hand of Jean-François Féraud, it was allowed three usages: one alluding to the harbouring of resentment vis à vis an injury sustained, a suffering, and—paradoxically to a modern reception—it also managed to include thankfulness for an act of generosity. After the revolution, however, this rapidly evolved into a purely negative sense: a return to its previous negative connotations (such as nursing an injury) but now with a strong desire to avenge oneself (“[un] souvenir qu’on garde des injures avec désir de s’en venger”) (ibid, 5).

Second, by 1844 the word became fixed in its negative connotations. Its designation as ‘a negative passion progressively imposes [itself] throughout the 19th Century’ (Ibid, 5).⁶²

Jarrige is right to insist on the necessity to go much further than just the word's etymology. Usage is equally as important. But that calls for the kind of detail that exceeds our present requirements.

1.2 *Ressentiment*: Nietzsche's philosophy and psychopathology of *ressentiment*, a philosophy which resonates with the imminent transcendent moral ideas of ethicist Raimond Gaita

Tobin Siebers (1988: 124) proposes three characteristics which identify a philosophy of *ressentiment*. First, such a philosophy must engage with life; second, such a philosophy must address emotions, and third, philosophy of this kind, must understand instincts. Having shown that Friedrich Nietzsche fulfills these criteria, Siebers extends the definition.

⁶² Indeed, in the second half of the 19th century its meaning as a passion took on an even more negative and dangerous one and *only* took on that meaning (“ne gardent que celle d’une passion negative, dangereuse”, Ibid, 5). By 1857 in the *dictionnaire des facultés intellectuelles et affectives de l’âme*, Dr Poujol, Professor of medicine at Montpellier University, describes it as a ‘memory that one holds deep in the heart, an injury [accompanied by] the desire for vengeance’ (“le souvenir qu’on garde au fond du coeur d’une injure recue avec désir de s’en venger”, and with it come many strong feelings all lashing out at once, including ‘hatred, ‘anger’, ‘vengefulness’.

These *ressentiment* philosophers, he claims, are ethical thinkers and psychological theorists. In as much as Nietzsche's theory of *ressentiment* focuses on how the weak represent the world to save themselves from the strong and use moral systems to shame their enemies into submission, his is an analysis of systems of representation, claims Siebers (1988: 125) which defines him both as an ethicist and a psychologist. Of course, Nietzsche's standing as philosopher, philologist—a status denied him in his lifetime—his *understanding* of philology is indisputable, and his historical, rhetorical and satirical talents cannot be overlooked.⁶³

Ressentiment, far from being an antiquated term, is implicitly valorized by modern ethical theory in the guise of *immanent transcendent moral ethics*. It recognises the crucial role that *ressentiment's* passive aggressive behaviour plays in human responses to life's perceived injustices. Raimond Gaita one of the well-known exponents of the theory, makes the helpful distinction between 'common understanding' and 'individual voices' (ed. Adamson, Freadman and Parker: 1998: 269). This distinction between 'individual' and 'common understanding' serves to underline the credibility and importance of *ressentiment* as a practical tool in diagnosis. Resentments rather than being emotions of mere abstraction or expressions of failed revenge are revealed by Gaita as the twisting and turning (an experience common to all human beings) into aberrations of their former selves, by a passive-aggressive response, one that we immediately recognize as Nietzsche's *ressentiment*.

That is to say, the responses to the 'big facts' of human life, such as mortality, sexuality, our vulnerability to suffering, are (under *ressentiment's* influence) subsumed into 'individual voices' that negate that 'common understanding'. Gaita's observation is that individuals and their 'individual voices', can be ambivalent disguising a nevertheless thinly veiled disingenuity. His observation resonates strongly, I believe, with Nietzsche's analysis of the 'archetypal' *persona of ressentiment*.

The example Gaita uses, argues for *ressentiment's* formative role in the dynamics of violence in both its passive and aggressive forms, and therefore of strong interest to transcendent moral ethics (Ibid, 1998: 269-271):

⁶³ Siebers, however, accuses Nietzsche of setting up a knowledge of ethics beyond the reach of human intelligence (1988: 126), a claim, which, as we shall see, the evidence strongly refutes.

['M'] is watching television where she sees a documentary on the Vietnam War which shows the grief of Vietnamese women whose children were killed in bombing raids. She responds as though acknowledging their shared suffering. She then says: 'But it is different for them. They can simply have more.' [...] Coming from her it was a racist remark of a kind I trust is easily recognizable. She does not mean that whereas she was sterile they were not... Nor does she mean that it is a matter of fact that Vietnamese tend to have many children. She means, that they could replace their dead children more or less as we can replace dead pets... Sometimes we speak as though some people are irredeemably shallow... She did not see into the Vietnamese mother's inner lives of any depth, but not because of anything she saw or failed to see in them as individuals... hers is a racist response. She might have gone on to say, 'They breed like rabbits', meaning not as a matter of fact, they tend to have many children, but that children and all that is involved in having them and caring for them cannot mean to 'them' what it does to 'us' [...] because she finds it unintelligible that the meaning of anything they do and suffer could go deep. Their children are replaceable. 'Ours' are not.

The point I am making is that Gaita's ['M'] is not just the voice of prejudice, or even racism. It is so much more than that. It is the voice of *ressentiment* informed by a profound unawareness of the 'common understanding' (as Gaita employs the term) that *should* inform a woman's feelings for the loss of her children. I would therefore argue that resentment, not racism, is the engine room of this response.⁶⁴

From Gaita's example, we learn that *ressentiment* impairs not only our seeing, our feeling, our right mind—it disenables, disrupts our capacity to hear the cry of human suffering, and less obviously, our capacity to *bear* our own suffering. Unnervingly, (things haven't changed much in a hundred years), it echoes the voice that Dostoyevsky attributes to *ressentiment* in a Novella entitled *Notes from the Underground* (1864), only here we see a toxic self-consuming, self-absorbed form of psychological self-harm, endlessly interpreting and re-interpreting its feelings by way of self-justification:

... our offended, beaten down, and derided mouse at once immerses itself in cold, venomous, and above all, everlasting spite. For forty years on end it will recall its offence to the last most shameful details, each time adding even more shameful details of its own, spitefully taunting and chafing itself with fantasies. It will be ashamed of its fantasies, but all the same it will recall everything, go over

⁶⁴ The shallowness of reaction, her inability to 'see into the Vietnamese mother's inner life' is dictated more by an inner dialogue that goes something like this: "They are our enemy's wives and mothers, sisters, daughters... and so their feelings can't be like ours. They deserve their suffering because 'they're' against us, and *because* they're trying to kill 'our boys' over there." They'll always recover, because unlike us, they're prolific breeders. They're just not like us: they'll recover and make some more".

everything, heap all sorts of figments on itself, under the pretext that they too have happened and forgive nothing. It may even begin to take to revenge, but somehow in snatches, with piddling things, from behind the stove, incognito, believing neither in its right to revenge itself nor in the success of its revenge, and knowing beforehand that it will suffer a hundred times more from all its attempts at revenge than will the object of its revenge, who will perhaps not even scratch at the bite. On its death bed it will again recall everything, adding the interest accumulated over time.⁶⁵

That is why for the purposes of this thesis, I shall argue for the reality that *ressentiment* can and does become ‘what it is,’ an *embryonic revenge* waiting to come to full term, a revenge which plays out in so many fields of human endeavor: religion, the sciences, politics, the arts. It is, in effect, Iris Murdoch’s (1992) ‘relentless’ ego, which she describes as ‘limited, imperfect, unfinished... full of blankness and jumble... divided... distracted... extended, layered, pulled apart... minds... like ragbags... We cannot see things as they are’. What is even more challenging, as we have seen, is that the perceptions will be different for different domains of reflection and inquiry. As Gaita (2019: QE: 73, 75) goes on to note that,

In physics, it is one kind of thing. In Literature, it is another. To see the reality of another person, [Murdoch] says, is a work of love, justice, and pity... an ethically loaded term for her... when reality becomes “really real for us.”

And we could add to that reflection this: *ressentiment* is perception’s great disabler making it almost impossible to see not just people, but anything and everything as it is.

⁶⁵ What we have here, is quintessential *ressentiment*. It was probably this moment in the Novella, which gave Nietzsche the idea in the first place. The idea of pinning it on institutional Christianity, which he perceived to be Neo-Platonism for the masses, always in a mind set of self-justification, always looking for an escape route out of suffering from this life. Forever the innocent party, forever the wounded ego looking for a scapegoat. Nietzsche, however, sees what possibly Dostoyevsky does not see: a perennially resentful opportunism, biding its time. Nietzsche saw that *ressentiment*’s pretensions of weakness are just that. Just because *ressentiment* oftentimes manifests as revenge stripped of potency, does not mean it does not wait its opportunity for revenge. That emotion just has not reached a tipping point.

1.3 RESENTIMENT:

**questions concerning whether its intentional self-deception is even possible—
is this a problem for Nietzsche’s whole project and his case against modernity?**

Peter Poellner in *Nietzsche on Mind and Nature*, ed. Manuel Dries. and P.J.E Kail, ‘*Ressentiment* and the Possibility of Intentional Self-Deception’ (2015: 189-211), weighs up all the approaches to understanding its psychological meaning, and the exact role that *ressentiment* might play in the cycle of violence. First and foremost for him, is the central question as to whether or not, as motivation, *ressentiment* is substantial enough to qualify as a contributor, or whether it, in Nietzsche’s presentation of it, is just so much rhetoric (Fraser, 2008) and grandstanding.⁶⁶ Scholarly opinion (quite independent of Girard’s concerns about Nietzsche’s interpretation of it) is, however, beset by one central disagreement: as to whether the creation of *ressentiment* values concerns an actual instrumental (conscious) intention, and if so, whether such a paradox is sustainable in the real world. The question here is whether such new values are consciously appropriated. And if not—if the mindset of *ressentiment* is proved to be subject to ‘some primitive mental mechanism’—to that extent, has *ressentiment* been stripped of its instrumental potency? Are we, *in ressentiment*, at the mercy of some evolutionary aberration?

Thus, there are contradictions, which arise over agency. R. J. Wallace is one cautionary academic voice that identifies them. He treats with incredulity the suggestion that ‘oppressed’ individuals *could* either believe their masters would pay attention to ‘the slave’s ‘new evaluative rhetoric’, or even formulate them in the first place, never mind ‘internalize’ such values with any integrity (Wallace: 2007: 114, 113). Bittner agrees: ‘The

⁶⁶ While there is considerable disagreement about that question, Poellner claims that there are at least four components upon which most scholarly opinions are in agreement (2015: 191-192):

- (a) that it is the product of ‘frustrated’ or ‘thwarted’ desire
- (b) that in its second stage, it develops into a strong sense of a grievance approaching hatred, for a perceived injustice
- (c) that it achieves a modicum of ‘compensation’ in an ‘impossible’ situation (my inclusion, ‘impossible’ meaning, a sense of inferiority which is often too great to overcome), achieved by a self-affirmation which attains unto a compensatory ‘superiority’
- (d) that it masquerades under a ‘new evaluative (ethical) perspective’ even adopting such virtues as ‘humility,’ ‘nonviolence’ and ‘justice’—in other words, re-packaging its negative feelings as something ‘wholesome’

strategic interpretation makes it impossible to understand how the new values could ever have taken root at all' (Bittner: 1994: 130).⁶⁷

From Nietzsche's perspective, there could be no more yawning gap or divide than that of the psychopathology of *ressentiment* and the non-resentment of 'the psychological type of the redeemer,' which Nietzsche concedes '*could* be contained in the Gospels *in spite* of the Gospels' (my italics) (A. 29), but certainly *not* in those under the curse of *ressentiment*. For Nietzsche the [true] Gospel resolution of *ressentiment*, its 'cure', is quite distinctive in its attributes, which he outlines below:

Instinctive exclusion of all aversion, all enmity...: consequence for an extreme capacity for suffering and irritation which already feels all resisting, all need for resistance, as unbearable displeasure... and knows blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer resisting anyone or anything, neither the evil nor the evil-doer – love as the sole, as the last possibility of life (A 30).

Precisely the opposite of all contending, of all feeling oneself in struggle has here become instinct: the incapacity of resistance here becomes morality ('resist not evil! ...), blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in the *inability* for enmity. What are the 'glad tidings?' True life, eternal life is found – it is not promised, it is here, it is *within you*. (A 29)⁶⁸

Poellner completes his excellent scholarly overview and assessment, by concluding that *ressentiment* is in fact, founded in a 'mental process of intentional self-deception'.

Nietzsche is certainly clear about *that*:

You can look behind every family, every corporate body, every community: everywhere, the struggle of the sick against the healthy – mostly a silent struggle with small doses of poison, pinpricks, spiteful, long-suffering looks, but also interspersed with the *loud* gesture of the sick Pharisee playing his favourite role of 'righteous indignation'... These are all men of *ressentiment*... inexhaustible and insatiable in its eruptions against the happy, and likewise in masquerades of revenge and pretexts for revenge.

(GM III 14; cf., TI III)

⁶⁷ In line with Bittner, another grouping of scholarly opinions, is of the view that Wallace's reconstruction creates more problems than it solves.

⁶⁸ Nothing, for Nietzsche, then, could be more unlike than the 'ethos' of the Nazarene and the psychopathology of *ressentiment*. The Nazarene's mindset has *internalized* the virtues, but the slave mindset has not and cannot precisely because *there*, 'the most unevangelic of feelings, revengefulness, again [are] uppermost' (A 40; cited in Poellner 2015: 196). The truth that emerges from all this, is one single fact. That authentic transformation of feeling (from a resentful spirit to a generous, thankful one, '*amor fati*') can only come with deep internalization of the 'radically new set of values exemplified by the Master's death on the cross, 'the only one [true] Christian' (A 39); (2015: 196). Thus, in the 'herd' or 'slave' mindset, no real transformation can occur, because 'their conscious world is shaped by unacknowledged yet conscious and persisting hatred' (2015: 196).

Lest all that be dismissed as an oxymoron, Poellner tackles the paradox by using Nietzsche's own reasoning. He argues that the psychopathology of *ressentiment* is characterized by 'counterfeiting' (*GM* III 14), 'lying to oneself' (A 55), 'not wanting to see something as one ("mann") sees it' (A 55) and 'self-deception' (A 46; *GM* I 10, 13). When we put these together, Nietzsche is arguing for a fully-fledged human agency in *ressentiment*. Poellner has no hesitation accepting that diagnosis. He even acknowledges Nietzsche's conclusion that *ressentiment* might be inimical to 'life itself' (*GM* I, 11) because pain can be seen so often, from an 'all too human' perspective, to be 'sufficient justification for negating the Other,' which Poellner names 'radical heteronomy' (2015: 210). In other words, this is a blight in human psychopathology so vastly distributed, and so easily aroused that it constitutes a human emergency (my underlining). He sees it as a challenge, which, must be addressed and certainly not one to be ignored or denied.⁶⁹

Bernard Registner in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, 'The Psychology of Christian Morality: Will To Power As Will To Nothingness,' places Nietzsche's thinking about *ressentiment* into the broader context of a 'naturalistic' account of morality (2013: 701-726) and cites Nietzsche's discussion of an agent's drives (*BGE* 6; cf., *GS* 335) and "affects" (*BGE* 187) as proof. If this is true, then Registner's claim that Nietzsche's deeper intention for the uses of 'naturalism,' is indeed to '[deflate] the grandiose self-image of the prevalent morality' (2013: 702), this would buttress the argument set forth in the previous paragraph. Which is to say that it establishes grounds for accepting Nietzsche's belief that *ressentiment* is endemic in human origins. In that opinion, his vision is exactly that of René Girard, who peered into the same abyss after him.

No wonder then that Nietzsche describes this pathological configuration of affects, as 'narcissistic pathologies' to which institutional Christianity was oblivious within itself, secure in the assumption that its foundations were rooted in 'rational foundations.' a self-delusion which Nietzsche described as 'the danger of dangers' (*GM* Preface, 6). I shall contend that both Freud and Girard draw from Nietzsche's original insights, as the first

⁶⁹ Thus, institutional Christianity's psycho-pathological dilemma becomes for Nietzsche an exemplary case study in *ressentiment* to highlight its potential negative valences not just in secular, social and political institutions, not just in all academic disciplines, or in all morality and even in all humanity, including himself—but also in modernity and its culture which had spawned them.

psychologist, ‘his own main category, which I claim in this book is “psychology,”’ remarks Pippin, ([2010] 2011: xvi).

Thus, for Nietzsche *ressentiment*’s actions are not innocent mistakes, but the symptom of an unmistakably affective condition (BGE 187; also *TI*: “Improving Humanity” 1), whereby all moralities, be they Christian, be they religious sentiments of any kind, and even secular ones, are rendered susceptible. Consequently, they become ‘merely *a sign language of the affects*’ (BGE 187; also see *TI*: “Improving Humanity”, 1). Certainly, Nietzsche does not leave it as just claims about *ressentiment*, rather, he drills deep down into the core of this type of psychopathology and brings to the surface and identifies the following deceptive strategies (BGE 187):

- (a) moralities that are designed to ‘justify’ actions
- (b) moralities constructed to assuage guilt and bolster self-esteem
- (c) boutique moralities formulated to ‘wreak revenge,’ to camouflage, (‘conceal’), to raise one’s status (to ‘transfigure’), to play on people’s nostalgia and idealism, to ‘vent their power’.

The best way to expose those moralities’ true nature is to apply the life affirmation test, asking of them the question as to whether they are ‘life promoting’ (BGE 4), and even more searchingly, the question of what actual values (as opposed to those which are claimed) are brought to the table (GS 345). For, when the ‘blow torch’ is applied, these so-called moralities are found to ‘worsen these pathologies and render them considerably more destructive [and]... *dangerous*’ (2015: 706).⁷⁰

Seen from the perspective of the will to power, then, *ressentiment*’s essence can be splayed open and dissected, which of course is Nietzsche’s purpose. This ‘essence’ focuses the microscope on something already mentioned above, but only in passing, that

⁷⁰It is important to see at the outset that Nietzsche’s target is not just the institutional Christianity of his day, but also every other human endeavor affected by it. This is where the ‘will-to-power’ comes in. A subject often misunderstood by the casual reader, in that, it in its purest form, has nothing to do with the struggle for supremacy and the desire to dominate and annihilate one’s enemy. That would be a degradation of its original intention ending in decadence and depravity. Rather, it has everything to do with ‘proficiency,’ ‘mastery,’ in the sense of mastering a skill. In our case, we would call it, and Nietzsche would name it, ‘effective’ agency (AC, 2). For Nietzsche this drive has its roots in humanity’s origins in that it is all about ‘energy’ and ‘discharge.’ ‘A living being,’ he argues, ‘seeks above all to *discharge* its energy [“seine Kraft”]’. Indeed, he argues, ‘life itself is will to power’ (BGE 13; see also *GM* I: 10,13). From which we deduce that the will-to-power, is a little like ‘mimetism’ a neutral force in itself, which can be shunted into positive or negative outcome, just like money’s potential as a medium of exchange can be used for good or for ill. The term ‘money laundering’ in such a context thus proves to be a misnomer.

ressentiment is driven by a sense of powerlessness, which strikes at the heart of the human psyche, for which it is the engine room for all accomplishments. Thus, it is more than ‘disappointment’ or ‘regret’ that defines *ressentiment*: it is the embodiment of ‘impotence’ and ‘ineffectiveness’ (Registner: 2015: 708) (*GM I*: 7, 10, 13, 14). It is, so to speak, ‘the gnawing worm of injured ambition’ (*GM III.8*). This feeling of impotence, it needs to be said, is felt by everybody, even if it be in different contexts by the same person. What is important for Nietzsche, is *how* we respond to that feeling of vulnerability. *Ressentiment* is the state of mind which actually turns such vulnerability into ‘poison’. This is the mindset of the person whom he now designates as the ‘man of *ressentiment*’ (cited in Registner 2015: 708-709). What this poison is has been defined as so much obfuscation, deception, self-deception, and obstructionism. Here we go even deeper down the rabbit hole to discover a deceit that is quite breathtaking in its ingenuity. For, from the deep machinations of its ‘clever’ intent, comes a ‘revaluation of values’ which claims authenticity and wholesomeness (*GM I*: 7; see 8; *GM I*: 8, 10), but the reality is that it is only intent on using false revaluation as ‘bait’ (*GM I*: 8) to imbue the hapless recipient with its own impotence (*GM I*: 13; see 7,10,14).⁷¹

Indeed, Nietzsche makes it clear elsewhere that *ressentiment*’s revaluation is a “self-deception of impotence” (*GM I*: 13; see 7,10,14).⁷²

So, not only is *ressentiment*’s revaluation, motivated by the ‘will-to-power’ of the weakest kind, whose new values restore only a semblance of power, it is also characterized by the exact same poison identified by Nietzsche. Here it is much more than just a begrudging endorsement of those values, as described by Registner to explain their appropriation of them (2015: 712). What we have is the most elaborate confidence trick. Perhaps not as discernible at the individual level as on the larger stage of human action—at

⁷¹ In effect, the bait is a *reputed* justice, rather than the real thing. A *seeming* love that fails to deliver; a *semblance* of wisdom, a *promise* of ambition’s dream—superiority—all, however, entangling the unsuspecting person and driving them into a deep state of a conscience which induces profound bouts of ‘misery’ and ‘shame’. This is a perversion, suggests Nietzsche, because the recipients of the poison are made to feel guilty about their good fortune, and even their ‘success’—hence the pitiful cry, ‘*there is too much misery!*’ (*GM III 14*).

⁷² Something expressed so clearly in this passage (*GM III*): 14):

These failures [...] what do they really want? At least to *represent* justice, love, wisdom, superiority – that is the ambition of the ‘lowest’, the sick... Admire above all the forger’s skill with which the stamp of virtue, even the ring, the golden sounding ring of virtue, is here counterfeited. They monopolize virtue, these weak hopelessly sick people, there is no doubt of it: ‘we alone are the good and the just,’ they say, ‘we alone are *homines bonae voluntatis*’.

the 'systemic' level.⁷³ Thus Nietzsche is right, when he claims that the *ressentiment* mindset eventually falls into an 'habitual revenge, the will to revenge... Always morality. Always the rub-a-dub of justice, wisdom, holiness, virtue' (GS 359).

Giles Fraser in a series of articles for *The Guardian* on Nietzsche's *ressentiment*, *On the Genealogy of Morals* Parts 1-7, reluctantly admits its presence in some aspects of today's religion and theology, even whilst questioning and decrying *ressentiment's* strength and ability to amount to much, dismissive of it as ('... a relatively minor evil compared to the more violent forms of vengeance' (24 November 2008):

There is an important rider to all this, however. For quite a lot of Christian theology has little place for forgiveness. The evangelical doctrine of penal substitution, for instance, argues that human beings are saved through a process whereby the violence that is due to human beings (because of human disobedience) is instead discharged upon Jesus: thus, the cross. He "pays the price of sin." This nasty and pernicious theology is built around the idea of a holy lynching, and forgiveness plays little part. Of course, Jesus himself taught that religion ought to be reconstructed around the idea of forgiveness rather than blood sacrifice. Even so, penal substitution simply perpetuates the grim ideology that blood is able to wash away blood. Clearly, this was the way in which the Christian George Bush responded to 9/11. This sort of Christianity – if Christianity it is – I have no wish whatsoever to defend.

1.4 *Ressentiment*: the implications for scholarly opinion of incorrectly interpreting Nietzsche's use of *ressentiment* in his stance on religion and 'agency' ⁷⁴

This distinction—that the strength or weakness of our resolve is decisive—will be crucial for our understanding of how and why *ressentiment* is so powerful *beyond* its first

⁷³ Nietzsche's designation of the pathology as '[an] instinct for devious paths of tyranny over the healthy' is captured in the following broadside on 21st century Western democracies' pretensions of 'virtue' and 'justice,' delivered by Achille Mbembe, establishing once for all that there is nothing outworn about Nietzsche's usage of *ressentiment* ([2016] 2019: 3, 117, 184):

... war is determined as end and necessity not only in democracy, but also in politics and culture. War has become both remedy and poison—our pharmakon. Its transformation into the pharmakon of our time has, in turn, let loose some gruesome passions.

⁷⁴ Robert B. Pippin in *Nietzsche, Psychology, & First Philosophy*, [2006] *Nietzsche, moraliste français*, [2010], (2011), in his chapters 'The Psychological Problem of Self-Deception' (5) and 'How to Overcome Oneself: On the Nietzschean Ideal' takes our discussion of *ressentiment* as an agency of impediment and dis-enablement much further. He affirms the impression we already have that Nietzsche's approach to agency is 'unusual' and attempts to determine the extent to which Nietzsche's approach to 'self-knowledge', 'value' and 'desire' align with this 'the most important and complicated modern philosophical issue' (2011: 105).

indications. It is because it not only misleads our perceptions as to what the real issue is, it also saps one's ability to deal with the relentless challenges thrown at it by that other notoriously misunderstood notion, the 'eternal return of the same.' For Nietzsche, the question regarding the matter of the strength or the weakness of the will is everything in matters determining whether an individual or a society will 'overcome oneself' or 'itself.' Pippin defines this process according to Nietzsche's literary understanding of self, and the creation of self, in terms of the creation of a *persona* in a novel. Pippin chooses (following Nehamas: 1985: 167-169) as the obvious candidate, Marcel Proust (an author highly esteemed by Girard for reasons which will become even clearer in Chapter 2) and the story of how the protagonist finally becomes the story's author. Here we find the Marcel, who is the object of the story; then, the older Marcel who appears to be narrating and writing the story and finally, the 'absent Ur-narrator, Proust himself' (2011: 111). For Pippin this is an example of its impossibility (2011: 111):

... the briefest contemplation of the details of this issue in Proust make much more unlikely the possibility of construing freedom as the self-creation of a unified character.

Here, on first reading, one is tempted to adjudge Pippin as mistaken to think that this kind of unity is what Nietzsche is striving for, when on a closer reading of Nietzsche, it is more the authenticity that strikes one as the paramount objective. But of course, this does not discount the fact that unity (completeness) is its final objective. And *that* can only be achieved by a thorough understanding of the 'phantom' of the modern ego, which is, in fact, the spirit, the multiple *personae* which *ressentiment* inhabits (*Daybreak* 1881, 105):

Whatever they may think about their "egoism", the great majority nonetheless do nothing for their ego their whole life long: what they do is done for the phantom of the ego ("Phantom von Ego") which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated to/shared with ("mitgeteilt") them;—as a consequence they all of them dwell in a fog of impersonal, semi-personal opinions, and arbitrary, as it were poetical evaluations, the one forever in the head of someone else, and the head of this someone else again in the head of others: a strange world of phantasms.

For Nietzsche, as Pippin rightly points out, agency is not simply about "showing up." Rather it is all about 'achievement,' 'One has to achieve something' (2011: 112). This includes achieving, according to Pippin's reading of it, 'a capacity both to sustain a

wholehearted commitment to an ideal' one 'worth sacrificing for'... [AND]... a capacity... a willingness to overcome or abandon such a commitment in altered circumstances' (2011: 113), in other words the capacity to adapt.⁷⁵

Thus, self-overcoming from a practical viewpoint is clarified: it is self-overcoming, self-negation and yet, crucially it is also self-identification, and self-affirmation (2011: 116). While this is, as Pippin emphasises, 'consistent with the intellectualist account of freedom in Socratism, Stoicism, and Spinoza, a notion for which Nietzsche expressed admiration' (2011: 116), I would also add that such an attitude is utterly consistent with an identification not only with just *imitatio Dei* in terms of being and becoming, but also utterly aligned with the main principles of *imitatio Christi*. There, life affirmation, 'yes-saying' and an attitude of forgiveness and acceptance take on a decidedly 'Christian' viewpoint one that does not privilege pure Christianity above other, even 'pagan' (including Classical Greek and other secular, 'foreign' notions. Rather it champions the pattern of attitude and behaviour espoused by Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of the true *Evangel*, the Jesus of the 'Jesus Project'—the Jesus that emerges from historical research and a 'truth' common to all intellectual and academic disciplines. In other words, a 'truth' that stands the test of life as it is, with all of its relentless, unfair, often cruel challenges. Nietzsche thus uses "Wettkampf" (contesting) language to underline the nature of such a contest, that under the surface of its uncompromising 'resistance' (at its core) there nevertheless lies an attitude of love. I think it self-evident that 'the ability to bully and tyrannise into cooperation is one thing, the ability to inspire true service is another' (2011: 118).⁷⁶

Pippin maintains that Nietzsche never succeeded in writing with the kind of "cheerfulness, "*Heiterkeit*", and balance of Montaigne' (2011: 121). I would argue, however,

⁷⁵ The *Gay Science* 276 spells out what such a commitment might look like, sound like, and how radically different that attitude might be from the nihilism of *ressentiment* (GS 276, 157):

... what thought first crossed my heart - what thought shall be the reason, warrant and sweetness of the rest of my life! I want to learn more and more to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them—thus I will be one of those who makes things beautiful. *Amor fati*: Let that be my love from now on! I don't want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse the accusers. Let *looking away* be my only negation! And, all in all and on the whole: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer!

⁷⁶ Of course, this kind of very personal language and intention sits uncomfortably with an academia which swears and lives by dispassion and objectivity. However, Nietzsche makes abundantly clear here, and elsewhere, right from the beginning of his academic career from *The Birth of Tragedy* onwards, that life and nature and the actuality of life lived by the person who lives it, can never, and should never be divorced from one another. That this relentless undergoing, overcoming, and becoming must encompass, 'great things and in smallest' (2011: 117).

that he never intended to. As Pippin himself confesses later in his concluding remarks, ‘Nietzsche’s implicit case to himself seems to be, you try putting Montaigne in the world of late-nineteenth-and early- twentieth-century, *my world*, and you will not find such a sanguine, wise cheerful observer’ (2011: 123). Even there, as Nicholas D. More might have pointed out, that would be to miss the *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche’s ‘last laugh’ ([2014] (2016: 211):

Ecce Homo recasts Nietzsche’s corpus in its own image. We find a self-examining, funny, spiritually selfish, recuperative, angry, and skylarking book that expresses good cheer and an encompassing gratitude—all in the face of personally dismal stimuli. And Nietzsche shows us how to read his previous works in the same way.

Yes, Nietzsche may have left us out at sea, as Berry concludes (in More’s parlance, ‘a semiotic sea without horizon’) (2016: 211); but unlike More I shall argue in Chapter 6, that ‘the terrifying danger of God’s death’ is in Nietzsche’s terms of reference, a nonsense and a *non sequitur*, because the G-d he believes in, is more like nothing at all, than one of the gods—the ‘indeterminate G-d’ (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*, “I shall be *who* or *how* or *where* I shall be,” G-d speaking to Moses—a translation by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs which we shall explore more fully in chapter 6. The Christ that Nietzsche believes in, too, leaves us a ‘legacy’ not of ‘redemption’ in the purely religious sense, but a redemption of a different kind—one open to all humankind, another aspect, which will be taken up in that last chapter.

1.5 *Ressentiment*: Nietzsche’s philosophy and psychopathology of *ressentiment*— seen through the lens of Nietzsche’s Early, Middle and Late Writings

In the last two years especially, after more than fifty years of neglect, as we have noted in the Introduction, there has been a significant shift in emphasis and direction regarding how Nietzsche’s works should be interpreted. It is important to grasp what that shift of direction and emphasis will mean for any understanding of *ressentiment*. Not only for its own sake, but also to determine how and why, Girardian analysis of *ressentiment* might fall short of a clear and fair assessment.

As we have seen from the Introduction, regardless of whether scholars view the

Nietzsche project as a search for philosophy (Ansell-Pearson, 2018), or his Free Spirit works as a 'dialectical *Bildungsroman*' (Meyer, 2019), or his *Ecce Homo* as the recasting of the Nietzschean 'corpus in its own image' (More, 2019: 211) and the story of how Nietzsche managed to solve the problem of human suffering for himself, every perspective, whatever it might be, will affect how we interpret *ressentiment*. The question is which perspective has the greatest scholarly support, and of far greater importance, which perspective best fits the intention of the Nietzsche project and its focus on the revaluation of values with the psychopathology of *ressentiment*, as its 'greatest danger'?

What follows is an attempt to summarise the latest scholarship and its findings, and how these might bear on how we finally interpret *ressentiment*.

Of course, neither Ansell-Pearson nor Meyer's approach account for all the perspectives out there, but they do give us a reliable sense of where the current scholarship is headed, so that the conclusions we draw about *ressentiment* will have a chance of being in alignment with that scholarship. This is important I think if we are to avoid Kaplama's opinion in 'Kantian And Nietzschean Aesthetics of Human Nature: A Comparison Between the Beautiful/Sublime and Apollonian/Dionysian Dualities' (2016), that the Middle period can just simply be leap-frogged. In footnote 3, he makes the point that,

This paper will purposefully avoid analysing Nietzsche's middle period works (particularly *Daybreak* and *All too Human*) both because the Dionysian is almost non-existent in these works and to be able to restrict the focus of the paper to Nietzsche's tragic sublime which is the dominant aesthetic, ethical and metaphysical idea principle of his early and late period works.

Even though the same footnote encourages us to read Ansell-Pearson's earlier analysis of *Dawn*, the omission of the whole middle period, I shall argue, is a fatal one—simply because the Nietzsche project is revealed through the Middle period as being a very complex transition between *BT* and the later works. It is a transition which, I shall argue Ansell-Pearson, Meyer and More navigate us through to reveal a unity of purpose against which *ressentiment* must always be understood. Otherwise, I shall maintain, *ressentiment* will continue to be *misunderstood* and *misrepresented*.

Before addressing our main perspectives, a brief note on how wrong we can be if approaches, in this instance, literary and psychoanalytic, are misapplied. The first example is Alexander Nehamas' for its time much lauded *Nietzsche, Life As Literature* (1985). The

problem here (as potentially with any approach to Nietzsche), is that Nehamas falls into three errors. First, in promoting certain views, he begins with assumptions that remain unchallenged. Second, he leans heavily on Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, his unpublished writings. And third, his book follows a strict regime of personal judgements about morals and meaning which obscures and even misrepresents the Nietzsche project.

First there is Nehamas' assumption, that Nietzsche's perspectivism must 'inevitably' lead to an inescapable set of contradictions. This is something picked up by the Girardian critique, which I address in chapters 2 and 3. From this perspective, Nietzsche's 'aestheticism' is for him a convenient camouflage to hide those contradictions. Thus, Nietzsche's relation to philosophy, Nehamas argues, must also of necessity be 'equivocal' *because* he rejects 'Socratic dogmatism.' And more, that Nietzsche being 'trapped in an impasse of his own creation' seeks refuge in 'so far largely unnoticed variety of literary genres and styles' to make 'his presence as an individual author unforgettable to his readers' (1985: 1-4). I notice too that Nehamas is particularly incensed by Nietzsche's withering attack on Christianity. Nehamas assumes, wrongly, that such an attack is fuelled by a terrible presumption (1985: 6), and one wonders exactly what he means by 'accuracy' with reference to 'revelations' and 'accusations' when we don't even know what these are exactly:

Can Nietzsche claim that he has revealed the most basic and objectionable features of Christianity and not also imply, at the same time, that his revelations and his accusations are correct?

As to the second, to do with Nehamas' questionable use of the *Nachlass*, to which he confesses, but shows no contrition, 'Some justification for my relying on *The Will to Power* may be considered necessary'. The 'may' does not really exonerate the practice, nor does the disclaimer that: 'I am aware that these notes do not constitute a "work" in any traditional sense' (1985: 9).

Nehamas's influence, which extended far and wide, can be seen in this appraisal by Ruben Berrios and Aaron Ridley in their Chapter 8 on 'Nietzsche' in the *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd Edition, ed. Gaut. and McIver Lopes (2009) [2001]. They conclude that in his 'mature aesthetic' he privileges 'the real non-metaphysical world of experience, embodiment and temporality' a process which Nietzsche termed giving 'style' to

one's character (2009: 103), (Nietzsche: 1974: 232). This artistry of self-stylization, which they take to be a conscious, deliberate 'self-deception,' they interpret as having been first preceded by an "opening of their eyes to themselves" ("this artist's cruelty", accompanied by another process of forcing 'an aesthetic unity' (Nietzsche: 1969b: 137) (2009: 104). Only this kind of "genuine seduction to life" makes suffering bearable, it seems. The self-stylisation Berrios and Ridley describe as a process that is at once both interpretative and transformative, yet there is no mention of either the Greek Tragic Vision, or the importance of the Dionysian-the Crucified connection (justifying Girard's criticism that this kind of fanciful philosophical talk under the guise of a literary device, hides itself away from the religious issues). However, the conclusion to which Nehamas comes at the end shows how far away one can drift from the real Nietzsche, as he damns him and not even with a pretension of faint praise (1985: 234):

In engaging with the miserable little man who wrote them [cruelty, attacks on many of our ideas and values, ... our habits and sensibilities] but the philosopher who emerges through them, the magnificent character these texts constitute and manifest, the agent, who, as the will to power holds, is nothing but his effects—that is his writings.

In effect, he accuses Nietzsche of the very *ressentiment* that he sees in others—locked in a world of his own making. This a conclusion shared by Girardian scholarship which we shall critically examine in chapters 2 and 3.

I imagine Nehamas and his admirers thought their nodding acquaintance with "noble morality" as opposed to "slave morality" would suffice. The truth of the matter is, by not including the *whole* context (its pagan and Christian expressions), and so reducing that complexity to just a matter of aesthetics, something important is lost. While it maybe true to say that for Nietzsche life itself is 'an essentially aesthetic phenomenon' (2009: 106), there is so much more to it than that, as our next brief psychoanalytic account from Lucy Huskinson shows.

Huskinson in *Nietzsche and Jung, The Whole Self in the Union of Opposites* (2004), calls out yet another 'surprising almost embarrassing' reception of Nietzsche's work and personality on Jung's part which leads him to 'wildly misinterpret Nietzsche's ideas.' She accuses Jung of being 'purposely selective in his reading of Nietzsche' (2004: 1-2). Indeed, I have found in my own reading that the ambivalent Jung-Nietzsche relationship reveals very similar dissimulation and occasional abusive trajectories as those taken by the Girard-

Nietzsche interrogation. Those nuances will be explored more fully in the next two chapters.⁷⁷

Which brings us to More's analysis of *EH*. Here, Nietzsche's 'interest in tragedy and responses to pain,' posits More, 'was not academic and abstract, but pressing and personal,' (More [2014] (2016: 2), which raises our investigation to another level. He points to *EH*'s 'ageing in the shadows' as the consequence of a lack of context which in turn has led to its 'lack for good interpretation' (2016: 2). More observes that Nietzsche asks questions in *EH* that sit uncomfortably with pursuits of a purely academic kind, and yet cry out for inclusion. Is there a value in life when it is lived painfully? Can prolonged suffering be overcome and transformed? Can I live such a life authentically and with meaning? (2016: 3). The core business of Nietzsche's project is not just about discussing ideas for their own sake. This is as much about heart as head. Nietzsche is not just talking about *ressentiment* as an abstraction, or to win a debate. Nietzsche More argues, is genuinely committed to diagnosing the ailments of modernity to steer it towards individual wellbeing and societal wellbeing, cultural wellbeing (one of the main arguments demonstrated by Huskinson's 'Whole Self in the Union of Opposites').⁷⁸

As Nicholas D. More notes in *Nietzsche's Last Laugh, Ecce Homo as Satire* (2016: 211):

Nietzsche does not write philosophy he writes a travesty of philosophy that shows how our discipline has gone astray by universalizing its prescriptions and by denigrating our emotions. Nietzsche writes philosophical satire as several ancient satirists did: against philosophy, out of love for philosophy. Thus, Nietzsche is not a philosopher; he is a satirist of philosophy. And satirizing philosophy constitutes his genuine pursuit of wisdom.

⁷⁷ Meantime, a further observation. Selective reading is rampant when it comes to Nietzsche, I imagine because there is so much to read, and there is so much of it *difficult* to read because it is demanding. Jung's 'wild' misinterpretations as with Nehamas,' have consequences for how we read and perceive the Nietzsche project. In Jung's case it is to completely misread Nietzsche's angle on 'symbol,' to the extent that he fails to listen to his own warning, 'not to constrict the symbol – not to have preconceptions of what can and cannot count as a symbol [...] not to reduce the symbol to theoretical conception, but instead to consider it in its own terms... so that its creative power can be fully – or *wholly* – experienced" (Huskinson: 2004: 173). I think those same consequences of a misreading, 'failing to listen to his own warning', entertaining 'preconceptions' which fail to account for Nietzschean notions 'on [their] own terms'—are impacted in the Girard-Nietzsche context. There *ressentiment*, like Nietzsche's angle on 'symbol', is reduced to something it is not, such that in this case *ressentiment's* explanatory power is reduced to a feeble image of its former self.

⁷⁸ For this reason, I must part company with Jessica Berry's conclusion in an epigraph that, ['Nietzsche] cannot and will not tell us how to live, and he disdains our efforts to look to him for inspiration, advice, or any kind of program. On the contrary, his project is purely descriptive; it is not prescriptive or normative.'

Elsewhere More also observes that what Nietzsche most cares about, most loves, takes most seriously, is the very thing he critiques most scathingly—and that includes, as we have seen and will see, Christianity itself. For this reason, I have, like More, chosen one of Nietzsche's last (posthumous) publications, *Ecce Homo* from which to draw my own conclusions about Nietzsche's life project in as much as it is his most meticulous and serious review of a whole lifetime's work. Which, at first glance, seems crazy because of its history of reception. Here More's close attention to detail identifies several methods and styles of scholarship (2016: 6-18) which may help us to understand how and why we should take this work's (*EH's*) pronouncements on *ressentiment* seriously.⁷⁹

These methods and styles of scholarship, and now the history of *Ecce Homo's* reception and its secondary literature are highly relevant to the way we interpret Nietzsche's take on *ressentiment*. The school of thought, to which many Girardian scholars subscribe (as we shall see in Chapter 3), argues that Nietzsche's preoccupation with *ressentiment* has more to do with his own psychopathology than any balanced psychological inquiry—a projection, if you will, of his own malaise. On this More justifiably observes, '*Ecce Homo* has aged in the shadows and its sorry life consists of neglect, misunderstanding and disparagement' (2014: 2). The Girardian school (my reading not More's) very much follows the 'long history of being mistaken – as damning evidence of insanity by Nietzsche's foes,' and even 'bizarre and embarrassing by his sympathisers' (2014: 4). *EH* has been variously described as, the '*enfant perdu*' of Nietzsche's books', and so Pierre Klossowski's take on *EH* as revolving 'around delirium as its axis' (2014: 8/9). Jacques Derrida calls the book an 'impossible transgression' of the dialectic logic of traditional metaphysics' (2014: 10). Sarah Kofman would be applauded by Girardian scholars as suggesting that *EH* is a 'Dionysian, satiric festival erected in defiance of Christian mores' (1992: 20), and More would probably agree that there is merit in that.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Among the many other 'styles' of interpretation More distinguishes between 'hot' and 'cool' interpreters. Where 'cool' speaks of those aiming for some kind of 'objectivity,' and dispassion, those who seek to contextualize Nietzsche's ideas by finding 'internal connections' to support theses about meaning. Whereas, 'hot' interpreters get excited about key phrases, or striking metaphors, which take them on exotic vibrant journeys of the mind, making 'surprising or dramatic connections between a Nietzschean phrase and other ideas' (2014: 7).

⁸⁰ By contrast, there are the biographers who have taken 'suspicious views' of *Ecce Homo*. More, rightly I believe, (and this is certainly true of some Girardian commentators), argues that it is because they 'frequently suffer the fault of projecting Nietzsche's ultimate mental state onto an earlier one, in large part as a consequence of their taking a parodic text seriously' (More: 2016: 13). Such a perception is reinforced by

The simple truth is that *EH* is both ‘honest and ridiculous by design’ (my underlining) and indeed Nietzsche’s entire corpus could be classified as ‘philosophical satire’ (2016: 3). The *reconstructivist* school following Thomas Steinbuch (1994) focus on the ‘unconscious condition of decadence’ and how it may be overcome (1994: 75), a condition which Nietzsche confessed to be in himself, against which he too had to struggle. But the goal is not merely to surmount obstacles but also to achieve a positive end. As More puts it humorously, ‘If we see a lioness leaping over fallen branches’ we are more likely to recognize its true intention— ‘hunting impala’—whereas most treatments of Nietzsche’s struggle focus on the decadence itself, which is only the ‘branches,’ and clearly Nietzsche is overcoming more than the branches (Moore: 2016: 14)! In a nutshell, the satirical style Nietzsche employs, is the very net to catch out careless readers and humourless *ressentiment* by surprise.

As we have seen, Alexander Nehamas’ *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* follows (reputedly the most widely known interpretation of *EH*) a similar circuitous path, quoting as it does from the spurious *Will to Power* forty-four times ‘and from its putative subject *Ecce Homo* only seven’ (2016: 14). From these Nehamas, in More’s reading of it, erroneously manufactures a ‘book that can rest on a pedestal of human excellence achieved through literary self-creation’ (More: 2016: 15). And while this re-construction is ‘admirable’ in its defence of Nietzsche’s ‘lifelong project of self-becoming,’ it falls short of the mark in as much as its premise is based on a ‘paucity of evidence and argumentation.’ Indeed, it could almost be deemed suspect in so far as it relies heavily on the “Nachlass” (‘six times more than the book’); nowhere is the purpose of *EH* sourced from the book and, finally ‘by and large’ the evidence is imported, or hung upon something mentioned in Nietzsche’s notes’ (2016: 15). Nehamas’ idealistic aims, his good intentions More claims, simply cannot stand up to the impact of the satire, which ‘undermines’ any notion for *EH*’s ‘idealized meaning’ (2016: 15), an opinion which my reading confirms. I must, however, question More’s insistence, that Nietzsche’s position is fatalistic. Here he appears to follow Brian Leitner’s

Linda Hutcheon, a literary theorist, in *A Theory of Parody: The Teaching of Twentieth Century Art Forms*, who underlines the incomprehension that results when ‘receivers’ fail to adjust their interpretation. ‘[H]e or she will neutralize both its pragmatic ethos and its doubled structure,’ recognizing that ‘Nietzsche’s parodies are very modern in the sense I am using the term here’ (1985: 27).

‘Who is the sovereign individual’ in Simon May (ed.) *Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morality*, (2011: 101-19).⁸¹

Notwithstanding, the principle and structure of my thesis follows More’s intention—which is to privilege Nietzsche’s ‘intended publications and ‘split them away from the notebook material’ (the “Nachlass”) (2016: 18), while, at the same time, taking that notebook material into account simply because so many contemporary approaches, now accept the use of the “Nachlass” as standard practice. As is required, in my later arguments, I shall define more carefully the guidelines that should be used when applying the “Nachlass,” in order to make a judgement about what Nietzsche might have intended, by his ‘eternal return of the same’ or his ‘will-to-power.’

1.6 *Ressentiment*:

Why Matthew Myer’s dialectic reading of *Nietzsche’s Free Spirit Works* is so important to Nietzsche’s philosophy and psychopathology of *ressentiment*

Finally, we come to Matthew Meyer’s ‘Dialectical’ Reading of *Nietzsche’s Free Spirit Works* (2019). This is, I believe, one of the most insightful interpretations of the Nietzsche canon’s coherent, imaginative and above all intelligent representation of *the Greek Tragic-Comic Vision* so central to Nietzsche’s life work. I will address Meyer’s work first as an end point if you like, and then bring in Ansell Pearson’s (2018) insights, which I believe make up for gaps in Meyer’s work.

I shall argue that all too often the tragic is treated without paying attention to the comic aspects. While Meyer fails to take seriously enough the attendant *religious* emphases of the Nietzsche project, he more than makes up for that by highlighting other overlooked aspects. His treatment of Nietzsche’s so-called ‘Free Spirit Works’ as a dialectical *Bildungsroman*, for example, offers many insights. The most telling being that these works *together* work through a series of dialectic stages whereby the education of the ‘free spirit’ can be achieved. Meyer, rightly, points out that this is not a mere abstraction or a

⁸¹ I shall use my reading of Christa Davis Acampora’s *Contesting Nietzsche* later in the chapter to offer up a quite different interpretation of ‘*amor fati*’ and its attendant ‘eternal recurrence of the same’.

universalized treatment, but the chronicle, first and foremost, of an intensely personal process of “Selbstaufhebung” (self-overcoming: literally ‘lifting oneself up [from the ground]’). It is the story in fact of Nietzsche’s own education, ‘moving from sickness to health, immaturity to maturity, bondage to freedom’ and that personal education itself, ‘mirroring the advancement of human culture’, thus lifting his personal story up to ‘a world-historical’ plane (2019: 5).⁸²

Meyer argues, which for our focus on *ressentiment* is crucial, that the dialectic is nothing other than (with resonances of the ‘eternal recurrence of the same’) the metamorphic phases which can be mapped onto the Free Spirit Works: ‘the ascetic camel,’ the ‘dragon-slaying lion’ and the Dionysian child (2019: vii, 9). It is significant that the child is the ‘Dionysian child’, and not just any child⁸³, and so a return with qualifications to *BT* revealing the full cycle of the whole project, which in scholarly circles has never been, were it not for Meyer’s work, quite this clear (at least in my reading of it). Taken together (*HH* 1878, *AOM* 1879, *WS* 1880, *D* 1881) this is how Meyer accounts for the so-called Middle Period and how this period relates to the whole Nietzsche project.

Firstly, he posits that the works serve as a dialectic *Bildungsroman*, which Nietzsche has ‘consciously constructed’ (2019: 3). Secondly, they constitute, to use Nietzsche’s terminology a “Selbstaufhebung” (*GM*, III 27), in the sense of a ‘dusting yourself off’, as it were, and standing up for yourself in the arena of life (when you’ve been thrown down), or as it is usually translated, this process is a ‘self-overcoming’. Meyers restricts it to ‘the will to truth’, but I think it goes much further than that, to include the re-creation of the self, perhaps even multiple selves.⁸⁴ Thirdly, he argues that the whole cycle completes itself with *Z I-IV*, 1883-1885, which Meyers calls a rebirth of the tragic art, a kind of retrospective of *BT*

⁸² This process, a kind of Socratic dialogue, works its way through a series of affirmations and denials: seemingly championing Enlightenment rational values, rejecting art in the name of ‘scientific truth seeking’ (something reinforced in the *EH* retrospect (2019: 5), only to heavily qualify it by a project of self-creation and an aesthetic justification of existence by the end of *GS*. But here, while the sciences are once again relegated to a subordinate position, in the end, claims Meyer, the inversion nevertheless reconciles the two, restoring the arts (the aesthetic) to its proper place, and makes possible the re-birth of tragic art which blossoms in *TSZ*.

⁸³ Although I am more than certain that he had Jesus’ own reflection on ‘child’ in the context of the disciples’ question as to who is ‘the greatest’ in the kingdom of heaven, also in mind.

⁸⁴ It is not as if the will-to-truth and the will to power can and should be separated, anymore than the Dionysus and the Crucified can or should be. If I live the lie, as *ressentiment* does, then the ego is disempowered and those who believe it are also disenabled.

(2019: 6). I would take it a step further and claim the strong likelihood that the cycle is completed with *EH*, 1888, a cycle in which all the inbetween publications play their part. *EH* makes it abundantly clear which are the important ones in Nietzsche's estimation.⁸⁵

Consequently, the dramatic purpose noted by More is of deep interest—with its *instigating event*, its *complicating set of problems*, which increase the tension leading to a *synthesis* 'that constitutes the drama's end' (More: 2014: 119). This is also highlighted by Meyer, in an exciting way. For instance, he refers to the 'Dionysian Child' phase, in two parts: *Incipit Tragoedia* (*The Gay Science* IV to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), and an *Incipit Parodia* as anticipating a Dionysian Comedy of Nietzsche's 1888 works (Meyer: 2019: 258-262). Bringing the tragedy and comedy together, at least from my reading of them represents a synthesis long overdue.⁸⁶

As we have seen from the beginning of this chapter *ressentiment* is to be feared as the most dangerous of sentiments, because of its invasive debilitating, inhibiting and destructive influences. Like the coronavirus-19 pandemic, and now its delta variant, the danger lies in its initial innocuous presentation. Its first benign impression of vulnerability and weakness is its ingenious and infinitely deceptive call card. Once invited in, often so feeble, on the point of collapse even extinction—it plays on the "Mitleid" of its newfound host, which very gradually concedes it further and further privilege of access. Once entry has been secured, after just a few short days of orientation, strengthened by the congenial surroundings of its welcoming host, it seizes each opportunity as it arises. Before too long it is enabled to engage with a more aggressive take-over of its host. Be it the psyche of an individual or the spirit of a nation, it is now enabled to confound, confuse, and finally disenable what the psyche sees and hears. In its enfevered state of mind, the psyche, the spirit, mistakes enemy for friend and friend for enemy. In the end having taken a

⁸⁵ Indeed, I would argue, that the *BT* retrospective would have been a surmise were it not for Nietzsche's insistence, that barring a few caveats, he has never deviated from it being his foundation work. In later chapters, I take into account M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern's *Nietzsche on Tragedy* [1981] (2016) rather dismissive evaluation of that foundation work, but I shall suggest that the disparagement is because they choose to apply a strict philological lens to it, which just repeats the mistaken (and silent) reception which greeted its first publication and also mistook its larger intention. Another way of saying, that applying the strictures of philology simply misses the point of its purpose i.e., its genre as a 'classically structured drama' (More: 2014: 119), rather than a sober minded historical account.

⁸⁶ If, as Meyers contends, the *Free Spirit Works* calls for 'a paradigm shift' that 'may have consequences for how we understand Nietzsche's larger oeuvre,' I am keen to understand what the shift of paradigm which Myer invites us to entertain would have on how we interpret and represent *ressentiment*.

stranglehold of its subject, *ressentiment*, uncaring of itself, like Samson of old, brings the whole temple down upon us all.⁸⁷

If the valorization of the Arts endorsed by the Middle period, fills the psyche with ‘satisfaction within oneself by means of this or that poetry and art’ (GS, 290), *ressentiment* fills the soul with such a deep dissatisfaction, that its only recourse is to lash out in blame at those who have discovered such happiness. Additionally, if it is true that Nietzsche weaves together ‘themes of self-satisfaction and artistic creation with themes of contemplation and knowledge’ (2019: 224), then *ressentiment* disdains, indeed fears, both contemplation and knowledge lest they expose its hiding places and its impoverished state, lest they increase its panic attacks, all of which it projects onto the world at large.⁸⁸

The Middle period too Meyer claims, revive both a tragic world view, ‘and the tragic poetry that flourished as a response to it’ (Meyer: 2019: 232; Strong: 1975: 184; Borsche: 1988: 85). Such a tragic “Weltanschauung” is anathema to *ressentiment*.⁸⁹ Meyer then alludes to the Mystery religions, that nurtured and produced the Dionysian Tragic vision, which Nietzsche saw as promoting its ‘will to life’, and the eternal return of life’ a ‘future promised in the past; the triumphant Yes to life beyond all death and change’ (TI, “What I owe” 4; Meyer: 2014: 233). This way the goal beyond overcoming is in an achieving that never ends: ‘the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity’ (TI, “What I owe”, 5), a goal that *ipso facto* resentment could never achieve. Similarly, by implication, Meyer’s discourse on ‘amor fati’ and the ‘eternal return’ exposes *ressentiment*’s incapacity to either

⁸⁷ *Ressentiment* Germany soon after World War I, the one that Nietzsche sensed would inevitably come into being (given its trajectory in the 1880s) is chillingly captured by George Grosz, in his autobiography *A Small Yes and a Big No*, ([1955] [1982], 1983). It is the perfect snapshot of how the dynamic of Nietzsche’s Master-Slave mindset works within the same psyche, in this case the rich and fortunate, formerly powerful, now dispossessed of their Vaterland’s glory, compensate for that loss by wallowing in the weakness and degradation they see around them (1983: 97):

Take your time, Erwin, and get a couple of those buskers who’ll do a song and dance for next to nothing. We’ll hire a large hall for you, and you can count on us to enjoy ourselves. All you have to do is to show us how horrible we really are – ha! ha! ha!

Later Grosz recounts the Dadaist meetings which proceeded in a similar vein (1983: 104), with performers paid to tell the ‘truth’, paid to abuse.

⁸⁸ This might strike us as abstract and fanciful, I know, were it not for the most bizarre excuse I have ever heard from someone who came to us wanting to leave a church because it was using too many metaphors which ‘confused’ them. ‘They’ liked their *Evangel* delivered in more sober, more accessible—more black and white terms—the sort of *Evangel* that Nietzsche scathingly exposes in pietistic Lutheranism.

⁸⁹ *Ressentiment* would rather take refuge in the Platonism for the masses, a world of its own where it can live out its brutal ‘wisened phatasm’, rendering ‘the Jews into the Christians’ own recalcitrant shadow’ (Blanton: 2014: 35).

understand or embrace or withstand the relentless onslaught of that same death, and change and terror, that “Greatest Weight” of the *Gay Science*’s existential challenge. Certainly, the ‘Dionysian affirmation’ ingests ‘this same logic and unlogic of knots’ (KSA 13: 16 [32]; cited Meyer: 2019: 234).

Continuing to unpack ‘The Dionysian Child’ phase ‘Incipit Tragoedia’ (*From The Gay Science IV to Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) and ‘Incipit Parodia’ (*From the Free Spirit to the Philosophy of the Future?*) (Meyer: 2019: 219-262), Meyer demonstrates that the Greek Tragic Vision with which Nietzsche began his career, continues with modifications (instructed by his dialectic) to the end of his career. As the ‘first *tragic philosopher*’ (*EH* “Books” BT: 3; cited Meyer: *ibid*, 234), Nietzsche nevertheless acknowledges his indebtedness to Heraclitus, (‘to a lesser extent the Stoics’, (Meyer: *ibid*, 234) and of course, Aeschylus and Sophocles and *their* connections with the mystery religions of ancient Greece as treated above. Dionysus Zagreus, which also emerged from the mystery religions and so preoccupied Nietzsche throughout his career, we shall develop more fully in later chapters.

Nietzsche’s *Z*, Meyer rightly takes to be ‘Nietzsche’s own tragedy’ (in my reading, not *his* tragedy so much as in his writing of his *style* of tragedy—perhaps there I go much further than Meyer’s claim) something not ‘obvious to everyone’ (Meyer: 2019: 236). While I also disagree on his assertion that ‘fatalism is central to ancient Greek tragedy and the eternal recurrence’ and *Zarathustra* (*ibid*, 236), my reading does endorse his claim that *Z* is couched, as is *EH* in very personal terms. Hence, my disclaimer concerning Meyer’s (and Stern’s) mistaken idea that there is a deep tension ‘between the “Übermensch” which represents a future goal for human striving and the eternal recurrence, a doctrine that undermines any sort of goal-directed and future-orientated striving’ (Meyer: 2002; Stern (2008: 301-302)).⁹⁰ In the ‘Incipit Parodia’, Meyer arrives at a conclusion. For him, it is a case of establishing the legitimacy of the crucial importance of the *Free Spirit Works* and how they contribute to the binding together of the Nietzsche canon. For us it will be what light

⁹⁰ Zarathustra and the Übermensch both (in my reading of them) were always going to be superseded by ‘the teacher of the eternal recurrence’, one who is none other than Nietzsche himself, the philosopher of the eternal recurrence. For, quite contrary to Meyer’s notion, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and for that matter, Heraclitus himself, do *not* subscribe to the kind of fatalism that disempowers human agency. It is *ressentiment*’s naivety, which Shakespeare explores in *The Tempest*, the focus of the fifth chapter. No, the tragic hero that is Nietzsche’s is something quite different: it is the Heraclitean-Dionysian child ‘that experiences... necessity [not fate as Meyer claims above] but as play and revels in the “innocence of becoming”’ (2019: 237).

the Greek comic/tragic vision will throw on Nietzsche's interpretation of *ressentiment* as it emerges in the *Free Spirit Works*, either by implication or by direct reference.

Meyer begins this section by extending his claim to include the contention that 'Nietzsche's free spirit project continues to animate his post-*Zarathustra* works in a way that makes sense of the dual emphasis on tragedy and comedy that emerges in *The Gay Science*' (2019: 241). In effect, this is part of the overall formation of the paradigm of 'the philosopher as artist' in the Nietzsche project. Indeed, Meyer insists that this is nothing other than the Dionysian comedy (KSA 11: 34 [201]; 2019: 245). But why comedy, finally? To understand this, Meyer, again rightly, brings in the comic dramatist Aristophanes' influence on Nietzsche (Ibid, 246-247)—otherwise we would make little sense as to why the philosophy of the future must involve 'mockery and laughter', and 'the high nonsense and Aristophanean derision of the world'. And why, indeed, philosophers must become 'parodists of world history and God's buffoons ("Hanswürste Gottes")': because 'perhaps even if nothing else today has any future, our *laughter* may yet have a future' (ibid, 246; BGE 223). All of which still does not really explain the 'why' of this comic satire. Partly, claims Meyer, this arises from Nietzsche's self-appointed vocation as the disciple of the Greek god Dionysus who Nietzsche also designates as 'the god of both tragedy and comedy' (BGE, 295; TI "What I Owe"; EH P 2; cited ibid, 247).⁹¹ What is important here for the section which follows (an *agonistic* perspective), is the relevance noted by Meyer, of two structural elements of Aristophanic comedy: the *agon* and the *parabasis* (Ibid, 260), which speaks of the enactment of *agon* in the guise of 'contest, struggle, ... debate...', and *parabasis* as a moment in which the dramatic action stops to invite serious self-reflection. It is a humorous and seemingly bombastic reflection that exposes the *ressentiment* of the demagogues and their cronies of Aristophanes' Athens, with their empty rhetoric—and their predilection to sway juries and assemblies to make decisions, which the civil and military

⁹¹ Extrapolating reasons for tragi-comic's importance can be stated as follows. First, free spirits are those who are fearless, 'willing to defy conventions and remain fearless in the face of death' (ibid, 247). Second, because as 'European morality' gradually begins to collapse, leading to a "monstrous logic of terror," and a "sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin and cataclysm" there will arise "a new and scarcely describable kind of light, happiness, relief, exhilaration, encouragement, dawn" (D 575), and an openness of spirit that mirrors an almost inconceivable open sea, "perhaps there has never been such an open sea" (GS, 343); cited Ibid, 248). There are other defining factors underlining the tragic-comic: a 'great love,' which solves problems; the humour which generates "overfullness of life"; as a humour pitched to be a prize to be won "which one throws to posterity" (BT "Attempt 7; Ibid, 256); it nurtures profundity.

leaders of the state had to carry out. For when those decisions and actions failed, it proved so easy for the demagogues then to play the blame game. It was so in the case of the decision to go to war with Sparta and the devastating Peloponnesian War, which ensued. When that policy failed as in the case of the Sicilian Expedition, the failure of the generals itself was more than punishment. But when popular sentiment raised its head as in the loss of so many ships at Arginusae, *even if it was a victory*, not long before the fall of the Athenian Empire in 406 CE, the backlash of popular sentiment more than confirmed Aristophanes' forebodings about the conflict of interest in the law courts and the unsavoury influence that hotheads on the Council could exert. W.S. Ferguson in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 'The Fall of the Athenian Empire' captures that fraught moment well in this summation (1973: 358):

Lashed to fury by a councilor named Callixenus, who acted throughout as the mouthpiece of the mob spirit, the Assembly forced the withdrawal of a protest of illegality that would have stayed action [...] The motion [however was] declared carried [...] It did not matter that those condemned had gained a victory that saved Athens from destruction in the greatest naval battle fought by Greeks against Greeks. Those who had braved the anger of the people were executed [...] Their chief fault, perhaps, was to have been eight when one alone was needed.⁹²

Meyer's contribution, thus, is to provide the kind of scholarly validation required to establish that our assessment of Nietzsche's interpretation of *ressentiment* is not just based on this aphorism or that, this book or that, this teaching or that. But rather is embedded and consistently and cogently argued across the whole Nietzsche canon—and not just the *Free*

⁹² While there is no humour in it, Ferguson's dry assessment 'their [the generals'] chief fault, perhaps, was to have been eight [generals], when one alone was needed,' exposes an irony that Aristophanes would have seized upon, and did in the *Frogs*. Not just *that* irony either, but the other also when the same Council made the decision to free the slaves who had fought at Arginusae and grant them citizenship. Peter Hunter writing about the same event, in 'The Slaves and the Generals of Arginusae', *The American Journal of Philology*, Autumn, 2001, Vol. 122, No. 3 (Autumn, 2001), pp. 359-380, describes the policy that spawned it as, 'costly, divisive and controversial' (359). *Frogs* won first prize at the Lenaeon festival about six months after the Athenian naval victory at Arginusae. His assessment of the reaction of granting of citizenship to the slaves was that it would have been 'furious and resentful' against those responsible (ibid, 372b). Hunter also notes, retrospectively, that this was not an uncommon reaction and cites the example of the destruction of the Sicilian Expedition a few years earlier (Thuc. 8.1.1; cf. Thuc.2.60.4-7, 3.43.5):

[T]hey were angry with the speakers who had joined in advocating the expedition, as if they had not themselves voted for it.

Resentment 'against the advocates of the policy remained' (Ibid, 374b), was never far away. Hunter concludes that 'Like the suspension of the democracy in 411, the enfranchisement of the Arginusae slaves may have provoked a backlash, in this case against the generals' (Ibid, 377b). This is a strong evidence as any of the indirect endorsement of the power of resentment in the fueling of reprisals.

Spirit Works and its dialectic. Nowhere is this more important than Meyer's understanding of *Ecce Homo* as performing the function of the parabasis of a Dionysian comedy (not of course lost on More's investigation which designates it as 'satire', whose work Meyer also cites). What, however, I feel is missing in Meyer's analysis is the serious purpose of Aristophanic Comedy, which is to expose the pretensions and weaknesses of political aspirations, such as those of Kleon the demagogue. Also, Aristophanes' serious concerns for the decline of democracy and the compromised judicial system in the *Wasps*. That is the reason why I have given it some space.

1.7 *Ressentiment*: in the arena of life— an agonistic perspective following *Contesting Nietzsche*, homage to Christa Davis Acampora and the ethic of Jesus of Nazareth

Acampora has been my compass in negotiating the immense 'ocean' of Nietzschean scholarship and has yielded many insights. This is not to say that there are not points of departure with my reading of her work, as I have found with so many of my trusted mentors along the way. Quoting from the interleaf of *Ecce Homo*, she cites a beautiful sentiment of Nietzsche's that is often overlooked:

On this perfect day, when everything is ripening and not only the grapes turn brown, the eye of the sun just fell upon my life. I look forward, I look backward, and never saw so many good things at once... *How could I fail to be grateful to my whole life?*

In Chapter 2 and in later chapters, I shall give full weight to René Girard's profound insight into "reconnaissance" and "méconnaissance," and link these *MT* notions with the kind of thanksgiving and gratefulness that Nietzsche expresses here. For "reconnaissance" in French (literally 'recognition', also used in English in a military sense of 'knowing/recognising your enemy') can be employed in a different context to express 'gratitude'. In this Girard and

Nietzsche, I shall argue, are of one accord.⁹³ Whereas, *ressentiment*, as I have stated above, wishes to impose a victory on its opponents ‘by destroying what opposes’ it, is driven by ‘an annihilative desire [“Vernichtungslust”], the Greek agonistic economy, by contrast, ‘aims to win back by excelling what opposes [it]... elevating above [“erheben”] rather than just forcing it back [“herabdrücken”]’ (2013: 22). The composite of all these positive intentions of the agon means that its outcome is ‘good’—good for the competitor, but also beneficial for the general welfare of the ‘polis,’ because this kind of competition, ‘potentially’ writes Acampora interpreting these Homeric values, ‘advance [...] human possibilities generally... promot[ing] meaningful excellence’ (2013: 22).

