

Self-deception at the Intersection of Friedrich Nietzsche and the Apostle Paul

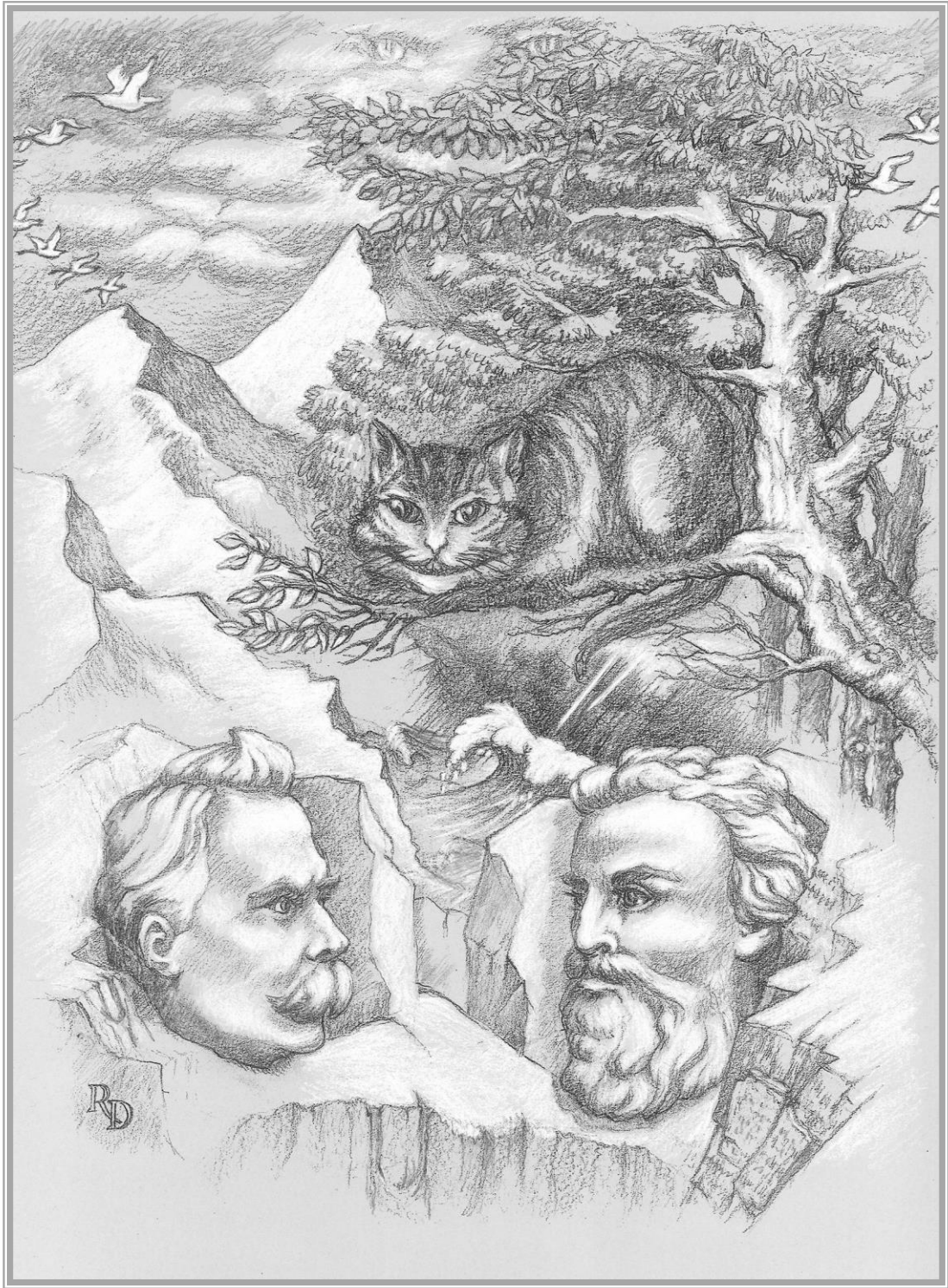
Brian Andrew Edwards

OCMS, PhD

2017

ABSTRACT

Self-deception is a key component in Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment*. It also plays a significant role in Paul's notion of the fall. This thesis explores issues of self-deception in the realm of Nietzsche-Paul discourse. Specifically, Nietzsche's explication of self-deception inherent in *ressentiment* is used to elucidate Paul's usage of self-deception in the context of the fall. Nietzsche's work on *ressentiment* is set in historical context to identify circumstances, people, and events that influenced development of his overall thought. A literature review is also supplied to appreciate the development of *ressentiment*. The primary source for Nietzsche's treatment of *ressentiment* are his late works. Analysis of Nietzschean *ressentiment* is conducted through them, first by means of a genealogical study of the castes of *ressentiment*, then in terms of an examination of the mechanism of *ressentiment*. This supplies a knowledge of the fundamentals and workings of *ressentiment* requisite to identify its crowning feature, self-deception. The resulting platform allows a fresh reading of Pauline fallenness, specifically concerning the notion of self-deception, in terms of the internalisation and moralisation of *ressentiment*. Paul's Letter to the Romans, particularly Chapters 1 and 2, is the material for this reading. The correspondence between select contours of Pauline fallenness and those of Nietzschean *ressentiment* validates the hypothesised association, propelling the investigation of self-deception forward. This brings to light a congruence of self-deception between the Nietzschean *ressentiment*-man and the Pauline fallen-man. It also recommends a driving motive for self-deception, fear of death. Death as a theme for Nietzsche is examined both biographically and philosophically. Seminal conclusions from the thesis argument are reviewed, contributions to the existing literature are offered, and significance of the project for the psychology of religion is discussed.



The world will be standing on its head for the next few years: since the old God has abdicated, I shall rule the world from now on.

– Friedrich Nietzsche in a letter to Carl Fuchs, 18 Dec. 1888

These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.

– Luke the physician on the Apostle Paul and his companions, Acts of the Apostles, 17:6

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND THE APOSTLE PAUL**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Middlesex University

Brian Andrew Edwards

Director of Studies: Stephen N. Williams
Second Supervisor: Benno van den Toren
House Tutor: Bernard Farr

October 2017
Oxford Centre for Mission Studies
Middlesex University

DECLARATIONS

DECLARATION 1

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed 
Date 1 October 2017

DECLARATION 2

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by inline citations, footnotes, or explicit references. A bibliography of all works mentioned is appended.

Signed 
Date 1 October 2017

DECLARATION 3

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if approved, to be available for photocopying by the British Library and for Inter-library Loan, for open access to the Electronic Thesis Online Service (EthoS) linked to the British Library, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Friedrich Nietzsche and the Apostle Paul were both big on the body. Just as a body is comprised of parts, so this thesis is a work of many. My Director of Studies, Stephen Williams, illuminated my project in terms of substance and style. Were I to record all his suggestions and directions in footnotes, they would rival the word count of the body of my thesis. Regardless of how juvenile my questions may have come across, his typical response was seasoned with grace. I am privileged to have sat in his shadow. My debt extends also to the entire faculty of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies who laboured to make the lonely enterprise of doctoral research a collegial one. The greater amongst equals for my sake was Ben Knighton. In the face of innumerable enquiries pertaining to both content and form of my thesis, he manifested the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon. To thank him once again is still to be in deficit. I must also thank our librarian, Ralph Bates. He seemed to know quite a bit about everything, and when he did not, he knew where to direct me. I am grateful that the breadth of his ken was matched by the wideness of his open-door policy.

There are others whose support was more atmospheric but no less vital. I met Don Apley twenty years ago. The first words I remember him uttering were, ‘I stand ready to serve’, and I have never known him to abandon his post. I am grateful for his ad hoc service to me on my thesis journey. Warren and Betty Wiersbe also walked with me the entire way of this project, support me in more ways than I can count, all of which accrued to tremendous encouragement to keep on keeping on. Roger Trigg began as a technical consultant of sorts, and while he remained ever-ready to answer thesis-related questions, he gradually took on the role of thesis-mentor. The same can be said of Stuart Judge, whose words of encouragement were timelier than he knows, and whose help has been eminently practical. I am blessed to call him a friend. Four other friends whom I call brothers have also marked my thesis journey. Eric Howard’s own trials along the thesis trail resulted both emotional and material support. Matthew Schultz lent his tech expertise to resolve glitches in my Microsoft document, as did Mark Graham, whose agile and analytical mind were also indispensable in helping resolve defects in my argument. Tom Reed’s above-and-beyond assistance in revising also helped improve major aspects of the project.

Mistakes tend to mount as words multiply, and my manuscript is a myriad of words. To mitigate rudimentary errors, a platoon of proof readers rallied to my aid. I

salute Don Apley, Micchel Bannert, Ralph Bates, Mark and Kristi Chalemin, Kirk Cox, Ben Crelin, Ruth Drew, Valerie Drum, Hope Edwards, Kathy Edwards, Chris Foreman, Mark Graham, Kiersten Haugen, Stuart Judge, Thom Justice, Garrick Little, Steve McMaster, Matt Schultz, Karen Morrow, John Ottoson, Christy Pearson, Tom Reed, Lois Scheyer, Nancy Sherrill, Debbie Sulzbach, and ‘Lisabeth Wissink and Lorene Wissink. Any mistakes that snuck through the ranks remain my sole responsibility.

Finally, family. Ruth Drew is woman whom I did not know upon arriving in Oxford, but one whom I will never forget upon leaving. She has become family to me, as have many of her relations. Together, they have fleshed out Jesus’ promise in Mark 10:29-30 to all who follow Him. My children tolerated years of absence, even when I was home. Graciously, they expressed interest in the face of what I’m sure was a boring tendency to relate everything to themes in my project. Hope, in particular, made her interest practical by investing both time and energy in giving me extensive critique on several chapters. Saving the best for last, my wife, Kathy, did it all. Her short-order cooking serves as a metaphor for handling the volume of miscellany when I was overseas, to say nothing of when I was home. Not only did she keep the home fires burning, she carried the torch abroad to cheer me in my travels when I needed her. I thank the Lord for her, and for all those who make up the body that has helped bring this project to fruition.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Friedrich Nietzsche's Works

<i>A</i>	The Antichrist
<i>BGE</i>	Beyond Good and Evil
<i>BT</i>	The Birth of Tragedy
<i>CW</i>	The Case of Wagner
<i>D</i>	Dawn
<i>EH</i>	Ecce Homo
<i>GS</i>	The Gay Science
<i>HH1</i>	Human, All too Human, I
<i>HH2</i>	Human, All too Human II
<i>NCW</i>	Nietzsche Contra Wagner: From the Files of a Psychologist
<i>OGM</i>	On the Genealogy of Morality
<i>PTG</i>	Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks
<i>SA</i>	Seventy-five Aphorisms from Five Volumes
<i>TI</i>	Twilight of the Idols
<i>UO</i>	Unfashionable Observations
<i>WP</i>	The Will to Power
<i>Z</i>	Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Chapter 1: A WORLD INVERTED

1.1 Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche envisioned a future in which man would rule a world of his own creation. Obscuring his vision was the world in which he lived, one ‘completely fabricated by a lie’ and full of upside down¹ thinking, values, and truth (*A* 10). Nietzsche inveighed against ‘the half-Christian, half-German narrowness and *naïveté* heaviness’ that was the morality of his day (*BGE* 3.56). It had been so corrupted that it made people sick and drove them mad. It had not always been that way, though. He claimed that from time immemorial, morality was life lived freely, instinctively. Morality was appraised only in positive terms, among which Nietzsche included virtue, danger, insult, and even godliness (of a sort)—every valuation except that of evil (*D* 1.18). Judeo-Christianity appeared and hijacked this natural morality by revaluing it (1.14), supposedly for the sake of alleviating suffering. In the spiritual guise of redemption, escape from suffering was attained through moral improvement. Ironically, it required suffering; one had to deny himself, which Nietzsche interpreted as denying life. The unassailable ground for this way of looking at the world was God (*OGM* 3.17). Nietzsche considered the biblical world view of a divinely guided and guarded humanity to be a man-made lie motivated by ‘malice and revenge’ (*EH* ‘Why I Write Such Good Books’ *D* 2). He claimed that it had given rise to ‘that decadence morality’ which resulted in ‘the degeneration of the whole of humanity’² (2). ‘Away with this inverted world’, Nietzsche wrote (*OGM* 3.14). ‘The earth has been a madhouse for too long’ (2.22).

Nietzsche laid much of the blame for this mad, upside-down world at the feet of the Apostle Paul. According to Nietzsche, Paul was the founder of Christianity (*GS* 5.353; *D* 1.68), the apogee of all moralities that sought to imprison man in a ‘labyrinth of “fixed ideas”’ (*OGM* 2.22). One of its most basic ideas was sinful guilt before God (*D* 1.68). Through Paul’s masterful use of ‘that most dangerous and explosive material, *ressentiment*’ (3.15), his ‘lust for domination’ gave rise to Christianity’s overthrow of the Roman world (*D* 1.68, 71f). In the seventeenth chapter of ‘The Acts of the

¹ The German, *die ... auf den Kopf gestellt*, literally means, ‘put ... on its head’ (see *A* 8f).

² Nietzsche explained in *D* 1.68 that the gospel results in sinful man’s redemption from, *inter alia*, bondage to ‘the carnality of the flesh’. Nietzsche employed a double entendre with the respect to ‘the flesh’ by using it in the subsequent clause to refer to the entire human race, which is ‘continually dying out, as if decaying’.

Apostles', Paul discoursed in Athens on the 'unknown God' (17:16-34). Nietzsche also used the term 'unknown God' in *BT* ('Attempt at a Self-Criticism' 3) and in *Z* (4.5.1).³ Given his Christian upbringing and his proclivity for biblical allusions, it is likely that he took it from Acts 17, and specifically Paul's Mars Hill sermon.⁴ But it is a previous stop along the *Via Egnatia* in Thessalonica to which I draw our attention here (Acts 17:1-9). Paul spent three Sabbaths reasoning with the Thessalonians from the Jewish scriptures. A great number of listeners evidently converted to the faith. Incensed at this, and perhaps alarmed by recent reports of disorder in Philippi caused by Paul's preaching (16:12-40), the Jews fomented a riot against the Apostle and his company. They hurled this accusation: 'These men who *have turned* the world *upside down* have come here also' (italics supplied, 17:6). The Greek word of import here, ἀναστατώω, generally means 'subvert', 'overthrow', 'cause trouble everywhere' (Marshall 1980:279). In the *EH* passage above, to say nothing of numerous others, Nietzsche effectively uses the Bible to justify blaming Paul and his gospel for overturning the social order.

Both Nietzsche and Paul campaigned to put to right their respective visions of an upside-down world. Nietzsche crusaded to revalue all values in a world he viewed as already inverted, and prophesied 'its redemption from the curse placed on it by the previous ideal' (*OGM* 2.24; see also 1.7; A 8). Paul strove against a *kosmos* whose values he viewed as antithetical to God's (Rom 3:6, 19). For Nietzsche, this moral inversion was a result of *ressentiment*; for Paul, it came through sin in consequence to the fall.⁵ A significant obstacle to each of their campaigns was the self-deception they attributed to their opponents.

A key Nietzschean concept employed in this thesis is *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* is a psychological phenomenon chiefly characterised by values inversion. It is perpetrated by the vengeful oppressed upon their oppressors to dispossess them of power without attacking them overtly. In its highest expression, it results in god-creation for people of *ressentiment* to justify their 'most secret tyrants' desires' (*Z* 2.7), i.e., to be new masters. This is impossible apart from the subsidiary characteristic of self-deception within *ressentiment*. I contend that the reaction of fallen-man, as Paul

³ Near the end of his journey, Zarathustra encounters a man acting 'like a madman' (4.5.1). Four times in his lament, the madman speaks of 'my unknown secret God'.

⁴ Nietzsche's extensive analysis of Paul's Damascus Road experience in *D* 1.68 makes it impossible to believe that Nietzsche was not thoroughly familiar with Acts (see chapters 9, 22, and 26).

⁵ Literally speaking, *fall*, *fallen*, and *falleness* are not Pauline terms. They are, however, common theological parlance associated with Paul's representation of humanity's estate and experience as a result of original sin.

analyses him in Romans 1 and 2, can plausibly be interpreted as a case of *ressentiment*, with a sufficient number of features shared with Nietzsche's *ressentiment*-man to make comparison possible. For the expressed purpose of this thesis, I anchor this contention in the notion that both are characterised by values-inversion and self-deception. Thus, the Apostle's fallen-man corresponds to Nietzsche's *ressentiment*-man.

An outline for the remainder of this chapter begins with a historical background of Nietzsche's life and thought. It provides context for the influences on him and his ideas (1.2). Terminology germane to this thesis will be treated in this section and the next. A literature review is conducted to create a critical framework for existing research on Nietzschean *ressentiment* and its subsidiary component, self-deception (1.3). Matters related to English translations of Nietzsche's works will be discussed (1.4). Finally, an outline for the thesis will be supplied in terms of research questions pursued (1.5). It comes deliberately after the literature survey because these questions are better appreciated after undertaking the survey.

1.2 Nietzsche's Thought in Historical Context

To understand Nietzsche's thought, one ignores at one's peril the historical currents that swept toward his birth and in which he was raised, as well as the key persons and events that influenced him. The years of his childhood and youth marked the psyche and shaped the intellect from which Nietzsche's thought would pour forth. His ideas, themselves, were motivated by a desire for greatness, and he embarked on a lifelong odyssey in search of it. As a boy, he sought honour first before God, then as a young scholar among his contemporaries, and finally beyond everyone. He did this despite, or perhaps in reaction to, being plagued by tragedy, loss, and chronic poor health. From his personal struggles, it could be argued, emerged the conceptual context for all Nietzsche's thought, the *agon*.

Nietzsche provocatively stated, 'I am dynamite!' in *Ecce Homo* ('Destiny' 1), the last and most intimate of all his writings. He spoke of the kind of power that could abolish the restrictive morality of his day, as he esteemed it, and thereby open the way to a limitless future for mankind. The aim of his 'Revaluation of all values' was to overturn the decadent status quo in Germany and beyond, by subverting the Christianity which had given rise to it, and in which it had now become ensconced (1). Some three-hundred years before Nietzsche was born, the centuries-old order in Europe had been toppled by the Reformation. Ironically, that contest played out within a hundred-mile

radius of Nietzsche's birth place. It was unintendedly instigated by an Augustinian monk named Martin Luther (Cate 2003:1). After years of struggle with the righteousness demands of God's law, Luther's 'extremely disturbed conscience' found peace in Paul's Letter to the Romans (Luther 1960:336). Specifically in the phrase, 'the righteousness of God' (Rom 1:17), Luther finally came to understand God's righteousness not only as active in judgement on sin, but passive in the sense of a gift whereby sinners were justified by faith.⁶ Nineteenth-century Lutherans held Romans to have been authored by a similarly plagued soul nearly fifteen-hundred years earlier (Cate 2003:307, 488). So when Friedrich Nietzsche launched his revaluation to replace the morality ushered in by the Reformation, he took aim not only at his fellow countryman, but also on the source of Luther's inspiration. Nietzsche trained his sights on the Apostle Paul.

A generation before Nietzsche was born in 1844, the changing currents had once again swept the geographical, political, social, and religious landscape of early nineteenth-century Europe (Blue 2016:14). Nietzsche's father, Karl Ludwig Nietzsche (known as Ludwig), was born into a pastor's home on the eve of the great Battle of Leipzig in October of 1813. No doubt cannon fire could be heard in the Eilenburg parsonage approximately twenty kilometres to the east. Ludwig's son, Friedrich, would later grow up at Grandmother Erdmuth's knee thrilling to stories of the battle when Napoleon was defeated for the first time (Cate 2003:12; see also Clark 2007:358-71).⁷ Out of that revolutionary period the balance of power shifted once more. A resurgent Prussia recovered its lost territories and confederated them with Westphalia, the Rhineland, much of Saxony, and other lands, vaulting the alliance to a place among the great powers of Europe (2007:388-98; Cate 2003:3f). Youthful imaginations glorify combat (Nietzsche and his peers would later eagerly volunteer for military service), so Friedrich's mind must have swirled with visions of aspirational struggle.

After decades of turmoil capped off by the Napoleonic wars, peace returned to the Continent. The Germanic lands in particular had enjoyed three centuries of Pietism, a religious movement characterised by a rejection of intellectual authorities, the primacy of a free conscience, and a preference for a devotional theology of the heart over an

⁶ In 1511 Luther made a pilgrimage to Rome in search of answers, but only returned with more questions and increased dread. The period roughly spanning the fall of 1513 to the fall of 1516 was personally momentous for Luther. They were spent in preparation for and delivery of lectures on both the Psalms and Romans at Wittenberg. Scholars such as Michael Mullet consider this endeavour critical to his conversion (1950:51-62).

⁷ The vanquished emperor would become one of Nietzsche's true few heroes (Cate 2003:12).

academic theology of the head (Parkes 2013:27; Shantz 2013:27f). But Enlightenment values had seeped into the movement, altering it ever so slightly on the surface, but fundamentally relativising it. The naïve faith of previous generations was being displaced by a reflective faith of the modern one (Shantz 2013:276f). The catechism of children in Saxony stressed morality over doctrine. Lutheran values of disciplined, honest work and social responsibility were inculcated. It was in this increasingly secularised post-conflict German Confederation, however, that indigenous and religious conservatism mounted a resistance and began a revival (Blue 2016:14). The Nietzsche home stood against this secular spirit in the strength of the new Awakening theology to which Ludwig had been exposed in his university years (1833-37). It was a radical movement in many ways, returning to tenets articulated by pietistic pioneers Philipp Spener (1635-1705), August Francke (1663-1727), Johann Schütz (1640-90), and even Johann Arndt (1555-1621). Of particular note were emphases on a direct experience of sinfulness, new birth as the necessary condition for entrance into heaven, an optimistic view of the future for God's people, and in all things a deep religious feeling (Shantz 2013:95-97; Parkes 2013:28). Young Friedrich whole-heartedly embraced each of these; the older Friedrich would repudiate them all with commensurate passion.

Local cultures began to flourish in nineteenth-century Europe, and a new stratum of society developed. Amongst Germanic peoples, at least, the 'cultivated classes' emerged. They would be known collectively as the educated middle class. Though this group was defined by the professions its members held (e.g., law, judiciary, medicine, pastoral ministry, teaching, academia, art), it was better known for its esteem of education. The German word for 'education', *Bildung*, carries three relevant meanings: 'education, cultivation, and most importantly, self-cultivation, the melding of one's character, talents, and sensibility and judgement into an amalgam of wisdom and insight' (Blue 2016:43, 91; Watson 2010:53f, 833f). This middle class enjoyed creature comforts, not as ends in themselves, but as a means of pursuit of enlightened culture. As an ascendant 'cultivated caste', they wielded significant cultural power in the mid-nineteenth century Prussian state (43f). Ludwig, who descended from a long line of Lutheran pastors and was appointed a parish priest, was a member of this upwardly mobile class (Benson 2013:107; Cate 2003:2, 4).

Ludwig married Franziska Oehler on his thirtieth birthday, and he took her home to his parsonage in Röcken. One year later their first child was born on 15 October, propitiously sharing a birthday with the current monarch, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

Accordingly, they named their son Friedrich Wilhelm, but his nickname was Fritz. He was especially sensitive to music, and since his father was the best piano player in the community, the sound of music filled the Nietzsche household and imprinted the boy for life (Cate 2003:6). But this was not the only thing that may have marked him. Evidently Ludwig's public persona masked private insecurities. By his own confession, self-doubts were masked by retreating to his pulpit. When he preached, he transformed from a demure and tentative individual to a courageous and decisive leader (Parkes 2013:28). It may be that Fritz picked up on his father's double demeanour, thus gleaning early insight into the phenomenon of self-deception. Parkes also draws attention to Nietzsche's later writing, 'The Parents Live on', in which he remarked that 'the unresolved dissonances between the characters and dispositions of the parents continue to resound in the nature of the child, and constitute the history of his inner sufferings' (*HHI* 1:379). This adult commentary seems to draw on a knowledge of tension between his parents, perhaps due to their divergent backgrounds: Ludwig from one of relative sophistication and education, Franziska from a spartan and more practical one (Cate 2003:4-6). In *BGE* 194 Nietzsche writes, 'Parents can't help making their child into something similar to themselves—they call this "education"—no mother doubts at the bottom of her heart that with a child she has borne herself a possession, no father disputes his right to subject it to his own conceptions and evaluations'.

Any possible tension between his parents ceased July 1849, just before Fritz's fifth birthday. Ludwig's health had begun to turn in the spring of the previous year. Fritz seems only to have become aware of his decline in September, as he recorded at boarding school in his first attempt at autobiography, 'Devastating blows fell from heaven' (Parkes 2013:33). Homeopathic therapy at a clinic in Naumburg proved ineffective, so Fritz, Elizabeth, and baby Ludwig Joseph were shut up to the winter of their father's vomiting, weeping, hyperventilating and screaming. In the new year a specialist from Leipzig diagnosed the condition as 'softening of the brain', as Fritz would put it years later (quoted in Parkes 2013:34).⁸ By spring Ludwig was blind and almost mute. On 30 July Karl Ludwig's agony ended. 'Overcome by the thought of being separated from my dear father for ever', Nietzsche wrote, 'I wept bitterly' (quoted in Parkes 2013:35). Though most biographers date Nietzsche's thinning faith to his late teenage years, signs of his departure were already appearing in the poetry of his preadolescence (35). A fair distillation of many of the 'life questions' confronting Fritz

⁸ An autopsy would later confirm the diagnosis (Parkes 2013:35).

at the time could be represented in the classic dilemma faced by people of all times: if God is all powerful and all loving, why does he subject his servant (in this case, his father) to such torture? It is a question Fritz would wrestle with one way or another for the rest of his life.