Which brings us to the questions that preoccupy us for the remainder of the chapter, and they are these. First, how does Nietzsche garner the Homeric agon for his own purposes, and is this interpretation consistent throughout his career? Second, what new insights for dealing with the conflict and violence inherent in the arena of human life and death does it offer? Third, why does Nietzsche choose Greek pagan terms of reference to re-value both modernity and Christianity? And, finally, how useful are these insights for exposing and unravelling *ressentiment* and the part it plays in the cycle of violence?

“Homer’s Wettkampf” is sufficient ground to work from, because Nietzsche thought it was complete, shared it with a limited audience, included it in his drafts and plans for *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* as a chapter entitled “Der Wettkampf”, and almost every significant idea that arises from it can be shown to be amplified and elaborated in other published writings (2013: 5). So why make the *ἀγων* a lens for observing *ressentiment*? As I have shown above, it serves as a powerful diagnostic tool, but also furnishes us with the means to expose its disruptive and inhibiting strategies, not to mention the wherewithal to rechannel its misdirected desires into more productive ends. Nietzsche is certainly not ‘clinging to an idealised past’ (2013: 198). There is a wisdom here. This is not contestation

⁹³ You may ask how and why gratitude can and should feature in a treatment of the economy of agonistic values and ‘the circulation of power’? (Acampora: 2013: 27). Of special interest to Acampora to elucidate the meaning of the word as Nietzsche might understand and apply it, is that of Pindar’s “Olympian 10” which celebrates the victory of Hagesidamos, the boys’ boxing victor in 476 BCE. What is of importance is the recognition that the boy’s accomplishment is utterly bound up with ‘those who supported and trained him, those who gave him the opportunity to compete for his polis, those who founded the games, and the poet himself who preserves the victory for others to remember’ (Acampora: 2013: 27). *This* is what the sophisticated economy of the agon is all about, and which clearly strongly impacted on Nietzsche and *his* view of life as ‘contest’.

for its own sake. Rather, it becomes, in the hands of the wise (“Kriterium des rechten Handelns” EH “Why I am So Wise” 1) a driving force, an ‘engine’, ‘for producing and reproducing values’ that are ‘crucial for combating nihilism’ (2013: 199). One which Nietzsche considered to be the greatest challenge human beings face.⁹⁴

I argue here, along the lines of Acampora’s previous contention that, ‘the Christian agon encourages a form of struggle that disables, enervates and debilitates those who emulate the exemplar of spiritual struggle that Pauline Christianity depicts’ (2013: 113). This is perfectly consistent with the problems Nietzsche contends afflict modernity. Which is to say, institutional Christianity has adopted an *inappropriate* form of agon and that this fatal miscalculation, in Girardian terms, *méconnaissance* (mistaken knowledge’), has misled it down a path of ‘self-destruction’, where its “Vernichtungslust” has caused it to fail to distinguish ‘foe from friend’ (2013: 113), which, of course renders the struggle (agon) meaning/less and worthy of disqualification. Hence, institutional Lutheran Christianity (and the Pauline Christianity upon which it is based), in my reading of it, are indeed ‘complicit in bringing about [their] own destruction.’ In other words, the intention of being ‘a good Christian’, is foiled by its unintended outcome—one of destruction and self-destruction.

Thus Nietzsche, as in so many instances in his thought experiments, hands us a paradox: that Jesus of Nazareth’s *anagonism* by going to the cross, is praiseworthy, whereas St Paul’s and Lutheran institutional Christianity (which was urged by Luther to burn down Jewish houses) and *their antagonism* are to be condemned. What we have here is Jesus of Nazareth, the epitome of what it means to live without *ressentiment*, versus St Paul and pietistic Lutheranism, which promoted anti-Jewish feelings by the fabrication of a violent

⁹⁴ What renders the “Wettkampf” of particular relevance for this thesis, is the way Nietzsche applies that Homeric notion to the Jesus he admires so much in *Der Antichrist*, which has been his guiding ethic from the beginning, and affirmed at the end of his productive life. Here, once again I follow Acampora, but with some qualifications and reservations. Here too, the *raison d’être* of the thesis lies exposed: *ressentiment* as Nietzsche also applies it to the Ethic of Jesus and the ‘opposite’ of Jesus (A 30)—St Paul. This is a Jesus who exhibits, ‘a thoroughly anagonistic practice,’ which Acampora contrasts with the common term antagonistic: ‘whereas the latter is commonly used to designate hostility toward another, the former indicates rejection of the opposition itself’ (2013: 119). St Paul’s *ressentiment* and his “Vernichtungslust” are contrasted in a counter-intuitive way. We are led by Nietzsche to expect Jesus of Nazareth’s anagonistic to be condemned, and St Paul’s antagonism to be exonerated as “Kraft” (strength), or strength of purpose to overcome. But according to the fine details of Nietzsche’s definition of a valid agonism and an invalid agonism, we are encouraged by Nietzsche to see that St Paul’s later Christianity’s and modernity’s agonisms are expressions of decadence and *ressentiment* that have misled Western civilisation with their Platonic-Christian (“Platonism for ‘the people’” [BGE P]) conceptions and its fateful division of ‘body’ and ‘soul’.

anti-Semitic God who demanded blood appeasement. (“Let his blood fall upon us” whose misinterpretation will be addressed in Chapter 3). Indeed, the German words “Wettkampf” and “Kampf” appear exclusively in the writings attributed to Paul in the Lutheran Bible (2013: 117). Hardly surprising, then, that from this arises another “Kampf” [*Mein Kampf*] and another *antagonist* (Hitler and National Socialism) who tap into those associations and exploit them and use them to justify an even more pernicious “Vernichtung,” where once again, the distinction between foe and friend is dissolved in the terrifying act which has come to be known as the Holocaust and the Final Solution.

Unlike the apostles, notes Acampora, Pauline writings do not include a gospel (2013: 117). This does not escape Nietzsche the philologist’s notice. Hence, he makes the distinction between “the *genuine* history of Christianity” and the dogma from the life of Christ (2013: 117; AC 39):

in truth, there was only *one* Christian, and he died on the cross. The ‘evangel’ *died* on the cross. What has been called ‘evangel’ from that moment was the opposite of that which *he* had lived: ‘ill tidings’, a *dysangel*.

In effect, what Nietzsche accuses Paul of is a ‘destructively distorted interpretation of the significance of Jesus’ (2013: 118). Hence, Nietzsche argues, in his creation of the ‘Christ ideal’, Paul (and Luther) have created in their reading of what it means to be a ‘good Christian’ something that negates what it means to be a ‘good human being,’ and so unhinge ‘all [other] related meanings and values.’ In sum, ‘Paul’s Christ [becomes] a transmogrification of Nietzsche’s Jesus’ (2013: 118).

From this perspective, Jesus of Nazareth for Nietzsche, is also the true agonist who stands against, ‘any kind of word, formula, law, faith dogma,’ ‘the whole of reality, the whole of nature, language itself has for him only the value of a sign, a simile’ (AC 34). For Nietzsche *this* Jesus lives out the abolition of the ‘cleavage between God and man’ (AC 41). Here Acampora acknowledges Nietzsche’s apparent reversal of his agonism stance (2013: 118):

It is quite remarkable, given his admiration of agon, that Nietzsche appears to admire Jesus for having qualities that seem to be *opposite* of his new agonist (and Paul is described as the opposite of Jesus in A 30).

What we have here in *Der Antichrist* is a stinging condemnation of institutional Christianity, a true Christianity gone wrong. Its ‘warlike, no-saying, no-doing spirit... stands

in strong contrast to that of Jesus.’ Acampora correctly extracts from all this the conclusion that by elevating ‘and distancing ... Jesus ... [separating]... his life from the practice of living [...] [this] ultimately leads to the demise of the institutions organised to cultivate our sense of community, “gratitude for descent and ancestors,” the spirit of cooperation and trust, and “promotion of the common welfare” (2013: 119/120; A 43). Paul’s crimes and misdemeanours are the total investment in the resurrection of Jesus, Nietzsche claims, and the belief in an (2013: 119):

[immortality] through personal salvation [which] over-determines the significance of individual human lives. Once in possession of eternal life one trumps any and all claims to distinction some other might make. Thus, Nietzsche can claim the noble virtues are perpetually eclipsed...

Something Nietzsche accuses of assassinating, ‘any noble humanity’ (AC 43), and with it a counterfeiting grasping selfishness masquerading as ‘selflessness,’ where “The salvation of the soul—in plain language: ‘the world revolves around me (“die Welt dreht sich um mich”). And most of all, for our purposes, is ‘motivated by *ressentiment* so shifting the centre of gravity [and] precipitating ‘a kind of axiological vertigo’ (2013: 119). This shift “places the life centre of gravity not in life, but in the beyond—in *nothingness*—one deprives life of its centre of gravity altogether” (AC 43). And so, as a result, the enduring fact that values are *won*, is ignored (2013: 123).⁹⁵

In this Chapter I have focused on Nietzsche’s understanding of *ressentiment* and set it in its historical context. I have also treated the subject of agency and *ressentiment* and Nietzsche’s interpretation of it, addressing those thorny questions by means of a survey of scholarly opinion (quite independent of Girard’s concerns) as to whether the apparent contradiction inherent in the notion of ‘conscious’ self-deception in *ressentiment* was reconcilable. I concluded, on the evidence, that it was not only possible to achieve such a

⁹⁵ If all this seems self-contradictory, then none other than the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, someone who was well aware of Nietzsche’s writings, comes to our rescue. He more than most understands the ambiguities and seeming contradictions entailed in the contests of power that are worth fighting for. Earlier in the poem, Rilke steals the words out of Nietzsche’s mouth when he laments the fact that, ‘What we choose to fight is so tiny! /What fights us is so great! / If only we would ourselves be dominated/as do by some immense storm, / we would become strong too, and not need names.’ This line of reasoning is repeated in *The First Elegy*, where he describes being consumed by an angelic presence, as an ‘overwhelming existence,’ a ‘beauty,’ which ‘serenely disdains to annihilate us’ but of whom in our *méconnaissance* we still find ‘terrifying.’ This is the language of mysticism, the kind to which, I shall argue in Chapter 6, Nietzsche subscribes.

reconciliation it also confirmed *ressentiment*'s complex and deeply entrenched status as a key player in the engine room of revenge. Its contributory role to the cycle of hostilities leading up to open violence and confrontation and its persuasive masquerade under various guises, mostly virtues of different kinds and morality, were also posited. The point was made, that Nietzsche's findings about *ressentiment* in fact revealed a dynamic, which was far more complex than previously thought, certainly much more than just a 'bit player' on a stage dominated by revenge. Recent analyses, such as that of Achille Mmembe and Raimond Gaita, who ostensibly, have no knowledge of either Nietzsche or Girard, at least in my reading of them, have, nevertheless also confirmed the strong theoretical foundations upon which Nietzsche and Girard's insights are built. These include the notions of "the man of origin" and war as the "pharmakon of our time" (Mmembe—Nietzsche and Girard) and the connections of a *ressentiment* mindset in the exemplar of [M] and her attitude to the deaths of children in the Vietnam war (Gaita) and the earlier personification of Dostoyevsky's *ressentiment* mouse. I have also stressed that taking genre into account (More: 2016; Ansell-Pearson (2018), Meyer (2019), is of utmost importance when interpreting *ressentiment*.⁹⁶

Then there is the Nietzsche canon, where no work should be interpreted in isolation, the same principles, in fact as apply when interpreting the biblical cannon. And even there, we need to account for how that canon has been cobbled together. This is not to mention the kind of unique drama, which *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and its rich mystical heritage offers us. And finally, there are many academic studies which subscribe with confidence to the overall consistency of Nietzsche's published works, including, of course, *Ecce Homo*, its most sophisticated, ground-breaking exemplar—more of that in Chapter 3.

In conclusion, to illustrate how Nietzsche and Girard's insights can be employed as powerful diagnostic tools even in quite contemporary situations at a systemic level, I offer this exemplar from Mmembe's *Necropolitics*.

⁹⁶ If we read Nietzsche simplistically and do not take the genres of satire, the aphorism form, the parable into account, we are most likely to mistaken both the intension and the meaning, to wit *Ecce Homo* and Roman satire, or the Skeptics or the Cynics (Berry, 2011) and most of all tragedy and the Greek tragic vision (Silk and Stern, 2016) to name just several. And to do that we have to take the experts in the field into our confidence, otherwise even if we *do* attempt to take those literary forms into account, we are going to get it wrong, especially if overall our readings are being shaped by the privileging of one kind of presupposition, over another.

In his chapter 'Viscerality' (right there you have a connection with Nietzsche's notion of the importance of body wisdom and materiality and 'origins'), Mmembe [2016] 2019 discusses planetary 'disentanglement' and the hunt for 'fugitives'—terms that readily resonate with both Nietzsche and Girard's insights—the entanglement of mimesis [Nietzsche and Girard] and 'fugitives' cf. Girard's notion of the 'scapegoat.' But it is the applicability of Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment* and Girard's scapegoat mechanism that exceeds expectations. Mmembe's analysis reveals how the two theories, might work effectively together to unravel the individual mind set of *ressentiment*, an analysis confirmed in Shakespeare's personification of it in the *persona* of Prospero in *The Tempest* which we investigate in Chapter 5.

First, Mmembe outlines the working parts of his international global case study: 'entanglement,' 'enclosure,' 'contraction' and 'containment' (2019: 96). Together these global strategies constitute a *matrix of rules* targeting 'human bodies' that are 'deemed either in excess, unwanted, illegal, dispensable, or superfluous'—classic illustrations of the scapegoat mechanism, where the vulnerable are targeted (Girard). Mmembe's 'human bodies' in Nietzschean terms, expose values that depreciate human life, de-humanise it—the product of the polarization of 'mind' and 'body,' 'spirit' and 'flesh' (think Pauline and Augustinian theology), where spirit is esteemed more highly than flesh. These 'vulnerable', 'unwanted' or 'surplus' 'illegal[s]', are 'governed through abdication of any responsibility for their lives and their welfare' (Winter: 2016: 308-309, cited in Mmembe: 97).

In Nietzsche's proclamation concerning the future, he causes us to see through 'a glass darkly', and seems to anticipate Mbembe's take, in this exposé of *ressentiment* and its pretences in (*EH*, 'Why I am A Fatality (or A Destiny, 1):

when truth enters into a fight with the lies of millennia, we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits; all power structures of the old society will have been exploded—all of them are based on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth. It is only beginning with me that the earth knows *great politics*.

From what was said before and is now affirmed, it is as if Nietzsche had read the Mmembe script. Mmembe foresees and speaks of deception on a massive scale fed by fear and led by what he calls, 'American prosperity theology' with its triumph of deception... [through]

narcotizing spectacles before spitting them out, “their pockets notably lighter... [a form of casino-messianism,] prosperity theology is set up as a theme park...” (2019: 105; Silverman: 2016, ‘Hotdogs in Zion’). He detects a fundamental deficit of confidence, which reaches for desperate measures even prepared to help the impending crisis along, to ‘bring it on.’ The world is ‘on the road to serfdom and the end is near’ (2019: 105). Mmembe even mentions Pauline theology, and its ‘blood’ terminology, which in a fear-laden survival desperate world, is even more willing ‘to sacrifice or be sacrificed. Its aim,’ he writes, ‘is to turn a forgiving God into an ethnic and angry god. In its major version, it is about collective suicide before the Apocalypse’ (2019: 106).

In conclusion, we listen to our other theorist, René Girard, whose last major publication *Battling to the End*, [2007] (2010), also apocalyptic in its language, sees in his mind’s eye a landscape very similar to the one observed by Nietzsche and Mmembe, and will serve as a fitting introduction to his *MT* and the scapegoat (2010: x):

Today, violence has been unleashed across the whole world, creating what the apocalyptic texts predicted: confusion between disasters caused by nature and those caused by humans, between natural and the man-made global warming and rising waters are no longer metaphors today. Violence which produced the sacred, no longer produces anything but itself.

In Chapter 2, we shall see how Girard’s profound insights into the *mimetic* dynamics of violence complements and completes Nietzsche’s thinking about the psychopathology of *ressentiment*.

2 Girard's *ressentiment*: in the guise of the philosopher's (Nietzsche's) error

***Ressentiment*: an *apparent* weakness, but one which supresses a hidden strength**

... the majority of researchers have rejected the mimetic theory, which reaffirms the enigmatic nature of sacrifice and sees its universality as rooted in the mimetic violence of all archaic groups, in the unanimous lynching of real victims—something produced spontaneously in disturbed communities, where it serves to restore peace.

René Girard, *Sacrifice, Breakthrough in Mimetic Theory*,
(Michigan State University Press, *East Lansing*, [2002] 2011), (ix).

[*Ressentiment*]... In French... the word has no other meanings than the one Nietzsche gave to it. During the twentieth century, this meaning did not remain unchanged; it expanded with respect to the original definition of Nietzsche. The philosopher's error was to measure *ressentiment* with the rule of what he called "the will to power" [...] For Nietzsche, those who have little will to power become necessarily the *slaves* of those who have more of it, who have *domination* engraved in their being. What Nietzsche forgot is that, in a democratic world, relationships between individuals do not depend on the place they occupy in a mythical hierarchy of the will to power, but on a competitive mimicry, in which even the most capable are never certain that they have the dominance.

René Girard, Foreword in Stefano Tomelleri's *Ressentiment, Reflections on Mimetic Desire and Society*, (Michigan State University Press, *East Lansing*, 2015), xii

2.1 Introducing the position Girard takes on *ressentiment*, while outlining Girard's *Mimetic Theory* and the scapegoat, their scholarly reception and the methodology that underpins it

Between 2010 and 2015 René Girard appeared to have a change of mind concerning *ressentiment*'s location in the cycle of the 'escalation to extremes' which contributes to uncontrollable outbreaks of violence. In [2007], *Achever Clausewitz* (2010), *Battling to the End*), Girard declared that 'What is not made explicit, but is often the real engine of a theory, is what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*. I take this intuition further by saying that

resentment according to its mimetic definition produces *misapprehension*, in other words the sacred'. In a Foreword to Stefano Tomelleri's *Ressentiment, Reflections on Mimetic Desire and Society* (2015), however, Girard takes a more antagonistic stance to Nietzsche's interpretation of *ressentiment*. Indeed, he professes that Nietzsche was not only mistaken about it ('distorted by poor Nietzsche's illusions of possessing the strongest will to power'), but 'embraced the bitterest defeat, that is *ressentiment* [...] it meant being infected with the illness that Nietzsche despised the most: *ressentiment*' (2015: xii-xiii).

This chapter will attempt to explain in full Girard's understanding of resentment as it applies to the cycle of 'the escalation to extremes,' including how and why his attitude towards Nietzsche's use of the term seems to have shifted during this period. I say, 'seems' because there are nuances in the wording of the 2007/10 concession to Nietzsche, which need to be accounted for. Because, overall, Girard's stance against Nietzsche on the grounds of apostasy generated by an insanity that desired self-divinization (his besottment with Dionysos, for example) and Nietzsche's obsession with 'the will to power' which brought on the 'philosopher's error,' is a consistent position that Girard takes against Nietzsche, as shall be seen. His stance on 'sacrifice' also changed over time, a discussion that need not concern us here, but one which at least illustrates that Girard was always prepared to change his opinion if he perceived that the evidence was there to do so. However, concerning *ressentiment* and Nietzsche's relentless, and at times savage willingness to blame Christianity for its proliferation throughout Western culture, Girard has taken strong exception. The reasons for this impasse will be explored in this chapter.

To begin with, we focus on building up a picture of how and where *ressentiment* sits in the Girardian theoretical canon with its focus on Mimetic Theory *MT* and the theory of the scapegoat. Mimetic theory, as Girard reads it, attempts to address three very simple questions. What causes social groups and societies to come together and cohere successfully? What causes these groups to break apart? What role does religion play in these two processes? (Kirwan: 2009: 20).

So, what is this *MT* and the scapegoat, and why does it continue to divide scholarly opinion and how and where might *ressentiment* sit within the canon of academic discourse?

Professor Scott Cowdell's overview (2013: 18-27) affords an excellent introduction. From the start, he underlines the challenge that *MT* and the scapegoat pose for people's

choices and desires as governed solely by reason. He argues for ‘a different reality’ (2013: 18). He draws attention, for example, to the impact of the influences of ‘fine teachers, exemplary craftspersons or musicians... indeed, any kind of influential role models.’ He then canvases a whole raft of other influences that impact our opinions and choices: advertising, media, violent computer games, that ‘awaken violent desires’ (2013: 19), which in his view substantiates Girard’s claim that ‘violence exerts a mimetic fascination without equal’ ([1978] (1988): 94) and justifies his mimetic approach to human desire *and human consciousness* (2013: 19; *Things Hidden*, 284).

Cowdell then teases out other aspects of *Le Système Girard*. He begins by proposing a simple formula: ‘*instinct* or *appetite* + *mimesis* = *desire*’ casting it in the Shakespearean dynamic of “borrowed desire” with its propensity for weaving a ‘triangular’ web, mediated by someone ‘we admire’ whose desire we desire which in turn, we infer, often turns to competition and rivalry (2013: 19). Thereupon follow other categories of the mimetic dynamic. Rivalous desire’s transfer from object of desire to the person admired during which phase subject and model ‘become entwined in mutual envy’ (2013: 20; *Things Hidden*, 417). Then, as the ‘crisis’ progresses further, we have an ‘escalation to extremes,’ which ‘begins with the shift from... “external mediation”’—a still ‘relatively stable and uncontroversial’ condition, to ““internal mediation,” where the model of desire... close to us, on our level and in our space, become[s] an obstacle to the desires that have awakened in us’ (2013: 21; Girard ([1961] (1965): 9).⁹⁷

“Metaphysical desire”, according to Girard, takes us to another level (existential in character) of mimetic rivalry (cited by Cowdell: 2013: 24). This is the ‘*interdividual*’ psychological level (very close to Nietzsche’s “Phantom of the Ego” *ressentiment* psychology, as we have seen and will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters). Cowdell

⁹⁷ From internal mediation, arises “double mediation” and as it builds, “reciprocal mediation,” ‘where the desire to thwart rivals replaces... the original object of rivalry’ with its many variations, such as ‘Each “becomes the other’s rival for acquisition of increasingly symbolic objects... [such as] obsessions with “forbidden fruit,” more... the result than the cause of rivalry (2013: 22-23; Girard [1961] (1965: 104); 2010: 22). The next stage in the progression of violence, important to our thesis, the “scandal” (*skandalon* in New Testament terminology) which in turn is the catalyst for “contagion.” These ‘scandals’ are forbidden objects of desire ‘that both attract and repel,’ such as ‘drugs, sex,’ all “morbid competitiveness” for power, be it “political, intellectual and spiritual, especially spiritual” (2013: 23; Girard: 1996: 198). Such *mimetism* and escalation then shunts the crisis to the point where “mirror doubles” and at greater extremes “monstrous doubles” emerge. A point, that is, where subject and model become interchangeable (2013: 23).

names it an ‘ontological sickness’ (2013: 24), the level at which a personal reality is confounded with actuality (my definition), an “amour fou” (Girard: *Things Hidden*: 297), ‘an insane infatuation’ (my translation/paraphrase). Thus, internal mediation and reciprocal mediation have moved us on to where, by the focus shifting from increasingly indistinguishable rivals to one individual or to a race, or clan, or head of clan (cf. driven by an increasing conflation and exacerbated by cognitive dissonance, the Girardian term—*méconnaissance*)—the mimetic crisis is finally reached.

Cowdell’s last pointer related to *MT* (‘internal mediation as the key to modernity’) (2013: 25) takes us to the heart of both thinkers’ projects: the causes and nature of modernity and links them with mimesis (for Nietzsche, though he was familiar with the term going back to Plato and beyond, often uses the German “Mitleid” interchangeably). The Girardian argument here is that modernity actually ‘heightens these mimetic dynamics.’ Girard, unsurprisingly, chooses the French Revolution, which historians accept as the catalyst for the development of democracies, as an exemplar: ‘Idolatry of the tyrant [Louis XIV], “is replaced by hatred of a hundred thousand rivals” when the traditional sources of advancement [Louis XIV and his court and administrators] have been taken away and replaced by “one vast middle-class court where courtiers are everywhere and the king is nowhere,” with its concomitant, “*men will become Gods for each other*” (cited Cowdell: 2013: 25; Girard: [1961] (1965): 119). This is Girard’s account of secular modernity. Alexis de Tocqueville, France’s aristocratic envoy to the young United States, had occasion to observe the new democracy at work and wrote about it in *Democracy in America*. He was not the only one. Stendahl and Flaubert too noted the ‘escalation of petty rivalry and ambition to distinguish oneself from the crowd’ (2013: 26) which, Dostoyevsky was to identify and characterize in the *persona* of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. The young St Petersburg University student feels swallowed up by the masses. He decides to murder a pawnbroker woman and so achieve the perfect crime. He esteemed that notoriety and anonymity were preferable to a wretched, monotonous, and undistinguished existence. Thus, in sum, Girard’s reading of modernity, as with Nietzsche’s (my reading), is one of mimetic volatility, which led both our thinkers (my view) to a somewhat bleak account of the ‘deteriorating human relations, personal instability’ and even a certain ‘madness’ (2013: 26) signaling the emergence of an apocalyptic age.

I have only made scant reference to the scapegoat mechanism, and clearly there is much more to the *MT* than this very brief account will allow. It will come into its fullness as its elements are pressed into service in the various case studies employed to illustrate them.

2.2 Girard contra Nietzsche over *ressentiment*: his admiration of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) and thereby, Nietzsche's madness exposed and condemned

While Girard concedes that Greek tragedy was a decisive stage on the path of 'this [mimetic] discovery,' 'because it challenges the mythological solution i.e., its 'doubles and duels' in the face of a crisis,' he insists that Nietzsche's approach to it is mistaken. This is because, Girard argues, the Greek tragic vision's refusal to listen to the essential truth that violence as the foundation of all cultures, means that the archaic world from which it speaks, and to which Nietzsche is wedded, in the modern era at least, will no longer have the face of Dionysos as Nietzsche hoped. What Girard means by that is not clear. Is it that Nietzsche was hoping for a culture of revenge rather than one of *ressentiment*, and if so, why? Ultimately, Girard claims, Nietzsche's willful blindness and deafness, symptomatic of modernity's psychopathology, created "a world of total destruction. Dionysiac chaos" (Girard: 2010: 105). Girard begins with a confession as to why the appeal to the young German poet is necessary: 'We need Hölderlin's help to show the essential similarity and difference between Christianity and archaic religion' (Girard: 2010: 50). Here, in the context of treating the "dangers of the Antichrist [and] those who wanted to be imitated," he remarks on Hölderlin's "dramatic discovery" (Girard: 2010: 50/51) of the importance of imitating Christ by means of withdrawal. The purpose of such a withdrawal, argues Girard, is to create distance. (Note: in chapter 3, I shall raise the question as to whether this not the very distance for which Nietzsche has been appealing in his argument against "Mitleid" often misunderstood by Girardian scholarship as just a ruthless critique of Christian compassion). Girard's explanation of what constitutes the imitation of Christ is crucial in the case for and against Nietzsche's deployment of *ressentiment* (Girard: 2010: 120):

The imitation of Christ provides the proximity that places us at a distance. It is not the Father whom we should imitate, but his Son, who has withdrawn with his Father. His absence is the very ordeal that we have to go through.

Hölderlin is portrayed as “sinking into what was soon to be called his “madness,”” while Clausewitz the principal subject and the context, is depicted as drawing nearer to the god of war, the same time as Hegel saw “the world spirit on horseback” (Napoleon) from his window (Girard: 2010: 121). Girard, by a series of contrasts, then chronicles those characteristics of Hölderlin that set him apart from Nietzsche in terms of his being “less haunted by Greece,” and more “frightened by the return to paganism... torn between two opposites: the absence of the divine and its fatal nearness.” Hölderlin is described by Girard, as initially oscillating between two poles. Whereas for Nietzsche these poles were between Dionysos and Christ, for Hölderlin it was, ‘between questioning a heaven that is now empty, and leaping into a volcano.’ Whereas Hölderlin, who was deeply Christian, ‘*or rather became more so as he withdrew from the world*’ (Girard’s italics), Nietzsche, on the other hand frightened by the death of the gods, refused to see the face of the divine. Whereas Hölderlin’s ordeal of nigh on forty years of withdrawal from the world and his quietism, must not be ‘misunderstood,’ Nietzsche’s withdrawal and isolation bear the unmistakable signs of ‘a desire to become a god’ (Girard: 2010: 123). It follows, then, falling in line with Girard’s logic, that the Hölderlin who leaves ‘the mimetic giddiness of worldly existence,’ who staggers towards an imitation of Christ ‘thwarting all rivalry’, resisting the Greek classical models he had adopted for so long, finally discovers that ‘*salvation lies in imitating Christ*’ and the truth in his own words that, ‘...where danger threatens / That which saves from it, also grows’ (Girard: 2010: 123). And while Dostoyevsky resisted, “Nietzsche succumbed to the unbearable tension that he wanted to maintain between Dionysos and “the Crucified.” By contrast, “Hölderlin saw his final withdrawal as the only means of ceasing to oscillate between self-glorification and self-repudiation, the only means of overcoming that torture” (Girard: 2010: 125).⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Girard’s analysis is clear: Nietzsche was unable to dive out of this crazy oscillation movement and so allowed himself to be sucked into the slipstream of *ressentiment* and madness. By contrast, Girard depicts Hölderlin as “going from one god to the next, studying the abyss of divine withdrawal... yet choosing Christ hidden behind the other gods” and completes his portraiture by praising his only ‘weakness’: ‘an irrepressible love for Christianity.’ Whereas Nietzsche, fifty years later, admits Girard, feels these things too, he finally wants, ‘to keep opposing Dionysus to the “Crucified.”’ This is something, Girard claims, was avoided by Hölderlin who broke through to experiencing a deeper and more mysterious reality: the Christ who has “replaced Dionysus, and thereby exposed himself to fiercer violence from the very thing he has demystified” (Girard: 2010: 128/129). Thus, for Girard Hölderlin serves as a powerful way of highlighting Nietzsche’s predicament and perilous mental state: his “madness certainly derives from the constant, increasingly accelerated switching from ‘the Crucified’ to ‘Dionysus’, from archaic religion to Christianity.”

In chapter 6, I shall critically examine whether Girard's claims for Hölderlin can be sustained.

2.3 Girard contra Nietzsche over *ressentiment*: the falling out with Richard Wagner (1813-1883) as proof of Nietzsche's *ressentiment* one which he projects onto others

In a lecture entitled "Nietzsche and Contradiction" (1986), Girard claimed he had found crucial evidence for his explanation that Nietzsche's falling out with Wagner was evidence of his madness. Girard argues that at last he had located the 'smoking gun,' which validates what had previously only been an intuition in him, that there was not just the one voice in Nietzsche's writings, which always spoke against Wagner. 'A few days,' he records, 'looking for something to write about in Volume XIII of the new French edition of Nietzsche's unpublished fragments, written between the summer of 1886 and the Fall of 1887, on page 200, under the heading 5 (41), I found the following, which I must translate from the French and apologize for my poor English version twice removed from the original (*Fragments posthumes: Automne 1885-1887*' (Paris: Gallimard, 1978). Girard explains that he transcribed it in full because it was so intrinsic to his case against Nietzsche:

Prelude to *Parsifal* the greatest gift I have received in a long time. The power and rigor of the feeling. Indescribable; I do not know anything that apprehends Christianity at such great depth, and that generates compassion so powerfully. I am completely transported and moved—no painter ever managed to render as Wagner does a vision so indescribably melancholy and tender. His greatness in apprehending a dreadful certainty, from which something like compassion emanates: the greatest masterpiece of the sublime that I know, power and rigor in apprehending a dreadful certainty, an indescribably expression of greatness *in* the compassion towards it, *whatever that means*. No artist has ever been able to express as magnificently as Wagner does such a somber and melancholy vision. Not even Dante, not even Leonardo. As if, after many years, someone finally addressed the problems that truly concern me, not to echo once again the answers that I always have ready at hand, but to provide the Christian answers, which have been the answers of souls stronger than those produced by the last two centuries. Yes, when this music is heard, we brush aside Protestantism as if it were a misunderstanding—⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Of the above transcript, which had been a letter sent to his sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, Girard admits that 'I will probably be suspected... of surrendering my scholarly objectivity to my own religious prejudices' and because the anti-Wagnerian consensus' [for], 'The official Nietzschean party line on Wagner and above all to *Parsifal*,' seemed 'unchallengeable' (1986: 58). For years he writes, he had been convinced of this, but lacked

From these key observations, Girard then draws the following conclusions, which I shall paraphrase as closely as I can. Firstly, if this text is authentic, which Girard believes it is, then Nietzschean scholars have been set the formidable task of rewriting the early, middle, and late Nietzsche's attitude to Christianity. Secondly, these same scholars will have to resolve the contradiction in Nietzsche's judgement of *Parsifal*—and they will need to resolve it, not as a philosophical question so much as a religious question and read it as one pertaining to a personal tragedy of a broken-down relationship with Wagner based on psychological, psycho-pathological grounds, rather than the myth of an ideological schism. Consequently, thirdly, Nietzschean scholarship, and 'all varieties of the Nietzschean cult' (1986: 64) must now cease to 'disregard the enormous scope of contradiction in Nietzsche's work'; cease their 'censorship of the madness of Nietzsche' (1986: 65), which Girard sees as an essential component of 'the philosophical myth' (1986: 65).

Girard's challenge, I have been contending, has been more than met by research without any knowledge of it. The most recent scholarship has simply come up with reasons quite other than ideological and aesthetic, which shall be treated later in this Chapter (see Law Too [2013]). While I suspect ideological factors other than just Christianity, were responsible as outlined by Law Too (who has strong Girardian sympathies) such as aesthetic and philosophical ones (the Hegelian view of history, for example), it is evidence of a very personal, even embarrassing kind (Young: 2010; Prideaux: 2018) that puts paid to a one-dimensional view on the rupture. Young (2010: 240) draws on Dr Eiser's leaked correspondence with Wagner, which exposes Wagner's gross betrayal of confidences concerning Nietzsche's masturbation habits, and shameless violation of patient confidentiality regarding which, Young observes, that at the second Bayreuth Festival in 1878, 'the gossip was all about the absent Nietzsche – about how he was going blind through masturbation' (Ibid, 240).¹⁰⁰

the textual evidence to prove it. Yes, there had been 'restrained praise of *Parsifal*'s prelude,' but that was 'exclusively musical,' and yes, the 'absence of a textual confirmation did nothing to shake [his] conviction that Nietzsche adored *Parsifal*, at least as much as he hated it' (1986: 59), but now he had found the 'smoking gun' he had been looking for.

¹⁰⁰ Nietzsche on discovering the betrayal, named it 'a deadly insult', an '*abysmal* treachery of revenge' (C: pp.417-48; KGB 111.I.384). The leak was not intentional, possibly an oversight on the part of Wagner, 'a busy man accustomed to delegating, had channelled some of his correspondence... through Hans von Wolzogen (an anti-Semite, stung by Nietzsche's assessment of him as intellectually mediocre, the editor of the *Bayreuther Blätter* (see also, GS, II, Section 71, 'On Female chastity'; Prideaux 2018: 214-15). More critically, Prideaux's conclusion is uncompromising (Ibid, 169):

Having said that, clearly, there are several dissenting Nietzschean scholarly commentators, who do think Nietzsche got *Parsifal* wrong. Georges Liébert argues that Wagner's work was simply 'a development of his earlier works'—the difference 'a matter of degree not of nature' (cited in *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, ed. Daniel Came, a chapter entitled 'Nietzsche and Music' Aaron Ridley (Oxford, 2014: 230). Liébert considers the work as promoting the conception that 'art *replaces* religion' in such a way that what *Parsifal* represents on-stage, 'is no other in reality than the artist himself' (2014: 121). This, Ridley argues is good but not good enough to address the issues raised by Nietzsche, namely that '*Parsifal* colludes with various "religious" and "nihilistic" instincts in the "counterfeit of transcendence and the beyond" even if the "beyond" that is counterfeited is... a purely artistic one' (2014: 231). Michael Tanner, he feels has a stronger case, which he deems is much more nuanced and therefore more persuasive. He describes the work as 'the most penetrating study we have of the psychopathology of religious belief in artistic terms' and so not in fact about religion *per se* but 'an exercise in 'the refusal to transcend' (1979: 205-9). Ridley goes on to note that 'Tanner does a brilliant job... of skewering those who like, Nietzsche, fail to attend to the astonishing complexities of Wagner's psychological explorations, and hear only a "preaching of chastity" (Ibid, Oxford, 2014: 231; Tanner (1979: 211). Consequently, on the face of it neither Nietzsche nor Girard can draw satisfaction from these responses. However, there is certainly nothing in these scholarly coverages to confirm an overriding 'Christian' theme, which is what drives Girard's argument: that Nietzsche's rejection of the drama is governed by its Christian theme but that this is used as an excuse for covering up his emotional and strong attraction to the work.¹⁰¹

It is not, as Elizabeth [Förster-Nietzsche] said, their differences over the religiosity of Wagner's *Parsifal* libretto that caused the final breach between the two men who love each other so very much. It was Nietzsche's eventual discovery of this well-intentioned, but crushing, correspondence.

¹⁰¹ What is taken away from this seminal article, is that for Girard, Nietzsche's philosophical project is flawed because it is informed by an unstable mind, ('... madness is an integral part of the Nietzschean adventure' 1986: 65), whose judgements (personal, philosophical, and especially psychological) cannot therefore be trusted expound this important Girardian belief in the following sub-section, and address its implications in full in chapter 3, in terms of how some Girardian scholars have taken up that line of reasoning.

2.4 Girard *contra* Nietzsche over *ressentiment* (1986: 63): ‘the number-one Nietzschean question’: is there a difference between Dionysian and the Christian?

Whereas Girard’s stance on *ressentiment* can be seen to be compatible on the grounds that he might have changed his mind about it (but even there in his later 2010 position *that* seems intractably irreconcilable), his position *vis à vis* Dionysos is uncompromisingly clear. For Girard’s reading of it, Nietzsche’s position on the ‘will-to-power,’ archaic religion as personified in his devotion to Dionysos are inextricably entangled with his madness. Cowdell (2018: 45), picks this up in the context of Girard’s perception of Nietzsche’s writings in *Ecce Homo*, where he concludes that, ‘you cannot espouse Dionysus, in the way that Nietzsche does, outside any form of ritual, without exposing yourself to the unrestrained release of *mania*’ (1986: “Nietzsche and Contradiction”: 59). In the same essay, Girard contrasts Nietzsche’s writing with Dostoyevsky’s. Whereas Dostoyevsky ‘awoke to his own personal state of entrapment and exposed it in *Notes from the Underground...*’, Nietzsche did not—though he knew and admired that particular work.’ Earlier, highlighting *To Double Business Bound*, Cowdell (2018: 45), confirms that this viewpoint of Girard’s had long been entrenched. It comes out, Girard believes, in Nietzsche’s cultivation of intellectual and artistic superiority in terms of will-to-power, which he understands as ‘the ideology of mimetic desire.’¹⁰²

James G. Williams in Chapter 16, ‘Nietzsche versus the Crucified’ of the *Girardian Reader*, (1996: 243- 244) introduces ‘the number-one Nietzschean question’ regarding the difference between ‘Dionysian and the Christian’, with these guiding remarks, which I now summarise.

First, while admitting that both Nietzsche and Girard are “Christocentric,” he considers that ‘the real point of departure for both is the Crucified as the center of history’ (1996: 243). The question raised for us by this seeming self-contradiction is this: how can a

¹⁰² Cowdell interprets this as ‘Nietzsche submitting to the *ressentiment* he deplores (which for Girard is “really a thwarted and traumatized desire,” and then underlines, as we have also seen in the arguments above, that this thwarted desire is then directed, ‘against Richard Wagner, who was the model of his own desire,’ which Girard interprets as ‘Nietzsche... seeking to rival Wagner’s own personal cult based at Bayreuth’ (1978: 62,73,74,79).

Christology common to both, also constitute a 'departure' from 'the Crucified as the center of history'? Williams' outline of Girard's 'case' against Nietzsche's understanding of Dionysos and the Crucified is instructive. His objections can be stated as follows. In the late 1960s, perhaps the early 1970s, Williams claims, Girard came to see Nietzsche as 'the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century,' but with that distinction comes a disclaimer—he defines Nietzsche as 'a negative guide to the meaning of the Christian revelation.' By this, following Girard, Williams meant, that, while Nietzsche *understood*, 'intuited' Christianity, he also resisted it. This resistance took the form of a kind of 'self-exorcism,' by means of a ruthless campaign against the institution of Christianity, labelling it as 'the worst of plagues' and accusing it of being 'rooted' in *ressentiment* by the 'interiorisation' of 'weakened vengeance' (1996: 243), from which emerged a 'Christian' morality which, was the most powerful and the most baneful in history.

Second, Williams, again interpreting Girard, attempts to define the differences 'between the Christ of the Gospels and Nietzsche's Dionysus.' Here he maintains that Nietzsche belying his knowledge 'that Jesus brought a sword "the order of charity" or love, as Pascal put it,' he 'willed and tried to affirm an order he understood as "life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence [which] creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilate..." (WP 1052) (1996: 244). Williams points to a number of other essays on Nietzsche, notably, "Nietzsche, Wagner and Dostoyevsky", in *"To Double Business Bound,"* 61-83, which portray Girard as pitching Nietzsche's entire work as 'as strategy of madness stemming in great part from his rivalry with Wagner' (1996: 244). Girard's account of this 'difference,' identifies the characteristics, which follow—pertaining to Nietzsche's perception of the difference and the role of academia in its reception and understanding of that 'difference.'

Firstly, he berates those who either ignore 'the anti-Christian polemics of Nietzsche' or pay scant regard to them (1996: 244). This is accounted for by Girard as Heidegger's influence who, 'gives an impression of radical indifference' (1996: 244). For Heidegger, in Girard's opinion, everything 'in Nietzsche that comes under the heading "Dionysus versus the Crucified" must be alien to "thought" and [must] therefore [be] harshly condemned as a pure and simple "return to monotheism," the very reverse of what Nietzsche himself imagined he was doing' (1996: 244). What Nietzsche actually 'imagined he was doing,'

Girard argues, is 'really exciting and novel' (1996: 246), and Heidegger in his preoccupation with what he *thinks* Nietzsche is doing, misses it. Heidegger is convinced, Girard notes, that the very passion with which Nietzsche attacks Christianity must be because he is 'still under its influence' (1996: 245). In effect, for Heidegger, the essential history of our world is 'post-philosophical and religion is irrelevant'. The Nietzsche of "Dionysus versus the Crucified" is ... alien to the real issues of our times.' Yet Heidegger concedes that Nietzsche's insight into monotheism as an intrinsic *ressentiment*, indeed 'the height of *ressentiment*', is his most important work, one with which not even Girard can disagree (1996: 245).

Secondly, Girard also admits, however, that 'the most daring material becomes inseparable from the grotesque' in Nietzsche's works. Genius and insanity lend each other a hand' (1996: 245). And so, 'the height of *ressentiment*' in Nietzsche's 'later fragments' becomes in Girard's hands, the symptoms of Nietzsche's impending 'final breakdown.' For Girard it is impossible to separate Nietzsche's perceived achievements as a thinker from *his ressentiment*, 'whether the subject is Wagner, the divine, or Nietzsche himself' in *Ecce Homo* (1996: 246).

Thirdly, Girard disentangles the main threads of the reasons for Nietzsche's antipathy to Christianity and in so doing, discovers, he believes, the prime movers of that *ressentiment*. Predominately, Girard feels that Nietzsche's *ressentiment* is rooted in a self-deception driven by fear. Also, at times, a wilful dishonesty, and at other times, a vengeful spitefulness shaped by a developing insanity.¹⁰³

This is where Girard draws a line under the whole issue of 'difference' and similarity of the 'old' and the 'new' and the reasons why Nietzsche, having understood so clearly the 'difference,' decided to betray his own insight—a clarity that turned its back on 'the saccharine idealization of primitive culture that began at the end of the eighteenth century' (1996: 250).

First, Girard blames Nietzsche's intransigence on a 'fierce stubbornness in opposing the inspiration of the Bible in favour of victims, which logically and inexorably led him

¹⁰³ In amongst it all, Girard can see that there *is* an honesty and a clarity of vision. Nietzsche's honesty while fitful is discernible. He is clear and 'strongly' believed 'in the unique specificity of the biblical and Christian perspective,' because 'He knew too much about pagan mythology not to be revolted by the shallow assimilation of the Judeo-Christian with the pagan.' 'He was too honest,' claims Girard, 'to dissimulate the disturbing sides, the ugly sides of the Dionysian' (1996: 246-247).

toward the more and more inhuman (harsh) attitudes of his later years' (1996: 252). Second, he is adamant that Nietzsche's *ressentiment* in its typically (for Girard) 'interiorization of weakened vengeance,' caused him to 'mistake it for the original and primary form of vengeance,' and so misled him into thinking that *ressentiment* 'was not merely... the child of Christianity... but also its father, which it certainly is not.' At this point Girard concludes that Nietzsche has taken on an idea, which flies in the face of the reality that, 'The Bible and the Gospels have diminished the violence of vengeance and turned it into *ressentiment*' (1996: 252). Third, even though 'Nietzsche was less blind to the role of vengeance in culture than most people of his time,' and 'analyzed *ressentiment* and all its works with enormous power,' because of this blindness, Girard claims, Nietzsche 'did not see the evil he was fighting was a relatively minor evil compared to the more violent forms of vengeance.' Girard believed that this blindness was aided and abetted, indeed 'blunted' by, 'the deceptive quiet of his post-Christian society' (1996: 252). Fourth, Girard sees Nietzsche's 'Dionysian' choice as a desperate attempt 'to bring back real vengeance as a cure for what seemed to him the worst of all possible fates, *ressentiment*.' Girard then argues for Nietzsche's whole life project as being back-staged by the real vengeance of 'nuclear and other absolute weapons, reducing our planet to the size of a global primitive village, terrified again by the possibility of unlimited blood feud' (1996: 253)—only the scapegoat method, which was effective then, is now deprived of its efficacy because of Christ's death.¹⁰⁴

Again, Girard's assessment of Nietzsche's Aphorism 125, is not devoid of praise. He acknowledges that the text 'plays with the murder of God on several primary levels' but then calls that 'play' into question, by accusing those self-same levels of 'contaminating' each other, even though they can 'nevertheless be logically distinguished from one another' (1996: 260). With the question, 'What are we to do with such a maelstrom of collective murders,' Girard has occasion to call on Freud, normally his sparring partner, for help—for

¹⁰⁴ By the end of this intricate argument, Girard concludes that the Nietzsche project, despite its fabulous insights into human violence, becomes every day 'more futile and unreal with each passing year' (1996: 253). The 'primitive sacred,' argues Girard, has hoodwinked both Nietzsche and Heidegger. In Girard's view of things, 'The revenge of Dionysus over the Crucified' has failed, and his justification of 'even the worst forms of oppression and persecution' have been foiled (1996: 254).

which he apologises to his readers. ‘Freud,’ Girard notes, ‘a few years after Nietzsche wrote *The Gay Science*, claimed he had discovered that all “festivals of purification and atonement, all sacred games,” all the religious rituals of mankind, are rooted in the collective murder of some real victim, men called God.’ Whereas, for the same claim, Freud earns the opprobrium of his followers, Nietzsche for his aphorism 125 (*GS*), is revered (1996: 260/61)—where is the justice in that, infers Girard?

2.5 Girard contra Nietzsche over *ressentiment*: Girardian scholars: following Lawtoo and Poettcker’s modest revisionism

While not generally disagreeing with Girard, not all Girardian scholars strictly and unswervingly adhere to Girard’s opposition to Nietzsche’s entire work on his perceived ‘apostasy’ and imbedded insanity. In Nidesh Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego, Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious* (2013) and Grant Poettcker’s ‘Beyond Nietzsche’s War Rhetoric: Ascesis, Sacrifice and the Recovery of Health’, CoV&R Meeting in Freisig, Germany (July 23, 2014)—we find a more sympathetic voice.

Lawtoo takes no position on a change of mind on Girard’s part concerning *ressentiment*. He does, however, call for an adjustment on how we should approach Nietzsche’s developing insanity. On the one hand, he accepts that ‘Nietzsche’s personal attacks on Wagner are tainted by the latter’s own *ressentiment*’ (Lawtoo: 2013: 51), and that Nietzsche’s self-contradictory judgement of *Parsifal* must also be taken into account. On the other hand, he argues that ‘Girard tells us only half of the story’ (2013: 51). Lawtoo balances this criticism with an earlier comment that, yes Girard’s reading of Nietzsche is ‘delimiting’ because he confines his focus on the Wagnerian family circle, but that this delimitation ‘appears less striking if we schematically consider the two main underlying theoretical investments that motivate his reading’ (2013: 50). The first is the triangular structure of desire, and the second is what lies ‘implicitly at stake in Girard’s reading of Nietzsche is the celebration of Christianity over against one of its most formidable critics’ (2013: 50). Lawtoo observes that Girard, ‘swings that oscillating pendulum that is Nietzsche’s pathos of distance too much in the direction of mimetic pathos and the *pathology* that ensues, [but] does not trace the countermovement that necessarily follows’

(2013: 51).

Lawtoo's other half of the story snaps into sharp focus the reasons Nietzsche may have had for his opposition to the whole Wagnerian *Bayreuth* project. Here he argues that when Wagner steps on to his *Bayreuth* stage and its 'amphitheatre,' something drastic has happened to change the dynamics of their relationship, tipping it off balance and exposing the damaging impact that the 'change' is having on Nietzsche's psyche. Lawtoo claims that the resentment this arouses in Nietzsche also, paradoxically, sharpens his 'critical lenses,' turning his 'capitulation to identificatory pathos into a critical distance of clinical values' (2013: 51). Through that lens, Nietzsche begins to understand *why* this whole *Bayreuth* experience, the Wagnerian theatre, is having such a devastating influence on him, and the German spectators. This "cultural hero of the German people," Nietzsche realises, is deeply tied to the very thing he has opposed to all his thinking life—the 'mimetic pathologies that infect modernity as a whole' (2013: 51/52).

There are two important elements explored by Lawtoo: the perceived impact on Wagner's audiences, and the dislocation it brought into Nietzsche's own personal life and their relationship. As we note these lines of analyses, we are mindful of what this might tell us about *ressentiment*. From them, we deduce the following:

(a) The impact on Wagner's audiences, according to Nietzsche

First, there is the "cultish" impact. Nietzsche observed an 'intersubjective group dynamic,' 'the power to affect the "crowd"' (2013: 52).

Second, Wagner's project was perceived by Nietzsche as 'an *ethico-political* assault' on Wagner's audiences and encapsulates for Nietzsche everything that is dangerous about the 'modern world that Wagner represents'; in effect, 'Wagner and modernity are two sides of the same coin,' "through Wagner modernity speaks most *intimately*" (CW "Preface"; 156) (2013: 53).

Third, through this lens, Nietzsche portrays Wagner, as an "actor," a "genius of the theatre," "the Protean character of degeneration" (CW 8; 172), (5; 166), (2013: 54), with the insinuation that the cultural revolution, the re-valuation of all values, which had been so fervently hoped for, has degenerated into a cult "*theatrocracy*" ("Postscript"; 182), over which Wagner rules as a "tyrant" (8; 172).

Fourth, Lawtoo infers that Nietzsche believed Wagner had betrayed his true vocation,

by allowing the cultural regeneration project to descend into mere 'theatre-rhetoric' 2013: 61), "the whole gesture hocus-pocus of the actor" (*GS* 368), with the "magical power to corrupt the German youth" ("Jünglinge") (*CW* 6; 167).

Fifth, Nietzsche sees Wagner's Bayreuth project as an elaborate propaganda campaign, a kind of 'crucible' within which some of the modern ideologies he most strongly opposes, idealism, nihilism, German nationalism, and anti-Semitism, are forged (2013: 57). Then there is:

(b) The dislocation personally experienced by Nietzsche

Firstly, Girard's diagnosis of Nietzsche as enduring a 'mimetic sickness,' a sickness, which effectively, 'relegates Nietzsche's psychic life to the status of a phantom of Wagner's ego' (2013: 47).

Secondly, Nietzsche felt, Lawtoo surmises (2013: 44), that Wagner's influence had somehow broken the 'wall' of Nietzsche's defences (his "Selbst-Vermauerung", his "Selbst-Verteidigung"), which I take to mean his 'integrity' as a self, as a person and that this breach threatened a kind of "self-dissolution" ("Selbstlosigkeit") (*EH* 2; 56) (2013: 44).

Thirdly, this experience of self-alienation taught Nietzsche to confess his own vulnerability to the mimetic pathology which Nietzsche names "Mitempfindung" ['to feel with'] and "Mitleid" [to suffer with] (in much the same way, as we have seen above, Girard was prepared to do as well). Here Nietzsche confesses his own sickness, which he had contracted from Wagner, and which was in danger of debilitating him further. He makes much of how by breaking with Wagner, because Wagner "[was] merely one of my sicknesses. He makes sick whatever he touches" (*CW* 5; 164), but Nietzsche was able to recover his health ("Genesung"). Collectively, all these elements combine to produce the rupture chronicled, so expertly taken up by Lawtoo.

(c) The impact on their relationship

Here, Lawtoo first refers to critics 'attentive to the political implications' of the Wagner-Nietzsche relationship', and why it irreconcilably broke down. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and Jean-Luc Nancy are his examples, as those who argue for the mimetic role in politics, and the more recent critical voices of Jacob Golomb and Robert Wistrich who suggest that the 'Wagnerian ideology and cult that developed in Bayreuth was a... real precursor of *Völkisch* and Hitlerian ideas', seeing through its dangerous illusions' (cited

2013: 57), (Golomb and Wistrich: 2002: 8). One has only to see how upset Nietzsche was by his sister Elizabeth's entanglement with such ideologies (her marriage in fact to an anti-Semite), to understand why Wagner's commitment to them would devastate his most important relationship (I shall bring in other sources in Chapter 3) to deepen an appreciation of why such a long and enduring relationship came to such catastrophic end. Lawtoo relies on Nietzsche's own words to reinforce those critical approaches: "It is full of profound significance that the arrival of Wagner coincides in time with the arrival of the '*Reich*'... Never has obedience been better, never [more] commanding," (CW 11; 180) (2013: 77).

Second, I deduce from Lawtoo's positive reception of Nietzsche's 'patho (-) logy' and the accuracy of Nietzsche's diagnosis of Germany's modernity culture, that this sharp and incisive diagnostic also applies to the accuracy of his self-diagnosis. For example, the very fact that Nietzsche pinpoints this 'rare pathology' as 'the most ordinary' of human experiences, 'so ordinary that it tends to go unnoticed and, thus, unquestioned, and, thus un-thought, like the contagious dimension of a yawn,' that as "the philosophical physician" (2013: 89) he is profoundly aware of its subtle and invasive powers to bring down one of his most important relationships, and so threaten his own psychological health. More of that in Chapter 3.

Poettcker for his part, takes a broader approach drawing our attention to 'traces of a new trajectory in Girard's concept of *ressentiment* in *Battling to the End* [2007] (2010). The first such trace is his changing attitude towards the mimetic dynamic. Whereas previously Girard seemed to privilege the mimetic analyst and endow the theorist with immunity, by 2007/2010 he is prepared to admit that 'We cannot escape mimetism; we always participate in it in some way, and those who acknowledge it interest me more than those who try to dissimulate it.' On this premise one would have thought Girard exonerates Nietzsche, given his uncompromising self-analysis from his earliest to his mature years. This realisation came upon Girard 'gradually,' accompanied by the insight that one must have 'to think from inside mimetism' (2010: 82). Here again Nietzsche's analysis from inside *ressentiment*, one would have thought, would also have won Girard's approval. Poettcker traces this back to a specific moment in Girard's 1976 essay, 'Superman in the Underground: Strategies of Madness—Nietzsche, Wagner, Dostoyevsky' (Poettcker: 2014: 2). This admission, Poettcker observes, is soon followed by another concession (2010: 83):

What is not made explicit, but is often the real engine of a theory, is what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*. I take this intuition a little further by saying that resentment, according to its mimetic definition, produces *misapprehension*, in other words the sacred.

While there is definitely an apparent softening, possibly occasioned by the context, which is to show that Nietzsche had a better understanding of the ‘abyss’ than Clausewitz, he still, in the end, infers that Nietzsche was deluded by *ressentiment* because he ‘misapprehended’ the sacred due to his Dionysian distraction. Poettcker’s point can still be admitted as evidence of a familiar pattern of argumentation on Girard’s part. That is to say, the ‘softening’ is part of the point he is making in this context, which is that Girard wants Nietzsche, a ‘German’ to be seen to have a better handle on the abyss of violence, than the other German Clausewitz, who apprehended it but, Girard claims, ‘[who] as a deep thinker... rapidly abandons his first, most brilliant, intuition, yet allowed it to color his whole book’ (2010: 83).¹⁰⁵

Girard’s portrait of Clausewitz, nevertheless, argues Poettcker, depicts him as ‘more deeply enmeshed in mimeticism and more disturb[ed] than Nietzsche’ because he attempts to ‘re-divinize violence’ (2014: 7). So where does that leave Nietzsche’s identification with Dionysos, ‘if *ressentiment* is no longer Nietzsche’s scarlet letter?’ (2014: 7). Here Poettcker argues that Girard’s Dionysus and Nietzsche’s Dionysos ‘are not equivalent’. For Girard, identification with Dionysus, is ‘to be *in the grip of* and to *advocate for* sacred violence.’ Indeed, Poettcker insists, Girard’s Dionysus ‘is therefore a *personification of* the sacrificial order and an emblem of sacred and sacralising violence.’ On the other hand, Nietzsche’s Dionysos, from Poettcker’s perspective, ‘is a transgressor against the prevailing law (of

¹⁰⁵ Poettcker discovers in Girard’s ‘hermeneutic,’ that it does not permit him to read Nietzsche on his own terms (2014: 3). Here he challenges Girard’s contention that Nietzsche’s ‘will-to-power’ has nothing to do with genuine courage and real adversity, but more to do with ‘a quest for self-engineered adversity.’ Poettcker argues it is Nietzsche’s version of *asceticism* which is ‘directed not at wanton destruction, but at purification and a *higher life*’ (2014: 9). Further, I am profoundly sceptical of Girard’s reading of Clausewitz. But that’s another story too elaborate to deal with in full here, other than to say that Girard is critical of Clausewitz’s ‘war as an extension of politics,’ seeing it as ‘cop out,’ in effect a *refusal* to see war in its bloody minded fulness. The reality is, that Clausewitz’s analysis is ‘spot on’ i.e., [War is nothing but a continuation of politics with the admixture of other means commonly rendered as ‘War is the continuation of politics by other means’ Karl von Clausewitz 1780–1831 Prussian soldier and military theorist: *On War* (1832–4) bk. 8, ch. 6, sect. B], a conclusion collaborated by the historian Gabriel Kolko’s analysis of the war in Vietnam.

Pentheus, and of Lycurgus), and acts sovereignly against this law to put an end to its violence' (2014: 7/8). In Poettcker's estimation, Nietzsche's Dionysos serves to expose the violence and duplicity of sacrificial system and its values, highlighting 'its contingency, partiality and fragility' and classifies it as 'an iconoclastic and ascetic gesture' designed to humble 'those in authority' (2014: 8). Jean-Luc Marion claims that Nietzsche's philosophy in fact strips 'Christians' of the 'moralized and metaphysicized idol they have made of God—... thereby enab[ling] a *non-atheistic* Christianity' and that even Nietzsche's madness, 'points to an important realization shared by all mystics—that one cannot grant being to God. One can only collapse into and lose oneself in the very God whose yes creates a world' (2014: 8; Marion (2001: 65/55). I shall follow Marion's analysis more closely in Chapter 6.

Poettcker's conclusions are worth noting as an important cautionary tale for how we interpret Nietzsche's project, how we understand its implications and for how we might interpret *ressentiment* in the context of Nietzsche as 'mystic' and 'ascetic' (2014: 9). The following observations (some contestable) are vital to enable such an adjusted reading (2014: 1, 9):

- (A) Nietzsche's "Wettkampf" / "Wettpraxis", and particularly his 'excessive rhetoric against Christianity render a mystical/ascetic reading almost 'illegible'.
- (B) Nietzsche's 'rhetoric of madness' 'threatens to make his philosophy useless to those concerned with *sanity* just as Nietzsche's war rhetoric has made it seem offensive... to interpreters concerned with *peace*'.
- (C) But in Nietzsche's defence, Poettcker offers these explanations, mentioned above, but reinforced here: 'The will-to-power may appear to be "a quest for self-engineered adversity" ... But as *ascesis* it is directed not at wanton self-destruction, but a purification and higher *life*'—I shall argue in Chapter 6 that this 'struggle' is in fact the bread and water experience of the desert fathers and mothers who I think Nietzsche admires and follows because of their integrity—that they live their lives 'without resentment.'
- (D) Also, in Nietzsche's defence, which I shall take up in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 6, is Fornari's observation that Nietzsche 'was much closer to Christ than many who would claim to be Christian' (2013: xvi).
- (E) Finally, Poettcker admonishes us as 'mimetic' theorists to take on an ascetic mindset i.e., 'the consistent refusal of easy victories over one's opponent' and appeals for Girardian scholarship as it "remain[s] at the heart of violence," to use Girard's terms of reference, and to leave a place for Nietzsche at the table of discussion, lest mimetic theory, 'remain a victim-revealing rather than a victim-

making hermeneutic.' This will be something about which I shall have more to say in the Conclusion.

In another Paper delivered by Grant Poettcker at the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, St. Louis University, 2015, 'Self Transcendence, Distance and Kenotic Presence in Girard and Nietzsche,' deals with matters to do with Girard's treatment of Hölderlin and the question of 'distance,' 'identification' and 'self-emptying' (that question I shall revisit in Chapter 6 as well). In the process, Poettcker draws two helpful conclusions. First, that Girard consistently analyses Nietzsche through three lenses: the lens of Nietzsche's friendship with Wagner, the lens of Nietzsche's descent into madness, and the lens of Romanticism (2015: 2). Second, and more challengingly, that Girard's treatment of Nietzsche's illness, 'functions as a kind of subtle *ad hominem*' (2015: 4). It is certainly to be interpreted that way by Guiseppe Fornari (one which I shall examine in detail in Chapter 3) when he writes, '[Girard's treatment of] the Nietzsche case would appear to be an exemplary story of *'empio punito*' (the ungodly one punished); the philosopher arrogantly defying Christ and being destroyed by his own foolishness' (Fornari: 2013: xiii), but even there comes the admission, that Nietzsche may in the last moments before his collapse have discovered a mysticism of his own.¹⁰⁶

2.6 Albert Henrichs' exposé of *Dionysos* and the *Crucified* raises the question of whether the differences in opinion between Girard and Nietzsche are nothing more than those provoked by the 'eyes of the beholder'?

This closing sub-section begins with a historical overview of the interpretations proposed. The purpose of this overview is to enable the discussion of 'difference of opinion' to be conducted within the context of a long history of discourse about it. This sub-section will also throw a good deal of light on the dynamics of how *ressentiment* and revenge may

¹⁰⁶ In short, Poettcker argues that because Girard has 'too quickly dismissed Nietzsche's own interpretation of his rivalry with Wagner, he misinterprets Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*' (Poettcker: 2015: 6) a viewpoint which I shall re-examine in Chapter 3. There I shall include quite compelling evidence from the most recent scholarly treatments of Nietzsche's biography by Sue Prideaux, *I am Dynamite, A Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 2018), among others.

be approached through such a scholarly lens, with the confidence that any interpretation proposed here will be consistent with such an investigation.

In his essay on 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The Modern View of Dionysus, From Nietzsche to Girard, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol 8 (1984), pp 205-240, Henrichs traces the complexes of scholarly and literary interpretations that have emerged before, during and since Classical times. He observes that, like any other god, as a composite figure, 'Dionysus 'acquired new aspects in the course of time', and that as long as [he] was a living part of an ever-changing culture, he too was subject to continuous differentiation and change' (1984: 205). After a probing assessment, he concludes that this Greek god, more than any other, 'has created... confusion in the modern mind,' and that within 'a wider spectrum of different and often contradictory interpretations,' differences of opinion have 'become more obvious and more extreme.' Yet, apart from the 'curious' fact that 'the more elusive Dionysus becomes the more prominent he appears,' Henrichs holds out the hope that if 'this trend should continue Dionysus is assured of an even longer and more exciting life in the future than the various lives he had in the past' (1984: 240), a view with which the present thesis concurs and to whose excitement it hopes to make a modest contribution.

For our present purposes, Henrichs' scholarly essay assists in defining Nietzsche's interpretation of the god in his own historical context, though I shall have to disagree on certain key points. Henrich acknowledges that Nietzsche, Pater and Otto's attempts to deal with the complexity of Dionysus 'by emphasising his inherent duality and by paying equal attention to his opposite aspects' was 'the most promising way of studying this god' (1984: 239). However, he denies Nietzsche his proper place of honour even over against the unqualified admiration of Jane Harrison of the Cambridge school and her acknowledgement of debt to Nietzsche 'more than once' (1984: 229), whose scholarship Henrich respects but one that raises the ire of some academics for its excessive focus on blood letting. Many of Henrich's reservations, which leads him to conclude that, 'Nietzsche himself had no interest in Greek myth, let alone in religion as practised' (1984: 229) are based on Nietzsche's

silence about them, including the dismemberment of Pentheus, which is ‘never mentioned, despite its relevance to Nietzsche’s thesis’ (1984: 229).¹⁰⁷

Henrich names ‘loss of self,’ ‘suffering’ and ‘violence’ as the key preoccupations of ‘the modern reception of Dionysus’, and identifies two principal approaches to Dionysus, ‘which held the field until very recently’: ‘the psychological and the anthropological’ (1984: 206)—both fields to which Nietzsche and Girard subscribe.¹⁰⁸

If, as Henrich observes, ‘Dionysus invites controversy because he lacks a clear cut identity’, that he ‘defies definition’, and that the only way of dealing with the god’s conflicting identities, is ‘to disagree about him’ (1984: 209), how might this then affect our discussion related to the question of ‘difference’ between Dionysos and the ‘Crucified’ as Nietzsche and Girard interpret it, and, further, what bearing might those differences of interpretation have on the question of *ressentiment*? Henrich’s treatment while not directly addressing those questions in their exact terms of reference, does lay down some guidelines in the second section of his essay, II. ANTECEDENTS OF THE MODERN DIONYSUS (1984: 212-219). In late antiquity, he argues, ‘Dionysus and Christ had much in common’. They both conquer death; they both blur the distinction between blood and wine, and both promise their followers ‘salvation after death’ (1984: 212-213). Thereafter, Henrich traces the following developments during the period of late antiquity to the ‘final victory of Christianity’. This is marked by Dionysos standing his ground as a pagan god to the extent that at the Trullian Synod in Constantiople, the church fathers ‘still found it necessary to warn their flock that Dionesiac dances and initiation were forbidden’ (1984: 213). This meant that men must not dress like women nor women like men for ritual purposes, that the Dionysiac masks were no longer acceptable; and that the name of Dionysos must not be

¹⁰⁷ Arguments from silence are, of course, always slender ground from which to argue. Just because Nietzsche does not mention something does not mean he is not aware of it, nor that he does not think it important. I think he has been influenced by Girard’s ‘take’.

¹⁰⁸ He claims that the conception of the modern Dionysos over a hundred years ago was first proposed by Nietzsche, in reaction to his ‘various predecessors, and in conscious departure from them’ in *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1984: 205). It ended, he claims, ‘for all practical purposes, in 1972 when René Girard in *La violence et le sacré* carried the modern concept of Dionysus to its logical extreme.’ And, undergirding all of this, Henrich points to two transition periods of German Romanticism, ‘which prepared the way for Nietzsche’s Dionysus and French structuralism’. It is from there, Nietzsche’s Dionysos and French structuralism, Henrich suggests, that ‘the seeds of the Dionysus of the future’ may well be contained (1984: 206). Each of the preoccupations, loss of self, suffering and violence, Henrich argues, are pitched both positively and negatively. Thus, Erwin Rohde and Eric Dodds propose that ‘individual consciousness of the worshippers of Dionysus become totally submerged in the group consciousness’ (1984: 207).

invoked during the vintage (1984: 213; Trullianum II, can. 62).¹⁰⁹

It is when Henrichs comes to Hölderlin (whom Nietzsche much admired and who we have discussed previously and will continue to do so in Chapter 6), we see the Dionysos versus the Crucified come into focus, and the question of similarities and differences, is exposed. Henrich's interpretation of Hölderlin's view of the Greek gods is quite different from Girard's version. Henrich and other scholars as cited, seem together to confirm that Girard ought to have been a little better informed before using Hölderlin as a key exemplar to drive home Nietzsche's apostasy and the lesson that insanity is no excuse. Whereas Girard builds up a case for Hölderlin's gradual movement away from archaic religion, Henrich argues for his deep involvement with it and its profound influence on him to the point where his Christianity teeters on the verge of paganism.¹¹⁰

In this vein, Henrich draws our attention to those notable features of Hölderlin's identification of Christ as a *figura* of Dionysos (the wine god). And here it is noteworthy to underscore the fact, not lost on Henrich, that for Hölderlin it is Christ's generosity of spirit, rather than his suffering that is striking (1984: 217). Indeed, Henrich then proceeds to offer other parallels: both when they (Christ and Dionysos) leave the earth to bestow on humankind gifts of bread and wine, not just for their own sake, but also, as a permanent reminder of their former presence and as an implicit promise that they would eventually 'return'. In other words, Hölderlin was seeing the Eucharist and the resurrection, 'through pagan and pantheistic eyes' (1984: 217)—dare I say, flatly contradicting Girard's reading which seemed to suggest that Hölderlin had seen through archaism and had chosen the 'distance' offered by Christ. Nietzsche not only followed Hölderlin in this but made of it his own much more 'Christian' (as in 'pure' Christian, 'first Christian' not the fake manufactured Christianity of St Paul which in Nietzsche's reckoning, was followed slavishly by the quietist Lutheranism of his day). I shall argue in the last chapter that this is because Nietzsche,

¹⁰⁹ The 'Christian' position from hereon, for a time, was under his 'disguised' name of 'Bacchus' to be understood—noteworthy from this thesis' perspective—as *either the Antichrist or as a prefiguration of Christ*, and Pentheus as 'the *vir religiosus* preaching the gospel of temperance' (1984: 213).

¹¹⁰ First Henrich accredits him (translator of Pindar and Sophocles) as being 'imbued with their religious spirit' and was more familiar with the Greeks than most of his contemporaries, including Goethe and Schiller', claiming that this 'empathy with the Greeks and their beliefs sets [him] apart' (Henrich: 1984: 216). Another fact important for our Nietzsche case, is that Henrich not only underlines the fact that Hölderlin was particularly attracted to Dionysos, but that he subscribed to the notion that Dionysos was 'a precursor of Christ' and 'in one instance as his brother' which Henrich hails as 'a remarkable synthesis' (1984: 216).

paradoxically, had a greater handle on theology and ‘mere Christianity’ than did Hölderlin, even though Nietzsche’s identification with Christ at first comes across as more ‘secular’ in terms of his approach to Christ’s suffering, the legacy of a great virtue, the virtue of a man without *ressentiment*.¹¹¹

Of course, Henrich’s coverage is much more detailed than can be adequately conveyed in this chapter. For my reading, it falls short of what is on offer in Nietzsche’s use of the myth, and the way he applies it to the Greek theatre, for the following reasons. First, despite his recognition of Nietzsche’s pioneer role in the creation of the future Dionysos, Henrich misses the ‘big picture’ of the Nietzsche project. A starting point might have been what he sees Hölderlin strive to achieve in his poetry between 1800 and 1806, ‘when his prophetic sense was at its keenest,’ Henrich claims. He continues with this personal assessment, which provides some considerable insight into Nietzsche’s vision as well, but he never seems to concede this for the remainder of the essay (1984: 216):

we are shown a bold vision of a new Germany, indeed a new earth, in which the Greek past has merged with the Christian present, while the mission of the Greek gods becomes interchangeable with that of Christ.

In effect, what Henrich attributes to Hölderlin’s sense of vocation as a poet, he could so easily have ascribed to Nietzsche’s calling as a philosopher, psychologist, and philologist (the latter Henrich denies Nietzsche, siding with those who dismissed his *BT*, his first major publication which sabotaged his academic career, as betraying his academic role as philologist): ‘to add a Greek dimension to contemporary concerns [...] envisaged [Dionysus] as the precursor of Christ...’, (1984: 216). My contention which I shall pursue in the next chapter, and Chapter 6, is that while Nietzsche was Hölderlin’s kindred spirit, he practised that vocation in a different way and took it so much further.

Second, yes, Nietzsche was attracted to the Zagreus myth, because of its suffering, but much more for its generosity of spirit (again a conviction shared by Hölderlin) and its portrayal of opposition to the sacrificial system, but without resentment. As Poettcker has argued, the identification with Dionysos is much more than meets the eye, even more theistic (in an ascetic sense) than Henrich realises (Poettcker 2014: 8):

¹¹¹ While no complete version of the myth of Dionysus Zagreus exists, Henrich argues that most scholars agree that it is this myth, which Nietzsche follows.

When Nietzsche identifies with Dionysus, he does so to show how thin the sacrificial order is—and how violent it is. In revaluing values, Nietzsche identifies with Dionysus. He highlights the contingency, partiality, and fragility of the values enshrined in our political communities. [...] by doing so he unmasks the human impulse to appropriate God—to assign God a place *within* a sacrificial order rather than allowing God to remain sovereign... this is not only Hölderlin's insight it is Nietzsche's as well: "A God that one can appropriate is a god that destroys."

Poettcker's recommendation that we 'connect Girard's remarks on Hölderlin with Nietzsche' and see 'the mystical impulse... as common to them both' (Poettcker: 2014: 8), is thus worth pursuing, and will be explored in Chapter 6.

Third, Henrich's recommendation, 'What is needed is a return to a more flexible approach to Dionysos which avoids the one-sided attention to isolated aspects of the god' (Henrich: 1984: 234), I would suggest, can be met in Nietzsche's project to which Henrich has only paid scant attention, with his narrow focus on Dionysos, whereas Nietzsche's use of Dionysos goes far beyond just religion.¹¹²

Concluding Remarks:

The basic working parts of Girard's *MT* and the scapegoat mechanism have been introduced. In addition, Girard's contest with Nietzsche's whole argument about *ressentiment* has also been outlined. Nietzsche's *ressentiment* premise, Girard contends, must fail because it is couched in terms of reference which can only have purchase in a by-gone era dominated by a universally archaic hierarchical violent world which practised sacrifice as a mechanism for restoring peace. It is an age which no longer exists, one which Christ brought to an end by exposing and invalidating its scapegoat mechanism. But Nietzsche thinks, and behaves, Girard argues, as if nothing has changed—or as if the clock should be set back to a time when people admired revenge. Girard also firmly believes that Nietzsche by measuring *ressentiment* against the 'will-to-power,' has created the notion of a

¹¹² In the end so much of Nietzsche's work has been misunderstood, mostly but not exclusively (as we have seen with Henrich) from a religious standpoint. Who could express this misunderstanding more appropriately and passionately than Professor Alistair Kee in his *Nietzsche Against The Crucified*, citing Nietzsche's famous (infamous), ("Hat man mich verstanden? — Dionysos gegen den Gekreuzigten") (Have I been understood? Dionysos versus the Crucified" (WP 9)?

‘herd’ whose domination is “engraved in their being,” thereby again betraying a world view which is obsolete. For Nietzsche forgets, Girard points out, that he is now living in a ‘democratic world,’ “where even the most capable are never certain they have the dominance.” Of course, given Girard’s re-discovery of his Roman Catholic heritage (in which he is now heavily invested), of far more serious import for him, was Nietzsche’s mental illness, which itself not only epitomised the *ressentiment* pathology but must also, he claims, invalidated his entire life’s work. In other words, it is the very *ressentiment* malaise with which Nietzsche tags Christianity, which causes him to commit the ‘philosopher’s error’ in the first place. Thus, Girard concludes, Nietzsche’s refusal to acknowledge the demise of archaic beliefs in the light of their supersession by the Gospel (an acknowledgement which the poet Hölderlin did accept, alleges Girard) and his quest to self-divinize, must end in madness and apostasy.

These objections (which were anticipated and already challenged in the Introduction’s Literature Review and Chapter One’s detailed treatment of Nietzsche’s understanding of *ressentiment* and the notion of *amor fati*) have all now *grosso modo* been addressed.

Sufficient to say, that Girard’s number one Nietzschean question, ‘is there a difference between Dionysian and the Christian?’ opened up here and formerly challenged in the Introduction is now expanded upon by Lawtoo and Poettcker’s more sympathetic reading. The issues raised, among others, included:

- (a) the extent to which Girard’s use of key personalities like Hölderlin and Proust as counter-exemplars of what Nietzsche *should* have been, *should* have thought and *should* have done—is either accurate or fair
- (b) the extent to which the integrity of literary and sacred texts has been compromised
- (c) the extent to which the contest with Nietzsche has in the end unwittingly morphed into an ‘*ad hominem*,’ i.e., how much of the *ressentiment* which Girard sees in Nietzsche is more a projection of Christianity’s resentment regarding his attacks against its faith and its values

Bearing those issues in mind, Chapter 3 will now take the Girardian contest to an even greater depth of inquiry as to the *nature* of the Girardian contest with Nietzsche.

3 Nietzsche: Christianity's whipping boy- a case of misplaced resentment

***Ressentiment* in theology—a Girardian perspective and a Nietzschean defence**

There have been many Nietzsches, nearly all of them mistaken for *someone else*. We wonder how it happened that this Nietzsche, so often written about, is so little read... Nietzsche was the last atheist and René Girard his first reader.

'Nietzsche, The Last Atheist', in *Violence, Desire And the Sacred, Girard's Mimetic Theory, Across the Disciplines*, (Fleming and O'Carroll: 2012: 227-228), (eds.) Cowdell, Fleming and Hodge.

"Ruhm und Ewigkeit" [Glory and Eternity], whose last stanzas are one of the most beautiful mystics texts of all time—are a telling expression of his destiny, strongly hinting that madness may have been his way to win a strange, inconceivable salvation. In the end [Nietzsche] was closer to Christ than many who would claim to be Christians. That is the final thought that I would leave with the reader

A God Torn to Pieces, The Nietzsche Case ([2002] 2013: xvi)

3.1 The Girardian *contra* Nietzschean dialectic so far

As we have seen, the main thrust of Girard's critique is that he construes Nietzsche's interpretation of *ressentiment* as the 'philosopher's error' because it valorises 'the will to power' and in so doing, relegates *ressentiment* to the bottom rung of a ladder of agency which strips the individual of his freedom of choice. Girard decries what he perceives to be the reduction of the individual in the modern era to a stereotype—one which belongs to a by-gone era and an archaic pagan world to which Nietzsche wants to return.

I shall posit that Girard and Girardian scholarship in general (mostly but not exclusively) is largely opposed to his notion of *ressentiment* because of the way they perceive him to weaponise it in his attack on Christianity. I shall argue that this attack has been fundamentally misconstrued as dismissing the Christ of the *Evangel* altogether, which is not in fact the case. Indeed, we find that both Girard and Fornari agree that Nietzsche identified with the 'Crucified' in a way that very few Christians understand. This continuing

contradiction will be exposed in this chapter and the ones to come, as such a position needlessly obscures the compatibility of the two theories, in as much as Nietzsche's theory also takes *mimesis* seriously. The irony is that Nietzsche becomes Girard's scapegoat. And true to another of Girard's great insights, Girard himself falls into it without really knowing it, despite the fact that it was he himself who said, 'We cannot escape mimetism; we always participate in it in some way [...] I long tried to think of Christianity as in a higher position, but I have had to give up on that. I am now persuaded *we have to think from inside mimetism*' (Girard: [2007] 2010: 82). As we shall see far too often Girardian scholarship is so pressed to prove the theory, and so convinced of its high ground vantage point as the champion of the victim, and the champion of a 'Christian' cause, that it proceeds too quickly to mount an attack on someone they perceive to be the victimiser just because he seems to be aligned with an anti-Christian lobby.

In an interview with Thomas Bertonneau on March 7, 1987, following a lecture on "Sacrifice and Deconstruction" both Girard's prejudice and vulnerability were exposed. To Bertonneau's question, 'How far is your interest in religion... responsible for the defensive attitude many people take toward your theory' (*Conversations..., Prophet of Envy*, ed. Cynthia L. Haven), he answered, '...maybe 99.5%' previous to which, he also admitted, 'I can't get outside of myself... nobody is ever aware of himself as scapegoating another. It's always someone else who is guilty of scapegoating' (2020: 35).

3.2 The dialectic of the Girardian case against Nietzsche aims at his perceived entrenched madness and hatred of Christianity, his drive to self-divinise and his *ressentiment*

Fleming and O'Connell in their chapter curiously entitled "Nietzsche, The Last Atheist" (2012: (eds.) Cowdell. Fleming. and Hodge: 227-250) are representative of much of Girardian scholarship. That is why I have chosen to conduct a close case study of it in this chapter, and an even closer case study of Giuseppe Fornari. Their understanding of the Nietzsche project, is fundamentally, that most of his thinking is inspired by a hatred of Christianity, a desire to self-divinize, to overthrow God, and that it is driven by the very

ressentiment that he projects unto others. The thinking is, as we have seen, that modern philosophers have (as a phenomenon to be remarked upon) deliberately chosen to ignore Nietzsche's 'madness' and self-delusion. And the other aspect to be noted, is that generally, apart from the exceptions which have been documented in the previous chapter, they adhere to Girard's thinking in this, as exemplified in the following reflection (2012: 243; Girard, "The Founding Murder in the Philosophy of Nietzsche", 1988: 229-30):

Girard in this essay, as well as in his other writings on Nietzsche, sees this ["God is dead] as a systematic tendency among modern philosophers that itself needs explanation... How is it indeed that the philosopher who dwells so darkly on the murder of God can be treated as all freshened up and invigorated. Yesterday's sombre thinking has been replaced by a merry '68-style dissident; this is the playful, insouciant and frisky Nietzsche whom neither Lou Salomé nor Cosima would recognize.¹¹³

This thinking includes the following questions (2012: 240-243). First is he *mad*? What is the nature of his accusation? Why does the predominantly atheist crowd laugh? Is it because he is 'a leftover fool from a bygone age'? And what of the manner of the death of God? Does the pointedness of this turn him into a Christian? Or is he emblematic of the OT prophets and a forerunner of Zarathustra? All of which, in the context of a darkening that is enveloping the world are described, 'as troubled and troubling readings' (2012: 240). But then again, is he simply a new kind of seer, an atheist ringing the death knell of theistic belief?

For Girard the latter is problematic in the sense that here we have an atheist proclaiming an atheism which is unrecognized by the crowd (Girard: 1988: 230). The madness then becomes only a matter of the crowd's perception. But if *that* is the case, why does the madman, foreseeing as he does its misunderstanding, why does he then 'aggravate' and 'provoke' it? (Ibid, 230). Is it to polarise the crowd, and so arouse the curiosity of those 'rare individuals liable to comprehend him: those who find themselves

¹¹³In another section of the same article, they observe, Girard even speaks of a 'recipe,' which 'modern philosophers' follow, that calculatedly avoids Nietzsche's designation of the 'death of God' as 'murder.' Instead, they 'all go about very sweetly repeating, "God is dead... God is dead ..." without adding anything whatsoever' (2012: 243; Girard: 1998: 229-30). He dismisses the claim that this is an innocent oversight. Rather, he insists, more of a ploy to pander to an intellectual gallery that ignores "The Madman" and applauds the atheist. Fleming and O'Connell, again borrowing heavily from Girard and from a mimetic perspective, outline all the possibilities of how to understand the "The Madman's" message, and the questions that are raised.

exposed, like him, to the hostility of mediocre minds’(2012: 241; Ibid, 230)? ¹¹⁴

Here we might do well to heed Nietzsche’s warning in (*EH*, 1) to listen carefully enough to know *who* he is as opposed to who we think he is, or even worse, to mistake him for someone else. It is obviously a warning intended to be heeded. But the questions remain: did we *ever* really ‘know’ him, and if we claim to know him, did we in the end, nevertheless, still fall into a case of mistaken identity? Put simply—despite our best intentions and endeavours, will we ever know him? Nietzsche’s challenge, his plea, based on the findings of Chapter 1, is this (I paraphrase): “if you are careless with my project, you will *inevitably* get me wrong. It will be the inattention to detail, the selective hearing of you, my future listeners which will cause you to hear a different message, a message never delivered by me, but by the ‘phantom’ of your own ego”.

This is the bar of judgement before which any interpretation, including my own, must be assessed. It will all depend on how astute and discerning the listener is to what *Ecce Homo* in its original context meant. It is against such a canvas that we now consider Chris Fleming and John O’Carroll’s argument for ‘Nietzsche, The Last Atheist.’

First, they set down a disclaimer, ‘we do not... want to posit a single facet of this thinker as synecdoche for the whole,’ and the assurance that their argument will always be only ‘a single layer of Nietzsche without pretending to treat the whole’ (Fleming and O’Carroll: 2012: 228). Second, it is an argument whose intention is to focus on ‘Nietzsche’s anti-Christian stance.’ It seeks to unravel the mystery of ‘the Girardian Nietzsche, the Nietzsche concerned with the significance of the universe and life itself, the *Christocentric* Nietzsche’ and his ‘anti-Christian ferocity.’ This, it claims, has largely been ignored if not actually ‘refused’—a refusal to see, ‘which is one of the main things we seek to grasp in this chapter’ (2012: 228-229). Third, they explain, that this is all part of a ‘clearing’ up, a ‘building [up of] an approach,’ which, following Martin Heidegger, purports to be both ‘the revealing and concealing of what we think of as being’ i.e., its purpose is to seek to ‘correct an oversight, by clearing it away’ (2012: 228; Heidegger: 1978: 178). Fourth, Fleming and O’Carroll endeavour to accomplish this in two ways: the first is the major one. It is to present ‘the other Nietzsches,’ as ‘rich as they are,’ if only to discard them. These include,

¹¹⁴ The assumption that Fleming and O’Connell make is that Nietzsche *is* the madman and that his main purpose is to overthrow the “Christian God”.

Nietzsche the novelist, the libertine, Nazi, radical democrat, Zoroastrian, German supremacist, Buddhist, Bacchanalian, Nietzsche-the-cool. In the process, they admit that this clearing process might ‘conceal other Nietzsches’ and concede that the Nietzsche they have chosen ‘freely to approach,’ might also involve, ‘much overgrowth and obstruction.’ The second way is to fully explicate ‘the Girardian Nietzsche’ (2012: 229).

Fleming and O’Carroll, then turn their attention to some of the ‘other Nietzsches’. They include the one concocted by Heidegger in his four-volume work on Nietzsche, which, in their opinion, ‘deliberately, even ostentatiously’ underplays Nietzsche’s preoccupations. For example, for Heidegger, ‘even Nietzsche’s pronouncements about “the death of God” are not at bottom about God at all, but actually about the end of the “suprasensory world” (2012: 231; 1977: 61). For Fleming and O’Carroll, *all the readings*, be they German or French and even English readings, ‘there has been a failure *of reading* all the same.’ It is Heidegger, who misleads them all with his analytic of *Dasein*. Heidegger’s praise of Nietzsche as historian and his overall sensitivity to “historicality” (2012: 231; 1996: 361-2), diverts attention from the real issue—Nietzsche’s obsessive hatred of Christianity, and so his reluctant lapse into what Heidegger believed to be a kind of disguised metaphysics, which now demands that the “last metaphysician” be overthrown (2012: 231; 1987: 8). The attention subsequently focuses on how, ‘despite *Things Hidden* being a work that is evidently secular, Girard has ‘suffered from the same allergic reaction among *his* critics’ as the refusal of Nietzsche’s critics to engage with his ‘ferocious’ anti-Christian stance’ (2012: 229). Here Cesàreo Bandera’s *The Sacred Game* is cited as exposing the ‘modern lay scholar, the representative of the profane or the secular [who] senses this danger [sacred roles that offend authorities] with a certain amount of anxiety, and vigorously protests against it. Therefore, they insist, it is only appropriate to refer to this type of reaction as some sort of “sacred allergy”’ (2012: 229; Bandera: 1994: 2).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Fleming and O’Carroll claim that this allergy is really a disguised prejudice at work. That it is all part of a general ‘post-war’ understanding of Nietzsche, but has now been exposed by Girard (“Dionysus versus the Crucified” *MLN* 99, 4, (1984): 816-35, 816; (2012: 230):

Why should Nietzsche be exonerated from an attitude that a majority of intellectuals regarded as sound? No apology needed to be made. No apology was made. Nietzsche was in the clear. But the anti-Christian polemic of Nietzsche has received scant attention since World War II. Why? If they were asked—they never are—contemporary Nietzscheans would probably answer, that their thinker’s passionate attitude toward religion has lost its relevance?

From the perspective of this thesis, Girard's claim seems to be that contemporary academics 'resent' any mention of religion, and especially of the Christian religion. The 'later Nietzsche' in *Ecce Homo*, 'did not lose his mind through disease, but rather it was because he could not bear the consequences of his own thought' (Ibid, 827), something that modern scholars would rather repress—is the inference. They suggest that Nietzsche, like the contemporary scholars who followed him, are subject to the same 'allergy' contaminating modern scholarship. A scholarship, which cannot bear the consequences of *its* own thoughts, which I take to mean, the dismissal of the relevance of religion and Christianity in a postmodern world. It is an opinion, which I find hard to recognise is the case, at least from my reading of that scholarship, including that of his most controversial works, *The Anti-Christ*, and *Ecce Homo*. Although, as I have pointed out in the Introduction, we do find this is the case with Heidegger, Saarinen (2019) and quite a number of others, but certainly not all.¹¹⁶

In Fleming and O'Carroll's eyes, there is no end it seems, of such conscriptions, misappropriations, and deconstructions. Thus, Alphonso Lingis's 'high-baroque babble' turns Nietzsche's eternal return into a metaphor for 'the fate of the Dionysian theatre of sensible appearances, of world without being, without unity, without identity' and the death of God. In the end eternal recurrence becomes 'nothing more than the "dissolution of the ego"', and what 'recurs is not being, but becoming; not identity, ideality, but difference' (2012: 233; Lingis: 1985: 43). Under Schrift's and Perry's re-fashioning, Nietzsche, the author of *The Anti-Christ*, is now 'not so much a philosopher concerned with Christ as a movement, flux, and creativity' as a 'thinker of becoming' (2012: 233; Deleuze 1986: xiii). Foucault's transformation of Nietzsche's analysis of morality, becomes 'an analysis of knowledge' (Schrift: 1996: 27). Each in turn, appropriates Nietzsche for their own ends and in doing so repress Nietzsche's core business of the discrediting of religion. Hence, Foucault '[cleaves] to the idea that Nietzsche's 'method could be imported without moral content,' simply

¹¹⁶ Fleming and O'Carroll, however, then mount a battery of claims to bolster their case. Just as 'Heidegger turns Nietzsche's attack on Christianity into evidence of metaphysics, so does he turn the idea of eternal recurrence into a scene in which values themselves are turned into a game' (2012: 231). Heidegger turns it all into playfulness, they claim, 'the concept of a total value' now becomes 'a non-concept' upstaged by 'this *parvenu* called the will to power, which pursues only its own preservation and enhancement' (Heidegger: 1978: 209). Then comes Deleuze, whose hands, corrupted by his attempt to downgrade Hegel, refashions Nietzsche to 'become a philosopher of "multiplicity" and "difference" and which, through smoke and mirrors, transforms Nietzsche's attack on Christianity by genealogical means into an act of 'weighing and evaluation' (2012: 233; Deleuze: 1986: 4).

because its principles were based on ‘power’ (2012: 234).¹¹⁷

Such an environment (and that is what the long digression from Fleming and O’Carroll has been all about) is why modern and post-modern intellectuals ignore the ‘God’ of Nietzsche, *not* just because Nietzsche said God was dead, but what is at stake here: the *anthropological* question (2012: 237). I think their inference is that this God-avoidance is due to its own kind of *ressentiment* that God should be mentioned at all (which I have argued in the Introduction is not without foundation but overstated). Consequently, the presumption of God avoidance is further pursued. At this level, through the door of transcendence, they ask, how might the notion of God be finally approached? Régis Debray: 2003, speaks of the human need to ‘transcend’ and the ‘immediate experience to supply meaning’ (2012: 237; 2003). For Debray, ‘there is little difference in the need for a “cause beyond” that which drove Christian evangelism or Marxist proselytizing in the 1960s (2012: 237; 2003). But of course, there is a difference, must be a difference, argues Emmanuel Levinas. Heidegger, and his “totalizing” form of thought’ must be rejected (2012: 238). To illustrate this—and to argue for it—Levinas is chosen to show how matters of universal concern are steered towards the local, to the individual and to ‘specificity.’ From ontology to ethics, as encapsulated by this rhetorical question: “The face of the other, in its defenceless nakedness—is it not already... an asking?” (2012: 238; [1994] (1998: 110).

Here at the last, is Fleming and O’Connell’s champion, the one and only critic who could take ‘explicit moral aim at this *homo deus*’ who has rejected ‘the Heideggerian turn.’ The critic who ‘watches and waits’ and takes note of, “The inhuman [...] who looks always to some greater good as he takes children from their mothers: the seat of God, the end of the world, the end of the human’ a ploy exposed by Levinas (2012: 238-239; Levinas: 1998:

¹¹⁷ As Fleming and O’Carroll intoned earlier, ‘How convenient!’ (2012: 233), convenient that Nietzsche could be so easily ‘conscripted to a quasi-libertarian cause.’ How could this be, they ask, when even a devotee of Nietzsche’s of the stature of a Jacques Derrida, ‘(whose undeclared nose appeared to be perpetually pressed up against the glass from the other side of religious belief),’ is portrayed as, ‘wary of the earlier philosopher, and with good reason?’ (2012: 235). Meantime, the “new” French philosophers, ‘spen[d] their time playing out theories... to miniscule resentments, with rhetorical promises of resistance’ (2012: 236), totally ignoring the brave new world of Nietzsche—one, ‘without gods or God,’ but one which, ‘retained’ ‘the terrifying power of divinity’ (borrowing from Jean-Luc Marion), one which featured, ‘the *inconceivable* human’ (2012: 236; Marion: 1991: 46). From Gans’s new perspective, the ‘minimal conception of God’ must be ‘the name of the universal,’ which he calls “the inhuman horizon of the human” (2012: 237; 1993: 31). For Gans the question (influenced by Nietzsche and shaped by the post-faith environment) is not so much ‘whether there is a God, but why it is that “we came to talk about God at all”’, (2012: 237; 1993: 32).

110/113), a revelation not lost on him.

Now their attention turns to the demon ('a *demon* no less') who announces the eternal recurrence, and a madman who announces the death of God (2012: 239-240). This opens up to another arena of conflict and dispute. The former (a demon, 'a kind of philosopher-critic': 2012: 239/240) calls for a major re-orientation of morals, a radical revaluation of values. The latter (the madman) proclaims 'the brute fact of atheism,' the "new atheism", and 'its manner of existing' (2012: 241). For Girard the madman is 'both an exponent of the archaic sacred and a seer of that same sacred to come, rising over the ashes of Christianity itself' (2012: 241). Scott Cowdell (2013):

... having been a secularizing and modernizing force in history, Christianity is now labelled anti-modern by a purportedly secular mood of militancy, which is more accurately described as anti-secular. This is the latest festival of atonement that Nietzsche's aphorizing madman called for, witnessing the archaic sacred being murdered and calling up the forces of eternal return, Girard does not believe this militant pseudo-secularism.¹¹⁸

Thus, despite their earnest intention to 'posit a single facet of this thinker' and not make of that single facet, 'a synecdoche for the whole,' Fleming and O'Carroll fail on both counts: they reduce Nietzsche to a single strand divorced from his philosophical project, and then go on and in fact make of that strand a synecdoche for the whole. All this in the name of being intent on 'unravelling the mystery of the Girardian Nietzsche.' Consequently, the philosopher Nietzsche and his actual project are lost to us and all that remains standing is the straw figure of the Girardian Nietzsche. In essence, Fleming and O'Carroll's claim that 'conscriptations, misappropriations and deconstructions' ought to be blamed on 'post war understanding,' and the 'prejudices of contemporary philosophers.' However, their understanding is itself guilty of similar conscriptions, misappropriations, and deconstructions vis à vis Nietzsche's eternal recurrence which they turn into a 'demonisation,' based on the unrelenting assumption, that Nietzsche is the 'possessed' madman. An assumption with which I agree, but the nuance as we shall see, is lost.

¹¹⁸ Girard insists, claim Fleming and O'Connell, that 'there is a *radical equivalence* between this murder and the birth of the gods.' The three would argue that Nietzsche causes us to read the eternal recurrence in such a way, and that "negating and destroying are conditions of saying Yes" (2012: 241/2; *Ecce Homo*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans., ed. by W. Kaufmann, 4: 784).

3.3 Does the Girardian polemic then not only mistaken who Nietzsche is, but also misrepresents his thinking (as demonic)?

In addressing the cardinal question regarding Nietzsche's philosophy, 'But what *does* it mean?'—Fleming and O'Connell closely follow Girard's interpretation, and in doing so leave themselves open to the criticism of selective reading, the very criticism that they aim at contemporary philosophers. First, they focus on Girard's 'close attention to *EH*... in making extensive use of a few passages from *The Will To Power* concludes that Nietzsche's 'moral rendering' is 'horrific because it foreswears compassion,' and does not, 'deviate from its consequences' (2012: 245; Girard: "Dionysus versus the Crucified", 820/824-5):

Nietzsche's value judgement is untenable. Pious efforts to exonerate the thinker for the consequences of his own thinking are misguided. It is undeniable that he himself extended the scope of this judgement to political and ethical questions in a manner that can only provide encouragement to the worst ideological distortions.¹¹⁹

For Fleming and O'Connell, then, this is all about 'heeding the "darkening"' (sub-section heading, 2012: 239). Though they acknowledge that the eternal recurrence is 'a kind of thought experiment, a way of testing out what a good life really consists in' (Williams: 2001: xvi), it is something about which they also demur: 'The passage, however, has imagined a personage, a *demon* no less, proposing the idea' 2012: 239), because it comes from the mouth of a 'demon.' It is the demonic which is uppermost in their mind, rather than the 'thought experiment.' So, the question is left begging. What can all this mean? Surely, the admonition can only be obeyed if it is understood?

Here, then, is a short recapitulation of the Girardian hermeneutic. What most preoccupies it, is Nietzsche's apparently mad claim, that 'he is who he is' ("Hört mich! denn der und der"). But perhaps not so mad when one recalls G-d's self-naming to Moses in Exodus 3: 14—*Ehyeh asher ehyeh* "I am that I am", better translated by Chief Rabbi Sachs as

¹¹⁹ In effect, Fleming and O'Connell subscribe to Girard's revisionist reading of Nietzsche, which condemns Heidegger and his followers for 'simply' refusing 'to see what is on the page' or reading 'fanciful things *into* it that are not on the page,' doing what his followers Foucault and Deleuze after him have done. They congratulate Girard for returning, 'almost with wonder' to the 'undeviating relentlessness of Nietzsche's pursuit' and his "fierce stubbornness in opposing the inspiration of the bible in favour of the victim" (2012: 245; Girard: 825). To Girard's conclusion, they add this evaluation: that 'The resulting philosophy Nietzsche generated was 'worthy of the glassy-eyed gods, but not humanity' (2012: 245).

“I shall be *who* or *how* or *where* I shall be.” Girard oblivious to this resonance, dismisses it as madness. Instead, Girard pays close attention to *EH*, ‘by making extensive use of a few passages from *The Will to Power*,’ especially aphorism 1052 (2012: 244). In the light of the question, which Nietzsche himself is said to have posed: (“Hat man mich verstanden? – Dionysos gegen den Gekreuzigten” (Have I been understood? – Dionysus versus the Crucified” (*WP* 9). From these two excerpts, Girard deduces the meaning that furnishes him with ‘his own profound reasons for not accepting it’ (2012: 245). Firstly, what excites him is that Nietzsche seems to understand that while the deaths (Jesus’ and Dionysos’) are ‘the same,’ their meaning is ‘different.’ The fact that Nietzsche understood what the difference is, was of critical importance for Girard, but the conclusion that Nietzsche draws, continues to repel him. Girard can only attribute a wilful rejection on Nietzsche’s part of what is self-evident: that, ‘While Dionysus approves and organises the lynching of the single victim, Jesus and the Gospels disapprove’ (“Dionysus versus the Crucified”: 820).

We have reviewed the question of Dionysos and the variant interpretations, which accompany him in the previous chapter. I shall revisit this review in my critique in the last section. Meantime, it is important to gauge the details of the Girardian objections. Cowdell (2018) is our best source for an update. First, he underlines Girard’s major concession that Nietzsche achieved... (Girard *The Girard Reader*: 1996: 254; 2018: 46):

something that the Christian thinkers have always failed to achieve. They have never dared... He put his finger on that “sword” that Jesus has brought, the sword destructive of human culture, the sword no human being can fail to dread and resent even though—or is it because? – it belongs to what Pascal calls *l’ordre de la charité*.¹²⁰

For most Girardians (not all as we have seen) “The madness is an integral part of the Nietzschean adventure; the thinker overturns the pendulum of his own thought in order to

¹²⁰ Here the main reason for the Girardian opposition to Nietzsche’s Dionysian ‘thought experiment’ becomes clear (I shall name it a ‘provocation’ in the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth’s parables and sayings). Girard perceives Nietzsche as deliberately choosing the ‘false sacred.’ So much so, Nietzsche is then credited with ‘return[ing] [it] in a new form.’ Cowdell, along with some other Girardians, argues that because ‘the old religious world has been spun out of its orbit since the founding murder was revealed by Christ,’ the old pattern has been permanently ruptured, “breaking thereby, the mainspring of eternal recurrence, lead[ing] us this time to the idea of an end without a [new] beginning.” (Girard: 1996: 245; 2018: 47). For Girard the ‘difference’ between Dionysos and “The Crucified” is “the difference between Nietzsche and Wagner”—as we have seen and shall continue to see, is a false equation—and the plunge into madness is the final confusion of that difference, the shift from Dionysos versus the Crucified to Dionysos and the Crucified. When this difference collapses, he claims, “Nietzsche goes mad” (Girard: 1996: 64-65; Hamerton-Kelly: 1992: 117).

prevent further oscillations and the intolerable suffering that accompanies them” (Girard: 1996: 48). Once again, this conviction that Nietzsche sacrificed himself to madness, is accompanied by a question: was Nietzsche when he rushed forward to protect a horse being beaten, subject of a long-suppressed compassion, an ‘implosion’ of compassion that overwhelmed him? Fornari (who will be the object of a detailed case study further on in the chapter) is in no doubts about the answer ([2002] 2013: 113):

Nietzsche must have sensed the truth of suffering in the beaten horse, such as he had long suffered himself and exorcised in the worst way: in the suffering of the substitute victim that he had long sought to have died in place of himself. Now that all is lost, he can recognize such suffering. It seems reasonable to conclude that this was the only way for him to have access to a feeling of compassion so long denied.

For Girard, Nietzsche’s failed strategy was “a properly *Luciferian* error,” mostly because ‘Nietzsche refuses the opportunity to be a “light bearer” for the truth of the victim that he perceives—a truth that remains opaque to atheist ethnologists, as indeed to many Christians’ (Cowdell: 2018: 49). He even goes so far as to blame Nietzsche not just for his own personal madness, but also for the “Dionysian and sacrificial choices along the axis of his writings” which resulted in “a madness every bit as significant as the political and historical insanity which followed” (Girard: *When Things Begin*: 135).¹²¹

For Girard, in *Ressentiment, Reflections on Mimetic Desire and Society*, (2015), *ressentiment* is a ‘boomerang effect’, of which he says, ‘Nietzsche was clearly a victim.’ He continues to claim that ‘His madness was not a causal, insignificant accident which his unquestioning admirers try to make credible’ (2015: xiv). Paul Dumouchel in the Foreword to this same publication, prefers to use the term ‘resentment’, and even after that admits that ‘resentment’ is not *ressentiment*, and refers to it as such, his assessment aligns with Girard and Tomelleri’s, in designating its place of less importance, than say, revenge. However, building from a foundational statement (following Nietzsche and Max Scheler) which claims *ressentiment*, to be ‘a form of frustrated resentment,’ indeed a ‘failed

¹²¹ Under the subtitle, ‘Human and Inhuman,’ Fleming and O’Connell conclude, that in Nietzsche’s world ‘there is no need for mercy or compassion.’ They also conclude, that because thinkers in the twentieth century confine Nietzsche’s religious concerns to the margins of his real project, to that extent, ‘these Nietzscheans have killed him.’ They assess Girard’s treatment of Nietzsche as a profound legacy, one which carries ‘the level of the discussion about Christianity’ in terms of its ‘*anthropological* significance’ and Christianity’s ‘fate in modernity,’ and ‘its role in modern philosophy, into the main arena of intellectual discussion.’ (2012: 246).

resentment' (2015: xviii), Dumouchel concludes his assessment with this moral reflection on Tomelleri's book (2015: xxvi):

Freedom and resentment are our lot. That is, freedom from resentment and freedom through resentment, and a freedom we will only keep if we do not turn resentment into our scapegoat. That is the central lesson of this remarkable little book that challenges our beliefs and certainty.

Thus, in sum, Dumouchel's argument concerning *ressentiment's* place in the mimetic cycle includes the following observations. Firstly, that resentment does have its unique features, and is not a straight re-play of resentment, 'For resentment does not arise out of just any type of failure to react or to avenge an offense... but only when this incapacity reflects the agent's weakness... Ressentiment is a disease of the weak' (2015: xviii-xix). Secondly, 'Ressentiment disguises the truth of its own resentment; it lies to itself and others.' Thirdly, it is in essence a 'misrecognition that is at the heart of resentment.' Here Dumouchel infers that Nietzsche and Scheler were right to claim, 'it has changed the world [by instituting] a new social, cultural, and religious order, characterized by equality, democratic rights and humanitarian sentiments, by care for the weak, and for victims.' But these virtues, 'are secretly animated by failed resentment. They constitute the revenge of the weak, the losers' (2015: xix). Overall, it is Dumouchel's conviction that Nietzsche as *maître du soupçon*, a master of suspicion, uses the term resentment to uncover the unsavoury motivations that 'lie hidden behind our democratic and humanitarian self-satisfaction, behind Christian charity and forgiveness', a term that calls into question 'our claims to moral superiority' (Ibid, xx).¹²²

A Girardian reading, argues then, that Nietzsche is wrong when he applies the term to individuals. Even when he is right about the 'close relationship that exists between resentment and Christian revelation,' he fails 'to understand exactly how the two

¹²² The three commentators seriously contest not just Nietzsche's definition but also his application of the term *ressentiment*. Dumouchel obviously feels he speaks for others. What follows is the kernel of the argument. At issue is the whole 'conceptual structure... Nietzsche... had imposed upon the idea of resentment.' This includes the whole panoply of 'weakness,' 'hidden desire for revenge' the harbouring of an 'envy that fails to express itself directly,' and most significantly 'Christianity' as 'an expression of resentment' –in effect, the trademarks of 'weak and morally immature individuals' (Ibid, xxi). These characteristics, claims Dumouchel, are to be distinguished from Nietzsche's admiration of revenge, 'as a form of self-affirmation whose goal is to re-establish the individual as what he or she fundamentally is. Ressentiment has as its objective, 'to take stock of our new anthropological condition, initiated by Christian revelation' (Ibid, xxiii). For Tomelleri, resentment is closely related to the 'process of secularization... the slow historical transformation from societies where victims are sacred.'

phenomena [Christianity and resentment] are related to each other' (Ibid, xxiv). Tomelleri, claims Dumouchel, succeeds in 'completely demystif[ying] resentment... licens[ing] resentment and giv[ing] us the freedom to be *ressenti*' (i.e., to be resentful), (Ibid, xxiv). Apparently, 'it is not such a dirty word!' he claims. All three believe that Nietzsche is scandalized by resentment only because he is both 'attracted and repulsed by it' (Ibid, xxv). In short, the mimetic reading is that the 'concept of resentment is itself an expression of resentment'! (Ibid, xxv).

Tomelleri, endorsed by Dumouchel then arrives at the following final assessment and recommendation (Ibid, xxv-xxvi), which I shall examine more closely in the final sections of this chapter:

There is, argues Tomelleri, no need to be scandalised by resentment. Not that resentment is good, but it is ambiguous, and its ambiguity is that of mimetic desire itself, which we cannot dismiss from our life. It provides occasions of conflict and baseness, resentment can fuel violence, discord, and injustice, but it can also open opportunities for growth, for justice and for inventing institutions that are better adapted to the transformation of our new anthropological condition at a time when the traditional means of protection against violence are disappearing, when politics is losing its sacred aura, and when veiled attempts are being made to sacralise religions anew.

3.4 Does Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment* despite mainstream Girardian dismissal, deserve a reputable place in broader theological discourse?

We begin with Fraser's more recent coverage in a series of articles in *The Guardian* in 2008. While Fraser is not a Girardian scholar *per se*, he had written a book, entitled *Redeeming Nietzsche, On the Piety of Unbelief* (2002), devoted to the theological implications of Nietzsche's hypothetical thinking about soteriology, 'these different experiments' (2002: 2) in the form of Nietzsche's 'redemptive project' and the attack on Christianity, to which we shall return shortly.¹²³

¹²³ Here it is important to note that it is not just institutional Christianity which is imbued with cowardice, argues Fraser, and branded by *ressentiment* and its characteristic trademark, impotence—it affects philosophers too. In Nietzsche's words, philosophers generally are 'conceptual idolaters' who deal in 'conceptual mummies' (*Twilight of the Gods*), in the sense that they are opposed to change and are addicted to the fixed, the unchanging and the eternal—in contradistinction to the flux of life, which he so admired in the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus. For Fraser, however, 'ressentiment is the

Here, it is important to note that Fraser appears to agree with Girard's readings of the Nietzschean *ressentiment*, as too weak a notion to do justice to the complex and violent human condition characteristic of our era. Following Girard, he agrees that Nietzsche 'could afford the luxury of resenting *ressentiment* so much so it appeared a fate worse than real vengeance. Being absent from the scene, real vengeance was never seriously apprehended' (cited in Fraser, Part 5).¹²⁴ Coming from such an unbiased position, Fraser's corroboration of Girard's reflection, would appear to deal Nietzsche's *ressentiment* premise a devastating blow were it not for Fraser's last moment concession which might cause us to think again. That is, if we take Fraser's point about how some current expressions of Christian theology such as the evangelical doctrine of penal substitution (among other manifestations) are abhorrent to the tenants of true Christianity, I shall later argue that it might be possible to allow that this itself is the vestigial evidence of the remnants of Christianity's deviation from its 'original path' of the good news, as is Nietzsche's claim.¹²⁵

In the 2002 treatment of the theological implications for Nietzsche's *ressentiment*, Fraser's slant on it takes on yet another point of view. This view contradicts his later position. I speculate whether this might be because he was seeing things too closely through a Girardian lens. In his earlier treatment, Fraser seems to follow and approve of Bonhoeffer's respect for Nietzsche's slant on *ressentiment* (here I am not suggesting that Boheoffer agrees with *all* of Nietzsche's viewpoints, however, he was certainly very sympathetic towards them).

Firstly, Fraser highlights an extract from Bonhoeffer's 1929 Barcelona lecture, where the theologian recognizes, that the Christian gospel 'stands beyond good and evil' (2002: 5; Bonhoeffer (1929: 37). What follows is worth citing in full:

Thus, it was by no means Fr. Nietzsche who first penetrated 'beyond good and evil,' even though it was on this basis that he denounced the 'moral poison' of

collateral damage of forgiveness' (Part 5- 'Breaking the cycle of conflict').

¹²⁴ By quoting an example, which Girard offers, drawn from a description of a fight in which Nietzsche acquired his scar from a university rival, Fraser seems to agree with the assessment of weakness as an expression of Nietzsche's own inadequacy and sees it as confirmed by Nietzsche's own account of a duel, as recorded, and commented on by Girard:

"Within two or three days our hero had recovered, except for a small slanting scar across the bridge of his nose which remained there throughout his life and did not look at all bad on him. More in the style of a romantic hero, than one who has suffered deeply..."

¹²⁵ Fraser's concession reads as follows (Part 5):

There is an important rider to all of this, however. For quite a lot of Christian theology has little place for forgiveness [...] This nasty and pernicious theology is built around the idea of a holy lynching and forgiveness plays little part.

Christianity. But, however much it may have come to be obscured, this insight belongs to the patrimony of the gospel itself.

Bonhoeffer's acknowledgement is in fact foundational to the present thesis. Even Fraser admits that Bonhoeffer's assessment may be correct (2002: 5; *BGE* 164): 'Nietzsche himself seems to interpret Jesus' attitude towards good and evil in these terms when he writes in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "Jesus said to his Jews: the law was made for servants – love God as I love him, as his son! What do we sons of God have to do with morality!") – an affinity which is the basis of Bonhoeffer's Nietzscheanism.¹²⁶

I shall later argue that we are permitted, using this frame of reference, to go even further, than just 'because of his or her life in Christ', because that would be privileging 'Christianity' in a way that neither Jesus of Nazareth nor Nietzsche intended (in essence this shall address Fraser's question: 'How is it possible to square a passage such as this with the idea that Nietzsche's fundamental insight is that those who speak of salvation are being disloyal to their humanity?' (Fraser: 2002: 74). This possibility is imbedded in Bonhoeffer's recognition, derived from his subscription to 'orthodox' Lutheran theology and its conviction that 'freedom is the essence of salvation, and salvation is only possible, 'beyond good and evil,' 'beyond, that is, the devious delusions of ethical self-righteousness.' Fraser then goes on to extend even this to include the remarkable understanding that, 'Like Nietzsche, Bonhoeffer believes all ethics, and Christian ethics no less, to be dangerous corruptions' (Ibid, 5).

Fraser, secondly, notes that Bonhoeffer also believed that the knowledge of good and evil takes humanity further away from our original unity with God, "The knowledge of good and evil shows that [humanity] is no longer one with his origin" (Fraser: 2002: 5; Bonhoeffer: *Ethics* 3). And once again, Fraser is able to see parallels between this and Nietzsche's 'telling passage in *The Anti-Christ* [which]... [speaks] of a pre-lapsarian community "at one" with its God and with itself" (*AC* 25; 2002: 5). This is tantamount to a 'Religionless Christianity' for both Nietzsche and Bonhoeffer. Thirdly, Fraser pinpoints the

¹²⁶ Fraser's reflections on this unexpected resonance is also worth quoting in full, in as much as it is a strong endorsement of my entire thesis and the critique, which follows in this chapter (2002: 5; Bonhoeffer: 1929: 40):

This aphorism does seem to suggest that Nietzsche is claiming an affinity with Jesus' teaching (both denouncing 'morality') ... For Bonhoeffer the freedom and free-spiritedness of the "Übermensch" that is made possible by the capacity of the Übermensch to operate beyond the dictates of morality, is remarkably similar to the Christian, who is likewise able to operate beyond conventional morality because of his or her life in Christ.

fact that Bonhoeffer's exploration of 'the betrayal of inwardness', like the betrayal of 'metaphysics' resonates with Nietzsche's own quarrel with Christianity, because they 'attempt to locate what gives human life its ultimate value in some realm beyond the earth' which, in effect, degrades and disparages earth-bound fleshly existence' (2002: 7). Fourthly, and astutely, Fraser later in his chapter 'Redeeming Redemption' not only defines 'the death of God' as a 'historical happening for which Nietzsche claims no credit,' he also then exposes Nietzsche's real target in his *ressentiment* foray, 'not God *per se* but rather patterns of thought inscribed into European culture by Christian soteriology' (2002: 73). It is there that 'these patterns of *ressentiment* and self-hate are exposed,' which are demonstrably involved in 'an almost infinite capacity for reinvention' (ibid, 73). Fifthly, notwithstanding all these resonances, Fraser also draws attention to what he calls 'the fly in the ointment,' which, curiously he cites as the "Übermensch" (GM II, 24; ibid. 73). I say 'curiously,' because I would have thought Bonhoeffer's previous definition of the Übermensch would point to a much more positive accounting of that term. His allies, Fraser argues, are well known and respected Nietzschean scholars, Keith Ansell-Pearson (1994: 102), Daniel Conway (1989: 212), Maudmarie Clarke (1990: 273ff.). Consecutively, each dismisses Nietzsche's notion of the "Übermensch" for its 'nihilism... dissatisfaction with the present "man," which corresponds to an 'ascetic ideal'; 'a nihilistic commitment to the deficiency of the human condition'; and finally, its 'desire to revenge [Nietzsche] against life.' I shall later protest that these evaluations, too, though coming from Nietzsche scholars are more a betrayal of a series of miss-readings, which take Nietzsche's statements out of their total 'canonical' context, which Bonhoeffer also could see might be the case. Sixthly, Fraser is again astute enough to reveal that among 'Christian' thinkers there are 'a whole range of different and competing accounts of what salvation involves' (2002: 74).¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Further, he concedes that both the Jewish scriptures, and the gospels in the New Testament provide interpretations of salvation that are totally compatible with Nietzsche's seemingly unorthodox claims, citing the Exodus 'act of liberation,' and 'Jesus' healing those who are sick' as examples. Neither of them, he claims, 'point us away from human life but, on the contrary, suggest that salvation is to be had by being fully human' (2002: 75). I would suggest that Barth's praise of Jesus of Nazareth as "Dieser Mensch ist *der* Mensch" ('This man is *the* man') gets close to what Nietzsche admires in his Jesus of Nazareth. Finally, Fraser allows for other ways of looking at Nietzsche's espousal of *ressentiment* that are often self-contradictory betraying, in part, I suspect his ambivalent response to the Nietzsche project and affected by his acceptance of Girard's criticisms at face value.

Fraser realizes that of all people, Nietzsche, ‘knew the temptation of *ressentiment*’ (2002: 88). Here he allows for Arthur Danto’s (1988) interpretation. He claims, for example, that Nietzsche’s attack on Christianity is more about health than it is about ideology. Thus, his *GM* becomes more of a ‘medical book’ than a philosophy (2002: 88; Danto: 1988: 19). From this perspective, Nietzsche’s thesis amounts to one of advocating for a response to suffering that reduces its ‘intentional’ impact’ (Ibid, 88). By this is meant the reduction of the psychological trauma, as opposed to the external source (‘extensional’) about which, at the moment of its inevitable and unavoidable incidence very little can be done. Here, values systems come critically into play. Danto argues, that ‘the goal of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy’ is all about ‘the elimination of surplus suffering engendered by Western morality’ (1988: 320). We deduce from this that such a strategy might reduce/manage *ressentiment*. Of course, Danto’s assumption that Nietzsche is advocating a ‘salvation’ that totally fesses up to ‘the total meaninglessness of life,’ (1988: 89) makes light of Nietzsche’s whole project, as we shall outline below. Fraser then focuses on Nietzsche’s combative stance on institutional Christianity as not just a ‘false religion,’ but a ‘pathological’ one, with the caveat that not all religion is pathological (2002: 89). Fraser wonders whether there is not a standing contradiction in Nietzsche’s logic if previously he has argued for a reduction in suffering? Perhaps Fraser puts an end to *that* discussion by appealing to Simone Weil’s attitude to suffering which he claims is closest to understanding Nietzsche’s take when she recommends that, ‘We should seek neither to escape suffering nor to suffer less, but to remain untainted by suffering’ (2002: 90; Weil: 1963: 73). What Nietzsche is advocating, is to turn one’s mindset towards suffering/sickness into a life-affirming attitude, rather than a descent into pessimism and nihilism. This comes through strongly in Nietzsche’s moment of candor when the mask is removed (*GS* 35-36):

You see I do not want to take leave ungratefully from that time of severe sickness whose profits I have not yet exhausted even today. I am very conscious of the advantages that my fickle health gives me over more robust squares... Life – that means for us constantly transforming all that we are into light and flame – also everything that wounds us; we simply can do no other. And as for sickness, are we not almost tempted to ask whether we could get along without it.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ To which Fraser’s response is, ‘Nietzsche believe[s] pain to have an important part to play’ and at times suggests ‘that sickness is a necessary prerequisite of health’ (2002: 91). This kind of Nietzschean argument, I shall posit, only seems mad to those who have *not* suffered, or been sick. Then there is Fraser’s suggestion that we pay attention to the Greeks in understanding Nietzsche’s increasing obsession with health. This is not just attributable to his declining health, but also to the philosophy of a number of Hellenistic schools of thought, such as Epicureanism, where to promote ‘health’ was also a

Fraser reflects on the fact that even Nietzsche's genealogical technique can be understood as 'uncovering one's medical history' (2002: 92), I would add, including modernity's medical history and what we have seen and named as its phantom sickness, the psychopathology of *ressentiment*. Girard would say, coming from another perspective, which I have argued, is not one mutually exclusive to Nietzsche's, that modernity is afflicted by a mimetic contagion of conflictual desire, fueled by acquisitive mimesis, confounded by *méconnaissance*. It is a condition that can be healed—by Girard's insights as *reconnaissance*, and 'pacific mimesis', and overarching it all, Nietzsche's '*amor fati*' and the heightened state of *agonistic* preparedness ('undergoing', 'overcoming' and 'becoming') by which effective intervention can be enacted.¹²⁹

In a chapter entitled 'Salvation, kitsch and the denial of shit,' Fraser, I believe attempts to draw a long bow. The exact details of the argument are too convoluted to properly examine in detail in this forum. However, it is important to include it in this chapter not simply because it demonstrates how closely Fraser has been following Girard's argument (and so valuable as I have stressed above to at least take the Girardian theory out of its hothouse into the wider academic arena), but also because it exposes some common misconceptions about the Nietzsche project.

Fraser summarises his intention as follows (2002: 122-140; 122):

Thus far, I have sought to reveal various manifestations of Nietzsche's attempt to articulate a convincing post-Christian soteriology. My next move will be to say why I think his soteriological experiments fail. Broadly, my contention will be that Nietzsche's soteriology is incapable of facing the full horror of human suffering in particular the evil as revealed in the Nazi death-camps. I will argue that after Auschwitz Nietzsche's soteriology looks like the imaginings of a more comfortable and innocent age.¹³⁰

constant theme (see Nussbaum: 1994: 13), where, indeed, philosophy was believed by the Greeks to be a kind of, 'healing by argument' (2002: 91). This then places *ressentiment* in its proper context: a sickness to be healed.

¹²⁹ Here we have Fraser's most tangential and even bizarre reflection. It is important for our discussion of *ressentiment* because it is used by Fraser as part of a battery of aesthetic arguments designed not only to cast doubt on Nietzsche's psychopathological diagnosis of *ressentiment*, but also to expose its supposed questionable *aesthetic* roots.

¹³⁰ In chapter 6, I argue quite the opposite, by demonstrating that Nietzsche's mysticism closely resembles that of Etty Hillesum one which, far from being the imagining of innocence and comfort, is intimately acquainted with grief, as Etty herself having died in Auschwitz and faced the full horror of Auschwitz. I shall argue that Nietzsche's war experience in Franco-Prussian War of 1869-1870 acquainted him with the horrors of modern warfare, and, as we have already seen, his distaste for Anti-Semitism is well documented. In effect, I shall be making a case for Nietzsche's 'redemption' as unnecessary, and his piety as one qualitatively different from 'the piety of unbelief' with which Fraser dismisses the Nietzsche project.

The argument goes something like this. First, and foremost, Fraser attempts to mount a case proving that Nietzsche's soteriology—to overcome the Silenian wisdom, which advocates the desire, 'not to be born, not to be, to be nothing—has failed: '... the second best for you' recommends Nietzsche, 'is to die soon' (*BT*, 3)—fails because, '[it] does in fact avoid it' (2002: 122). In effect, it fails, claims Fraser 'to register the fullness of its extent, the full horror of true evil' (2002: 122). This 'evil' he names 'Auschwitz' and then introduces two terms: 'shit' and 'kitsch', the latter further defined as 'the absolute denial of shit' (*Ibid*, 123, 125).¹³¹

Thus, Fraser seriously challenges Nietzsche's claim that he has looked at 'life in all its wholeness,' that he has 'outfaced horror.' Fraser's contention is 'Nietzsche's work is shaped considerably by the effects of kitsch' and so is 'blind to the evil in the world', that his soteriology is consequently, 'profoundly flawed' (2002: 126). If this is so, then Kundera's counting of Nietzsche among the 'enemies of kitsch,' using his hatred for Victor Hugo's "petty words" and "ceremonial dress" as an example of Nietzsche's 'disgust for kitsch *avant la lettre*' (Kundera: 1988: 135-136) is a curious endorsement which contradicts Fraser's assessment. Fraser passes this over by stating that Nietzsche never uses the word 'kitch' and was more likely to use the word 'decadence', which also has strong aesthetic overtones, or in Fraser's terminology, 'orientation' (2002: 126). Fraser then goes on to turn Nietzsche's condemnation of Wagner back on to Nietzsche, again, as we have seen, almost becoming a standard Girardian line of argument.¹³²

In his sub-sectional treatment of 'Kitsch soteriology' and the final solution, Fraser endeavours to deliver his *coup de grâce*, this is on the back of his comment that Nietzsche's criticism of 'Wagner's use of Christ's vicarious suffering as the topological counterpoint to Apollo... is an act of cowardice that leads his art into a systematic avoidance of pain and suffering,' is then also turned back upon Nietzsche. Here the aim is to show that Nietzsche

¹³¹ I notice in passing that this slant of Fraser's has the stamp of the Girardian about it. *Kitsch* is something he borrows from Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, (1984). For Kundera 'kitsch' also has a pathological dimension spawned under totalitarianism, the 'enemy of independent mindedness,' which promotes the 'absolute denial of shit' (1984: 242; cited by Fraser: 2002: 125).

¹³² Nietzsche's target might be Wagner's 'decadence', and in condemning Wagner, he is, claims Fraser, 'condemning the culture of his day' (2002: 127). Wagner's 'betrayal of his artistic vocation', his indiscriminate promotion of sentiment and passion as a means of generating mass appeal, which Nietzsche called 'a plebiscite against good taste' (2002: 127; *CW* 183), the accusation, that 'Wagner's art lies most where it promises the most; that is, in its pretensions to become theology' (2002: 127), for Fraser, merely reflect Nietzsche's own lies.

too, is undone by a residual weakness for kitsch' (2002: 129). Fraser does not seem too bothered by the possibility that he might be 'claiming' that Nietzsche's work, 'to be in some way, bound up with preparing the ground for the holocaust' (Ibid, 129), a trajectory often inferred by Girard, although that insinuation has moderated over time.¹³³

But what this all has to do with Nietzsche's failed soteriology is not immediately obvious, especially the references to Nazi anti-Semitic ideology. Such sentiments were abhorrent to Nietzsche, something, which every self-respecting scholar of Nietzsche knows all too well. So why forge the link, particularly when it is now common knowledge, 'that his work was vastly distorted by those, not least his sister who were keen to conscript him to the cause of National Socialism'? This emerges in the sub-section, 'Nietzsche's aristocratic kitsch' (2002: 133).

Here, as if to make up for the contradiction above, Fraser takes the opportunity to turn Nietzsche's loathing of anti-Semitism into 'largely an attack upon vulgarity' (Ibid, 133), tagging that notion with Yirmiyahu Yovel's comment, cited by Fraser, that 'Nietzsche's problem with anti-Semitism was that it was a sentiment of the mob.' Vulgar because it arose out of a 'mass movement... ideological, a new form of slave morality and of the man of the Herd' (1977: 122; Fraser: 2002: 133).¹³⁴

Fraser puts all this down to Nietzsche's preoccupation with 'the concerns of the privileged aristocracy' and 'grand politics,' where once again Nietzsche's talk of 'a higher task' and a 'higher state of being' (*BGE*, 258) are dismissed as elitism. I think Church's research (2015) puts paid to that. Both Nussbaum and Fraser are aware that they might be

¹³³ After some introductory comments on Hitler's view on Art and his condemnation of 'degenerate' art which he blamed for the aesthetic 'sickness' afflicting the German people' against which he would wage 'a war of purification against the last elements of putrefaction in our culture' (cited in Chipp: 1968: 482), Fraser points out other connections. Connections, which might be traced back to Nietzsche, like 'the essence of this being' (Ibid, 478), and the prevalence of this kind of language in Communism as well, returns his attention to Kundera's definition of kitsch (Kundera: 1984: 244):

Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass! The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! It is the second tear that makes kitsch kitsch.

¹³⁴ The arguments that follow morph more into claims and assertions weakening Fraser's case against Nietzsche. Fraser weighs in on Nietzsche's consistently 'high-brow' style of writing as a cover for that kitsch, which, he claims, 'does not necessarily make his work immune to kitsch,' indeed, Fraser insists, Nietzsche's is a 'high-brow' version of kitsch (Ibid, 133). Fraser's case against Nietzsche then becomes clear: Nietzsche is unrepentantly 'elitist,' 'indifferent to the concerns of the ordinary person,' and his 'almost total lack of concern for the politics of everyday life' (Ibid, 134). Previously, Fraser had enlisted Martha Nussbaum's reading of Nietzsche to bolster the perception of Nietzsche as indulging in, 'a particular aesthetic of pain rather than pain itself,' and her insistence that his was 'a bourgeois conception of pain.'

oversimplifying things, and perhaps overstating them but hold nevertheless to their opinions and assertions, which as I have indicated, is attributable either to selective reading or the wrenching of Nietzsche's statements out of the context of his total project. I shall hold off on a detailed defence for one who cannot defend himself till later in the chapter.¹³⁵

In conclusion, Fraser completes his assessment under the final and very short sub-section title, 'Christianity and shit', where he asks the big question, of whether or not Christianity fares any better than Nietzsche, 'in its capacity to encounter human suffering' (Ibid, 139). Whereas Milan Kundera thinks not, Fraser thinks *his* reasons are rightly suspect given the dubious example of Valentinus, a heretic, to support his view that Christianity is kitsch, because he, Kundera, could not think of God and shit together.' I found Fraser's defence of Christian soteriology in terms of being 'the fulcrum... point at which God and 'shit' meet, facile, missing 'the point' of Nietzsche's attack on Christianity, to which we shall return.

There is, of course much more to Fraser's assessment. Notwithstanding, I have given it a good airing, because it is representative of Girardian and non-Girardian secondary literatures and their approach to Nietzsche's work and the kinds of difficulties they have with it, either through their own misinterpretation, the misrepresentation of others, or just simply because the complex layers of Nietzsche's project have been misunderstood in terms of genre and intention. I have included it to make clear that Girardian scholarship does have outside support, even in Nietzschean circles, and that this scholarship, in fairness, does not just emanate from within itself.

¹³⁵ Fraser is inclined to believe (he uses the term 'arguably') that Nietzsche's pain is 'the pain of a hero in a novel, the sort of overly aestheticized pain experienced by the eponymous hero of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*' (2002: 136). Sentimentalised suffering, he argues, *is* kitsch. Upon which he returns to his theme that Nietzsche claims to have gazed into the pit of the 'horror of the nihil.' But since then, ... we are faced with piles of bodies. Compared to that Nietzsche's own version of the nihil looks pale and self-obsessed.' His overall objection remains: 'Nietzsche... glamorizes suffering,' and because the holocaust 'redefines nihilism... Nietzsche's strategy for overcoming it is rendered obsolete' (Ibid, 138, 139).

3.5 Giuseppe Fornari's case against Nietzsche—should it be dismissed on methodological and procedural grounds?

Now in the last of our series on Girardian approaches to Nietzsche's *ressentiment*, Professor Guiseppe Fornari and his *A God Torn to Pieces, The Nietzsche Case* ([2002] 2013) step into the limelight.¹³⁶

Fornari's inquiry attempts, in engaging with the Nietzsche project (2013: vii-xvii; 1-9) many objectives. These include, making a case based on evidence, gleaned from the clinical reports of Nietzsche's madness relevant information from the doubles crisis, which drove him out of his mind, analysing and assessing its ideas as they emerge from 19th century Europe and to determine why Nietzsche's part in the story of modernity is 'essential' (xi). In addition, Fornari also endeavours to hammer out a 'textual' hermeneutic (which he calls a 'perilous strategy': the complexity of identifying 'tracks and signs' that lead to answers—looking for interpretative keys (3), to unmask the genius of Nietzsche, to distinguish the 'real tracks' from the 'false ones' and so to unmask what is *not* real (5).¹³⁷ Whether Fornari achieves all these intentions is far beyond the purview of this chapter. However, those intentions *do* serve the purpose of a framework for our investigation into methodology, and how the methodologies Girardian scholarship adopts, determine how Nietzsche is interpreted. Each discipline has its methodology, and the big test for Nietzsche scholarship (much the same for Girardian scholarship) is how to deal with a life's work that straddles so many disciplines.¹³⁸

Fornari in the chapter 'The Eternal Recurrence of Madness', opens it with this comment (Fornari: [2002] 2013: 11):

¹³⁶ I have chosen this work, because it encapsulates the main threads of Girardian discourse on, and reservations about, Nietzsche's life and thought. I would be less than honest, as I have mentioned in the literature review in the Introduction, if I did not confess that it was the reading of this 'inquiry into Nietzsche's life and work' which provoked such a profound response in me, that the writing of the thesis became an ethical imperative.

¹³⁷ In amongst it all, his overriding purpose is to penetrate Nietzsche's 'theatrical metaphors' to capture what Fornari calls, the 'textual prey' (5). To do so, he must evade/avoid 'being made captive without knowing it.'

¹³⁸ This is not the first time that we have broached the subject of method. But on this occasion, we approach *ressentiment* and its interpretation using time-honoured philosophical methods. These include defining our terms of reference, focused on *ressentiment*, identifying the assumptions with which we come to those terms of reference—testing their assumptions against what *ressentiment* is, not just as a theory. In this case, how Nietzsche defines it, not just what we *think* it is, or *want it to be*, and testing the conclusions we draw as to whether they align with assumptions that are even *valid*.

Once the right key to interpretation has been identified, Nietzsche's own writings and documents about his life provide what seems to be almost overwhelming confirmation, compelling us to see his ideas and fate with fresh eyes.

He then, 'To start with', lays before us 'the conclusion that set the tragic seal on [Nietzsche's] life, and that the 'good' will of many interpreters has vainly tried to minimize: the mental breakdown that occurred at Turin around the end of 1888 and the first days of 1889' (Ibid, 11). Here we have a conclusion, which begs the question of what assumptions Fornari brings with him to form that conclusion.

As we trace the path from assumption to conclusion, are we likely to discover 'the right key to interpretation'? What follows is the carefully plotted path of how Fornari arrives at his final assessment.