In April 1850, Franziska packed up her children and her worldly possessions and moved back to Naumburg to be close to her family (Cate 2003:8-10). Their first domicile would be considered today an urban flat. Ludwig's sisters lived with them, and the children attended the local elementary school. Five years later Franziska moved to a spacious house on the edge of town where the children had room to play and explore (10f). As Fritz grew, so did his education. In 1854, he was enrolled at the local *Domgymnasium* in which he quickly distinguished himself from his peers. As a good Lutheran boy, he worked hard from before sun-up to well after sundown, but his academic success came more by means of his budding intellect (12). Of particular note was his talent for the literary and musical arts, which he practiced outside of school. He wrote poetry and essays, and dedicated time to educating himself musically. His passion for study in all his endeavours strained his eyes and brought him blinding headaches, maladies that would plague him for the rest of this life (13). Still he studied and wrote. He laboured over his most extensive work around his fourteenth birthday, an autobiographical work, '*Aus meinem Leben*' (14).⁹ He also threw himself into the study of classical music, bordering on obsession for the great German composers Mozart, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn. These he extolled for their doxological quality; by contrast, modern music was exhibitionist and sinful. From an excerpt of his 'Life', it is apparent that even at this early age the objects of his passion were evaluated through a moral prism (15).

He received a scholarship to the prestigious *Schulpforta* boarding school in September 1858, owing to his father's former state employment and not personal achievement (Brobjer 2008b:322ff). The educational programme's emphasis on academics left little time for physical exercise or creative diversions (Cate 2003:17). Nietzsche chafed at the 'uniform discipline of a regulated school' (Nietzsche quoted in Blue 2016:308). He therefore struggled in courses that constrained his thinking to predictable formulas and rote memorisation, but abandoned himself to those that played to his literary and artistic strengths. His precious extra-curricular time was devoted to the composition of poetry and music, some of which was awarded prize marks (Cate

⁹ Translation: 'From My Life'.

2003:33). By the middle years of his schooling, his preference for personal musings over formal pedagogy increased to the point that he found himself exploring new vistas of thought.

Internal tension was brewing by Friedrich's fourth year at Pforta. His Christian affections were wearing thin on account of his studies, theology among them. This led him to question fundamental doctrines of Christianity such as 'the existence God, the immortality of the soul, the "divinity" of Christ, the "inspiration" of the "Holy Ghost"' (Cate 2003:31). If his scepticism was in doubt before, this period confirms Friedrich's falling away from the faith of his fathers. He viewed his youthful thinking as constrained by juvenile prejudices blindly accepted as truth. Friedrich wrestled back and forth between free will and environmental forces that undoubtedly influenced an individual. He came to see that these forces, both internal and external, must be combatted in order to attain any sort of personal freedom. In the summer following his fourth year, he launched a personal study of both the French Revolution and the New Testament Gospels. As a result, he connected early Christian slave morality to the Jacobins' vengeful antipathy that resulted in the wholesale overturning of French society. These musings represent the inchoate forms of Friedrich's doctrines of self-overcoming, the *agon*, the self, and fate, all of which would flower a quarter of a century later in *BGE* and *OGM* (33f).

Much of Friedrich's final year was spent writing his senior thesis on a little-known sixth-century BCE Greek poet, Theognis of Megara (Blue 2016:169-71). This was his first notable philological work, yet it was not his first foray into the field. From 1861, he became absorbed in the fourth-century BCE Gothic King, Ermanach (128f). The saga of his defeat survived in both German and Scandinavian mythologies, so it was perfect for a comparative study of texts, languages, and histories. Elements of betrayal, revenge, guilt, and punishment permeated the plot in which moral and other valuations became transformed when the oppressed became the oppressors. Friedrich used the term 'transvaluation' here (Cate 2003:37), and it would become prominent in *OGM*. It was through 'Theognis', however, that Friedrich's aptitude for philology shone (Cristi & Velásquez 2015). Such prodigy did not go unnoticed by a certain university professor who would go on to nurture the lad to rework the paper at Leipzig into an essay worthy of publication in the prestigious *Das Rheinische Museum für Philology* (Cate 2003:69, 72). From his research for both of these works, Friedrich began his life-long exploration into the nature of myth-making and value-creating.

It is important to mention Friedrich's discovery of Ralph Waldo Emerson while at Pforta, probably in 1861-62. Later discovery of Nietzsche's annotated copies of Emerson's books and collected essays, his effusive praise of Emerson in letters and other notes, and his extensive excerpts of Emerson's writings indicate that he read him all the way through his life (Brobjer 2008a:23-25; see especially 119-21, footnotes 11-24; Blue 2016:129f). 'He loved Emerson from first to last', writes Kaufmann, and Nietzsche even entitles a section of an 1888 essay by his name (*TI*, 'Roving Expeditions of an Inopportune Philosopher', 13) (1974b:11). Paul Janz argues for nineteen distinct Emersonian influences that would manifest in Nietzsche's later thought. They include, among others, 'atheism, the revaluation of all values, the relativity of morality, the philosophy of becoming, ... that man is something to be overcome, ... the *Übermensch*, the eternal recurrence [and] *amor fati*' (Brobjer 2008a:118, footnote 5). Though Janz may over-argue his case in points, his larger point of Emersonian influence finds support in the scholarly community, e.g., Jaspers, *Nietzsche* (1965), Hayman, *Nietzsche* (1980), and Pletsch, *Young Nietzsche* (1991) (118, footnote 5), Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson* (1992). There was arguably no greater influence on Friedrich Nietzsche than Emerson, save perhaps Schopenhauer.

Final exams loomed in the spring of 1864. As a consequence of six years of nonchalance toward some important courses during his tenure, his graduation from Pforta hung in the balance. Friedrich did in fact graduate from Pforta with his university qualification due to flashes of brilliance in certain subjects and a penchant for test-taking (Cate 2003:35-39).

Nietzsche matriculated to Bonn University in the fall of 1864. Driving his choice of institutions was Bonn's two leading philologists, Otto Jahn and Friedrich Ritschl. Ritschl had ties with Pforta (Cate 2003:40f). Almost immediately upon arriving in town, he joined a student fraternity that, like other fraternities, kept regular evening hours in the town's taverns (41). Like many a first-year university student, Nietzsche became swept up in the extracurriculars of beer-drinking, opera, and theatre. The debt he incurred forced him to write home for money on more than one occasion, and was met with a chastening reply from his mother in a February 1865 letter. Despite this, the flow of money continued (43f). He went home to Naumburg for Easter break to face the disapproval of his mother (and sister) over his profligate behaviour. This was nothing, however, compared to the shock they exhibited when he informed them of his prodigal departure from the study of religion, and of theology altogether (Blue 2016:310). A

prime reason for this was his exposure to David Strauss' sensational *Life of Christ* at university (1864). In the train of Kant and Hegel, Strauss asserted that the nature of things could not be known until the process by which they came to be was analysed. Applied to the New Testament, hidden realities that lay beneath events in the Gospels needed to be exposed, as well as the hidden motives of those who recorded them. Strauss subjected the claims of Christianity to rational thought, which he insisted left the Bible's miraculous accounts explainable in scientific terms and governed by natural laws. It also rendered the historical Jesus as a mere man, albeit a good one (Cate:2003:44f). Nietzsche's training in philology was congenial to Strauss' novel research. It had taught him of the necessity of myth-making by primitive peoples, and that first-century Christians were in desperate need of inspiration in light of their Roman oppression. Therefore, part deliberately and part unconsciously, Nietzsche employed a nascent genealogical approach to cast the faith as a constructed narrative: Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection was designed to serve as Christian 'truth' (44-46).

Nietzsche made clear his dissatisfaction with theological studies by formally transferring his academic registration to the faculty of philology when he returned for his second semester (Cate 2003:47). This, however, was not enough to mollify his disappointment over time already poorly spent at Bonn. His new direction would take him back west across the country to Leipzig. At least three reasons are apparent for his move. Bonn had been an expensive place to live. With Leipzig and Naumburg barely fifty kilometres apart, not only would he be closer to home, but nearer his funding source. He would also be reunited with his friend, Carl von Gersdoff, who was giving up law at Göttingen for German literature at Leipzig. Leipzig University was attractive for the new life it was infusing into its declining philology program by acquiring the nationally renowned, Friedrich Ritschl (49f). Nietzsche never looked back to Bonn (Blue 2016:207).

No sooner had Nietzsche begun his philology studies at Leipzig in October of 1865 than he happened upon Arthur Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in his new landlord's bookshop. Schopenhauer's style and worldview enraptured Nietzsche so that he constantly read him, and urged his friends to do so as well (Brobjer 2008a:29). He adopted him as mentor, so identifying with him that in a 7 April 1866 letter to a friend he confided that referencing either Schopenhauer or myself 'is often the same thing' (Middleton 1996:11). In Schopenhauer Nietzsche found authorisation for his own recently-expressed atheism. Beyond this confirmation,

Schopenhauer served as a major influence to think philosophically, so much so that it affected his philological studies, despite warnings from Ritschl (Brobjer 2008a:29). Schopenhauer's perspectives on metaphysics, suffering, art, language, ethics, and pity would greatly shape Nietzsche's own thinking and writing for a decade, then become counterpoints for his work from 1876 onward (30-32). One major reason for Nietzsche's break with Schopenhauer at that time was the Schopenhauer's pessimism. It stemmed from his view of the world as comprised of interminably conflicting desires that were devoid of *telos*—purposeless suffering. Nietzsche's own life already had been filled with pain and loss. Whether he realised it or not, it seems likely that he wanted to free himself from 'the revolving wheel of Ixion' and 'the eternally yearning Tantalus' (Schopenhauer 2010 1.3.38). Nietzsche's reading around this time of Schopenhauerian philosopher, Eugene Dühring, is also relevant for one small fact. Inside of the back cover of Nietzsche's copy of Dühring's *Der Wert des Lebens* (*The Value of Life*, 1865) lies the first known association of Nietzsche with the term, *ressentiment*. The word appears there in his own handwriting, along with a couple of page references where Dühring discussed it in the book. It also occurs several times a lengthy excerpt he copied (Brobjer 2008a:68, see also 148, footnote 34).

In the summer between his first and second year at Leipzig, Nietzsche read Friedrich Albert Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* (*History of Materialism*, 1866). Lange rejected all metaphysics, preferring the natural world to be explained in material terms, with the exception of mental processes, which remained linked with a Kantian formal idealism (Brobjer 2008a:34). He argued *inter alia* that the history of philosophy could only be understood through the history of science. Lange, along with Schopenhauer, intensified Nietzsche's desire for philosophy. Lange's use of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* (1859) gave Nietzsche a scientific basis for his growing desire to replace modern mankind's superstitious and immature religious ideas with sound philosophical reasoning (Cate 2003:73-75).

Evidence of Nietzsche's passion may be seen in his preoccupation with two ancient Greek personages throughout the second half of the decade: Democritus, the pre-Socratic philosopher, and Diogenes Laertius, a little-known third-century BCE historian of philosophy who wrote on Democritus in a ten-volume history of Greek philosophy, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (Brobjer 2008a:35, 49). Democritus presented biographies of philosophers from Thales to Epicurus, along with a comparative analysis of their thought (Blue 2016:263-65). Nietzsche spent a full year

on a paper examining Laertius' sources for submission in a Leipzig University essay contest in September 1867, which he won (Cate 2003:75f). His essay was publicly praised by Ritschl, and it became his second published work, also submitted to *Das Rheinische Museum*, in two successive issues (78f).¹⁰

By his final year at Leipzig, Nietzsche's interest in philology reached low ebb. He therefore did not welcome the communiqué from the head of the department that he would have to invest another entire year to achieve his educational goal, a doctorate. Juxtaposed with his declining interest was a growing admiration for the controversial music of Richard Wagner. In November 1868, owing to a kindness from Professor Ritschl's wife, he was invited to a dinner at the Brockhauses of Leipzig given in honour of Wagner who was stopping through on tour. The two not only discussed music but also philosophy, and particularly Schopenhauer. By the end of the evening, Wagner had extended an open invitation to his new admirer to come visit him in Switzerland. Nietzsche himself was so inspired by the evening's discussion that he resolved to stay the course in Leipzig to finish his doctoral studies and write his dissertation (Cate 2003:83-86).

The dawn of 1869 cast a propitious light across Nietzsche's professional path. A chair of classical philology at the University of Basel had just been vacated, and Ritschl wanted his protégé to fill it. He was unaware of Nietzsche's waning interest in philology, and most certainly of his being mocked by Nietzsche behind his back. In a twist of irony, Ritschl put his own academic reputation on the line for his pupil. His glowing endorsement coupled with some behind the scene politics paved the way for Leipzig University to grant Nietzsche early *Promotion*, to exempt him from the requirement of earning a *Habilitation* credential, and be awarded an honorary doctorate. Nietzsche ascended the post of professor at age twenty-four, though without tenure (Barnes 2014:129; Blue 2016:302-04). The university made the official offer to Nietzsche on 13 February 1869, and he arrived in Basel on 19 April (306, 311). As part of his processing into the institution, he was asked by a former professor, now an administrator, Wilhelm Vischer-Bilfinger, to apply for expatriation from Prussia (Salomé 2001:xxii). It was an unorthodox, though not unprecedented, move to conserve the university's recent hire in the event that war mandated his conscription.

¹⁰ A postscript to the affair lies in the essay committee's citation of the essay's epigraph in their remarks on Nietzsche's accomplishment. Translated from the Greek the epigraph, it read, 'Become such as you are'. This maxim evidently stayed with him for life, for in a slightly altered form it served as the subtitle for his final book, *EH*, 'Become What You Are' (Blue 2016:274f).

Nietzsche spent his first year of teaching knee-deep in subjects from the pre-Socratic philosophers to Latin epigraphy. His fall semester called for thirteen hours of lecture per week, slating him Monday through Wednesday for the earliest daily slot at 7:00 a.m. He was also obligated to teach Greek and Latin six hours a week in the local *Paedagogium* (Pletsch 1991:106f; Cate 2003:90). Nietzsche's health would soon buckle under such a load, with frequent relapses to follow. Each episode left him increasingly compromised. In particular, his eyesight began to fail. Nietzsche escaped the pressures of teaching by taking advantage of Wagner's invitation to visit him in Tribschen, Switzerland, just two hours away by train (95-101). From May 1869 through April 1872, he spent many weekends and holidays at the Lake Lucerne residence, twenty-three visits in all. No doubt there would have been more, but his host moved to Bayreuth, Germany (Hollingdale 1999b:56). Most importantly, Basel was the place where Nietzsche's writing career began in earnest. In a span of sixteen years he would generate material for fourteen published books, as well as three significant unpublished articles.

The Franco-Prussian War broke out in July 1870 while Nietzsche was on midsummer holiday southeast of Lake Lucerne. He dispatched letters to both Vischer at the university and the municipal education board requesting a leave of absence from university for military service. As a proud former cannoneer, he envisaged making some material contribution to the war effort. He was granted liberty on 10 August, but due to his lack of Swiss citizenship, his role was restricted to that of medical orderly. Within a month, the overwhelming acuity of victims, long work hours, and poor hygienic conditions conspired to make Nietzsche himself a casualty. He was discharged mid-September due to debilitating bouts of diphtheria and dysentery. Not only had he lost his health (again) and another chance to distinguish himself, but now he had lost statehood. When Nietzsche concluded his teaching career, he would become a wanderer for the remainder of his sane life (Cate 2003:113-16).

In January 1871, Nietzsche's nerves were again frayed, now due to the drain his teaching duties had become on his private philosophical pursuits. He even wrote Vischer to request a transfer to the philosophy department to fill a chair that had just come open. He did in fact breakdown and so was granted further leave, which he took in southern France, his sister tending to his convalescence. Upon his return, his load was lightened in view of his physical and psychological infirmities, but he was denied the transfer (Cate 2003:122-25).

The 1872 publication of Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, commenced what scholars consider the early period of his writings (1872-1876). The inspiration for *Tragedy* had begun 'somewhere in an Alpine nook' two summers prior (*BT* 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' 1). It was an exploration into the pessimism of the ancient Greeks as they sought to understand their world of suffering, contradiction, change, and ultimately death. The book was essay in genre, musical in form, metaphysical in aim, and filled with Schopenhauerian concepts. Humanity was driven by unseen forces, which meant that the lived-experience was subject to an illusory order. The Greeks responded by developing tragedy to express life as changing and powerful (i.e., the Dionysian side), without losing the benefits of life as stable ordered (i.e., the Apollonian side). Their chief was the ability to tolerate the Dionysian. Since music could be experienced immediately apart from conscious thought, it was believed to be the pathway to oneness with the universe. Euripides killed tragedy by smuggling in Socratic rationality, which effectively cast a glare across the world of will so that only the illusory world of phenomenon was visible. Nietzsche's Germany (and Europe) was increasingly becoming pessimistic for its inability to explain the mysteries of the universe, even though scientific rationalism was on the rise. Wagner's music, according to Nietzsche, was manifesting Dionysian power just in time to check societal decay and promote cultural recrudescence. Nietzsche's *Tragedy* was widely panned. His former mentor at Leipzig, Ritschl, jotted a two-word evaluation in his diary, 'idea-rich giddiness', and wrote him a letter taking issue with most of the contents of the book (Cate 2003:145). Students avoided his lectures in droves (165). Nietzsche himself acknowledged embarrassment over his work in the preface he wrote for its 1886 edition of *BT* ('Attempt at a Self-criticism' 6), even while subtly congratulating himself for pioneering paths into secret places (7).

On the heels of this first publication, Nietzsche wrote three articles that never saw printer's ink during his lifetime. In 1873, he wrote 'On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense'. He argued that the fundamental human drive is to create metaphors to make sense of the world. Reason, language, and knowledge are thus inventions. Over time their origin is forgotten; they are viewed as corresponding to reality, and so represent 'truth'. In the same year he wrote 'Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks' in which he discussed the thought of sixth and fifth-century philosophers Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Anaxagoras. He argued that the world is mechanically produced through a continual recombination of its matter directed by *nous* (i.e., mind or

Geist), which was also material. Noteworthy is the ground he laid for the concept of *ressentiment* in Anaximander. In 1874, Nietzsche wrote 'We Philologists' in which he took to task his fellow philologists for treating their profession as a mere job instead of using it to mine the culture of the ancient Greeks and Romans for ethical treasures. Through proper teaching, the tide of decadence that Nietzsche perceived to be sweeping modern Germany could be critiqued so that a high (classical) culture could be recovered.

In the next four years, Nietzsche would cross a Rubicon by producing four lengthy essays that generally criticised German culture. They were collected and published in 1876 under the title *Unfashionable Observations*, a project which Nietzsche had envisioned in August 1873 to be comprised of thirteen essays (Schaberg 1995:31f). In the spring of 1873, Nietzsche produced his first essay, 'David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer'. He undermined the widely popular Strauss by branding him a cultural philistine who not only self-authorized critique of German values, but whose ignorance was leading the country away from an acquisition of greatness by glorifying past national accomplishments.

In February 1874 Nietzsche published 'On the Utility and Liability of History for Life'. Nietzsche argued that culture formation was being ill-served by defining itself in terms of historical process and evolutionary mechanics. To justify existence by looking backwards was a hold-over from Christianity, and only led to a devaluation of values ending in nihilism ('Utility' 5-10). Nietzsche did not think that the flux of history could be ignored, however, but its chaos was to be organised and overcome (10). This presages the concepts Nietzsche would rely on in the future: the *Übermensch* who would, by will to power, overcome all things including himself in the eternally recurring *agon*.

In October of the same year Nietzsche published the third essay of *UO*, 'Schopenhauer as Educator'. He idealised Schopenhauer as the type of philosopher who can instruct man in the highest ethic. It is the ethic of self-realisation, which involves distinguishing between man's apparent nature and his true nature, or *physis*. One must not succumb to the allure of the former so that one can pursue the 'transfiguring overarching purpose' of the latter, 'attaining power in order to come to the aid of the *physis*' (*UO* 'Schopenhauer' 3).

The fourth essay of *UO*, 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth', was published in July 1876. It is important to step back for a moment to the summer of 1873, when a student

named Paul Rée enrolled in Nietzsche's lecture series on 'The Pre-Platonic Philosophers' (Hollingdale 1999b:90). Rée was a Jewish atheist who was interested in natural explanations for religious experience and morality. Along these lines, he authored a short work, *Psychological Observations* (1875), and a major work, *The Origin of the Moral Sensations* (1877). As Rée's status developed from student to friend, so his influence on Nietzsche grew, with the result that Nietzsche began to defect from Wagner and to abandon the pessimism rooted in metaphysics of his own earlier work (Brobjer 2008a:41; Kaufmann 1974a:90). Nietzsche considered Wagner's new 'cultural' centre at Bayreuth a threat to any hopes of reviving the true German spirit. Wagner was becoming the cultural philistine Nietzsche had lambasted just three years ago. Unfortunately, he had already committed to a laudatory essay on Wagner (see Middleton 1996:119f). His notebooks from the period (Newman 1946 4.435) and his frequent (perhaps psycho-somatic) ailments (Hollingdale 1999b:97f) both strongly suggest that this created a tremendous schism within Nietzsche due to his growing disdain for the composer. With the help of Peter Gast, however, Nietzsche found room to compartmentalise praise of Wagner for his mesmerising music away from the unabashed desire for power that had produced such creativity (Schaberg 1995:406). Years later Nietzsche would rationalise that he was writing about himself, and even Zarathustra (*EH* 'The Birth of Tragedy' 4).

1878 heralded new directions for Nietzsche. The May publication of *Human, All too Human* marked a definitive break with Wagner.¹¹ In this work he attacked moral assumptions by undermining the origins of Christianity's (and Schopenhauer's) metaphysical notion of good-evil. With a nod to Rée (*HH* 'On the History of the Moral Sensations' 35), he posited alternative explanations for this morality in the physiological causes and psychological needs of worshippers ('Of the First and Last Things' 13, 17), and also in the nature of language itself (11). This undermining of an opponent's position anticipates Nietzsche's genealogical approach, his notion of *ressentiment*, and his 'hammer philosophy'. He would become indelibly linked to them all. *HH* was written in aphoristic style, not original to Nietzsche, but chosen by him to allow anything from a single point of critique to a lengthy argument in essay, each with verve and humour. His final section, 'By Oneself Alone', would recommend taking one's philosophy 'in the end [as] nothing but their own biography' (513), and would

¹¹ This version of *HH* was supplemented by 'Mixed Opinions and Maxims' in February of 1879. The 'The Wanderer and His Shadow' was added in September of 1880. They were published altogether in 1886 under the title *Human, All too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*.

pave the way for the character who would serve as his quasi-alias, Zarathustra. *HH* also began what scholars designate Nietzsche's middle period (1878-1882)¹² in which appeared, as we have just seen, undeniable elements of his own evolving philosophy. Finally, his regularly incapacitating health forced him to spend stints away from his teaching duties, foreshadowing his resignation from Basel in May-June of 1879 (Hollingdale 1999b:107, 109-12, 115). He thus began his peripatetic lifestyle, predominantly in Switzerland, Germany, and northern Italy, for the final decade of his rational life. A modest annual pension funded his existence (Schaberg 1995:77).

In June 1881, Nietzsche published *Dawn*. The subtitle, *Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality*, suggests it was a continuation of his previous exploration into the origins of morality. The chief developments of this work were two. One was his idea that morality is one of man's 'crudest and subtlest deceptions (namely self-deception)'; it is an ethical explanation for customs catalysed by desire for power and fear of consequences (*D* 2.103, 140). A second was the further development of his will-to-power concept, now identified as 'strength [that] has been overcome by something higher, ... that energy that a genius expends not on works, but on himself as a work, that is, on his own mastery' (5.548). His retrospective commentary in *EH* considered this book the commencement of his war on morality, the victory of which would constitute 'that new morning [in] a whole world of new days' ... characterised by 'a revaluation of all values' ('Books' *D* 1).

The Gay Science was published in August 1882.¹³ Nietzsche contended true knowledge of the world need neither be regarded as banal nor feared. Life in all its glory and gore was something that could be cheerfully embraced, not something that at best had to be endured. In service of this argument, he put forth numerous existential ideas: the murder of God (*GS* 3.125); good having evolved from evil (1.4); a desire for power as the source of all values, even love, pity and self-denial (1.14, 27); self-overcoming as the path to meaning (4.285, 290); the rejection of any worlds other than the present material one. All of these ideas combined to set up the grand hypothetical Nietzsche used to introduce his notion of the eternal recurrence at the close of his book:

¹² Incidentally, this five-year stretch was given entirely to the production of what has been called Nietzsche's 'Free-Spirit Trilogy' (Caygill 1991; Franco 2011). It consists of *HHI*, *D*, and *GS*.

¹³ The 1882 edition consisted of four books. An expanded edition was published in 1887 that included Nietzsche's Preface, a fifth book, and an appendix of songs.