First, is the question of what caused the madness. To be discounted, is the explanation, 'without any factual basis, either medical or biographical,' that this madness was the consequence of syphilis (Ibid, 11). Second, the circumstances of the fall into madness and the clinical notes must be scrutinized, as opposed to the 'inviolable layers of postmortem admiration, a piece of hypocrisy that has long deserved to be exposed... Too many books and too many ideas have been infected with it' (Ibid, 14). Here, for Fornari, there must be eyewitness accounts. This includes Peter Gast, for example, 'an ill-treated but faithful follower' who seemingly pretends that Nietzsche's insane letter invoking 'the *Crucified*' was a sign of 'happiness,' 'joy even,' 'triumph,' 'full of veneration' (Ibid, 14).¹³⁹

Third, there must be documentary confirmation—and what better proof than the "Krankenjournal" (Medical record) of the asylum in Jena. This is where he remained from January 18, 1889 to March 24, 1890. Here is chronicled the insanity of brokenness - disorientation ('One moment he thinks he is at Naumburg, the next at Turin'); 19 January, "My wife Cosmina brought me here," 27th March; asks repeatedly for help against torture at night. Here too, disgusting behaviours—the smearing of excrement 3 February; urinating in his boots and drinking urine, 5th April; eating excrement 18th April.

¹³⁹ For Fornari this is dramatic proof of how, 'failing to understand Nietzsche's madness amounts to sharing it to a certain extent' (Ibid, 14). Ironically, Fornari's disdain for Gast's veneration is exposed as an unintended hypocrisy in as much as he admits to Nietzsche's mystical veneration at the conclusion of his assessment, and as we have pointed out earlier, Gast at Nietzsche's funeral comes across as anything other than 'an ill-treated faithful follower.'

Fourth, before the pursuit of ‘investigations,’ ‘further texts and soundings,’ Fornari wants to ‘conclude’ this ‘question of madness’ and for the first time, it seems, is sensitive to the fact that he might have ‘exaggerated’ his analysis. In the same context, Fornari brings in Nietzsche’s obsession with ‘the eternal recurrence,’ which he claims would make many ‘connoisseurs of the philosopher... thoroughly scandalized and tempted to rend their clothes’ (Ibid, 22). However, no explanation, other than a generalized assertion like this one, is offered: ‘All Nietzsche’s ideas arose from a state of morbid excitement and were fostered by ‘madness’ that was present from the start and perfectly ‘recognizable within him’ (Ibid, 22).¹⁴⁰

To begin with, ‘The Philosopher and His Double’, then ‘The Foundation of Dionysus’, ‘The Antichrist and the Crucifixion,’ and finally, under the chapter heading, ‘What None Have Perceived,’ which Fornari considers to be his ‘final, and spiritually most important chapter.’ Here he argues that there was ‘no other way for Nietzsche to attempt to reach the unattainable Father... Hatred was his distorted way of realizing an impossible love.’ And yet, as a standing contradiction to the rest of the book, in his chapter, ‘A Strange Debt to Europe,’ he concedes that ‘In the end [Nietzsche] was much closer to Christ, than many who would claim to be Christians,’ to which he adds, ‘That is the final thought I would like to leave with the reader.’ (Ibid, xvi). Now I shall offer the gist of the remainder of Fornari’s argument, and how these last chapters and what has preceded them, might relate to the Girardian representation of *ressentiment*. My final section for this chapter will then offer a succinct critique in defence of Nietzsche.

3.6 The Nietzsche Case—is it finally, simply a case of ideological bias, muddled methodology, unsubstantiated generalisations, assertions—and ultimately, a misdiagnosis?

Fornari solicits Girard’s assistance in the hope that ‘the concrete, recognizable answer to the question of what caused Nietzsche’s mental breakdown’ might now be

¹⁴⁰ For that generalization, Fornari relies heavily on the slender connection between Nietzsche’s comment that ‘the world subsists’ ‘lives on itself: feeds on its excrement’ (NKS, vol. 13, *Nachlaß* 887 – 1889, 14 [188], 374; Fornari: 2013: 22) to reinforce the point, that this ‘madness’ was dormant long before the Turin episode.

established for all to see: that is, a ‘rivalry that remains unresolved,’ not just for Nietzsche, but for modernity as well. My account from this point onwards makes no pretence of doing justice to Fornari’s argument, which ranges over quite diverse themes as outlined. The other constraint is that I shall be looking through the lens of how his argument might be relevant to *ressentiment*. However, I must admit that the knockback for the material in this book did not surprise me.¹⁴¹ I shall endeavor to define what that ideological bias might be and explain how it could affect the conclusions which Fornari draws on Nietzsche’s ‘condition,’ particularly, as we shall discover, his self-contradictory response to Nietzsche’s status as ‘a follower of Christ.’

While each chapter as stated above is diverse in theme, one characteristic is common to them all. The arguments are for the most part based on assertions (often unsubstantiated), broad generalisations (often sweeping), proffering claims, which are sometimes *impossible* to substantiate. In addition, biographical details are either tangential or inappropriate and in some extreme cases (as in the use of the medical records) verging on the unethical. Consistency may be in evidence and all the details may hang together in a seamless ‘organic’ way, as claimed. However, internal consistency does not necessarily mean that the assumptions upon which those arguments are based, are sound.¹⁴²

In chapter 1, we have the metaphor of the hunt to clarify the challenge of discovering Nietzsche, and the daunting task of interpreting Nietzsche’s work. With Chapter 2 and its ‘Eternal Recurrence of Madness,’ there is the appeal made to ground Nietzsche’s madness in the medical records and in his writings. Chapter 3, ‘The Philosopher and His Double,’ refines the search (having dismissed syphilis as a cause), and attempts to pinpoint the epicenter of the madness, beyond the ‘terrible complexes,’ the conflict with mediators such as Wagner, the megalomania, the rivalry, ‘the laughter of madness’ and other lapses of ‘self censorship’ (Ibid, 27).¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ In (note 4: 119) (2003: viii), Fornari candidly notes how ‘some American university publishers’ to whom he had submitted the project (from his perspective) were misinformed by ‘ideological prejudice’. His footnote is honest enough to record his experience of that response on September 2, 2001, at a political science convention in San Francisco, a few days before 9/11. The reception was totally dismissive, “I don’t believe *one* word of what you say!”

¹⁴² My *modus operandi* will be to first define each theme’s relevance to our discussion of *ressentiment*. Second, to identify the assumptions and the nature of the claims being made and third, to evaluate each of the arguments as they arise.

¹⁴³ However, it is ‘Nietzsche’s imitation of the model,’ of Wagner in particular, ‘the most unsuitable person to establish a well-balanced and proper relationship’ (Ibid, 29), (central to *MT*’s analysis of conflict and rivalry)

Chapter 4, 'The Foundation of Dionysus' as part of an 'archaeological' excavation not just of what has been uncovered by Nietzsche, but also a psychological 'sondage,' the "double-bind" dynamics of desire, of the philosopher himself come into view. In the process a succession of foci also come into the depiction. Primarily, the notion of a 'doubles crisis' which is used to unravel what Nietzsche's obsession with the "death" of God is really all about, as part of Nietzsche's desperate struggle 'to block the doubles ('the proliferation of doubles') of rivalry within himself' (Ibid, 54).¹⁴⁴ The rest of the chapter then becomes a chronicle of the various Nietzschean attempts at 'self-divinization' in order 'to escape from the double crisis.' But the more 'he tried to escape from the double crisis, the more the doubles multiplied under his eyes' such that Nietzsche can no longer content himself with the mask of Dionysus but must now 'gain possession of the god's innermost nature' (Ibid, 61/62). However, apparently the masks continue to be applied viz., Zarathustra et al. all of which lead to 'the centre of the labyrinth' and the monsters once again of gratuitous 'cruelty,' sexual licence, sacrifice of this "stranger god" (Ibid, 66), all masks of the resentment playing itself out in his private life. At the centre, the final enemy the core of the nature of the Dionysian frenzy must be confronted (Ibid, 74-80). Here Christianity's 'sacrificial victim' stands in the way, it seems. But strangely, (paradoxically?) Nietzsche emerges from the confrontation with this gem of an insight that sounds very much like Girard's thesis (NKS, vol. 3, *Morgenröte* IV, 205):

Bear this in mind! The person punished is no longer the person who did the deed. He is always the scapegoat.¹⁴⁵

which is the door through which Fornari chooses first to enter. But, equally, early (adolescent, 'youthful') writings receive their fair share of criticism: 'sugary, hypocritical' in tone, punctuated by 'a nauseating profusion of apologies and thanks' (Ibid, 31).

¹⁴⁴ In this context Nietzsche's identification with Dionysos is explained as one of his ways of dealing with this 'doubles rivalry' within himself. Thus, the death of God 'the mother cell of his thinking' (De Lubac, *Mistica*, cit., 287; Fornari: 2013: 54), is interpreted as 'Nietzsche's plan for sacrificial neo-foundation in a nutshell,' and the Dionysian project symptomatic of 'the double bind that generated all his works.'

¹⁴⁵ However, this is not Fornari's conclusion, though he admires its 'striking concision' (ibid, 75/76). It is rather, 'a lucidity that brings us to the crux of the matter, the contradiction at the heart of Nietzsche's system of doubles and his attempt to use it as a completely novel means of self-divinization' (Ibid, 76). Yet Girard, Fornari admits, 'has called Nietzsche the greatest religious thinker of the nineteenth century' (Ibid, 80; Girard 1994: 198), a conclusion which he undercuts by claiming that 'Girard... was not thinking about what Nietzsche actually produced so much as what he [Nietzsche] came across by chance as his whaler ploughed through far northern seas. In that sense he [Nietzsche] was a genuine explorer of *terra incognita* the greatest religious discoverer of the nineteenth century' (Ibid, 80).

Chapter 5, *The Antichrist and the Crucifixion*, then takes the extraordinary claim just cited, to its logical (reductionist) extreme. Dionysos here is now represented as ‘the solace’ that eluded Nietzsche (Ibid, 81). *The Case of Wagner, The Antichrist*, now bring us, beyond his penultimate conclusions, to Fornari’s final assessment. It may be summarized as follows. Firstly, *The Antichrist* is pitched in terms of the metaphor with which Fornari began: ‘The Hunt for the Whale’, where ‘Nietzsche the hunter’ is depicted as making his final move, ‘his last bid to win the game, the real *Transvaluation of All Values*’, which in Fornari’s eyes, amounts to a ‘crazy and yet clear-sighted strategy.’ It is this, which dictates how the game is played. He speaks of it as Nietzsche’s ‘initiation trial, whose survivors alone can learn Nietzsche’s ultimate secrets and in a negative form, the ultimate secrets of Christianity,’ something Fornari claims, causes believers and non-believers alike to ‘give it a wide berth’ (Ibid, 82). ‘Nonbelievers, in the majority as usual,’ he notes, take Nietzsche’s efforts at their face value and mistake his propaganda for victory’ (Ibid, 82). Fornari claims that there is a ‘blindness that exists about the book’ (Ibid, 82). Secondly, while Fornari admires Nietzsche’s ‘brilliant formulation of the infernal underground of the modern world’ (Ibid, 82), treats with respect his ‘far greater insight and courage than many of those who adopted his ideas’ (Ibid, 83), marvels at ‘some evocative intuitions... [such as] Christ’s distancing himself from all sacral religions, his preaching of a new freedom to be achieved here and now in a life lived to the full and not ransomed by violence’ (Ibid. 84)—he cannot believe that these insights were properly received and prefers to take the line, that ‘the very possibility [of following through on them] horrified him and he refused to believe it’ (Ibid, 84). Anticipating the subsection entitled, ‘Christ Insulted’, he deplores the fact the Nietzsche ‘drove himself towards the original source from which the message sprang, hoping to shut it off, to dry it up forever. But he was finally overwhelmed and met his fate there’ (Ibid, 85).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Thereafter, follows the ‘self-destructive nature of the collision course followed by Nietzsche... gauged by the verbal abuse and blasphemy employed’ (e.g., “...But can you be more grossly mistaken than when you make a genius of Christ who was an [*Idiot*] (ibid. 85; NKS, vol.13, *Nachlaß* 1887-1889, 15 [9], 409, note 12. 133). The fact that Nietzsche drew on Dostoyevsky’s *Idiot* is noted, but its possible intention is not acknowledged (i.e., as a provocation rather than a statement of abuse, or as a literary device in the way Dostoyevsky uses it). Once again, Fornari chooses to believe that this is profanity in the form of ‘an inverted prayer’ (Ibid, 86), and that Nietzsche is simply following ‘archaic reason,’ ‘Adam and Eve’s disobedience,’ seeing things from ‘*the serpent’s viewpoint*’ (Ibid, 86). Fornari is careful to point out that this ‘demoniacal’ tendency, was a ‘shadow that hung over Nietzsche from his earliest writings’ (Ibid, 87).

Thirdly, Fornari's analysis settles into a resignation that the ultimate inevitable outcome of these series of 'blasphemies' must be, in Erwin Rohde's words of revulsion in a letter to Overbeck in 1886, for Nietzsche "to crawl to the foot of the cross" (Ibid, 98; Letter of September 1, 1886 in *Supplementa Nietzscheana*, vol. 1, F. Overbeck, E. Rohde, *Briefwechsel*, (ed.) A. Patzer, D Gruyer, Berlin-New York 1990, 109).¹⁴⁷

Having expressed his sorrow and pity, in Chapter 6 in 'What None Have Perceived', Fornari's empathy evaporates. Here we have a Nietzsche now 'effectively abandoned by all his friends' (Ibid, 102).¹⁴⁸ Fornari then begins to lay bare the ideological misgivings and prejudices that had been there, he claims, from the beginning, under the surface of the veneer of 'reconstructing Nietzsche's conclusive thinking' (Ibid, 102)—Fornari's argument here taking on the guise of a conspiracy theory. Yes, in *EH* there are 'terrible flashes of human truths' (Ibid, 105), but underneath them (not that the nature of those truths are explained properly), lurks the resentment regarding the 'pure madness' of *Parsifal* (an 'umpteenth attack', claims Fornari, on Christ as much as on Wagner) (Ibid, 105), and the irresistible ("I cannot do otherwise. So, help me God! Amen", *EH*, 302, echoing Martin Luther's cry at the Diet of Worms (Ibid, 105), a resonance Fornari doesn't fail to exploit.¹⁴⁹

Then follows a curious concession. This despite his insistence that 'Nietzsche repeated as actions the fate of the now revealed victim whom he had tried to deny in words. After having highlighted the unsuccessful attempt to oppose Dionysus to Christ at the close of (*EH*, 374) ("—Have I been understood? — *Dionysus against the crucified Christ*") (ibid, 111), Fornari then draws this conclusion, which will become part of my defence of Nietzsche in the last section of this chapter (Ibid, 111):

¹⁴⁷ For Fornari, Nietzsche's choices amount to Nietzsche embodying, 'the sacrificial foundation to realise in himself the 'death of God that he had prophesied, to deliver himself up body and soul to the devil on his heels'. Nietzsche's life's work is simply 'A deliberate self-immolation [that] will demonstrate the divine nature of the priest-king,' which in the notes [49] he describes as 'the climatic point of my analysis' which evoked 'a real feeling of sorrow and pity' (Ibid, 99, 135).

¹⁴⁸ The reasons for this abandonment are numerous, beginning with the lack of 'pity' of others for him, and he for them. Then follows the depression engendered by his failed relationships with Salome and Rée and their betrayal (Ibid, 103). According to Otto Weininger, 'the absence of religion' was another factor dictating the trajectory of Nietzsche's personal life: 'What he lacked was *grace*; and without grace, loneliness, even Zarathustra's loneliness, is intolerable' (Ibid, 104; in K. Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophie* cit. 164) etc.

¹⁴⁹ He comments on the fact that 'not unlike Luther, Nietzsche the 'heretic', the 'schismatic' knew how to make a clean break... [trying]... to shift the blame on to his hated adversaries (Christ, Luther, himself and the German nation as a whole)' (Ibid, 106). But the 'simple form of the cross... central to Nietzsche's mental collapse, [which] reproduces the four directions of quartering a human body, as effectively performed by the Dionysian mobs' (Ibid, 110).

Dionysus *is* Christ crucified because Christ crucified is the revelation, that wants to become salvation, of all victims killed in the name of Dionysus.

Fornari then emphasises Nietzsche's 'patent identification with Christ' by means of a note written in Italian to Jean Bourdeau in January 1889, "I am the Christ, Christ in person, Christ crucified" (ibid. 111; S. Barbera, *Un biglietto smarrito di Frierich Nietsche a Jean Bourdeau, gennaio, 1889*, "Belfagor," LIV (January 1999), 74-78). Fornari in fact admires what I take to be his understanding of a 'credo' on Nietzsche's part, though Fornari does not express it that way, only as an 'impressive crescendo, almost Trinitarian in its final utterance of truth that he had always denied' (Ibid, 111).¹⁵⁰

In the last pages of his 'The Nietzsche Case' (114-118), he poses some interesting rhetorical questions (which he addresses in part), and some residual questions demanding an answer. Firstly, he asks, 'Was the philosopher-anti-Christ forgiven by Christ?' A truism is initially offered as an answer: 'Nobody can tell of course' (Ibid, 113), but as we shall see, there is plenty of 'telling.'¹⁵¹ Secondly, to add to his case that Nietzsche *may* in this 'lost letter' have been genuinely seeking to be identified with Christ, Fornari then furnishes us with some final pieces of Nietzsche's writings that seem to add to the strong likelihood that this is the case. Notably, the last verses of *Glory and Eternity*, then the Dionysian Dithyramb intended by Nietzsche to conclude *EH*, about which he said in a letter to Gast, was, 'my supreme achievement [...], composed beyond the seventh heaven [...]. One could die if read unprepared...' (Letter of December 30, 1888 (NSB, vol. 8, 566; ibid, cited, 114).

And here for the first time it seems, Fornari entertains the possibility that Nietzsche's language is that of the mystic, a mysticism recognized by D'Annunzio, who quoted them in his ode on the death of Nietzsche, on which he comments: 'Certainly this is the mysticism of Dionysos and the eternal recurrence' (Ibid, 114).¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ I shall, of course, argue that this was always the case and never a denial, at least not of the Christ of the Evangel, a reference, which I note Fornari never acknowledges. He is content, rather, to use the Turin episode to concede that the compassion that Nietzsche expressed that day on behalf of the beaten horse, was, 'In its crazy paradoxical way, the compassion of Dionysus the Crucified can only be Christ's compassion' (Ibid, 113).

¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, Fornari cannot help inserting a credal answer. Such strictures as, 'forgiveness must be accepted,' that the 'unforgiveable sin' against the Holy Ghost, is in fact refusal of forgiveness, and that given Nietzsche 'struggled so strenuously' against such forgiveness all his life and given that his antichrist *figura* is the personification of 'anti-forgiveness' cannot, by definition, be forgiven (Ibid, 114).

¹⁵² Fornari also acknowledges, that 'there could be something more here.' He asks two questions of us as we read the last three stanzas: who is the *You*? And what is it that "none have perceived?" We shall examine this in my last chapter of the thesis, when we explore the possibility that Nietzsche may have been a mystic from

Concluding Remarks:

Is the Girardian contest with Nietzsche, then, a case of misplaced resentment?

On first reading Nietzsche's antagonism of Christianity and the vehemence, the venom of the provocations listed against it, as written in *The Antichrist*, its stinging polemic which spares nothing, one would say that the Girardian perception and resentment of Christianity being misjudged is entirely justified. To accuse Christianity of not only being the child of *ressentiment* but also, in effect, its mother and father, seems 'rich' to say the least.

But to go away with only that view would be to ignore the *context* in which the polemic is waged. And by 'context' is meant that Nietzsche has more in view than just Christianity. This is a polemic where Christianity is not its only target: *all* beliefs (the uncritical religious lens) are being called into question. And not just religions, as we have seen (and will continue to see in the following chapters, especially the Rwandan genocide and *The Tempest* case studies). But also, *all* of our most cherished values and morals, our great achievements, how we valorise them is being called into question. And even when that polemic *is* understood and perhaps even embraced, many readers of Nietzsche might conclude that he is a nihilist. And again, that reaction would be justified.

However, the charges of nihilism, apostasy and demon possession are in the end misperceptions because they miss the real point which Nietzsche is making. For in recoiling from these revelations in self-defence, skulking in denial, failing to naturalise, insisting on our species superiority, waving our moral, religious, nationalist, sexist placards above our heads, when we fail to look into the mirror of our 'human all too human' reality, oblivious of it, blinded by our certainties, we also fail to *hear* the ironies of what we say, the slogans we chant: for, indeed, 'this may not be who we are,' but this is definitely 'what we do.' We *say* we are *for* the planet, but shamelessly exploit it in the name of economic prosperity. We *say* we are concerned *for* the displaced, but 80 million people are stateless, homeless. We *say* we are righteous, law abiding, justified—and yet our economies would rather pay out millions of dollars of taxpayer money to keep people incarcerated in hotels than give them

the beginning, not just at the end of his life. I shall also posit the strong possibility, that Dionysos and Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the Evangel, were *always* interchangeable, and not just at the end of Nietzsche's productive career.

the less costly (*sic*) freedom of allowing them to be housed in our communities with families who want to welcome them.

It's not atheists we must fear, says Nietzsche, it's humanity's potential to engage in destructive and self-destructive behaviour—*that* is what we should fear.

But fear is not Nietzsche's resting place as we shall see in the chapters to follow. It is 'amor fati,' loving the circumstances, the weaknesses of our humanity, embracing them (undergoing them), but by wisdom, not just knowledge, overcoming them—not for its own sake, but in order to overcome and become something better. Yes, even loving the relentless way life deals out cruelty to us and responding to it with wisdom and kindness, not with denial or those 'blame games' that afflict our politics and media. Not with cynicism and sarcasm, but with the realism and the good humour of the Greek comic-tragic vision. Not with the passive-aggressive attitude of *ressentiment* but with the steely resolve of the *agon* economy which chooses its battles wisely, the kind of wisdom Desmond Tutu of 'Truth Commission' fame in his life upheld right up to his recent death, as we have already seen:

There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in.

4 The Rwandan Genocide: a *ressentiment* case study

Illustrating *ressentiment*'s susceptibility to deception and self-deception

Whatever they may think and say about their “egoism”, the great majority nonetheless do nothing for their ego their whole life long: what they do is done for the phantom of their ego [“Phantom von ego”] which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated [“mitgeteilt”] to them;—as a consequence they all of them dwell in a fog of impersonal, semi-personal opinions, and arbitrary, as it were poetical evaluations, the one forever in the head of someone else, and the head of this somebody else again in the head of others: a strange world of phantasms.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak* (1881: 105)

“Scandal” means not one of those ordinary obstacles that we avoid easily after we run into it the first time; but a paradoxical obstacle that is almost impossible to avoid; the more this obstacle, or scandal repels us, the more it attracts us. Scandals are responsible for the false infinity of mimetic rivalry.

René Girard / *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, (2001: 26)

The explanatory power of Girard's *MT* and the *scapegoat* and Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment*

This case study will be conducted across a broad spectrum: theoretical, social, philosophical, psychological, and political. In terms of the social/psychological dimension, the analysis will engage with different levels of involvement: individual, ‘interdividual’ (a term coined by Girard's *MT*), regional, and global, while at the same time applying various psychological frames of reference to expose the dynamics of *ressentiment*. The range of readings and theoretical approaches and interpretations which have been put forward to explain the genocide, along with a commentary on the epigraphs as it applies to the insights of each of our two theorists, will be analysed and assessed.

The purpose of the chapter will be to draw comparisons and contrasts to better expose the dynamics of *ressentiment*, and to test the two theories' explanatory capacities as they work together with other readings.

4.1 An encounter between the Artist George Gittoes' with the then Vice-President Paul Kagame as seen through the Nietzschean lens of 'master' and 'slave'

Today as I write, the Kigali Genocide Memorial marks its 25th Liberation Day, commemorating the event when the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi was stopped. The wording of its publicity has the ring of the victor's rhetoric:

We honour the men and women in the Rwandan Patriotic Front who made a great sacrifice to liberate our country.

'Sacrifice', as we have seen, is a loaded word full of ambiguity and paradox. From the binding of Iphigenia to the binding of Isaac, the binding of Christ to the 'tree' of crucifixion and the entanglement of millions of men and women in 'someone else's war,' such sacrifices are always promoted in great causes, or pitted against terrible injustices. Always sanctioned in the name of grievances too intolerable to bear, or just simply expressed, as the 'difficult decisions that had to be made' in the name of social cohesion or some other justification. Difficult decisions, such as Truman's tortured rationale for the dropping of the first atom bomb on Hiroshima which liquefied 140,000 people in a matter of minutes to reduce American military casualties, killing thousands more Japanese men women and children in the decades that followed. Or the Australian government's 'honourable' decision to farm out aboriginal children to white families (which came to be infamously known as, 'the stolen generation')—all in the interests of 'assimilation,' social harmony—all for the 'good' of 'the nation.'

The 'Liberation Day' for Rwanda 2019, organised by its Tutsi patron, now President Paul Kagame, formerly in charge of the RPA/RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Army, Rwandan Patriotic Front), billed it as A Day of "patriotic and solemn speeches, cultural events, special ceremonies, parades, concerts and sports matches" with the aim to "challenge, inspire and bring hope to humanity." All worthy aims and objectives, if it were not for the knowledge that Kagame's administration has the shadow of 'crimes against humanity' committed by the RPA hanging over its head, as documented in a recent Yale University publication *Rwanda: From Genocide to Precarious Peace*, by Professor Susan Thomson, to which we shall refer in more detail later in the chapter. For the time being, it is sufficient to mention one of the book's conclusions concerning how the number of deaths claimed by the

administration (over a million), have been found from extensive evidence culled from diverse sources, to be deliberately exaggerated to give the impression that the RPF's intervention was achieved against great odds. The reality is quite different. While not denying that the odds were substantial and terrible, the reality is that atrocities were committed on both sides. Knowing what happened (and this would not be lost on the Rwandan people as they celebrate), it is impossible not to see this as a grand Kagame Administration publicity exercise, perhaps intended more for an international public than for even the people themselves. For *they* would know, perpetrators and victims alike, that the Day and this brochure gloss over the awful reality of those one hundred days. *They* would see it as an attempt to deflect attention away from the fraught circumstances of the imposition of the new order. From our point of view, the brochure and the Day while undeniably enshrining a heart-felt commitment and a sincere belief in the Arts' creative capacity to drive social change for the better, we find it impossible not to hear, in the face of the evidence which will be presented here, that the strong conviction about the universal ideal of the inherent dignity of humanity and its equality, rings hollow. Let the words and the evidence which follow, be the judge of whether our reception of them is justified. Certainly, Nietzsche will have a lot to say about those ideals and the Arts:

Art has manifested itself world over as an efficient form of communicating, expressing opinions, airing issues, and sharing values about all aspects of life that affects humanity. We are convinced that art as a forum for communication, expression, reflection, innovation, and creativity is a key motor for social change. As Desmond Tutu has said, 'My humanity is bound together in yours, for we can only be human together...' his profound words have been the inspiration behind the festival slogan: "I am, because you are, you are because I am: we are human together...The word "Ubumutu" can be defined as 'Being Human.'

Our analysis proper begins with this revealing personal account from the Australian artist George Gittoes who was in Rwanda at the time of the genocide under the auspices of the United Nations. In his most recent book *Blood Mystic* (Macmillan, Pan Macmillan, Australia, 2016) he tells the story of his exposure to the Kibeho massacre of Hutus at the hands of Kagame's RPA a year later. He writes (Gittoes: 2016: 22):

The RPA soldiers were slaughtering people with both machine guns and machetes. Their commander had warned me that if he saw me taking photos, he would kill me. They all knew what they were doing was a war crime and that my photos could be used as evidence.

Gittoes describes, not without regret, how, to save his own life he improvised an excuse for his visit in Rwanda even against the evidence of the frozen images he had taken of the Kibeho massacre which were on public display in the Palace foyer around him as the soldiers escorted him to the newly self-appointed Vice-President. In sheer terror for his own life, he was overcome with the full realisation that an Internet search of the photos could at any moment indict him. His reason for being there, when challenged, was that he was there to ask permission for an official portrait sitting with Vice-President Kagame. All the while, Gittoes is painfully conscious of the fact that Kagame, could at any moment know that it was his photography work that had been used in the case against his officers who carried out the Kibeho massacre, and that these photos might later be used at their trials for ‘crimes against humanity’.

In the conversations which followed with Kagame, as Gittoes sketches a portrait of the Vice-President (ironically usually associated with honouring a public figure who has achieved great things), he realises that Kagame just needs to talk, to get things off his chest. He admits to all ‘sorts of things to do with this terrible war.’ Gittoes’ fears gradually diminish as he realises Kagame had agreed to the sitting as an excuse to offload, and that in this very Catholic country even the President couldn’t count on any priest as his father confessor, so an artist would do—someone interested enough to want to do his portrait.

Then out of the blue an amazing confession from Kagame (Gittoes: 2016: 110):

George I was in Uganda, just a day’s march away, and I had the most professional, best trained army in Africa. I told the Americans just to give me the okay and the genocide would have been over in less than a week—but they wouldn’t. A million or more died and they needn’t have—you and the world saw how quickly my army took control.

What, of course was not mentioned (Kagame knew it as did Gittoes) was the retaliation that started at Kibeho, or the millions who had been reportedly killed by Kagame’s men in the Congo long before. Gittoes then simply ends his notes on the portrait sitting episode with, ‘I was painting a portrait of evil personified; he just wanted me to see him as a reasonable guy’ (2016: 109).

My own reading of this episode as Gittoes recounts it is not his. Gittoes deduces from the encounter that, if the Kibeho massacre was a horror movie, he had met Count

Dracula himself (2016: 109). Personally, I was fascinated to see how Gittoes the artist, while not exactly side-stepping his complicity in the moment, by shaking hands with the devil (as Lt. General Roméo Dallaire commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda describes *his* involvement with the whole massacre event) nevertheless shows himself to be in partial denial of his own duplicity and betrayal. A betrayal brought about by the double-bind situation he finds himself in: if he tells the truth, he risks death but in doing so he is loyal to his calling as an artist seeking the truth; if he tells a lie, he saves himself but compromises on his integrity as an artist.

This is one of the trademarks of *ressentiment*. I say, 'partial denial' because while all along Gittoes admits to justifying his lie as an act of survival, he cannot bring himself to focus on that betrayal for too long. He would rather end the episode by focusing on the evil that is Kagame. The picture on page 108 of his book says it all. At both top and bottom of the page there are two photos of Gittoes and the President together: the upper photo where Gittoes poses with his sketchpad opposite a standing Kagame, with two of his suit buttons neatly done up; tie, shirt immaculately kempt for the occasion. The other photo below, show both men's torsos cut off at the waist, with just the hands clasped in handshake.

Then there is the composite view of the whole page. Its synthesis reveals a distorted version of the two as if we, readers, and viewers, were looking into a Fun Park mirror, a hall of mirrors. Kagame stands even taller than he really is, distorted by how the two photos have been spliced together. They reveal grotesquely long arms, and a painfully long torso and legs cut off at the knees (these a clever indictment of how the tall and proud Tutus have stood over the Hutus and an implied commentary about the terrible amputations and disfigurements which Gittoes witnessed). Meantime, Gittoes sketchpad appears to be torn in two, and his torso appears grotesquely long. I notice too that the hand that sketches in the top photo is not the hand that shakes the President's hand—and what a 'dead' hand it is, in both shots, highlighting the impression of a reluctant participant.

The eyes, however, tell a different story. Gittoes' eyes on the one hand, are full of disbelief, melancholic, glazed over, in overload, reflecting the horrors he has seen. His pencil is held in an awkward way as if it did not want to be there, his pad hanging limply over his arm, like a waiter's towel, emphasising his vulnerability and subservience. Kagame's eyes by

contrast, the glint of a man who knows he has the power and knows that he has mastered Gittoes, has him in thrall. There is also evidence in the gaze to the camera, that he knows, with a deep-seated knowing, that this moment could be his downfall if the reality of the actual circumstances of the PFA evacuation of the refugee camp hit the media. On the other hand, in his own way, with unnerving coolness, he stands his ground as one who has stood in that lonely space countless times, in a lie that he knows he lives and not just tells.

The distance between them in the photo is palpable, like a chasm between them. The big question is this: who took the original photo? I suspect it might have been Gittoes' cameraman. However, it might also have been one of the Vice-President's aides. In that case, the publishers have taken the liberty to doctor the portrait and make their own statement with Gittoe's editing, even though later we come to know that this was a photo commissioned and foisted on a reluctant Vice-President Kagame.

When Nietzsche's mimetic pathology of *ressentiment* is applied to this amazing true-life anecdotal moment, we discover that *ressentiment* as a mimetic psychopathology, isn't just about resentment in the English sense of the word. Rather, it is about power imbalance, and how that imbalance is turned around by the weaker party into a position of 'strength,' or at the very least, into survival. There is even more to it than that. In this remembered moment (and memory for Nietzsche is also part of his insight into *ressentiment* in that it is always a strictly edited memory), the weaker party in the engagement is nevertheless able to have its revenge. In this case, by the photo's final representation, and the manner with which the prose comments on the photo. The whole effect is to undermine any respect that Kagame may have hoped to glean from the sitting. Nevertheless, Gittoes also (I suspect partly unconsciously) photo shops out his own complicity in the moment, the hypocrisy of it, which, would have been the betrayal for him, of a most personal artistic integrity.

So, it is not difficult, at least superficially, to determine, who the 'master' is and who the 'slave' in this scenario. Clearly it is Gittoes who feels powerless. As a way out of his precarious situation, Gittoes turns the tables on the 'master,' by deceiving Kagame into believing that Kagame, despite the atrocities he has authorised, is to be respected as the man to take Rwanda into the future.

But *is* Kagame self-deceived? And *is* Kagame really the 'master'? The answer to both questions is—no, he is not deceived, and no, he is not really the master, not either in the

telling of the story of the moment nor in its photographic depiction. Yes, his confession documented above, exposes Kagame's vulnerability, but also the remembered encounter as Gittoes describes it, shows a man in fear and panic that at any moment his position of strength might collapse (Gittoes: 2016: 111):

I persuaded him to come outside for a photo. But once in the light he was in real and obvious pain, like a vampire. After just a few photos he needed to get back to the dark. But we re-entered at the wrong point and found ourselves trapped together in layer upon layer of heavy drapes. The curtains were the length of the Presidential Office which was the size of basketball court. The more we struggled the more frantic Kagame got. I was lost in the dark with a man responsible for the soldiers who were responsible for the deaths I had witnessed at Kibeho, whom hours before I had feared would have killed me. Back inside we shook hands.

I think Gittoes' remembered moment, perfectly illustrates Nietzsche's mimetic psychopathology of *ressentiment* as a condition of mind that afflicts the 'master' and the 'slave'. We are all, including himself, writes Nietzsche, vulnerable in the moment, and we need to know how to achieve mastery over it, through a mindset embodied in the "Übermensch"—although it remains a question as to how that overcoming might have been achieved in this moment, and what might it have looked like. What would the "Übermensch" have done? We shall come back to that question at the conclusion of the chapter.

As 'physician of the soul,' as the self-proclaimed 'philosophical physician,' Nietzsche goes to the core of the problem: the sickness itself. For Nietzsche, *ressentiment* is a sickness—a sickness that renders the human spirit vulnerable to all kinds of psychic phenomena' (such as fear for one's life, for example, when under direct physical threat). It is a sickness not easily dealt with. It is a sickness that represents 'the greatest danger ["grösste Gefahr"] for the healthy' (*On Genealogy of Morals* 14; 100). And no one would dispute Gittoes' health, but given perilous, vulnerable circumstances, he finds himself giving in to dissimulation, which completely goes against the grain of his artistic integrity. Could he have acted otherwise?

No one was more aware of his own susceptibility than Nietzsche. Indeed, he made himself a living laboratory designed to test his own thinking, never mind anyone else's. The master-slave distinction that he creates to highlight degrees of vulnerability to *ressentiment*

is framed in such a way as to underline the fact that the masters (those who take pride in having ‘mastered’ themselves like Nietzsche) are just as open to the contagion, just as mimetic, and will succumb to its entanglement, if countermeasures are not vigilantly applied. Hence, he speaks of ‘walling in the self’ (“Selbstvermauerung”); ‘self-containment’ (“Selbsterhaltung”) and other self-defensive measures (“Selbstverteidigung”) (*Ecce Homo* 8; 63).

When people, argues Nietzsche, break through those of our defences necessary not just to protect the true values that matter, but also to defend the very integrity of a self, which Wagner had violated at the beginning and at the end of Nietzsche’s career, this puts a person in great peril. It is a situation, argues Nietzsche, that easily leads to a dangerous sense of self-alienation. Breaking free from the mentorship relationship with Wagner, left him in a dissonant state of mind: ‘I [felt] alienated from my own being’, [“meinem] Wesen entfremdet fühlt”], (*Untimely Meditations*, IV, 7; 222). In Nietzsche’s case, it was a question of personal survival in the face of no longer being able to compromise with the increasing anti-Semitism and pro-nationalism he perceived growing in his former mentor. And, more than that, Wagner had also betrayed his trust as a friend (Prideaux 2018: 166-169, 214) as well as turned his back on the joint project which he thought they had embarked upon, and in self-defence Nietzsche had to learn to protect himself, something I have discussed in earlier chapters. Taking Nietzsche’s reflection into account, then, we could say that Gittoes did do the right thing in the moment—putting self-protection first.

But then, of course, if Kagame had cornered him out of sight and out of mind, out of public glare, as might so easily have been the case—were it not for the fact that he realised Gittoes’ strong connections with the International Press and the international community through the United Nations under whose umbrella he had worked in the past—then Gittoes might have had to choose the difficult way, as Jesus of Nazareth had done, and many other Rwandans had done, like the preacher who Gittoes photographed pleading for both sides to reconcile, preaching Jesus’ words ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God’ just moments before he was (allegedly) hacked down along with everyone around him, a man like the Jesus of Nietzsche’s *imitatio Christi*, utterly without *ressentiment*. Or was there some more sinister possibility?

Gittoes remembers his last exchanges with the preacher at Kibeho, asking him if he wanted him to stay. To which he answered, “They are probably more interested in killing you than us.” Whereupon he asked if Gittoes could take three orphan boys with him, who had lost their parents the previous night, and chaperone them to safety under UN protection. Gittoes agreed, but then had to run the gauntlet of RPA soldiers. Having got them to relative safety, when he made his way back to where the preacher and his flock had been, this is what he saw (Gittoes: 2016: 24):

No-one was standing. The area was flattened and still – all were dead. I couldn’t find the body of the preacher with his distinctive yellow coat, but I never forgot him as a man whose faith had enabled him to overcome fear and bring comfort to those around him.

Perhaps Gittoes had that man’s courage in mind when he was facing Kagame. Significantly, Gittoes does not take time to dwell on that. Perhaps it was too painful. Perhaps he needed to feel better by putting Kagame down, dismissing him as a vampire, a man of the darkness. The reality is, Gittoes could leave Rwanda, but Kagame could not, and did not—and more, had held the country together for more than two decades. This is the ethical paradox that Nietzsche often explores, in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Does this mean that the cauldron of the genocide and his part in it has enabled Kagame to overcome the madness of *ressentiment* and the thirst for revenge, which drove the atrocities in the Congo and the incursion into Rwanda? Apparently not. It is clear, that the only reason that there is peace is that he holds a tight rein on the country, brooking no criticism. There is strong censorship in the country. While perhaps that is what is needed, for a time—there must eventually come a day when Rwandans will speak honestly and openly and heal their differences. Whereas imposing the victors’ (Tutsi) narrative on the nation can only reinvigorate the original Hutu perception of Tutsi minority supremacy. Living in denial of the ethnic differences and resentments that sparked the conflicts between the two groups is bound to be a repression that one day must break out with even greater ferocity when Kagame retires. Or, when his successors cannot match his political skills, or if, and when, climate change kicks in, as David Attenborough recently said, and is especially impactful for the African continent, those realities are bound to surface and haunt him.

Professor Thomson notes that new and disturbing evidence has come to light. Basically, that some mass graves which are being discovered almost every other week and month, designated as belonging to the past genocide, might in fact be current. If that proves to be true, then the nation's future is indeed precarious. Thomson speaks too of complex situations, like the one played in Gittoes' case but without the same 'happy' outcome. People who were forced to kill to spare others, a double-bind situation faced by many Jewish inmates in the death camps, who were only able to save themselves and some others by collaborating, something that the Adolf Eichmann case tried in Jerusalem highlighted in graphic detail, when such Jews were yelled out of court as collaborators. The whole trial inspired Hannah Arendt, who covered the trial, to coin the term 'the banality of evil.' For this she was excommunicated by her own kith and kin, but an expression Nietzsche would have embraced given his understanding of a desperate need for a revaluation of values that exposes the labels that masquerade as values—such as 'good' and 'evil,' to be ambivalent because such designations are very much in the eyes of the beholder, or should we say, the victor (Girard's 'foundation story').

The other Nietzschean notion I would bring into the discussion, and test, is the notion of the 'phantom' self. Nietzsche's diagnosis of the 'phantasm,' or phantom, a bodily mimesis which he claims to have discovered lying at the very heart of the origin of subjectivity in the history of humankind—not just Rwandans, or Germans—a claim which matches Girard's, although they use different terms as we have seen in previous chapters. Nietzsche exposes *ressentiment's* destructive power as an involuntary physiological susceptibility to suggestion, which has not been suppressed by civilisation, and which goes on, even among the educated today. *Ressentiment* has the power of an external threat, writes Nietzsche, which "throng[s] the modern city to penetrate the interior life of the ego" (EH 8; 63) to sap it of its wellbeing and health. If Nietzsche's diagnosis is correct, and his thought experiments are right, there is hope in the sense that it opens the situation for early intervention—when evasive actions might be taken to nip violence, or radicalisation in the bud.

In Nietzsche's own words, the modern age requires us to build defences against this contagion. For it is the health of the species that is at stake (Nietzsche, 1886)¹⁵³:

¹⁵³ Preface, second edition, *The Gay Science*

the problem of the total health, of a people, time, race or of humanity – to summon the courage at last, to push my suspicion to its limit and risk the proposition: [that] what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto was not at all ‘truth’ but rather something else – let us say health, future growth, power, life.

An assessment that provides a nice segue to an application of Girardian terms of reference to the Rwandan genocide. Here we are taken to a larger scale of reference: the ‘all against one’, or scapegoat theory. Which suggests that *MT* lends itself to more of a macro level of analysis.¹⁵⁴ Which is not to say we cannot apply the Girardian analysis to the same Gittoe situation.

4.2 THE ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE: A brief account of its ‘foundation story’

Just as the Nietzschean ‘master’ ‘slave’ antithesis is often misunderstood, so too is Girard’s scapegoat mechanism. To convey Girard’s perspective effectively, we will also need to bring in several other insights. They are the ‘foundation event,’ the ‘foundation story,’ *reconnaissance*, *méconnaissance*, and *acquisitive mimesis*. For as with Nietzsche, so with Girard, there is the conviction that mimetic psychopathology takes us back to the beginnings, the foundations of all cultures, all societies.

First, here is an account of the origins of the Genocide (Hintjens, 1994)¹⁵⁵ against which we can test both theories. Hintjens (Ibid, 241) locates the following three key factors in the conflict: domestic pressures, psychological factors, and manipulation by external forces. She also acknowledges that the genocide was organised under the aegis of the state, and that the main actors were Rwandans. She recognises the role of pre-colonial legacies and the colonial policies that created the state, which conducted the genocide. With reference to mechanisms that were employed, she identifies ‘striking resemblances’ to those used in the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews (1999: 241). She then singles out three approaches to the period leading up to the genocide: (a) a focus on external factors, colonial and neo-colonial (b) domestic causes including demographic factors and ‘ethnic’ conflict (c)

¹⁵⁴ See Frederik Grunfeld and Anke Huijboom, *The Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda: The Role of Bystanders* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007, for an example of micro-, meso, and macro-level analysis.

¹⁵⁵ based on Helen M. Hintjens ‘Explaining the 1994 genocide in Rwanda’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37, 2 (1999), pp. 241-286, Cambridge University Press.

a psycho-social account focusing on conformism and obedience (1999: 243). She then outlines a possible narrative of its historical evolution, upon which I draw.

In the 1980s Rwanda was far from being a failed state. In the mid 1980s the country 'gave an impression of extreme orderliness' and presented itself as a sort of 'Switzerland of Africa.' (1999: 244). From her personal experience of living there, she did observe that appearances belied an underlying different reality: a 'lack of candour' (in the sense of 'much that was unpleasant was left unsaid'), an absence that could be easily mistaken for 'excessive politeness' (1999: 244). In the early sixties and after the independence of Rwanda from colonial Belgian rule, 'covert actions' were an important dimension of the Rwandan regime's close political control, and were especially effective in a highly stratified society, where power differentials had long been taken for granted (Ibid, 246), (Maquet: 1961). Since the 1950s, the average Batutsi and Bahutu had been identical in the language they spoke. They were also on the same plane as each other in terms of their religious beliefs, and in their educational and income levels (Ibid, 247). It was only after independence that the Batutsi were subjected to strict quotas in secondary and higher education, and in public employment (1999: 247). From this period onwards, claims Hintjens, they were confined to a strictly limited sphere of influence as the Bahutu elite gradually took over the reins of power from the Batutsi monarchy and the Belgian trusteeship power (1999: 248). Violence, of course had always been there, such as that of the 1952-62 Revolution in which some 10,000 Batutsi had been killed and 100,000 had been forced to flee the country (Ibid, 248).

The distinction between the three groupings, Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa through the male line, was introduced for convenience by the Belgians in 1933. Official convenience cut right across an ethnic connection that combined the three main groupings, where the pre-colonial Rwandan kingdom was divided into more than a dozen clans. Each of which included Batutsi, Bahutu and even Batwa, but Batutsi controlled the corresponding positions of lord of the army and lord of the cattle (see Reyntjens 1996: 182-4; Maquet 1961: 173-185) cited in (Hintjens: 250). So, in sum, the 'notion of two exclusive and incompatible Hutu and Tutsi identities was constructed gradually' by a fearful and resentful Bahutu majority (Hintjens: 251). The original immigration of Batutsi is thought to have taken place in the twelfth and thirteenth century BCE and included the Batutsi of Burundi. During colonial rule,

church, school, administration, and the army were organised around the assumed racial superiority of the Batutsi. In the 1920s the triple offices of land cattle and army overlord were combined into a single position confined to Batutsi alone (see Codere: 1973: 353; Prunier: 1995: 45-6). The emerging Bahutu elite, consequently, came to express its search for a political role in racial terms, to which Catholicism 'gave added impetus to this crystallisation of a sense of group oppression and resentment against the Batutsi *en masse*' (Hintjens: 253). Then comes this crucial observation (Hintjens: 254):

By introducing Christianity and 'tidying up' Rwandan social groups, Belgian colonial administration cut across mechanisms of social cohesion, including the religious belief systems and clan structures. This created a monolithic division between Hutu and Tutsi identities and started to dissolve the ideological glue of Rwandan monarchical society.

A new class, notes Hintjens, of educated Bahutu started to demand majority rule and 'racial' self-determination and encouraged to do so by a new generation of Belgian officials, clergy, and soldiers. Later still, after World War II, with increasing inter-Belgian rivalries between Flemish and Walloons (see Linden: 1977; Braeckerman: 1996 and Uvin: 1997), and a fresh influx of Flemish officials and priests into Rwanda, there was tendency to support the perceived Hutu underdog, a claim denied by some Flemish scholars notably Filip Reyntjens (cited in Hintjens: 254). The transformation on the other hand was undeniable. In a short space of time between the end of the War and independence in the 1960s, 'the Batutsi had... been transformed from a proud and noble aristocracy to a lazy, parasitic and cruel pastoral 'race' caste as 'alien conquerors' (Hintjens: 255).

Significantly, from 1961 to 1962 the Belgian trusteeship authorities oversaw the replacement of half of all the Batutsi chiefs by Bahutu chiefs. The coloniser who had championed the cause of the 'little man,' the Bahutu majority (see Lemarchand: 1970: 179; Linden: 1977: 220-8), had now created a situation of political opportunism and growing fears of Tutsi radicalism (Hintjens: 255). This in turn brought into existence the 'Bahutu Manifesto' of February 1957 expressing the Hutu elite's desire to end Tutsi dominance once and for all (Ibid, 255).

4.3 THE ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE: The immediate crisis and the role of the media and its implications for *agency*—the underbelly of *ressentiment*

For the immediate situation we shall draw on Daryl Li 'Echoes of Violence: Radio and Genocide in Rwanda' (ed. Thompson: 2007: 90-109). I choose the media as our optic for the purposes of highlighting the mimetic dynamics espoused by Nietzsche and Girard and choose Li's account also as a means of counter-interrogation. Li unsurprisingly, given what we have already seen through Hintjens' lens, describes the discourse of history in Rwanda in this manner (Li: 94):

a product of late colonial modernity, a particular way of looking at the past based on a unified national narrative incorporating all its people past and present and cast in the mould of linear progression, whose dominant theme was Hutu victimisation in the colonial era and emancipation 1959 onward.¹⁵⁶

This was followed by other messages with more immediate connotations, such as 'Masses be vigilant ... Your property is being taken away. What you fought for in '59 is being taken away' (RTL, 21 January: 1994) (cited in Li: 94). It is significant, again, that RTL was launched in July 1993, just as tensions were rising, which means here was an outlet for Hutu propaganda right from its inception and as Sibomana (1999: 205) notes, 'Through a game of repetition... the media build up moral and cultural constructs which eventually become permanent features... fuelling a climate of intolerance... [turning those constructs] into agents of destruction of Rwandan society.' The 'game' also included such tactics as: the exploitation of people's vulnerability; 'popularizing' genocide; arguing its case by means of 'non-falsifiable assumptions'; generating trust; soliciting Belgian support to bolster the strength of its argument; and most important of all, orchestrating specific genocide strikes.¹⁵⁷ One of the most bizarre and chilling tactics was to cloak seriously disturbing

¹⁵⁶ The exploitation of the narrative of Hutu victimization as promoted by the RTML continues in the following vein: "In this formulation, the Hutu revolution of 1959 that precipitated the end of elite Tutsi hegemony... Belgian rule represented a radical and emancipatory leap forward... During the genocide, however, the RTML [*Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*] portrayed the progress achieved since the revolution as under threat from the RPF, collapsing past into present and calling on Rwandans to re-enact the do-or-die moment of 1959, 'the 1959 revolution ought to be completed in order to preserve its achievement' Georges Ruggiu, RTML's Belgian *animateur* claims it was the station's management that had issued the instructions to broadcast this message, ICTR-97-32-DP2000., paras. 110, 186).

¹⁵⁷ Here are some of the details, which amplify the points I raise: exploiting Rwanda's inability to adjust to the fluid political situation' (Li, 96), popularizing, normalizing the genocide, engaging with large listening audiences

violence in language and to tinge it with humour. RTLM through its animateurs, were experts in the use of euphemism: 'work' for killing, serious intent cloaked in buffoonery, as with the animateur Hitimana who suddenly launched into an attack on an opposition journalist, Joseph Mudatsikira in this chilling 'cheerio' tirade (Kirschke: 1996: 93) cited in (Li: 103):

Let me say hello, child of my mother. Let me salute you, as you are the same as Noheli [i.e., also a journalist] ... If you die just as everyone has been speaking about you, it is not like dying like a sheep, without having been spoken of. When we have spoken about you, you have effectively been spoken of.

The targeted journalist Mudatsikira was killed several days after the broadcast. Which makes Li's teasing out of a broad theme here, that radio 'implicates' rather than 'manipulates', 'informs' rather than 'determines' listeners' choices, to me at least, incongruous. Of this, I ask the question: is it that Radio served *only* as a medium 'through which Rwandans experienced and enacted genocide'? Does that mean that listeners are *only* 'constituted subjects,' but that their actions and decisions are *not* that of agency—because that interpretation depends on 'unitary, autonomous actors, for whom radio is simply a source of information or misinformation, or a stimulus eliciting a certain response'? Or is it that they are *merely* subjects who are 'permeable to mediated discourses, firmly embedded in the shifting set of forces, structures and meanings,' and that their choices are, 'shaped by and made in the spaces and tensions between these currents'? (Li, 105). Both Nietzsche's *ressentiment* and San Roque's 'cultural complexes' (which I shall discuss further on in this chapter) would strongly side with the last analysis, as would Australians who experienced the Cronulla riots directed against 'Muslim' immigrants on Australia Day in Sydney a decade ago. They would remember the power and impact of the radio 'jocks' as an actuality that cannot be explained away by just an appeal to the frenzied, alcohol-fuelled response of a crowd against 'foreigners.'

through interaction, jokes (Chrétien et al. 1995: 73-4; Des Forges 1999: 70; Higiro 1996: 1; Kirschke 1996: 84-85; Prunier 1995: 189) cited by Li (97), giving an impression of frankness and trustworthiness, alerting listeners to specific targets e.g. machete in one hand, radio in the other ((ed.) Thompson: 2007: 12), use of popular music e.g. Siumon Bikindi's anti-Tutsi songs (Li, 100).

4.4 THE ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE:

A broader historical appraisal seen through Nietzschean and Girardian lenses

Thus, given the two accounts of how the genocide came about, what light might Girard and Nietzsche's insights throw on the Rwandan scene?

We have already stated how Nietzsche's treatment of 'master' and 'slave' had little to do with aristocracy versus Hitler's scathing representation of 'chattering democracy.' Rather more to do with states of mind within the one individual, which oscillate between strength and vulnerability. A state of mind, which, depending upon the circumstances in which she or he find themselves, will be either strong or weak *in the moment*. We saw that the mind state of *ressentiment* strongly linked to the 'slave' mentality can be experienced by both 'slave' and 'master'. This was nowhere better illustrated than in the artist Gittoes' memory of his encounter with Kagame—where both, it seems, experience power and weakness all at the same time—where both undergo their moment of 'intense pain.' While Gittoes attributes the pain to Kagame, undoubtedly it was a pain he also experienced himself but one to which he only reluctantly admits.

What we have not yet investigated is how *ressentiment* plays out on the larger stage of human affairs (although this was anticipated in my Introduction and the analysis of the US Capitol invasion in January 2021). To wit, the Rwandan experience as a nation as it evolves from pre-colonial, to colonial and finally, to post-colonial independent Rwanda up to and including the genocide period of 100 days in 1994 and its aftermath in the establishment of the Kagame era and the current situation, the twenty-five years or so of peace under 'majority' rule.

To do this we need to bring in other notions important to Nietzsche's "Weltanschauung." These include and have started with the two already mentioned—*ressentiment* and the 'master'/'slave' dialectic. Then will follow a train of other insights, such as (a) the 'will to power'; "Mitleid" (a notion I shall argue akin to Girard's *MT*), in the classical Greek understanding of it (mimesis) and in Nietzsche's re-interpretation of it; (b) recurrence of the same, which I shall posit, represents not a passive and fatalistic resignation, but the relentless antagonism of life's challenges in terms of the suffering, the

changes of fortune they bring which must, argues Nietzsche, be met not just with superior force, not just with intelligence and wisdom but also with *amor fati*; (c) the Greek *agon* which Nietzsche holds up to us as an exemplar of how the Greeks harnessed it to overcome their internal and external conflicts and how this exemplar might in turn help modernity transcend the violence and antagonism which threaten it from within and without (“Wettkampf” is the closest Nietzsche gets to expressing this ‘antagonism’ in German, capitalizing on its resonances with the Luther Bible); (d) and finally, the Greek Tragic Vision as embodied in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, from which he never deviated, but worked on and refined, a vision that when it becomes our vision, Nietzsche hoped might enable us to overcome the entanglements of the “Phantom von Ego”, a paradoxically ‘mindless’ state of mind which haunts the modern era (exacerbated by the intrusion of media), about which Nietzsche, drawing inspiration from Plato, forewarned his readers.

Which brings us to Girard’s perspectives—perspectives that enhance and broaden Nietzsche’s. I shall propose that together our two theorists’ understanding will enable us to develop not just a diagnosis or a prognosis for modernity’s ills, but might also, working in tandem, offer us a remedy in the shape and form of new ways of thinking about the problems that face us—and might even inform policies of state whereby solutions can be found to ensure the wellbeing and flourishing of the individual, and communities in our global society. And perhaps we can learn the relevance of these principles as we test their capacity to understand some of the most horrendous events of the 20th Century, other than the Nazi holocaust of the last century, and those perpetrated in the 21st Century.

We continue our theoretical analysis and its application to the Rwandan genocide, with Girard in mind. First, as with Nietzsche, an overview of the key concepts that will be applied. These can be listed, in order of a loose sequence of connections and its logic: (a) the foundation event and the foundation story, an understanding that Girard discovered by reading and examining the foundation stories of different cultures, through which he uncovered a common theme: theft, a founding murder and the lie (b) the mimetic cycle, which Girard describes in terms of the violence cycle: notions of ‘imitation,’ internal and external mediation, rivalry, mimetic contagion and the mimetic crisis: (c) the scapegoat mechanism—which in prehistoric and archaic societies, Girard argues, were invented as

survival measures to resolve the crisis—and its aftermath: a false peace based on a lie told about the victim, the scapegoat, whereby he or she is either divinised or demonised.

In addition we shall bring into the discussion the emotions that either drive the violence cycle to its bitter or peaceful end: (i) *acquisitive mimesis*: as the term suggests, the mania for self-aggrandisement, be it individual or group or nation; (ii) *méconnaissance*—the cognitive dissonance, the misperception that fuels the hatreds and fears and drives the cycle of violence (iii) *reconnaissance*—when misperception is put aside and people learn to see each other as one (iv) and finally, *pacific mimesis*—again as the term implies, the mindset of the peacemaker.

We focus on three key moments in Rwanda's history (A)-(C), which will be treated as one continuous, annotated story, and not just a repetition of the two accounts by Hintjens and Li:

- (A) pre-colonial days to Independence in 1962
- (B) the period immediately following Independence, tracing the eclipse of Tutsi dominance and the ascendancy (not without its difficulties) of an elite Hutu political pressure group
- (C) ending with the events leading up to the assassination of Hutu President Habyarimana when his plane was shot down in April 1994—for which the invading Tutsi PLF (People's Liberation Front) was blamed—a crisis which in turn, became the genocide proper, when in 100 days more than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. Here the emphasis will be the role of Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM).

This story in three parts has already been told but my intention now is to recast that narrative in order that Girard's *MT* and Nietzsche's *ressentiment* might engage with it and so reveal their explanatory power.

First, then, there is the pre-colonial period up to and including Rwandan Independence Day. A Girardian reading would immediately note that the foundation events of Rwandan history confirm the pattern of analysis of a foundation narrative of oppression in the name of order. We learn that right from its beginnings the Tutsi pastoralists fleeing famine and drought by immigrating to Rwanda in the 1300s, began at first peaceably it would seem, to settle in with those already there. These migrations were alleged to have arisen slowly and steadily, and did not qualify as either invasion or conquest, just 'co-occupying' territory already settled by the Twa and Hutu peoples—along with a great deal

of cohabitation and intermarriage with ‘a large degree of integration, acceptance and interaction.’ (Mumdani: 2002: 53; Vasina: 2004: 18; Chrétien and Strauss 2006: 58). But then through its kings Ruganzu Ndori in the 1600s and Kigeri Rwabugiri in the 1800s, one after the other, central Rwanda, and outlying Hutu areas were subdued and eventually a unified state arose under Tutsi rule.

As we have seen in our brief historical account earlier in the chapter, this centralised military and economic structure became the first Rwandan state, and a Girardian reading of this history would argue that these foundation events would set in motion the first stages of an emerging cycle of violence, sparked off first by the build-up of rivalry occasioned by its tell-tale marks of theft (acquisition of territories not theirs), murders and subjection to rule (violence) and the ‘lie’ that either this suppression was for the good of all, or that the ‘occupation’ and ‘subjection’ was mutually beneficial, which of course it was, as we shall see, but in a way that intrinsically generated a *ressentiment* or state of rivalry which bided its time for a revenge that would reverse the humiliation. Later I shall argue that there was nothing ‘inevitable’ about this state of rivalry. It could, given the early circumstances of the Tutsi arrival have worked out differently with ‘good will.’ J.K., Rennie (1972) draws attention to the revisionism that was sought in the telling of Rwanda’s history after the 1959-1960 violence which then erupted.¹⁵⁸ Kagame’s court-centred history with its insistence that the state of Rwanda did not borrow certain features from the agriculturalist of “Hutu” peoples, and the denial of any suggestion that “Hutu” ruled over “noble” pastoralists, arguing that “no non-Hamite or “Hutu” clan, ‘could ever have dared enforce its rule, still less have succeeded in doing so, seeming to suggest that they did, is to display ignorance of Rwandan society’ (cited by Rennie, 14). Of course, ironically these vigorous denials are all that the Girardian notion of foundation story is about—the denial of the victors and the suppression of the voice of the victim, the vanquished, and more, the suggestion that the Hutu somehow intrinsically *deserved* their subjugation.

Rennie then traces the expansionism based on a close study of records and comes to the following observations which confirm the Girardian reading. The subversion (‘expansive wars’) was gradual but relentless, culminating in the nineteenth century with an

¹⁵⁸ In his ‘The precolonial kingdom of Rwanda: a reinterpretation,’ *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1972), 11-54, Gideon Were Publications, Makere University.

organisation of state that consolidated the gains of those incremental wars: with the Tutsi self-ascribed and earned status as 'rulers,' 'commanders,' 'warriors'; Hutu classified as 'camp followers,' 'plunderers,' 'providers,' 'subjects,' 'cultivators,' 'labourers,' 'taxpayers' and at the bottom of the ethnic ladder, the Twa who (perhaps willingly) given their low status, played the role of 'personal retainers,' 'executioners,' 'potters,' and bizarrely, 'court jesters' (Rennie, 32), serving both dominant Tutsi and Hutu groups from the bottom of the pecking order.

To the question, how were the Tutsi able to be so successful for so long, Rennie's findings are that the Tutsi enjoyed a greater degree of social mobility, and the equally successful introduction throughout the subversion of the promotion of the social "premise of inequality," reinforced by Hutu men's acceptance of that inequality of social relations. However, Rennie notes, that they were able to turn those inequalities to their own advantage over time. By such strategies as intermarriage, for example, and the exploitation of the client-patron relationship, and the 'blood brotherhood' connections with the Tutsi they sought to reverse their subjugated status. It dramatizes what Girard describes as the pattern of mimetic rivalry which slowly escalates from one crisis to another. He describes them as 'scandals,' stumbling blocks if you will, driven by an intractable hunger for total domination which had long exceeded its original need to survive which in this context was that of drought and the initial, it would seem, open 'acceptance' of the Tutsi by the Hutu and Twa. This insatiable Tutsi drive caused the crises to stagger from one 'scandal' (perceived offences of both Hutus and Twas used as pretexts later for retaliation and revenge) to another, and an entanglement into the slip stream of 'the false infinity of mimetic rivalry.' 'False' because of the Tutsi's blindness and deafness to the realities of their own 'hubris' which caused them to believe in the intrinsic rights and privileges to rule; and 'infinity', meaning, in this context, that the Tutsi's sense of entitlement was unsatisfiable, and would stop at nothing to both maintain and preserve it for all time.

So, to return to a Nietzschean term of reference. The 'master' and 'slave' power relationship is again not as straightforwardly dominant as it appears, with the "master's" reliance on the Hutu "slave," rendering them vulnerable to a future reversal of roles later on. And this is exactly what happened in the lead up to Independence 1962, preceded by the 1957 Hutu Manifesto, and the 1959 massacre and expulsion of Tutsi King Kigeri V and

tens of thousands of his followers into Uganda, following inter-ethnic violence. Thus, centuries of smouldering *ressentiment*, finally broke out into outright revenge of such viciousness that not even the Tutsi themselves could conceive it, even in the context of a growing state of fear. Not surprising that this expulsion of Tutsi (think Girard's scapegoat mechanism) was followed in 1963 with over 20,000 Tutsi deaths in their first attempt to regain their former power and status. When it looked as if the roles would be reversed yet again with a more organised and concerted return of Tutsi in the guise of the RPF (RPA) (remember Paul Kagame's boast to the artist Gittoes, "I had the most professional, best trained army in Africa") the Hutu motivated by fear, allowed themselves to be driven by means of the mimetic contagion of those events. When the mimetic crisis sparked off by the April 1994 assassination of the Hutu President Habyarimana, the Hutu minority/elite unleashed the 'final solution' of genocide, at which point, as we shall see, the scapegoat mechanism reached its crisis.

As this section of the discussion draws to its conclusion, the question as to how well the Girardian *MT* and the scapegoat mechanism measure up to their claimed explanatory powers, in terms of their ability to define how the cycle of violence works itself out in the way it does and why, is timely. It will be interesting to note as the scaffolding of the details of the story of what happened are removed by the telling of it, accompanied by reflections informed by the theories leading up to the 100 days, whether they escape the entrapment of the 'politicisation,' to which "even the most basic concepts and research questions" are subjected.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ (Peter Uvin, 'Reading the Rwandan Genocide', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn, 2001), pp.75-99).

4.5 THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE:

Girardian and Nietzschean theories of origin tested as to their explanatory power.

Unlike theories for theory's sake, they expose a repeating pattern and an emotional core often overlooked. The Girardian 'foundation event,' 'foundation story,' 'foundation murder,' when applied to that story, highlight the unmistakable and forever looping pattern in the development of any state and culture. The violence of its initiation, the acquisitive mimesis with its heavily invested self-interest which informs its expansion and finally, the denial if not the suppression of truth altogether. Here as we have seen is also Nietzsche's 'will to power' in action, revealing the life and death struggle for power of two socio-ethnic groups to the point of annihilation ("Vernichtung"). This is not a Nietzsche's death wish for society so much as a *diagnosis* of how and why over matters of power, individuals, people groups and nations are caused to behave this way. Of course, we do not have to use his terminology. But often the very naming of what is happening ("Geschichte" = in German, the story of what has happened) and Nietzsche was an astute observer not just of human behaviour, but of history) helps to define what *is* happening and so unravels *how* and *why* it is happening.

Now, to take us into the immediate period of the genocide from the RPF invasion of the Tutsi from Uganda in 1990 sparking off a four civil war to the shooting down of the President's plane in April 1994. This coincides with the Tutsi breakthrough deep into Rwandan territory and the inception of the 100 days. At this point in the analysis, I shall call a pause to consider where we have come in our analysis and examine some of the adjustments in thinking about the genocide that might be called for.

The first cautionary word from Uvin's scrutiny of all the evidence, is this: that many researchers approach the traumatic event with 'strong *a priori* lenses,' see the genocide merely as an opportunity 'to demonstrate their pet theory.' The best accounts, he notes, are those that have 'a keen eye to multi-causality' which 'provide insights into the genocide' (ibid, 96). He also alerts us to other blind spots which lurk under the surface, such as the 'unspoken visions of key empirical questions' such as those related to *whose* work of atrocity this was: that of a select group of 'senior militia and military people' who had 'to

force the majority of its participants to do their dirty work'? Or was it 'a massive... spontaneous popular enterprise, building on widely shared cultural images?' (Ibid, 96b-97a).

This is a challenge that my thesis must square up to: does the attempt to 'test' the two theories which it undertakes fall into the trap so well accounted for by Uvin?