‘What if ...’ (4.341).¹⁴ The teaching of this doctrine he would leave for his next book and its hero, Zarathustra (4.342).¹⁵

Thus Spoke Zarathustra was published in stages from 1883 to 1885. It hallmarked the commencement of his late period (1883-1888) when he began bringing fragments of his thought together into a composite philosophy. Above all, *Zarathustra* showcased the triumvirate of Nietzsche’s philosophical ideas: the *Übermensch*, will-to-power, and the eternal recurrence. Literarily, *Z* is the story of a hermit who goes on a quest for self-overcoming. It is a polemic against Judeo-Christianity, inverting biblical images and doctrines to show the supremacy of his own perspective on life and meaning. Life is hard, but it can also be wonderful. Zarathustra seeks a higher plane of existence that takes hold of all of life, a mode of existence enjoyed only by higher beings whose values exceed those of ordinary people. Will-to-power is the key to unlocking all this bounty. By it, one can embrace pain as joy, be lord of the earth, and become the sun in a world of one’s own creation (*Z* 4.19f).

Beyond Good and Evil was published in June 1886. It is a continuation of many of the themes from earlier works and, as he shares in a 22 September 1886 letter to Jakob Burckhardt, ‘it says the same things as my *Zarathustra*—only in a way that is different—very different’ (Middleton 1996:255).¹⁶ The poetic motifs in *Z* find correspondence in the prosaic elucidations of *BGE*, and his style begins to shift from aphorism to more protracted essay. *BGE* is Nietzsche’s attempt to work out will-to-power both as a philosophical reality in the development of humanity (*BGE* 2.36), and as a historical reality in the context of what he perceived to be a degenerating Europe and Germany (8.240-56). He railed against traditional morality because it inhibited a true flourishing of the human species. The crux of the problem was Christianity. It commanded self-denial (i.e., the *thou shalt not*’s of the Old Testament Decalogue; see also 5.199) in the service of doing good for God’s Kingdom (alternatively, ‘progress’). Self-denial deferred happiness to a world beyond because life in this evil one was pain and suffering. Nietzsche, therefore, claimed there must be a higher being, one who would go beyond present moralities by legislating one’s own good and evil (6.211). Admittedly, this involved pain, both experiencing it in oneself as well as inflicting it on others through exploitation, destruction, and oppression. But true life could be found

¹⁴ This aphorism and the next were the finale of the original edition of *GS*.

¹⁵ The text of this final aphorism is almost verbatim the text of ‘Zarathustra’s Prologue’, Part One.

¹⁶ Nietzsche also expressed this intention in a draft for a preface to his intended second volume of *BGE*. He chose rather to use it as his preface to *HH2*.

only by taking it whole: every high and every low, every weal and every woe, each delight and every sorrow, ‘all in the same succession and sequence’ (*GS* 4.341), time without end (*BGE* 3.56). Those who would operate in the will-to-power showed that they were worthy of such a glorious, albeit dangerous, existence.

On the Genealogy of Morality was published November 1887 as an intentional sequel to *BGE* (Kaufmann 1992a:439). In it Nietzsche continued his critique of Christianity via three essays. His first essay contended the binary designation of good and evil was not eternal. Its origin was the triumph of slave morality over master morality, prototypically in Christianity’s conquest of Rome by means of *ressentiment*. His second essay presented *ressentiment* as giving rise to the moral trappings of guilt feelings and bad conscience. These were really consequences of will-to-power being inhibited from natural expression (i.e., by punishment) and turned back and inward upon the individual. Rather than allow some metaphysical explanation for good-evil, Nietzsche traced their origins back to the amoral values of good-bad in the naturalistic creditor-debtor relationship. In the third essay, Nietzsche characterised ascetic ideals, chiefly truth and love, as weapons used by the priest to subjugate the weak and gain power for himself. Ramifications of this affected every aspect of life and society: religion (*OGM* 3.17), modern science (3.23), politics (3.25), historiography (3.26), and even the atheism of Nietzsche’s day (3.27). The height of irony was the priest’s *coup de grâce*, the invention of deity to provide unsurpassable meaning in life, and so provide a once-and-for-all answer to the crying question, ‘Why suffering?’ (3.28).

Nietzsche generated five short works in 1888, the last year of his creative life. *The Case of Wagner* was published in September. Nietzsche personified the ‘problem of decadence’ in Wagner (*CW* ‘Preface’). Wagner’s music served as the epitome of cultural decline, beguiled as he was by Schopenhauerian and Hegelian ideals (4, 10). If this wasn’t bad enough, Wagner defected to Christianity; worse still, he helped create a cultural pandemic by infecting Germany and Europe with ‘moral and religious absurdities’ through his famous operatic productions, ‘Parsifal’ and ‘Der Ring des Nibelungen’ (i.e., ‘The Ring of the *Nibelungen*’, 3-5). In a turn of the knife, Nietzsche lauded Bizet for his ‘Carmen’. This is because he perceived it to adumbrate the *Übermensch*, as well as promote will-to-power values such as cruelty in terms of love and creativity in the service of killing, all in a spirit of cheerfulness and the strength of courage (1f).

Twilight of the Idols was written in August-September 1888 (published January 1889). He censured Germany for its apathy over the cultural malaise that had crept in. He reprised and deepened criticisms previously levelled at Socrates, Plato, and Kant, then castigated Christianity for present-day nihilistic values. Nietzsche's answer to this was to overturn the moral tables through the transvaluation of all values. The effective subtitle, *How to Philosophise with a Hammer*, signified the use of a tuning-fork to determine what is sound and what is rotten or hollow (*TI* 'Preface'). Nietzsche was tapping on the ideals of Christianity to show their hollowness and unworthiness of belief. These ideals were in the twilight of their usefulness, and thus candidates for destruction.

Nietzsche wrote *The Antichrist* in September 1888 (published 1905). He continued his attack on Judeo-Christianity because of its world-historical destructiveness to noble values (A 24-45) and its deadly war against the higher type of human (5). The work was also intended to be a grand reevaluation of all values (9; see also *EH* 'Twilight of the Idols' 3).

Ecce Homo was written in October-November 1888 (published 1908). It was widely considered to be an autobiographical statement, and was conducted primarily via retrospective commentary on his each of his books. He wrote such good books because they possessed the insight of 'a psychologist without equal' (*EH* 'Why I Write Such Good Books' 5). They pushed aside accepted boundaries and provided new vistas of thought and life into the rare 'genius of the heart' (6). Framing the catalogue of his book's commentaries were characterisations of himself: he was so wise on account of his aesthetic intuitions; he was so clever as a consequence of his personal disciplines; he was a destiny because he was willing to go the way of the Zarathustrean immoralist ('Why I Am a Destiny' 4-6) to blow up the power structures that had stood for two millennia (1f). He was willing to sacrifice the present and destroy the past for the sake of the future (4). His name would be enshrined forever as the one who unshackled humanity from a make-believe world to live free and noble in a new world of their making. He signed the book, 'Dionysus versus the Crucified' (9).

Nietzsche contra Wagner is Nietzsche's final work, written in December 1888 (published 1895). The book is comprised of altered selections from previous works dating from 1877 (*NCW* 'Forward'). Nietzsche did not neglect to praise Wagner when he truly invested himself in his music, but he did accuse him of ultimately selling out to the masses. Christianity corrupted him, and great was the fallout thereof, for his music

became a dangerously corrosive to the German population. In this, Wagner became a focal point for Nietzsche's own anti-Christian views. His vantage point for such criticism came from identifying with the Greeks, who ventured 'the highest and most dangerous peak of present thought and looked around from up there [and] looked *down* from there' (italics original, 'Epilogue' 2).¹⁷

Having contextualised Nietzsche's thought in his personal history, a concise review of the relevant literature pertaining to Nietzsche's concepts of *ressentiment* and self-deception is now offered.

1.3 Review of Literature on *Ressentiment* and Self-deception

Nietzsche's notion of self-deception cannot be sufficiently understood apart from the context his moral critique assigns to it, which is *ressentiment*. A body of literature in anglophone reception has therefore been developed¹⁸ to explore the issues associated with both *ressentiment* and self-deception as they occur in value creation.¹⁹

In A 24 Nietzsche claimed *ressentiment* to be the psychological origin of morality, epitomised in Judeo-Christian morality. Bernard Reginster observed twenty years ago this claim to have been largely ignored by scholars (1997:281). Investigation of *ressentiment* considered without reference to Judeo-Christianity has not fared much better. Nevertheless, the relative dearth of scholarship on the subject has included some well-known contributions: Scheler, *Ressentiment* (1998); Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la Philosophie* (1961);²⁰ Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice* (1991); Bittner, 'Ressentiment' (1994); Solomon, 'One Hundred Years of *Ressentiment*' (1994). To this short list we should add Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (1964) and Améry, '*Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne*' (1966).²¹ Curiously, for all the promise in the sweep of Solomon's title, he interacts with only three authors who engage the phenomenon of *ressentiment* in any meaningful way:

¹⁷ Two other works for which Nietzsche is responsible should be mentioned. He wrote a collection of poems in the fall of 1888 known as *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*. Six of them were published in the 1891 edition of *Z*. Three others were taken in slightly altered form from *Z*, Part Four. *The Will to Power* is the title of a volume consisting of selections from Nietzsche's notebooks between 1883 and 1888 (Kaufmann 1968:xv). It is highly controversial in that he never intended for them to be published in that form. His sister acquired sole copyright of all his writings in 1895 (Hollingdale 1999:220). In 1901, she published the book as volume fifteen in her first edition of a collected works of her brother. A 1904 edition added 200 pages of notes. A 1906 edition in two volumes expanded the number of notes to 1,067. This remains the total for all subsequent editions (Kaufmann 1968:xvii).

¹⁸ Literature on Nietzsche is so voluminous that I have concentrated on his reception in English-speaking scholarship. Examples of journals exclusively devoted to Nietzsche studies include *International Nietzsche Studies*, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, *New Nietzsche Studies*, and *Nietzsche-Studien*.

¹⁹ See section 1.5 of this chapter for the research questions used to explore these issues.

²⁰ English translation, *Nietzsche & Philosophy* (1983).

²¹ English translation, 'Beyond Guilt and Atonement' (2009).

Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971); Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality* (1974); Strawson, 'Freedom and Resentment' (1974).²² Not much has changed in the years since Reginster made his observation. Typically, *ressentiment* is given only cursory coverage in broader treatments of Nietzsche's discourses on master and slave moralities, the bulk of which are conducted within commentaries on *OGM* (Weber 1964:110-17; Kaufmann 1974:371-78; Strong 1975/1988:245-50; White 1997:136-49; Ridley 1998:15-40; Lippitt 2000:77-79; Williams 2000:20-23, 100; Murphy 2001:133-38; Williams 2001:20-35 *passim*; Leiter 2003:202-06;²³ Janaway 2007:90-123 *passim*; Benson 2008:125-38, 150-55; Hatab 2008:37-68 *passim*; Acampora 2013:110-50 *passim*).

1.3.1 *Ressentiment* in the First Half of the Twentieth-century

Study of *ressentiment* attracted precious little attention in the half-century following Nietzsche's passing in 1900. Four names achieve stark relief in this regard. In 1912 Max Scheler published his half-anecdotal, half-polemical volume entitled, *Ressentiment*.²⁴ According to Scheler, *ressentiment* as the source of moral values was the most profound discovery of its kind in recent times. Scheler treated *ressentiment* as an ethical concern, but explored both its psychological and sociological implications. With Nietzsche, he concluded that its significance lay in its toxic power for value-formation and value-deception. When Nietzsche applied the concept to the value of Christian love, however, Scheler considered Nietzsche's theory to be 'completely mistaken' (1998:63). Scheler considered Christian love, or *agape*, not to be a consequence of *ressentiment*, but its complete opposite. According to Nietzsche, the provenance of *ressentiment* was the sensory realm, while *agape* belonged to the spiritual (64). The direction of *ressentiment*, in keeping with its ancient Greek origins, was from lower to higher, from image to essence, from ignorance to knowledge, and from need to fullness. Christian love reversed all of this so that strength inclined toward impotence, wealth to poverty, fullness to deficiency (64f). Furthermore, Scheler took issue with Nietzsche's assertion that moral judgements, sourced as they are in

²² Rawls and Strawson actually used the term, 'resentment', which Solomon accepts as virtually synonymous with *ressentiment* (1994:103).

²³ To be fair, Leiter does treat *ressentiment* analytically. Still, it is simply a thousand-word detour on the way to his explanation of the argument of the first essay in *OGM*.

²⁴ First edition: 1912 'Über Ressentiment und moralisches Werturteil' In *Zeitschrift für Pathopsychologie* Jahrg. I, H. 2/3 Leipzig: Verlag Engelmann. Final expanded form: 1915 'Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen' In *Gesammelte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*. The 1961 and subsequent translations are based on *Vom Umsturz der Werte* 4th edn, Vol. 3, Maria Scheler, ed., In M Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, 15 vols. Berne: Franke Verlag (Scheler 1961:33).

ressentiment, must be subjectively derived from repressed feelings and desires (117-21; 2012:270f). Perhaps as a vestige of his early Catholicism, and most certainly due to Kant's influence, Scheler held that *agape*, as an example of genuine morality, is 'never based on *ressentiment*', but 'rests on an eternal hierarchy of values [that] are fully as objective and clearly "evident" as mathematical truths' (1998:52f). The supreme manifestation of Christian love in the human record 'is supposed to have taken place in Galilee: God spontaneously "descended" to man, became a servant, and died the bad servant's death on the cross' (66)! In Nietzsche's schema, sacrificial love was manifestly *ressentiment*, and operated on a self-created value system that is the inverse of the status quo; for Scheler, such sacrifice merely recognised and moved toward higher values that come as givens (1973:228-32). Scheler concluded that 'the root of Christian love [i.e., as a reversal in values] is entirely *free of ressentiment*' (1998:67, see also 44-53).

A second significant figure to interact with Nietzsche's thought was Sigmund Freud. In 1914 he published an essay on 'The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement', boldly proclaiming that the whole structure of his budding discipline rested on the theory of repression (1962a:15f). In 1915 he elaborated on the theory in essays entitled, 'Repression' (146-58) and 'The Unconscious' (166-208).²⁵ Freud never used the term *ressentiment*, and though he claimed not to have been influenced by Nietzsche, many have argued to the contrary. Hans Loewald observed a direct influence on Freud from Nietzsche (1988:71). In *Nietzsche's Presence in Freud's Life and Thought* (1995), Ronald Lehrer marshalled evidence to indicate that Freud's debt was not merely inspirational, but substantively informational (1995). Jacob Taubes declared Freud to be 'very dependent' on Nietzsche (2004:88), and Barker claimed that repression accounts for Freud's own denial of Nietzsche's 'enormous impact' on him (1996:99). Didier Anzieu pointed out that Nietzsche coined the term *das Es* (the *id*),²⁶ and showed how dependent Freud's discussions of super-ego and guilt feelings were on Nietzsche's notions of resentment, bad conscience, and false morality (1986:88f; see also 100f, 581; Hollingdale 1999a:110-15; Smith 2011:129).²⁷

²⁵ This volume, *Die Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung*, was republished with minor additions in 1924 (Leipzig: International Psychoanalytischer Verlag). The 1962 translation is based on this version (Freud 1962a:3).

²⁶ Freud actually credited Georg Groddeck for this term (1989:17), though it is hard to believe that he was unaware that its genealogy led back to Nietzsche and his frequent use of the term.

²⁷ See also Hollingdale for similarities between Nietzsche's explanation of conscience and Freud's super-ego (1999:119-24). Regarding further possible influence of Nietzsche on Freud see Jones (1953-

Third, Max Weber in his posthumously published *The Sociology of Religion* (1922) highlighted *ressentiment* as the means of social revolution, whereby the Jews inverted their perceived status from a ‘pariah people’ to a prestigious one (1964:112, 15). Following Nietzsche, he argued they created an ethical system anchored in a religious scheme. This was achieved by inverting the ancient belief that privilege (i.e., blessing) flowed from righteousness, advocating instead that it stemmed from sinfulness. The unique hallmark of this novel order was vengeance. It manifested as ‘a conscious or unconscious desire for vengeance’ (110), a ‘religious resentment’ among the ‘disprivileged’ people (112), and as a universal deity whose wrath would be poured out on the entire world (113). When it came to Christianity’s alleged roots in *ressentiment*, however, Weber parted company with Nietzsche, arguing discontinuity with Jewish forbearers. Though he acknowledged *ressentiment* played a part in salvation religions (i.e., Judaism), he claimed it was merely part of a much larger and more complex reality, that of universal suffering. The drive for salvation was not exclusive to Christianity, nor Judaism for that matter. Weber said Christianity removed the ‘penetrating feeling of resentment (i.e., *ressentiment*)’ (115). It did this by addressing the intellectual needs of the human mind driven not by material circumstances, but ‘by an inner compulsion’ to pursue ethical and religious questions, and thus deriving a sense meaning and order in the cosmos (117).

Martin Heidegger was the fourth important scholar to engage Nietzsche. His work of the late 1940s found publication in a 1950 essay, ‘Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?’²⁸ He reworked Nietzsche’s views on the nature of being and time in such a way that they were no longer bound by ontology, in the attempt to obviate the all too human rancour against time, which was the existential origin of *ressentiment* (Heidegger 1968, see also 1972). He accomplished this by focusing on Zarathustra’s speeches, ‘The Convalescent’, ‘On the Great Longing’, and ‘On Redemption’ (1984:212-26). Heidegger also made significant use of ‘The Anaximander Fragment’, a text on which Nietzsche based his *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (PTG 1873).²⁹ According to Heidegger’s Nietzsche, mankind’s chief obstacle on the way to the overman (the one who could handle the eternal recurrence) was the spirit of revenge.

1957:3.283), Ellenberger (1970:276-78, 542f), Wallace (1983:17), Gellner (2003:20-22), Cybulska (2015).

²⁸ This essay, the fruit of a lecture course, was included in 1950 *Holzwege*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann GmbH. It was subsequently published in 1954 in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, and in 1961 in an eponymous four-volume work, *Nietzsche*, both Pfullingen: Verlag.

²⁹ See also Heidegger’s ‘The Anaximander Fragment’ In *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy* (1985) and ‘Anaximander’s Saying’ In *Off the Beaten Track* (2002).

Man's capacity for reflecting on himself was to relate *beings* to what is, i.e., Being, whether (perceived to be) actual or possible (1984:220f). Viewing Being through the thought of Schelling and Schopenhauer, Heidegger claimed that Nietzsche had in mind 'Being of beings' when he spoke of will-to-power (222f). This kind of thinking thrust Nietzsche into the metaphysical, which meant the spirit of revenge had to be dealt with in this realm and not merely in a psychological dimension. Heidegger used etymology to relate revenge to persecution, claiming it was not only reactive, but proactive. He does not specifically mention *ressentiment*, but he writes in terms that bespeak it:

Vengeful persecution ... defies its object by degrading it, in order to feel superior to what has been thus degraded; in this way it restores its own self-esteem, the only estimation that seems to count for it. For one who seeks vengeance is galled by the feeling that he has been thwarted and injured (221).

To define revenge even further than 'persecution that defies and degrades' (222), Heidegger quoted from Nietzsche's aphorism, 'On Redemption'" 'This ... alone is revenge itself: the will's ill will toward time and its "It was"' (223). The essence of this is time irrevocably passes away. Revenge (and *ressentiment*) hates transiency, so the will imposes constancy and absolutes to create an imaginary world it can control. In doing so, time and reality are degraded such that the eternal recurrence cannot be experienced, and the overman cannot realise itself as Being in the flux of time (224-26). Heidegger refused outright to discredit or refute Nietzsche, but he let stand Nietzsche's idea of 'perpetual Becoming through the eternal recurrence of the same' made *being* 'stable and permanent' (228). As such, he questioned whether or not Zarathustra's doctrine could actually overcome *ressentiment* or bring about redemption from the spirit of revenge (229).³⁰

Looking back over the half-century following Nietzsche's death, relatively few scholars entertained the concept of *ressentiment*. Those who did considered it for its ethical, psychological, and sociological implications. Scheler and Weber, in the decided minority of those who discussed it explicitly, made a turn by insulating Christianity from Nietzsche's accusation that it bore the noxious effects of *ressentiment* on Europe and western civilisation. Elsewhere, *ressentiment* was discussed conceptually in relation to its influence on the human psyche. It was also discussed in an attempt to provide a philosophical basis for the notion of Being by going beyond discussions in psychology

³⁰ Heidegger remarked, 'Nietzsche's metaphysics is not an overcoming of nihilism. It is the ultimate entanglement in nihilism' (1984:4:203).

and delving into the realm of ontology. Self-deception, as expressly involved in *ressentiment*, was virtually left unaddressed.

1.3.2 *Ressentiment* after World War II

After WWII, interest in Nietzsche began to rise, in part due to Walter Kaufmann's omnibus volume, *The Portable Nietzsche* (1954).³¹ It helped rehabilitate Nietzsche's image after being co-opted by the Nazis. Associated interest in *ressentiment* also increased in scholarly precincts, which I will treat in two groupings. The bulk of this interest came in the form of *ressentiment* as an applied concept in fields such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, politics, ethics, religion, and even economics. Scholars often worked in fields that overlapped others, say philosophy with sociology, or politics with ethics, in which case I have chosen a single field in which to categorise their contribution. Others delved into the technical aspects of the phenomenon itself. The secondary literature is voluminous enough that representative selections have been made.

Philosophy

In the field of philosophy, Pierre Klossowski was among the revolutionary thinkers who popularised Nietzsche in the francophone world of the 1960s and 70s. He was particularly enamoured of Nietzsche's solution³² to the toxic psychological state of *ressentiment*. That solution was the eternal recurrence. After thirty years of study, Klossowski presented a conference paper in 1964 entitled, 'Forgetting and anamnesis in the lived experience of the eternal return of the same'. He combined this with a collection of articles he wrote over the next few years to publish *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* in 1969. Michel Foucault, upon reading a hot-off-the-press copy, dispatched a letter to Klossowski, lauding it as 'the greatest book of philosophy I have read, [along] with Nietzsche himself' (2005:vii). In this volume, Klossowski picked up on Nietzsche's observation that the flow of time is irreversible (in *PTG*), which means all events, both willed and non-willed (i.e., those that lie beyond one's control) are fixed. Invariably, not everything that could have been done was accomplished, and even that which was done may have been wrong. Such imperfection, with its inherent suffering, becomes locked in time, rendering time punitive. The eternal recurrence removes the

³¹ It included complete translations of *Z*, *TI*, *A*, and *NCW*. Prefaces to each of these works, a general introduction, translated excerpts from ten other works, and notes rounded out the 700-page volume.

³² Klossowski actually called it 'redemption' (1997:69).

‘once and for all’ character of events, and the heaviness attending those who must live with them in consequence. The cause of guilt is thus removed, and *ressentiment* is obviated (Klossowski 1964:67-69). Klossowski courageously departed from the growing Nietzsche establishment by evaluating Nietzsche’s project to be a failure. It undermined stable reality, intelligible knowledge, identity of the subject, and coherency of experience. For Klossowski, the eternal recurrence turned out not to be a redemptive circle, but a vicious circle. Man does not overcome *ressentiment* en route to the superman, but is enslaved by it on the road to becoming inhuman (121-71).

Gilles Deleuze was another Nietzsche reviving force in post-WWII France. One of his most outstanding efforts was *Nietzsche & Philosophy* (1961) in which he analysed Nietzsche’s novel contribution of sense and value to the philosophical enterprise (Deleuze 1983:1). He used two key Nietzschean doctrines, the will-to-power and the eternal recurrence, to correct what he claimed was Hegel’s misguided attempt at universal synthesis (147-94). He founded his analysis on a faithful examination, by most accounts, of Nietzsche’s discussion of active and reactive forces. Deleuze was keen to distinguish the two by recycling Nietzsche’s types of the master and the slave. Everybody consists of a hierarchy of forces, but what makes one a master or a slave is the ‘determinate relation in the subject itself between the different forces of which it is made up’ (115). The master type is animated by active forces from within, which allow him to act independent of circumstantial or societal influences. Active forces create authentic humanity that is strong and free, self-determined and self-esteemed. The slave type, by contrast, draws his identity and meaning from external sources. Reactive forces animate this weak man who determines his worth and course of action by measuring himself against the strong master and by complying with the ruling system.

Deleuze said active forces manifest will-to-power, but reactive forces manifest *ressentiment*. Reactive forces may dominate, not by overcoming power, but rather by undermining it. Will-to-power is measured on the basis of one’s capacity for autonomy. The degree to which they determine their own meaning and action is the measure of their strength and nobility, i.e., the master type. Individuals characterised by *ressentiment* are reactive. What is more, they mask this from themselves with values of negation such as humility, patience, justice, and love.³³ These *ressentiment* values, which Deleuze strongly identified with Christianity, are entropic. When spoken of in terms of health and vitality, as Nietzsche so often did, they are toxic or pathological

³³ Nietzsche calls it ‘forgetting’ in *OGM* 2.1.

(1983:111-45).³⁴ *Ressentiment*—people crave stability and absolutes, leaving them constitutionally opposed to Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence, which Deleuze equated with the affirmation of chance. Change is therefore guaranteed, and this extends to the notion of being. ‘Returning is the being of that which becomes’ (48).

In 1980 Richard Ira Sugarman published a work on the phenomenology of *ressentiment*. He argued Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* (1994)³⁵ revealed a failure in Scheler’s otherwise indispensable work on *ressentiment*. Furthermore, he reconceived Heidegger’s work on the metaphysics of being and time. This paved a new way to understand the essence and origin of *ressentiment* in terms of an ontological structure of rancour against time. Sugarman put forth Dostoevsky’s underground man to illustrate the sense of losing one’s humanity through a morbid obsession with impotence in the face of an increasingly rational and scientific world. Only when man is willing to courageously choose his life—of suffering, success, religion, or of things constructive or destructive—is he truly free and in control of his destiny. Take away choice, and man ceases to be man. In underground man’s *ressentiment*-like experience, Nietzsche glimpsed how to overcome the spirit of revenge that animated it (Sugarman 1980:1-20).

Sugarman used Scheler’s work to subject the concrete, ontological form of *ressentiment* in the lived-experience to philosophical analysis. Scheler’s scheme permitted resentment to express desire for revenge without transmogrifying into *ressentiment*. This was done by allowing the self to consciously respond to unjust suffering with passion-infused sadness and/or anger. Sugarman argued that Scheler’s shortcoming was a failure to adequately account for how the self becomes being, i.e., the phenomenon of existence. In addition to ontological problems, it created ethical ones in that it left no solid foundation for the righteous indignation necessary to fight injustice. *Ressentiment* was thus left to cycle on to the deception of self-induced suffering (21-41). Heidegger’s interaction with Anaximander provided a corrective to this Schelerean devaluation of the historicity of being. Transience is the penalty that being pays to time, he gleaned from Anaximander. Morality enters the picture when the temporal character of reality is resisted by the spirit of revenge. Self-deception borne of *ressentiment* lay at its root, and a practical acquiescence to the way-things-are (i.e., being) as punishment. This locked man into a sadly fixed experience.

³⁴ See Klossowski above.

³⁵ The original publication, *Записки из Подполья* (1864), came in two parts, each serving as the feature of the first two issues of Dostoevsky’s journal, *Эпоха* (*The Epoch*), in January and February. The first English publication came in 1918, *Notes from Underground In White Nights, and Other Stories* C Garnett, trans., New York: Macmillan.

Nietzsche proposed the eternal recurrence and will-to-power to overcome this malady, and the overman to manifest its meaning. According to Heidegger, such a world would be devoid of meaning because it was comprised of discrete moments that, though each one recurred endlessly, none of them could serve to interpret the others (56-96). Sugarman's rethinking of Heidegger with respect to historicity, suffering, and longing allows for acknowledgement of the rancour against time, and the engendered *ressentiment*, to be overcome. This happens not in man's eternally recurring now's, but in the interstice between the inescapable response to his past and the unsettling openness posed by his future. Nietzschean and Schelerian *ressentiment* was obviated by building on Heidegger's ontology such that Being gives itself the time-event as a promise of what is to come (97-132).

Robert Solomon purported to critique postmodern philosophy by using the Nietzschean *ressentiment* diagnostically (1990:268f). He argued *ressentiment* is not altogether the despicable emotion that Nietzsche and his interpreters have made it (see also Solomon 1994). Rather, it has positive effects that include bolstering the value of egalitarianism, which is necessary for social cohesion, and energising the value of pluralism, which supplies the creativity necessary for revolutionary change. Yet Solomon fully admitted to *ressentiment* as a personal and social corrosive (1990:277-80). He concluded that 'postmodernism is an expression of academic *ressentiment*' on the part of those who find themselves marginalised and slighted by the enduring spirit of the age, despite their enthusiasm for alternative philosophies and their rejection of classical philosophies (289).

Christa Acampora's *Contesting Nietzsche* (2013), and particularly her chapter entitled 'Contesting Paul', argues *ressentiment*-based morality changes everything. It moves the location of the moral contest from the material to the metaphysical sphere (114-22). It changes the matter in dispute from values of becoming (i.e., good and bad) to those of being (i.e., good and evil) (122-26). It changes the goal of the contest from living in the moment, in which one may find their identity in present deeds that are open to all possible outcomes, to living in light of the past, which constrains both the present and future by what might have been (128-47).

Sociology

In the late 1960s and into the 70s, René Girard, a philosopher of social science, dealt with Nietzsche's moral philosophy in a way that forced him to part company with

‘contemporary Nietzscheans’ of his day, and with Heidegger (Girard 2001:244f). He applied *ressentiment* to anthropological studies, and to Nietzsche’s contention between Dionysus and Jesus as the Crucified. Girard held to the standard view that *ressentiment* is ‘the interiorization of weakened vengeance’, and ‘that its ultimate target is always *ressentiment* itself, its own mirror image, under a slightly different mask that makes it unrecognizable’ (252). In Jesus’ death as a sacrifice for sin and a way out of suffering, Nietzsche saw *ressentiment* as vengeance against master values (250), resulting in corruption of humanity. Girard recognised Christianity advocated the victim’s perspective, but he separated from the crowd by claiming the vengeance sought by *ressentiment* was not caused by Christianity. Jesus, as the uniquely voluntary and innocent victim, rendered the vengeful scapegoating mechanism inoperative (see also Girard 1987). Nietzsche had made this claim because he was shot through with *ressentiment* himself, which was made possible by the civilising effects of Christianity. Girard claims that only in the relative calm of nineteenth-century ‘post-Christian society’ could Nietzsche find ‘the luxury of resenting *ressentiment*’, and he called for ‘real vengeance’ to deal with what he considered its disastrous effects on society (2001:252f). Girard also implied that Heidegger’s endorsement of Nietzsche’s death of god (i.e., the exhaustion of the Christian religion) was a sign of his own *ressentiment*. Regardless of Heidegger’s denials of having nothing against Christianity, Girard maintained that Heidegger did in fact contend unawares with the biblical god (259f).³⁶

In 2002 social scientists Bernard Meltzer and Gil Musolf published an article detailing the similarities and differences between resentment and *ressentiment*. They acknowledged both Nietzsche’s groundbreaking work in formulating the concept of *ressentiment*, especially in application to the spread of Christianity, as well as its subsequent development by Scheler in relation to the rise of *l’esprit bourgeois* in Western Europe. They claimed a distinction between resentment and *ressentiment*. Resentment is the more common, fleeting emotion that takes umbrage over offenses and disparities. *Ressentiment* is a relatively less common, longer-term sustained response to similar stimuli (2002:241-45). They supplied empirical data to identify social contexts giving rise to *ressentiment*, obviously siding with a Schelerian perspective (245-47). They also highlighted consequences that may issue from *ressentiment*. They went beyond both Nietzsche and Scheler by concluding that *ressentiment*, rather than merely

³⁶ Girard claims even Freud to have manifested *ressentiment* when he writes about the collective murder of God in *Totem and Taboo* (2001:260).

resulting in a smouldering affective emotional state, may lead to individual and collective social activism that applies pressure for revolutionary change (248-51).

Psychology

Bernard Williams (1994) argued that Nietzsche's philosophy could simplify psychology to a moral system sourced in blame.³⁷ In the spirit of Paul Ricoeur's 'hermeneutics of suspicion', he claimed the task of morality is to diagnose problems in the phenomenon of the will (Williams 1994:239-41). This was based on two fundamental ideas: real action and an independent self, or agent. Williams cited the *BGE* Preface and *D* 2.124 to show that Nietzsche held these to be metaphysical illusions (contra Heidegger), as well as the notion of the one idea being caused by the other (243). The result is the unnatural phenomenon of blame, which Williams viewed as springing from Nietzsche's famous *ressentiment*. This was nothing more than an expression of power (244-46).

David Goicoechea (2000) employed *ressentiment* in articulating the psychology of evil. He used Augustine and Nietzsche as 'two of the greatest psychologists of the Western world' to make his case (Goicoechea 2000:54). With respect to good and evil, he said that Augustine's notion of free-willed choice dominated modern thought until Nietzsche came along with his notion of will-to-power. Will-to-power allowed one to overcome *ressentiment*, and pursue the joyful wisdom that is *amor fati*. Augustine held that choosing good required grace. Otherwise, choice, while seeming to be free, was really a self-deception because it was tethered to hidden radical evil. According to Goicoechea, Nietzsche's psychology went beyond Augustine in that it located this self-deception in the unconscious (55f).

Morgan Rempel (2002) examined Nietzsche's claim that Christianity was not a normal historical phenomenon, but a *psychohistorical* development sourced in the Apostle Paul (62ff). The substance of Nietzsche's examination was Paul's conversion experience (Acts 9, 22, 26), and may be found in *D* 1.68. According to Nietzsche, Paul's conversion came, not primarily by the flash of *light* accompanying the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, but by a flash of *insight* as to how to use the Crucified One for his own purposes. He deconstructs Paul's first-hand account of the event when he writes, '*Essentially* what happened ... is this', and then provides his own interpretation of what transpired in Paul's mind (italics supplied, *D* 1.68; see *A* 24).

³⁷ In this section, my reference is not to the field of psychology, but to those writers who take interest in Nietzsche's psychology.

Nietzsche's entirely novel and 'careful reading' (Nietzsche 1968:103) got behind Paul's words to his motives, sublimated by *ressentiment*, which were sourced in his need for relief from the crushing demands of God's law (see *WP* 2.171). So Paul projected his repressed self-reproach onto Jesus, transforming the Saviour's execution into an atonement. The relief Paul pursued but could not achieve (i.e., freedom from guiltiness) became possible by creating a religious system that could supply something that did not exist (i.e., forgiveness from deity). Rempel stresses that, for Nietzsche, Christianity was fuelled by *ressentiment*, leading to nihilism (2002:92-112).

Ken Gemes (2009) used Nietzsche's *ressentiment* to explicate the Freudian concept of sublimation in the discipline of psychotherapy, especially as it relates to the notion of repression. He held that repression involves the disintegration of the self and thus may manifest pathological symptoms, whereas sublimation achieves the integration of the self and is 'a necessary condition for full psychic health' (2009:38). Where Freud's account failed to make this distinction, Nietzsche's discussion of the majority of modern humanity, the herd, provided material for doing so. All human beings are a collection of competing drives, and herd humanity is characterised by the constant disorganisation of these drives.³⁸ This is repression, whereby a master drive stifles or forces into disguise weaker drives, not allowing them expression, or even causing them to manifest the inverse of the original aim of the strong drive (e.g., Christian love as an expression of envy). By contrast, sublimation is the process in which the master drive allies weak drives in a concerted result toward its original aim. Repression is characteristic of *ressentiment*; sublimation allows one to overcome it and embrace *amor fati* (46-52; see also Richardson 1996; May 1999). Gemes names Melanie Klein (1926), Hanna Segal (1952), and Hans Loewald (1973, 1988) as those in the minority of psychoanalysts influenced by Nietzsche (2009:52-54).

William Remley (2016) made the case that Nietzsche strongly influenced Sartre to the extent that his notion of *ressentiment* served as the basis for Sartre's analysis of racism and, particularly, anti-Semitism in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1948). The psychological structure of Sartrean anti-Semitism is similar to that of Nietzschean *ressentiment*. They both involve herd beings who hide from 'the other' in anonymity, hatefully negating 'the other' to affirm themselves (Remley 2016:149-52; see also Solomon 1994:110-12). They attempt to overcome what they perceive to be decadence

³⁸ Nowhere does Gemes use the term will-to-power, but his discussion of drives may be generally understood under such rubric.

in the surrounding culture, and fear might be affecting them, by redirecting their deepest beliefs and drives. This is the sublimation and self-deception of *ressentiment*, and is made possible by the constant reality of will-to-power, only with different accident-goals (see Reginster 1997:282f). As propounded by Nietzsche, fear of the other and the self-overcoming made possible by will-to-power found much relevance for Sartre in the problem of anti-Semitism. The solution to anti-Semitism found correspondence in Nietzsche's *ressentiment*. Will-to-power allows one to overcome circumstances to become a whole, authentic person in a Nietzschean sense, and also in a Sartrean sense (Remley 2016:153-57).

Politics

In the field of politics, Jean Améry,³⁹ a survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, published an essay in 1966 entitled, 'Resentments'.⁴⁰ Based on the inhumanity he and millions of other Jews experienced at the hand of the Nazis, he justified his resentments as 'the special kind ... of which neither Nietzsche nor Scheler ... was able to have any notion' (1980:71). Two decades of contemplation resulted in his estimation that the natural process of psychological healing in which polite society encourages forgives and forgets is 'immoral' (72). Therefore, Améry viewed resentment (i.e., *ressentiment*) as the only emotion powerful enough to fight injustice (i.e., the Holocaust). It could do this by maintaining a posture of unforgiveness and a mindset of not forgetting in the face of social pressures to move on and normalise relations. Only resentment keeps the pain of injury sufficiently alive to beget the emotional energy and moral courage necessary to prevent such abhorrence from recurring (73-81). Though he committed suicide in 1978, Améry's work has influenced others who work in matters of retributive, distributive, and reconciliatory justice (Heyd 2004; Brudholm 2008; Fassin 2013).

The eminent political philosopher, John Rawls, published *A Theory of Justice* (1971).⁴¹ His landmark work attempted to develop a philosophy of justice for application to political structures, the goals of which were to formulate a framework for

³⁹ Améry was born, Hanns Chaim Mayer.

⁴⁰ The original title, '*Ressentiments*', was translated into English as '*Resentments*' for inclusion in a collection of his writings entitled, *At the Mind's Limits* (1980). This posthumously published version is the one referenced here.

⁴¹ This edition was primarily comprised of articles previously written by Rawls. In his 'Preface to the Revised Edition' (1999), Rawls states he extensively revised his work for a 1975 German translation (as well as other languages), responding to criticisms and incorporating insights subsequently gained. These changes were reflected for the first time in the 1999 English publication, which is the edition referenced here.

corporate justice and to safeguard individual freedom. He briefly touched on Nietzsche's notion of *ressentiment* in a discussion of the role of envy in a just social system.⁴² He distinguished between envy and resentment, the latter being a 'moral feeling', the former, not. Rawls' point was not to laud resentment, but to make it a tool of rationality in achieving social justice (see Rawls 1999:467-74).

Literary critic, Fredric Jameson, published a seminal work on Hegelian-Marxist philosophy, *The Political Unconscious* (1981). He theorised literary creation is inescapably, even if unconsciously, affected by historical context and the respective forces at play within them (1981:17). Thus, literary interpretation is political interpretation: 'always historicize' (9). In applying his theory to classical texts of Balzac, Gissing, and Conrad, one of Jameson's chief tools was the 'ideologeme', which is the ideological kernel that is both descriptive and prescriptive of culture (76). Ideologemes transmit 'narrative paradigms' from ancestors to descendants, but they do so as subtext (185). *Ressentiment*, was 'the ultimate negative category' of ideologeme (60f) that framed nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western literature (and culture) in the binary distinctions of good and evil (87f). Jameson identified Nietzsche as 'the primary theorist' of *ressentiment*, 'if not, indeed, [its] metaphysician' (201; see also Dowling 1984:133). Yet he suggests that Nietzsche was also ignorant of the fact that *ressentiment* was already a reality of the European culture of the day. That is, *ressentiment* was a bourgeois value wielded by its elite to both maintain their standing in society and deny social advancement to poorer classes (Jameson 1981:201f). Support for Jameson's proposal of Nietzsche's ignorance might be found in the historical context of Nietzsche's life.

Ethics

Robert Solomon (1994) cast *ressentiment* in a constructive light in a lengthy discussion of its ethical dimensions and how they might impact ethics. He argued Nietzsche's brilliant insights concerning resentment⁴³ were caricatured by traditional expositors. Solomon preferred aspects of Scheler's more positive assessment of the phenomenon. First, he did not regard resentment 'an ethics of weakness, an expression of weakness, or a devious attempt to protect the weak from the strong', but suggested it sprang from the free and educated of all societies who merely wanted to increase their already

⁴² Pertinent to his discussion, Rawls only mentioned Nietzsche in a footnote (1999:469, footnote 8). Also, his discourse employed the term resentment instead of *ressentiment*.

⁴³ See Solomon in footnote 22 of this chapter.

ascending power (Solomon 1994:115). Second, resentment is ‘a keen sense of injustice’ that links members of society together, regardless of stresses and discord (117; see also 1990:278f). It gives rise to politics and a give-and-take strategy that acknowledges shared disadvantage and injury, thus legitimating dissent as a means of achieving justice for all (1994:116f, 124).

Daniel Smith (2011) discussed Deleuze’s theory of desire, with particular attention to the unconscious, in the context of immanent ethics. Deleuze equated ‘morality’ with ‘constraining’ rules used to judge actions and motives based on transcendent values, while ‘ethics’ was a group of ‘facilitative’ rules that evaluated action, thought, and speech in relation to whatever mode of existence was implied (Smith 2011:124). Morality asks the question, What *must* I do, signifying actions are measured and power is constrained by limits. Immanent ethics ask the question, What *can* I do, and is interested in expansive capacities that go beyond limits. Smith claimed Deleuze looked to Nietzsche (and Spinoza) for such an immanent approach to ethics (124). Nietzsche advocated replacing the transcendent duality of good and evil with the immanent ethical contest between master and slave modes of existence. *Ressentiment* thwarts all this by creating an illusory transcendent world that gives us limits (i.e., enslaves) and perverts our desire such that we no longer seek expansion, but desire our own repression (i.e., self-deception) (125f).

Christine Swanton (2011) made a case for Nietzschean virtue ethics. Virtue is driven by will-to-power, which itself is understood as increasing strength, growth, and improvement in becoming who one is (Swanton 2011:297-302; see also Richardson 2001). Self-improvement is the basis of action, not its goal. Since there is no terminal point at which action for improvement ceases, virtue may be conceived as relative. The point of reference is the strength of the subject at any point of evaluation (Swanton 2011:300). Not only is virtue continuous, but it is also agonistic in that it necessarily involves, among other things, self-overcoming. The key is will-to-power in its overflow that manifests in Nietzschean virtue in the strong. Swanton cites Nietzsche’s example of the noble response of dismissing an offense (*OGM* 2.10). Whatever danger, destruction, or deficit the transgression might have imposed is overcome by the strength of nobility. This the weak cannot do, at least not inwardly, for their clemency ‘may be a form of repression in which anger is driven inward [i.e., resentment] and surfaces in various distortions’ (Swanton 2011:301). In ‘this self-sublation of justice ... mercy ... remains

the prerogative [i.e., virtue] of the most powerful’, by which Nietzsche meant those who live beyond the law (*OGM* 2.10).

Religion

Jörg Salaquarda was among those who engaged Nietzsche’s thought in the realm of religion. In ‘Nietzsche and the Judeo-Christian Tradition’ (1997) he argued Nietzsche’s presentation of *ressentiment*-motivated Christianity was erroneous, and even false (1997:107). He did, however, acknowledge the existence of *ressentiment* as a psychological attribute of reactive morality, and conceded the religious sphere may be especially susceptible to it. He ultimately rejected, with Scheler (1998), Nietzsche’s assertion that the roots of Judeo-Christianity grew out of the soil of *ressentiment* (1997:109).

Thomas Bertonneau (1997) argued along similar lines. He used a second-century work, *True Doctrine*,⁴⁴ by anti-Christian Greek, Celsus, to critique Nietzsche’s assault on Judaism, Christianity, and Jesus (1997:2f). Bertonneau quoted extensively from Celsus to evidence his vilification of Christianity, claiming the animating spirit of his attack presaged Girardian mimesis and the scapegoat mechanism (8). Yet such calumny itself revealed resentment, which Bertonneau described as the desire for life and being that lies beyond one’s reach, so that the pain of not having it must be assuaged by devaluing the said life and being (11). Bertonneau, a self-professed non-believer, concluded that Nietzsche’s particular denigration of both Christianity and Jesus exposes his own enthrallment to resentment (14; see also Conway 1994:328). Gary Banham corroborated this point in ‘Jews, Judaism, and the ‘Free Spirit’ when he suggested the Nietzschean personae behind the authorship of *A* ‘partakes very fully’ of the revenge it purports to expose (2000:74f).

Tim Murphy’s ‘Peter, Paul, and Nietzsche: Tracing the Signifier “Christ” through Christian History’ (2001) showed how the psychological essence of *ressentiment* translates to political power (131). He highlighted the creative and transformative nature of *ressentiment* to support his claim that Jesus and the ideals he manifested were reinterpreted and adapted to suit the needs of historically subsequent parties. Against much established literature on Nietzsche’s critique of the early church (see *OGM* 2.12), Murphy claimed Nietzsche viewed ‘Paul’ as the signifier of the early church, the group

⁴⁴ This work (Greek, Ἀληθῆς Λόγος) is available in English (Celsus 1987). It is translated from its only surviving source, Origen’s *Contra Celsum*.

whose *ressentiment* caused him to revalue and reverse values in such a way that they needed not be related to their source (Murphy 2001:133-37). Before Paul, 'Peter' was the signifier of the early disciple-Synoptic community (128-33). After Paul, Luther became the signifier (137-39). Beyond Luther, it was the entire history of Christianity (139f). Murphy concluded with the point that Nietzsche, perhaps unwittingly, rendered a critique on German Protestant Hegelianism. By mapping his own revaluation onto both the past and the present, history could not be seen as the progressive unfolding of ultimate meaning and purpose, but rather an ironic manifestation of opposites (140f; see also Shapiro 1989:131f).

Bruce Benson, in *Pious Nietzsche* (2008), asserted fundamentally that Nietzsche argued most with those whom he resembled, and Paul was one such person (73). Benson gave a familiar sketch of Paul's and Christianity's relationship with *ressentiment* (120-33). Particularly interesting was Benson's strong suggestion that Nietzsche was full of *ressentiment* and full of self-deception. In this regard, Benson frequently associated the two concepts (162f, 202-11).

Economics

In 'Nietzsche, Proficiency, and the (New) Spirit of Capitalism' (2015), Bernard Reginster discussed virtue ethics in the context of economics. He said *ressentiment* is an obstacle to entrepreneurial capitalism (Reginster 2015:458). He argued capitalism showcases Nietzsche's will-to-power through the prized value of proficiency (and effectiveness). It is typically identified as an executive virtue (475). By it one imposes values through achieving desired ends, come what may, overcoming failure or success, destruction or construction. Reginster proposed that will-to-power be construed as 'the desire for effective agency', and its resulting satisfaction be equated with Nietzsche's 'feeling of power [as] an experience of ability, competence, or proficiency' (455f). He suggested proficiency is 'a central and essential ingredient of happiness', which 'has been appropriated to anchor the ethical outlook of capitalist entrepreneurship' (463). *Ressentiment* threatens achievement of these happy and virtuous ends by bringing to the fore a feeling of impotence, which neutralises the courage requisite for the capitalist enterprise (475). Any success thus achieved is hollow because the agent's feat would then be measured by values altered from original ones (457).

Having looked at applications of *ressentiment* in specific fields of study, we turn now to matters of conceptual analysis in the reception of *ressentiment*. First, we will

consider the phenomenon of *ressentiment* as it is treated in terms of its overall contours. We will then examine several aspects of *ressentiment* that are matters of debate.

Among the few scholars that analysed the phenomenon of *ressentiment* itself, there is general agreement over its major contours (Sugarman 1980, Reginster 1997, Morelli 2008; Poellner 2004, 2011). The bulk of Nietzsche's explicit discussion of *ressentiment* may be found in *OGM* 1.10-14, 2.11, and 3.14-15. Chapter Two of this thesis will cover *ressentiment* in depth, but a précis of the phenomenon is offered here. *Ressentiment* is a psychological state initiated by some offence or injury, actual or imagined, resulting in a feeling of inferiority by the party offended, who also feels powerless to rectify their now oppressive circumstance. Blame for the injury, which Nietzsche often refers to in terms of suffering, is assigned by the offended to the offender. This casts the offender as a hostile 'other', and catalyses a response of resentment in the offended. Over time this response to the offence at the original injury generates both a desire for mastery over the oppressor and a heightened sense of inability to bring that circumstance about. Therefore, the offended party adopts a new evaluative matrix that inverts the previous one. This results in a perceived alleviation of suffering. Concomitantly, a new balance of power arises wherein the offended now feels justifiably superior to the oppressor who, by the same token, is now seen to be inferior. This much is largely uncontested.

There are internecine debates over various aspects of *ressentiment* such as terminology, valuation, positive value, structure, and self-deception. With respect to terminology, commentators are divided as to whether to use *ressentiment* or resentment in reference to Nietzsche's umbrella phenomenon of reactive-feelings. Legions use the terms as functional equivalents, albeit with qualifications, often for the sake of convenience to the English reader. For example, Williams states that, other than *ressentiment* having become technical terminology in psychology, resentment adequately covers Nietzsche's intended meaning if it is considered sublimated (2000:136, note 6; see also Solomon 1994:103; Richardson 1996:60; Bertonneau 1997:11; van Tongeren 2000:211; Meltzer & Musolf:2002:242; Brudholm 2008:13f). Others maintain that, while resentment can refer to Nietzsche's *ressentiment*, a distinction is necessary for the latter to bear the freight Nietzsche intended for it in the first place (e.g., Scheler 1961; Weber 1964:110-17; Nehamas 1985:162f; Bittner 1994:128; Higgins 1994:43; Reginster 1997:296f, 287; 2015:458, Fassin 2013:253f). For example, Reginster claims that resentment is best used in a restricted moral sense

that presupposes the condemnation of rejected values, while *ressentiment* refers to an irrational endorsement of the very values rejected (1997:296).