The response to that challenge is a simple one: that the insights which Girard and Nietzsche offer, enable us to frame the very questions Uvin raises, by highlighting principles, rather than answers, offering certain tools of investigation, methodologies, rather than the touting of foregone conclusions. Having said that, in previous chapters I have highlighted the instances where even the best principles and tools, can be misapplied, without the kind of constant vigilance and self-critical awareness advocated by both our theorists. So, it is good to remind ourselves of that at this crucial point in our investigation, so that the analysis of the Rwandan genocide does not turn out to be a self-fulfilling ideological/methodological exercise. But it is Uvin's deceptively simple, yet profoundly honest insight generated by a close reading of the genocide that particularly caught my attention. His observation, for example, that the emotional experience and the sheer physicality of the genocide are largely missing in the intellectual theoretical approaches applied to it. This is not to deny that personal testimonials regarding the sheer brutality of the events of the hundred days do not exist, because clearly those anecdotal accounts are out there in abundance. No, Uvin is correct to press this observation as the account of the emotional dimensions of the artist George Gittoes' meeting with President Kagame has confirmed.¹⁶⁰

The key here is Uvin's experience of not just the chilling 'ordinariness' and transparency of the acts, but the fact that mostly when he writes, or thinks about them, he treats them in a purely conceptual way. The question about how we come to 'know' the genocide is a deeply disturbing one and should be. Nietzsche's 'ah ha' moment, mentioned

¹⁶⁰ Uvin's searching account prompts a question that is also mostly overlooked or ignored by the majority of the analyses: '... what does "knowing," in this context mean?' (Ibid, 97) And then, this (Ibid, 97):

I am struck by the ordinariness of it all—the way that it is understandable and even takes little more than routine processes. For those who suffered from it and those who still live with its sequels, the aftereffects must be cataclysmic. I still shudder when I think of it in graphic detail and not as a concept, as I usually do. Yet the causes of the Rwandan genocide are explainable and understandable... What brought about the genocide were the usual dynamics of Rwandan society.

previously comes to mind. Its exact details are worth repeating (Nietzsche: 1886: Preface, second edition, *The Gay Science*):

the problem of the total health, of a people, time, race or of humanity – to summon the courage at last, to push my suspicion to its limit and risk the proposition: [that] what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto was not at all ‘truth’ but rather something else – let us say health, future growth, power, life.

Here further questions are raised: *why* did Nietzsche feel he needed to ‘summon the courage at last’ to push his ‘suspicion to its limits’? Suspicions about *what*, exactly—and *why* are the stakes so high? Why should the realisation that the popular understanding of the purpose of philosophy is wrong, concern us? What was it that caused Nietzsche to admit to himself late in his career, as *he* reflected on it and evaluated it—that the business of philosophy is not about truth, but ‘health,’ ‘power’ and ‘life’? And why should his realisation be that novel when the Greeks before him were obsessed with the same question: the question of ‘wellbeing,’ and happiness and flourishing. What I am suggesting is this: that Nietzsche, being the good ‘soul’ physician that he is, wants us to see that every value, every ‘truth’ has its emotional valence. If we have not, due to lack of courage (or carelessness) penetrated to the emotional core of that truth or value, and understood its *emotional* meaning, then, according to Nietzsche’s reading of it, it is no truth at all. In effect, I have been arguing all along, that Nietzsche’s life project is to reinvigorate philosophy by acknowledging the value of emotional intelligence, the impact of the *power* of emotions and so to temper that emotion with the *reason* of philosophy. It is the kind of balance between the Dionysian (emotion) and the Apollonian (reason) he argues for in *The Birth of Tragedy*, his first major work and which come together in his later thought, as the ‘new’ Dionysos in whom both are melded. The Dionysos, for example, who stands like Jesus of Nazareth against the extremes of emotions by which human wellbeing in the name of some cause or other are sacrificed. Uvin is courageous enough to allow the genocide to envelop him with its actuality, to ‘shudder... [to] think of it in graphic detail, and not as a concept, as I usually do.’ (Ibid, 97) But after having been schooled by that emotional perspective, what conclusions might his reading draw?

Ultimately, it gets down to the simple accessible things, not conspiracy theories regarding the deliberate failure of duty of the international community, but simply ‘the usual dynamics of Rwandan society... [coming] together in a unique constellation that

produced unique results.’ That it built on ‘decades-old processes... deeply entrenched images of ethnicity... cultural practices... routine dynamics of social exclusion and impunity, and standard patterns of international ambiguity and hypocrisy.’ He underlines the fact that all ‘these processes have existed in Rwanda for a long time and do so in many other countries, although not necessarily conjointly.’ He also observes, rightly, that their existence does not necessarily, fortunately, lead ‘to this particular genocidal result,’ but does concede that their existence does ‘produce vast and untold misery every day in the slow and invisible horrors of suffering that result from racism, impunity and exclusion’ (Ibid, 97).

So how do the insights of Nietzsche and Girard match up to Uvin’s conclusions?

As stated, I shall put the theories to work, especially tuning in to the role of the media in orchestrating the genocide of the hundred days, but also by retracing the lead-up to those hundred days from the RPF invasion by the Tutsi from Uganda in 1990. That invasion sparked off a four-year civil war right up to the shooting down of the President’s plane in April 1994. In answer to the question, what brought the country to this point, Uvin’s reading of it, despite all the uncertainties about the genocide, identifies the following factors. He believes that these factors are indisputable: that the genocide was conducted by Rwandans themselves. That it fed on a fertile soil of racism and authoritarian structural violence. That the differences between the main protagonists, Tutsi and Hutu were real with the distinction between them becoming more obvious in the colonial period. That it arose from ‘a deeply essential conflictual, painfully lived form of ethnicity’; that ‘radical elements inside the country systematically sabotaged [any interventions to stop it]; that there were clear and persistent human rights violations, polarisation and militarisation of society typically present for years before the country erupt[ed]’(Uvin: 1, 79, 96, 93, 95).

The second most important question for the purposes of the thesis is this: why did a country so awash with Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, not only fail to prevent it, but also in many instances, aided and abetted the genocide? And if it was obvious without ‘an iota of doubt... that something terrible was under way in Rwanda, that serious plans were afoot for even more appalling deeds... [because] it seems likely that hardly anyone could bring themselves to believe that this was the case.’ (International Panel of Eminent Personalities of the Organisation of African Unity OAU, Final Report, ch. 9.1, cited in Uvin,

91), why, as our first guiding principle of addressing those two questions, were the people of Rwanda blind, despite the obvious fear in the air, and why was nothing done to avert it?

I shall major in tandem on the following key concepts: Girard's *scapegoat mechanism* and Nietzsche's *recurrence of the same* and "Mitleid"; Girard's *méconnaissance* and Nietzsche's 'phantasm' and *ressentiment* for the media's role over the 100 days. I shall also make passing reference to some quite distinctly different perspectives. Some are drawn from Joel Hodges' 'Torture and Faith: the Violent Sacred and Christian Resistance in East Timor' (*Violence Desire And The Sacred*, (eds.) Cowdell, Fleming and Hodges, Continuum, A Bloomsbury Company, 2002: 86-104), which focuses on state-sanctioned violence from a mimetic perspective and the testimonial of a torture victim. Other observations are highlighted by the Jungian practitioner Craig San Roque's, *The Long Weekend in Alice Springs*, San Kessta Publications, 2003 and his reflections on 'cultural complexes.' And finally, the film *Tanna, Two Tribes, One Love*, based on a true story set in the South Pacific. The latter recounts how a long history of tribal conflict comes to an end through steps taken by warring tribes to change their cultural structures. The catalyst for this, was the tragic suicide of young lovers who refuse to set aside their love for the sake of an arranged marriage forced upon them by a culture of appeasement and reprisals. It was a reconciliation which eschewed a 'Christian' solution.

4.6 THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE: Girardian theory applied through the lens of *méconnaissance* and *reconnaissance*

Key to Girard's analysis as to why the cycle of violence in terms of both its scale and intensity is often unforeseen and so unanticipated, is his use of two 'diagnostic' tools: *méconnaissance*, and *reconnaissance*. I propose to unpack these terms in ways that, to my knowledge have not been defined in this manner before.

The connection between *méconnaissance* and *cognitive dissonance* was suggested earlier. The latter is a well-known psychological phenomenon, but in and of itself does not really explain how and why a person, or cultural structure arrives at a stage of perception where reality is so distorted, that the actuality of the event is either hidden from view, misunderstood, or misinterpreted.

The French term, used by Girard, by contrast, usefully exposes that process. The starting point is, of course, its obvious meaning: a ‘misunderstanding,’ a ‘mis (“mé”) knowing (“connaissance”/knowledge). But nestled in the word “connaissance,” is the notion of a birth (“naissance”), which suggests that the person, or system, or structure that is trying to ‘understand’ or define a situation, or a problem, or a crisis, often unknowingly, misread them because of unexamined assumptions that have taken root or have been conceived in the mind. This causes those people and cultural matrices to misperceive what is *actually* happening, often a process which even the word ‘prejudice’ does not define either because it only covers the final point of development in judging, and not its antecedents.

So, what does the word “naissance” (birth) contribute to an explanation of why and how a cycle of violence is ignited?

The answer is to be found in an understanding which acknowledges that ideas first presented to the mind only begin to control behaviour after they have penetrated its defences and pushed through into ‘acceptance’ and a kind of conception (cf. its opposite ‘misconception’), where the mind then begins to allow the idea to grow to full term. By ‘full term,’ I mean the stage at which ideas start to control not only the perception of the event, or problem or issue, but also the behaviours, policies, decisions that follow. And, because the term speaks to us of a misunderstanding, it follows that the judgements, policies, decisions that flow from it are misconceived and misdirected.

Its opposite, “reconnaissance,” given the meanings we have highlighted, opens exciting possibilities for ‘correct’ readings of the causes of a violent cycle, a problem, issue, or situation, which in turn may lead to its resolution, particularly when such an informed action is applied early in the cycle. The development of “reconnaissance” follows a similar pattern of development as “méconnaissance,” but hopefully with good outcomes. The word is now used in the English mostly in a military sense, alluding to a preparatory phase of information gathering, intelligence. The reasoning here is that any strategy which might be devised, to be effective, must be sound, based on a real understanding of the ‘enemy’s dispositions and intentions. If that intelligence is false, or misconceived, then certain defeat must follow. The Fall of Singapore in the Pacific War was such an occasion, when British intelligence concluded, that the Japanese attack, given their naval strength, would come from the sea. The assumption, based on a deliberate Japanese diversionary naval build up

was, of course, wrong. As it happens, the Japanese launched an attack by land, catching the British defences totally unprepared inflicting one of the most devastating defeats in their military history. The same happened at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in Indochina, when the French also suffered their most humiliating defeat because, on faulty reconnaissance, decided that the Vietminh would never attack across the mountains—which history records, they did.

Let us now apply these Girardian terms of *reconnaissance* and *méconnaissance* in association with the Nietzschean psychopathology of *ressentiment*, to the Rwandan genocide.

4.7 THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE:

Girardian and Nietzschean theories: the two theories thus far explained and applied to the 100 days and their antecedents

To do that, we return to Gittoes' version of his encounter with Kagame. However, before we re-visit that moment, which has such relevance for our analysis of the 100 days and its antecedents, we must move forward in time *after* the genocide to another moment in 1995 when in Australia Gittoes was awarded one of the most prestigious Religious Art Prizes, the Blake Prize. This was for his work "The Preacher II - Kibeho Massacre Series, Rwanda", which graphically portrays a preacher, sacred text in hand, preaching from Jesus' Beatitudes, offering words of comfort to those caught up in the genocide in East Africa in April 1995 amongst refugees who had been extracted from refugee camps, which we discussed earlier. On returning to Australia from Rwanda, Gittoes completed the work over one night as a summation of all the visual horror he had experienced. His comments take us back to the Kagame moment, only now we can see how the picture of the Kibeho massacre which he carried in his head was embodied in the unnamed, never discovered, never identified preacher:

..."The Preacher', [...] raise[s] people up, make[s] people feel human and spiritually alive and give[s] them courage and faith. When I returned home, I was carrying this terrible imagery in my head. I have a wife and two children. I didn't want to go straight into the studio and start painting dead children. And the one powerful positive image I had was the preacher. I could see him in his yellow coat, and I could

feel his courage. I went into the studio virtually on the day after I got back and painted it very quickly. The picture took about four hours to do. I thought I would have to go back the next day and touch it up, but when I came back, I saw that there was nothing more to do to it. It was just there.

The other poignant observation is this: only Hutu, or Tutsi would know (and perhaps even they would not either because of centuries of intermarriage) whether the preacher was a Tutsi or a Hutu. I did not know. And had, before visiting Rwanda for an intensive three weeks with matriculation students in 2017 *assumed* that the Preacher was Tutsi bravely awaiting his and others' deaths before the Hutu arrived during the hundred-day genocide to kill him. When a Tutsi Bishop from Rwanda came to visit in 2018, I referred to this picture which had so moved me that I had it blown up into a large colour print. The bishop never questioned my interpretation. But he would, at a glance, have known what I did not know: what the preacher's ethnic origins were, and the exact circumstance in which the Preacher spoke the Beatitudes to the hundreds around him—it was none other than the Tutsi Kibeho massacre of Hutu outside a refugee camp a year after the genocide.

The reality is, that while the identity of the man with the yellow jacket for our purposes does matter, and if he was a Hutu it *most definitely* matters and shocks us profoundly, the actuality (as opposed to the reality perceived by the antagonists, by us) is this. This was a massacre that took place outside the Kibeho displacement camp, on a hill in April 1995 with Kagame 'squarely at the helm of Rwandan political life' with the RPF ruling as 'securocrats not democrats... with its own security in mind' (Thomson: 2018: 88); that many Hutu were killed by their own people for being collaborators, and many Tutsi also died because they defended, or sheltered or spoke up for Hutu.

I know the Rwandan Bishop who visited Australia well enough to know that he is a man of peace, just like the preacher with the yellow jacket, standing before his vast congregations, seeing virtually every day of his life, the old hatreds surfacing. And for him, only the Beatitudes will do to bring about the healing his country so desperately needs. I believe Nietzsche's whole life project dedicated to the revaluation of values throws light on this astonishing reality. It can be summarised by one of his mature works *Beyond Good and Evil* which in the context of this investigation, is of great importance, especially as we shall see this title has resonances with Rumi's famous poem, 'there is a field I will meet you

there'. Why '*Beyond*'? Because values are human constructs, which reflect particular perspectives and realities, realities which do not necessarily match what is happening in the real world. The revelation concerning the true identity of the 'Preacher' brought to mind the terms of reference we have been considering. *Méconnaissance*, occasioned by the entrenched *ressentiment* between Hutu and Tutsi literally over centuries, blinded them to the actuality of their common humanity, an ideal which Kagame's 25th Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide at the beginning of this chapter attempted to enshrine in a nation's psyche. A nation, today, where even the mention of ethnic distinctions between Tutsi and Hutu is now outlawed and punishable by law. But for all that you cannot erase the actuality, that here is a majority of Hutu amongst the young under 24 years of age, 61% of the Rwandan population (Thomson: 2018: 247), and their futures, many of them orphans with sadness hanging palpably in the air, perhaps waiting for their terrible time in the sun. *They* know what's actual, as opposed to the reality fed to them by the State. They understand all too well how this new regime is nothing other than a 'matrix'¹⁶¹ imposed by the State.

Iain McGilchrist, Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Research Fellow in neuroimaging (among many other roles), makes the point¹⁶² that not all knowledge is propositional in nature, and that in fact all knowledge derives from experience—embodied experience. He also makes the point that what we attend to, what we think is important, what we think matters determines the way we see the world. He observes (ed. Chilton, Kopytowska: 2018: 138):

Attention changes *what kind* of a thing comes into being for us: in that way it changes the world.

From a neurological standpoint, he notes, that attention changes *who we are*—*we* who are doing the attending. Drawing on the latest findings based on mirror neurons (which Girard's theory of mimesis taps into, and which Nietzsche's understanding anticipates), McGilchrist goes even further with these astonishing claims—that by our attending to someone else performing an action and even by thinking about them doing so, we become

¹⁶¹ I draw attention to a question which occurred several years after my knowledge of this massacre. Was the man in the yellow jacket a Hutu? In which case, my sentiments and that of Gittoes' would be justified as drawing strength from his courage. But what if he was a Tutsi decoy set up to draw the Hutu crowd to him for a more accessible massacre? What if the orphans which Gittoes was offered, were a trade-off to divert attention and so allow the Tutsi with the yellow jacket to abscond? That's the thought which haunts *me*.

¹⁶² In his chapter 'God, Metaphor, and the Language of the Hemispheres'.

objectively, measurably *like* them, in how we behave, think, and feel. An attention, in effect, which brings into being a whole world of its own, and with it, depending on what it is, a set of values.

This is a helpful insight to carry with us as we close in on the two ‘protagonist nations within a nation’ in their 100 days. Clearly, their perception of each other was a misperception of tragic proportions. The Tutsi with their innate sense of superiority, and the Hutu with their reluctant acceptance of that superiority attended by a centuries-long smouldering *ressentiment*, fuelled the high octane of emotion required to break out of their subservient position and with such terrible ferocity.

I choose the following moments and aspects mentioned by Uvin and Li to annotate and comment on them using Girardian and Nietzschean terms of reference. My basic premise shall be, that perception overrides agency. Consequently, misperception, or *cognitive dissonance*, when entrenched (especially over centuries of enculturation) evokes Nietzsche’s “Phantom von Ego”: an intrinsically collective mindset that feeds off the mimetic principle (which Nietzsche identifies as “Mitleid”) that locks ‘interdividuality’ into *either* a negative (destructive) *or* a positive (creative) “Weltanschauung”.

Here is a summary of Li’s findings (2007), all of which have been confirmed by Thomson (2018). Undoubtedly the *RTL*M played a significant role in the orchestration of the 100 days. And not just in its orchestration in terms of the very physical and detailed ways in which it played out in specific locations (roadblocks, churches, public places stadiums) recommended and broadcast, but more insidiously, its psychological campaign, equally as detailed, which both drove that underlying *ressentiment*, and justified it. Through a radio campaign certain strategies and tactics were used. They included: falsification of history, ‘normalising’ the killings, shaping the ordinary citizens made.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Further details included:

- (a) the creation of a narrative which falsified the past, ‘what you fought for in 59 is being taken away’, ‘a build-up of moral and cultural constructs... fuelling a climate of intolerance which turned them into agents of destruction;’
- (b) a strategy of ‘normalisation,’ through the use of *euphemism* (equating the killings as ‘work’) which *ritualised* them, identified by Girardian scholarship as an essential component of the mimetic crisis and the scapegoat mechanism; by means of lively good music, and an interactive western style of interactive radio (my underlining); by creating an impression of ‘frankness’ and ‘trustworthiness’; by playing and re-playing of Simon Bikindi’s anti-Tutsi songs, which popularised and so legitimised the killings in a cheerful mocking way, captured in the journalist Mudatskira killing which played on people’s hunger for celebrity, even in the face of notoriety, ‘if you die just as everyone has been speaking about you, it is not like dying like a sheep’ (103);

With these *RTLM* strategies in mind, the attention now turns to the serious questions raised by Li as to whether the genocide actually qualifies as ‘agency’ in the normal sense of the word. As stated, I shall posit that, *MT* and the scapegoat, and the psychopathology of *ressentiment* in the form of ‘phantom of the ego’ do offer useful guidelines.

We saw earlier that Li challenges the too easy response, which argues that the Rwandan masses slavishly followed its dictates as ‘agents’ of terror. The actuality of what happened, he argues (crying out for more research), appears to invalidate that claim. He would rather we speak of ‘constituted subjects,’ than ‘unitary autonomous actors.’ He argues that these so-called actors are more like ‘subjects’ who are ‘permeable’ to ‘mediated discourses’ (now *that* is Nietzsche’s “Phantom von Ego”). This means, effectively, that while choices are ‘shaped by and made in the spaces and tensions between these currents,’ the matter of agency, and personal responsibility is an open question requiring ‘urgent’ attention (Li, 105), an open question the answer to which might be found in the realm of perception, as I have claimed earlier. And here Girard’s notion of *méconnaissance* also comes into play, as it pertains to the mystification, (the ‘mis-knowing’) characteristic of primal religion (Cowdell: 2018: 30), exemplified in the ones who sacrifice a scapegoat, who ‘are utterly convinced of [its] guilt’ (De Castro Rocha: 2019: 15). An ‘ignorance’, if you will, or in terms of French dictionaries, “de ne pas reconnaître...” “not to recognise” (Dumouchel: 2014: 210). Paul Dumouchel goes on to define the term even more precisely as ‘false knowledge’ and even ‘bad knowledge’ (Ibid, 211). His details about it, both from the French and Girardian perspectives are worth adding before we apply *méconnaissance* (his interpretation and mine) to the influence of *RTML* on the implementation of the genocide. These nuanced definitions highlight other interesting traits of this mindset. Firstly, it is a term that concerns our relation to others. Secondly, it is a knowing which ‘ignores’ what it ‘knows,’ and like the French expression, “*mauvaise foi*” (literally, ‘bad faith’), implies a kind of “lying to oneself,” a ‘non-recognition’ of ‘the role others play in the determination of our “true and justified beliefs” and the determination of ‘our desires, our choices, and our

(c) a relentless psychological campaign, which was ‘firmly embedded in an evershifting set of forces and structures and meanings,’ which also shaped the choices that ordinary citizens made, ‘in the spaces and tensions’ between their currents’ (Li: 105)

preferences' (2014: 213). His, and Girard's understanding of 'lying to oneself' is crucial for any response to media and genocide. In Dumouchel's reading, it is our wanting to make the world 'to conform or say what we believe.' Which is often but not always, I would argue, as simple as a conscious intention 'to change the world'. Dumouchel adds, rather it is 'to make the world *as we say, that it is*' (2014: 215).

There is a cultural dimension that is also of interest here in this complex human, not just Rwandan, genocidal swamp. Once again, Dumouchel's analysis is very helpful. He alerts us to *méconnaissance*'s larger meaning: that it is the kind of cultural cringe which 'shies away' or 'refuses to probe further a body of knowledge that, if questioned properly, would reveal the truth' about our violent origins. We would rather the world not "be like that." We would rather believe that our culture as it is today, which 'we love and cherish' not have sprung 'from the blood of victims' (2014: 216). But even here the individual and the collective identities, Dumouchel, following Girard, argues that they are inextricably linked, in the sense, that culturally what we have is a "unanimous misunderstanding," which is 'a self-organising mechanism of violence' (2014: 216). And what is more, the contrived conviction is expressed as a 'false sacred,' the reality of which, after the mimetic crisis is over, 'diminishes as distance grows and as the traces of the founding scapegoating are slowly erased' (2014: 217), confirming that, the *méconnaissance* is allowed to 'persist.' This certainly can be seen, in the sense that as Rwanda under its President moves further and further away from the actuality of 1994, "the Truth" with a capital 'T' of those events, becomes more and more that of 'precolonial ethnic unity, where divisions wrought by colonial rule [are] replaced by Rwandan unity and its former glory... restored by the RPF' (Thomson: 2018: 148).

Here Dumouchel's on-going account is informative. Referring to Tarantism (a psychological compulsive dancing believed to be caused by the bite of a spider) based on De Martino's fieldwork (1961), he taps into that research to take *méconnaissance* to another level—that of a 'veiled knowledge...', an impossible social situation, 'which cannot be addressed directly.' ¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Both mental illness and the spider's bite were eliminated by De Martino's research. In their place a new factor emerged: a "cultural formation," caused by 'strong social and psychic conflicts or trauma' and 'usually strikes teenagers and young adults' who have to reject 'an impossible social situation which for various cultural reasons cannot be addressed directly,' such as 'a forced wedding, an impossible love... (or the) death of a loved one.' (Dumouchel: 2014: 220).

Dumouchel's conclusion, however, is curious in that he claims such *méconnaissance* 'deprives agents of all means of dealing with a past they regret' (Ibid, 223). He then garners that claim, by a methodology which he employs to explain the Rwandan genocide, using Midlarsky's *The Killing Trap* (2005) and its five indices. These not only seem out of touch with the genocide's reality, but also fail to do justice to his excellent explanation of *méconnaissance*. While these might be impressive in their attempts to cover five genocides (!), the terms Midlarsky employs, at least in my reading of the way Dumouchel appropriates them, are caught in a quagmire of abstractions that somehow cut us off, as Li and Uvin have warned, from the overpowering reality of the genocide events themselves.

Let us now again bring in, the Nietzschean "Phantom von Ego." We have defined it as a bodily mimesis, which Nietzsche claims to have discovered lying at the very heart of the origin of subjectivity in the history of humankind. It represents the power of an external threat which "throng[s] the modern city to penetrate the interior life of the ego" (*EH* 8; 63), one which consequently saps it of its wellbeing and health. The question is why is this so? There is no more poignant example to illustrate it than the role of the media and its 'knock-on' effect on the agency of the perpetrators.

On first exposure to "Phantom von Ego", we might be tempted to think of it as the state of mind of a careless, passive person who is held in thrall by the opinions of others: 'impersonal, semi-personal opinions and arbitrary' (*D*, 105), one which lacks any control over its state of being. But the whole passage taken in context suggests that this is a state of being that has entrenched itself because 'the great majority... do nothing for their ego their whole life long' (Ibid, 105)—that is, they have, be it through carelessness, or romantic and idealistic notions ('poetical evaluations'), become entrenched in a mindset that allows them to be manipulated by others.

RTL and its presenters, as we have seen, were very aware of the influence they exerted on others. But Li is right to challenge any reading which claims that the listening public automatically have been taken in beyond their capacity to act independently. Nietzsche's argument one would expect might be, that the listeners', the herd's predisposition to feel their vulnerability and inferiority (the slave mindset), combined with a *ressentiment* built up over centuries, *would* make them vulnerable to revenge and to manipulation. And some of Nietzsche's critics, Girardian scholars included, might argue that

Nietzsche would be expected to congratulate Hutu Rwandans for finally being strong enough to rise up beyond *ressentiment* and actually exact an arguably justifiable revenge. But neither of those arguments align with a careful reading of Nietzsche.

As explained above, the “Phantom von Ego” is a state of mind brought about by ignorance and passivity. However, there is nothing ignorant about the way the listening public Tutsi, and Hutu, responded. In the Nietzschean sense they are sick and possessed by this ‘phantom’ of the ego, one that has been manufactured, perpetrated by the media to facilitate the emergence of a violent collective consciousness. Despite even this, from the evidence at least, perpetrators they most definitely were. Whatever the reasons, they were faced with clear choices and decisions that had to be made. And those choices were as varied as Thomson defines them, regardless of whether ‘the killers were reluctant or enthusiastic about the task, the result was the same’—an observation which reinforces the claim I made earlier, that it is a mindset, a perception which drives agency, it is an agency that never operates in a vacuum.¹⁶⁵

These motivations, (the list below by no means a comprehensive) reveal that *most* decisions to kill were in fact consciously chosen and explainable. Other incontrovertible facts are these: (a) the murders were not motivated by ethnic hatred (Ibid, 22); (b) the official line that Hutu killed Tutsi out of ‘a deep-seated hatred introduced by Belgian colonizers and cultivated by Hutu-led post-colonial governments’ (Ibid, 23) is just not there in the evidence. As one Rwandan put it (Marie Bosco cited (Thomson2018: 8):

This government made it so hard to live together since the genocide because they don’t accept what happened. People were killing stealing, burning, everyone was involved because there was no way to escape. Am I not a survivor?

The ‘everyone was involved’ because they couldn’t escape,’ I would argue, does not mean that they were helpless, because like Gittoe’s *Preacher II* reveals they certainly had a

¹⁶⁵ Demonstrating their loyalty (2018: 6), fulfilling their ‘civic duty’ (Ibid, 21) killing under duress... (Ibid, 22), offering incentives of various kinds (Ibid, 28), specifically of money and property (Ibid, 30), killing out of fear (Ibid, 28), acting out of loyalty to social ties, friends family (Ibid, 29), caught up in the violence of group dynamics: killing in mobs (Ibid, 30), often acting with justification, which created ‘unavoidable’ situations such as being used as human shields in the line of fire (Ibid, 107) which inevitably ‘brought about their own demise’ (Ibid, 90). Also, often atrocities would be attributed to criminal gangs (Ibid, 90) and under the influence of constant propaganda, often acted out of a conviction informed by ‘genocide ideology’ (Ibid, 146).

choice, terrible though it be and one that only a few strong enough, and brave enough could make.

4.8 THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF THE GENOCIDE:

Girardian and Nietzschean theories crossexamined against three theoretical approaches: Midlarsky's 5 indices in a *Killing Trap*, Joel Hodge's *MT* analysis of state sanctioned violence in East Timor and San Roque's Jungian 'cultural complexes' approach in *The Long Weekend in Alice Springs, Australia*

As noted earlier, I think Dumouchel would have been better off trusting the explanatory power of *MT's méconnaissance* rather than resorting to Midlarsky's indices of genocide. To state under the indice of continuity of killing that, 'genocides do not spring out of virgin ground that is free of violence and persecution' and that 'the past and present are linked' (2014: 293) amounts to little more than a truism. These and the other abstractions cited by Dumouchel are thinly disguised generalisations which are never either convincingly anchored in clearly contextualised events or validated by specific evidence, which leads Dumouchel to argue the *non-sequitur* that, 'resources spent on genocidal militias and buying machetes could have been employed more usefully to fight the rebels, whose offensive had recommenced', or this, 'the motive the driving force behind the homicidal behaviour is nothing but a shift of violence, compensation, vengeance against sacrificable third parties' (2014: 296). The other distraction, at least in my reading of Dumouchel's otherwise excellent coverage, is his wont (following a consistent paper trail of many Girardian scholars) to insist upon a Christian apology.

The privileging of Christianity has been a thorn in the side of the Girardian camp, despite its protestations to the contrary. Even the chapter 'De la *méconnaissance*' is not exempt. Not always apparent in the details of the chapter, it is certainly stated in the Introduction (2014: xv):

[It] is about misrecognition and how we should understand the effect of Christian Revelation. Girard argues, as we know, that Christian Revelation puts an end to the misrecognition that is at the heart of the scapegoat mechanism and in consequence renders it both inefficient as a means of protection against violence and culturally

barren. I submit that this claim should be understood in the sense that Christian Revelation does not so much do away with misrecognition as displaces it.

I shall argue for a much broader understanding of *méconnaissance*—one that is accessible to *all* and one which has not been displaced by Christian Revelation. I shall posit that it belongs in the pantheon of psychological terminology along with such notions as *cognitive dissonance* and the controversial Jungian idea of ‘cultural complexes’ both of which deny Christian Revelation, rather than affirm it.

Meantime, we examine another mimetic analysis which also falls into the way of Christian privileging. This is especially the case, where no mention is made of Islam as being the state religion that undergirds ‘state-sanctioned violence’ in East Timor, but where ‘Christian resistance’ enlivened and enlightened by that same Christian Revelation, enabled its protagonist, a former village king, Cristiano, who was a victim of torture (eds.) Cowdell, Fleming, Hodge, 2012: 88), who ‘by entering into Christ’s own way of being in relationship with God,’ along with the East Timorese, ‘seemed to learn how to come to terms with pain and suffering.’ We are told early in the analysis that from 25 or 30 per cent of the population in 1975 who were Roman Catholic Christians, sky-rocketed to over 90% in the 1990s), (2012: 95).

This contrasts starkly with the Rwandan case study as we have seen it unfold. Indeed, Thomson explains, that it was ‘Mosques... [that] ... had provided cover for some Tutsi, with Muslim leaders staunchly refusing to participate in the genocide, saving hundreds of lives in the process’ (Thomson: 2018: 33). Whereas Ellen Carmody (‘Catholic Church, the Rwandan Genocide, and Reconciliation’) notes that even Catholic churches were the sites of many massacres during the genocide, and in some cases, Archbishop Perraudin, of Kigali (during the First and Second Republics) focused on the divide between Hutu and Tutsi. He did this most publicly and notably in his Lenten letters, in which to his 98% Roman Catholic countrymen he had this to say: ‘How long can we allow our dear [Tutsi] brothers to make fools of us and to ignore us and the people from whom we are descended?’ (Carmody, 4). Carmody also records the fact that of those five priests who stood up to this “racist quota policy” denouncing it as ‘an aberration’ within the church, three were murdered with their congregations during the genocide (Ibid, 5). In addition, mention is made of a Father Serembo who ordered bulldozers to push down the walls of his parish killing the 2,000

people inside (Ibid, 6). It is only as recent as November 23 2016 that the nine bishops of Rwanda wrote a letter of apology for the Church's role in the genocide, to which President Kagame's Office duly notes that:

This step is welcome as an individual expression of remorse. However, its profound inadequacy only serves to highlight how far the Catholic Church still remains from a full and honest reckoning with moral and legal responsibilities... to face up to its own past without excuses or fear, just as Rwandans have been doing over the past twenty-two years.¹⁶⁶

Read against those comments, Hodge's proud claim (eds.) Cowdell, Fleming, Hodge, 2012: 102) for Timorese Roman Catholic Christians that, relationship with Christ enabled the Timorese to place themselves within a larger context than the spatially, temporally and existentially collapsed zone of sacred violence, in communion around the Victimised One who has already defeated sacred violence and death'—perhaps calls us to a more temperate judgement.

Craig San Roque's analysis of violence in an altogether different cultural context adds weight to that call for a balanced assessment. His treatment of Jung's 'cultural complexes' resonates with Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment*. The connection is not at first self-evident, but as soon as San Roque's attempts to understand the First Nation predicament ('we all struggle to make sense of the chaos') and begins to articulate that chaos, we immediately recognise the repressed voice of *ressentiment*. Revealed in the way it resists consciousness, for example. How something 'seems to happen to [our]

¹⁶⁶ Yes, this is the same Kagame we saw earlier, only then he was Vice-President. It seems he too, has a past to reckon with, although you would not know it from the brazenness with which he milks the guilt of his international subscribers. And here, trading off the guilt-ridden Catholic Church for all it is worth, in terms of the begging confession he extracted from Pope Francis in an audience with him on March 19, 2017, demanding assurances that the Church actively stop 'divisive language' by some Catholic clergy, excommunicating members of the Church who participated in the genocide (Carmody 9). It confirms Thomson's claims in this memorable indictment (Thomson: 2018: 38):

Neatly packaged stories of Hutu hatred for Tutsi found sympathetic ears as many journalists and others writing about the genocide felt the need to atone for their failures in reporting it. The sympathy of foreign friends had a moral dimension for Paul Kagame. His people had been the victims of genocide and shoring up the RPF as blameless leaders made sense to many outsiders at the time. Kagame would soon exploit these feelings of international shame to explain his policy choices while also laying the groundwork to justify human rights abuses in the name of national security and later, economic development.

consciousness'; how when a complex operates, 'self-awareness becomes less sharp, and a 'most... inarticulate' frame of mind' sets in. San Roque observes (an established characteristic of Nietzschean practice) his fascination for 'something but am almost unable to think about it... almost unable to think.' (San Roque: 2013: 6-7). He describes those 'cultural complex' moments as 'bacchic visitations' (2013: 12). He draws a circle representing (a whole weekend in Alice Springs observed) around himself. As he observes, he describes what he sees and hears. He notes First Nation's 'endurance,' its 'domestication by the West,' how the memory systems are 'developing too many gaps,' too much 'misunderstanding,' realising that at its core, at its roots these cultural complexes are 'essentially a psychological problem' (2013: 17, 19).¹⁶⁷

Having broken open the outer canister, as it were, of the cultural complex, San Roque is taken to an even deeper Jungian consciousness, where the hard cultural soil of the past is broken up to reveal its 'psychological inheritance,' its 'ancient complexes' of 'pathologies of former influential cultural events' (2013: 27-28). San Roque finds himself looking into a cultural past at the face of a 'refugee from another time' (2013: 29). These events he discovers are culturally shared around the world, be it the 'mythical Middle East' and the story of Inanna, Goddess of war (2013: 31), a story of her resentment that ends in an ambivalent reconciliation with Dumuzi her estranged husband (2013: 43), or the principal dreaming of a wild dog that comes in from the South through the gap in the mountain range to the site of Alice Springs (2013: 51). And here San Roque finds himself, (my reading at least) in Girardian and Nietzschean genealogical origins territory: where the 'dog,' 'a dingo ancestor' of violence ravages 'the incumbent male... the mother and puppies'; where 'caterpillar ancestors' and 'the green stinky beetle' fight it out with one another (2013: 52-53).

When San Roque reflects on the reality of what it might mean for Alice Springs to be built on the mythic event of a rape and a dog fight, he wonders about the extent to which

¹⁶⁷ The root of the human problem as illustrated by San Roque's careful attention to detail of the indigenous First Nations' reaction, is the psychological condition of nations incapacitated by *ressentiment* for whom San Roque is able to speak noting their 'helplessly committed acts of violence, spontaneous, unregulated, without insight or reflection.' Nations afflicted by an inability 'to integrate [their] experience' (2013: 20-21). It is a condition that passes before his eyes like a near death experience of a culture 'on the border line of a peculiar disintegration' (2013: 22).

mythic sites and mythic stories reflect ‘psychic influences’ that repeat themselves in the present. The aboriginal *persona* says out loud what San Roque is thinking might be the case: “You can’t get away frummit!! That dreamin’ story is why there’s trouble in this here town,” ‘the dog fight belongs to archetypal dreaming time... the town and its inhabitants, dwell in archetypal time’ (2013: 54)¹⁶⁸.

San Roque’s next insight is one I have rarely come across: that as observers, we are implicated—and we must take ourselves into account, and *MT* as we have seen, certainly reinforces this imperative. Not the last but the first concern: is to ‘attend to something that has come adrift in myself’ (2013: 61). That ‘something’ is *my* integrity, which by the very act of displacing someone else’s, we might have displaced others from theirs. Just because I think I have an aerial perspective on the issue, does not mean I have a clear view of things. The old man from Warlpiri is right of course, indeed, there is an ethical angle on this, and using the metaphor of an eagle riding the thermals, in his words, I should be careful ‘to mind my own mice’ (2013: 62)—that ‘A web of disordering complexes has evolved as a consequence of the psychopathologies of colonisation’ (2013: 64). As we have seen with the Rwandan genocide, while colonisation exacerbated and helped to intensify the *ressentiment* that had started centuries before, the explanation for the violence cannot be explained by colonisation alone. His verdict on the impact of the church, ‘Australian Christian Folk’ is not a flattering one even with the qualification of ‘unwittingly inject[ed] unspeakable depression and psychic disorder’ and making allowances for their good intentions, ‘righteousness becomes terror’ (2013: 64).

The case of Teresa highlights how ineffectual religion is when dealing with hard-core issues like addiction. Her fears are not easily assuaged. The plastic crucifix mocks her predicament, and even that is taken away for fear of self-harm. Sniffing petrol is lethal, but she can’t stop. This is the cultural ‘self-decomposition’ which comes with loss of ‘cultural practice’ (2013: 72). With her, there is no ‘conceptual frame’ to help, and her ‘psychic

¹⁶⁸ The rest of San Roque’s Weekend’s observations are truly fascinating, with so much to offer, not only with regard to an understanding of how the Nietzschean and Girardian analyses might meld with a Jungian perspective, but how all three views help to get underneath the Rwandan genocide story, which as San Roque notes ‘the area of overlap between my culture and Aboriginal is indeed my affair’ (2013: 61); to which we could add, that the overlap between the violence that happened in Rwanda and the domestic violence that kills two women (and sometimes more) in Australia every week of the year through domestic violence, has very strong relevance here, and it makes *us* realise that this is a human problem, not just a Rwandan problem.

immune system is down' and this 'multiple collapse' has reached the proportions of a 'cultural complex' (2013: 72-74). Her physical defences are down, her 'limited repertoire of effective tools' (2013: 79) are utterly incapable of withstanding the brutal 'eternal return of the same' (Nietzsche's terminology) for the relentless onslaught of the cultural factors that are stacked against her. In Australia it is loss of culture, loss of country. In Rwanda, Thomson argues, it is a past that 'points to waves of mass violence, occurring every forty years or so, when the ruling class fractures and ordinary people become the targets of physical, ethnically motivated violence' (Thomson: 2018: 254).

What can be gleaned, then, from San Roque's Jungian diagnosis, based on this Nietzschean observational methodology? How does it align with Nietzschean and Girardian diagnostic tools?

First and foremost, *ressentiment* aligns with the Jungian 'cultural complex.' All the same indicators are there: a phantom of the self, evoked by the assaults of the white majority culture one that has splintered, shattered the indigenous psyche. Second, *ressentiment* and the 'cultural complex' share the same auto-immune defects: lack of sharpness, confusion, inability to think, the persona riddled with holes, plagued by gaps, living in the foggy world of *méconnaissance*, one inherited from the past, its 'bodies and human suffering, the cursed currency of history' (cited 2018: 256, Magaziner, "#MindYourOwnBusiness"), one which, Thomson observes, Paul Kagame regrettably continues to practise. Third, a psychopathology deeply embedded in past cultural 'events' which have long ago morphed and become mythic sites and mythic stories that have now acquired the force of a psychological inheritance that evoke psychic influences which repeat themselves in the present. All markers reminiscent of Nietzsche's eternal return of the same.

And, of course, finally, the foundation events, and foundation stories with their original violence and murders, mirror the Girardian Mimetic Theory (MT) account, with their 'divinisations' and their 'demonisations': an extraordinary unconscious saltpan of the human past, a collective unconscious which explains—if we could but interpret it—who we are as humans and the reasons why we do what we do (and why we persist with the myth, 'this is not who we are, but this is what we do') caught so graphically by San Roque in the spine-chilling event, which he remembers. When, in some obscure desert camp, at a midnight hour, 'a man I know... had taken up an axe in a drunken rage seeking his wife' and 'stumbled

in the dark into the cold campfire and seeing a shape wrapped up in blankets mistook it for his wife and slew the dark shape' (2013: 86). To the question, 'what is it in our brains that allows us to take axes to our sleeping women?' he answers: 'repetitive', 'autonomous' arising from some strange nub in the minds of men' (2013: 88), exposing what Nietzsche and Girard have discovered in our origins: the cycle of mimetic violence which arises from *ressentiment*. A *ressentiment*, which morphs into acts of violence through the fog of *méconnaissance*—an eternal return of the same which come back to haunt us, like some phantom of the ego, unless we do something for our ego our 'whole life long' (Nietzsche: 1881: D 105). What Nietzsche names "Phantom von Ego", Girard tags as "scandal," a unique kind of obstacle (2001: 26):

not one of those ordinary obstacles that we avoid easily
after we run into it the first time; but a paradoxical obstacle that is almost
impossible to avoid.

5 Last Words: *The Tempest* as case study

Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: *ressentiment* observed through a literary lens

Existential and metaphysical *ressentiment*: Shakespeare, Nietzsche, and Girard's last stand

What is not made explicit, but is often the real engine of a theory, is what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*. I take this intuition a little further by saying that resentment according to its mimetic definition, produces *misapprehension*, in other words the sacred. (Girard: 2010: 83b)

The days of thinkers "prowling around angrily like captive animals, watching the bars of their cages and leaping against them in order to smash them down" [are over]. (Nietzsche, *Daybreak: 'Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brad Leiter, CUP: 1996: 46)

In this chapter, I shall explore and critically examine the last word and testament of each thinker on *ressentiment*: not only its essential nature, not just its place in the cycle of violence, its disruptive influence on the human psyche but also—finally—its prognosis as 'the last enemy'. To do so we shall access the 'last' works of each writer: *The Tempest* (TT), *Ecce Homo* (EH) and *Battling to the End* (BTE), with TT, being the cardinal testing canvas for Girard's and Nietzsche's theories.

Here the manner and tone of each thinker's approach is noteworthy: for Shakespeare it is a sad knowing, with at times despairing glimpses into the past, the present, and the future. Yet also, forever longing, forever hopeful. For Nietzsche, as we have seen, it is a last laugh—a laugh, however, that never loses its seriousness of purpose. For Girard it is the 'unavoidable anthropological observation' of the 'escalation of extremes' whereby, humanity, 'more than ever the author of its own fall', must 'wake up... [from its] sleeping conscience' thus eschewing a false 'comfort' which must 'always contribute to the worst' (Girard: 2010: 217).

5.1 SHAKESPEARE'S RESENTMENT *ISLAND*: THE FINAL TEST

Nietzsche, Girard, and Shakespeare—is there a consensus and if so, what is its significance?

To this point I have argued that Nietzsche and Girard, after looking long and hard at human resentment from the same viewing platform must surely arrive at some kind of consensus while retaining their unique perspectives. If resentment is the engine room, the underground malaise that infects modernity and drives it towards an apocalyptic abyss of its own making, then neither of our intrepid observers underestimates the seriousness of the crisis. Both agree that mimetically charged rage once ignited is next to impossible to extinguish. In *TT*, this is Shakespeare's acknowledgement too: that resentment's perniciousness, its pervasiveness in culture, are of such monstrous proportions as to define it as 'systemic.' For Shakespeare it is a sickness of the heart that drives the Catholic and Protestant infarction and its internecine religious wars. It is a sickness only discoverable, it seems, by wrenching away from conventional lenses. None of the looking glasses provided by Puritans, Protestants or Catholics, it seems, are capably of exposing its roots, which sink deep into the mangrove colonies of denial and suppression.

In effect, it is a religious dilemma, 'a historic surge,' which for Shakespeare permeates and imposes itself 'painfully on the moment-by-moment crises of daily life' (Hughes: 1992: 18). This Elizabethan form of resentment, as Nietzsche discovered in the context of German Lutheran Protestantism, wears the mask of piety, and righteousness. It is a piety which negates the flesh, but whose hands are besmirched by the semen of a genealogy of twisted and self-denying, self-justifying morals that are committed to the annihilation ("Vernichtung")¹⁶⁹ of its enemies. Here Shakespeare and Nietzsche show themselves to be at one. Both find it necessary to look for terms of reference that break the bounds of traditional orthodoxy to expose *ressentiment's* blasphemy and idolatry. I suspect that Shakespeare and Nietzsche trace its fault lines (anti-Semitic and pagan blood sacrifice)

¹⁶⁹ Shakespeare's analysis, Hughes claims, was informed by a movement that began in Italy in the early sixteenth century, one that was consciously devised and directed at deepening 'the schism of the Reformation.' It centres on Hermes Trismegistus, who was thought to be an Egyptian sage from the period of Moses but is a compilation of partly Gnostic treatises. These treatises were thought to have anticipated Plato and Christ and included 'everything in man's psychological history that Catholic orthodoxy and Protestant militancy excluded,' a perspective open to 'religious, spiritual, and philosophical systems' of an earlier world (Hughes: 1992: 19).

back to early Christianity's betrayal of its Jewish roots to compensate for its sense of powerlessness in that period before Constantine, which finally formalized and legalized it as the religion of the Empire. Thereafter, formal Christianity became the institution of an Empire from whose hypocrisy, both Catholic and Protestant, never quite recovered.

Both thinkers Shakespeare and Nietzsche, seem to confirm a conclusion which refused to privilege that kind of Christianity and sought instead pagan equivalences to expose the institution's inconsistencies, misdemeanors, and hypocrisies. They also, it appears, steer their readers towards a purer, more compassionate, and more tolerant Christianity reminiscent of its 'true' 1st century origins such as Nietzsche's naming of it as the heritage of the Christ of the *Evangel* and the overcoming of resentment which we shall explore in full in the last chapter.

But why use pagan symbolism? Perhaps for the same reasons as Jesus of Nazareth employed unorthodox means by recasting the true heroes of faith in *personae* abhorrent to the Jewish authorities of his day—like the Good Samaritan (for Jews through a sectarian lens, as abhorrent as Gentiles), the Syro-Phoenician woman, the Cannanite woman, Naaman the leper. A recasting, which Girard (a late convert to modern French Catholicism) could not find it in his heart to practise. While Girard is blind to this controversial practice in Shakespeare (whom he admires and holds up as exemplifying a deep understanding of *mimesis*), he is hypersensitive to it in Nietzsche. Unable, for example, to countenance Nietzsche's Dionysos as synonymous with a re-imagined Christ, who stands with Dionysos outside and against the blood sacrificial system, and false religion. Yet, Shakespeare and Nietzsche employ this methodology, following the example not only of Jesus of Nazareth but also that of the great classical writers such as Aeschylus who in *The Persians* casts Xerxes in the role of a tragic hero to shame a newly emerging Athenian Empire into acknowledging the oppressive policies it was imposing upon former Delian League members.

The question remains, however, as to whether Nietzsche and Girard's theories align with Shakespeare's analysis, and more importantly, whether all three thinkers in their consensus are persuasive enough in their findings to cause modern contemporary analysts to re-think the nature of the cycle of violence and the on-going relevance of *ressentiment*.

Central to Nietzsche's project, from which he never deviated, was the paramount importance of the Greek Tragic Vision. For Girard, it is the *MT* and the scapegoat (with its

historic roots in Greek tragedy) and for Shakespeare it was, as Hughes names it—the ‘Tragic Equation’.¹⁷⁰ All three thinkers, it seems, point to a consensus by whose means the dynamics of violence is exposed. That lens either in part or in full, is the Greek tragic vision. For Girard it could only always be incomplete, due to his belief that a commitment to the Classical model somehow exclusively constitutes a betrayal of the ‘innocent victim,’ the scapegoat, Jesus Christ, who came to put an end to blood sacrifice. This again I have shown to be a simplistic assessment.

Shakespeare’s analysis is, for example, the more compelling because he aligns the best of the Greek tragic vision with the best of authentic Christianity, as opposed to the bellicosity of the Christianity of the Crusades, both Protestant and Catholic (remember the St Bartholomew Massacres in France), and then in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation period. The Enlightenment for both Shakespeare and Nietzsche was a welcome triumph of reason, something that also included a totally justifiable homage to the main movements of the Greek pre-Classical (Heraclitus *et al.*) and Classical periods (Socrates, Plato, Aeschylus, Sophocles), itself reminiscent of the Renaissance, a period considered to be in possession of a much admired integrity however flawed by its other ‘human all too human’ propensities to also admire the vestments of power. It is not just the one play *TT*, but the whole Shakespearean canon, which cumulatively arrives at the same conclusions as Nietzsche and Girard. Hughes’ case for Shakespeare may be convoluted, perhaps even at times overreaching itself, yet its claim that *TT* is ‘a keyboard for playing the Complete Works’ does very helpfully alert us to Miranda’s ‘brave new world’ apocalypse in the making, a world also glimpsed by Nietzsche and Girard—in so many words, a world entirely at the mercy of *ressentiment*.

Shakespeare through Prospero take us into the very mind, heart, and soul of *ressentiment*. Its most defining feature being the capacity to deceive and self-deceive which resonates strongly with the findings of chapters 1-4. The Tempest keyboard plays out the ‘eternal recurrence’ of that same old human predilection for self-delusion. One which resonates with Shakespeare’s Master trick, so successfully to suspend our disbelief as to dupe us into thinking that this fictional Prospero has actually overcome *ressentiment*: forgiven his former enemies, released his ‘slaves’ (Ariel and Caliban) from their servitude,

¹⁷⁰ ‘The Tragic Equation, the “Grosse Fuge” of the themes of Shakespeare’s tragic myth’ (Hughes: 1992: 379).

and even come to recognize that what he loathes in Caliban, 'This thing of darkness', is also his own failing, 'I acknowledge [as] mine.' (Act 5.1.278-279). However, as we shall see, this is pure alchemy, so much smoke and mirrors. The powers Prospero exercises, the powers he foregoes, the ethical victories he claims to be his own, all amount to sleight of hand. This is a brilliant exposé not just of *ressentiment* but also of political rhetoric and of all systemic propaganda (such as the Rwandan annual remembrance, which is contradicted by the continued silencing of dissident voices, the voice of the majority, the oppressed, the marginalized, the forgotten). Further, Shakespeare draws those critical observations into the old controversy of Plato's allegations of Art's propensity to do the same, in the Epilogue, where Shakespeare and Prospero become one. Here he equates his dramatic art to 'charms [now] all o'erthrown,' to the 'spell' and 'art to enchant' (Act 5. Epilogue.8, 14) with which he has held his audience in thrall.

Indeed, the audience has undergone a carefully orchestrated experience of Shakespeare's making, an experience only made possible by the human predisposition to 'believe' what it sees and hears. Without that predisposition, and without his exploitation of that predisposition, there could be no *performance*, 'Let your indulgence – set me free' (Act 5. Epilogue. 20). Without that 'indulgence' he would have had to wait in vain—but knows that will not happen: the applause will come '[He awaits applause, then] exit (Act 5. Epilogue. 21).¹⁷¹ Lawtoo observes that this 'paradoxical logic of mimetic pathos' derives its strength and efficacy from the fact that it 'does not rest on rational discourse (*logos*)' which is the norm only in moments of 'waking-consciousness,' but also taps into a 'mimetic unconscious' (Lawtoo: 2019: xxxii), a state of mind highly susceptible to 'suggestion,' the 'lowering of rational faculties' and the 'subordination of thoughts to drives (especially sexual and violent drives)' (2019: xxxiii).

¹⁷¹ In light of a comment by Nidesh Lawtoo (2019), there is something chilling about that 'waiting' and his recent analysis of how 'neo-fascism', 'aspirational fascism' and 'new fascist' "leaders" (2019: xxxvi), inspired by Nietzsche's insight into "actors" all kinds of actors, have become the real masters' (GS) (2019 xxix/xxx):

Since classical antiquity actors have been defined as protean figures endowed with a power to cast a spell on all kinds of theatres, thereby blurring the line between appearance and reality [...] This actor qua master cannot be framed within a stable rational identity that is not singular but plural [...] [the] Nietzschean strand in mimetic theory... is affectively implicated in the forms of theatrical mastery it denounces [...] unmasking contemporary actors who impersonate fictional roles of authority of all kinds of political stages, casting a real shadow on the contemporary world.

Thus, Prospero's mind *is* the mind of *ressentiment*. And while its spite, its harboured anger, its predilection for revenge, are well known, not so well known is *ressentiment's* amazing talent for concealment, deception, and self-deception. Shakespeare's treatment of the theme is as much a theophany, as Hughes claims it is an epiphany, which unveils *ressentiment's* whole battery of magic tricks and devices to deceive.¹⁷² While Hughes's assessment of *TT* may seem contrived, it does draw attention to a very seldom mentioned characteristic of this 'unfamiliar' play, that of a characteristic which perfectly matches *ressentiment's* self-delusionary mindset. Whereas in every other play of Shakespeare's the 'charge of the Boar' ('a psychological event, a shock wave of death... of... architectonic design') (Hughes: 1992: 383) is allowed to take its course, whether through comedy with its humourous chaotic overtones or through tragedy and its air of the inevitable which must and will reach its dire and bitter conclusion—here in *TT*, that shock, that charge, is arrested, stopped in its tracks through magical intervention. It is an intervention which reeks of contrivance, of political obfuscation. The tempest, the events triggered by it, Prospero's backstory, the account of the unlikely reconciliation of the two brothers even the manner with which Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love and the plans for them after they marry—all smack of something that is staged by a *ressentiment* rhetoric which longs for closure but cannot achieve it in any other way than by a feat of imagination, a far-fetched metaphor... the kind which inhabits the poetic *conceit* of a John Donne. Or, to it put more bluntly, the magician's pulling of the wool over the eyes of his captivated audience. Certainly, it is a very

¹⁷² Its withholding of the truth: '...my daughter, who/Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing' (Act 1.2.18) in the name of protection, 'I have done nothing but in care of thee' (Act 1.2.16)

- (A) Its refusal to admit fault: naivety and neglect under the cover of an obsession, 'to my state grew stranger, being transported/And rapt in secret studies'; its vilification of a brother, 'Thy false uncle' (Act 1.2.76-77), who had no choice other than to inhabit the vacuum of power (someone has to rule—if you don't I shall); its neglect of the responsibilities of power passed off as 'neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated/To closeness and the bettering of my mind' (Act 1.2.89-90)
- (B) Its false claims disguised by a refusal to answer questions, 'cease more questions. / Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dullness/And give it way. I know thou canst not choose' (Act 1.2.185-187)
- (C) Its shameless exploitation of others (Caliban and Ariel) in the name of enlightenment and freedom—to Ariel— 'Dost thou forget/From what torment I did free thee?' (Act 1.2.252-253); to Caliban— 'Thou most lying slave, /Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee, /Filth as thou art, with human care.' (Act 1.2.348-349)
- (D) Its self-righteousness, its false humility, its false humanity, its brazen exploitation of power which together conceal themselves under a cloak of reconciliation—to Antonio his usurping brother— 'I do forgive thee, /Unnatural though thou art'. (Act 5.1.78-79)
- (E) Its narrative of self-pity which discounts personal agency, 'the story of my life, /And the particular accidents gone by...' (Act 5.1 308-309)

long way away from the biblical narrative of 'the coat of many colours' and Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers in Egypt, although those stories too maybe amount in the end to nothing more than the narrative of wishful thinking and idealism (see David Tacey's Jungian analysis of Sacred Text, Hebrew and Christian)¹⁷³. Hughes' depiction of the nature and scale of the 'big lie' of the intervention is impressive.¹⁷⁴

In Appendix II, *The Perpetuum Mobile*, Hughes unveils the 'simplest possible working psychological model of the Tragic Equation' devoid of historical and religious constructs (1992: 513), which bears an uncanny resemblance to the world of *ressentiment*. He speaks there of the 'rational ego' which attempts to control 'man's (*sic*) behavior according to the needs and demands of a self-controlled society' and how this is forever and constantly beset by 'the natural, biological and instinctual life' (1992: 513). While the rational ego can apprehend the Goddess of Complete Being, it 'cannot express the fullness of [that] life' (1992: 513). This is because of its many 'act[s] of suppression', its many self-betrayals' (1992: 513/514), and it is these which precipitate 'the Tragic Equation,' the exception in *TT* proving the rule. I think Shakespeare does what I am not sure Hughes has even countenanced. Shakespeare reveals to us the impossibility of overcoming *ressentiment*. Or, if it is overcome, Shakespeare's inference is that it will require a self-sacrifice on an inordinate scale, such as that of Nietzsche's Christ of the Evangel—according to Nietzsche, the only human being ever to have gone to an underserved death without resentment.

Where does this leave the theories?

The Nietzschean master-slave dichotomy works well. Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel all three at various times find themselves to be both strong and weak, depending on their

¹⁷³ *Beyond Literal Belief: Religion as Metaphor*, (Routledge) 2015

¹⁷⁴ First, it occurs in the context of a Masque, which 'is an incantatory magical spell' to ensure, a 'flowering' and rebirth' at its end (Hughes: 1992: 442). Second, the intervention is accompanied by '[puppet language] ... stilted quaintly formal...' (1992: 448), a language that is 'ritualised.' Third, here in *TT* for the first time the charge of the Boar has failed: its incarnation in the 'baffled, demi-devil' Caliban materializes as this 'stunned, half-animal form, shaking its head from the impact' (1992: 461), 'a gruesome... final defeat' averted' (1992: 463). Fourth, the action of the play itself because it is 'perfunctory,' also 'exerts tremendous suggestive power' (1992: 469), even if it is in the form and shape of 'a chord of dissonance' (1992: 470). Fifth, to further undercut all Prospero's achievements, which 'are precariously provisional' (1992: 471), there is the real prospect that 'after Prospero's retirement', 'the Gadarene, possessed will rush down the hill [once more] into [another] Civil War' (1992: 471), the inference being that, this time the boar's charge will be 'successful.'

circumstances. Each see-saws from one to the other state of mind. In the case of Prospero everyone and everything are mere extensions of how he perceives them, rather than how they are in the real world. Yes, *who* they are, is seen and heard—but heavily annotated and cultured by Prospero's *ressentiment*. When he is strong, when he feels in control, when they are compliant, when he is their master and they are his slaves, he can indulge his compassion and forgiveness mostly in the Roman imperial patriarchal spirit of 'bread and circuses', the *Pater Patriae*. However, if they are against him, in any way disloyal, the resentment flares up within him and lashes out against them. Even his beloved daughter is not immune to his anger when she dares question him. Shakespeare himself, as we have seen, is caused to acknowledge in the Epilogue, that he is at the mercy of his audience, for without *their* indulgence, without *their* applause—indeed, without their complicity, his artistry and craft must fail.

Prospero's narrative itself takes on a Girardian mimetic twist. His *ressentiment* tells and re-tells the foundation story which *ipso facto* covers the traces of its greed for power, its incompetence and neglect and most important of all—its deceit. Like the current Rwandan regime, Prospero's reality is fashioned and cultured by deception. It is the victor's story that smooths over the untidiness of the actuality of events. In the case of Rwanda, the regime replaces the actuality (the oppressive domination of Tutsi over Hutu) with a narrative that continues to titillate an international sponsorship, plays on the world's collective guilt for its inaction during the genocide and suppresses and manipulates the collective memory of its victims and its youth. It punishes those who dare tell a different story—one which dares to suggest 'that we were all doing it.' It is a narrative, which carefully orchestrates the present and massages the future with a meticulously staged betrothal of state, nation and people, a thinly veiled disguise for an arranged marriage set up for the purpose of ensuring a stable Tutsi succession. Lawtoo's homage to Nietzsche's ("Wir sind uns unbekannt" ('we remain unknown to ourselves') *GM* 3, trans. Douglas Smith, 1998) could easily serve as an epigraph to *TT*), and his dictum related to fascism, that 'Political unity and strength comes at the price of individual differentiation and freedom' (Lawtoo: 2019: liii) could not be more apposite to the Ferdinand-Miranda story.

This is the world of *The Tempest*. This is where the world of William Shakespeare's mind meets the minds of Friedrich Nietzsche and René Girard. This is where their insights

coalesce, test each other; the place where observations of their soundings at such vastly different times and places in history are recorded, compared, and contrasted. Here the three meet on Shakespeare's chosen ground, the personalised imagined island of Prospero's *ressentiment* (Nietzsche and Girard) which broods over past treachery and betrayals. The *locus* of a foundation event and foundation story—the big lie in the aftermath of the violent cycle of revenge, with its inevitable demonization and divination, the false sacred: a world where the triumph of *reconnaissance* so easily gives way to a tragic *méconnaissance* (Girard). Deception and self-deception island, where master and slave meet, where “Mitleid's” mask is removed, where a false *amor fati* is embraced and where degradation ‘undergoes,’ ‘overcomes’ and is transformed into the ‘becoming’ of ‘pearls that were [its] eyes,’ and the music of the spheres (Nietzsche). It is a world that requires divinities, the Goddess of Complete Being. The Goddess who ‘secreted the two fundamental myths of Christianity,’ ‘the essential equation’ (Shakespeare), which Ted Hughes claims to have discovered, ‘[a] myth not entirely imported by me,’ he writes, ‘a single, tightly integrated cyclic work... which reflected, even in a sense embod[ies], a daemonic, decisive crisis in the history of England’ (Hughes: 1992: xii). The terms ‘daemonic’ (Nietzsche) and ‘crisis’ cf. ‘mimetic crisis’ (Girard) also resonate with ‘Prospero island’, and its tempest, with its overtones of the tempestuous temperament of the great man, which drives all angers and revenge. Like Narcissus, it gazes at a picture of itself thinking it to be someone else. Creates a world of phantoms with which it falls in love... a world of fantasy and dreams... the world of the false sacred (Nietzsche and Girard).

Ressentiment is locked into a world of its own and others' making—a world whose idols must be exposed, a world which can only be ‘redeemed’ *if* it is finally tempered and transformed into a true and actualised mercy. The elaborately staged public forgiveness enacted and imagined by Prospero, in the style of the ceremonies and staged public events we see in Rwanda, simply will not do.

In this chapter, Nietzsche and Girard's theories are subjected to Shakespeare's relentless scrutinizing gaze. It is anticipated that from the engagement of each theory with the others will emerge a consensus about: (a) what ‘the crisis’ is (b) whether that ‘crisis’, while qualitatively different: Elizabethan England's ‘decisive, ideological/sectarian crisis’ (Shakespeare); Wilhelmine Germany's ‘modernity’ [Nietzsche]; and post-World War I and

II's European and global post-modernity 'crises' [Girard]—all amount to being a 'human' problem (*ressentiment*) [Nietzsche and Girard], or a problem of history peculiar to that period (or both).

5.2 SHAKESPEARE'S *RESSENTIMENT ISLAND*:

Does the Island live up to the name? Shakespeare's unrelenting exposure of *ressentiment* and mimetic desire indicates that it does

If Goethe's Tribute to Shakespeare (considered by many German intellectuals of the time as the ideal first step to "Bildung"), is any indication, Nietzsche's response would have been commensurate with it.¹⁷⁵ Erika Fischer-Lichte (who cites Goethe) notes his final description of these moments as, 'the restoration and liberation of his self' (Fischer-Lichte: 2017: 10), with which, again, no doubt, Nietzsche would have identified. As for Girard, his admiration is tempered by singleness of purpose, 'an irrepressible love of the subject'—of mimesis. It is for others, he remarks, to extoll with superlatives the virtues of their favourite writer's virtues, "singular," "unique," "peerless," and "incomparable" (Girard: [1991] 2000: 3). He does, however, acknowledge Shakespeare's 'sophistication' and the 'insidious and complex... handling of desire' and the consistency of his adherence to the theme of mimesis (Girard: 2000: 4). Michael Kirwan, SJ, in the Second Edition Introduction, pays tribute to Girard's 'relentless humane realism' which informs his reaction against 'romantic sentimentalism' and 'critical ideology' to 'rescue Shakespeare' (as if such were required), and the warmth and humour of his approach. Kirwan also makes mention of a deficiency which I too have noted, of Girard being guilty of the criticism of 'cannibalising great texts in order to prove his grand theory,' and the kind of 'biographical speculation' which is taboo in literary criticism but which 'Girard has no compunction about transgressing'. Kirwan nevertheless claims that the approach is, 'ultimately, judicious and restrained' (Girard: 2000: xvi), a claim which I shall crossexamine rather than condemn, as any theorist might

¹⁷⁵ (Goethe: 1983-8: iii: 163-4):

The first page I read made me a slave to Shakespeare for life. And when I had finished reading the first drama, I stood like a man blind from birth to whom a magic hand has all at once given light. I realized and felt intensely that my life was infinitely expanded. Everything seemed new to me, unfamiliar, and the unaccustomed light hurt my eyes... I struggled free—and knew for the first time that I had hands and feet.

also easily stray into such ‘cannibalising.’ Regarding our central thesis, *ressentiment*, such cautionary words call for a circumspect approach when it comes to narrowing the focal lens in this way.

The other player in this chapter, is Ted Hughes, for whom Shakespeare was sheer genius, and who became for him an obsession to the point, where as a Cambridge undergraduate, he was reading all Shakespeare’s work, ‘in the order of their being written.’¹⁷⁶ For Hughes, all of Shakespeare’s works was a life-long project of telling ‘the mystery of himself to himself’ (this could so easily serve as a trailer for Nietzsche’s life work too). *The Times* review of the *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, says it all, proof that Hughes’ exploration is apposite for this chapter, and our two theorists who are often accused of dwelling too long on the dark side of humanity: “The Shakespeare who emerges from this book is uncannily familiar. He is a poet of primitive violence, animal energies, dark irrational forces and incessant sexual strife – a mirror of the poet laureate.” Marina Warner salutes Hughes’ *magnus opum* as a “high-wire performance” and declares: “the readings Hughes offers are dazzling.” In other words, it is an approach well credentialed for the purposes of this thesis, which focuses on the cycle of violence and *ressentiment* and its domination by ‘dark irrational forces.’

To begin, I return to the claim of the subheading that *The Tempest* Island is an island of resentment.¹⁷⁷ Stephen Greenblatt’s Introduction to *The Tempest*, with no apparent prior knowledge of Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* in sketching its thematic trajectory and with no obvious awareness of Dostoyevsky, highlights the very same traits. He describes the play as ‘an echo chamber of Shakespearean motifs’ with its theme of the deposed leader and his exile (1997: 3047). For Girard it is a reconciliation of two strands of the Bard’s career, the ignoble and the noble. Girard pronounces *TT* a ‘self-satire’ whereby Shakespeare pits one part of his career as a writer (the early period, ‘uneducated poetic feeling’ as incarnated in Caliban (Girard: [1991] 2000: 344) against the other (the later period, ‘serene, noble,

¹⁷⁶ Robert McCarum, ‘How Shakespeare’s ‘blood cult’ became Ted Hughes’s fatal obsession’, Sat 27 Oct 2018, *The Guardian*).

¹⁷⁷ If we take Dostoyevsky’s sketch (previously referred to in *Notes from the Underground*), we have an exact match for Shakespeare’s *ressentiment* exposed, highlighting its key traits: ‘spite,’ ‘taunting,’ ‘cold,’ ‘years on end it will recall its offence.’ A ‘chafing itself with fantasies,’ ‘ashamed... but all the same it will recall everything, go over everything,’ ‘heap all sorts of figments on itself,’ and even ‘On its death bed it will again recall everything, adding the interest accumulated over time.’

orderly' that recalls Nietzsche's idea of the Apollonian' (2000: 348), a transition which the characters themselves also mirror. While there is some merit in the notion of self-satirical elements in the play, I shall argue that Girard has misread Shakespeare's overall intentions whose satirical tone covers a much wider range of targets, and which are more in line with *ressentiment's* role in the cycle of violence and the build up to the mimetic crisis and its resolution. To substantiate this claim, I draw on Greenblatt's excellent overview of the play.

Greenblatt's depiction of the storm in *TT* is one of 'indifference to the ruler's authority.' This is *doubly* ironic, as the tempest 'is not in fact natural and that it emphatically does hear and respond to human power' and which is 'in fact' of Prospero's, allegedly 'benign' doing (1997: 3047-8). In other words, profoundly ironic, Prospero goes to great lengths to justify before his daughter Miranda 'seizing the opportunity that fortune has granted him,' which Greenblatt quickly and rightly points out, 'might be cynically termed political opportunism' (1997: 3048). And it is at this point, I think, that the connection with Dostoyevsky's caricature of *ressentiment* is made plain. First, by Greenblatt's unwitting noticing, that the opportunity Prospero seizes, 'has its tangled roots in what he calls "the dark backward and abyss of time" (I.2.50) (1997: 3049), which includes details of Prospero's temporary abdication of power in trust to his brother Antonio, in order to pursue "secret studies", the brother who seized that interim period to usurp him. Now *this* 'tempest' created moment makes Prospero gloat "They are... in my power" (3.3.90), a moment which concerns not just Antonio but also his co-conspirator, Alonso, King of Naples. This too is ironic in as much as later in the play the legitimacy of Prospero's power itself is called into question by a 'moral authority', which becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate from the "foul witch Sycorax." Indeed, the princely magician Prospero (1997: 3049) realises that such conflation and contamination calls for a clean break with the past, which happens in Act 5, when Prospero breaks his magic staff and 'drowns' his book which he construes as somehow validating 'moral' authority.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ A false moral authority, the politician's rhetorical gesture as highlighted by Sarah Maddison in *The Colonial Fantasy, Why White Australia Can't Solve Black Problems* (Allen & Unwin, 2019), pointing to the ingenious ways in which successive Australian governments have 'appeased' public shaming, but continue unconsciously to pursue the 'desire for colonial completion' ('Understanding Australian Settler Colonialism', 2019: 215-234). Here is yet another question to pursue as we line up *The Tempest's* exposition of *ressentiment* and its cycle of mimetic crisis, revenge, and the outbreak of violence.

Greenblatt's Introduction pinpoints other features of *The Tempest*, which speak of *ressentiment* and its *modus operandi*. Here it is good to be reminded of what Meares calls the 'doubleness of Shakespeare.' By this he means the necessity of attaining a 'symbolic attitude' in which what is expressed is understood not only as real but also the creation of an analogical movement of mind, 'in which things that are not usually connected become connected in the manner of dream' (Meares: 2016: 136). In effect, Meares claims, in Shakespeare we see, 'to a high degree, the co-ordination, as in the creation of self between two kinds of speech (Vygotsky)... 'social speech' and 'inner speech' [...] 'In this way, the words... are double and the person choosing them has a vision in which more than one thing can be seen in a single image' (2016: 137). This could be construed as the double-speak of *ressentiment*, but the reality is it is this same 'doubleness' which escapes it.

In outlining the main emphases of *The Tempest*, as Greenblatt exposes them, they alert us to the core business of our analysis of *ressentiment*. Here is a list pertinent to *ressentiment* as we draw the three thinkers into conversation:

- (1) there is an 'undergoing' (I deliberately use this Nietzschean term which draws attention to the primacy of 'experience') that must take place for all: the 'shock', the 'terror' of the storm and the shipwreck and 'the unexpected survival', and the mariners—least affected—who after a fall into an uneasy sleep, are awakened just in time 'to sail the miraculously restored ship back to Italy' (1997: 3050)
- (2) there is the 'experience' of the other survivors who make their way inland: their 'complex trials' and the 'psychological experiment' to which they are subjected, which expose them to 'anxiety', 'temptation', 'grief', 'fear' and 'penitence' (1997: 3050)
- (3) there is Ferdinand's (the only son of the king of Naples) 'managed' experience: his short-lived experience of 'grief' for his father's death by drowning, his subjection to 'the song of death and metamorphosis' (I.2.400) and *the only one to encounter Prospero directly* (my italics) in the context of his weaving of 'a carefully planned dynastic alliance' between Ferdinand and his daughter Miranda, whose 'experience' he makes as 'menacing, humiliating... frustrating' as possible (1997: 3050)
- (4) all the rest are also (unwittingly) directed by Prospero through the intermediary of Ariel, who allegedly possesses 'an inherent moral "delicacy", though he has been enslaved by the witch Sycorax, for refusing "to act her earthy and abhorred commands" (I.2.275), but who once freed by him is now held in thrall by Prospero for a fixed period of service, imposed by an unrelenting and draconian discipline

Greenblatt then goes on to note that Prospero's powers are circumscribed, limited (this is of importance for our analysis of *agency* and *ressentiment*). Yes, he can make Antonio and

others 'know something of the bitter loss and isolation' he has had to endure. Yes, he can induce in them 'irresistible drowsiness and startled awakenings,' make banquets appear and disappear. Yes, he can drive them to desperation and madness,' but in the case of his brothers Alonso and Sebastian, Prospero 'cannot (my underlining) shape their inner lives and effect a 'moral transformation' (1997: 3050). Perhaps the one who most appears to have escaped scot-free is Gonzalo because of his alleged 'goodness.' He is the one who also intones through 'utopian speculations' of how he would govern the island 'were he responsible for its "'plantations"' (1997: 3051). However, one senses all along a certain scepticism, even an ironic undertone that holds this kind of *idealism* up for the ridicule it fully deserves, because it lives its own lie with such brazenness. It is where what is presented naively, is subjected by Shakespeare with a barrage of unrelenting inferred questions. What is moral authority? From where does any authority derive its justification? What does it take to survive? How will humanity react in a state of emergency? What is the 'relation of theoretical understanding and practical experience'? 'Who is the civilised man, who is the barbarian?'

As for Caliban, Greenblatt's commentary at the start is strangely silent other than the snapshot of a Caliban under the power of Prospero, keeping his main comments until the very end of the Introduction. It is there that Greenblatt draws attention to 'the surprising power of Caliban's voice.' His 'vehement protests,' his undeniably 'remarkable, unforgettable eloquence,' his 'richly sensuous poetry, his indomitable spirit, and desires.' 'His inconsolable pain' and the embarrassing reminder to Prospero of 'a hidden bond' 'across the vast gulf that divides the triumphant prince and the defeated savage' (reminiscent of the master-slave of Nietzsche dichotomy within the human psyche): "This thing of darkness," Prospero says of Caliban, "I/Acknowledge mine" (5.1.278-79) (1997: 3053). Thus, Caliban under Shakespeare's hand becomes the voice of the 'survivor' of all oppressed peoples, who are forced to live the lie but who daily mirror back to their oppressors, the 'darkness' of their exploitations. For Shakespeare, Caliban is the personification of a suppressed and stolen beauty, an innocence befouled by false accusations and lies.

While, as we have seen, Girard superficially acknowledges the substance of these claims for Caliban, he is ultimately dismissive of him as 'uneducated,' 'amoral,' even

‘dangerous.’ For Girard Caliban is the ‘principle of disorder.’ Indeed, Caliban and Stephano together are ‘someone else as well,’ ‘a single monstrous creature,’ ‘both the product, the mythical monster and the process that produces it—our mimetic process of course’ (Girard: 2000: 344-45). In sum, Girard’s approach to Caliban is problematic. For Girard Caliban is ‘a stumbling block to a real understanding of the play’ (Girard: 2000: 343). Yet, Caliban *initiates* his master into the beauties of the isle (I.2.337-38). He is Prospero’s only companion, and devoted servant. However, for Girard this ‘close collaboration of Prospero and Caliban’ has no bearing on what happened during the play [a mistaken disclaimer in the context of what we have witnessed], ‘it is meaningful only in relation to the past’ (2000: 344). For Girard again, Caliban ‘symbolizes uneducated poetic feeling before language, formless, amoral, even immoral, dangerous [...] symbolises that portion of Shakespeare’s own works that, being full of monsters, may be viewed as somewhat monstrous itself’ (Girard: 2000: 344). The issue of colonial exploitation is overlooked—the foundation event, its violence and the deception of its foundation story missed somehow.

Greenblatt notes wryly at the end that it is Prospero who ‘leaves the island, it is he who begs for pardon’ (1997: 3053), something overlooked by Girard, who dismisses Prospero as ‘an impotent man,’ for which even his overcoming of the desire for revenge cannot atone (Girard: 2000: 350). But why the oversight? Surely the most pertinent answer to that question is that when we use literature to support a theoretical hypothesis, we must do so without imposing upon it to such a degree that the integrity of the text’s intrinsic meaning is compromised. The following section’s theoretical discussion aims to show how and why this alliance between the Arts, philosophy and Literature is so vital.

5.3 RESENTIMENT AND THE ARTS:

Nietzsche, Girard, and Shakespeare's insights into mimesis and *ressentiment*— how and why their pathologies are best understood when also mediated by literature, drama, and the arts

The subject matter of this section focuses on a theoretical prerequisite mentioned in the Introduction. It concerns the matter of renegotiating the relationship of literature and philosophy in the light of ethics (eds.) Adamson, Freadman and David Parker: 1998). As we have seen in previous chapters, a theoretical interlude is crucial because it builds on one of the foundational premises of this thesis: that Literature, and indeed the Arts in general should be treated as making an indispensable contribution to a philosophical investigation and not as in the Rwandan case, allow itself to be compromised by serving shabby political ends, or as in the case of Proust where his text is misappropriated to serve a religious agenda.

Raimond Gaita makes the salient if provocative observation that literature is indispensable to ethics, and more, that philosophy is enhanced by it.¹⁷⁹ In the light of Gaita's admonition, it is no accident, then, that the three theorists share literature as their preferred medium to examine the 'decisive' crises facing humanity, nor is it surprising that metaphor in particular and poetry in general should feature so prominently in their methodology.

As we once more approach the shores of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, the poet's voice is identified and heard and with disembarkation, the Self comes under its spell. It is a spell that by means of language effects a personal transformation through feeling and conversation—and with it a distinctive music, a poetry which Meares names 'antinomial' in structure, a

¹⁷⁹ For without it, it will not always be clear why Nietzsche and Girard's use of literature is either necessary, or even useful, as a means of intellectual/scientific discourse (Adamson et al. 1998: 269-270):

Some experiences are common to all human beings. They are responses to what R.F. Holland called the 'big facts' of human life – our mortality, our sexuality, our vulnerability to suffering... The commonness of these experiences is thought to transcend culture... Some people believe that acknowledgement of them includes a sense of common humanity that implies a sense of fellowship [...] [The important question is this]: what is involved in seeing others as sharing with us experiences of a kind which might underpin our sense of what it means to seriously wrong them [...] My argument furnishes some reasons for believing that had philosophy been more attentive to the understanding of life offered by literature rather than by science or metaphysics, then we would be better able to cope with the tensions generated by the acknowledgement that thought about life and morality is inescapably... the aspiration to a universal ethic based on a sense of the commonness of human experience. This argument implicitly speaks to concerns that are germane to contemporary theoretical movements including new historicism, post-colonialism and cultural studies.

structure designed to embrace paradox and complexity (Meares: 2016: 59, 61). As the line of that horizon is approached and penetrated, the inner voice ascends, and as that voice speaks and sings, its authentic 'actual' self, 'creates an inexplicable feeling of significance, sometimes amounting to bodily feeling, a shiver. It is also, as Jung would argue, 'the structure (my underlining) of self' [itself], and as Oliver Sacks infers, a language that draws us into 'greater possibilities of being' (2016: 63/64).

The use of literature to test theory is bread and butter for Girard and Nietzsche, both of whom are seen in some quarters of academia as 'unsystematic', shamelessly interdisciplinary, and methodologically suspect and marginal to mainstream intellectual discourse. Not to mention that both theorists extensively use literature to validate and even to communicate philosophical ideas. We have already intimated that these perjorative perceptions in the light of the latest findings of neuroscience need correction.

Thus, we begin this section with some thoughts from Jane Adamson in her 'Against tidiness, Literature and/versus moral philosophy' (ed.) Adamson 1998).¹⁸⁰ She deals with, what she calls the 'problematic *link*' between philosophy and literature: on the one hand, philosophy's 'need' of literature, on the other—certain 'difficulties' in the 'crossover from philosophical to literary modes of thought,' which she names 'a sort of transdisciplinary catch-22' (1998: 84/85). Analytic philosophy's limitations, 'procedural' and 'substantial' and its 'relatively narrow conception of what constitutes moral reflection and moral life,' also come under the microscope (1998: 85).¹⁸¹ In the end, the antagonism of literature and

¹⁸⁰ She writes in response to three philosophers, whom she considers to have, 'opened fresh ground' in this area of study: Cora Diamond, Martha Nussbaum and Iris Murdoch (ed. Adamson: 1998: 84-110).

¹⁸¹ Some of the questions and recommendations pertinent to philosophy's relationship to literature (and the *ressentiment* discussion which preceded it) are appropriate for the tripartite conversation to follow. They include:

- (a) That the collaboration between philosophy and literature must now strive for integrity in light of the ancient quarrel, which broke down the relationship in the past and resolve the question of 'who calls the tunes?' ([1998: 86], loosely based around Iris Murdoch)
- (b) How will the collaboration unfold in terms of their respective 'operative values, concepts, desires, beliefs'—will the relationship alter as different agendas arise? (1998: 86)

philosophy can be defined (eds.) Adamson, Adamson 1998: 104) in terms of philosophy's 'impersonal investigation' versus literature's 'imaginative inquiry' (1998: 105). It is welcomed by Adamson as a 'productive resistance' (essential from Nietzsche's perspective, where everything is about a creativity that emerges from 'resistance'), a 'working model of how philosophy and literature may... draw energy from their "againstness"' one that operates neither by 'a theory or a set of rules,' one that emerges with 'practice' and so is (1998: 109-110):

necessarily fluid, provisional, and ever liable to change, being at times harmonious, at times discordant or embattled... it [thus] makes sense to question whether the harmony achieved by such a quarrelsome couple can be more than provisional, and whether this does not paradoxically enhance its value.

Whether literature and philosophy as ex-partners can cobble an enduring marriage, achieve domestic harmony after the honeymoon is over, remains to be discovered. I think the fact that both our theorists work heavily in literature, and that Nietzsche frames and sifts his arguments through the medium of literature would encourage us to be hopeful. I shall argue that their union is not only desirable but necessary even if two of the three

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- (c) That the collaboration is necessary in view of the 'complexity' and the 'difficulty of moral and ethical life, to which literature brings more precise articulation and revitalisation of understanding (1998: 87 based on Nussbaum)
 - (d) That philosophy (more inclined towards what is 'shipshape, trim strictly relevant, goal-directed'), can only be enriched by literature's 'less fastidious,' 'more adventurous' inclinations (1998: 87)
 - (e) That their strong differences are mutually beneficial, not *despite* but *'because'* they are so often at cross purposes' (1998: 87b)
 - (f) That philosophy could do with 'learning to read with a different sort of eye' and ear (1998: 88b, after Cora Diamond)
 - (g) That this kind of 'reading' will engender an imaginative style of approach often lacking in philosophy which is more concerned about 'style of mind' (1998: 89, Diamond)
 - (h) That philosophy *because* it is trained neither to make 'imaginative leaps' nor one 'that it is trained or encouraged to develop [it],' needs literature (1998: 90, Diamond)
 - (i) That philosophy and literature offer two models of moral attention that need to work together (1998: 92-100 Nussbaum): one, such as that demanded by 'other cultural forms – film, painting, dance,' an attention that provokes 'reverie,' 'playfulness,' 'fantasy,' and which assists in the 'wresting' lucidity from darkness (1998: 99)—which attends to the '*messier, less determinant, more mysterious*' than philosophy will allow (1998: 92); and the other (philosophy), which is more circumscribed (narrowly focused) acting like a 'spotlight' intent on 'outcomes,' 'active but not interactive'—where 'the moral inquirer is fully in command' (1998: 98)
 - (j) That the moral capabilities of each, philosophy and literature in terms of their respective strengths and weaknesses, are enhanced by such collaboration: philosophy's tendency to reduce literature to 'views' 'arguments,' 'premises,' 'answers,' 'propositions,' 'conclusions' (1998: 102) can be balanced by literature's 'rich sense of the density of our lives [which] involves bodily senses as well as mind, one's 'whole soul' and imagination as well as thoughts' (1998: 104)

(Shakespeare and Nietzsche) *practise* literature and if the third (Girard) approaches it from the other end, as analyst and critic. However, even as a critic, as we have seen in Chapter 2, Girard proves to be one of a controversial kind, one who ‘flies in the face of more formalistic descriptions.’ The kind that draws on the biography of the author and links it up with theology abolishing ‘the last distinctions between novelistic and religious experiences’; the kind that ‘is both observer and participant in a ‘mimetic’ power struggle between literary studies and philosophy... [whose] work is carried out in the context of this palace feud and is inevitably shaped by it’ (Kirwan: 2009: 6).¹⁸²

Perhaps Peter Brooks’s deep understanding of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in film and theatre will assist in not just declaring literature and philosophy’s relationship as an enduring one but also as one better able to unravel the complex layered and dynamic relationship that exists between resentment and the cycle of oppression and violence. Brook more than most directors has been drawn to *The Tempest* (four times in fact) for the same reasons as I am drawn to the play for its relevance *vis à vis* *ressentiment* and the cycle of violence. To my knowledge Brooks was no more aware of *MT* and the scapegoat than Shakespeare was. Any more than when he filmed his rendition of *Lord of the Flies* in black and white (a film adaptation of William Golding’s novel). Both works offer the best exemplars for Girard’s theory. The reason for this fascination with *TT* is that Brook considers it to be Shakespeare’s “complete and final statement and that it deals with the whole condition of man (*sic*)” (Brook: 1976: 80). In an ironic “Open Letter to William Shakespeare” he ridicules those reviewers who undervalue *TT* and plays the fool by claiming that he should have realised it was Shakespeare’s ‘gravest mistake’ and that he (Peter Brook) himself must also have been gravely mistaken to have thought the play ‘a *Faust* in reverse.’ ‘The last in your final cycle of plays about mercy and forgiveness,’ he writes, drawing attention to the fact that its storm and its hard craggy environment and its bleak

¹⁸² As we shall see from Girard’s treatment of Shakespeare’s works in general, and *The Tempest* in particular, he is more interested to use them to prove his mimetic theory, a practice which he unabashedly owns (Girard: 1978: 224):

I do not claim to be a complete critic, or even a critic at all. I am not really interested in a text unless I feel it understands something I cannot yet understand myself [...] Not literature as such, I believe, but certain literary texts are vital to my whole ‘enterprise’ as a researcher, much more vital than contemporary theory. Mine is a very selfish and pragmatic use of literary texts. If they cannot serve me, I leave them alone.

three plots which surround and envelop the 'truth seeking Prospero with Lords crude and murderous and darkly wicked clowns', were there to highlight that very theme (Brook: 1987: 74).¹⁸³

Brook was reacting against those producers, directors that played for 'safe' theatres to which he himself had condescended, but now goaded by 'a nagging suspicion that this was very far from the daring of the Elizabethan Age'... 'and its metaphysical sense of terror and amazement' (1985: 108), he wanted to make up for it, a desire that was met by performance time in Europe, France specifically and even Africa on tour, where there was more room for experimentation. His 1990 production thus thrived with its rectangle of white sand surrounded by dark sand on which a single rock stood in empty space. It was a deconstructionist set and interpretation that Nietzsche would have admired, and over which Girard might have strongly demurred. It was also a 'contemplative' production that eschewed the frenetic momentum of Brook's 1968 production fostering a quietness, accentuated by bare-footed actors on sand and silent gestures such that when Prospero raises his staff and Caliban succumbs, there is *sheer* silence (Reitz: 162), a facet of the production that will take on even greater significance in our last chapter.

Walter Kaufmann's claim that 'there is something Shakespearean about Nietzsche' (1960: 207), then, hardly comes as a surprise to those well read in Nietzsche and Shakespeare. The same uncompromising commitment to realism, the same unflinching confrontation with the dark side of humanity, the same 'lightness of being' and empathy with a touch of irony and satire, the same fascination for the Greek mind and tragedy.

Fischer-Lichte has pointed out the lengths *some* German producer/directors went to 'soften' Shakespeare for German audiences, the kind of audience that Nietzsche despised and the one he addresses in a philosophy scathing of the German propensity for passivity and the evasion of what T.S. Eliot names 'too much reality.' Why? Because as Friedrich Ludwig Schröder (1744-1816) part of the *Sturm und Drang* movement discovered, audiences did not warm to this new Shakespearean, 'autonomous, unfettered individual' as came across through the re-working of the prose translations of Shakespeare.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Brook's is a 'sombre interpretation,' 'austere' and 'remote' (Berhard Reitz, Université de Mayence, 'Making the Invisible Visible: Peter Brook's Productions of *The Tempest*, 151).

¹⁸⁴ By Christopher Martin Wieland (1762-6) and Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1775-7) (Fischer-Lichte: 2017: 11). Fischer-Lichte notes that Schröder (2017: 11): felt these plays should all have a happy ending. Laertes, Othello, Desdemona, Cordelia, or Lear should die they

From this, we conclude that German audiences might have responded well to the apparent reconciliation at the end of *The Tempest*, but that would have indicated they had learned nothing at all from the Bard. And certainly no one, not even Hamburger ladies would have blamed the miscarriage of their child as a 'result of seeing and hearing this [*Othello*] dreadful tragedy' (Schütze (1794): 454). That is the kind of uncompromising theatre we have from Shakespeare, which the best of the producer-directors, like Brook honour and convey—as we have seen from those Greek tragedians who taught Shakespeare and Nietzsche: that we must learn to suffer, and even in despair—and, yes against our will, learn wisdom 'through the awful grace of God':

He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep, pain, which cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God"

Agamemnon, Aeschylus (circa 525/524 BC—circa 456-455 BC).

Here, in effect, is the 'oneness' of the Tragic Vision of the Greeks at their best as Nietzsche saw it. With the 'completeness' of being of Shakespeare's 'myth,' which is Hughes' Equation of the 'Goddess of Complete Being,' Hughes sees in Shakespeare's artistic vision (all of the works the comedies, the tragedies, the histories) as dancing together under the one 'basic structural pattern' (Hughes: 1992: xi). This was an insight Hughes developed under the watchful eye of director Peter Brook back in 1968 at the Old Vic. This is also the oneness of Nietzsche's life work, who through the reconciliation of the Apollonian and Dionysian revises his Greek Tragic Vision. It is a vision that Nietzsche visits and re-visits throughout his career right from the beginnings of *BT* to *EH*. It culminates, as seen in previous chapters, with the revisionist Dionysos who stands with Jesus of Nazareth against the false sacred. It is a vision of unity that reconciles the Crucified and Dionysos, into one elegant and beautiful tragic optic, and ultimately as we shall see in chapter 6, morphs into Thomas Merton's 'mystical' insight 'of the profound truth, that 'we are already one.' ¹⁸⁵ This is the closest it gets to Nietzsche's dictum of 'becoming who we are,' the final steps in the

all had to participate in a general reconciliation at the end.

¹⁸⁵ It was a truth, he announced to a large audience of Asian monks at a Calcutta conference in October of 1968 literally minutes before his death:

My dear brothers we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. What we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are.

process of ‘undergoing,’ ‘overcoming,’ and ‘becoming’: the ‘completeness’ in fact of St Paul’s vision in his letter to the ‘degenerate’ and ‘profligate’ Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 13, of ‘faith, hope and love... and the greatest is love.’

Against the backdrop that has been established in this and the preceding chapters, it is not too difficult to see how the notions of each of our thinkers, like a symphony of ideas, orchestrate an explanatory narrative which exposes the dynamics of the cycle of violence, a canvas against which the false sacred can be seen in a new light.

First, there is the psychopathology of *ressentiment* of Nietzsche, which in the mimetic spiral of violence as Girard has rightly conceived it—is ‘the real engine of a theory,’ that ‘resentment according to its mimetic definition, produces *misapprehension* [“méconnaissance”], in other words, the [false] sacred’ (Girard 2010: 83b). Though Shakespeare would, of course, not have known the term *ressentiment*, his plays, and notably *The Tempest*, powerfully convey it. Indeed, the play’s action, as we have seen, takes us into the very mind of resentment. Prospero’s mind is resentment. Powerless to change his political exile, I have posited that Shakespeare has Prospero act out in his mind what he has never been able (through incompetence perhaps, reminiscent of Richard II?) to manage in real life. Not just revenge, but also reconciliation with his former enemies—and most of all—the overcoming of *ressentiment* in Act 5, which in his imagination he achieves by breaking the staff and drowning his books. Ironically, this is anticipated by Shakespeare at the start of the Act 5 where Prospero (completely unaware), ‘in his magic robes’, boasts a certain ‘invincibility’ (Act 5.1.1-3 Norton Shakespeare, 3098):

Now does my project gather to a head.
My charms crack not, my spirits obey, and time
Goes upright with his carriage.

Those against whom his anger has been roused, are now in his thrall: he has them ALL under his power, as Ariel emphasises: ‘Confined together/In the same fashion as you gave in charge/Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir... /They cannot budge till your release,’ reports Ariel (Act 5.1.8-11). All this is sheer fantasy, and it is the power of Shakespeare’s spell that has *us* in his power to believe it is happening, when in reality it is not. Everything is being lived and experienced in the mind of *ressentiment*—the mind which holds grudges, that believes it has been aggrieved, in total denial of its complicity. Prospero by abdicating

responsibility, neglecting the power and authority invested in him and willingly conferring it onto another, has set himself up for failure. A classic case of the “master” in Nietzschean terms, Prospero nevertheless, feels himself to be a “slave” overcome by impotence. He lashes out in the only way available to him as we have seen by the Dostoyevskian tags, driven by a spite characterised by ‘taunting’, ‘cold’, ‘years on end... [recalling]... its offence,’ ‘chafing itself with fantasies.’ ‘[A]shamed... but all the same it will recall everything, go[ing] over everything,’ ‘heap[ing] all sorts of figments on itself.’ ‘On its death bed it will again recall everything, adding the interest accumulated over time.’ The whole Prospero ‘project’ is nothing more than an alchemist’s ‘experiment’ (Norton note: “Project” suggests an alchemical projection or “experiment,” 3098). This is Shakespeare’s genius: to manage his audience’s experience by a “Hirngespinst” (German for a spinning of the web in the brain) of such effectiveness, that it is palpably experienced by his audience as a series of real events. We not only see and hear the resentful self-deception and its projection of another—we experience it as if it were our own—Girard’s *mimetism* in action.

In addition, there are biblical allusions which also serve to distract and seduce. For example, the following conversation between Ariel and Prospero has an air of the Genesis story about it. The whole play is an act of creation, and its defence in the way that Prospero mounts it, sounds like a *theodicy*, as if God has a case to answer for God’s *ressentiment* in bringing into existence a creation which is subject to suffering and evil. To Prospero’s ‘How’s the day?’ Ariel replies, ‘On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord/You said our work should cease’ (Act 5.1.3-4). The resonances of creation could not be clearer, and the partnership in symbol of Spirit (*Ruach*) and Creator in Genesis 1, and the 6th day of the creation of humanity, more obvious. Then follows an absorbing Prospero ‘monologue’ with Ariel, where he highlights Ariel’s complete inability to identify with the human condition to which Ariel readily admits: ‘Mine [thinking] would sir, were I human’. This vulnerability is something over which Prospero appears to gloat: ‘And mine shall’, but then followed by a beautiful ode to mercy, which seems disingenuous somehow (Act 5.1.21-28, 30-32):

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
Yet with nobler reason ‘gainst my fury

Do I take part. The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance

.....

Go release them Ariel.
My charms I'll break, their sense I'll restore
And they shall be themselves.

Thereupon, the irony of 'they shall be themselves' not lost on us, Prospero draws a circle with his staff and in breaking the spell, he breaks his staff: 'To work mine end upon their senses that/This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff, /Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,/And deeper than did ever plummet sound/I'll drown my book' (Act 5.1.52-57). The reconciliation then proceeds apace, as each of the conspirators come to their senses. Each person (significantly) released according to the measure of Prospero's willingness to let go his own resentments: 'Most cruelly/Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter. / Thy brother was a furtherer in the act' (Act 5.1.71-73). This then, results in his willingness to forgive: 'I do forgive thee/Unnatural though thou art' (Act 5.1.78-79). Biblical resonances continue to abound reminiscent of Joseph's forgiveness of his brother's treachery and *their* resentment delivered from the powerful judgement seat of Pharaoh but nothing could be further from *that* truth.

If there are biblical resonances, there are also 'secular' resonances from Goethe's *Faustus*, Part I as well. Here Faust changes the original, 'In the beginning was the Word' — to, 'In the beginning was the Mind'; to 'In the beginning was the Power'; to, finally, 'In the beginning was the Deed' (*Goethe's Faust* 1808, tr. Louis MacNeice (1951), Oxford University Press) lines 47-60, 'Faust's Study'. So, not just an obvious challenge to the biblical creation story, but also equally as confronting, a challenge to Prospero's entire project: for his is altogether a product of the mind and so pitifully bereft of actual 'power' and 'deed.' In *that* sense, in Nietzschean terms at least, Prospero's act is finally an act of idolatry and cowardice because like *ressentiment* itself, it is not anchored in the real world of genuine "agency" and action such as that espoused and honoured by the Greek notion of the "agon," which *is* rooted in the real world. Here Shakespeare confirms the Greek Tragic Vision from which he also drew, and so validates Nietzsche's vision. Which sounds like a conveniently circular self-validating argument were it not for the fact that their vision is separated by two centuries, and that their analyses (Shakespeare and Nietzsche's) of their particular crises the

Protestant-Catholic conflicts and the emergence of modernity and their similar methodologies (tapping into pagan mythologies)—converge on the same diagnosis and prognosis. Basically, that humanity suffers from a psychopathology (no matter its naming: it *is* a dividedness, an inner seemingly irreconcilable drive looking for ‘completeness’)—which from a Girardian perspective, is none other than the *mimetism* which is innately competitive, conflictual and violent and has for centuries sought resolution in the *scapegoat* mechanism. This unconscious victimisation of another to resolve the conflict, is dramatized in Prospero, such that from both perspectives he is goaded by a *ressentiment* borne of impotence which is, of course, its stock in trade.

So, despite its biblical resonances, in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* on this island we are still in the realm of fantasy, of imagination, an idolatrous world of Prospero’s own making bearing the stamp and seal, the exact imprint of his own image. Because it is a *ressentiment* world rather than a real world, I would posit, that Shakespeare anticipates Nietzsche’s critique of institutional Christianity’s *ressentiment* to which we shall later return at the end of the chapter. The ‘poor cell’ to which Prospero invites Alonso, not only jolts us into a recognition of that unreality, but also exposes the false asceticism of the period. It is the “cells” of those anchorites and anchoresses, who lived out their vows of absolute denial and negation of life, anathema to Nietzsche, one which Shakespeare so obviously shares. All in all, this paradox lends an ambivalent air to Prospero’s assurances, ‘I’ll deliver all, And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales/...My Ariel, chick/ That is thy charge. Then to the elements/Be free and fare thou well’ (Act 5.1.317-322). ‘Ambivalent’ and paradoxical, in the sense that, allegedly, Prospero’s powers are no more—and yet still he has the power to grant Ariel ‘her’ freedom. Consequently, the power he claims, is the power he does not, in fact, have. This is much the same as the Protestant and Catholic claims to authority and power of a Christianity that has morphed and long since lost touch with its authentic roots—its connections with Nietzsche’s Christ of the *true* Evangel.

Hughes’ elaborate treatment of all of Shakespeare’s works, including the Sonnets, even if the details of his interpretation are disputed by some critics, the general thrust of that thesis is, from my reading, rock solidly steeped not only in the history of the period, but also in this specific work of *TT* and its antecedents. Having outlined the two fundamental myths of Christianity as exemplified in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, the

former fundamentally the myth of Catholicism, and the latter the myth of Puritanism indicative of the 'daemonic decisive crisis in the history of England' which 'dominated English life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', Hughes defines it thus (1992: 5):

In the life of Shakespeare's time, these two complexes of religious fanaticism were deadlocked in a holy war, albeit suspended and in a sense arrested, by Elizabeth I's religious policy. Within Shakespeare's drama one finds them deadlocked and arrested in the same way. Yet not absolutely arrested: in both history and his drama they were inching towards catastrophe. In this sense the equation into which he combined the two myths was the composite myth of the English Reformation itself.

Shakespeare was acutely aware of the historical as well as the theological implications of both myths for their Catholic and Protestant exponents. For Puritans, the 'fear of female sexuality – where female sexuality has become identified with the infernal' (1992: 15) and for Catholicism, something abhorrent to Reformation thinking, emblematic of (1992: 14):

a Catholic votaress about to enter her novitiate and become a bride of a sacrificed god, her love dedicated with absolute chastity, to him alone, she is manifestly consecrated by the Divine in the most sacred Catholic sense. From both points of view, she is an avatar of the Goddess.

Of course, as Hughes is quick to concede, this is not to say that Shakespeare's mature plays 'are first and foremost allegories' of the religious conflict of the times, but rather more 'Western man's (*sic*) greatest image of a fundamental polarity in human existence [...], the moment-by-moment crises of daily life' (1992: 18). All of which brings Shakespeare's concerns and that of Nietzsche and Girard's into sharp focus. For Nietzsche, the anger that Prospero vents against Caliban's alleged intended rape of Miranda, for example, is more a projection of Prospero's *ressentiment* in the face of a love, and for that matter a sexual drive and attraction he has somehow foregone. This is manifested in his preoccupation with the prospects of his daughter Miranda's eventual wedded state with Ferdinand, Alonso's son. In a most transparent and crude manner, he is more concerned about the marriage as a means of securing the family's dynastic succession, than about whether she will be happy in that relationship. For example, Miranda's mother is only indirectly referred to, and we see Prospero enjoying (like the Jewish story of Laban's demands on Jacob) loading Ferdinand with cruel almost absurd tests of character that say more about the lacuna of his own character—the unmistakable symptom of the vindictiveness and 'spite' that characterises *ressentiment*.

Where does this leave us with the present case study: Nietzsche and Girard's understanding of *ressentiment* and how and why Shakespeare's *TT* is an appropriate means of validating the two theories, or indeed, whether the three *literary* treatments should be in any way legitimately employed as a means of theory validation?

5.4 POST-SCRIPT: SHAKESPEARE'S *RESSENTIMENT ISLAND*— Nietzsche, Girard and Shakespeare's literary interests themselves tested under an inter-disciplinary methodological microscope

In Daniel Came's Introduction to *Nietzsche on Art and Life* (ed.) Daniel Came, Oxford University Press, 2014), Came notes that '...readings that emphasize the practical-existential orientation of Nietzsche's philosophical reflections are rare.'¹⁸⁶ For Nietzsche the Arts (literature included) are much more than just 'an amusing sideshow, a readily dispensable tinkling of bells to accompany the seriousness of existence' (*BT*, 17). We have already discussed philosophy's need of literature (and the arts by implication) from a transcendent moral ethical viewpoint—so there is no need here for such a justification. My purpose, briefly, is to show that Nietzsche and Girard's honouring of literature and Nietzsche's privileging of the Arts (including literature) is not only a valid one, but a useful one, indeed a crucial one for an analysis of *ressentiment* and its place in the violence cycle. Because Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Girard also use the literary lens to 'examine' historical cultural, psychological, and sociological phenomena, it is timely for us to at the very least explain why this is not a misguided approach.

Bruce G. Trigger in *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Oxford, [1996] 2009) in the light of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* perspectives, which Nietzsche re-visited and defined over his entire philosophical career, offers some useful guidelines. He notes, for example, that there continues to be a 'diversification of theoretical viewpoints in both prehistoric and

¹⁸⁶ He suggests that there may be 'sociological reasons' for this (2014: 2-3):

- (A) that existential concerns are 'remote from the detached, theoretical interests of mainstream Anglophone philosophy'
- (B) that 'aesthetics' is, up until recently, considered by most recent Anglo-American philosophers as 'the poorer less sophisticated cousin of ethics'
- (C) that there are some who entertain 'grave doubts as to whether philosophical aesthetics is a *bona fide* subject at all' (Hampshire: 1954)

historical archaeology' which has led to 'trivial and self-serving aspects of many theoretical confrontations' and their 'increasingly factional, divisive and exclusionary' traits, 'trapping themselves in separate, non-communicating discourses.'¹⁸⁷ Such 'talking past, ignoring each other' kind of stand-offs in 'processual and post-processual' debates (Trigger: 2009: 485) is certainly not the dead-end kind of methodology advocated by this thesis. Rather it strives for an approach governed by the notion that 'conceptual changes follow the fault lines of political, cultural and social changes.' In effect, what is required is what Trigger calls a 'theoretical convergence dialogue' to allow for 'more useful hybrid theories' and 'complementary approaches' (such as Nietzsche's and Girard's) rather than half-hearted attempts for reconciliation that are mere gestures designed to prevent 'de-stabilisation', leading to a 'naïve eclectism'. What is recommended, is a methodology that embraces 'diversity and complexity' (Trigger: 2009: 497-98). Nietzsche's approach to the disciplines is controversial, as is Girard's. Both are 'promiscuous' in their straying into other disciplines. Kirwan, for example, singles out Girard as such and describes him as entertaining a 'cheerful interdisciplinarity,' which strays into 'ethnology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, mythology and theology as well as literary criticism' (Kirwan: 2009: 4-5), and Nietzsche's field of inquiry is even more unruly.

In the end as Trigger suggests, research must be guided by the integrity of its investigation, and that 'synthesis' may also have to be both 'pragmatic' and 'convergent' (Trigger: 2009: 508-512)¹⁸⁸

Trigger's final word on the matter is this: that 'none of which is sufficient by itself to do all that can be done,' but that 'Together, they form a powerful battery of techniques, each with a sound ontological grounding' (Trigger: 2009: 512). On such convergence will rest the justification of multiple approaches espoused by this project. Childe's conviction (1949,

¹⁸⁷ (2009: 484-485; Hodder: 1999: 12, 2001b: 10-11; R. Chapman: 2003: 14).

¹⁸⁸ In other words a research encompassing 'middle-ranging theories' that explore:

- (a) 'correlations' between similarities of culture and belief (Binford: 1962)
- (b) behavioural correlations such as sacrifice to deities (Trigger: 2003a: 473-94)
- (c) historical interpretations (Morris: 1994b: 45-6) to clarify 'ambiguities of meaning of material culture, written texts and oral traditions';
- (d) theories that pursue 'direct historical approach' to account for 'new meanings over time'
- (e) the 'empirical approach'; 'structuralist approach' of Lévi-Strauss et al. and the search for 'patterning';
- (f) the 'intuitive approach' based on 'the questionable phenomenological assumption' that there is a correlation between the present and the past, based on a commonality of 'experience'

1956b) that ‘the world humans adapt to, is not the world as it really is but *the world as specific groups of humans believe it to be*’ (my italics). As a ‘materialist’, however, Childe also believed that ‘... in order to endure every view of the world ha[s] to accord to a significant degree with the world as it actually [i]s’ (cited in Trigger: 2009: 524).

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON *RESSENTIMENT ISLAND*—

Adrian Kiernander analysis, ‘Prospero’s Island of the Dead: Strindberg’s *The Ghost Sonata* as a Source for *The Tempest*: how it amplifies *ressentiment*’

Adrian Kiernander offers an analysis, which synthesises some of the important themes this thesis has sought to highlight in this chapter. In addition, it enriches the vocabulary used to define *ressentiment* and assures us that our reading is grounded in a perspective, which confirms that Shakespeare’s smoke and mirrors treatment of his theme (the tempestuousness of the human passions) is as important as its protagonist, Prospero. Which is to say, it is not just Prospero as a personification of *ressentiment* that is important, but also the play’s ‘use of mimesis’ and ‘the relationship between the events as they are presented on stage and the events which they purport to represent... ‘that this relationship itself is ‘problematic’ (Kiernander: 2019: 1).

What really matters, then, is not just the ‘mind’ that thinks resentfully, but the psychological, cultural, political, and even biological structures deeply imbedded in the human condition and psyche, which facilitate, endorse, and even valorise *ressentiment*’s self-delusional and deceptive devices. The point being that these massive deceptions bypass our defences because they are carried through the air virus-like by means of ‘tiny inconsistencies which perforate the surface of the text’ itself (2019: 3). Thus, as Sarah Bachelard observes based on Raimond Gaita and Iris Murdoch’s immanent transcendent moral ethics, what is at stake here is, ‘the possibility that one’s *life* might be lived in illusion, that one might fail to be properly oriented towards the real.’ Kiernander discovers this very possibility in Prospero when he lies to the audience and to himself. For when one has penetrated the poisonous stratosphere of the Island, one discovers a phantasm which is both Prospero and the world he has created, deception on a grand scale, that must cast

doubt on everything else in the play, especially the ‘illusion of character as person and the fact of character as written text’ (2019: 7). The deceptions are endless, almost compulsive—indeed, accusations of lying come easily to Prospero—Caliban cheated of the island is accused by Prospero of lying; Ariel’s liberation is deferred to a time well beyond the end of the play (2019: 8). In fact, ‘the evils he is most alert to are those which are closest to his own practice and which he projects onto others’ (2019: 9), which further illustrates Bachelard’s point that, ‘then moral perception or vision is necessarily distorted and deep responsiveness to the reality of other people impossible’ (Bachelard, 2014). So enmeshed are Prospero’s lies that ‘nothing in the play can be trusted, that everything could be a paranoid fantasy. It might be as well to start from the premise [to cast doubt on the fact] that Prospero has even left his own study in Milan. If he ever had one.’ (2019: 9).

Christopher Norris goes so far as to claim that ‘the text itself is free of any “stable relation between the world and text, the real and the written, object and representation” (Norris, 45). This then becomes Girard’s world of the ‘foundation event, foundation story’ where the story told is that of the victor over the vanquished (who having been disempowered, is then silenced and mis-represented—only here it is pure fiction, not the kind of dangerous real-life fiction that has enveloped Rwanda, as we have seen in Chapter 4). The two worlds are almost indistinguishable. ‘Typically,’ notes Brooks, there is ‘the imperialist political reorganisation of the island state... [and] Ariel a puppet leader... thus Prospero’s benevolence, like Prospero himself, is part of a text which is itself a lie and the truth behind it remains indeterminate’ (2019: 12).

Gilles Deleuze (1980) defines such a world in existential terms: a ‘schizophrenic’s loss of the perception of surfaces,’ where ‘the entire body is nothing but depth... As there is no surface, interior and exterior, container and content no longer have precise limits; they plunge into universal depth’ (Deleuze: 1980: 286-7). Indeed, in Shakespeare’s *TT* we discover the same abyss, the same frightening depths which are ‘soundless’ (fathomless) into which Girard and Nietzsche peered. It is a silent inner psychic world sustained by a text where ‘the past is a dark backward,’ a world where one must continually ‘attempt to climb upward to the surface’ (Kiernanda: 2019: 14). A world, ever more eerie and frightening, where the terrifying cosmos of the Masque of Juno, the play within a play, becomes a welcome, violent, wrenching relief away from such depth of emptiness. No wonder

Prospero, who creates such a world and is condemned to live in it, seeks to impose it on those towards whom he feels resentful so they too can experience its disorientation and pain as he does. It is a schizophrenic pain, which he enjoys inflicting on them, which Deleuze describes as a 'schizophrenic vision' one which 'sees' the skin and surface of the other, as if they were pierced by an infinite number of little holes' (Deleuze 286-7); (Kiernanda: 2019: 15). Such that Caliban complains about being 'pinched as thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging than the bees that made 'em' (1,2,328-9) by urchins—goblins in the shape of hedgehogs... three times described as agents... (Kiernanda: 2019: 15); and note Caliban's warnings to Stephano and Trinculo: "From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches, Make us strange stuff" (4, 1, 233).

Prospero himself as writer/director/producer of the Masque, writes Kierananda, 'is pulled between the two levels... and the closer he moves towards the Juno text, the more deeply he descends into its narrative', (as would be the case of all those victors who become the subjects of the very same foundation narrative that they themselves have concocted i.e., the pre-colonisation Rwandan narrative of ethnic peaceful coexistence before colonisation). This predicament is reminiscent of the plight of President Kagame of Rwanda, who we have seen oscillates between Nietzsche's 'Master' and 'Slave' syndrome. The foundation narrative (focused on Hutu atrocities, and Tutsi innocence), which the President has inaugurated and now must perpetuate at any price. This he must do to guarantee both the stability of the new Rwanda and on-going international economic support. His own and minority Tutsi survival depends upon it, all against the backdrop of a simmering Hutu majority *ressentiment*, which waits for its time in the sun.

This play within a play (Shakespeare's play) also parallels Bottom's dream within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It will produce an unthinkable and inexpressible loss of identity ("Methought I was... no man can say what methought I was") because it hath no bottom" (Kiernanda: 2019: 15). Alonso in a madness induced by Prospero, "... my son i'th' ooze is bedded, and I'll seek him *deeper than ever plummet sounded* and with him there mudded" (3.3, 100-103). Prospero picks this up later when he promises to drown his book "*deeper than did ever plummet sound*" (5,1,56) and again Alonso restored to sanity, repeats the wish that "myself were mudded in that oozy bed where my son lies' (5, 1, 150).

The schizophrenic outlook in those Prospero makes mad, plays itself out in the chess game at the end of the play. As Kiernanda emphasises, the scene takes on special resonance, underling the two-dimensional world in which they are allowed to move (managing their conflicts, for example in such a confined and, paradoxically shallow world)—all the outworking of a kind of Hitlerian big lie (2019: 16). A world of make-believe—of wishful thinking—where the arranged marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda is described as set “set down with gold on lasting pillars” (Kiernanda: 2019: 16), reminiscent of Hitler’s dreams of Third Reich architectural master projects built up as an elaborate model by Albert Speer, himself under the spell of his own delusions of grandeur.

But what of Strinberg’s *Ghost Sonata*? For Strindberg, the lack of fixity in the island world of the *The Tempest* links with *The Ghost Sonata* a world of ever shifting perceptions of an unstable mind... (subtitle Kama Loka “a kind of ghost or dream world through which... some mortals have to wander before they enter the peace of death’s kingdom” (Strindberg, 150n) (Kiernanda: 2019: 16/17). For this present thesis, it is more about the feverish workings and machinations of the *ressentiment* mind and the terrifying free-fall of its divorce from reality, and given the existential fear of death, an even great desperation devoted to escapism of all kinds. However, it is Peter Brooks’ conviction, that must have the last word, in as much as it highlights the importance of this whole exercise of using literature as a case study (Brooks: 148; Kiernanda: 2019: 11):

the structure of literature *is* in some sense the structure of mind—not a specific mind but ...‘the mental apparatus,’ which is more accurately the dynamic organization of the psyche, a process of structuration.

6 Nietzsche's Theodicy: *imitatio Dei, imitatio Christi*—

Nietzsche's theodicy: *imitatio Dei, imitatio Christi*—resentment transfigured

Ressentiment's nemesis: amor fati

He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep, pain, which cannot forget,
falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will,
comes wisdom through the awful grace of God”

Agamemnon, Aeschylus (circa 525/524 BC—circa 456-45BC).

In the end [Nietzsche] was closer to Christ than many who would claim to be Christians. That is the final thought that I would leave with the reader.

Giuseppe Fornari, *A God Torn to Pieces, The Nietzsche Case*, (2015: xvi)

6.1 Full circle: human all too human— *towards a Christology without enemies*

In this last chapter, we turn our attention to what for this thesis is the common ground of our two theorists. It is a ground often acknowledged by Girard in his lifetime: that Nietzsche understood better than most, the uniqueness of Christ's death—but with this caveat—that Nietzsche stopped short of accepting the full implications of the death of Christ by switching his allegiance to Dionysos, and in so doing, cast his lot with archaic religion. I have argued throughout that Nietzsche's identification with Christ, when properly understood, is perfectly compatible with a revisionist Dionysos, one who also stands outside the sacrificial system to condemn it. I have stipulated that this double identification (Dionysos and the Crucified) is a deliberate provocation on Nietzsche's part, designed both to expose the false Christ and to highlight the true Christ of the Evangel. No one puts it better than Alistair Kee:¹⁸⁹

[Nietzsche's] terminology is confusing, but the point is clear enough. 'What did Christ deny? Everything that today is called Christian'... It is as if Jesus too is the Anti-Christ. He stands against this new Golden Calf... Shoulder to shoulder, not one but two Anti-Christes, standing proud and firm against the Church's Christ.

¹⁸⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, 98; Alistair Kee, *Nietzsche Against The Crucified* (1999: 147, 148).

I have posited that when the Dionysian mask is removed, it is the face of Jesus of Nazareth, which is revealed and that the innocent scapegoat, thereby exposed, condemns the archaic sacrificial system, so taking us full circle to a conclusion: that a reconciliation between the theoretical standpoints of our two thinkers is not only possible, but also necessary. Necessary because anything less would be a misrepresentation of Nietzsche's *via negativa*. Anything less would *unnecessarily* exclude him from the circle of Girardian scholarship. Necessary, for without his representation at the table, a powerful *explanatory force* ¹⁹⁰ would be missing from the many voices that seek a solution to the terrible cycle of violence which afflicts humanity today.

The Jesus revealed, is the Jesus of Nazareth, the unmediated, the 'un-institutionalised' Jesus, the unresentful Jesus who embraces life, *all* of life—its beauty, its ugliness, its fairness, its cruelty, its injustice—its unrelenting assault on our ideals and desires to shipwreck them on the shoals of *ressentiment*. This Jesus and the way he died personifies Nietzsche's *amor fati* (literally 'love your fate', I prefer 'destiny')—an embrace of circumstances as they are, not as one wants them to be. It is also a 'Yes-saying' to an imperfect, broken, bewildering and even dangerous world, the sort of world that Nietzsche recognized and insisted, indeed implored, that others face up to as well. In such a context, Nietzsche's notion of the *eternal recurrence of the same* is rescued from fanciful at times even foolish speculation about what it might mean. It is not about being happy to be condemned to live out exactly the same kind of life we have lived and to live it over and over again. It is rather an attitude of mind that gratefully, enthusiastically enters the *agon* of life, life as it is with all its inbuilt contradictions, its suffering, and disappointments. An attitude of ironclad resolve determined to overcome nihilism, to engage with *ressentiment's* relentless campaign of deception and self-delusion to expose it for what it is: a phantasm, and a decadence masquerading as the 'real' world and 'progress'. Eternal recurrence of the same is also a state of being, the relentlessness of an often violent and brutal cycle of existence that keeps coming back at us to wear us down. *Amor fati* is more than its equal. It is an attitude of mind that does not just determine to overcome *ressentiment's* decadence for the sake of personal well-being, but also releases the individual and the community to

¹⁹⁰ (ed.) Fiona Ellis, *New Models of Religious Understanding*, John Cottingham, (Oxford University Press, 2018), 25.

become (through a continual, dare I say it, relentless process of re-valuation) something authentically beautiful and wholesome and real.

But what sort of destiny, fate is Nietzsche suggesting we embrace? Amongst three possible alternatives—classical determinism, classical fatalism, causal essentialism—Andrew Milne points to the latter as being the most likely candidate.¹⁹¹ In this he is supported by Leitner who favours ‘*only*’ a ‘causal essentialism,’¹⁹² by which he means that each organism determines its own, ‘space of possible trajectories.’¹⁹³ Others, like Solomon, are inclined to follow classical fatalism. Those readings support a literary, ‘*aesthetic* thesis,’ the ‘necessary outcome’ demanded by Greek tragedians¹⁹⁴—thus an Oedipus “fated” to live out a life that has been pre-ordained, a life lived that is impervious to any ‘causal chain he [might have] pursued’.¹⁹⁵ While this fatalism seems to resonate with Nietzsche’s love for tragedy and his immersion in the notion of the eternal recurrence, I shall posit that Nietzsche’s approach to agency is *never* (certainly beyond appearances to the contrary) ever fatalist, as we have seen in previous chapters and will see in this chapter.

I have from the beginning, argued that ‘self-creation’ and the revaluation of values central to Nietzsche’s project, would be untenable if the integrity of such agency, the ‘will-to-power,’ were diluted. The eternal recurrence, a device revealed to Nietzsche as a means of exposing *ressentiment* has also been misunderstood in the sense that, Nietzsche argues counterintuitively, that those who are depressed by such a notion, wilt under it, and are crushed by it, share the same disposition of passivity as those eaten up by *ressentiment*. They are effectively disqualified from the *agon* of life because they refuse to embrace it as it is or, conversely, engage with it in ways that disqualify them from the contest. *Ressentiment* with its subservience to unconscious motivations, and the *phantasms* which they have also made of others, is as we have also noted above, never absolved by Nietzsche for its complicity in the cycle of violence. He knows that intrinsically behind the mask of passivity

¹⁹¹ *Nietzsche, mysticism and the god who isn’t one*, (Doctoral thesis, The University of Western Australia, School of Humanities, Discipline of Philosophy, 2019), 95.

¹⁹² B. Leitner, “The Paradox of Fatalism and Self-Creation”, in C. Janaway (ed.), *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche’s Educator*, Clarendon Press, 1998), 213.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 213.

¹⁹⁴ I shall argue that this is not uniformly true cf. *Sophocles’ Oedipus, Evidence and Self-Conviction*, (Cornell University. Ithaca and London, 1991) as his title suggests, posits a quite different view. We take this up further on in the chapter.

¹⁹⁵ R. Solomon, “Nietzsche on Fatalism and “Free Will””, *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, vol.23, 2002, 69.

and a presenting weakness, *ressentiment* is always the opportunist (Cain's sin) lying in wait, ready to seize hold of an unsuspecting resentment and transform it into a murderous, destructive annihilating ("Vernichtung") revenge.

I have argued throughout that Nietzsche's life project of 'undergoing', 'overcoming' and 'becoming' in the face of its great antagonists *ressentiment* and nihilism, is dedicated to a cultivation ("Bildung") of an *agonistic* stance that responds to the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' by a considered *choice* of the battles ("Wettkampf") with which it undertakes to engage. Whether to advance or withdraw as dictated by the reality of the circumstances encountered. For Nietzsche there are, as we have also seen, *agonistic* confrontations to be either undertaken or foregone upon the basis of their potential outcome: whether those actions contribute to the flourishing of the individual and society, or conversely, trigger their decadence and fall. For Nietzsche the halcyon days of pre-Classical and Classical Greece and its tragic vision, continually serve as a model to follow—one which he lauded in *BT*, and one from which he never deviated.

In this chapter I want to take the discussion further to suggest that the excursus into Classical and Pre-Classical Greece by means of which Nietzsche constructs his tragic vision not only does *not* preclude a Christian perspective, but actually embraces a Christian mysticism, a heterodoxy that is both body and spirit, a mysticism that is unafraid of desire.

6.2 A question to be resolved: is a Nietzschean form of mysticism tenable?

The central question and the first, which needs to be posed, is this: what kind of mysticism, what particularity of *meditatio* chosen by Nietzsche would prove to be consistent with his major project of the re-valuation of values? And, closely linked with that question, second, what kind of G-d, what kind of Christ to be imitated are to be found within the Nietzsche canon?

In answer to the second question, I believe that previous chapters have established what Nietzsche's G-d and Christ look like. His G-d is an essentially Jewish G-d who in the formulation to Moses' question as to 'who' it is who is sending Moses to liberate his people in slavery, is in the English translation at least, as cryptic as, "Tell them *I am*, has sent you." In the Hebrew, as we have also remarked, the formulation is much more nuanced: "*Hayah*,

asher hayah”, ‘I shall be *who* or *how* or *where* I shall be.’ In other words, a G-d who is more like nothing at all than one of the gods; a G-d who defies definition, explanation, and location. A G-d who is better understood in the experience of sheer silence, than in any prescriptions.

But as for Nietzsche’s mysticism, here we are confronted by an even more complex set of realities. While there is incontrovertible evidence that Nietzsche’s ‘Sitz im Leben’ is one not only of a mystic, but also that of a prophet and many have argued it, the questions of exactly what kind of mysticism, and what kind of prophetic role this is, are less clear and more controversial. I would suggest that most Nietzschean scholars tend to downplay the religious aspects, relegating the meaning of those terms to the *aesthetics* of literature, the Arts, philosophy and even psychology rather than any attribution to religion *per se*. They would, in my reading of them, say that any ‘mystical’ or ‘religious’ elements are deployed by Nietzsche to serve a philosophical (aesthetic) and psychological purpose, or to be understood as a *rhetorical* device, which of course is all true. Nevertheless, it is difficult if not impossible to deny (as we have seen in previous chapters) that the *ascetic* and the religious, be it ‘pagan’ (Dionysos) or the ‘Christ of the Evangel’ (Christian), are prominent in the Nietzsche canon, and none more obviously than in *TSZ*. But, equally, the more general purpose of Nietzsche’s project must always remain in view, one which strengthens the ‘secular scholarly’ assessment expressed by Peter Dews:¹⁹⁶

Nietzsche’s work revolves around a diagnosis of Western culture and civilization as crippled from the beginning by their orientation towards... an otherworldly, timeless truth... For Nietzsche the conception of truth relies on a basic misapprehension: that there is a pure knowing subject, which can... gain access to reality without any bias or partiality ... [he]... exposes the self-destructive dynamic built into the ‘ascetic ideals’ espoused by the Platonic – Christian tradition.

This assessment would seem, at first sight, to discount the possibility of taking the view of Nietzsche as prophet and mystic seriously. After all, if his ‘diagnosis’ blames the ‘ascetic’ ideals espoused by the Platonic – Christian tradition, what room is there for a discussion on mysticism? However, as with everything else with which Nietzsche is in *agonistic* relationship, his rejection is always measured: that is to say, when he applies the

¹⁹⁶ P. Dews, “Postmodernism: pathologies of modernity from Nietzsche to the post-structuralists” in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Political Thought*, (eds.) Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (Cambridge University Press, [2003] 2005) 347.

tuning fork, it is not the music he rejects, but those aspects of it that are in a state of dissonance. Consequently, the object, the purpose of Nietzsche's *agonistic* stance as we have also seen, be it against Socrates, Plato, Wagner, or Christianity—science or philosophy or philology—is to shake out what is false, 'decadent', crippling self-destructive or self-deceptive.

Hence, my purpose in this chapter is to explore what is left when the extraneous and fanciful is shaken out of the notion of 'mysticism.' What remains? In other words, as with Christianity, it is *that kind of* Christianity that is to be deplored; with theism, *that sort of God* to be denounced; in the context of epistemology, *that kind of truth* to be rejected. Thus, not necessarily *all* of Christianity, or *any* idea of the notion of G-d, or *all* truths, must be denied. And, so it is, with *that kind of asceticism*, *that kind of mysticism*—when it is subjected to the test by fire—what will remain that is real? What will (of what remains) contribute to the well-being and wholeness of the individual and the community at large?

Of course, given the focus of this thesis, our purpose here is much broader than just shaking mysticism to its foundations to expose what remains. I shall maintain it is the core business and undertaking of this thesis to determine whether what survives the test is sufficient for the task of neutralizing, even overcoming *ressentiment*. To this end, further questions are raised. First, *how* can such a "Sitz Im Leben" become instrumental in transforming a violent, resentful, sectarian humanity into something more hopeful? And second, to what kind of mysticism does Nietzsche subscribe, given his longstanding disdain for transcendence?

In his chapter on 'Mysticism' Milne's study falls in line with J. Richardson's acknowledgement that while Nietzsche's affirmation of *everything* bears similarities to mystical thought, the 'not-willing' and selflessness is utterly inconsistent with 'Nietzsche's advocacy of willing and selfishness.'¹⁹⁷ Milne's research claims that Nietzsche's mysticism if it is there, can only escape the contradictions mentioned by Richardson, by placing those elements within the context of Goethe's work. His rationale for doing so is based on the observation that 'the most interesting questions relate [not] to the tension between

¹⁹⁷ J. Richardson, "Nietzsche's Value Monism", in M. Dries and P.J.E. Kail (eds.), *Nietzsche on Mind and Nature*, (Oxford University Press, 2015), 96.

Nietzsche's supposed mysticism and his atheism, but rather between his mysticism and egoism.' ¹⁹⁸

I shall pursue the hypothesis that, firstly, while there is clearly a tension between Nietzsche's rejection of God and mysticism, when viewed through the lens of a certain kind of Western Christian mystical tradition, (to which Milne only pays lip service), those tensions between institutional religion and mysticism, have always existed. Not just the mystical traditions within Christianity but also in Islam and other Faith traditions. Again, based on previous chapters, it has been established that often what readers take for egotism and bombast in Nietzsche, is nothing other than Nietzsche's deliberate provocation and his clever use of irony and satire as in *EH*, which D. More has observed is too often lost on either the careless reader or the reader that comes with a predisposed, literalist mindset.

And such a mind we find in Milne's thesis. He comes to the discussion with a conviction: that Nietzsche's mysticism has its roots in *BT* and that it is confirmed in such phrases as 'oneness with the inmost ground of the world' ("Einheit mit dem innersten Grunde der Welt") and 'identity with the heart of the world' ("Einheit mit dem Herzen der Welt"). ¹⁹⁹ Milne attributes this language to the aesthetics of Kant and Schopenhauer rather than to the Western Christian mystical tradition. He claims that they were 'formulas' which provided 'the young Nietzsche [with] a vocabulary not so much to express the inexpressible' as to 'point to what is left behind, what is left untouched by our theorizing.' ²⁰⁰ He thus underplays the mystical resonances of the vocabulary and even asserts that, 'Nietzsche would shortly abandon this vocabulary', ²⁰¹ a claim, which *TSZ* and the strong mystical undertow in Nietzsche's writings thereafter, must surely be contest.

¹⁹⁸ Milne, *Nietzsche, mysticism and the god who isn't one*, p.2.

¹⁹⁹ *BT*, 2. 38; *BT*, 5. 49, (cited in Milne, p.50).

²⁰⁰ *Op.cit.* p. 52.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* p.52.

6.3 Styles of asceticism and mysticism, and their varying attitudes to silence: in the light of Nietzschean and Girardian readings of *ressentiment*

M. Ross in his *Silence: A User's Guide: Volume I*, decries the lamentable state to which popular discourse on mysticism has fallen: ²⁰²

Today, the resurgence of interest in so-called mysticism (a dog's breakfast of a word that needs to be eliminated from the discussion) is tainted with voyeurism and self-aggrandizement and has become a consumer circus based on quests for "experience" that leads customers away from, not toward, the silence and illumination they seek.

I agree with Ross that there is what some would disparagingly call a New Age version of mysticism which may distract from 'authentic' silence (whatever that is), however, I also affirm that this is no reason for dismissing the term. And if it is a 'bubble and squeak' throw-away meal, it is not the word's fault so much as a 'user beware' alert. In this section, I shall outline how a treatment of mysticism would read, were it to take both Nietzsche and Girard seriously, and treat this as another way of testing the theories' explanatory power, *vis à vis* "ressentiment."

I propose, using Girardian and Nietzschean terminology, that there are broadly two major approaches to and expressions of, mysticism: the mysticism of *reconnaissance* and the mysticism of *ressentiment*. The former is unashamedly and unapologetically emotional, materialist, erotic, monist, inclusive, 'unknowing,' open, fun loving, born out of an attitude of gratefulness, embracing all of life: the good, the bad the ugly—with a strong adventurous bent. The latter, sharing the Achilles' heel of institutional Christianity, tends towards being hollowly 'intellectual,' 'spiritual,' prudish, dualist, forever striving to 'know' define and to judge—closed, tending towards dogmatism, one (often but not always) borne out of resentment and escapism—often, either risk averse or paradoxically, afflicted by a martyr syndrome. In Nietzschean terms, the divide closely resembles the division between Apollonian and Dionysian. Let these remain claims for the moment, acknowledging, that as with French Grammar, there will always be many exceptions.

As for silence, it is both *ressentiment's modus operandi* and its demise. First, there is the false silence. The kind of silence, which descends after *ressentiment* has assuaged its

²⁰² M. Ross, (Cascade Books, 2014), 25.

thirst for revenge. The sheer silence by which the cries of the innocents have been cut off from human ears—be it the ‘Preacher’ and his hundreds of listeners outside Kibeho refugee camp for Hutus, on that fateful massacre day on 22nd April 1995 in Rwanda almost a year after the main impact of the genocide. Or the cries of an Abel, or an Isaac, an Iphigenia muted, mouth taped, offered up by her father, King Agamemnon as an animal (a self-deception was the only way he could endure the sacrifice) to ensure the success of the Trojan War which was about to begin. Or, the silence of Nietzsche’s Christ of the Evangel, who stands dumb before Pilate’s questions regarding the truth of the charges brought against him. It is the silence that Nietzsche keeps throughout his professional working life. It is the true silence of the Jesus of Nazareth, whose legacy of non-resentment Nietzsche has followed all his life. The context of that silence is Procurator Pilate’s decree, which allowed for one of those condemned to death to be pardoned. The crowd instead chooses Jesus Barrabas. By contrast, here in Jesus of Nazareth is the one, the *Ecce Homo* (‘Behold the Man’) of the Latin Vulgate New Testament. Here is Pilate’s last plea to an enraged blood thirsty crowd, a plea that hopes for a change of verdict: from ‘Crucify him’ to ‘Release him.’ A plea that the mob might see in this convicted one, what Pilate sees—an innocent, silent ‘man,’ one silent and passive by choice.

I have argued that Nietzsche’s project cannot be understood unless we stand with Christ on the day of Pontius Pilate’s judgement (provoked by the maddened crowd) against him. One of his most mature works, *Ecce Homo* (*EH*), is not only an autobiography inspired by his deep knowledge of Greek and Roman satire (Moore, 2014), but also a deliberate provocation directed at future readers to imagine Nietzsche as standing mute in the place of Christ on that day of judgement. Will we, as he recounts his autobiography and reviews his major works in provocative ways, side with the maddened crowd baying for blood just because he calls himself the ‘Antichrist’? Or will we see him for what he is—the innocent condemned for a label that was designed as a provocation? (Kee, 1999). For just as the authorities (Herodian, Jewish religious, and Roman) of the day out of a *ressentiment* fed by jealousy and fear, twisted Jesus of Nazareth’s words and fashioned him into a ‘King of Blasphemy’ or the ‘King of the Jews’ (*INRI*)—so Nietzsche’s detractors are caught in the trap of their own making entangled in the mimetic mirror of the phantom of their egos. In effect, will we *recognise* who he is? Will we *understand* him? As Kee’s epigraph indicates:

It is as if Jesus too is the Anti-Christ. He stands against this new Golden Calf...
Shoulder to shoulder, not one but two Anti-Christ, standing proud and firm against
the Church's Christ.