With respect to the valuation (or revaluation) function of *ressentiment*, what is it that *ressentiment* changes or re-/devalues?⁴⁵ Leiter states that *ressentiment*-filled slaves devalue ‘unpleasant stimuli’ (2003:204), the stimuli he later characterises as ‘*really* external (i.e., the masters, their oppressors)’ (italics supplied, 259; see also Morelli 1998:4).⁴⁶ For Deleuze, ‘values are changed’ (1983:170; see also Schacht 1995:16; Solomon 1996:208f). By this otherwise simple statement, he actually means that *ressentiment*, as the passive and unwitting nihilistic expression of will-to-power (by which it is typically known), must actively value reactive feelings so as to embrace them, and thus affirm them (Deleuze 1983:172-75; see also Rose 1993). Reginster claims *ressentiment* does not revalue values themselves, i.e., the attributes associated with the one who is resented (i.e., strength, beauty, unfettered freedom). What changes is the way the ‘man of *ressentiment*’ (*OGM* 1.10) relates to those attributes. Secretly, he still prizes the said attributes and wants to pursue them, yet openly he rejects them (Reginster 1997:289-97). Thus, he is plunged into self-deception, relating to the said values both favourably and unfavourably out of a dis-integrated self (297-305). Guy Elgat claims that the slaves revalue *ressentiment* itself, so instead of desiring revenge, they interpret their drive as an aspiration for hope and justice. Concomitantly, they perform a ‘meta-revaluation’ on the entire project of revaluation itself so that hope and justice become (positive) moral objectives and laws (Elgat 2015:539; see *OGM* 3.14).

Regarding the value of *ressentiment* itself, Peter Poellner stands virtually alone in the claim that *ressentiment* possesses no net positive phenomenal value (2009b:167f, footnote 27). Contra Nietzsche’s apparent partial endorsement of *ressentiment* (*OGM* 1.10; *WP* 693, 695), Poellner suggests a) any gains from *ressentiment* are necessarily tainted by self-contempt, rendering them undesirable, and b) nowhere does Nietzsche affirm that any instrumental value from *ressentiment* (e.g., cleverness) makes *ressentiment* necessary for the acquisition of such a gain, for it could be acquired by other means. A host of others regard *ressentiment* as ultimately positive for the phenomenal results it causes. Examples include Améry (1980), Solomon (1994), Barbalet (1988), Rawls (1999), Small (2001), Bowles (2003), and Fassin (2013) who advocate its use in fighting injustice. Kathleen Marie Higgins (1994) views *ressentiment*

⁴⁵ The nature of valuation will be discussed at length in Chapter Two of this thesis.

⁴⁶ In light of footnote 22 above, Leiter’s comment may fairly be interpreted as non-technical.

as a sort of emetic that makes us sick enough to recognise our problem of repression, and want to do something about it.

There are numerous ways of representing the structure of *ressentiment* in terms of number and/or level of elements, features, or parts. Reginster depicts *ressentiment* as a combination of three elements (1997:286f). Goicoechea's representation breaks down into five parts (2000:54-56). Poellner conceptualises the phenomenon in six essential constituents (2004:48f).⁴⁷ Morelli combines both Nietzsche's and Scheler's conceptions of *ressentiment* in a structure cycling through nine elements (1998). Sugarman views Scheler's schema as an elaboration of Nietzsche's philosophical work on *ressentiment*, and graphically portrays it in what he calls a 'Hermeneutical Circle of *Ressentiment*' (1980:32, see also 21-34). My own scheme consists of four components, and provides the structure for Chapter Two of this thesis.⁴⁸

One such component in *ressentiment* is self-deception, the psychological phenomenon that pervades Nietzsche's discussions of moral valuation in his mature period (Pippin 2010:90). I consider self-deception the culminating move of *ressentiment*, and it serves as the focal point of this thesis. Self-deception allows the injured, oppressed party to justify for themselves the process by which they enjoy acquired power over their former oppressor. It supplies a confidence rooted in the way things ought to be (i.e., morality), resulting in a deep and abiding strength to maintain power. Self-deception as a general phenomenon has generated numerous matters for debate including whether attitudes, beliefs, and memories are held in the conscious or unconscious, as well as whether the processes in achieving them are reflexive or controlled. There are also matters debated particularly in the Nietzschean literature on the self-deception of *ressentiment*. They include, chiefly, models of the self and matters of agency. Both of these boast voluminous literature, the complex intricacies of which lie beyond the scope of this thesis. What follows is a classification of notable contributors in these two debates pertaining to self-deception in *ressentiment*.

The first debate concerns the fundamental models of the self discussed in Nietzschean literature on self-deception, of which there are principally two. The first may be grouped under the rubric of deflationary models. Sometimes referred to as literal or 'garden variety' self-deception, deflationary models discount unconscious motives or beliefs, as well as sub-agents. Very few Nietzsche scholars embrace a deflationist

⁴⁷ Chapter Four of this thesis explicates Poellner's work.

⁴⁸ It should be noted that the various elements, features, or parts of one author's schema may be subsumed or combined in one or more of those of another author's.

interpretation of Nietzsche, but multitudes give at least cursory mention of it to provide contrast for their own models.⁴⁹ One Nietzschean deflationist is Guy Elgat (2015). He applies Mele's deflationary understanding of self-deception (2000) to Nietzsche's account of slave self-deception. Claiming the advantages of empirical support and simplest explanation (2015:541f), Elgat argues slave self-deception does not require conflicting beliefs or intentions, held either consciously or unconsciously, to generate the *ressentiment* project of revaluation that produces new values embraced by slaves (525, 538-41). Rüdiger Bittner (1994), also a deflationist, argues that *ressentiment* is an everyday phenomenon experienced by suffering people who desire something better. They are predisposed to want change, so they bias evidence and manufacture lies, slightly and incrementally enough so they can upgrade their metaphysical and moral beliefs, thus making them feel better about themselves (13-33).

A much more common approach to Nietzschean self-deception is found in Divided Mind models. These accounts consist of psychological divisions or subsystems that hold relatively autonomous beliefs, motives, and desires. These models are attractive to Nietzscheans because of his statements on fundamental conflicting drives (*BGE* 1.12, 2.36; *WP* 2.179, 3.488-92) and repressed instincts (*OGM* 1.10). Speaking of repression, Freud's theory of repression and the unconscious from the early twentieth-century was foundational for later Nietzsche scholarship.⁵⁰ Reginster (2007) observes the 'pathological logic' of *ressentiment* (303; *WP* 2.135) causes a loss of integrity of the self, which results in a diminished life experience (301-05). The *ressentiment* type of 'self-deception is precisely such a self-division' that results in a 'split within the agent's self' (298; see also Via 1990:10, 17; Janaway 2007:205-22; Katsafanas 2001:184f). Sharli Paphitis (2010) agrees with Reginster, but couches her discussion in terms of a rational slavish self wanting to overrule an animal master self. The rational self, in an effort to ameliorate the pain of internal conflict, overrules instinctive affects in favour of reflective ones to achieve a sense of wholeness (124; see also Morelli 1998). In so doing, a person deceives themselves by denying genuine aspects of their self as a true expression of who they are (Paphitis 2010:126-29). Only when a person courageously embraces the pain of conflict between their conflicting 'selves' can they experience

⁴⁹ Greg Ten Elshof may also be associated with this model, but his interpretation of *ressentiment* is mostly Schelerian (2009:64ff); Nietzsche is only briefly mentioned (76). Note also his use of non-Nietzschean philosophers Annette Barnes (1997), David Pears (1998), Herbert Fingarette (2000), and Alfred Mele (2000).

⁵⁰ Herbert Fingarette and David Pears first published material relevant to this discussion in 1969 and 1984 respectively. Though they do not reference Nietzsche, their work in the philosophy of the mind, and particularly in self-deception, made them attractive to Nietzsche scholars.

psychological integrity and be their truest or most real self (128f). John Richardson (1996) explains competing drives and conflicting fundamental values in terms of Nietzsche's famed 'Perspectivism' in *Nietzsche's System* (35-39). The resentment of the slave disrupts the affective sense of wholeness and associated feelings of strength and joy that the master creates, despite the chaos of drives that constitutes the self. The blame generated by resentment causes the slave to seek external reasons for their own suffering, while denying the cause within themselves. Thus, they impose a revalued order on the world around them, effectively disjoining them from their past and disordering them toward the future (133-35). Poellner accounts for the unity-in-diversity phenomenon of the self by positing two mental systems, in what I call a Revised Sartrean-influenced model (2004:60-64).⁵¹ Borrowing from both Husserl and Sartre, he suggests a unified self is best achieved when one (consciously) accepts the greatest diversity of phenomenal values in the lived-world, good and bad, actual or potential, then orients one's life so that the internal (unconscious) ordering of drives reflect those values. *Ressentiment* hinders such an attempt, rendering the self 'unfree' (i.e., a slave). The inability to see this about oneself constitutes self-deception (2009b:168f; see also Sartre 1956:439f).

A second debate regarding Nietzschean self-deception concerns agency. There are many concepts and issues that fold into agency such as morality, freedom, free will, spontaneity, control, autonomy, intention, motive, action, responsibility, culpability, and consciousness. Not only do many of these overlap, they intrude on debates other than agency. In light of constraints on this thesis, we will engage the surface level of the discussion, i.e., whether or not Nietzschean self-deception involves moral agency. The qualification of agency as moral, itself, becomes immediately thorny. For my purposes, I shall consider it as the case when the self has epistemic access to genuinely causal and effectual motives. Representative of those who hold that the self cannot manifest such agency include Leiter and Reginster.

Leiter points out Nietzsche in *D* repeatedly compares humans to plants. Plants do not need a 'gardener' to direct their genetics (i.e., basic drives) to grow (2003:62f). Leiter canvasses *D* along these conceptual lines, as this excerpt shows from *D* 2.116: 'The primeval delusion still lives on that one knows ... how human action is brought about ... [But] [a]ctions are never what they appear to be ... Moral actions ... are essentially unknown' (Nietzsche quoted in Leiter 2003:102). Without personal

⁵¹ This position is detailed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

knowledge of one's motives, moral agency is impossible. Reginster likewise holds to a naturalistic account of Nietzschean agency, discussing it in the context of a psychology of Christian morality (2013). Morality is simply a function of drives, which themselves arise from physiological sources (see *BGE* 1.6; *GS* 4.335). Such 'agency' lacks genuine free will (see *BGE* 1.21; *TI* 'The Four Great Errors' 7), and its consciousness is either a secondary cause or an epiphenomenal incidence (see *D* 2.116; *GS* 4.333; *WP* 3.478) (Reginster 2013:702). Even when Nietzsche describes 'the sovereign individual' (*OGM* 2.2) as one who is 'able to vouch for itself as future' (2.1), Leiter claims such rhetoric is merely an accommodation to the reader, and that Nietzsche still 'does not think human beings have a capacity for genuinely autonomous choice' (Leiter 2003:227f). When *ressentiment* enters the picture, it transfers the locus of valuation from the material to the metaphysical, from the physiological to the rational, and from the individual to the universal. Christian morality, as Nietzsche characterises it in *OGM* 3.11, is life-denying for its self-contradiction. Will-to-power, that which ultimately drives all living things, is thus pitted against itself such that the self is rendered unaware of its instinctual desires. The self seeks to meet manufactured needs (i.e., metaphysical) which can never be satisfied—a dangerous and pathological route to nothingness (Reginster 2013:720-24).

On the other side of the debate are those who hold the Nietzschean self can and does manifest moral agency. Solomon takes issue with Nietzsche's 'supposedly "neutral" descriptions' of agency illustrated in lambs and birds of prey *OGM* 1.13 (1994:121, see also 115-20). He claims these portrayals are predicated on a simple-minded dualism (weak versus strong) rooted in a poorly devised biological determinism (115f). Solomon argues this determinism, which is Nietzsche's 'peculiar brand of fatalism (*amor fati*)', when combined with his dualism, suggests that weakness and strength are fixed as surely biological characteristics (120f). This obviates a robust sense of agency and ethics, since behaviour is predetermined. Becoming what one is becomes somewhat muted. Against this, Solomon contends we have 'a great deal of latitude in the cultivation of our innate abilities' (121; see also Janaway 2007:123). Biological and sociological influences notwithstanding, he claims virtue can be manifested and even cultivated, and that resentment, contrary to popular interpretation of Nietzsche, serves to invest the agent with a sense of meaningful stakes against which to measure our actions (Solomon 1994:121-24). John Richardson (1996) qualifies an agent as one who commands the long process, backwards and forwards, of willing (in the sense of approving, or finding pleasure in) all events, circumstances, forces, and

actions as one's own (207-16). Gabriel Zamosc (2011) also holds to a sense of agency in Nietzsche, and particularly takes issue with Leiter's interpretation of the sovereign individual. Nietzsche's language in *OGM* 2.2 is not accommodation, but plain on its face: the sovereign individual, answering only to himself, is free from 'the morality of custom, [and] is autonomous and supramoral (for "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive)'. The sovereign individual is not bound by ethical code⁵² dressed in a 'social straightjacket' (*OGM* 2.2). His behaviour is self-determined, not imposed by an external system. Furthermore, Nietzsche's description of the sovereign individual as 'master over himself' strongly suggests enough strength and enough awareness of will and desire is at hand to carry through as a moral agent, regardless of fated circumstances (Zamosc 2011:110f).⁵³ Ken Gemes (2009) asserts that 'genuine agency' requires 'agency free will', which only those who possess the requisite courage and capacity may achieve (37, see also 37-45). Robert Pippin's (2010) 'expressivist' view holds that agency is not behind the deed (see *OGM* 1.13), but in it. Agency is expressed through what happens in the present (i.e., action), and need not be concerned with what has not happened. Agency takes responsibility for the present, thus obviating guilt over the past and the *ressentiment* generated thereby (Pippin 2010:67-84; see also Acampora 2013:139-50). Thomas Miles (2011), similar to Zamosc, considers the 'self-mastery' of the sovereign individual to consist 'of a self-affirming conscience that guides [him] to take on great tasks and fulfil his commitments to them' (12).

From the foregoing review of the relevant literature we can see that the Nietzschean conceptualisation of *ressentiment* was entertained by few scholars prior to the Second World War. Even when it was, self-deception as an associated phenomenon was hardly addressed. In the second half of the Twentieth Century to the present, study of Nietzschean *ressentiment* gained momentum, particularly as an applied concept to various fields such as sociology, politics, and religion. Comparatively few scholars examined the phenomenon of *ressentiment* itself for its technical aspects, and even fewer specifically focused on the constituent aspect of self-deception.

It is in this field I locate my thesis. I propose a connection between the way Nietzsche regards *ressentiment* and the way Paul regards the fall. This entails folding

⁵² In the phrase, 'the morality of custom' (*die Sittlichkeit der Sitte*), the German word for 'moral' (*sittlich*) can also mean 'ethical' (Zamosc 2011:110).

⁵³ Zamosc makes a similar argument against Reginster's presentation of the sovereign individual (2011:70-73) (Zamosc 2011:127f, note 9; 133f, note 27).

together elements of Nietzsche's philosophy and the Apostle Paul's theology, teasing out both for their psychological and sociological implications. The purpose of this approach is to shed light on the way Nietzsche and Paul explicitly or implicitly understand self-deception in the conceptual context of *ressentiment*. This calls less for new interpretations of Nietzsche and Paul, independently considered, than for theoretical linkage between the two. Specifically, I want to facilitate a two-way engagement in which Nietzsche's appraisal of Paul in regard to morality opens a way of Pauline reflection back onto Nietzsche. First, therefore, I will seek a Nietzschean reading of Paul through a *ressentiment* lens, principally of the Apostle's understanding of sin involving self-deception as practised by the 'unrighteous' in Romans 1 and 2.⁵⁴ I will then consider how Paul might respond to Nietzsche on Nietzsche's terms, yet retain his own substance. This kind of engagement has not been attempted before.

We must now entertain a word on the source texts used to study Nietzsche's thought, with special reference to the relevant works translated into English.

1.4 English Translation of Source Texts

English translations of Nietzsche's works are plentiful today, and they began to roll out shortly after his death. Oscar Levy enlisted a cadre of translators for his eighteen-volume project, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1909-13). Little further work was done until after WWII when, most notably, Walter Kaufmann undertook a fresh translation of Nietzsche. His compendium, *The Portable Nietzsche* (1954), was an attempt to correct previous misinterpretations. By the late 1950s and early 60s Italian scholars, Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari, had begun first-hand investigation of Nietzsche's notebooks preserved at the Goethe and Schiller Archive in Weimar, Germany. The fruit of their labours was a multi-volume, critical German translation, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW)*, commenced in 1967.⁵⁵ In 1980, a cost-effective, condensed edition was launched by Ernst Behler and Bernd Magnus, then taken up and continued by Alan Schrift and Duncan Large. The result was the fifteen-volume set, *Kritische Studienausgabe (KSW)*, which has arguably become the defacto standard edition. The work of these scholars and associated teams of researchers resulted in dissemination of comprehensive translations to the wider world. In 1995, Stanford University Press undertook a translation of the entire Nietzschean corpus into English—

⁵⁴ All Scripture passages are taken from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

⁵⁵ The *Digital Critical Edition (eKGWB)* is available online at 'Nietzsche Source', <http://www.nietzsche-source.org/#eKGWB> (accessed 16 December 2016).

published and unpublished works, complete with notebooks from his early years and his tenure at Basel, as well as material previously unavailable dated to his final years. The projected goal was an entirely comprehensive and even more critical work in nineteen volumes, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*.⁵⁶ In terms of translation, I predominantly use this edition in my thesis, while a plethora of other excellent English translations rounds out the references made.

In terms of content, this thesis is predominantly occupied with Nietzsche's later writings, those published from 1881 onward that *explicitly* feature morality.⁵⁷ My chief exhibits are *Beyond Good and Evil (BGE)* and *On the Genealogy of Morality (OGM)*, both of which Nietzsche himself considered his 'most far-reaching and important' works (Middleton 1969:299), as well as linked in purpose (*OGM* 1.17).⁵⁸ The former of the pair proves to be a provisional expression of the latter (*OGM* 'Preface' 2), and the latter is intended to be a sequel to the former (*OGM* 'Editor's Introduction' 1; see Magnus 1985:305). *OGM* also contains the preponderant usage of Nietzsche's term, *ressentiment*, as well as the *locus classicus* of the same in 1.10. Lampert, citing Strauss, claims that Nietzsche writes *BGE* with an upward-building architecture consisting of 296 sections/parts (*Stücke*), comprising nine chief sections/parts (*Hauptstücke*), organised into two main divisions, separated by 'Epigrams and Interludes', all framed by a 'Preface' and an 'Aftersong'—'the whole book is a coherent argument that never lets up' (2001:6f; see Kaufmann 1974a:108). Likewise, Nietzsche arranges the aphorisms of *OGM* into essays which, in turn, coalesce into a passionate argument. Schacht draws attention to *OGM*'s preface to signal that Nietzsche 'aspires to comprehension in a strong sense of the term, and will settle for nothing less' (1995:259). Deleuze calls it his 'most *systematic* book' (italics supplied, 1983:87; see Staten 1990:15). White, after quoting Nietzsche's eschewance of systematisation in *TI* ('Arrows and Epigrams' 26), writes that though he 'does not strive to be systematic', this does not mean 'that he never builds' (i.e., an argument) or 'that he is incoherent'

⁵⁶ To date, only six of the projected volumes have been published: Vol. 2, *Unfashionable Observations* (1995); Vol. 3, *Human, All too Human I* (1995); Vol. 4, *Human, All too Human II* (2013); Vol. 5, *Dawn* (2011); Vol. 8, *Beyond Good and Evil/On the Genealogy of Morality* (2014); Vol. 11 *Unpublished Writings from the Period of Unfashionable Observations* (2000).

⁵⁷ This is due not only to space limitations, but also because earlier works such as *HHI* represent only a 'tentative expression' of his 'thoughts on the descent of moral prejudices' (*OGM* 'Preface' 2). Not even his discussions in *D* concerning Paul's *ressentiment*-motivated conversion require modification of my argument.

⁵⁸ Four different editions of *OGM* are used in this thesis. The 2014 Del Caro translation is the mainstay. Translations by Kaufmann (1992), Diethelme (1994), and Smith (1999) are used sparingly for their editorial comments or particular insights in translation.

(1990:7). Nietzsche's 'argument' revealed that he was not satisfied with mere communication. He wanted to persuade: he took aim on his readers (*BGE* 'Preface') and heaped blame on 'anyone' who could not understand him (*OGM* 'Preface' 8). Together, *BGE* and *OGM* not only form the skeleton of his moral philosophy, but flesh it out to a great extent.

Though primary attention will be given to Nietzsche's late period, works from the entire Nietzschean corpus are necessary to adequately illuminate his thought. Beyond his published *œuvre*, Nietzsche's *Nachlaß* occupies something of an academic limbo. Some claim Nietzsche is not responsible for that which he chose not to publish (Hollingdale 1999b:ix). Others refuse to read the unpublished writings (Ridley 1998:14), while others regard them as Nietzsche at his most authentic. Heidegger considered the *Nachlaß* a well of Nietzschean doctrine (Heidegger 1987:159ff). With due regard to Magnus' warning (1988:218-35), Schacht's advice seems to resonate more closely with the spirit of Nietzsche when he cautions against a 'puritanical' approach toward Nietzsche's 'published works ... as a canon of texts to be zealously guarded and defended against dilution by any admixture of other material' (1995:119). Therefore, I treat the *Nachlaß* as a 'supplement [to] the indications of his thinking to be found in what he has published' (1995:119; see Ansell-Pearson 1991:xvii, note). The same holds for his notebook-scribbles, collected and posthumously published in *The Will to Power* (Kaufmann 1998:129), Spinks' caution notwithstanding (2003:164). Intentional and mature connections between *WP* and other works cannot be denied, such as *WP* 4.876 to *OGM* 1.4, the latter mentioning the 'infamous case of Buckle', and the former providing Nietzsche's derisive commentary on Buckle as 'a plebeian agitator of the mob' for his prejudiced and mistaken understanding of moral genealogy.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

The remainder of this thesis proceeds along the following outline, and is comprised of research questions explored. *Ressentiment* is showcased in Nietzsche's investigation of the origins of moral phenomena. He terms his enquiry a 'genealogy' because he views morality as descending to modern man through the struggle for power in the human species (*OGM* 'Preface' 4). A cast of types of humanity is prominent in this 'lineage'. Thus, Chapter Two asks after the nature of three of Nietzsche's types of humanity (i.e., character or personality attributes) that are involved in the 'history of morality' (7). What are their chief characteristics? How did these types arise in the first place? What is their

role in the development of morality, and how does *ressentiment* manifest itself in the same? How do the types interact with each other, and to what end? Following this, *ressentiment* will be examined as a mechanism, breaking it into its constituent movements to understand how they work together, and to isolate its culminating move, self-deception.

The operative term for Chapter Three is correspondence. Based on the technical picture of *ressentiment* gained previously, I will ask whether or not the contours of Nietzsche's *ressentiment* find correspondence in features of Pauline fallenness. This enquiry will be performed by mapping salient aspects of *ressentiment* onto chapter 1 of Paul's 'Epistle to the Romans'. This will highlight self-deception as a nexus between Nietzsche's and Paul's thought, which will then become a guiding focus for my assay of Romans 2 for elements and expressions of self-deception.

Chapter Four focuses on the crowning move of *ressentiment*, self-deception. A philosophical analysis of *ressentiment* is considered to ask if it can adequately account for the difficulty typically associated with Nietzschean self-deception. An analysis of Pauline self-deception is performed to elucidate its workings on theological grounds. I then ask if the two analyses can somehow be synthesised to provide greater resolution on the phenomenon of self-deception. Finally, I examine fear, and specifically fear of death, as a possible fundamental motivation for self-deception.

Chapter Five presents the salient conclusions of the thesis in a rehearsal of the argument. Contributions of this project to the existing literature are also discussed. The thesis concludes with implications of the project for the field of the psychology of religion.

In the following chapter, we will examine Nietzsche's origin story of morality, which he terms 'genealogy'. We will do so in terms of its key human types, which Nietzsche groups into castes. Through their interactions we understand the crucial role *ressentiment* plays in the development of morality. We will then examine *ressentiment* in depth for the sake of understanding how its various moves transpire. Our ultimate objective is to identify and understand the culminating move of *ressentiment*, which is self-deception.

Chapter 2: THE CASTES AND PHYSIOLOGY OF NIETZSCHEAN *RESSENTIMENT*

2.1 Introduction

Nietzsche laments the a priori world around him as a previously-inverted value system (*OGM* 'Preface' 3). He blames Christianity and the phenomenon of *ressentiment* for this corruption in his day (*A* 62; *OGM* 1.8-10). Therefore, he calls for all values to be revalued, especially those of truth and morality (*BGE* 9.262; *OGM* 3.24).¹

Walter Kaufmann claims *ressentiment* to be 'an integral part' of Nietzsche's philosophy, and 'one of the key conceptions of Nietzsche's psychology' (1974a:374, 71). Max Scheler heralds Nietzsche's discovery as 'the most profound' in that period concerning 'the origin of moral judgments' (1998:27). Bernd Magnus stresses 'the notion of resentment, *ressentiment*, [is given] prominent display [in *OGM*], for it functions just precisely as the sort of explanatory tool which is needed to account for some moral attitudes and beliefs' (1986:48). Peter Poellner asserts it lies 'at the heart of the later Nietzsche's most central philosophical preoccupation: the critique of "moral values"' (2004:46). René Girard indicates, to Nietzsche, *ressentiment* is 'the worst of all possible fates' (1996:252). Nicholas Birns classifies it as 'one of the thorniest concepts in the Nietzschean lexicon' (2010:1). This chapter will attempt to understand it.

Nietzsche's *OGM* will serve as the primary text for several reasons. Most obviously, it occasions the earliest employment of the term *ressentiment* and stands as his only treatise in which he develops the concept. It is also widely recognised to be the most mature and clearly argued expression of Nietzsche's comprehensive philosophy. According to Christopher Janaway, *OGM* is the 'most sustained philosophical achievement, his masterpiece, and the most vital of his writings for any student of Nietzsche, of ethics, or of the history of modern thought' (2007:1). Aaron Ridley considers it to be 'the most important piece of moral philosophy since Kant' (1998:1). Nietzsche himself regards it as 'perhaps the most uncanny things written so far' (*EH*

¹ Brian Lightbody points out the value of John Wilcox's *Truth and Value in Nietzsche* (1974) in discussing conflict in the secondary literature over Nietzsche's view of value, whether it is subjective and non-cognitive or objective and cognitive (2010:61-65). Though he cites Wilcox's admission of defeat 'in finding a way to synthesize, harmoniously, the cognitive and non-cognitive Nietzsches', Lightbody is much more positive about his own attempt (64). He claims the existence of 'a natural or essential body' that grounds interpretation in the real world, and that genealogical inquiry permits epistemic and justified access to the 'true origins of history, society, religion, culture and ... morality' (74).

‘The Genealogy of Morals’²).³ I will supplement from his other works, as well as employ secondary literature germane to the discussion.

While drawing on the standard secondary literature, this chapter amounts to my own independent account of Nietzsche’s *ressentiment*, but without adopting an interpretation that is idiosyncratic or manifestly unorthodox. It entertains a wide discussion of *ressentiment* to demonstrate the embeddedness and functioning of self-deception within it. I begin, therefore, by following Nietzsche the philologist in a brief investigation of the word, *ressentiment*. Reasons for so doing should be patent when examining a writer who must venture beyond his own language to select a term so integral to his system. Following this I will conduct an extended genealogical investigation of the context of *ressentiment*, which is Nietzsche’s understanding of morality as it has evolved to the present. This is accomplished by explicating his archetypal characters of master, slave, and priest in order to trace some familiar themes, thereby situating those types to interact with each other and be understood in fresh ways. Finally, this orients the subsequent break down of *ressentiment* into its constituent parts which, working together, give *ressentiment* the transformational power Nietzsche requires of it.

2.2 Philology

After years of inspiration from the lakes of Sils Maria, Nietzsche publishes *OGM* in 1887 and features his first usage of *ressentiment*. Without definition or explanation, either expressed or implied, the word splashes across the pages midway through the first essay: ‘The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who are denied genuine reaction, that of the deed, who make up for it only through imaginary revenge’ (*OGM* 1.10). Rather than viewing the concept of *ressentiment* as appearing from nowhere, a sounding of Nietzsche reveals it to be elemental in his argument. Also, Nietzsche’s prequel to *OGM*, *BGE*, presages *ressentiment* through the familiar contours of will-to-power, good-bad distinction, herd mentality, guilt and guilt feelings, and the revaluation of values.

² This is the title of Nietzsche’s essay in *EH*, and so should not be confused with his entire volume by the same title, designated in this thesis by the abbreviation of *OGM*.

³ Ratschow concludes, against this host of scholars, that *OGM* does ‘not belong in the same class’ as the majority of Nietzsche’s works published prior to it (1988:64).

Still, why does a German philosopher living in Switzerland go fishing for language in French waters? The answer, in part, lies in historic accidents swirling about in early nineteenth-century Europe. The Enlightenment tide is receding, carrying with it the primacy of the individual and a recrudescing feudalism (Young 2006:205). Germany, in particular, is fractured to the point that ‘the differences between the various dialects of German [are] so strong that communication between people from different regions [is] difficult or impossible’ (205). Nietzsche deplores the ‘dilapidation of the German language’ of his day (*UO* ‘Strauss’ 11). So it is no wonder the *lingua franca* attracts the expeditious mind of a young philologist, and it is from such semantic currents Nietzsche draws his term from everyday French.

Ressentiment as a word is neither new for Nietzsche nor anyone else. Nicholas Birns writes, ‘If a French person had heard the word used, all they would have understood is the garden-variety connotation of “resentment” in English. It has no original idiomatic meaning in French’ (2010:4; see Huskinson 2009:23).⁴ RJ Hollingdale’s classic biography consistently translates the word into English as ‘resentment’ (1999b). There are etymological signs that the word derives from the Old French *ressentir*, and combines the prefix *re-*, which ‘designates both repetition and backward motion’ (Stringer 2000:264), with the root *sentire*, ‘to feel’, which relates to ‘sense’.⁵ The overall force of the word is to feel or perceive anger or indignation (Simpson & Weiner 1992:1566; Barnhart 1995:656), and that, immediately ‘through the senses and not [mediated through] reflection in the mind’ (Kee 1999:64). In his introduction to Max Scheler’s volume entitled, *Ressentiment*, Manfred Frings adds that the French version possesses a ‘peculiar strong nuance of a lingering hate’ not typically intended in the English usage of resentment (1998:5). Nietzsche most likely eyed the term in the essay by Montaigne, ‘Cowardice, Mother of Cruelty’ (1976 2.27).

Kaufmann asserts in his commentary on *OGM*, ‘the German language lacks any close equivalent’ to *ressentiment* (1992b:441). Scheler informs us it is not adequately translatable into German (1998:25). Birns, however, informs it is ‘a mistake to think that when Nietzsche originally uses *ressentiment* he is using a word insulated from ordinary German conversation’, citing both *Groll* and *Verstimmung* as ‘rough equivalents’ (2010:4). Small states unequivocally that ‘the term *ressentiment* is already well-established in the writings of ... Eugen Dühring’ (2001:171), a German

⁴ For an extensive comparison of the two words, see Meltzer & Musolf’s ‘Resentment and *Ressentiment*’ (2002).

⁵ This excludes usages which have become obsolete since the seventeenth-century.

philosopher and economist with whom Nietzsche is quite familiar, and frequently hostile (*OGM* 2.11, 14, 26). Furthermore, Nietzsche himself treats *ressentiment* as an already-familiar sphere for the study of moral inquiry, specifically in dealing with justice (2.11; see 1.14). Regardless, there is consensus in philosophical, sociological, and psychological communities that Nietzsche casts the word ever after in technical coinage.

2.3 Genealogy

Beyond philological investigation, a much fuller profile for *ressentiment* may be developed through genealogical enquiry. Mining for understanding necessitates that, before dealing with the concept itself, we retrace Nietzsche's search into the context of *ressentiment*. The context is morality: 'the conditions and circumstances from which [morality] grew [and] under which [it] developed and shifted' (*OGM* 'Preface' 6). One might even consider it an exhumation. Rather than accept the morality of his day, he proposes a critique of 'these "values" as given, as factual, as beyond all questioning' (6). He reformulates his implied hypothesis into a polemical question, 'What if the reverse were true?' He proceeds to insinuate that morality might be precluding humanity's development, that evil might actually be more beneficial than good, and the present might inhibit the future. Nietzsche closes his preface with a thinly veiled answer to his own question: 'Morality [is] the danger of dangers' (6). Furthermore, Nietzsche's diagnosis of morality as modern degeneration serves as entrée for his attack on Judaeo-Christianity, appropriating the concept of degeneration for his ends (see also *BT* 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' 5). Moore claims he accomplishes this by subversively dealing with 'Christianism [as the] flowering of decadence has its roots in the very values which have shaped Western civilization' (2002:139f).

Before continuing, Nietzsche's concept of genealogy itself requires explanation. He views the subject of his study, morality, as evolutionary (non-Darwinian⁶) and naturalistic, as opposed to eternally absolute and metaphysical (see *EH* 'The Birth of Tragedy' 4). This leads him to excavate history to find 'our human moral past' (*OGM*

⁶ Moore (2002) makes the case that Nietzsche's views on evolution, so called, are not influenced directly by Darwin (22), but must rather 'be understood in terms of what has been called the "non-Darwinian revolution"' (16). A leading light of this movement, on whom Nietzsche leans, is 'Anglo-German zoologist named William Rolph' (47). Moore includes a lengthy quotation from Rolph's *Biologische Probleme* (1882) in which he argues that evolution's driving force is 'a *struggle for the increase of life*, but not a *struggle for life*' (italics supplied, 53). Moore notes this passage is 'heavily marked by Nietzsche in his copy of Rolph's book' (53, footnote 44). Moore makes a similar claim of Wilhelm Roux's influence on Nietzsche (37f).

‘Preface’ 7), what Foucault calls a ‘materialism of the incorporeal’ (1981:69), and to discover this ‘well hidden land of morality ... for the first time’ (*OGM* ‘Preface’ 7). Heretofore, investigation into moral origins has repeated ‘the errors of the greatest philosophers’, thus requiring novel and persistent work in the rubble of history’s stone and pebble (*HHI* 2.37; see Agamben 2009:89).

Regarding Nietzsche’s methodology, Smith warns against viewing Nietzsche’s ‘genealogy’ as ‘the historical study of the ramifications which lead outwards from concepts in which a number of meanings intersect’ (1999:xv). Nietzsche’s genealogy should not be confused with the typical historical inquiry. Paul Ricoeur makes this apparent in his discussion of Nietzsche’s (and Freud’s) ‘reductive hermeneutics’, which has reinterpreted mankind’s history to free it from absolute origins, favouring instead possible sources and—even better—empty places in which power allowed the rise of ethical and religious values (2004:438). Geuss succinctly states that ‘giving a “genealogy” is for Nietzsche the exact reverse of what we might call “tracing a pedigree”’ (1999:1). Relevant to my reading of Nietzsche are two points of Geuss’ (and Ricoeur’s) rationale. First, he asserts the search is not for ‘an unbroken line of succession from the origin’ to the subject in question (1999:1, 3-6, 14f). However, Nietzsche’s *OGM* does seem to lay out a lineage of sorts, the generation of which may be fairly characterised as dialectical and perhaps even teleological, but not in any absolute sense (2.13; see also Azzam 2015:102f). He designates the development of the nobles as ‘the intermediate age’ (*OGM* 2.19, see ‘Preface’ 6, 2.12) and speaks of the philosopher emerging from ‘the previously established types’, by which he means priestly and religious ones (3.10). Geuss’ second assertion is the goal of genealogical inquiry is not to find ‘a single origin’. For example, one cannot trace ‘the historicity of the legend of [the] origin’ of Nietzsche’s Christian morality back to a seminal event, person, or group (*WP* 2.251). Rather, morality results from a ‘conjunction of a number of diverse lines of development’ (Geuss 1999:4). Still, Nietzsche cannot extend his moral investigation back interminably, so he himself chooses starting points (26, note 11). Therefore, ‘the moral conceptual world’ has beginnings which are ‘like the beginning of everything great on earth [that] was thoroughly drenched, and for a long time, in blood’ (*OGM* 2.6; see Moore 2002:79).

The salient feature about this primordial cauldron is the characteristically Nietzschean *agon* it represents, and out of which humanity as a new animal is created. Genealogy assigns present morality a beginning, which means it has not always *been*. It

has been subject to accidents of history so that it has *become* what it is ... and might have been otherwise. Additionally, anything that begins may also end. Thus, morality may be expected to become something else entirely, perhaps even to end someday (Mulhall 2005:32). Describing origins in this way permits an alternative starting place and the construction of a platform upon which Nietzsche may build his case.

For the sake of this investigation then, we will examine the types—Nietzsche labels some of them castes (*BGE* 9.257; *OGM* 1.7; see *HHI* 45; *A* 57; Middleton 1996:297f)—which constitute this lineage.⁷ Within them the philosopher identifies such historical accidents as physical changes (e.g., gradual and sudden) in human society (e.g., from nomadic to settled), specific entities (e.g., Jesus, the Church, Paul), the development of certain psychological dispositions (e.g., bad conscience, sin, guilt feelings), and the rise of various social customs (e.g., contractual relationships and legal punishment) which both precipitate and catalyse other events. I will follow Nietzsche's discussion of three of his castes germane to this thesis, which he conducts at varying lengths in a patchwork throughout *OGM*. I will arrange them in this order: noble, slave, and priest.⁸ The aim of this presentation is to weave together strands of Nietzsche's argument in a logical manner.⁹ Thus, they will be couched in the serviceable metaphor of a lineage of descent, which will cast light on his moral genealogy.

Discussion of the priestly caste will be disproportionately greater than that allotted the others, the rationale lying in its critical role for Nietzsche in human moral evolution. The noble and slave castes are merely raw material for change, while the priest serves as the agent of change. Like a flame to a tinder keg, so the priest ignites the revolution of morality, sparked by a revaluation of values. He is a creator, so to speak, impressing will into the stuff of humanity to shape it into its current state-of-the-species, the slave-cum-master. I will argue Paul the Apostle assumes many of the characteristics and much of the role of the priestly caste (see section 2.5). Thus, greater devotion is given to developing this caste so it may provide an adequate source of information from which Paul may be analysed later.

⁷ Ridley refers to them as 'personality types' which, he claims, Nietzsche uses as 'magnets for issues or for aspects of issues which are then pursued, psychobiographically, through a disquisition on the personality types that exemplify them' (1998:14).

⁸ His other two castes are the barbarian and the philosopher (of-the-future), the former serving as the initial and natural state of humanity, the latter as Nietzsche's hopeful vision for the species.

⁹ From *OGM* 2.12, we understand Nietzsche to argue against a linear connection between cause of origin and effect, or eventual purpose. However, Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) uses Nietzsche's own genealogical method in contravention to Nietzsche, and precisely in relation to the same subject matter, discipline, to show causes and effects between power and subjugation. Therefore, developing a conceptual linearity in Nietzsche's thought is not without precedent.

2.3.1 Noble

The initial caste in Nietzsche's lineage is the barbarian. 'Let us admit to ourselves unsparingly how so far every higher culture on earth so far has begun! ... In the beginning the noble caste was always the barbarian caste' (*BGE* 9.257). This caste is the cradle for all races, not merely German, nor even European, but for all peoples. 'Roman, Arabic, Teutonic, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings'—all trace their roots back to the beast of prey (*OGM* 1.11).

Barbarians become a 'master-race' by conquest, not contract. 'Human beings with a still natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, predatory men who ... hurled themselves on weaker, more civilized, more peaceful races' (*BGE* 9.257; see *OGM* 2.17). The conquered race becomes the oppressed, and the new social landscape is inhabited by two castes: slaves, and those who rule them, masters.

These rulers are 'the born "masters" (that is, of the solitary, beast-of-prey species of man)' (*OGM* 3.18). Their superior power provides for themselves privilege, which presumably translates literally into a *higher* station: homes on heights, transportation on horseback or even on the backs of humans, elevated seating at public events for unobstructed views, selection of unbruised fruit from the top of the merchant's cart, etc. (see *BGE* 6.257f). How natural for these aristocrats to view themselves as both noble and standard bearer, sanctioning whatever they do as good. 'From this *pathos of distance* they first took for themselves the right to create values, to coin names for values' (*OGM* 1.2). Nietzsche asserts language itself is an 'expression of power: they say "this is this"'. Thus, whatever the master designates 'good' becomes good. More fundamentally, the concept of good is sourced in the ruler himself, grounded in being, not doing. The noble kind of human being feels itself to be value-determining and is value-creating (*BGE* 9.260).

Nietzsche also produces etymological evidence to demonstrate 'the terms for "good" ... as formulated by the different languages ... all lead back to the same conceptual transformation', always and everywhere to a social context of nobility and aristocracy (*OGM* 1.4). For those who have ears to hear, he offers 'the main nuance' of good. Objectively, this refers to 'someone who is, who has reality, who is real, who is true'; subjectively, good becomes transformed into truthfulness, as opposed to lying and dishonesty (1.5). Over time, good becomes synonymous with nobility, and associated traits such as fullness, bravery, gentility, and capability are contrasted with those of

commoners who cannot be trusted because they are weak and thereby forced into humility, patience, and industry (1.5). No thing—deed, word, or event—along this human value scale is yet invested with culpability. Thus, the noble caste arises in what might be termed the pre-moral era. Modern morality, for reasons that follow, finds it hard to empathise with such values as duty only to peers, capriciousness ‘beyond good and evil’ toward those of lower rank, and the wisdom of maintaining both certain enemies and coping mechanisms for keeping them close as friends (*BGE* 9.260). Furthermore, Leiter notes that ‘the concept of “good” in the hands of the masters connotes a distinctive psychological or characterological state, and not simply class position: “later ‘good’ and ‘bad’ develop in a direction which no longer refers to social standing (GM I:6)”’ (2003:201). He also comments ‘that while “master” and “slave” begin as class-specific terms, their ultimate significance is psychological for Nietzsche, not social ... “slavish” and “noble” are intended to have psychological or characterological connotations’ (217).

2.3.2 Slave

An ineluctable result of an aristocratic caste is a plebeian one. A master necessitates a slave. Technically, slaves constitute a caste for Nietzsche, but their essential values are not conducive for true community, and their demise is always immanent (*HHI* 2.45). Comparing the ‘good person’ of the noble caste to the ‘bad person’ in the lower stratum of society, he attributes ‘no common feeling’ to slaves, but values them as merely ‘a mass, like bits of dust’ (2.45). True, slaves are derived from nobles, but at best this renders them a sub-caste, at worst, parasites. ‘Worst’ is the position they in fact occupy in Nietzsche’s schema. Slaves are poles apart from nobles;¹⁰ opposite the high-born and privileged are the low and common, among whom conditions are ripe for *ressentiment*, the hallmark feature of slavish existence. ‘*Ressentiment* is the triumph of the weak as weak’, writes Deleuze, ‘the revolt of the slaves and their victory as slaves. It is in their victory that the slaves form a type’ (1983:117).

Whereas the master-life is characterised by happiness, the slave-life is one of unjust suffering. Slaves interpret masters’ actions, even their very existence, in terms of oppression. The greater the autonomy and higher the joy experienced by masters, the heavier the burden and deeper the misery felt by slaves. Slaves are trapped in their

¹⁰ Nietzsche uses ‘master’ and ‘noble’ as virtual synonyms.

predicament due to their subjugation; they are powerless to throw it off ... but they can hate with 'the hatred of impotence'. And they can revolt, but in a most unusual way.

Nietzsche speaks through Tacitus to introduce the Jews as 'a people "born to slavery"' (*BGE* 5.195), and 'the greatest example' of the spirit of impotence (*OGM* 1.7). Originally, Nietzsche identifies the Jews as strong and proud people, even warriors. Life in their early history is good, their outlook positive, and why not? God is for them. But everything changes with their defeat and consequent subjugation. To bear their oppression, they interpret their defeat and oppression as punishment. Domination is not an accident of history, a natural product of conflict which can go one way or the other. It is the result of sin. Their identity and experience are defined in relation to another, to the Other. Their trouble is metaphysical; God has turned against them. He is punishing them through exile, and they are impotent to change the world in which they now find themselves imprisoned. So they long for the next.

The present world becomes something evil to escape. Thus, slaves begin to long for death, viewing it both as release and victory. Those who control the world, the masters, are viewed as evil, too. Evil is to be resisted, but how do impotent slaves resist a powerful master? The answer comes by internalisation. By means of sublimating the struggle, Nietzsche's response is that slaves (epitomised in the Jews) invert the balance power by pronouncing as blessed their values such as poverty, lowliness, and impotence, and damning to hell aristocratic values such as power, lust, and beauty (*BGE* 1.7). This is Nietzsche's famous 'slave revolt in morality', originating from bad conscience (*OGM* 1.10), generated by *ressentiment*, and resulting in the reversal of all values. Masters measure everything by using the self as the starting point for good. Sheerly by contrast, slaves are designated 'bad', which means that masters can discount, marginalise, or even dispose of slaves. Notably, this is typically without remorse or calumny. Slaves perform an opposite calculation, only more so. They measure their morality by using another outside of themselves, thus objectivising it for their reference point: the master, whom they hate (see Deleuze 1983:115f). Therefore, masters are not simply 'bad', but 'evil'. In contrast to, and derived from their value of the master, slaves designate themselves as 'good'. Hence, slave morality may be said to be evil-good, whereas master morality is simply good-bad. Furthermore, the slave regards everything that the master *is not* as good. Thus, slave morality defines itself in terms of what it is against, while master morality does not concern itself with such navel-gazing. It is

positive and gets on with life. Not surprisingly, Nietzsche castigates slaves for their master-supplanting morality.

Nietzsche identifies Christianity as heir to the Jewish slave revolt in morality by describing the former as the veiled hateful outgrowth springing from a tree of revenge (*BGE* 1.8). ‘What is it that we combat in Christianity?’ he asks. It is to fight slavish devaluing of courage and pride, and the promotion of self-contempt (*WP* 2.252; see also Nehamas 1985:126). Slave morality reaches its zenith in Christianity’s transmogrification of mere ‘bad’ into ‘evil’, thus transferring the battleground from world and body to soul and conscience. For Nietzsche, this is precisely where the danger lies: internally. Through the ‘sedimented accumulation of innumerable generations’ (Lampert 1995:369), the moral values of the new system have come to feel so normal and strangely comforting, their truth so naturally plausible (see Kaufmann 1974a:109).¹¹ The morality of the common person, whether through democracy or socialism, has so tamed them to prevent them from destroying themselves that they have become drugged, intoxicated, polluted, and even poisoned into mediocrity (*OGM* 3.13f, 26). ‘Europe’s doom’ is a bellwether for all, bringing into view ‘the sight of human beings [that] now makes us weary—what is nihilism today if it is not that?—We are weary of human beings’ (1.12).

Materialists cannot evade Nietzsche either. He assails English psychologists in particular under the premise they misunderstand history, and thus follow Darwin ill-advisedly. Departing from seven years of association with Paul Rée over matters both personal (i.e., Lou Salomé) and philosophical (i.e., origin of conscience) (Kaufmann 1974a:48, 60-62), and lumping him in with ‘all English moral genealogists’ (*OGM* ‘Preface’ 4, see 7), he focuses his attack on morality in terms of the evolutionary flourishing of humanity. The evil instincts are expedient, species-preserving, and indispensable to as high a degree as the good ones; their function is merely different’ (*GS* 1.4). Several years later, he mocks Rée and his findings as psychologically weak (perhaps intimating *ressentiment*) (*OGM* ‘Preface’ 7), suggesting a manifestation of ‘small subterranean hostility and rancor toward Christianity (and Plato), that perhaps never made it across the threshold to consciousness’ (1.1).

Both materialist and metaphysician alike would view Nietzsche’s slave stage in human evolution as a necessary evil. For it is only through guilt and ‘bad conscience’

¹¹ For an excellent extended discussion on how force becomes justice becomes truth, see Wood’s Chapter Two in ‘The Reign of Duplicity: Pascal’s Political Theology’ (2013:51-91).

leading to the *ressentiment*-motivated transvaluation of values that humanity acquires depth and becomes ‘an interesting animal’, a free-willing subject equipped with an awareness of a whole new dimension of being (*OGM* 1.6). As seen in the next section, slave innovation makes civilisation possible. And since it is not possible to go backward, Nietzsche advocates the arduous task of continuing mankind’s evolutionary journey (Nietzsche 1994:xiv).

One final note is necessary. The profile edges of this group are fuzzy at times because what he says of the slave, Nietzsche often says of the priestly caste (Elgat 2015:524, footnote 3).¹² In fact, he identifies his preeminent example, the Jews, as both a slave people (*BGE* 5.195) and a priestly people (*OGM* 1.7). Though Nietzsche thinks it is likely priests may originate ‘from the knightly-aristocratic’ evolutionary branch of the human tree (1.7), they so closely associate with slaves that they identify with the sick herd, the flock. This perspective is not hard to derive from Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, noting especially the verb tense he utilises: ‘Verily, these herdsmen themselves *still belonged* among the sheep’ (italics supplied, *Z* 2.4). Subsequently, priests seize the opportunity to move ahead of weaker members and become a lead sheep. From there it is only a matter of degrees to achieve shepherdship. This position brings with it opportunity to fleece their fellows: slaves become lead sheep become shepherds-who-shear, which is to say, priests (*OGM* 3.15). ‘What [Paul] himself does not believe was believed by the idiots among whom he cast his teaching.—His requirement was power’ (*A* 42). Benson concludes that ‘Nietzsche’s account of Paul is that Paul *single-handedly* elevates himself to the role of priest’, which is obviously a position of power, ‘from what Nietzsche would consider to be a slave nation’ (2008:130).

2.3.3 Priest

Sometimes Nietzsche refers to this caste as ascetic, other times as ascetic priest or aristocratic priest. I will employ his most basic reference, that of ‘priest’. The priest appears ‘regularly [and] universally ... in almost all times [he] emerges; he does not belong to a single race; he flourishes everywhere; he grows from all social classes’ (*OGM* 3.11). Thus, priestly origins may include the castes of the noble or of the slave. If the former, Nietzsche posits a group within the noble class separating itself from the military faction for the sake of ritual purity, then identifying with the slaves. Regardless

¹² Ridley discusses Nietzsche’s blurring of distinctions further (1998:46-50).

of its origin, the priestly caste is not merely, nor even primarily, a biological or social entity, though certainly Nietzsche would be the last to disembodify it.