Second, there is the true contemplative silence of Nietzsche's *imitatio Christi*, the authentic peace from which he observes the world without fear or favour. A vantagepoint from where he squints through the lens of incompleteness (1 Corinthians 13) at that world through a psychologist's, philosopher's, philologist's, artist's, and saint's lens mediated through aphorism, parable, poetry—metaphor and simile—drama and satire, an essentially literary and artistic, and, yes, even religious lens (*TSZ*). In effect, by virtue of the richness of these multiple lenses, it becomes a multi-layered life-long guided 'untimely' meditation, never deviating from the seriousness of its intention. Even the parody and satire in *Ecce Homo* (*EH*) which line up institutional Christian morality, German pseudo culture and post Socratic, neo-Platonic philosophy for mockery are guided by that same serious purpose: to create 'a legacy of better understanding.' Nothing is spared, not even 'the serious thinker' (Moore: 2014: 28-30), not even Nietzsche himself.

My purpose is to bring the false and the 'true' silences together, to explore how the latter might, in Nietzsche's terminology, 'overcome' the former to achieve a flourishing of individuals, communities and nations. To accomplish this, we focus first on Nietzsche as contemplative mystic and activist and his life-long, 'untimely' meditation on *amor fati*. There is enough in Nietzsche's writings to lead us towards the insight that he might be writing not just the kind of observation we noticed in San Roque's Jungian resolve to 'write no more than it is possible to describe in this weekend in Alice Springs.... [to] set down what the place makes me think' (San Roque: 2013: 13). More than that, Nietzsche in his *Untimely Meditations* (*Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* 1873-1876), concentrates the attention by means of 'a longer/lingering glance directed at a person or object, whilst reflecting [on them] and pulling them into discernment, a weighing up of what they are,' my translation/paraphrase' (based on 2010 Duden) Bedeutungswörterbuch], ("den Blick längere Zeit auf jmdn., etwas, etwas bedenken, etwas in Erwägung ziehen"). My argument is that Nietzsche's form of meditation is in fact an observation ("Betrachtung") that draws its inspiration from Zen Buddhism where to meditate is not to switch off the mind, but rather

to switch on the alertness of its 'lazy/soft eye' which searches out the actuality that lies behind and beyond the mere reality of our own making.

This, however, is not *beyond* in the Neo-Platonic sense, disconnected somehow from the moment. Rather, it is woven into the very material fabric of the *experience* of that moment. Yes, it is a meditative state, the *peripatetic* walk of the Greek pedagogue, the artist as he waits for inspiration from the Muses to fall upon him. It is also anchored in a *physical* location – be it the cave of Elijah, Plato's cave from which Nietzsche's madman seemingly emerges into the sunlight to make dramatic, idiomatic proclamations that we have murdered God, or Zarathustra's cave from which he periodically exits to speak prophetically to the world.

This is the *imitatio Dei*—the imitation of the G-d who is more like nothing at all than one of the gods. The G-d of Moses who identifies himself as "*Hayah, asher hayah*," 'I shall be *who* or *how* or *where* I shall be.' The indeterminate, undefinable G-d, the one who liberates, but will not allow himself to be either appropriated or enslaved. Elijah's G-d. The One to be found *not* in the 'great wind' which splits mountains and breaks rocks into pieces, not in the earthquake that shakes the ground to its foundations; not in consuming wildfires but in 'a sound of sheer silence.' The quiet field of Rumi where, 'Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing/ there is a field. I'll meet you there/When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about/Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other"/doesn't make sense.' It is the physical *location* where Zarathustra discovers and re-discovers that in the context of 'inevitable defeat of action,' as in the *Ecce Homo* moment before Pilate, where one 'will never succeed in ordering the world'; where one can only but taste 'the bitterness of ... defeat,' but where nevertheless, in the end one can look:²⁰³

on the green meadow over which the cool evening was running just then and...
[weep] together" "But then life was dearer to me than all my wisdom ever was."

By what means was it possible to arrive at such a state of mind? What is the point of any action if such action must end in defeat—we ask? Is it a madness that distracts the mind to see what is not there? Or is it what all mystics see, be they orthodox, unorthodox, or heterodox? Is not this the Grammar common to them all? The madness of a Julian of Norwich who in the midst of the Black Plague can only see hope, and love worthy of trust:

²⁰³ (Michalski: 2007: 59-60 Portable Nietzsche 339, *TSZ* III, 2)

‘all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well’ (*Revelations of Divine Love*), cited *TLS* Vol.41, Number 10, 23rd May 2019, 3,5-6). Notes Wellesley in her review of ed. E.A. Jones’ (*Hermits and Anchorites In England, 1200-1550*, 2019), Julian never discusses the realities of her enclosed existence—focuses rather on a vision that both transcends but also exists in the present moment of her ‘pryson and this lyfe [of] penance’ (2019: 6). For the reality is, that in a piece of ‘macabre high drama,’ the novice, we are told, would climb into a grave dug inside the cell, ‘where she was sprinkled with earth,’ after which the door was bolted (2019: 3). Is not this then the feverish and wishful imaginings of a deprived body and mind? Is this not a far call from the Nietzsche we have come to know?

Possibly. Except that his *ascesis* is like everything else he embraces, not *that kind* of ‘ascesis,’ not *that kind* of Christ, not *that kind* of god, not *that kind* of religion, not *that kind* of Christianity. And it is there—in that place, that location—without a hint of *ressentiment*, that we find Nietzsche the mystic, Nietzsche the saint. A new kind of saint who sits comfortably with the philosopher and artist of the future. Among those who “contribute to an ‘imperishability [“Unsterblichkeir”] of the intellect” (KSA 19 [10]), those who look to society to define their position, but are nevertheless independent of the community ‘for the meaning and purpose of their lives.’ Those whose attitudes by contrast to the herd, break through to a sovereignty, and an autonomy that sets them free. To put it in Nietzsche’s terms once again (*UM*. 3. 4):

The saint, in whom the ego is completely melted away and whose suffering is no longer felt as his own life ... but as a profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things ... which the game of becoming never hits upon, [is] that final and supreme becoming-human after which all nature presses and urges for its redemption [“Erlösung”] from itself.

6.4 Time present, time past and time future – *amor fati*: their bearing on the psychopathology of *ressentiment* and their implications for Nietzsche's brand of mysticism: is it an atheist spirituality?

As we have seen from Dostoyevsky's treatment in *Notes from the Underground* (1864), from which Girard and Nietzsche both draw inspiration, *ressentiment*'s habitat is in fact the past, where for 'forty years on end' 'it immerses itself in cold venomous... everlasting spite,' recalling 'offence to the last most shameful details,' and because it is possessed by the phantom of the ego 'spitefully taunt[s] and chafe[s] itself with fantasies, recall[ing] everything...heap[ing] all sorts of figments on itself, under the pretext that they too have happened and forgive nothing.' It is a toxic world which it inhabits. But unlike Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment* has its day in the sun. It is the consummate opportunist waiting for the timely moment. Waiting for a tipping point when it is able to break free from its impotence—in Nietzsche's reading of it—when it is able to sink its razor-sharp teeth into the human flesh of those who have humiliated it. Here I mean something more like the formerly cited Iris Murdoch's rapacious relentless ego (1992: cited in Bachelard), 'limited, imperfect, unfinished... full of blankness and jumble... divided... distracted... pulled apart' to the point where, it 'cannot see things as they are.' Much like the 'colonial fantasies' that appropriate and justify the taking of what is not its own in the name of some great cause like 'manifest destiny,' or 'civilising mission,' or 'Petrine mandate' or in the language of the current Rwandan regime, bearing the burden of that 'great sacrifice to liberate our country.'

The brooding past, which is *ressentiment*'s breeding ground, is anathema as Zarathustra's doctrine of time presented early in Part III, has been defined, rightly, as 'Zarathustra [not] interpreting the present from a perspective that gives primacy to the past [which] is both psychologically devastating and unnecessary' (Higgins: 2010: 97). As we have seen, *ressentiment* feigns passivity, but lives in active if not always conscious denial of actuality (things as they are), indeed lives in the past and lives in denial. It creates and sustains a make-believe world (Prospero's world of the psyche and the mind) that the German word "das Hirngespinnst" (literally, a weaving or a web of the brain or as Duden

(2010) describes it, ‘something that doesn’t really exist,’ or a ‘deception,’ a ‘swindle’ (“einer Sache, die nicht wirklich existiert,” “Täuschung” “Schwindel”).

Fundamentally, if we follow some scholarly opinions, even when we encounter what seems like a purely existential notion such as *recurrence*, it is also invested with a ‘religious’ notion (Kee: 1999: 115). However, it is not, in my understanding of it at least, either a purely religious notion or a docile acceptance such as expressed in Jungian ‘cultural complexes’ (San Roque: 2013: 6), the kind where we sit back and lie under centuries, millennia of layers of human violence, mendacity and greed resigned to our fate. The kind that bludgeons people into submission, so that they feel oppressed by them, but do nothing about them—and worse, devour each other to compensate for such terrifying inaction. The tone of resignation which San Roque catches in the whispered conversation of two black mob under a tree in the town of Alice Springs, Australia: ‘You can’t get away frummit!! That dreamin’ story is why there’s trouble in this here town’ (2013: 54). The same kind of tone arising from the nihilism that walks side-by-side with *ressentiment* that Nietzsche detected coming from the emerging nationalism and the democracies of the ‘new’ Europe of the 19th Century.

We only feel, infers Nietzsche, that we are condemned to repeat what is ingrained in our collective pasts, when we deny the potential power of the collective will as released in the *agon*, or allow ourselves to be intimidated, pacified by social structures as seemingly formidable as those we considered in the Rwandan chapter, which in the Australian context translates as ‘settler colonialism’ of ‘White Australia’ (Maddison: 2019: 215)—same imperialist ‘story’—we could say the inverse of Joseph Campbell’s hero with a thousand faces i.e. the *ressentiment* persona with a thousand faces.

In effect, whereas *ressentiment* interprets—perhaps does not even interpret, just succumbs in bitter silence—this eternal recurrence in negative oppressive ways, the “Übermensch,” with the mindset of *amor fati* draws strength from the positive, creative, individual and communal lessons of the past that emerge from the *agon*. In this way the challenges of the present, transformed into new structures *become* because of their deep naturalization with the world as it is, a ‘new’ humanity, a new community, a new society—in fact, a new world.

In Nietzsche’s mind, the eternal recurrence’s relentless siege on human sensibilities

in the form of cultural as well as materialist, ontological and existential onslaughts (the *agon*) calls for the formation of, what Ward Blanton names, a 'dynamic intellectual community.' Think: Nietzsche's society of 'kindred spirits' or 'friends') [where] people lose themselves... reorient their families, ethnicities, articulate... things differently in relation to the inherited genealogies of political association.'²⁰⁴ Such a 'losing of the self,' with *kenotic* overtones (the self-emptying of Philippians 2) brings us back to a mystical perspective. But what does Nietzsche's brand of mysticism mean? Is its content an amalgam of the intellectual and the mystical?

I think to label anything as simply 'religious,' which Kee does, or 'numinous' as is Rudolph Otto's reading (1925), is to privilege religion or Christianity in ways that Nietzsche would be reluctant to do. Yes, Kee is right, Nietzsche does speak of the eternal recurrence as a moment of enlightenment, one that he acquired 'that day' in August 1881: '6,000 feet beyond man and time... beside the lake of Silvaplana... beside a mighty pyramidal block of stone which reared itself up not far from Surlei. Then this idea came to me' (*TSK*, 42). But the 'tight control on it' that Kee senses is there (1999: 120) *is* there for a reason—that we receive the experience as something that *anyone* who is thinking and aware can access—not just orthodox 'religious' people.

This may seem an odd conclusion to draw. But here we are helped by the French philosopher, André Comte-Sponville, who, obviously conversant with Nietzsche, in his *The Book of Atheist Spirituality, An Elegant Argument for Spirituality Without God*, speaks of a mystical experience at age twenty-five or twenty-six. He describes a moment when after night had fallen, he and his friends walk through a forest.²⁰⁵ In retrospect Comte-Sponville says, that what he was trying to recapture was not words, but an experience: silence. He then, as a good philosopher does, who approaches it not just cerebrally but experientially, unwinds the 'onion' layers of the experience. First, he notes that the '*ego* had vanished... no

²⁰⁴ Based on an interview cited by Blaskow in *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception*, (236) and a Review of *A Materialism For The Masses, Saint Paul and the Philosophy of Undying Life*, Colombia University Press, (2014).

²⁰⁵ (Comte-Sponville [2006] [tr. Nancy Houston 2007] (2008: 156):

Gradually our laughter faded, and the conversation died down. Nothing remained but our friendship, our mutual trust and shared presence, the mildness of the night air and of everything around us...My mind was empty of thought, I was simply registering the world around me [...] And then all of a sudden ... What? Nothing: everything! No words, no meanings, no questions, only a surprise. Only – this. A seemingly infinite happiness. A seemingly eternal sense of peace [...] Yes, in the darkness of that night, I contained only the dazzling presence of the All. Peace. Infinite peace! Simplicity, serenity, delight.

more value judgements, only reality.’ Second, that time in its ordinary sense dissolved, there was ‘only the present.’ Third, that he was overwhelmed with a sense of pure ‘being’ by which everything extraneous to it, was stripped away in a kind of detachment in which there could be no more ‘illusions,’ ‘lies’ only the ‘truth’—not a truth which he possessed, but one that ‘contained’ him. An amazing experiential account, as close as one can get to defining ‘immanence,’ ‘as if the universe had been restored to itself at long last... There *were* no questions, so how could there be answers?... truth without words... immanence—but without its opposite.’²⁰⁶

While Nietzsche admittedly writes in more dramatic terms, of a ‘revelation,’ an ‘ecstasy,’ ‘a tempest of a feeling of absoluteness, of power of divinity which stole upon him’ (*EH*, 102-3, 101), the terms of reference that echo and re-echo between these two men’s experience of the mystical, show that it is also an experience not incompatible with intellectual insight. Even more significantly, not incompatible with philosophy, either. In short, Comte-Sponville and Nietzsche are on the same page—they know ‘that it [is] a matter not of words, but of silence’ (2008: 160). Comte-Sponville has no hesitation about calling his experience ‘mystical,’ nor has he any compunction about using the two key words of Western Christian mystical experience into which Nietzsche taps: ‘mystery’ and ‘mysticism’ (2008: 155, 140). The two philosophers, Nietzsche and Comte-Sponville would have had no difficulty understanding one another. *That* is the sort of mysticism Nietzsche subscribes to—although he had, as we have seen, taken it much further into Christian thinking than Comte-Sponville would be prepared to do.

Etty Hillesum’s *Diary* (1941-1943), the most unlikely candidate for Christian mysticism—a cultural Jew with only a passing acquaintance with formal Christianity—illustrates what kind of mysticism this might be, when on a card thrown out of a train on its

²⁰⁶ He then continues with the following account whose perspicacity is far too insightful to under-represent with just a paraphrase (2008: 157-158):

There was no faith, no hope, no sense of promise. There was only everything – the beauty, truth and presence of everything. This was enough. It was far more than enough! A sense of joyous acceptance. A sense of dynamic quietude – yes, like an unlimited courage. Rest without fatigue. What was death? Nothing. What was life? Only this palpitation of being within me. What was salvation? Only a word, or else this state itself. Perfection. Plenitude. Bliss. Such joy! Such happiness! Such intensity! ‘This is what Spinoza meant by eternity,’ I said to myself – and, naturally, that put an end to it, or expelled me from it. Words returned, and thought and the ego, and separation. But it didn’t matter...How can you fall out of the All? How can eternity come to an end? How can words stifle silence?

way to Auschwitz, had written ‘We left the camp singing.’²⁰⁷ How was this possible? Simply, that Etty had discovered the ‘small naked human being amidst the monstrous wreckage’ within herself, just as Nietzsche had.

6.5 Nietzsche’s notion of “Wettkampf” as intrinsic to his brand of asceticism, mysticism, and the psychopathology of *ressentiment* as interrogated by Poettcker (2014)

Before going any further with our discussion of Nietzsche’s mysticism, a series of clarifications. Here I am indebted to Grant Poettcker for his generous permission to tap into several pieces of his investigative work. His address, ‘Beyond Nietzsche’s War Rhetoric: Ascesis, Sacrifice and the Recovery of Health’ to a Girardian Conference (CoV&R Meeting in Freising, Germany) is pertinent to this section of our project. It draws attention, to an important reversal of opinion for Girard regarding the mimetic analyst’s vulnerability to mimetism (as important, in fact, as Girard’s change of trajectory regarding sacrifice under the auspices of Father Schwager) (Girard: 2010: 82):

We cannot escape mimetism; we always participate in it in some way, and those who acknowledge it interest me more than those who try to dissimulate it... I am now persuaded that *we have to think from inside mimetism*.

What is of particular importance to Poettcker (and to the purposes of this thesis) is what seems to be a significant change of conviction on Girard’s part concerning the role of *ressentiment* in the mimetic spiral of violence, as ‘the real engine of a theory,’ that ‘resentment according to its mimetic definition actually produces *misapprehension* [“méconnaissance”], in other words, the sacred (Girard: 2010: 83b). Yet, as we have seen in the early chapters of this thesis in a Foreword to Tomilerrri’s appraisal of *ressentiment*,

²⁰⁷ When we ask what it was that she saw that would produce such optimism, I would posit that it was ‘*amor fati*.’ I think her answer speaks of a ‘Yes-saying,’ as expressed in this entry on 29th May 1942):

God I try to look things straight in the face, even the worst crimes, and to discover the small naked human being amidst the monstrous wreckage... Every human being has his own reality... I try to face up to your world God, not to escape from reality into beautiful dreams – though I believe that beautiful dreams can exist beside the most horrible reality and I continue to praise your creation.

Girard five years later, finds cause to dismiss Nietzsche's application of *ressentiment* once more and it would seem, rejects it altogether. And this because of the 'philosopher's error,' in that Nietzsche, claims Girard, measures resentment with 'the rule of the will to power' by assuming that 'those who have little will to power become *nececessarily* (my italics) the slaves of those who have more of it, who have *domination* (Girard's italics) engraved in their being (Tomelleri: 2015: xii). What Girard fails to understand because he is distracted by an erroneous understanding of the 'will to power' is that, just as he (Girard) had come to realise that mimetism can only be understood from *within*, so Nietzsche had also come to realise that you can only expose *ressentiment* by thinking from inside it. And even more than that, as it happens, they realise, each in his own way, that it is important to admit one's susceptibility to mimetism, but also in Nietzsche's case, *his* susceptibility to *ressentiment*, yet Girard argues, that Nietzsche thinks he is impervious to it.

This argument, as I have shown in the Rwandan case study, is erroneous due to Girard's misunderstanding of the 'will-to-power,' which he now uses as justification for rejecting Nietzsche's actual conception of *ressentiment*. I have argued that this is exactly what Nietzsche understands by *ressentiment*. He too conceives of it as the 'real engine' driving the cycle of violence—not just distracted by 'misapprehension,' but entangled in it. Poettcker, however, for all of his insight, concedes far too much. For example, I have found Laurence's claim (which Poettcker cites) that Nietzsche's "Wettkampf", or war rhetoric, in the wake of twentieth-century wars has 'now [been] rendered offensive and unusable' (Lampert: 1986: 283), may have been true for the immediate post World War I period, but not in the present era, when after World War II, emotional memories were rife and unbalanced. I would argue that in today's context, the war rhetoric, which was borne out of Nietzsche's own painful experience of conflict in the Franco-Prussian War (Silk and Stern: [1981] 2016: 56), has not in fact lost any of its sharp relevance. Mbembe [2016] (2019: 9-41) says as much when he reflects that the 'critique of the violence of democracies' is nothing new and speaks of the new democratic era as 'wearing a mortuary mask... half carrion,' going on to note that (2019: 41):

ours is rather a time of paranoid dispositions, hysterical violence, and procedures to annihilate all those that democracy will have constituted as enemies of the state.

This is a perspective akin to Clausewitz's optic, where politics becomes an extension of war, or that of Thucydides,' who long before Clausewitz recorded the terrible Corcyraean Revolution (Thucydides: III 69-85), where democrats and oligarchs (our rough equivalent of left, and right wing. politics) fought it out using their political affiliations as an excuse for settling old and very personal grudges. These were wars which were not only instructive of wars in general, but foresaw a new terrible kind of war, which came to be known as 'total war,' in human terms—an internecine war—on a scale and depth of impact, never experienced before. Thus, Nietzsche's war rhetoric is more than justified in philosophical terms, one which also served Nietzsche's purpose to highlight satirically, the bellicosity of Wilhelmine Germany which ushered in the twentieth century, and to underscore the intensity of the *agon* required to overcome *ressentiment*. Which is to say, Germany's *ressentiment* which emerged from its architect Bismarck's unification of a diverse group of duchies and minor kingdoms by 'blood and iron' can also not be overcome except by force of intellect and moral will exhibited in the Greek *agon*. Only such a will, deployed by a special kind of rhetoric could expose 'offensive' tactical and strategic maneuvers that might serve to outflank, isolate, and annihilate *ressentiment* by neutralizing its "Ver-nicht-ung," [no-saying] with the 'Yes-saying' of *amor fati*. This realization adds another dimension to our understanding of the kind of prophet/mystic that Nietzsche is. Not only is he not passive but active, not mindless but mindful. His way of looking at the world ("Weltanschauung") which his kind of 'untimely' meditative state produces, is an eagle's perspective that I have come to call 'riding the thermals,' riding them in the silence.

When we go back to how Nietzsche introduces the problem of *ressentiment*—its insidious, invasive, acquisitive, duplicitous, and destructive character, of 'greatest danger' ["grösste Gefahr"] (*On Genealogy of Morals* 14; 100), we discover the kind of tactics that Nietzsche recommends: 'walling oneself in' ("Selbstvermauerung") cf. connotations of defensive walls, and of the sealing off of an anchoress in her confinement. Then there is 'self-containment' ("Selbsterhaltung") and 'self-defence' ("Selbstverteidigung") (*EH* 8; 63). We remember there too, how when *ressentiment* breaks through those defences, that it can produce a sense of alienation within oneself—this with reference to the psychological 'wake' on that tumultuous ocean of Nietzsche's failed relationships with the Wagners,

Cosmina and Richard. A rupture which produced a feeling of psychic trauma: 'I [felt] alienated from my own being' ['meinem Wesen entfremdet fühlt] (*UM*, IV, 7; 22).

The question is, how does all this square up with the *ascesis* mentioned by Poettcker and the deep mystical and contemplative roots which nurture *ascesis*?

In simple terms, Nietzsche's 'gestures' are ascetic in the sense, that they are signs pointing, not to 'wanton self-destruction,' but to a purification and higher *life*.' (Poettcker: 2014: 9). Earlier Poettcker makes mention of another *ascetic* gesture of Nietzsche's in the form of his "manic prayer" (*Daybreak* 1, 14) misunderstood by Girard as Nietzsche's descent into madness:

Make me insane, I beg you, O divine power. Insane so that I may finally believe in myself. Give me delirium and convulsions, moments of lucidity and the darkness that comes suddenly... I have killed the law and I feel for the law the horror of the living for a corpse. Unless I am above the law I am the most reprobate. A new spirit possesses me; where does it come from if it does not come from you?

Poettcker then summarises and critiques Girard's misreading of this passage. He points out that for Girard this is 'a mirror of Nietzsche's own insanity,' the 'lyrical frills' of romanticism to which Nietzsche is addicted, the 'thunderbolts and phantoms' that surround Nietzsche the madman, a state of mind that is 'irretrievable' and 'inevitable' (Poettcker: 2014: 4). Poettcker then exposes the flaws in Girard's interpretation. While I distance myself from his unqualified conclusion that Girard's description of Nietzsche's relations to Wagner as rivalrous is 'clearly appropriate,' I do subscribe to Poettcker's challenges—mainly that Nietzsche's *Daybreak* is a mask of Nietzsche himself, its prayer the utterances of a Nietzsche descending into the apparent madness of *ascesis* (Poettcker: 2014: 5). Poettcker questions Girard's assumption that this is Nietzsche's own prayer which he puts into the mouth of the mad man. Rather, he offers a more reliable scholarly reading which sees Nietzsche as offering 'the [recipe] for becoming a medicine man among the Indians, a saint among the Christians of the Middle Ages, *angekok* among Greenlanders'... (1997, (ed.) Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R.J. Hollingdale), 1, 14). The context, argues Poettcker, indicates that Nietzsche is underlining what is common to all ascetics: their unanimous assessment of the '*insanity* of the prevailing sanity' of their day. Their supplications for 'a force beyond the law' justifies 'the supplicants' authorship of a new law' (2014: 5). If Girard is to be believed, his reading would endorse the claim that 'all

supplicants and mystics are unknowingly in the grip of rivalry' which is, from what we have seen, clearly an unsustainable claim, violating the principle of literary protocol. Though Poettcker does not state it clearly, he is in effect calling Girard out on his argument as principally directed at Nietzsche, in effect, an *ad hominem*.

Poettcker then returns to the mainstream of his discourse, which is to draw attention to Girard's astonishing *volte face* on Nietzsche's take on *ressentiment* in as much as he is now willing 'to offer Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment* a hearing.' This is, as we have suggested earlier, a huge turnabout from Girard's previous position on Nietzsche as being inextricably tied to a Romantic "Weltanschauung," 'therefore unusable on principle' (2014: 6). Overall, Poettcker is worried about Girard continuing 'to violate literary protocol' (2014: 7) and also that in Girard's repudiation of Nietzsche's Dionysos by choosing to conflate the later Dionysos with the earlier one, because it better serves his polemic, which for Poettcker amounts to 'a problem of translation, or of *equivocation*' highlighting the glaring reality that 'Girard's Dionysus and Nietzsche's Dionysus are not in fact equivalent,' (2014: 7). But an even more serious concern emerges later in Poettcker's assessment, that if as Girard says, we must 'remain at the heart of the violence,' that such a *locus* should not lead to 'a victim-making hermeneutic' that grows like a wild shoot (my inference) out of a 'victim-revealing' stock (2014: 9) which would constitute a betrayal of *MT*'s vocation as a peace-making mission.

While in agreement with most of Poettcker's reading of Nietzsche, I think he oversubscribes on both the nature of Nietzsche's falling out with Wagner and the impact of his mental illness on his philosophical work, for which his somewhat weak concession to 'assign him [the *wahnsinnig* Nietzsche] the last place at the table' (2014: 9), might not atone. I argue strongly for Nietzsche's place around that table, and not just 'the last place'.

6.6 THE DYNAMICS OF *IMITATIO* AS CENTRAL TO NIETZSCHE'S MYSTICISM:

The notion of idol and distance— Hölderlin, Nietzsche and Girard's understanding of *imitatio Dei*, *imitatio Christi* tested by Jean Luc Marion's *The Idol And Distance*²⁰⁸

Girard in one of his last most mature works, *Battling to the End*, (Michigan State University Press, 2010), devotes an entire chapter to the poet Friedrich Hölderlin. Early in the book he justifies why the appeal to the young German poet is necessary: 'We need Hölderlin's help to show the essential similarity and difference between Christianity and archaic religion' (Girard: 2010: 50). Here, in the context of treating the "dangers of the Antichrist [and] those who wanted to be imitated," he remarks on Hölderlin's "dramatic discovery" 'of the importance of imitating Christ by means of withdrawal' (Girard: 2010: 50/51)²⁰⁹.

Hölderlin is portrayed as 'sinking into what was soon to be called his "madness,"' while Clausewitz is depicted as drawing nearer to the god of war at the same time as Hegel saw "the world spirit on horseback" (Napoleon) from his window (Girard: 2010: 121). Girard then sketches those characteristics of Hölderlin that set him apart from Nietzsche in terms of his being 'less haunted by Greece,' and more 'frightened by the return to paganism... torn between two opposites: the absence of the divine and its fatal nearness.' Hölderlin, as with Nietzsche, is described by Girard as oscillating between two poles: for Nietzsche it is Dionysus and Christ; for Hölderlin it was, 'between questioning a heaven that is now empty and leaping into a volcano.'²¹⁰ So, it follows, that the Hölderlin who leaves 'the mimetic giddiness of worldly existence,' who staggers towards an imitation of Christ 'thwarting all rivalry,' resisting the Greek classical models he had adopted for so long, finally discovers

²⁰⁸ ([1977, Editions Bernard Grasset], Fordham University Press, 2001)

²⁰⁹ The purpose of such a withdrawal, argues Girard, is to create distance, and his explanation of what constitutes the imitation of Christ is crucial in the case for and against Nietzsche's understanding of *ressentiment* (Girard: 2010: 120):

The imitation of Christ provides the proximity that places us at a distance. It is not the Father whom we should imitate, but his Son, who has withdrawn with his Father. His absence is the very ordeal that we have to go through.

²¹⁰ Whereas Hölderlin, who was deeply Christian, '*or rather became more so as he withdrew from the world*' (Girard's italics), Nietzsche, frightened by the death of the gods, refused to see the face of the divine. Whereas Hölderlin's ordeal of nigh on forty years of withdrawal from the world, his quietism, must not be 'misunderstood,' Nietzsche's withdrawal and isolation bear the unmistakable signs of 'a desire to become a god' (Girard: 2010: 123).

that '*salvation lies in imitating Christ*' and the truth in his own words that, '... where danger threatens / That which saves from it, also grows' (Girard: 2010: 123).

And so, it goes on: while Dostoyevsky resisted, 'Nietzsche succumbed to the unbearable tension that he wanted to maintain between Dionysus and 'the Crucified', and by contrast, 'Hölderlin saw his final withdrawal as the only means of ceasing to oscillate between self-glorification and self-repudiation, the only means of overcoming that torture' (Girard: 2010: 125). Thus, for Girard Hölderlin serves as a powerful way of highlighting Nietzsche's predicament and perilous mental state: his "madness certainly derives from the constant, increasingly accelerated switching from 'the Crucified' to 'Dionysus, from archaic religion to Christianity.' Girard then follows this up with the imperative that "One must not choose Hellenic religion over Christianity, but hold both at the same time, and accept the idea that Christianity could have transformed the Greek view of the world" (Girard: 2010: 125). Consequently, Girard's treatment of Hölderlin is a demonstration of how *he* overcame the tension between Christ and Dionysus, the Christian religion and archaic religion, and why, conversely, Nietzsche failed and "succumbed" to that tension. In effect, Girard depicts Hölderlin as 'going from one god to the next, studying the abyss of divine withdrawal... yet choosing Christ hidden behind the other gods' and completes his portraiture by praising his only 'weakness': 'an irrepressible love for Christianity.'²¹¹

Michel Haar, Université de Paris IV: Sorbonne, after reproaching Heidegger for misrepresenting Hölderlin for being more theistically *avant garde* than he is—deliberately omitting direct references to the God and the Father so as to better match Heidegger's abstraction of God as 'emanation of divinity' but not divinity itself,²¹² Haar proceeds to define Hölderlin's God more carefully, revealing a God that is much more traditional than Heidegger would allow: a 'singular God', a "God of Heaven", "the Father," "the Most-High" (1989 89), a more immediate, accessible God, 'Near/And difficult to grasp God' (*Patmos*, 2,165), which is a very different 'Hölderlin God' from that evoked by Girard, as we have seen above. And whereas Girard depicts Hölderlin as cutting his ties with Hellenism, Haar

²¹¹ At face value, given Girard's reading of the Nietzsche project, there does not seem much future in pursuing a contemplative, *imitatio Dei, imitatio Christi* for Nietzsche. I shall argue that Girard's understanding of Hölderlin and Nietzsche merely serve his theory rather than the reality of their relation to one another. To begin with, Hölderlin was one of Nietzsche's favourite poets (KGW I.2, 338-41). Secondly, other specialist academics in the field would disagree with the notion that Hölderlin's identification with Christ *actually* matches Girard's representation.

²¹² (*Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1989), 89-100, 'Heidegger and the God of Hölderlin').

acknowledges that 'Hölderlin's Hellenism should not be underestimated,' and then goes on to reveal Hölderlin's unorthodox Christ ('the exhalted Son of the Most-High' (*Patmos*, 2, 170) of whom he affirms: 'Christ still lives' (*Patmos*, 2, 171), but 'as much as he would like to 'form an image and see the Christ as he truly was' (*Patmos*, 2, 170), Hölderlin places him among the ranks of other gods of antiquity' as a son that is not unique (1989: 97).²¹³

So where is the privileged place of Christ that Girard accords to Hölderlin? Haar argues that if there is such a place, it is 'strange' and 'not entirely positive' in as much as having made Heaven come down to earth, in Hölderlin's view, Christ has 'indirectly established' poets as 'mediators', "for they *know who the Father is*, whereas even the sages cannot fathom [God's] favor" (*Brot und Wein*, 2, 94) (cited 1989: 97-98). And those same poets have become 'priests,' "But are holy priests of the god of wine" (*Brot und Wein*, 2, 94). These poets 'live above the flight/Of birds' (*Wenn aber die Himmlischen...*, 2, 224), in turn become 'guardians of the immense distance between the height of the Most-High and the most obscure ground of Nature' whereby the poetic word becomes the true medium which unifies All, which clearly recalls, argues Haar, the *Cratylus* of Plato (1989: 98). And the other question is, where is Hölderlin's overcoming of the tension between Dionysos and Christ? ²¹⁴

Before moving on to Jean-Luc Marion's assessment of Nietzsche, allow me to reflect briefly on the implications of the conclusion reached thus far. That, while Hölderlin might have been Nietzsche's favourite poet in his youth and while later he considered Hölderlin a kindred spirit in the Classics, he had in his mature years outgrown him. For starters, Hölderlin clung to a theology of sorts laced with Romantic Classicist overtones of Deism and pantheism, whereas Nietzsche takes his direction, as we have stated, from the dictum 'God is more like nothing at all, than one of the gods.' Whereas Hölderlin clings to the old gods, Nietzsche has outgrown those too, profoundly aware that in mistaking the false God of institutional Christianity for the true God who cannot be named, having killed that God off

²¹³ Haar concludes that Hölderlin's perception of Christ, while one of veneration and 'even adoration,' 'remains obscure and elliptical.' The Father has other sons like Heracles and Dionysus (*Der Einzige*, 2, 154). In this confession, Hölderlin admits to an "audacity" and a "sense of shame", even an "error" in drawing the parallel, but he does so nevertheless (1989: 97).

²¹⁴ My purpose in stating these questions is to show that really Hölderlin and Nietzsche's stance on the archaic and the Classical past, is very similar. Indeed, I shall go on to argue that Nietzsche's identification with Christ is in fact, much more orthodox than Hölderlin's, a conclusion that runs counter to Girard's.

falsely, institutional Christianity's modernity celebrates that god's demise in vain. Not only 'in vain' but with absolutely no idea of the implications of the act. On the one hand, this is not even G-d; and on the other hand, if it had been (a *non-sequitur*)—if it *were* possible, those responsible are blissfully unaware of the monstrous implications of such an act. But what, you say, of Dionysos? Well, Nietzsche had outgrown that old god too, and discovered a revisionist version of Dionysos, Dionysos Zagreb, which matches, as we have seen in other chapters, the Christ of the Evangel. More of that later from Jean-Luc Marion's perspective, one that only partially addresses Nietzsche's *praxis* but unwittingly offers some interesting insights into the nature of Nietzsche's mystical life practice.

6.7 Jean-Luc Marion's ambivalent conclusions regarding Nietzsche's *imitatio Dei, imitatio Christi*

If one can battle through Jean-Luc Marion's turgid style, there are wonderful insights to be had. For Marion the 'moral' gods are those who simply answer to the name they have been given (Marion [1971] 2001: 35). They are the priestly gods of *ressentiment*, who restore their lost authority and power, compensate themselves for their weakness. Marion—and certainly Nietzsche—considers the death of those sorts of gods (the 'death of God') as liberating the 'metaphysical horizon' (2001: 35). These gods work within the double framework of morality and metaphysics. For Marion, as for Nietzsche, atheism itself remains idolatrous because it has allowed theism to continue to eke out an existence by becoming an object of disdain, perhaps even a subject of *its own* *ressentiment*, its negation of the idea of God.²¹⁵

It is at this point that Marion begins to question the success of Nietzsche's endeavours to wrench himself out of theism into an atheism as Marion understands it. However, Marion's exercise proves to be a confusing 'cloud of unknowing' where he

²¹⁵ Marion follows the course of Nietzsche's attempts to 'break the idolater in yourself' and in doing so, his strivings to inhabit a non-idolatrous space in the "Dasein" (the ground of our being) (*Dithyrambs*, 202). This space, which is life as it is, forces us to create/posit values (*TI*, 5), (2001: 41). It is like Rumi's space, where nothing is excluded from one's perspective, where 'nothing that occurs [is] subject to erasure or censure' (2001: 42), where everything is a 'Yes', 'Life as it is' ["Ja", "das Leben wie es ist"], without subtraction, exception or selection (2001: 43).

attempts to prize out some kind of meaning for 'Ariadne,' 'Dionysos' and 'Zarathustra', and the notion of 'collapse' and a 'falling short,' which are then transferred into the realm of the search for love in general, and erotic love and satisfaction in particular. Marion portrays this eroticism through the notions of 'Interplay,' "Zwischenspiel." A kind of 'in-between-ness,' a treading of water, or 'waiting' for the next Act; a "Vorspiel," a foreplay in the context of an insatiable erotic love. These are descriptors which Marion clearly feels define the status of Nietzsche's quest whose intention ultimately fails to break through to a non-idolatrous space. It must be more symptomatic, Marion infers, of Nietzsche's failed amorous relationships.²¹⁶ The mystery equation of Dionysos, Ariadne, Zarathustra is thus raised to a new level with the addition of the 'I' (of Nietzsche) coming into play, all in the name of whether or not *ressentiment* is overcome or, like some Greek spirit or god, or daemon, which teases humanity, plays with humanity only to reject it. Or, like the gods of Shakespeare's *King Lear* are like so many boys torturing flies who 'make sport of us all.' However, for all Marion's toing and froing, he does concede, somewhat reluctantly it seems, that for all the names Nietzsche gives to the divine and to himself, he always returns to the Christ, and that this is the dominant appellation (2001: 56). This becomes in Marion's parlance, 'the Christic structure' (2001: 59), 'the 'figure of Christ' (by which I presume he means 'figura'), a 'pastiche'—which all together, constitute signs of the fact that Nietzsche's "Ja-saying" has its roots in the Christ of 2 Corinthians 1:20. However, one wonders how this can be, given Nietzsche's strong stance against St Paul.²¹⁷

Marion then treats us to an astonishing series of denials, which most conveniently highlight some of the important markers that define Nietzsche as mystic and saint. I argue that the denials arise from Marion's misplaced assumptions about Nietzsche's stance on Christ, which are similar to that of Girard but produce different conclusions.

²¹⁶ Marion feels that Nietzsche, by admitting that 'no one can bear the weight of the 'abyssal thought' without philosophy materializing and morphing as some kind of 'divine hand' to wrench us from nihilism, the accomplishment even of dancing feet that rise above meaninglessness (2001: 47), not even that in his mind, will be enough.

²¹⁷ I have argued elsewhere, that in critiquing his mentors, there is always a residual understanding that honours them, as can be seen in his treatment of Socrates, Plato, Schopenhauer, and Wagner to name just four. His acceptance of Plato's stance on the 'media' is a case in point (which featured strongly in both the *Rwanda Genocide* and *The Tempest* chapters) despite Nietzsche's 'j'accuse' levelled against the neo-Platonism that followed. This he holds accountable for derailing the heritage of the Christ of the Evangel and for creating the toxicity of *ressentiment* and the formation of its attendant 'phantom of the ego' a 'false' ego, which haunts modernity.

Having conceded that there is 'a Christic structure in the Nietzschean text' (2001: 59), having acknowledged Nietzsche's 'strange' 'theological penetration' and 'respectful intimacy with which Nietzsche approaches Christ' (2001: 61), Marion finds it impossible to accept the reality that 'Nietzsche meditated on the mystery of Christ, nor even that he undertook consciously to repeat the mystery of Christ after or at the moment of emptying it' (2001: 61). This denial exposes Marion's erroneous assumption, that Nietzsche has categorically rejected Christ. Ironically, the 'emptiness' which Marion alludes to points to the *kenosis* of Christ which enables Jesus of Nazareth to overcome *ressentiment* and which Nietzsche actually does meditate on sufficiently enough to provide the 'Christic' details which Marion himself has highlighted. Their significance, however, evades him. Marion's insistence that Nietzsche's stance is that of the anti-Christ, is as Kees argues earlier, missing the point of Nietzsche's *actual* position i.e., where *that kind of* [institutional] *Christ* is opposed by two Anti-Christ: Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ of the Evangel) and Nietzsche who stand together as one.

Now comes a series of concessions that reveal that Marion's approach is at best ambivalent, at worst self-contradictory. For example, Marion's sensitive speculation that 'underneath the holy fable and disguise of Jesus' life, there lies concealed one of the most painful cases of martyrdom of knowledge about love' (2001: 61b). This elegantly underlines nothing less than Nietzsche's interpretation of the Christ of the Evangel's journey to the cross, to which Nietzsche often alludes. Marion in the name of a different cause, operating as we have said, on the erroneous assumption that Nietzsche has no room for *any* Christ, that Nietzsche's is an intractable Anti-Christ sentiment and therefore this 'Christic structure' must be unconscionable if Nietzsche is to avoid inconsistency and contradiction. My argument contends that such a position is perfectly consistent when a *different* assumption is proposed.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ Marion teases out the vital elements from the Nietzsche 'pastiche,' hoping to prove Nietzsche's case a *non sequitur*: (a) that Christ 'by loving on the cross, overcomes *ressentiment*' (2001: 64); (b) the disciples, '[that] small community did not understand the main point, the exemplary character of this kind of death, the freedom, the superiority over any feeling of *ressentiment*' (AC, 40) (cited 2001: 64); (c) that the community did not comprehend that *ressentiment* disappears before love, life affirmation and the *Amen* (2001: 64); (d) that as a consequence, the return (eternal return of the same)—my inference—'the most unevangelical feeling, *revenge* came to the fore again... a feeling that created 'gods born of *ressentiment*' (AC 40; Kaufmann 615).

Putting all this substantial evidence together, at times using Nietzsche's notes even if they include the much debated *Will to Power* 167 = VIII, 2, 350, 11 [282], we have a compelling case for Nietzsche's utter identification with the Christ of the Evangel, the one who was there *before* the 'decadent' Church's manufactured Christ and its irruption within the primitive church. *That* was the Christ of the early Christian 'naïve' (2001: 64) movement, which Nietzsche describes in his notes as

A Buddhistic *peace movement* in the very middle of and starting from ("mitten aus") the people of *ressentiment* par excellence, to the point of issuing therefrom ("heraus").²¹⁹

The respected theologian for Girardian scholars, Father James Alison in his analysis of reconciling the 'wrath of god' with the loving Christ would explain this by means of a mimetic hermeneutic. Which, stated simply, is human beings projecting their violence onto God. The violence is really *their* doing not God's. The conclusion is the same i.e., that there has been a distortion of interpretation, but *the source* of that distortion is read differently by Alison and by Nietzsche. And there you have the knot of the debate between Girardians and Nietzsche's interpretation of *ressentiment* exposed, with the one side (Nietzsche after all is mute) ever tightening that knot of contention. However, when one understands that each party in the debate is committed to the same principle of the primacy of mimetic pathology (including Nietzsche's highly nuanced much misunderstood notion of "Mitleid"), that Nietzsche's charge of *ressentiment* against Christianity is not a blanket rejection of original, pure Christianity, as has been indicated above, then perhaps the knot may after all, not be so impossible to untie. The argument of this chapter confirms it: that Nietzsche has always respected the Christ of the Evangel. And much more than that, his understanding of this Christ aligns very respectably with modern Pauline scholarship and also the 'Jesus Project.' In effect, his identification with Christ, his meditation on the 'mystery' of Christ, is remarkable, and the defining of the distortion, identical, based on the same cognitive

²¹⁹The inference in that note is this: that at a critical point in its early development, 'genuine, original Christianity' (AC 39; Kaufmann, 613), was hijacked, derailed by *ressentiment* which 'immediately reinterpreted it, abolished it, and developed it into a reactive system (law, morals) ... that organizes history with the aim of accusing beings (Parousia, judgement, hell)' (2001: 64). But that this derailment need *not* be the end of the story in as far as that same 'genuine, original Christianity' 'will be possible at all times' (AC 39; Kaufmann, 613), (2001: 64).

dissonance caused by the *ressentiment* of Girard's revised view in *Achever Clausewitz*, where it is *ressentiment* which misapprehends ("méconnaissance") false religion as true, not Nietzsche the saint.²²⁰

Marion, *par contre*, dismisses what he sees as Nietzsche's 'two-way bet.' Marion might have said that Nietzsche's pretensions are similar to Kant's 'evasion' in the 'Critique of Reason', for which Nietzsche reserved his most critical scorn. After all, a rigorous, rationalist, Enlightenment world, a world of uncompromising scholarship demands otherwise—an uncompromising atheism, where such evasions are utterly unacceptable. For this reason alone, Marion's unpicking of Nietzsche's alleged 'idolatry' is worth following to test the reading. Marion begins with Christ's cry, 'my God my God why hast thou forsaken me?' which he interprets as 'a general disappointment and enlightenment over the idol, 'illusion' ["Wahn"] of his life' (2001: 65). Marion uses this cry as proof of disqualification of an 'idolatrous illusion of the Christ' one which renders it untenable, with the inference that Nietzsche even in the pursuit of a revisionist Christ, is entertaining an idol unawares. Marion likens this cry to 'the cry of a *foetus* hurling at life, the cry of the one who pierces the idolatrous veil to swim in the ocean of distance... the death of the idolatrous representation of the divine' (2001: 65) which, he insinuates, condemns Nietzsche to be 'still idolatrous' (2001: 68).²²¹

On the one hand, the cross is pictured as a victory over *ressentiment*, on the other, it is depicted as a defeat at its hands, 'a phenomenon of *ressentiment*' (2001: 67). For Marion, the introduction of *ressentiment* renders Nietzsche's explanation of love 'not credible' (2001: 68), indeed, unconvincing (2001: 66):

If the privileges of the Christ do not spare him an unappealable disqualification, perhaps the reason for this is found less in the Nietzschean interpretation of the

²²⁰ Which raises the question of why Marion feels it necessary to question the consistency of the evidence above. One can only assume it has to do with the assumptions that Marion brings to the table. For him these revelations are inconsistent with Nietzsche's will to overcome idolatry (my reading of Nietzsche's interpretation of 'idolatry' is *anything* that is false, anything that rings hollow, anything that negates life rather than affirms it and *anything* that seeks to escape life as it is in order to build castles in the sky: a self-delusional world).

²²¹ He finds it 'remarkable' that Nietzsche should 'posit' that 'abandonment becomes the condition of relation to God as a person and not as an idol', and that same abandonment, 'offers one of the faces of communion—perhaps the highest.' For Marion this is the site of Nietzsche's 'massive' omission' (2001: 66), and he thinks Nietzsche to have caught himself in a standing contradiction. On my second reading of this I am reminded of what is overlooked by Marion: that Christ is meditating on the first lines of Psalm 22 i.e., that this is the cry of meditation, not of despair. Hence, perfectly consistent with Nietzsche's Christic structure.

Christ than it is of "God." More precisely, Christ is one of the names for one who experiences the divine. But of what divinity does Christ experience the divinity?

Here clearly Marion understands that the acceptance of this revisionist Christ is still an acceptance of a 'G-d.' His verdict: that the love which is inferred in Nietzsche's 'Christ of the Evangel' who operates, 'through love' '... suffices neither to define nor to account for a "God" against whom only the analysis of *ressentiment* penetrates' (GM II, 21). By this, I suspect that Marion is treating Nietzsche's pitch of the Christ of the Evangel as merely one designed to discredit St Paul and *that kind of* Christianity (Luther's Christianity, a pietistic Christianity), which in his opinion, lands Nietzsche in the same standing self-contradiction and negates his 'God is dead' 'We have murdered God' thesis.

Marion's theistic case against Nietzsche, thus, follows hard upon the contradictions he discovers in the 'Christic structure' of the Nietzschean text. It can be summarized as follows. First, the premise that "God" loves only in hating, i.e., that for that kind of "God," love demands 'strict reciprocity' (2001: 69), which Nietzsche himself underlined in (*The Case of Wagner* 2), 'he becomes terrible when one does not love him in return.' *That* kind of love is 'a barbarism,' it is exclusivist, egotistical (2001: 70). Nietzsche's Christ of the Evangel, the one who overcomes *ressentiment*, is for Marion a Nietzsche who 'admits a beyond of love, another world, where love yields to something vaster and stronger than it is' (2001: 70), the very things he critiques in the metaphysical sleights of hand, a smoke and mirrors job. For Marion this is quintessentially 'duplicitous,' a 'dissimulation,' a 'hypocrisy,' a 'deficiency' (2001: 71).

But Marion's objections are based, as I have been arguing, on a *misreading* of Nietzsche. And this emerges very clearly in his *misunderstanding* of Nietzsche's 'God is dead' provocation. Before we discuss this in some detail, let me conclude Marion's interpretation of it. Firstly, I do not think he gets the idea that Nietzsche is an *agent provocateur* and that not everything he writes is to be taken either literally, or at face value. Satire and irony also seem lost on him. Secondly, no distinction is made between the old and the revised Dionysos which is encapsulated in the question, '...what face [of] the divine can still assume after the "death of God" and before the still-to-come advent of Dionysus' (2001: 71). Thirdly, Marion falls into what we have seen Girard call 'the philosopher's error' in its misapplication of the 'will-to-power'. Here this "God" becomes, with Marion's

uncritical acceptance (by which I mean he does not take into account the published canon of Nietzsche's works) 'God as a maximal state' (2001: 72). Thus, in Marion's reading of Nietzsche, 'the idols remain'; 'the "new gods" themselves also remain tied metaphysically to the will to power... they play and dance like idols' thus, Nietzsche, claims Marion, 'remains an idolater' (2001: 73).

Which brings us to the mad man who seeks God. For Marion this is the abyss, the 'distance that identifies and also is identified with God,' 'the "God" who dies remains still too close, metaphysically for his death not to be idolatrous and for the new face that succeeds him not to reestablish another still metaphysical idol' (2001: 74-75). Marion's case is faulty in as much he draws too heavily (inferred above but not stated) on what he knows is 'the texts of the collection called *The Will to Power* editorial control of which was heavily imposed by Nietzsche's sister. Marion's claim that Nietzsche is an idolater because his belief is, 'most clearly the onto-theological comprehension of the "gods"' (2001: 77), is thus undone by his admission that this 'might not count among the last fragments,' to which he adds the *Antichrist*, *Ecce Homo*, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* and the *Dithyrambs* (2001: 77). Marion's last comments confirm he is held in thrall by the false assumptions previously mentioned. Certainly, no concession is allowed for Nietzsche's attempts to uncover a G-d who is more like nothing at all, than one of the gods, which is my reading. And as for Dionysos 'touching' him, and that the 'distance' which Nietzsche claims for himself, is not there, but yet Marion will (curiously) allow for 'a distance of Goodness', which he admits, 'is most precious' (2001: 78).

What Marion never acknowledges, is that the dictum Nietzsche follows is perfectly consistent with the classic definition of God: that God is more like nothing at all than one of the gods who declares, 'I shall be *who* or *how* or *where* I shall be.' To that premise, Nietzsche holds fast throughout his writings, but Marion cannot see through the parody and the satire which saturate his project. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, for example, is partly a parody of the Bible and 'an imitation of Menippean satire' (More: [2014], 2016: 169), partly an expression of Nietzsche's mysticism, to which Nietzsche devoted the longest book treatment in the *Ecce Homo* review of his life's work, which has also been much misunderstood. *EH* has always been cast as the *enfant perdu* of Nietzsche's books, wrongly diagnosed as symptomatic of his madness: that Nietzsche had 'lost his grasp on reality and

become completely immersed in himself' indulging in an 'excessive degree of self-glorification' and an 'extreme conviction that he had a mission to fulfil [that] are both embarrassing and repulsive' (Frey-Rohn: 1984: 262).²²²

6.8 Nietzsche's madman, Plato's cave, Elijah's cave, desert fathers and mothers, contemplatives all: *imitatio Dei*, *imitatio Christi*, the marks of the artist, the philosopher, the saint

By following Marion's nuanced argument, given the detailed rigorous scrutiny to which he subjects Nietzsche's writings, the Nietzschean text is undoubtedly 'Christic' and theistic, but not in the self-contradictory, conflicted ways by which he *assumes* Nietzsche to have been self-deluded.

I now draw the argument in this chapter to a close. I have in previous chapters built a case for Nietzsche as prophet, teacher, healer and now mystic and saint, in the desert father and mother traditions, and Western Christian mystical tradition. Those roots themselves are steeped in the Jewish prophetic, teaching, healing, and mystical traditions, with overtones of Eastern Buddhism following the Zen practice of 'observation' which I have linked with Nietzsche's "Betrachtungen" and his discipline of allowing his philosophical reflections to find their inspiration in 'untimely meditations.' There is also a significant body of evidence to suggest that Nietzsche was also influenced by Hindu contemplative, ritualistic and theological practices.

His pedagogy is peripatetic: he not only travels into foreign 'wilderness' countries far from home he also walks by lakes, he climbs mountainous terrain, where he, like the fathers and mothers of the desert before him, receive their great insights. Like Zarathustra and the

²²² The fact is that it is also steeped in Menippean satire, designed to 'reform philosophy,' one that 'mixes jokes and serious matters together' a philosophy that sought to create particular feelings, not to prove new doctrines' one that attempted to take up the struggle against the feelings of revengefulness and vindictiveness' (More 2016: 209-210). He learned, as More notes, 'to write by the dictum of his Roman hero Horace: *ridendo dicere severum* – say what is grave by laughing' (More: 2016: 211). And, to borrow from More's delightful title for *Ecce Homo* as Satire, this is 'Nietzsche's last laugh' on those who fail to take account of the medium and genre as well as the words in which his works are cast.

mad man, he is sent to an unbelieving, skeptical public who are not ready for his revelations. He is the very essence of the untimely messenger who arrives at a destination that is out of joint—a dislocation of time and place unprepared for what has been understood and *now* must be spoken. Plato's image of the cave²²³ is offered as an analogy for the human condition. Above the cave is the intelligible region accessible not to perception but to reason; the upward journey out of the cave into daylight is the soul's ascent to the intelligible realm (Losin: 1996: 49). In Nietzsche's interpretation of it, however, it is the location where the artist, the philosopher, and the mystic meet, where perceptions are challenged and exposed to the bright sunlight of intuitive, not just rational understanding.

Nietzsche's mad man and Plato's released prisoner are one and the same: they have come out of darkness into light: in the tradition of the prophets, they have seen a great light. Gone are the shadows of 'artifacts' (Republic Book VII, 515c1-2). In broad daylight, they see things as they are. They see through the shadows cast by cultural artifacts. They understand that what they have been looking at have been 'two removes from truth and reality' (Losin: 1996: 51). But in *actuality* Nietzsche's madman sees much more than Plato's prisoner whose understanding merely breaks through limited 'epistemic horizons' (1996: 51). The madman with a lantern in the bright morning who announces that he is looking for G-d, actually comes in the name of a prophetic tradition, which confronts and accuses not just those who have betrayed G-d's trust, but those who have killed him off. Not many commentators, I reaffirm, choose to pause and consider that the rhetoric of the mad man is a *non sequitur*: if G-d is G-d, G-d cannot be killed, because by being more like nothing at all than one of the gods, the true G-d, cannot like the idols, be murdered. It is the dangerous fantasy of those who have not deeply considered the nature of G-d, and much more the profound implications of declaring that G-d's death is real. In their imagination, these 'murderers of all murderers' deceive themselves into thinking that the deed is 'a done deal'. They are so convinced about it, that they can actually hear the sound of the gravediggers burying God, they can smell God's decomposition. These ones who laugh, have no idea of the implications of their claim that the sponge by which they have wiped 'away the entire horizon' and the hands that have 'unchained the earth from its sun' have

²²³ in Republic Book VII, as suggested by Peter Losin ('Education And Plato's Parable Of The Cave', *The Journal of Education*, Vol. 178, No. 3, Cultural Foundations & Educational Heritage, Part I (1996) pp. 49-65)

(ironically) created ‘an infinite nothing’ an ‘empty space’ a ‘night and more night’ where we all have to light lanterns in the morning, to see the darkness of the violent acts we have committed. But now no water, no atonement to ‘wipe this blood off us’, no ‘festivals of atonement’, no sacred games now, unless we invent new ones.²²⁴

The mysticism that Nietzsche espouses, the G-d he confesses, the Christ he believes in, are nothing like the ‘mystical explanations’ of Lutheran pietism, which were ‘considered deep’; but the truth is, they are not even shallow’ (2018: GS, 126, 121). The new mysticism’s truth is ‘*In the horizon of the infinite.*’ That truth tells us that we have destroyed ‘the bridge behind us.’ That truth reveals that ‘we have destroyed the land behind us’ and that before us lies a vast ‘ocean’ that ‘does not always roar’, and at times... lies there like silk and gold and dreams of goodness’ (2018: GS, 124, 119). What Nietzsche is calling for is a reorientation: we are looking in the wrong direction.²²⁵ Nietzsche’s mysticism, is decidedly anchored in the body. It is also a *dialectic* mysticism, one that uproots ‘the things it takes for granted’ (1993: 58, 533c7-d1). It is steeped in story and song (the liturgy if you like of the new mysticism/monasticism), for like Plato, Nietzsche too understood the power of ‘words’ to bring about changes in the soul, describing them as “charms” or “spells” (*epôdai*) [364b5-7; 426a6-b2; 608a4-5). Nietzsche, following Plato, recognises that words have their affect on the mind similar to drugs (*pharmaka*). They are persuasive (1993: 64, end note 10). The poetry of GS, particularly its poetic songs, ‘call to mind quite explicitly the Provençal concept of *gaya scienza*, that union of *singer*, *knight* and *free-spirit* (EH 8.I). Indeed, Nietzsche, writes More, ‘associates Zarathustra and himself with this kind of tripartite person: a singing poet, a warrior, and an independent thinker who cuts against the grain’ (More: [2014] 2016: 165).

²²⁴ But the madman has entered the empty churches, heard the ghostly *requiem aeternam deo*, seen ‘the tombs and sepulchers’ that they have become (GS, 125 *The Portable Nietzsche*, Kaufmann [1954] 1982, 95-96). That madman is Nietzsche, and what *he* thinks is evident in more literal terms, claims Bernard Williams, where the death of God is ‘identified there as the fact that “the belief in God has become unbelievable,” “the greatest recent event” which is beginning to cast its shadow across Europe’ GS 343 (ed. Williams [2001] 2018: xii). Williams, like Marion before him, is also caused to ask the big question: that if Nietzsche declares the death of God, why is it that he should continue ‘to think that [this] death of God would have vast and catastrophic consequences... should he really have thought this?’ (2018: xiii). And my answer is, yes he should have thought this, because the God, the ‘true’ G-d is more like nothing at all than one of the gods—gods who are mere projections ‘of fear and resentment, representing the victory of the weak over the strong’ (2018 xiii).

²²⁵ (Losin: 1996: 52, applies this to Plato, I apply it to Nietzsche). For Nietzsche, as with Plato, *phronêsis*, intelligence is only as useful and beneficial as its orientation (1996: 53). That orientation is the orientation of the ocean, of the infinite. It also has to do with desire (the mimetic), and so the affective domain not just cognitive, which tends towards ‘a single direction’, rather like ‘a stream whose flow has been diverted into another channel’ cutting itself off from ‘the agency of the body’. (1993: 53-54, 485d6-12).

Wherever the eyes focus, we see a union of opposites: the mystical and the intellectual; the physical, the spiritual, a world where dance and music leap over the moral, 'I dance right over morality' (*EH*, 8.I) (More: 2016: 165)—all mingle with one another—to produce a new kind of intellectualism, but also a new kind of mysticism. In the retrospective Preface to the *GS*, (Preface 3), Nietzsche proposes the idea of philosophy as the art of 'transposing physical states of the body "into the most spiritual form and distance"' and the view that 'interpreting philosophical works, accordingly, is the "unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, [and] purely spiritual"' (*GS* Preface 2), (More: 2016: 165). Here also, is a new kind of faith and a celebration of the material that I have not seen documented anywhere better than in Father James Alison's account of the ancient Hebrews in the first Temple and their celebration of the rite of Atonement.²²⁶

The following extracts assembled by Father James, capture the moment the High Priest comes out through the veil as the embodiment of the celebration of 'glory' (I); (II) the High Priest's movement up to the altar of sacrifice; (III) the High Priest as YHWH himself making the offering of himself, the Atonement sacrifice; (IV) the pouring of the blood of the grape—and then, the pouring of the blood of the lamb ('a very noisy and joyous ceremony'); whereafter (V), as part of the rite of Atonement, the distinctions in G-d are reunited as ONE followed by 'the great ululation of the Name; and (VI) with the rite ending as the people bow before YHWH.

The whole rite speaks of a G-d who comes joyfully in materiality, vesting G-d in the flesh of the High Priest, who will be YHWH for the day: the Creator comes into the midst of creation to 'un-ensnarl creation from within, to make everything that is, flow anew towards giving glory to G-d'—the 'flowing river' of Heraclitus? (I ask), (Alison: 2013: 241-243). This is the kind of re-imagining that Nietzsche is calling for, inspired as he was, I believe, by 1st

²²⁶ I am convinced Nietzsche was aware of this quite unique understanding of the material and rite of Atonement which was unexpectedly joyous (Alison: 2013). At least for me, it helps to explain why Nietzsche admires one half of Judaism and not its less than optimistic side in later times which gave birth to the sin-obsession of the second Temple out of whose *ressentiment*, the doom and gloom of institutional Christianity was conceived and borne to full term, much to Nietzsche's chagrin. Alison's description, which is based on a rite in the Apocryphal book of Sirach, retains some of the 'feel' of that earlier ritual. It is the High Priest Simeon as he would have performed it at the time of Alexander the Great, only a dim echo, admittedly, of that first Temple hundreds of years before that, but close enough to give us an inkling of what a liturgy without *ressentiment* might have looked like, sounded like (Alison: 2013: 256-259).

Temple joyful, material rituals, rather than the morbid, soulless wallowing in and exploitation of guilt—the pre-*ressentiment* rituals which the Christ of the Evangel sought to re-discover and reveal—which have now been buried under layers of pessimism and guilt exploitation of a Jonah-like religiosity which argues that this God is too merciful.

Here, then, is a simplified version of the liturgy which I have excised from Alison's brilliant evocation of that celebration of unity, an unashamed joy in materiality, the sheer glory of all of life immortalised in the contemporary Jewish toast with wine at meals, "La chaim" (to life), an affirmation of *all* of life so dear to Nietzsche, starting with this veritable grace shower of similes (Alison 2013: 256-259):

- (I) *How glorious he was when the people gathered round him as he came out of the inner sanctuary! [...] Like the morning star among the clouds, like the moon when it is full; like the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and like the rainbow gleaming in glorious clouds; like roses in the days of the first fruits, like lilies by a spring of water, like a green shoot on Lebanon on a summer day; like fire and incense in the censer, like a vessel of hammered gold adorned with all kinds of precious stones; like an olive tree putting forth its fruit, and like a cypress towering over the clouds. ('The Creator has come in the midst of creation, and so every element of creation has come alive and is resplendent' (Alison: 2013: 256)*
- (II) *And when he received the portions from the hands of the priests, as he stood by the hearth of the altar with a garland of brethren around him, he was like a young cedar on Lebanon; and they surrounded him like the trunks of palm trees (Alison: 2013: 257)*
- (III) *... choreographed as indicated above...*
- (IV) *...he reached out his hand to the cup and poured libation of the blood of the grape; he poured it out at the foot of the altar, a pleasing odour to the Most High [El Elyon], the King of all. Then the sons of Aaron shouted, they sounded the trumpets of hammered work, they made a great noise to be heard for remembrance before the Most High (Alison: 2013: 257)*
- (V) *Then all the people together made haste and fell to the ground upon their faces to worship their Lord the Almighty the Most High [...] On that day the Lord will be one and his Name one (Zechariah 14.9) [...] And the singers praised him with their voices in sweet and full toned melody... (Alison: 2013: 258)*
- (VI) *Then Simeon came down and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation..., to pronounce the blessing of the Lord with his lips...and they bowed down in worship a second time, to receive the blessing from the Most*

*High*²²⁷

As I have indicated with the help of Father Alison, the Jews did have such a *religere*: sinews that bound a society together in First Temple worship of which Nietzsche, as philologist, would have been aware and would have admired in the same way as he respects the *agon* in all of its fullness. He would have been equally as impressed with the *Book of Jonah's* agnostic reading²²⁸ as with its non-sacrificial, non-violent reading.²²⁹

Current Jewish practice, particularly significant in the light of the Holocaust of the last century, is to read the whole of the Book of Jonah for Yom Kippur for the Day of Atonement. '...after fasting for almost twenty-five hours, and edging towards the conclusion of the day', Avery notes, 'the gathered congregation is commanded to hear the *Book of Jonah*' (Avery: 2017: 17). It is a day when this '*krisis*' text—a genre which is read at times of 'famine, drought or widespread illness'—steers the community towards peace and unification to conserve resources and away from human inclination towards rivalry and violence' (2017: 18). What is also significant about this *teshuva* practice (meaning 'repentance', or 're-turning') is that it traces 'a movement from fragmentation to wholeness, from sin to integrity, from exclusion to embrace... from violence to non-violence... 'to be in all respects *at-one*' (2017: 18, 29; note 5).

²²⁷ Notes Alison: 'I have invited you to enter imaginatively into the world of the First Temple and asked you to allow yourself to undergo a liturgy, an activity... which... commemorated and brought to life... someone who is purely benevolent...' (Alison: 2013: 259). This exemplar alone might serve to expose the reasons why Nietzsche may have longed for something as good as, if not better than, the Greek *agon*, and Greek tragedy to pull a society *joyfully* together as one.

²²⁸ (Cook: 2019, "'Who knows?'" Reading the Book of Jonah as a Satirical Challenge to Theodicy of the Exile)

²²⁹ (Avery: 2017, 'Jewish Atonement and the *Book of Jonah*: From Sacrifice to Non-Violence, ed. Michael Kirwan and Sheelah Treflé Hidden, 17-32). The former based on the Ninevite king's question that still lingers in the silence following the declaration that G-d has no concern for Nineveh, 'Who knows?' A question that is answered by Avery with this: 'is one of individual responsibility and contrition, which would do violence neither to an 'other,' nor to one's 'self' (Avery: 2017: 27), a practice to which Nietzsche would also have utterly subscribed.

6.9 The power of One: the Dionysian and the Apollonian— or viewing Nietzsche's mysticism through a Girardian and Nietzschean lens

In conclusion, I finish with a fuller explanation of the outline of claims I proposed at the commencement of the chapter in terms of styles of asceticism. And I want to do so, more by showing rather than telling—by addressing a simple question: what does the *reconnaissance* mystic see that remains off-limits for the *acsetics of resentment*?

A direct path to the reply would be to cite Amy Hollywood's exemplar, which she uses to introduce the *Cambridge Companion To Christian Mysticism*. It is found in the ninth book of the *Confessions* of Bishop Augustine of Hippo [354 – 430 CE]²³⁰. She repeats the story of an 'experience' that Augustine and his mother Monica had together while travelling in Italy on their way back to North Africa. The kernel of the context of this 'vision of Ostia' as it came to be known, is recounted here:²³¹

One day, in deep conversation, they wondered "what the eternal life of the saints would be like," concluding "that no bodily pleasure, however great it might be and whatever earthly light might shed luster upon it, was worthy of comparison, or even of mention, besides the happiness of the life of the saints." As they spoke, Augustine tells us, "the flame of love burned stronger" in them and raised them "higher towards the eternal God." Their thoughts ranged over all material things up to the heavens, and then beyond the material heavens to their own souls.