Nietzsche seeks to present the many manifestations of the priest. First and foremost, he is a leader. He takes the form of a shepherd of the flock/herd (*OGM* 3.11), a ruler over a kingdom (3.15), a self-appointed and ‘foreordained’ saviour (3.15; see 17), and a trailblazer to a different plane of existence (3.13). The priest is no common leader, however. Hence, second, he is an opportunist, using resources to his advantage over others. As such, he is a tamer of animals (3.15), a physician dispensing medicine (3.15f), a magician performing tricks (3.20), a sorcerer wielding potions and casting spells (3.20), a huckster who peddles idealism (3.26), an artist in psychology (3.20), and an oracle and interpreter of strange forces and events (3.5). Third, the priest is a ‘religious person’ (3.10). He is a saint separated from this world (3.1), a soul resolved to desert solitude (3.7), the guardian of ‘ancient good customs’ (3.9), a pontiff leading to another world (3.11), and a contemplative who seeks wisdom in the infinite and objective (3.26). Fourth, he is a warrior by different means (3.15). He is a self-evolved ‘new type of predator’ (3.15), the most formidable enemy (3.7), a munitions expert in ‘that most dangerous and explosive material’ (3.15), an opponent of all that was originally good (1.7), and a fighter for ‘his right to existence’ (3.11).

The priests’ adversarial posture is, understandably, not directed against the slaves, for the slaves hold no obvious power. Rather, priests focus ‘antithetical valuations’ into an insidious power grab against the reigning class, thus creating opportunity for their own caste, a priestly aristocracy. For Nietzsche, the ‘greatest example’ of this is the Jews (*OGM* 1.7), whose world-historic mission causes all other campaigns of conquest to pale by comparison (1.9). The Jews, in Nietzsche’s estimation, hold the distinction of being ‘the priestly people of *ressentiment* par excellence’ (1.6). Their power is generated from hatred, ‘the most spiritual and poisonous variety ... Priests have always been the truly great haters in world history’ (1.7). This hatred is sourced in impotence. To appreciate Nietzsche’s understanding of impotence, counterintuitively, one must understand his meaning of power.

Nietzsche posits that power manifests itself in will, which is an active, form-giving energy. Everything—morality, truth, life, the world, perceived existence—begins with and pertains to the ‘instinct of freedom (in my language: the will to power)’ (*OGM* 2.18). It is life-force itself, the very locus of humanity (*BGE* 2.36, 9.259). This force, this instinct, cannot be destroyed, but it can be channelled in the creation of new forms.

Nietzsche's philosophy owes much to Spinoza, with whom he 'must come to terms' (*HH2* 1.408), and over whom he gushes in a July 1881 letter to friend Overbeck (Middleton 1996:177). Since Nietzsche never actually seems to read Spinoza, his debt comes by way of (though not exclusively, even by 1881) the second volume of Kuno Fischer's *History of Modern Philosophy* (1865) (Brobjer 2008a:77f). Prominently featured is a discussion of Spinoza's ethics in which the term *conatus* is favoured to describe force as both inertia and as a thing's fundamental drive of self-preservation (i.e., to exist) (see Fischer 1887:114f; see also Schacht 1995:178-82). Moore notes Nietzsche takes issue with this concept as 'an innate, essential tendency to endure', and instead reacts to the *conatus* by interpreting the fundamental striving of each organism as 'essentially a striving for more power' (2002:46). Regardless, understanding will-to-power in its manifesting forms forces this inquiry to return to the mists of genealogy.

In its rawest form, will-to-power is the desire to conquer and control. Unabated, the original barbarian caste would destroy itself. Therefore, parties must negotiate, if for no other reason than survival. Following on, a capacity for society is bred out of the primitive relationship between provider and receiver. More specifically, out of this relationship evolves humanity's faculty of free will by which it evaluates others against itself, calculates risk, and contends with fate—all of this so it can now make promises. Promises are binding commitments to a course of action (Migotti 2013:510). They undergird contracts and are the glue used to construct society.¹³ This somewhat crude and certainly alien process eventually passes from consciousness and intellect into instinct and behaviour. Humanity possesses a conscience (2.1f; see *HHI* 2.99; see also *GS* 5.354).

Humanity's promise-keeping ability is sourced in a capacity for memory, and memory is lastingly 'burned in' through pain (*OGM* 2.3).

The debtor, in order to inspire trust for his promise of repayment ... pledges something by virtue of a contract to the creditor in the event that if he does not pay, ... the creditor could subject the body of the debtor to all kinds of indignity and torture, such as cutting as much of it as seemed appropriate for the size of the debt. (2.5)

Violation of a creditor's trust by a debtor becomes the creditor's right to violate the debtor in return. With the passage of time, promises and violations are codified so every offence becomes valued (2.8), not in terms of literal reparation, but in terms of equivalents: 'the [creditor's] pleasure of being allowed to vent his power uninhibitedly

¹³ Migotti holds that Nietzsche sources motivation for promising in a commitment to oneself, *viz.* personal integrity, and not in commitment to another, *viz.* moral obligation (2013:513-19). As a practical matter, the manifestation for corporate human development is the same.

on someone powerless ... the enjoyment of violating' (2.5). Nietzsche likens this pleasure of the creditor to the celebration of warriors after victory (2.9). Thus, cruelty, 'the master's right', becomes just and good (2.5).

Nietzsche further argues the processes of conscience require reason accompanied by self-restraint and sobriety. Their combined force leads to 'this whole gloomy business we call reflection' (*OGM* 2.3). Herein, depth in the 'essentially dangerous [priestly] form of human existence' begins to develop (1.6). Related to reflection is 'that other "gloomy thing," the consciousness of guilt, the "bad conscience"' (2.4). It, too, stems from the ancient creditor-debtor relationship. The capacity to contract one's self requires personal evaluation, which amounts to measurement against others. The pricing of goods and services, as well as the assigning of values for exchange, constitutes the human as the self-aware 'valuing animal' (2.8). Failure to measure up to contractual obligation now means, at the very least, an internal pain through bad conscience, if not external recompense through money, possessions, or physical cruelty (2.5).

As mentioned previously, primitive, concrete, and violent contractual concepts become codified. Eventually this code translates into social forms of justice and the notion of objectivity. Thus, civilisation characterised by law blossoms. *Ipsa facto*, this mandates law enforcement. In such an arrangement, the community stands for the creditor, and the lawbreaker for the debtor who is treated as an outsider-enemy to the community. The debtor, therefore, deserves any and all warlike hostility prescribed by the law, which Nietzsche reckons to be 'the copy ... of normal behavior toward the hated, disarmed, defeated enemy': in short, punishment (*OGM* 2.9).

Punishment according to the tradition of 'previous [naïve] genealogists of morality' finds its roots in some strict, formal purpose, and its utility branching out of that purpose into creative applications (*OGM* 2.12; see 13). Nietzsche contends, however, while utility certainly is subjective, so is purpose. Punishment has ever served its master-of-the-moment, and thus is always being 'reinterpreted for new views'. It 'involves a new interpreting, a contriving in which the previous "meaning" and "purpose" must necessarily be obscured or entirely extinguished' (2.12). Punishment is 'a power-will playing itself out in all events' (2.12). It is a late phenomenon and holds, not a singular meaning, but 'a whole synthesis of "meanings"' (2.13). Nietzsche supports this assertion by supplying an incomplete list of twelve purposes for punishment, developing the last in a dedicated aphorism, 2.14. He claims the purpose of arousing feelings of guilt as a means of reform does not correspond to the historical,

empirical record. Rather, punishment has the reverse effect in that it ‘makes people hard and cold’. It actually confirms criminals’ alienation from the community and fortifies their resistance to justice. This is because of humanity’s pre-moral state, and state of mind. The very same sorts of procedures brought to bear in the act of punishment are merely those employed in prehistoric times by the strong upon the weak. There is no guilt as such, just fate taking its course as directed by power. So punishment may tame a wrongdoer, but it does not reform them (2.15).

Returning to bad conscience, Nietzsche hypothesises it is an ineluctable change of the first magnitude, beyond even evolutionary measurements. It is an alteration of cosmic proportions. The civilising of pre-moral humanity does not eradicate its drives, but rechannels them into its inner world, expanding them into the soul. Thus, instead of pure joy, it feels pleasure in suffering; in place of unmitigated strength, it delights in weakness; in substitution of abounding health, it becomes content in profound sickness (*OGM* 2.16-18).

It must be stressed that this sickness is an ‘active force’ (*OGM* 2.18), the same will-to-power of the blond beast ‘repressed, pushed back, imprisoned deep within and ultimately discharging and venting itself only on itself’ (2.17). As such, bad conscience is still a form-creating power, ‘the genuine womb of all ideal and imaginative events ... [bringing] to light a plenitude of strange new beauty and affirmation, perhaps even beauty itself’ (2.18). This new beauty is basically the new scale on which unegoism ranks supreme. Humanity now enigmatically revels in selflessness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, but the genetic linkage stays intact: ‘this *delight* belongs to the realm of cruelty’, the same compensation as debt in the ancient commercial relationship, which is to say, guilt (*italics supplied*, 2.18-20).

The truly diabolical usage of guilt lies in its function in the evolutionary process. The primeval tribe carries an obligation to its ancestry for their ‘sacrifices and accomplishments’, for it is upon them the tribe has been built. In a bizarre calculus, the tribe’s debt of honour grows to exceed its ability to repay because its forbearers become magnified, at least in regard to their significance, beyond the value of the tribe itself. That is, the tribal community remains finite while the significance of the ancestral community increases *ad infinitum*, thus leveraging the tribe’s sense of debt to its progenitors. Nietzsche may have in mind the *Moai*, those monumental elongated heads of the primitive *Rapa Nui* of Easter Island, sculpted to represent deified ancestors (see *OGM* 2.19). See Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1 Totems, *Rapa Nui*, Easter Island, used with permission

Nietzsche writes, ‘The ancestors of the mightiest tribes must have grown to prodigious proportions’ such that, ‘in the end the ancestor is necessarily transfigured into a god’ (*OGM* 2.19). Nietzsche asserts the true origin of guilt is fear of the gods, and the inevitable evolution of the pantheon into a single universal god, ‘the Christian God as the maximal god achieved to date’ (2.20; see Acts 17:22-34). Along with this comes the suspicion of unpaid debts and the commensurate desire for release from them, but as the creditor is now untouchable (i.e., an infinitely holy God), so is the debtor’s hope of repayment. Thus, by means of beliefs made indelible through the repetition born of obligation (i.e., ‘religion’), guilt becomes moralised and maximised. First, it is turned back into the debtors’ bad conscience so they are both responsible for their own predicament and precluded from resolving it. ‘Along with the impossibility of discharging debt, the thought of the impossibility of discharging penance is also conceived, the notion that it cannot be discharged (of “eternal punishment”)’ (*OGM* 2.21). Second, guilt is turned back upon the creditor through the ‘genius of Christianity: God sacrificing himself for the guilt of humanity ... the creditor sacrificing himself for his debtor ... out of love (can you believe it?—) out of love for his debtor’ (2.21)! The innovation of a holy God moralises guilt which deceives humanity regarding its true nature and its true pain, both of which stem from imprisonment in the civilised state.

Herein lies the diabolical genius of the priest, the channelling of the human will to a goal, to nothingness, in contrast to not willing: the ascetic ideal (*OGM* 3.1). In Europe, which represents for Nietzsche the leading edge of civilisation, this amounts to Christianity (*BGE* 3.62; 3.14). The priest is the founder of this slave revolt (*OGM* 1.7-

9), despot of this monotheism (2.20), and leader of the herd of the sick.¹⁴ It is not only the strong who seek to control their existence, but the weak, the herd. Will-to-power is manifested by the slave population, ‘not through brute strength, but by sheer force of numbers’ (Moore 2002:55), and is manipulated by the priest. As leaders of the herd, priests themselves are sick with the contagion of *ressentiment* which, in turn, shapes their worldview to one of a ‘completely different existence’ (*OGM* 3.11).

Nietzsche describes the priest as a model of the ascetic life lived in a realm where *ressentiment* toxifies the soil and pollutes the air. Such a *ressentiment*-filled life ‘is paradoxical to the highest degree’ because its enjoyment increases in proportion to its suffering, even as its capacity for life decreases (*OGM* 3.11). That the priest is ruthlessly committed to his ideal should come as no surprise, for his very existence depends on it. He not only believes it, he wills it. Thus, he fights those who oppose it as those who oppose him personally, using ‘energy to stop up the sources of energy’ (3.11). His weaponry is superior, spiritual in nature, even as he himself has evolved into a ‘new type of predator’, and is the master of self-contradiction, healing wounds and wounding to heal; his necessity to the herd is self-created (3.15).

The necessity of the priest is also required by evolution, both in what humanity has already become and in the future form Nietzsche envisions for it. Within the cesspool of morality still survive ‘rare cases of power of soul and body in humans, the human lucky strokes ..., those who turned out well’ (*OGM* 3.14). Nietzsche frets over mixing the two populations, weak slaves and strong masters, in all civilised cultures because the former will threaten the latter by subverting their ‘trust in life’ (3.14). The ultimate revenge of these purveyors of *ressentiment*, he contends, would be realised

when they succeeded in shoving into the conscience of the happy their own misery ... so that someday they would have to begin to be ashamed of their happiness ... [Such an] inverted world ... would be ... the supreme viewpoint on earth. (3.14)

Thus, segregation is required, the sick from the healthy, for the sake of humanity’s future. But who to care for the sick, and such a large population, too? The priest (3.14f).

His medication is powerful, dispensed with craft and ruthlessness. Though the priest is also sick—how else can he understand his patients?—he retains enough mastery of himself to will his charge over the herd. In this way, he protects them from

¹⁴ By virtue of the language he selects for his discourse, Nietzsche appears to number Richard Wagner among the priests: ‘Recall how enthusiastically Wagner followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach back in his day ... [but] in the end he had the will to *teach otherwise* ... to preach reversal, conversion, negation, Christianity, medievalism and to tell his disciples “it’s no good! Seek salvation somewhere else!” Even the “blood of the Redeemer” is invoked at one point’ (*OGM* 3.3).

the outside threat of the violent and healthy, and also from the threat—at least from an awareness of the threat—of demise from within. Such demise comes as a natural result of guilt and remnant effects which, left unattended, would contaminate the entire population. The priest must, therefore, deliver the herd from its own *ressentiment*, lest it destroy itself. Interestingly, he does not desire to eradicate this force so much as to control it because it is indispensable in securing his own position.¹⁵ He is not after a cure; his medicine is palliative, and it comes in different forms (*OGM* 3.17-21). If it were possible to formulate the essence of the priest's role—keeper of the sickly status quo and comforter of the diseased—into a single pill, it would be the narcotic of *ressentiment*-turned-back-on-itself. This is the only force powerful enough to deaden the almost unendurable pain of the guilty person who believes their suffering to be deserved. Physiologically, it masks consciousness of the true problem through scapegoating:

For every sufferer instinctively looks for a cause of his suffering; ... a guilty perpetrator who is receptive to suffering—in brief, some kind of living thing upon which he can discharge his affects in deeds or in effigy based on some pretext ... “I suffer: someone must be to blame for this”—thus thinks every diseased sheep. But its shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to it: “Right you are, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: ... you alone are to blame for yourself!” (3.15)

This reflexive *ressentiment* Nietzsche distils from the phrase, ‘you alone are to blame for yourself’, into the concepts of ‘guilt, sin, sinfulness, depravity, [and] damnation’ (3.20). In short, this is religion, specifically, Christianity. Ultimately, that ‘genuine artist in feelings of guilt’ exploits the bad conscience in what ‘has so far been the greatest event in the history of the sick soul’ (3.20). Nietzsche writes in *A* 49, ‘the concepts of guilt and punishment, inclusive of the doctrines of “grace,” of “salvation,” and of “forgiveness” [are] *lies* ... *A priest's attack!* ... the invention of sin (italics original). Calling it sin, the sufferer ‘should understand his suffering as a state of punishment’ (3.20), and that, justly deserved. The priest directs the will of the guilty to re-wound him to the point of paralysis. Henceforth, ‘he is like the hen around which a line of chalk has been drawn. He can no longer get out of this circle’ (3.20). The slave becomes a sinner!

The opiate of religion takes full effect. By reinterpreting suffering as guilt feelings and punishment, the slave population is exploited to the ends of ‘self-discipline, self-surveillance [and] self-overcoming’ (*OGM* 3.16). As a result, the weak and sickly are rendered harmless to one another, the incurable self-depleted from the population, and the remainder kept in isolation from the healthy. Nietzsche refers to this collection of

¹⁵ As previously noted, will-to-power in the original barbarian caste must be controlled, else be destroyed.

individuals as the church. It serves an indispensable governing role for society in the present, and preserves a remnant to evolve into greater forms of humanity in the future.

The priest is not just diabolical, but also magnificent. His magnificence lies in his creativity, one might even say, his entrepreneurial spirit. He has ‘dared, innovated, thwarted, and challenged fate more than all the other animals put together: he, the ... insatiable one who struggles with animal, nature and gods for ultimate mastery’ (*OGM* 3.13). In turn, he makes possible the survival of humanity through the machinations of *ressentiment*, for in ‘this system of procedures the old depression, heaviness and weariness were thoroughly conquered, life became very interesting again ... [In] his kingdom ... people protested no more against pain’ (3.20, see 17). The priest creates an outlet for humanity’s fettered will, thus rescuing it from a withering extinction, in the face of the unanswerable ‘cry of his question, “why suffering?”’ (3.28)? The priest’s creativity also takes the form of protective and provisional status (*BGE* 3.62; 3.13), that is, as means for the next caste, or species of humanity: the philosopher. ‘Graphically and vividly expressed: until the most recent times, the ascetic priest gives us the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone philosophy was allowed to live and crawl about’ (*OGM* 3.10). On the diabolical side, the priestly caste is full of deception, first towards itself, then to the masses. As a result, its medication serves not to cure suffering agents, but to consign them to an inescapable prison, for its remedy has ‘ultimately in its aftereffects ... proven itself a hundred times more dangerous than the disease from which it was supposed to redeem’ (1.6). Regardless, Nietzsche applauds the power of will in such a class, even as he rails against it. Without the priest, there would be no philosopher of the future.

This, then, is the cast of castes for *ressentiment*, and their organic relations to each other. To understand how *ressentiment* works itself out, I will now treat *ressentiment* as a biological mechanism, examining its component parts and how they interact with each other to accomplish revaluation. In so doing, I will identify a key component in the workings of *ressentiment*, self-deception, to be used later in a fresh reading of Paul. So we turn now to what I call the physiology of *ressentiment*. Admittedly, this metaphor leaves much room for ambiguity, imprecision, and paradox—some even claim contradiction. This should come as no surprise, however, when pursuing the physiology of a psychological phenomenon.

2.4 *Ressentiment* as Mechanism

What follows is an explication of *ressentiment* into its constituent parts. Stage One, Internalisation, consists of two phases (see sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2). Stage Two, Moralisation, also consists of two phases (see sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4). This schema certainly should not be regarded as inviolable, as different authors organise their understandings of *ressentiment* in different ways.¹⁶ Regardless of how it is broken down, dissecting it (see *UO* 'Utility' 7) allows us to identify its core, the source of its power and its meaning.

It also bears mentioning that Nietzsche would view the parts of *ressentiment* more in terms of phenomenological associations than as a chronological progression. This is helpful to keep in mind in view of the inescapable historicity of his genealogy, so that these phases of mind and affect may be permitted to coordinate with one another. They defy delimited sequencing, often overlapping one another. This harmonises well with the Nietzschean idea of the human body as a manifestation of power, of forces.¹⁷ Moore, quoting from Nietzsche's notebooks, illuminates the topic:

If we translate the characteristics of the lowest living being into terms comprehensible to our 'reason', they become *moral* drives. Such a being assimilates its neighbour, transforms it into its property ... assimilation means to make a foreign object alike, to *tyrannise*... Slavery is necessary for the development of a higher organism, likewise castes. (*italics original*, 2002:79f)

With all this in mind, I term this discussion a physiology of *ressentiment*.

One could argue that Nietzsche spends his entire adult life in the quest of mastery, so it is fitting that he has opinions about ambition. Control, absolute and unabashed, is not only the pursuit of superhumans, but of everyone, including the squeamish, degenerate, disease ridden, milquetoast. *Ressentiment* is this poor-excuse-of-a-specimen's means for achieving it. Existentially, it includes the right of self-determined morality, meaning, and identity. Therefore: measuring from one's own self, right and wrong may be arbitrated; mastery over interpretation and allocation of meanings falls under one's purview; perception and projection of one's own self is, perhaps, the most fundamental right of all. Psychologically, *ressentiment* speaks to overcoming domination, which must always be understood in relation to something else, an other.¹⁸

¹⁶ See section 1.3.2 of this thesis.

¹⁷ Nietzsche's understanding of the organism as the site of a competitive struggle owes much to the intellectual lineage of Roux, Haeckel, and Lange (Moore 2004:34-37).

¹⁸ Though enquiry into the psychology of *ressentiment* is plentiful, our project remains focused on Nietzsche's discourse on it in the context of the reevaluation of moral values, and specifically as it gives rise to self-deception in order to consummate the phenomenon.

This psychological aspect is the focus of the remainder of this chapter. Implications from the former will be entertained later.

2.4.1 *Ressentiment* as a priori: Expansion of Will-to-power

This is Stage One, Phase One of the *ressentiment* mechanism. Nietzsche's will-to-power is 'the tendency of all beings—humans included—not just to survive, but to enlarge and expand—to flourish, so to speak, even at the expense of others' (Volf 2011:67f). See Figure 2.2.¹⁹



Figure 2.2 Stage One, Phase One of *Ressentiment*

Ressentiment is war by other means incessantly waged by the weak (*OGM* 2.11, 3.14). Relatedly, Huskinson represents much of Nietzsche scholarship when she pits will-to-truth against will-to-power (2009:6-8, see also 11-13). I argue Nietzsche holds that will-to-power depicts will-to-truth as a means to traditional morality, in the process exposing will-to-power as a slavish functionary in the service of will-to-truth and a guise for maintaining the status quo (*OGM* 2.11f; *TI* 'Preface'; see Thielicke 1984:229f). If the assumption is that *ressentiment* begins by 'I' in the sense of initiating an effect (i.e., *I will x*), this is not technically correct, for actually *ressentiment* is a response. *Ressentiment* is will-to-power manifesting itself indirectly. It does so psychologically through affects, both conscious and unconscious, in response to an unfavourable balance of power. The prefix re- in the word 'response' directs attention backwards in the course of values formation. '*Ressentiment* ... is reaction from the ground up' (*OGM* 1.10). Such a bold statement prompts inquiry after the provenance of such a major impetus in Nietzsche's slave revolt, that of the *ressentiment* mechanism. From where does *ressentiment* arise? Answers to this question plunge one into the first stage of

¹⁹ I am indebted to LC Chin (2006:8) for the conceptual ideas from which I have derived my portrayal of the *ressentiment* mechanism.

ressentiment, that of internalisation, and set up the sphere in which *ressentiment* is formed.

A partial answer to this question is *ressentiment* arises from bad conscience, ‘the genuine womb of all ideal and imaginative events’ (*OGM* 2.18). The generation of these phenomena surely fits Nietzsche’s description of *ressentiment* activity in creating entire worlds (1.10), as well as those things deep and interesting (1.6), promising (2.16), and beautiful (2.18). *Ressentiment* also creates things not so laudable in Nietzsche’s view such as sin, redemption, judgement, and deity, but these still technically fall under the rubric of ‘ideal and imaginative’.

However, this merely serves to push the inquiry of origins back further so that it must be asked, whence bad conscience? Nietzsche’s answer is three-fold. First, ubiquitous will-to-power seeks expansion via ‘all those instincts of the wild, free, roaming human beings’ (*OGM* 2.16). But where such expansion was formerly unchecked, it meets a historic accident of earth-altering change. In any conflict there is the vanquished and the victor, the victor defining the state of affairs that holds. This ushers in ‘something new, ... a ruling structure’ (2.17). In a word, it is the State, and it drastically changes the field of contest. Made up of ‘the conqueror- and master-race’ (1.5), it organises the world by measuring everything against its own values, effectively creating a system of power tilted in its own favour (2.17). The key, Nietzsche informs us, is what it does to those conquered, the slave race.

The oldest ‘state’ accordingly emerged and continued to function as a terrible tyranny, as an oppressive and ruthless machinery until such a raw material of people and semi-animal was not only thoroughly kneaded and pliable [i.e., submissive], but also formed. (2.17)

Thus, Nietzsche holds the State is responsible for forming bad conscience.