There are here the remnants of the sort of Apollonian elements that Nietzsche came to reject in his mature years and dismissed as 'appearance' rather than 'reality' because it was a manufactured, 'prettied up' version, rather than the 'real thing' of the Tragic Vision—an artifice, if you will. As we unpack what the experience was that Monica and Augustine shared together, it is quickly apparent that it is the kind of mystical experience that Nietzsche would blame on the Neo-platonism, which he accused of infecting not just institutional Christianity in all departments, including formalised mysticism, but all of Western Civilisation. The beatification they experience relegates the material ('all material things up to the heavens')²³² to an inferior level. The experience they had was 'not of this world,' such that they are described as returning, 'to the sound of our own speech, in which

²³⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine Coffin (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1961), bk.IX, sec. 10, pp. 197-8)

²³¹ Ed. Amy Hollywood, Patricia Z. Beckman, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1

²³² *Ibid*, 1.

each word has a beginning and an end,’ comparing it to the *Logos*, whose ‘words’ never end. Hollywood observes that such a description demonstrates an ‘abiding debt to Neo-platonism,’ and that this vision played ‘a vital role in the development of Western Christianity’ even though Augustine’s designation as a ‘mystic’ is strongly disputed in some quarters.²³³ This observation too underlines the source of this vision’s influence (Neo-platonism) and the *kind* of experience that it was—‘a process of uplifting and transcendence,’²³⁴ which undervalues the material world in all of its manifestations, as merely biological or elemental or chemical.²³⁵

Contrast that experience with this *Oneness in the Eucharist*:²³⁶

*My heart and my veins and all my limbs
trembled and quivered with eager desire,
..... such madness
and fear beset my mind that it seemed to
me I did not content my Beloved and that
my Beloved did not fulfil my desire...*

*I desired to have full fruition of my Beloved
and understand and taste him to the
full. I desired that his humanity should to
the fullest extent be one in fruition with my humanity.*

Here we have an unabashed honesty, transparency, audacity (‘my beloved did not fulfil my desire’), earthiness and fleshiness, an ardour of unashamed desire. The eroticism that lies at the heart of Hadewijech’s vision is unmistakable (‘I desired to have full fruition of my Beloved/and understand and taste him to the/full’); its ‘madness’ unapologetic (a madness (‘such madness’), which we have seen in previous chapters sometimes parodied, sometimes alluded to, often embodied. All based on the ‘permission’ (‘permissiveness’?) of the Hebrew *Song of Songs*, which has been appropriated by Christianity and its mystics, to serve as an allegory for Christ’s relationship with the Church, his bride.

²³³ Ibid, 2: mainly because Augustine grounded the process ‘in the intellect’.

²³⁴ Ibid, 2

²³⁵ James Alison, *Jesus the Forgiving, Listening for the Unheard Voice*, Book Three of Four (Imitatio, a project of the Thiel Foundation, 2013), 241. Alison here makes the point that the ritual of the Atonement of the First Temple, highlighted and valued materiality. He notes that, ‘The key idea was that God, YHWH, would come into materiality, vesting himself in the flesh of the High Priest’.

²³⁶ Hadewijech, (1220-1260), *The Complete Works, Vision VII*

Thus, the contemplative experience, erotic love and spiritual union are inextricably inter-twined. From Joseph Chu-Cong's 'I am the beloved' (guest is host), And my beloved is mine' (host is guest), to 'Come my beloved let us go to the field' (resurgence of the divine image), 'And see whether the grape blooms have opened' (mutual inter-penetration), to 'There I will give you my love' (unity attained). The whole mystical experience is laced with explicit sexual imagery: 'the beloved one and the beloved dwell in the other, and how they/penetrate each other in such a way that neither of the two/distinguishes themselves from the other'. '...mouth in mouth, heart in heart/body in body, and soul in soul/while one sweet divine nature/flows from them both/and they are both one thing through each other'. Dr Kerry Hide names the experience 'oneing' (*Love Has Seven Names*). Mechtilde of Magdeburg (1282-1294), in *Flowing Light*, 1.43, 1.44, lifts the veil on other equally explicit disclosures: 'The narrower the bed of love becomes, /the more intense are the embraces. / The sweeter the kisses of the mouth become, /the more lovingly they gaze at each other.'

What purpose is served in drawing attention to these aspects of the erotic in mysticism as far as Nietzsche's *imitatio Dei*, *imitatio Christi* are concerned? What facilitating role does the sensual imagery play in the ascetics of *reconnaissance* (Girard's term), and does Nietzsche even subscribe to it as part of *his* experience? And if so, more pressingly, what does *ressentiment* lose by suppressing, perhaps even denying, such a libidinal force?

Robin B. Pippin having acknowledged that "the possibility of... an unrequited love, especially the possibility of sustaining it, turns out to be one of the best images for the question Nietzsche wants to ask about nihilism." Pippin then goes on to suggest that this failure in love leads Nietzsche to pose the much more universal 'philosophical' question of whether or not 'some form of erotic longing might yet remain tenable—even in the perpetual *absence* of all satisfaction'.²³⁷ Whilst this is an ingenious way of contextualising eroticism in its philosophical, existential setting and while extracting such truths as the 'rehabilitation of erotic distance' is useful—ironically, it might also *distract* us from Nietzsche's true *modus operandi*. His thinking routine requires intellectual 'meaning' to be answerable to corporeality and the natural material world. That is to say, the emotional and intuitive 'intelligence' of the body. Nietzsche insists that human intelligence and perception

²³⁷ A line of inquiry pursued by Joseph D. Kuzma in 'Nietzsche, *Tristan*, and the Rehabilitation of Erotic Distance', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, Special Issue: Nietzsche and the Affects (Spring 2013), pp.69-89), 69ff., citing Pippin.

must be aligned with nature and things as they are, rather than just exploiting them for 'intellectual', 'acquisitive' and 'human' purposes. Thus, Pippin's equally ingenious proposal to link the unrequited state with 'eternal recurrence' and 'some form of erotic longing [which] might yet remain tenable—even in the perpetual *absence* of all satisfaction', nevertheless side-steps the question of *why* Nietzsche's "Fernsten-Liebe" took such a hold on him.

Joseph D. Kuzma's suggests that Nietzsche's life 'obsession' with Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* might yield some insights. He concludes that the tradition of Courtly Love offers some answers in terms of 'the pursuit of Christian virtue with the deification of yearning itself', but also, paradoxically, that it morphs into a 'pseudo-religion of an explicitly anti-Christian, heretical kind'. Heretical because it advocated not love of neighbor, but rather a *domnet* which only had eyes for a love 'both of and from a distance' (*amor de lonh*). But just what did that entail? First, it is a love 'without end in sight... without orgasm', a love that encounters an 'endless accumulation of obstacles.' Denis de Rougemont writes, "Obstruction is what passion really *wants*—its *true object*." The *Tristan* story is deeply rooted in this kind of story telling, captured in Isolde's inconsolable cry, "Destined for me, lost to me", ("Mir erkorren, mir verloren"). This unrequitedness of the Courtly Love tradition is then linked by Kuzma with Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same, noting that Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* also ends as it began: an endless circle whose optic treats death as a mirage, a 'simulcra'. It is a narrative structure that 'pushes the longing for amorous proximity and consummation to its furthest point possible while also offering us at the same time an account of absolute and unrelenting erotic forbearance.'

But as I have explained previously, this is, in my reading of it, a misrepresentation of 'eternal recurrence'. It is *not* a fatalistic notion that destines us to repeat all the mistakes and longings and suffering of the past. It is even less a statement of Nietzsche's views on the physical make-up of the universe (as some readings of it have it, a kind of astrophysical reflection), or primarily a religious interpretation of Eastern ways of thinking. It is, and always has been above all things a values provocation, a test of our world view, a test that exposes whether or not, we are living in the real world: to use the terminology of *The Matrix* trilogy, whether or not we have taken the 'red pill' as opposed to the 'blue pill.' The blue pill being our tendency to indulge fantasies, to deny suffering—in effect, to live in a

world of not just our own making, but a world of ‘phantasms’ imposed by a rapacious ‘fake news’, the ‘fake truth’ of oppressive ‘resentful’ cultural structures that imprison us in Plato’s caves of self-delusion. The red pill is the *agon* of the Greek Tragic Vision that looks life in the face (see Etty Hillesum’s comments to which I have previously alluded, “We left the camp singing”), an ‘immanent transcendent’ view of life that works hard at making our worldview and values match what is there, and thereby creates ethics that lead to a flourishing and liberation and wholeness of the individual and the community in the here and now—in the real world.

Nietzsche’s ‘deep deep Eternity’ (“tiefe Ewigkeit”)—correcting the mistaken impressions surrounding ‘eternal recurrence’—points to the importance of basking in the moment, an ‘immanent’ transcendence or overcoming that leads to a marvelous ‘becoming’, which in turn leads to a revaluation of values that renews and creates rather than weakens and degrades. What we have here is *not* an ‘unrelenting erotic forbearance’ (!), nor a ‘fusional reconciliation to the highest summit of erotic life’(!). Rather, we have something higher than reconciliation, higher than the “fernsten-Liebe” (literally: ‘the most distant love’) of Courtly Love with its highly stylized and contrived, manufactured love.’ We have instead a love that ‘loves beyond reward [“Lohn”] and retribution (‘Vergeltung’) (TZ IV); a love that lives and thrives in the present moment, the *eternal* present, the only moment that is actually lived as opposed to remembered, or merely wished for (“erwarten”), or anticipated in an immaterial future. A love that loves beyond all ends and results. The love that manifests as the circle of circles, the rings of eternity, the ring of recurrence (“dem Ring der Wiederkunft”) which capture Nietzsche’s devotion (“I love you O Eternity TZ III: “Seven Seals”¹, a ‘voluptuousness’ (“Wollust”) that defies articulation. No wonder that any definition of what the eternal recurrence *is*, sticks in Zarathustra’s throat, even when, as Laurence Lampert observes (83), the propitious moment for which the whole book has been waiting, has arrived. So, certainly not an emaciated version of sexual gratification (its abstraction) but rather an ‘immanent transcendence’ of sensuality in the present moment— a *reconnaissance* mysticism rather than an asceticism of *ressentiment*, which will always fundamentally and profoundly misconceive the true dynamic of sensuality’s place in mysticism.

In sum, Kuzma, could not be further from the truth. There is no deprivation, no ‘deferral’ here, but rather a wholehearted enjoyment, in the moment, of what it means to be in love, indeed, an unapologetic, shameless indulgence—a Dionysian affirmation of a never-ending gratification, that is never, and need never, be finally satisfied.

In conclusion, the sexuality enshrined in such mysticism, is best explained by Constance M. Furey.²³⁸ Having laid bare Jacques Lacan’s faintly (perhaps not so faint) ridiculous proclamation that Teresa of Avila’s (1515-1582) ‘visceral description’ amounts to the barely comprehensible groans of ‘an orgasmic woman’ (“she’s coming. There’s no doubt about it”) (Lacan: 1972-73: 76), adeptly, then beautifully identifies the traps (the same as those set by Nietzsche) into which the careless reader must fall. No wonder, she opines, those who study mysticism are wary of the pitfalls and so either ‘disavow the topic of sexuality altogether,’ or ‘argue that the longing expressed in mystical texts is erotic rather than sexual’ (2012: 329). She rightly and strongly makes the point that the explicit sexual language is not “merely” metaphorical, not so many ‘hard shells we can crack open to find the sexual experience inside,’ but rather it says what it is—sexual, but not in the far too limited notion that a contemporary understanding brings to it (2012: 330). The mystics’ understanding, so much more of a nuanced understanding of ‘the desiring body,’ which Nietzsche seems entirely to have grasped—transcends the notion of sexuality as ‘a fixed identity’ (2012: 331). This mystical sexuality (call it for what it is) is also not something that can be ‘plotted along a grid with the dichotomy of heterosexuality or homosexuality on one axis, and abstinence or intercourse on the other.’ Rather it is about ‘the way these encounters dislocate the embodied self, reimagining it in spaces and forms not regularly inhabited’ (2012: 330-31).

Thus, when Teresa of Avila comments on the *Song of Songs* and its ‘Let Him kiss me with a kiss of His Mouth,’ and ‘Thy breasts are better than wine for they give off fragrance of sweet odours,’ she goes way beyond the purely sexual to ‘the interweaving of bride and nursing child, bridegroom and nursing mother, one who nourishes and one who pleasures,’ exposing, comments Furey, ‘how difficult it is to differentiate between the desire for food and touch, sleep and sex, between arousal and satisfaction’ (2012: 334). Such nuanced

²³⁸ In her Chapter on ‘Sexuality’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Amy Holywood, Patricia Z. Beckman (2012).

commentary is lost on Kuzma and Lacan, but certainly not missed by Nietzsche. His understanding sees such sexual language (hence “Wollust”) of the mystical text as equating ‘[immanent] transcendence with embodied intersubjectivity’ (Hollywood: 2002: 5) (cited by Furey: 2012: 332).

6.10 The Conclusion of the Matter: *Ressentiment’s* mysticism versus the mysticism of Reconnaissance as expressed in ‘*amor fati*’

At every turn, *ressentiment* is found wanting, even in what would at first appear the most self-serving of all desires: sexuality. Its code here is unnuanced, ‘fixed,’ crass, simplistic, literalist. It either errs on the side of self-absorption, abstraction (‘the dominance of mind over body’) (Mack: 2000: 1-23, 7), or as with the Moravians, literalizes the connection between “maleness” sanctified by Christ’s blood and the marriage bed to the point where they for the purposes of issue ‘instructional cards for married couples’ are supplied (Furey: 2012: 336).

For Nietzsche the way of ‘*imitatio Dei*’, ‘*imitatio Christi*,’ the discipleship of ‘*amor fati*’ has a design and a purpose: the “Vernichtung” of *ressentiment*, and what a worthy ‘no-saying’ (Ver-nicht-ung) it is.

CONCLUSION

Girard's *MT* and Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment*: towards a Christology without enemies

Nietzsche's sustained interest in *agon* involves much more than clinging to an idealised past. In the *agon*, he finds an engine for meaningful evaluation, a possible route to affirmation. This does more than build great individuals: it has a binding force, one that potentially supports a sense of responsibility, mutual indebtedness, and gratitude...

Contesting Nietzsche, Christa Davis Acampora,
(The University of Chicago Press, 2013: 198, 202, 204)

The project of transfiguration demands that the subject consciously embrace the broken-up part of its own life; that it compels itself to take detours and sometimes improbable connections; that it operates in the interstices if it cares about giving a common expression to things that we commonly dissociate [...] Let us be content to observe that future thinking will necessarily be about passage, crossing and movement. This thinking will be about flowing life, about passing life... This thinking will not be about excess but about surplus; that is to say, about that which, as it has no price must escape sacrifice, expenditure, loss.

Necropolitics, Achille Mbembe,

C.1 Nietzsche's "Wettkampf" (the *agon* under another title): a struggle defined by its three-point orientation: 'artist, 'philosopher' and 'saint'

Pressed to summarise the entire thesis, two words come to mind: orientation and methodology. These are of a kind unique to Nietzsche. The orientation is more about an active alignment, than a passive fixation of one's location in a given context. The methodology is informed by that great epistemic question, 'how do I know that I know?', offering a rich medley of communication platforms (genres such as the aphorism, poetic drama, satire, different styles of philosophical inquiry—Epicurean, Stoic, Romantic) which explore how the various ways we communicate knowledge potentially and substantially affect our understanding and application of that knowledge. Most of all, these two markers are always and everywhere dedicated by Nietzsche to the formation of healthy cultures—at

the personal (individual/family[micro-regional], (municipal and state [meso-focus] level and, finally, the (national/international/global [macro- level]—which enable their flourishing. In effect, Nietzsche's orientation and methodology demarcate two aspects of his approach to any issue. First, a concern to accurately name what its appearance is on the surface of the 'event horizon.' Second, his approach then becomes a relentless quest to expose the dynamics (the inner workings) of what is going on under the surface of what has been defined in order to discover its *true* nature. For example, the 'will-to-power' accurately names the drive, but it is the presence or absence of *ressentiment*, the presence and absence of 'truth,' which determine whether that drive develops into a toxic pathology, or whether it will follow agonistic principles delivering positive outcomes for the individual and the community.

Thus, Nietzsche's orientation is all about a constant verification and authentication of a person's attunement with what is actual. In Heidegger's terminology, a process whereby one determines 'what is there' ("Da-Sein") in the moment ("Jetzt-Sein") of decision-making and action. Whatever else we learn from a deep and long engagement with Nietzsche's understanding and interpretation of *ressentiment*, it would have to be the imperative of always checking one's personal viewpoint and interpretation against Nietzsche's very particular and specific orientation to the questions and challenges posed by *ressentiment*. This orientation also includes, as outlined at the start of the thesis, the nuanced and seamless 'dance' of speculation, intuition and pure reason and argument. And it is to do with more than just orientation in terms of *context*—be it of time or place or occasion—as important as that is. Rather, it is to do with holding oneself to account not just to Nietzsche's 'teaching' regarding self-criticism alone, but to what *life* teaches us, the natural and material world. It is an accountability, he argues, which *ressentiment* at every turn, tries to evade. Because *ressentiment's* inclination is to be passive, its agency vulnerable and open to quite a different kind of orientation—one that has forfeited sovereignty and integrity.²³⁹

²³⁹ The sort of alignment that is imposed from without, such as the Nazi notion of "Gleichschaltung." The term derives from the world of electrics where one electrical current say of 210 volts can be 'converted' by a transformer into 240 volts. In Nazi ideology, it came to define the policy of 'alignment' and 'realignment' to produce standardization, conformity. "Schalten," the verb, implies 'force' such that in modern historical parlance "Gleichschaltung" is now applied to any authoritarian regime's forceful imposition across all sectors of domestic social, political, and economic policies as well as that of foreign policy designed to eliminate

Nietzsche's orientation on culture is never simply one of the location definition and kind. Robert Yelle (2000) underlines this by admonishing us not just to acknowledge Nietzsche's borrowings from the Romantic movement, but also to pay close attention to *why* and *how* Nietzsche draws on those antecedents. It is not enough just to note that he is indebted to the Romantics. That would lead one down the path that Girard takes when he dismisses Nietzsche *because* of those Romantic influences. Yes, Nietzsche was probably influenced by Johann Jakob Bachofen and Friedrich Creuzer and their 'cycle of opposites,' and that cycle's affinity with 'a specifically mythic idea... developed later into a philosophy' espoused by 'Zoraster and the philosopher Heraclitus.' Yes, he did use the ouroboros, or serpent biting its own tail, as a 'symbol of the unity of myth and philosophy, from the self-overcoming of the latter' and, yes, it did continue to 'serve Nietzsche throughout his career as a model for his own development as a philosopher' (Ibid, 175). However, here is the defining question: is it just to do with his development as a *philosopher*, or is there more to it than that? The other question would be—what do those influences tell us about his methodology?

If these questions are omitted, discussions of context can entirely miss the point. This is briefly illustrated by a reading, which while correctly claiming that Nietzsche's orientation is his '*View from Above*' (Michael Ure [2013: 1], then proceeds to build a case that this 'view from above,' which can only be understood from a 'recycling of classical and Hellenistic philosophy's ambition... the Olympian and Stoic views from above.' This too is permissible and has, as we have seen, been covered by many. However, the conclusion drawn, because it overlooks Nietzsche's preoccupation with *ressentiment*, the *agon* and the Christ of the Evangel (The Crucified) and Dionysos, leads to the erroneous (almost nonsensical) conclusion that Nietzsche has repudiated 'ordinary emotions of pity, fear and grief' (Ibid, 1). As we have seen, Nietzsche's spiritual exercises in their implications (*via negativa*, *via contemplativa*, *imitatio Dei*, *imitatio Christi*, the theology of suspicion, "Maître du Supçon," '*theō-dikē*' [theodicy]) go far beyond those of classical philosophy, even though they do, as with the multiple personalities of Dionysos, offer a base line from which to work. A far more helpful analogy to understand alternative readings of what Nietzsche's aerial

'variations,' 'nuances' of any kind: consistency and standardization is its overriding and overarching purpose. In Nietzsche's eyes, this would amount to the creation of a toxic, decadent culture, and so it proved to be.

perspective might mean, can be found in Craig San Roque's *The Long Weekend in Alice Springs* (2013: 62) reflections on Australian indigenous perspectives, which also view problems from above:²⁴⁰

An old man from Walpiri country, he comes, and he sits, or asks for a lift, or five dollars, he mentions something, something which stirs... suddenly I'm thinking new thoughts...
He's singing about an eagle hunting for mice... well not for mice actually, but for stories... He's telling me to mind my own mice...

I have suggested throughout, that at Herr Nietzsche's own invitation, we are to think of other compass points to guide us, 'the exemplary individual,' as a philosopher, artist and saint' (Church: 2015: 84-96, 94-96). We must remember that each one of those categories he has subjected to a rigorous dialectic. His methodology is a constant looping back, a shaking out of their strengths and weaknesses, and a final adoption of only those aspects that survive the cross examination, the cross interrogation—a process which, significantly, does not end with Nietzsche, and with you and me. For there are always blind spots of which we become aware.

While most Nietzschean scholars focus on 'artist' and 'philosopher,' for example, they often ignore, deny, or even just plain re-interpret, the religious element in Nietzsche's work, turning it into something of their own making. As Girardian scholars have complained—and with good cause—such scholarship dilutes and even translates that religious nuance into a purely philosophical one, usually aesthetics. Even Church who embraces all three titles has much more to say about Nietzsche as artist and philosopher under the category of exemplary leader/individual, than he does Nietzsche as 'saint'.

This is not because Nietzsche in a focused and extended manner does not *seem* to pursue this theme. His is a Greek tragic-comic, essentially *religious* vision, which confronts suffering and pain and evil and has learned to dance and sing and laugh with joy in their embrace—the very quintessence of *amor fati*. There is fear in that vision, but it is a fear

²⁴⁰ This is such a wonderful observation by San Roque so much in synch with Nietzsche's cultural perspectives which are also viewed 'from above.' While such an optic is 'aerial' (which speaks of a serious attempt being made to achieve 'objectivity'), the Walpiri man risks in his vulnerability to be misunderstood and dismissed as a 'dropout.' In effect he is warning the Jungian psychoanalyst not only to just mind his own cultural business, but also to be aware of his white prejudice and arrogance masquerading under the mask of a misplaced confidence in his 'new thoughts' about 'them' about 'us.'

which is embraced and transfigured as it is with Etty Hillesum's card tossed from the train to Auschwitz, with the extraordinary transforming message, "we left the camp singing." Or a George Gittoes who transfigures his pain and anguish into the Rwandan Preacher, for which he received a prestigious religious art prize.

While Nietzsche's *modus operandi*, his heterodoxy, as we have seen often verges on a 'pagan' version of a Christian and Judaic theodicy, it is also the *aporia* of an Elijah who, from a Zarathustrian cave, watches the firestorms, feels the shaking of an earthquake beneath his feet, watches the howling cyclonic winds, listens to the cracking and breaking of boulders as they shoot by him. An *aporia*, which yields the insight that G-d was in none of those earth-shattering manifestations. Rather, *this* G-d was in the extended stillness, in the sheer silence, which followed—it is only then that the depressed Elijah himself verging on nihilism and self-defeat, comes to realise that *this* G-d is more like nothing at all than one of the gods. That *this* Nietzschean imponderable G-d was in fact the indeterminate G-d of Moses, who will be *who* and *how* and *where* 'he' will be. Yes, even a Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the Evangel, the Crucified, who endures the cross without *ressentiment*—*that* one. The one who with Dionysos, stands outside the sacrificial system, the Christ who stands in judgement of all false gods, false Christs, false religions who have come before, and will come after him. The enigmatic Crucified One, who personifies each and every Dionysos and Osiris of history, who have been scapegoated and dismembered by violent cultural, ideological structures. The one which *ressentiment* in all its masks wants to murder, to destroy, to silence.

Nietzsche's vision is not just to re-member what has been suppressed and denied, but to cast aside all pessimism and 'No-Saying'—indeed, it is to become a 'Yes-Sayer', the locus of the Christ, this *Ecce Homo*, where *amor fati* and the Greek tragic-comic vision meet (GS 276):

... let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my negation... someday I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.

'Yes-Sayer,' the kind of exemplary person, for example, who fearlessly takes on the *daemon's* challenge of the eternal recurrence of the same, powerfully personified and dramatized in this Zarathustrian promise (TSZ III, 113, §2):

I shall come again with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this snake – not to a new life or a better life or a similar life: - I shall come back eternally to this selfsame life, in the greatest things and the smallest, to teach again the eternal recurrence of all things.

Those who overcome, who are ‘not crushed by the challenge,’ “Wer zu vernichten ist mit dem Satz, ‘es ist keine Erlösung’” literally— ‘those who are not annihilated by the notion, “the sentence,” ‘it is no release/liberation’)—they are the ones who are fearless, who have no need of the redemption borne of guilt mongering. These are they, who emerge triumphant from the ‘Heavyweight’ contest, Nietzsche’s allusion to the victory of Hagesdamos, boys’ boxing champion in 476 BCE, recorded by Pindar. Comments Acampora (2013: 27):

Hagesidamos’s accomplishment is inextricably bound to those who supported and trained him, who gave him the opportunity to compete for his *polis*, those who founded the games and the poet himself who preserves the victory for others to remember.

Thus, the mind orientation appealed to and found by Nietzsche in his beloved Classics, is far from the kind of *ressentiment* passivity that many commentators attribute to Zarathustra’s teaching of the eternal recurrence of the same and its elusiveness. That teaching cannot be understood apart from the *agon*. The whole contest is played out on an individual and societal—indeed, existential stage—the “Selbstüberwindung” (literally, ‘self-mastery’; figuratively, ‘scaling the heights,’ ‘resolving’ problems’ cf. Duden (2010: 961). In *Dawn* Nietzsche writes about a scale and degree of excellence that arouse awe and envy, inciting others to achieve their best, which in turn produces the exemplary individuals who are appointed to the highest levels of leadership in Nietzsche’s meritocracy. It is a contest which a Job and the Solomon of *Eccelesiastes* 3 confront, the contest of wresting *meaning* from what appears to be a *meaningless* world. It is Jacob’s wrestling with the relentless antagonism of dialectic forces which are for us and against us. How to unmask them?

Question formation is the answer. But which questions to ask?

Jeffrey Church asks the question that is so easily overlooked, as to why these—philosopher, artist, and saint—and not others, say ‘mechanic,’ ‘chef,’ ‘orator’ or ‘politician’? Church’s answer is that ‘these are the only ones that are self-determining’ (2015: 85). Such autonomy we can readily understand for philosopher, and artist—but for the saint, who is

often ridiculed as hopelessly ‘compliant’ — ‘those fanatics who queue up for martyrdom,’ often the stereotype. This ‘autonomy’ is surely anomalous for religion and for Christianity in particular—that is from an outsider’s philosophical perspective. They can hardly qualify as fostering ‘autonomy,’ indeed, have we not seen Girard judging such autonomy as inimical to the ‘Christian way’ i.e., his, a brand of Christianity, that tends to define autonomy as a rebellious independence that must break free of God, to create a self-referential divinity of its own? I argue that following the line of investigation pursued by Nietzsche’s notion of sainthood, leads one to actively acknowledge the nature of a religious heterodoxy which is perfectly compatible with philosophy.

But how does Church get around this conundrum? First, he advocates that we must ‘look beyond the individual’s own self-conception to the public or social meaning of the individual’s life’ and consider it as a ‘social achievement’ (Ibid, 86), which, in Nietzsche’s terms, as we have seen, “overcomes... the spirit of the age” (KSA 19 [7]). Thus ‘autonomy’ is defined by Nietzsche as one’s devotion to, ‘universal concerns,’ and one’s capacity to “contribute to an ‘imperishability [“Unsterblichkeit”] of the intellect” (KSA 19 [10]). Again, the fit for ‘saint’ is an awkward one for Church. He can readily see how the two titles, ‘philosopher’ and ‘artist’ belong together, but ‘saint’? He finally justifies this “ménage à trois,” by focusing on the factors that are common to the three. Which is to say, all three, he claims, while looking to society to define their position, are nevertheless independent of the community ‘for the meaning and purpose of their lives.’ *That* is the common trait, a trait certainly foreign to the psychopathology of a *ressentiment* that is stifled by the external demands of ‘others’ and so lives a life condemned to be forever lost in a perpetual fog of ‘phantasms,’ forever enslaved to its addiction to nursing grudges and plotting revenge, forever caught in the web of ‘fake news.’

These attitudes symbolized by the three compass points, by contrast, break through to a sovereignty, and an autonomy that sets them loose from their shackles. Important thus to note that this is a genuine struggle, as fierce as that of any addiction that fights for autonomy. The kind that Girard readily recognized as being the mimetic theorist’s struggle to break her way out of the mimetic vortex. As we saw, in a moment of self-doubt, Girard made his remarkable confession (Girard: 2010 : 82):

We cannot escape mimetism; we always participate in it in some way... I became aware of this obvious point only gradually. I long tried to think of Christianity as in a

higher position, but I have had to give up on that. I am now persuaded that *we have to think from inside mimetism*.

This strongly resembles Nietzsche's struggle with "Mitleid" and *ressentiment*. It is a struggle which exemplifies his methodology, that is to say, his deep dive into the mind of *ressentiment* and "Mitleid" in order not just to understand, not just to overcome—but to *transfigure* them into life and health dealing attitudes from the inside. In other words: to become an exemplary individual through a process of overcoming *ressentiment*, in order thereby to be enabled to re-value values and create new ones which are aligned with the realities, the actualities of the new day, the epoch as it is. It is an attitude of mind, which chooses only those agonistic contests, which will create a better person, a stronger society, a culture devoid of toxic predilections.

Meantime, Church strives to define both the differences and similarities amongst the three. The artist 'explores the meaning of human existence.' The philosopher, 'is dedicated to the fundamental question of the value of human existence... developing a 'view of how to live' and 'put [it] into practice.' The saint (I notice Church prefers in the first instance to use the term 'religion,' 'saint' continues to sit awkwardly with him), 'enjoins human beings to come to grips with their mortality, and hence the meaning of existence.' The philosopher 'develops a view of how to live which he puts into practice in his own life.' Thus, together they possess a common autonomy, and yet each one with its nuances. Between artist and philosopher, the difference is based on their 'differing methods of attaining knowledge'—the difference between 'intuitive and conceptual' ways of knowing (Ibid, 87). I notice thereafter, Church discards the term 'saint' altogether (perhaps the function of saint is nevertheless retained in this definition of the role as 'a religious calling by sacrificing sublunary ends for a higher purpose of life' (Ibid, 87)—preferring to use the term 'Dionysian' as one who shares the artist's 'intuition') (Ibid, 88).

Church's awkwardness nevertheless forces him, I suggest, to acknowledge the 'elephant-in-the-room': 'How does the saint rank among artists and philosophers?' Church admits that while Nietzsche 'speaks much less about this character than about the other vocations,' he does ascribe to the saint '[an] excellence along a different dimension than the artist and philosopher,' not 'of intuition or conceptual thinking but rather of freedom.' Again, here one cannot help wondering how this might stick in the throat of the 'well read'

‘well heeled’ Nietzschean who thinks he or she has a handle on Nietzsche as a ‘radical’ atheist (Saarinen, 2019). For Church this kind of thinking highlights the saint’s most unlikely and unexpected ‘greatest appearance of self-determination among all the exemplars’ (Ibid, 94). With this kind of saint, ‘there is no question of hypocrisy,’ Church insists, where the saint’s well being is staked on a ‘self-preservation’ based on an ethical ideal’ (Ibid, 95). This gets as close as it can be to Raimond Gaita’s and Iris Murdoch’s reflections on the ‘saintly nun,’ who stays with a secular inflexion of what ‘saintly’ might mean and builds that notion into an understanding of ‘immanent transcendent moral ethics.’ At this point, Church feels, Nietzsche must be cited (*UM*. 3. 4):

The saint, in whom the ego is completely melted away and whose suffering is no longer felt as his own life ... but as a profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things ... which the game of becoming never hits upon, [is] that final and supreme becoming-human after which all nature presses and urges for its redemption [“Erlösung”] from itself.

Church’s inference is that Nietzsche’s saint must therefore be a Schopenhauerian, ‘consummate secular saint, a self-abnegating individual in the absence of God’ (*UM*.3.4; Ibid, 95). We must not, however, assume here that Nietzsche only rejects Schopenhauer’s nihilism and pessimism, in order to keep his secularity. I believe and have argued that Nietzsche’s saint is much more even than Nietzsche lets on (for us to discover, for him not to say)—that he, Nietzsche is a saint of a new kind, of a new era whose laughter is named by Nicholas D More as ‘Nietzsche’s last laugh.’ In my reading, however, his is the laugh not just of satire. His is the laughter, as I have defined it, of the mystic: from Hildegard von Bingen to Etty Hillesum and Simone Weil. This is a mystical experience, with *its* heterodoxy and *its* silences—self-contained yet unrestrained. Their measured yet uninhibited words accompanied also by their actions on the plane of Nietzsche’s ‘events’—the event horizon of actuality as described and mandated by the transcendent moral ethics of a Raimond Gaita, or an Iris Murdoch or a Sarah Bachelard. It is also, as we have seen, the experience of the atheist spirituality of an André-Comte Sponville.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ I could have chosen Clare Carlisle *Spinoza’s Religion* as a source. But I have only just received this excellent coverage which confirmed my long-held suspicions that Nietzsche was at the least influenced by Spinoza in so many aspects of his approach. Indeed, you could say his was likewise, an ‘ethical vision unconstrained by the demands of doctrinal orthodoxy,’ (2021), 1. A detailed discussion of that will have to come at a later date. Meantime the more current exemplar of Comte-Sponville served me very well.

What Nietzsche teaches, at least my reading of it, is a fundamental way of looking at life, an orientation to life that even his beloved Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the *Evangel* had to learn. An orientation towards life, which allows us to be held to account by the most unlikely mentors who speak to us from a place *beyond* good and evil—who speak to us from the cauldron and the maelstrom of life itself, even from the abyss of apparent defeat. Even from the pit of failure and despair, a way of life all too easily rejected as apostasy. An orientation that speaks to us even from Hillesum's camps of the Holocaust and her last words written on a card on the way to Auschwitz thrown out of the train: "We left the camp singing".

But what kind of orientation is this, that even Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified One, the Christ of the *Evangel* must learn?

In his *Beyond the Word of a Woman, Recovering the Bodies of the Syrophoenician Women*, ATF Press, 2008, Alan Cadwallader takes issue with *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and its 'Prayer of Humble Access', which for 450 years has been prayed alluding to the Syrophoenician woman in Mk 7:24-30. Cadwallader's treatment of 292 pages is too detailed to do it full justice here. In the paraphrase, which follows the aim is to convey the insidiousness of structural cultural blindness. It is a point that encapsulates all that has come before: that the tyranny and violence of cultural structures that oppress humanity, can only be overcome by undergoing, overcoming *ressentiment*—a process, which Mbembe defines as, the ethics of the passerby. What follows, is a paraphrase of Cadwallader's account and will serve to exemplify what Mbembe might mean by such an ethic.

Picture this. Jesus has strayed deep into Gentile (non-Jewish) territory. He manages to find a Jewish household in which to take refuge. This 'goy' female to whom 'the prayer of access' alludes, comes bursting in and in so doing, has already polluted the house. Depicted by St Mark as tarnishing Jesus' Jewish righteousness, she throws herself at his feet, clinging to them by way of petition for her 'daughter.' Jesus' response in the language he uses, argues Cadwallader, is brutal. The staccato rhythm of the Greek is in iambic pentameter—said as if the words were being hammered into wood. *The Message* paraphrase, I suggest, captures the insult better than most translations that aim for clinical accuracy:

He said, "Stand in line and take your turn. The children get fed first. If there's any left over, the dogs get it."

Her response apparently is pitched in a sophisticated Greek that not even Mark could muster, suggesting not only that this is a reliable and original source, that this is most likely a well-educated woman, but being on her own and with another woman, also suggests that the two were high class courtesans. Thus, on three counts Jesus *should have been* incensed. Instead, Mark portrays Jesus as deeply moved to grant her the request for healing. That was only after she served him, in the most elevated (Ελληνιστική Κοινή), Koinē Greek, the rejoinder (paraphrasing), that in his Jewish culture dogs might be considered curs, might be kept outside the house, and given the scraps; however, in her culture, their dogs were working dogs and *they* were served the best morsels of food under the table. Thus, on two counts she has vetoed Jesus, and beaten him at his own cultural joust. At the level of proverb and dialogue, she has emerged as winning both contests, an *agon* if you will. *This* Jesus of Nazareth emerges as one whose eyes have been opened. He now sees what the Father's mission is: and the 'woman's' partner in the business is healed, (after all Rahab Jesus' great grandmother, too, is discovered to be a prostitute).

Cadwallader argues with sound scholarship to support him, that for St Mark, this was a turning point in Jesus' ministry. The xenophobic and misogynist cultural lenses fall off (just as with St Peter in *Acts* and his vision of the blanket full of ritually unclean animals, which he is ordered to eat). In that moment the Crucified realizes, what St Peter will surely realize, that his mission extends beyond the Jewish household, beyond male and female, slave, and master, boy and girl, to include the Gentiles, the pagans, the 'goys.'

Effectively, the strong observation I have made throughout this thesis, is that the Crucified One is not so much calling the Gentile world to account. Rather, it is through the mouth of this sophisticated and well-educated pagan prostitute, and by the Gentile world itself, that Jesus of Nazareth himself is called to account. Called to a complete and radical *re-orientation* of culture and outlook, a revaluation of values, that takes its compass bearing from the mystic, as Thomas Merton discovers in the 'palace of nowhere' (*merton's palace of nowhere*. James Finley, (ave maria press, Notre Dame, Indiana), [1978] (2003), cf. 119-147:

This one door is the door of the Palace of Nowhere. It is the door of God. It is our very self, our true self called by God to perfect union ... And it is this door we secretly enter in responding to the saving call to 'Come with me to the Palace of Nowhere, where all the many things are one'.

That is exactly the kind of cultural critique Nietzsche applies to modernity: turning modernity's values on its head and exposing it for what they often are: a heartless sham—values that we espouse but rarely follow through on—as in 'Black lives matter,' or ignoring the Uluru Statement. The Syrophoenician woman's outlook is Nietzsche's worldview too. A call to allow life to be what it is, the world to be what it is, to be *truthful* about what it is. A call to embrace all of humanity as it is, a call to arms. To adopt a radical revaluation of culture for the flourishing of all—in effect, this is Jeffrey Church's 'few' exemplary individuals working on behalf of the 'many'—in action.

Meantime, another example, for which we again have neither space nor time, but must mention in passing, is the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28. It is an account, which captures a similar moment but a different context, when Jesus is again challenged to see beyond the culture and the world of Israel. Only this time there is more at stake. The Canaanite woman who cries out to this *Jeshua* (Jesus) is an embarrassing reminder of another *Jeshua* (Joshua) who in the name of G-d was ordered to kill all the Canaanites, men women and children—effectively committing a genocide. Thus, Jesus ignores her cries, not just because she is a Gentile woman making a scene, but because he knows that this is *a survivor* that should not be there. That she is one who reminds him and the Jewish men and women with him, of war crimes from bygone days. Once again, it is a pivotal moment in the clash of cultures. Jesus, enlightened, turns to her, and heals her. It is the beginning of a series of healings that break all the rules. It is the start of a whole new platform of speaking, and parables. Nothing could afford better examples of this kind of re-valuation of values and a radical re-orientation than the parables of the wedding garment in Matthew 18: 21-35 the sheep and the goats, Matthew 25: 31-46. This is the kind of saint I believe Nietzsche is advocating—none other than the Christ of the Evangel himself, The Crucified—the archetypal, revisionist Dionysos.

The reason why I draw attention to the above moments is, then, that they help to define Nietzsche's role, who modelled himself, as I have argued above after Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the Evangel, the only true Christian. A role that calls out the pietistic Lutheran Christianity of his day, which had, in by-gone days, mandated the burning down of Jewish houses. Unbeknowns to Nietzsche, Luther's mandate prepared the way for the Nazi Proqram. Ironically, its justification was founded on the conviction that Jews were guilty

because ‘they’ had called for his crucifixion: ‘Let his blood be on us,’ a gross error of judgement which remained unconfessed by the Vatican except in the last decades of the last century. An irony of more recent days is to be found in how the President of Rwanda extracted from the Vatican a confession as to its complicity in the genocide of Tutsi, when all along, as we have seen, Hutu were also liquidated by Tutsi of which the Khibeo refugee massacre was only a ‘small’ but terrifying sample.

Jesus of Nazareth’s struggle to see outside his own cultural lens required him to be open to the Gentile world, an estranged world, which would call him to account, not the other way around. It may come as a surprise that even the Son of Man, who many believe was the Son of God, had to learn to ‘undergo’ the shock of facing his own cultural prejudices; had to overcome those prejudices, to ‘become’ a more inclusive person. To do that he, like all of us, had to admit to his then cultural *ressentiment*, an admission, which in hindsight prepared him to go to the cross without *ressentiment*.

With this excursus into the Crucified’s revelation which enabled him to see through the oppressive structures of culture, I rest my case. That *ressentiment* does have traction. That Girard’s attempt to side-step Nietzsche’s definition of *ressentiment* and replace it with an emaciated version of its former self, must be called to account. That *ressentiment* and revenge have belonged—and always will belong—together, had to be affirmed. Indeed, Nietzsche’s definition of *ressentiment* fits Girard’s account of the cycle of violence and scapegoating so much better than his revisionist account. An account which actually betrays his original acceptance of the Nietzsche’s definition: ‘the real engine of a theory ... what Nietzsche called *ressentiment* ... I take this intuition further by saying that resentment according to its mimetic definition, produces *misapprehension* [“méconnaissance”], in other words, the [false] sacred’, (Girard: [2007] (2010): 83). Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* is indeed the engine room that drives modernity’s oppressive structures and continues to drive them as it has done in the past, whenever it has practised scapegoating under the cloak of the false sacred. I have also argued that this *did not* end with the death of the Christ of the Evangel. The fact that he drew attention to it is one thing. The fact that it continues today under so many different guises and masks—quite another.

Girard like Nietzsche adopts an anthropological approach, principally, as Father James Alison one of his best theological interpreters notes along the lines of ‘how we

function as human beings; the roles of habit, narrative, memory, language and desire... and above all the way we are other-dependent...' (Alison: 2013: 42). Alison's treatment of the Emmaus story (Luke 24.13-35) is a fascinating one *because* he treats it anthropologically. Father Alison focuses on those who feel themselves to be 'in the know,' and this stranger, whom they presume to be ignorant. The dead man walking and talking (Jesus) turns the tables on them. They become the ignorant ones, and he the third party, speaks from a knowledge base they (Celopas and his mate, N) do not have, and urgently require if they are to make sense of the confusing and violent times they inhabit. In Alison's reading of the narrative, it is 'a dead man talking without rancour' even though he 'has been seriously victimized' (Ibid, 76). Alison argues that the only reading, which can make sense of it all, is a Eucharistic one, 'through Jesus our Rabbi' (Ibid, 78)—that is to say, a Christology without enemies. Now while Nietzsche's anthropological approach is even more radical, it is no less theological in the sense which we have defined throughout—the G-d who is more like nothing at all than one of the gods, and the G-d who is *who* and *where* and *how* 'he' will be, in effect, a G-d without *ressentiment*.

C.2 Concluding thoughts regarding a Christology without enemies

If Girard acknowledges that Nietzsche's genius was the first to recognize the uniqueness of Christ's death. If Girard concedes that *ressentiment* is in fact the engine room which through misapprehension ("méconnaissance") drove people and cultures in the past into 'false religion,' there is no reason why his Mimetic and scapegoat theory and Nietzsche's psychopathology of *ressentiment* cannot work together in accounting for modernity's cycle of violence and the psychopathologies that drive it. The thesis has demonstrated this by close argument and several case studies. The complementarity with which the two theories work has been amply demonstrated. Several Papers featuring the two theorists have also been tested in this way at Girardian Conferences in Australia and before an academic circle at ACU (Australian Catholic University) Canberra. Chapters have also been published in a peer reviewed book on Theology, and most recently in *Dynamics of Dissent, Theorising Movements For Inclusive Futures*, 'Ressentiment as false transcendence', (pp. 105-124), (Routledge 2020).

The final question to be raised, then, is not so much whether the two theories can be reconciled *per se*— that has been addressed in the affirmative—so much as whether even if certain sections of Girardian scholarship disagree with the specifics of this research’s findings, can one with any integrity continue to use the two theories? My conclusion on the matter is that respectful disagreement is more than possible. Indeed, there is much evidence emerging in the latest Girardian scholarship to suggest that this process is already well in train ²⁴². This was illustrated in Chapter 2 of the thesis with Nidesh Lawtoo’s, *The Phantom of the Ego, Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious* (2013), and Grant Poettker’s ‘Beyond Nietzsche’s War Rhetoric: Ascesis, Sacrifice and the Recovery of Health’, CoV&R Meeting in Freisig, Germany (July 23, 2014). Thus, the prospects for the working of the two theories together are bright and the hope is that they will continue to produce important insights.²⁴³

The main hurdles (undoubtedly there are others) standing in the way of a full reconciliation of the two theories, as I have identified them throughout the thesis can be summarized as follows.

1.

Differing views on *ressentiment*. Girard would argue that Nietzsche became a victim to it, proof of which emerges in *Ecce Homo*, “Because I am so wise, so great, so beautiful” (Tomelleri: 2015: xiii). Paul Dumouchel, Girardian scholar, approves of Tomelleri’s ‘total’ demystification of *ressentiment* and his argument that it is ‘not such a dirty word,’ dismissing Nietzsche’s (and Scheler’s) hatred of it as nothing more than their resentfulness of *ressentiment* (Ibid, xxiv). I have argued by contrast, that *Ecce Homo* in line with the latest

²⁴² In *Mimesis And Atonement, René Girard and the Doctrine of Salvation*, (ed.) Michael Kirwan and Sheelah Trefflé Hidden (Bloomsbury, New York, London, New Delhi, Sydney) 2017, nothing is spared in airing every kind of version of atonement doctrine. As Rowan Williams notes in his Foreword: “Whatever account of the redeeming work of Christ we emerge with will at least not be just a repetition of the crudest forms of sacrificial economy,” xv. I would like to think that the thesis adds to the list of innovative approaches.

²⁴³ The most recent example is the peer-reviewed Abstract for a Paper for an International Nietzsche Conference in Rome for September 2021 which I hope to deliver under the auspices of the International Science Council, has just been approved, under the title ‘Nietzsche’s ‘Will-To- Power’ As A Potentially Irrational-Rational Psychopathology: How And Why *Amor Fati* May Prove To Be Its ‘Horse Whisperer’, attempts to do just that. The key insights, which I hope to promote include: (1) how these two psychopathologies closely resemble the contemporary neurologically defined ‘borderline conditions’ and their implications for culture; (2) how identity politics stifle exemplary leadership and so create toxic cultures; (3) a critical assessment of Achille Mbembe’s (2019) re-working of Frantz Fanon’s ‘ethics of the passerby’ and its resonances with Nietzsche’s *amor fati*.

and most respected Nietzschean scholarship, is a serious attempt to assess and evaluate his work up to that point. I have drawn attention to the fact that his project here is framed in the genre of 'satire' as part of his *Incipit Parodia*. Effectively, it expresses Nietzsche's search for the philosophy of the future and his quest for a 'free spirit' community—to consummate his Greek Tragic Vision begun in *The Birth of Tragedy* and ending in the *Incipit Tragoedia* as worked through in the period from *The Gay Science* to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. I have also demonstrated that while *ressentiment* does call for demystification, it is not of the kind practised by Tomelleri. Whereas Tomelleri's 'demystification' is a thinly veiled belittlement of the term, Nietzsche's is an unmasking of a psychopathology that deserves to be taken seriously as the driving force of revenge, a view that Girard, it appears, himself once held. For Nietzsche, too, *ressentiment* is the mindset that aids and abets a revenge blind to its "meconnaissance," a misapprehension which leads not only to 'false religion,' but also to 'false philosophy,' in fact, 'false anything,' even the 'false Nietzsche,' to which he had become wise. An 'insider' wisdom, if you will, because he writes from an orientation that never ceases to account, compensate for that pathology. I have argued that the title *Ecce Homo* far from being the ravings of a resentful man set on self-deification is Nietzsche's clue to us as to the *locus* we need to occupy to understand his entire *opus*. Will it be the ground occupied by a crowd manipulated by the resentful Herodian temple hierarchy? Or will we stand with the real Nietzsche and the true Christ of the Evangel, who both occupy a ground united against the sacrificial systems of false religion, the false Christ of Wilhelmine German Lutheranism? This religious perspective will undoubtedly receive a pushback by those Nietzschean scholars who argue for a sectarian, radical atheist Nietzsche, but there is also the possibility that the theological heterodoxy, which I have championed, will find some acceptance in those quarters as well. In my reading of Nietzsche and his approach to *ressentiment*, I posit that he was fully aware of his own propensity to be affected by it and so sought to deconstruct it. He offers very practical suggestions in (*EH*, 8, 63) concerning how to defend oneself from this contagion, partly by recognizing (Girard's term is "reconnaissance") its tell tale signs in oneself and others, and partly by "Selbstvermauerung" (building walls of defences) and "Selbstverteidigung" (and undertaking other self-defensive measures). Let us be clear here—there is nothing insipid about Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment*. For this century, for the centuries ahead, it will

always (while humans are humans and perhaps even when they become ‘transhuman’), claim serious traction as I hope to contend in the last section of the Conclusion. Certainly, the events that unfolded in Washington with the materialisation of armed insurrection from Trump supporters as the Biden installation to the Presidency approached, more than confirmed all that has been claimed in the Introduction analysis, with the loss of five lives (it could have been so much worse, as confirmed by recent Congressional inquiries) in the deep heart of the world’s alleged strongest democracies, in the Capitol.

2.

Girard’s entrenched view that Nietzsche’s Dionysos, driven by his own *ressentiment* commits him to an Anti-Christ position. Conversely, the argument, which some Nietzschean scholars posit, that the Dionysian commitment is confirmation of Nietzsche’s conversion to radical atheism (although even there we have dissenting voices such as that of Jean-Luc Marion, as we have seen, who claims that Nietzsche only feigns radicalism). As to the former, I have presented a case for Nietzsche following the example of his beloved Christ of the Evangel, who often in his teachings shocks his listeners to deeper reflection by pointing to ‘impious’ heroes such as the ‘good’ Samaritan or even Gentiles, such as Naaman the leper to show up their lack of true piety. Here Jesus of Nazareth’s methodology is supported by many other Old Testament examples such as the prophet Jonah, who, Jesus said, would be the only sign given to ‘this faithless generation’ (by which he meant, especially the Herodians standing before him, but also looks forward to our own day). The sign of Jonah favoured the repentance of Israel’s cruelest enemies, an enemy, which is notable for God’s forgiveness being offered, controversially, without sacrifice (a deep contrition in dust and ashes, including domesticated animals, was deemed sufficient). I have argued that with Nietzsche it was not a case of *either* Dionysos *or* the Crucified, but Dionysos *and* the Crucified. Through my case study of *The Tempest*, I have made a strong claim for Shakespeare’s deliberate use of pagan mythology in the context of sectarian wars (Catholic versus Protestant)—a use necessitated by the contemporary ‘Christian’ context, which, in Shakespeare’s view, had betrayed its origins. So Classical allusions with strong true Christian resonances had to be employed to shake up an Elizabethan audience to the realities of the day. Curiously, Girard recognizes this and admires it in Jesus and Shakespeare but cannot

bring himself to see the same technique employed by Nietzsche. My contention has always been that when we take off the Dionysian mask, we discover the Christ of the Evangel, the Crucified One, and the religion espoused by Moses of a G-d who will be *who* and *where* and *how* 'he' will be. For those persuaded that Nietzsche is a 'radical atheist', my thesis offers the more palatable notion that Nietzsche's G-d is more like nothing at all than one of the gods and that the methods Nietzsche employs to understand that G-d is the *via negativa* and a theology of suspicion—where he attains to the title, "Maître de Soupçon."

At this point ²⁴⁴ Girardian perspectives may be troubled by the figure of Christ which I have projected through Nietzsche's lens of *amor fati* and life affirmation. I think here it is all too easy to fall into the oft repeated misinterpretation of Jesus of Nazareth's (Nietzsche's the Christ of the *Evangel*) resignation as a fatalistic resignation. Even some Nietzschean scholarship follows that line of reasoning. I favour the view of 'causal essentialism' over and above either classical determinism or classical fatalism (Milne; Leitner: 1998: 213). I think one's interpretation here is strongly predicated on whether both *amor fati* and *eternal return of the same* are understood as a fate and endless 'hopeless' repetition, or whether they speak of something more beautiful and life affirming as a destiny chosen to fulfill who one truly is, and not just a capitulation to the "Phantom von Ego." Causal essentialism argues for it along the lines of each organism determining its own space of possible trajectories, suggesting limitations, certainly, but within a prescribed space of freedom committed to the notion that agency remains intact, even if absolute sovereignty may be an impossibility. Nietzsche's notion of *agon* surely teaches us that—where contests are chosen, as we have seen, according to the values and virtues they might engender in us and our cultures. Nietzsche's Christ of the Evangel thus chooses to embrace the cross not as one of 'resignation,' or 'serene Socratic equanimity,'²⁴⁵ (Cowdell, 2021) but 'for the joy that was before him endures the cross.' I argue that Nietzsche's 'Yes-saying' mirrors the sentiment expressed in 'All the promises of G-d are "Yes" in Christ Jesus' (2 Corinthians 1.20). Cowdell's 'alternative imperium' which he claims that exemplar confronts, I cannot see being anything different from the one the Jesus of the Gospels confronted i.e., the

²⁴⁴ I am indebted to Professor Cowdell for his concerns regarding my representation of Jesus of Nazareth. I thank him for expressing them, as I suspect they anticipate how other Girardian scholars may also misinterpret it and am pleased to address those misgivings accordingly.

²⁴⁵ Indeed, Nietzsche criticizes Socrates for the kind of passive aggressive acceptance which led to his wrongful conviction.

imperium in Jesus' day of a Rome which justified the self-aggrandisement of its Empire by claiming it was protecting its security, is hardly different in drive than the *ressentiment* infected modernity and postmodernity's drive (Rome's resentment that its ambitions have been obstructed, mirrored by modernity and postmodernity's resentment that its ambitions—in the guise of *its* aspirations—have been ignored) .

Of this one can be certain, however, whatever one's interpretation (and here the Girardian scholarship is correct): Nietzsche's obsession with the divine cannot be, should not be, ignored if his *Opus* is to be properly understood.

3.

The stumbling block to which many Girardians return, is Nietzsche's take on "Mitleid" and the 'eternal return of the same.' In as much as they have argued that Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment* brands a certain class of people ('the herd'), they feel he presents us with a rigid stereotype of persons to which somehow 'aristocratic' Nietzsche felt he was immune and lived a life far above that kind of existence. This then is linked with the eternal return, so not only are these people condemned to live a life of *ressentiment* from which they cannot escape, they also are fatalistically condemned to live it forever. Because Girardian scholars presume Nietzsche despises 'compassion' (indeed that he suffers a breakdown, they argue, because when that compassion which he has been suppressing all his life finally overtakes him, he has a breakdown, a 'compassion implosion'). They conclude his heartlessness must therefore have finally overtaken him. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. I have argued previously that "Mitleid" is to feel (literally 'to suffer with') and that behind this emotion always lies the possibility of derelict behaviour. It is not surprising that Nietzsche should look behind the heart of compassion to see what might lie under it. This is his method with all moral and ethical principles to expose how easily they can be turned against themselves and weaponised. Often those who feel compassion for the oppressed ('black lives matter,' the plight of refugees) can, to their dismay, find this emotion turned into outrage directed against the perpetrators of the oppression.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ As I pointed out in the body of my previous arguments, in London a black man rescued a racist who was being kicked to death, and in Melbourne Australia, police also had to save a 'fascist' from being seriously injured—all in the name of compassion and 'righteousness'. Mimetic theory itself argues that the dynamic of mimesis is such that the very emotions unleashed by that dynamic in the scapegoating which avert the destruction of communities, is also the exact same emotion which tears it apart. Dr Thompson, as I have referenced it, speaks of Jesus' parables of the tares and the wheat to indicate that this is what he had in mind:

4.

Another significant hurdle to be negotiated to achieve a reconciliation of the two theoretical positions is the apparent privileging of Christianity by Girardian scholarship. Whereas this is vigorously denied by Girardians, I have exposed it in practice with reference to three books in the series *Breakthroughs in Mimetic Theory*, most notably in Bandera (2019) and most blatantly in Grande's *Desire, Flaubert, Proust, Fitzgerald, Miller* (2020), where Proust has been needlessly misappropriated to serve the Girardian cause. I say needlessly, because in so many ways Proust is on the same wavelength as Girard without labouring the point about Proust's 'Christian' resonances, which somehow are required to render him 'kosher'. I notice, for instance, in Grande's treatment of Proust there is no mention of his scathing criticism of Ruskin in *La Bible d'Amiens*. Proust, in the context of his response to the "vitality" (ASB 183; CSB 129) of medieval art, turns Ruskin's definition of idolatry against him, 'serving with the best of our hearts and minds, some dear or sad fantasy, which we have made for ourselves' (cited in *Proust and the Arts*, Sophie Duval '...Faith, Idolatry, Infidelity' 2015: 23). What attracts Girard to Proust, is that his work *In Search of Lost Time* is 'a paradigm of mimetic desire, where it is nowhere possible to detect a desire that feeds on itself' (Girard: 1965: 38). In other words, he is attracted to Proust whenever he is in accord with *MT*. No doubt, Girard would also have approved of Proust's exposure of idolatry in art, but perhaps would have been more uncomfortable about the fact that this idolatry is attached to misappropriation, if he had been aware of it. For in Proust's eyes Ruskin's 'sin' is his conviction that, 'Christian art is superior to all others because his faith has made him fetishize it.' It is also that Ruskin "was obliged to lie to himself concerning the nature of the reasons which had led him to adopt," doctrines which he professed, not because they were relevant, but because he found them pleasing' (Duval: 2015: 24). Here Proust is more in tune with Nietzsche than he is with Girard, something that it would have been good for Girard to acknowledge. Girard does himself no favours when in his most mature work, he argues that 'we are faced with an inescapable alternative: either we acknowledge the truth of Christianity, or we contribute to the escalation to extremes by rejecting Revelation'

that positive "Mitleid" the wholesome wheat, can so easily turn to tares—they both grow from the same ground of the psyche. In such a context, *ressentiment* is a state of mind that can overtake anyone, to which anyone, including Nietzsche, is susceptible.

(Girard: 2010: 103), which suggests that attempts to stem the violence cycle from any other perspective, is doomed to failure. We have seen from the Rwandan case study that many of the perpetrators of the genocide were in name ‘Christians,’ Catholic and Protestant—and for that matter, those of no religion at all, ‘everyone was doing it.’ In other words, a human problem (‘all too human’) that can and must be solved by *all* of humanity.

C.3 Nietzsche’s cultural analysis and Girard’s *MT* at their point of intersection and Jesus of Nazareth’s overcoming of *resentiment*—what is at stake if we ignore them?

We began this Conclusion by defining the two key words which inform the thesis: ‘orientation’ and ‘method.’ They are important because they determine whether Nietzsche will be understood or misunderstood recognized or mistaken for someone else. We can see this most clearly in Ronald Beiner’s *Dangerous Minds, Nietzsche, Heidegger and the Return of the Far Right*. Many scholars and commentators well understand that Nietzsche has been championed by opposite ends of the political spectrum. Beiner too acknowledges this but claims that Nietzsche as thinker is not the resource, we have so often been told that he is. He goes on to reflect that, ‘In a longterm view [he is] more likely to be [a] resource for the right and the far right’ (2018: 5). The academic reality is that Nietzsche’s works have been claimed by both sides almost from the beginning of his posthumous universal reading. Another phenomenon to note, is this—that regardless of which side is taken, those who in the end elect to reject his total work can never quite do so without recognising his ‘genius.’ And here Beiner is no exception. He acknowledges Nietzsche, ‘as pretty much the most influential philosopher of the twentieth century,’ and for this reason can do no other than to urge his readers to undertake ‘a very profound engagement’ with him (Ibid, 6). At the end of Beiner’s Introduction comes this plea, which deserves to be cited in full (Ibid, 14):

Hopefully no reader of my book will draw from it the unfortunate conclusion that we should walk away from Nietzsche and Heidegger—that is stop reading them. On the contrary, I think we need to read them in ways that make us more conscious of, more reflective about, and more self-critical of the *limits* of the liberal view of life and hence what defines that view of life. [...] We need to open our eyes, at once *intellectually, morally, and politically*, to just how dangerous they are.

Noone well read in Nietzsche would disagree that when dealing with his works we are handling 'intellectually radioactive materials.' Nietzsche too recognized this with the caption, 'I am Dynamite' in *EH*. I have followed Beiner's admonition to commit myself to 'a profound engagement with Nietzsche', and to open my eyes *intellectually, morally, and politically*, but have come to quite a different determination. That the danger is not with the mind who produced the ideas, but rather with the minds that receive the ideas, how they understand them and how they practise them. I respectfully point out that the ideas of Jesus of Nazareth have also produced beliefs and behaviours that Jesus himself would consider to be a serious misunderstanding of his original teaching, teachings, which were not written down until many years after his death. St Mark's Gospel, the closest to the original events of his ministry and teaching (30 CE), is an account of greatest interest to historians, and justifiably so, because of its proximity to the events it was 'remembering'. Not surprising, then, that in it we see a more 'human' Jesus—a Jesus who is represented as growing into a new understanding of humanity, which included, as we have seen above, 'overcoming' the *ressentiment* of his cultural upbringing, in order to embrace all of humankind. The Crusades, the Sectarian Wars of Protestantism versus Catholicism, Calvinist versus Anabaptist and in these days a dangerous Christian Evangelical Fundamentalism of the Right that has supported and continues to support Trumpism and all manner of exclusions, are all aberrations of Jesus' teachings. Yet noone would accuse Jesus of inciting these conflicts, perpetrating the ideas that caused them, nor would they for that matter accuse him of perpetrating Luther's burning of Jewish houses or the Nazi genocide of Jews, gypsies and the mentally and physically infirm. Beiner is caused to acknowledge that in *Ecce Homo* it is Nietzsche who in 1888 predicted the chaos we are now experiencing: 'upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys, the like of which has never been dreamed of. There will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth.' To which Beiner exclaims, 'And so it came to pass' (Ibid, 131). Is that not a prophetic utterance, one come to full term, the mark of a true prophet? And does not his apocalyptic vision match Girard's in *Battling to the End*?

Achille Mbembe, *Necro-politics* (2019 [2016]) and his 'Ethics Of The Passerby' could so easily have come out of the mouth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified, who as a 'passerby' also in the region of Tyre, discovered a new ethic that has the potential to

transfigure, in its purest form, the oppressive cultural structures confronting us in the 21st and 22nd centuries. It could also, as I have argued throughout, have come from the mouth of Nietzsche, both of whom anticipated the ‘ethics of the passer by’ (2019: 186):

To traverse the world; to take the measure of the accident represented by our place of birth, with its weight of arbitrariness and constraint; to wed the irreversible flow comprising the time of life and existence; to learn to assume our status as passerby as the condition, in the last instance of our humanity as the base from which we create culture—these are perhaps ultimately questions of our time, questions that [Franz] Fanon will have bequeathed to us in his *pharmacy of the passerby (passant)*.

Beiner’s intentions are honorable. He justifiably sees the Far Right as a potent danger to our democracies, and this is being played out even as I write with a United States of America still smarting, rubbing its eyes in the wake of the Capitol incursion and attempted insurrection. *Those* are the dangerous minds, not Nietzsche’s mind, who advocates for a meritocratic democracy. A democracy where the few ‘exemplary people’—not lording it over or manipulating the ‘many’—but in *agon* style—the few inspiring the many to create a flourishing sustainable culture that benefits all. Alan Patten (2011) argues that contemporary political theory has been unable to develop an adequate normative theory of culture. The main reason for this is, he argues, because ‘we conceive of culture in terms of identities’ (cf. Taylor, 1994: 25) who put forward the most influential account of culture as a certain “identity” that deserves “recognition”) (cited and noted by Church: 2015: 247). Here Nietzsche’s major contribution is to improve ‘our static “identity”-based culture by introducing a dynamic individualism which breaks free of egocentricism and transforms itself into an exemplary individual whose *praxis* ‘synthesizes high and low culture and transcends the dispute between them’ (Ibid, 247).

And that is not the only dispute such an account resolves. The wagging of the finger, the rolling of the eye—the hurling of abuse, the ‘Physician, heal yourself’—are jibes bizarre in their irony, one that would not have escaped the astute reader, be they Girardians, philologists, or modern day Epicurians and Stoics (even passionate and fearful disciples of Beiner). The irony of ironies is this—that in scapegoating Nietzsche, Girard and Fornari not only prove that the mimetic and scapegoat theory is sound, but that a Christology without enemies is possible.

The reality is that Nietzsche and Girard's intentions are almost a mirror image of each other, even though different terminologies are employed. What both insights acknowledge (unplatable as these might be to many contemporary readers and scholars alike but is now self-evident) is that there is an ontological violence, which undergirds the 'normative social order.' This acknowledgement expressed by the mature Nietzsche in 1887 (GM II: 3), is what Girard would later articulate as, 'Blood torments and sacrifices.' When Nietzsche turned his back on 'No-Saying,' he was doing much more than just eschewing negativity, nihilism, and pessimism of all kinds. He was also locking the 'cage' on violence's "Vernichtung," and throwing away the key. The German word closely approximates our English word 'annihilation,' which literally means to reduce things to nothing, 'nihil.' The German underscores this notion ("nicht[s]" = nothing) by adding to it the nuance of exercising an unrelenting brute force against the 'other,' until all life is extinguished. Nietzsche's life affirmation, *amor fati*, recognizes what such a stand is up against. A universe whose very existence arises out of violence, by which the material, animal and botanical world has been constructed. Most important of all, it is a violence embedded in an emerging proto-human consciousness by whose means an intrinsically conflicted human and cultural awareness was born and by which despite the undeniable accomplishments and values of modernity and every progress since, have been called into question. For the human all too human propensity to lie, steal and murder is evident in the DNA of every culture's foundation story.

By having exposed that reality, each theorist in his own way, offers solutions that are urgently needed in these days. Cowdell (May 2021) commends my dissertation/thesis as offering a key 'to unlock late modernity's pathologies, but also its possibilities' and declares the case I make for *amor fati* and a 'non adversarial Christology' a 'timely' one set against the backdrop of late modernity's 'social and cultural crises.' I would in acknowledging with gratitude his commendation, also assure Girardian scholarship that I have not 'dismissed perhaps even sacrificed Girard much as one might argue that Girard has dismissed or even sacrificed Nietzsche,' in as much as I have to the best of my ability attempted to demonstrate how 'elegantly' and powerfully the two theories work together when misunderstandings over *ressentiment* are set aside, and that the thread of the argument from the beginning has always been that Nietzsche's Christ is a revisionist Dionysos.

It is only fitting, then, for Nietzsche and Girard to have the last word.

Nietzsche's retrospective observations and his future are these (cited Acampora 2013: xi; GS 276):

On this perfect day, when everything is ripening and not only the grape turns brown the eye of the sun just fell upon my life: I look forward, I looked backward, and never saw so many good things at once [...] I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation... someday, I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.

For Girard, citing Hölderlin, there is the prospect for humankind, of a great hope. (Girard: 2010: xviii):

But where danger threatens
That which saves from it also grows.

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