This broad framework leaves such wide gaps in understanding that a second response to explain the appearance of bad conscience is needed. Nietzsche asserts the bad conscience grows out of the soil of ‘the oldest and most primitive personal relationship of all, in the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor’ (*OGM* 2.8). Originally a debtor’s failure to repay his creditor results in the substitution of something he owned, ‘for example his body or his wife or his freedom or even his life’ (2.5). Nietzsche goes to great lengths to evidence the socialisation of mankind into a self-aware, promise-keeping animal. For all its levels of sophistication, it is still a function of (will-to-) power exercised through cruelty (2.3-6). Such cruelty employs pain as a ‘mnemo-technique’ to burn in a sense of contractual liability, what Nietzsche terms ‘memory’ (2.3). Over time, personal obligations originating in the simple

creditor-debtor relationship evolve into corporate legalities and social complexes, a 'morality of custom and the social straightjacket' necessarily imposed by the powerful so that humans may grow beyond barbaric, competing nomads and into a moral collaborative civilisation (2.2). In this emergent form, the community represents to its members what the creditor has previously represented to the debtor. Masters become refined, after a fashion, into nobility as those who abide law and custom (2.8f; see *D* 1.9). Nevertheless, the currency of compensation inherent in the creditor-debtor relationship essentially 'consists in a court order and right to practice cruelty' (*OGM* 2.5). 'Locked once and for all under the spell of society and peace', cruelty remains the right of rulers (2.16). Only now cruelty has become codified into forms of punishment and justice employed by the rulers of the polis, the State. 'The major moral concept "guilt"', Nietzsche claims, 'has its origin in the very material concept "debts"' (2.4). So he does not construe this guilt as moral in nature. Slaves are simply punished as violators (2.8f), yet from the vantage of 'disinterested malice', which is to say 'with the clearest conscience [on the part of debtors] in the world' (2.6). Nietzsche sums up all this under the institution of law, and considers transgressors to violate economic standards of the community rather than moral ones in any absolute sense. Ultimately, therefore, bad conscience is unintentionally caused by the sheer physical enslavement of one race by another, and a normalising of that relationship (2.11, 17).

Third, bad conscience also appears as a result of incipient priestly influence, beginning in the era when priests are considered, or at least associated with, aristocracy (*OGM* 3.17). According to Nietzsche, the priestly valuation 'branch[es] off from the knightly-aristocratic [manner of valuation] and then develop[s] into its opposite' (1.7). Knights (and warriors) prize 'a powerful physicality, a blossoming, rich, even overflowing health, along with whatever is required for their preservation: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general everything that involves strong, free and cheerful activity' (1.7). Priests value *other* things. They are impotent and thus afraid to act openly for fear of reprisals. Their desire for expression remains undiminished, however, and so gives rise to hatred. This hatred is directed toward those in power, whether primeval barbarian-masters or present-day noble-masters. It results in a posture contrary to everything represented by the masters (aforementioned as knights). For Nietzsche, masters are the picture of Life. They say *yes* to everything in the world, whether good or bad. The impotent, by contrast, say *no* to everything in the world, imagining another domain to which to flee for refuge from the perceived suffering of

this one. The impotent, for Nietzsche, represent something even more dangerous and profound than death. Theirs is the way (paved by the priest) to nothingness (1.6f).

The impetus for this a priori phase is will-to-power. It is ‘the *more natural* outlet’ (italics supplied; for ‘outlet’ read, ‘force’) at work before bad conscience is invented (*OGM* 2.22). In the next section, we will learn it is both responsible for, and manifests itself in new form as, bad conscience when it becomes blocked by the strictures of State.

2.4.2 *Ressentiment* Conceived: Force Turned back by State

This is Stage One, Phase Two of the *ressentiment* mechanism. More needs be said about punishment. The natural, perhaps angry, response of those punished is the ‘genuine reaction, that of the deed’ (*OGM* 1.10), to throw off the stranglehold of the masters. In light of the existing power disadvantage suffered by the comparatively weak, though, this recourse seems impossible.²⁰ What can be accomplished against the very force of life itself, that which is ‘the instinct for freedom (in my language: the will-to-power)?’ (2.18). Elsewhere, Nietzsche calls this will-to-power ‘the essence of life, ... the principle superiority of the spontaneous, attacking, infringing, reinterpreting, reordering and shaping powers, upon whose effect “adaptation” first follows’ (2.12, 15). It is outward in direction. It will seek expression. It will achieve its goal. It can neither be annihilated nor interminably caged. It can only be redirected. Thus, ‘this instinct of freedom violently rendered latent— ... repressed, pushed back, imprisoned deep within and ultimately discharging and venting itself only on itself: this, and only this is bad conscience in its beginnings’ (2.17).²¹

Nietzsche uses the term ‘bad conscience’ in two senses, the first of which we will entertain now. This sense of bad conscience bears no ‘inculpatory implication’, as Kaufmann translates it (Nietzsche 1992b:464), and stems from mere socialisation. From the previous section we understand socialisation to derive from the strictures of State. Nietzsche asserts that the establishment of customs, including moral norms, is fundamental to civilisation (*D* 1.16). I will term this ‘gestational bad conscience’. It produces two different outcomes, one negative and one positive. To discuss it, we must recover the thread of punishment from above. The negative product comes by way of the violent and sudden emergence of the State (*OGM* 2.17). Mankind, in the form of the blond beast, strides forward in the creation of civilisation, while at the same time

²⁰ Such could also be the fate of those heretofore considered powerful and noble.

²¹ Nietzsche’s will-to-power is Rolph’s inchoate ‘increase of life’, both of which are fundamentally characterised by a ‘principle of insatiability’ (quoted in Moore 2002:52f).

stepping backward into a snare of its own making, a torture chamber made possible by the State, in which ‘all those instincts of the wild, free, roaming human beings [are turned] backward against human beings themselves’ (2.16). That is, ‘all instincts that do not discharge themselves externally’ [Nietzsche lists some of them: ‘enmity, cruelty, lust in persecution, in assault, in change, in destruction’] ‘now turn inward—this is what I call the internalization of human beings ... That is the origin of the “bad conscience”’ (2.16).

Since Nietzsche views everything through the prism of materialism, this internalised will-to-power manifests itself in an altered humanity. Instead of being an outwardly directed, spontaneous force that changes and creates the world around mankind, redirected will-to-power forms a new world within it. From what we learned in section 2.4.1, the State-as-creditor punishes the citizen-as-debtor for failing to keep her promises (i.e., obligations to customs). To avoid future such pain, she must develop a memory of her promises. To carry out what the memory prescribes, she must develop a will. Nietzsche claims the will, in seeking to fulfil promises, gives rise to a sense of responsibility. None of this could transpire without the never-before existing internal environment, created by will-to-power, called bad conscience. Nietzsche discusses bad conscience in the more common term of consciousness, which he relates to awareness, which leads to self-awareness, to which he also refers as reflection (*OGM* 2.1-3). This ‘tremendous process’ produces the responsible (read, ‘culpable’) individual, one with the ability to make promises and the implicit capacity to keep them (2.2). The power to remember conflicts with ‘the force that works in opposition here, that of *forgetfulness*’ which Nietzsche also terms ‘faculty of repression’ and ‘repression apparatus’ (2.1).²² Memory overcomes forgetfulness so nature can achieve its goal of breeding an animal whose capacity is justified, whose power is absolute, and who has the right to make promises (2.1). Promise signifies mastery of the self and, most notably, its future (2.1). Promise-making requires ‘mnemo-technique’, the use of pain to create memory, which is essentially an idea forged into a person (2.3). The greater the pain, the more unforgettable the idea, until the idea becomes instinctual and absolute. Ultimately, bad conscience culminates in ‘what later is called the “soul”’ (2.16). In sum, mankind as a

²² Nietzsche’s famous ‘doorkeeper’ passage in *OGM* 2.1 features the *Hemmungsapparat*, translated as ‘repression apparatus’ by Del Caro, and as ‘apparatus of suppression’ by Deithe (Ansell-Pearson 2007:35). Though modern psychology distinguishes between the two, Nietzsche’s usage precedes such a distinction and so should not be pressed into the service of one notion more than the other. Thus, I make no distinction when referring to the phenomenon of self-deception.

responsible animal consciously relates itself to the surrounding world by means of the world within. See Figure 2.3.



Figure 2.3 Stage One, Phase Two of *Ressentiment*

The positive product of gestational bad conscience also comes by way of the State, but superveniently. Although Nietzsche denigrates things ‘unegoistic’ at the outset of Essay One (*OGM* 1.2ff), he seems to lend veiled praise to a prime example of such in Essay Two, bad conscience. Nietzsche warns us to ‘beware of thinking contemptuously of this whole phenomenon [of bad conscience]’ (2.18). He knows it might be tempting to dismiss it due to its ugly and painful origins (2.18). How can anything good come of something bad? Bad conscience might also be discounted because of negatives which ensue. Admittedly, the ramifications of bad conscience are far more damning than one might first imagine. The same (will-to-) power that surges upward to erect the State’s halls of power also works ‘in a backward direction and in the “labyrinth of the breast” ... creat[ing] for itself the bad conscience and negative ideals’ (2.18). It creates a No-saying animal in a No-saying world. But Nietzsche does not want us to throw out the baby of ‘all ideal and imaginative events’ with the dirty bathwater associated with bad conscience (2.18).

Nietzsche’s warning is issued so that something positive is not missed. In this light, he should be heard saying, ‘Guard against dismissing altogether this phenomenon merely on account of the negatives it possesses at the outset’. To the one with vision enough, the result of bad conscience is something so incalculably unexpected and lucky that the course of human evolution is interrupted and the axis of the earth altered (*OGM* 2.16). That is, bad conscience transforms the world of humanity into a curiosity interesting enough to necessitate divine spectators (2.16). This newly evolved race possesses beauty worthy of ‘affirmation’ (2.18). It seems to be a contradiction to what one (i.e., Nietzsche) might want, but one must somehow account for the enigmatic delight of ‘selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice’—the creation of generative and

regulative ideals (2.18). Bad conscience has redeeming value. No doubt, though, Nietzsche takes solace that the positives thus incurred by bad conscience still have their source in the cruelty of punishment (see section 4.2.1).

Thus far, the first two phases of the development of *ressentiment* have been explored. They comprise the internalisation stage (*OGM* 2.10-16), which is the damming up of force (will-to-power) to create a reservoir (gestational bad conscience). This sense of bad conscience is devoid of any inculpatory implication and serves as the womb for *ressentiment*. It will become clear shortly that this *ressentiment* takes on the character of its environment. That is, just as bad conscience is pre-moral at this point, so also one should think of *ressentiment*. Accordingly, I will term it ‘proto-*ressentiment*’ at this point in the cycle (see Ridley 1998:15-40). Based on several passages on the slave revolt and its morality, understanding proto-*ressentiment* may be advanced.²³ With particular respect to slaves, it may degrade into the malignancy which is characteristic of their impotence. This course of development will be traced in detail in the next section.

Ressentiment need not perforce follow this pathological pathway, however. Indeed, it may not present itself at all in the master, the noble. Masters may deem an offence either as insignificant and, therefore, unworthy of attention, or as momentous enough to deserve their response. In neither case, however, is the offender perceived in moral terms, that is, as an evil enemy (*OGM* 1.10). On the occasion when *ressentiment* does manifest itself in nobles, it ‘consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction’ (1.10), and ostensibly ends in overcoming, with no deleterious effects. Evidently this ‘reaction’ is so fast, immediate in fact, Nietzsche considers it evidence that these well-born, supercharged humans are active by necessity (1.10). This contrasts dramatically with impotent slaves who sever instinct from action. The result is the slaves’ enervated instincts, along with accompanying emotions, begin to fester and ultimately poison them (1.10). Slaves become silent, biding their time, devising a response: the slave becomes reactive-man (1.10, 2.11). Not so nobles because their discharge-by-instinct precludes the toxic effects of *ressentiment* (1.10).

In concluding my discussion of gestational bad conscience, it is helpful to ask how *ressentiment* originates in it. One might argue that *ressentiment* rises spontaneously in direct consequence to the formation of bad conscience. However, this fails to address

²³ A number of references to *ressentiment* in this regard may be found in the following aphorisms of Essay One: 10 (8x), 11 (3x), 13 (1x), 14 (1x), 16 (4x).

the heart of the question due to the indefinite nature of ‘spontaneously’.²⁴ On the other hand it may be argued Nietzsche’s use of bad conscience requires *ressentiment* to be a latent expression of will-to-power inherent in the oppressed (*OGM* 1.10). In accounting for this view, I might say *ressentiment* arises indirectly, thus still giving opportunity for expression via the bad conscience. Like tension produced by the bending of a bow, it is merely, but unavoidably, potentialised because of a powerful force operating on the individual-become-slave. The nobles act out immediately, instinctively, thus mitigating the negative effects of *ressentiment*. Bad conscience for them remains non-moral, and *ressentiment* is ‘temporary’. It is still ‘bad’ in that their action is constrained and not free. But again, bad conscience, as the incubator for personal development (i.e., into memory, will, consciousness, etc.) and corporate development (i.e., into culture), however painful the experience of its formation might be, may still be viewed as benign and even beneficial.

The second sense in which Nietzsche uses bad conscience contrasts with the first. The impotent fear retaliation by means of a straightforward deeds-reaction (*OGM* 1.10). They cannot ‘attack with the fists, with the knife, with honesty in hate and love’ (*A* 49), and so scheme their response over time. This causes the internal environment to become toxic so that *ressentiment* roots and grows. As it does, bad conscience assumes a permanent disposition. It becomes truly bad; in my terms, it becomes ‘toxic bad conscience’. As we shall see, Nietzsche closely associates it with *ressentiment*, so much so that elaboration on it is saved for the ensuing sections.

Stepping back for a moment, what is not clear is what causes proto-*ressentiment* to become active or reactive, yielding temporary or enduring results, respectively. That is, if both slave and noble collapse into the same relatively impotent individual, given sufficiently adverse circumstances (i.e., domination), then what *sine qua non* determines which mode of valuation, slave or noble, should be employed (*OGM* 1.10)? Nietzsche mourns humanity’s illness, but also envisions it to be pregnant with great possibility

²⁴ Given the ascetic ideal is born of bad conscience, Leiter’s answer to the question of ‘how and why an essentially ascetic or “life-denying” morality should have taken hold among so many people over the past two millennia’ (2003:9) ultimately proves unsatisfying. Leiter’s solution requires the invention of ‘type-facts’, which are those characteristics that define a person as a particular type according to a ‘fixed psycho-physical constitution’ (8). Leiter’s train of thought approximates this: a person behaves out of what they believe, and they believe out of who they are. Leiter writes, ‘The “morality” that a philosopher embraces simply bears “decisive witness to *who he is*” – i.e., who he *essentially* is – that is, to the “innermost drives of his nature” (italics original, *BGE* 6)’ (9). When he employs the metaphor of a tree being typed by the fruit it yields, Leiter takes us back to the same unhelpful starting place. Question: How do you know what kind of tree it is? Answer: By the fruit it produces. Question: What kind of fruit is produced? Answer: The kind that comes from that type tree.—The net result is unsatisfying.

(2.16-18). He seems puzzled as anyone over the magnitude of ‘humankind [as] sicker, more uncertain, more changing, more indeterminate than any other animal’ (3.13). How is it ‘such a brave and rich animal’ must also be ‘the most endangered, the one sickest for the longest time and the most seriously ill of all sick animals?’ (3.13). How can so many *yeses* be birthed by so many *nos* (3.13)? What possible proposal can Nietzsche make to increase the number of humanity’s ‘lucky strokes’ (3.14)? As has been mentioned, the development of bad conscience may take one of two different pathways. One leads to a staging ground for immediate action by the masters, thus rendering it benign, the other toward a breeding ground for subterranean scheming by the slaves, thus rendering it malignant. Since Nietzsche follows the second pathway to fully portray the mechanism of *ressentiment*, we will follow it from here forward.

2.4.3 *Ressentiment* Seeks Relief: Expansion Propelled by Pain

This is Stage Two, Phase One of the *ressentiment* mechanism. In the slave, thus far, a pent up force (will-to-power) has created for itself a reservoir (bad conscience), within which *ressentiment* has arisen. Following the pathway for the toxic form of *ressentiment*, bad conscience mutates into that form which Nietzsche claims to bear the ‘sting of conscience’ (*OGM* 2.14), what we are calling toxic bad conscience. This mechanism of *ressentiment* now enters its second stage, moralisation, in which it develops the dastardly character for which it is infamous.

Just as the first phase begins with the catalyst of injury (see section 2.4.1), so also this phase (*OGM* 3.15). Slavish *ressentiment* is fundamentally a reaction. It is a revolt, and Nietzsche’s primary concern. Moreover, this reaction is different from ‘the *genuine* reaction’, and thus connotes inauthenticity (italics supplied, 1.10). Nietzsche’s most sweeping single treatment of *ressentiment* is found in his very first aphorism to exhibit the term, *OGM* 1.10. Here he describes it as imaginary, self-centred, calculating, disingenuous, and sinister. Thus, the slave revolt—the wholesale moral inversion perpetrated on humanity—is catalysed when *ressentiment*²⁵ seeks to break out of incarceration to create new values. This new moral landscape comes by means of ‘the value-positing gaze—this necessary direction to the outside instead of back onto oneself’, which Nietzsche declares to be ‘the very essence of *ressentiment*’ (1.10). He also identifies the need of *ressentiment* for stimulus which is both external to the slave and perceived to be hostile in nature (1.10, see 11; also Conway 1994:329). A

²⁵ I.e., what we are here calling proto-*ressentiment*.

progression of emotive phenomena issue from such stimulus beginning with the emotion of anger, and from which arises resentment (*OGM* 1.8-11, 15; see Willard 1988:149). Submit this mix to the pressure of refused expression, and it gives rise to a desire for revenge (*OGM* 3.14). Continued pressure over time causes fermentation into rancour, and eventually the womb of bad conscience becomes a cauldron brimming with the noxious brew of *ressentiment* (1.11). Add to this concoction the element of personal denial, the active ingredient of which is self-deception (1.11, 13f), as well as the character traits of cleverness and imagination (1.10), and the revaluing work of *ressentiment* is complete.

Before breaking down this phase of *ressentiment*, a step backwards is necessary. As discussed in the previous section, proto-*ressentiment* both benefits and suffers from the precondition of bad conscience (in the gestational sense). Civilised people, therefore, have come to operate on the state-building principles of sacrifice, trust, patience and the like, yet still from out of the sphere of rage that boils within (*OGM* 2.18). Modern humanity suffers a painful, even torturous, internal environment subjected to tremendous pressure generated by this *ressentiment* (3.11). In such a condition ‘every sufferer instinctively looks for a cause of his suffering’ (3.15). Suffering humanity perceives itself injured. Since *ressentiment* is a manifestation of will-to-power,²⁶ its natural expression is ‘overcoming’. In spatial terms, it might be viewed as expansion.

In this light, injury may be understood as restriction experienced by the victim. The instinctual response to this is one of retaliation. Nietzsche expresses two reasons for the injured to vent affects (*OGM* 3.11). The first serves as a defensive measure against further injury, and the second as an anaesthetic to kill internal pain (3.15). To these I suggest a third reason. It relates to will-to-power—retaliation ultimately serves *to resume* a course of expansion. This is not unique to slaves, but to everyone who is attacked, maligned, harmed, threatened, or in any other way physically, psychologically, or socially limited against their will. Retaliation is normal. Thus, the response-vector to injury in the cycle of *ressentiment* continues to be expansive, outward, and directed toward an other.²⁷ See Figure 2.4.

²⁶ Del Caro translates it, ‘power-will’ (3.11).

²⁷ So Poellner (1995:130f, 253f) and *pace* Leiter (2003:202f).

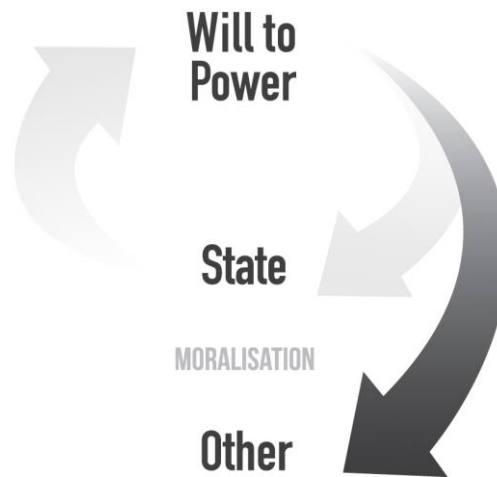


Figure 2.4 Stage Two, Phase one of *Ressentiment*

Only now *ressentiment* turns ugly. It must be remembered that noble *ressentiment* is no longer in view; it has been discharged because it *can* be. But we are tracking the slaves' *ressentiment* because they *cannot* discharge it. They very much want to do so, for will-to-power requires it. They hunt for a target upon which to unleash their pent-up energy. I will develop this further below.

I should further qualify the concept of injury or suffering within the context of *ressentiment*. Nietzsche's presumably inexhaustive list includes such occasions as 'bad deeds', 'imaginary slights', and 'dark questionable stories' (*OGM* 3.15). Fundamentally, the concept must include anything leading to a disadvantage or power imbalance, resulting in perceived suffering. Perhaps most naturally injury is construed as physical in nature. Long ago, Nietzsche claims, humanity experiences this as a consequence of war when barbarians 'still possessed unbroken strength of will and lust for power [and] hurled themselves upon the weaker' (*BGE* 9.257). He proceeds in the same aphorism to associate physical domination with 'soulful' strength, viewing the latter as source of the former. To exhibit such as universal he offers 'the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings, ... Goths, [and] Vandals' as among those who not only pillage and plunder, bloody and spoil, but delight in all their exploits out of the expansiveness of their own being (*OGM* 1.11; see 10). The vanquished become the weak, and the physical power gradient set up over them should be obvious. Additionally, in the Nietzschean system this asymmetry is chiefly characterised by a culture impregnated with victors' values such as strength, decisiveness, cruelty, rage, and ecstasy to name a few. Physical domination is not the only advantage of powerful rulers, 'creating values is the true right of masters' (*BGE*

9.261). Therefore, injury should include one or more forms of psychological trauma that often accompanies and amplifies physical injury. The perception of pain, threat, restriction, or any other imposed disadvantage can result in phobias and other disorders that remain with the victim long after the physical pain disappears (see Volf 2006:6f). Regardless of the form of injury, the key is it creates an imbalance of power, which in turn results in pain of suffering in the comparatively weak. Power seeks target (Foucault 1980:98).

Let us return to the discharge, the release, the outwardly-moving direction of *ressentiment*. After a fashion, everyone reacts ‘outwardly’ to an attack, so why does Nietzsche labour over the trajectory of *ressentiment*? Two reasons are apparent. First, *ressentiment* requires ‘external stimuli in order to act at all’ (*OGM* 1.10, see 1.2). *Ressentiment* parasitically draws its impetus, its life, from an other. Its entire orientation, including self-valuation, begins with what is ‘outside’, ‘different’, and what is ‘a non-self’ (1.10). Therefore, Nietzsche can assert *ressentiment* ‘is reaction from the ground up’ (1.10). In doing so he brands the slave as negative. Second, the noble also ‘reacts’, but not as the slave. The strong nobles simply act out of themselves. The difference is they need no justification for their action-response; they are their own reference point. Furthermore, since they are ‘saturated through and through with life and passion’ (1.10), they view their action as part of the struggle, the game. Moreover, they have no need to retaliate either to regain a sense of self-worth or to replenish their happiness because they are ‘full human beings overloaded with power’ (1.10). They are constantly full, content in themselves and therefore have no dependence on enemies per se in their calculus of joy and life. The stimulus of attack is considered merely part of the whole, not a detraction from it. There is no vector, purpose, or moral score to keep. Thus, Nietzsche shields the noble from the contaminating effects of *ressentiment*.

Not only does Nietzsche characterise this stimulus as external, but also hostile (*OGM* 1.10). Since *ressentiment* has ‘more need of enemies than of friends’ (*TI* ‘Morality as Anitnaturalness’ 3), it conceives of the ‘other’ in adversarial terms such as ‘the evil enemy’ [and] ‘the Evil One’ (*OGM* 1.10). Huskinson writes that ‘an illusory enemy is thus created from the sense of powerlessness so that I conceive myself to be oppressed by an external evil rather than my own weakness’ (2009:23). Leiter debates the notion of this ‘other’ as *someone*, preferring to take the ‘enemy’ to be *something*. He argues that ‘states of affairs can provoke *ressentiment*’ if the victim perceives the self to be powerless (Leiter 2003:202f, note 13). Against Leiter, Nietzsche’s language

would seem to favour an entity against which the impotent might pitch his revolution. He seeks a ‘guilty perpetrator who is receptive to suffering’, ‘some kind of living thing upon which ... he can discharge his affects’, ‘someone ... to blame’, even the victim’s ‘friends, wife, child and anyone else who is closest to them’ (*OGM* 3.15). Wittingly or otherwise, *ressentiment* seeks to justify its existence by means of a ‘guilty perpetrator’ (3.15). In casting the inflicting party as ‘evil’, it attaches blame: ‘Someone or another must be to blame for my feeling’ bad (3.15). Someone, an other, and therefore external to the victim, must be responsible for the pain. ‘It’s *your* fault!’ is the cry. This is no mere designation of transaction, but a declamation of wrongdoing. If such a culprit can be found, reprisal may be viewed as justifiable, and even mandatory.²⁸

The objective in seeking an agent to blame is to assign culpability.²⁹ The good-bad axis begins to shift at this point as the charge of injustice is assigned in the slave’s mind to the stimulus. Mal-intent cannot go unanswered, and so suffering gives rise to anger. However, fear precludes open retaliation to the injury, settling instead for repeated reflection on the event. This serves to build aggrievement that amounts to resentment (*OGM* 1.14, 2.11). Again, circumstances prevent open reprisal so machinations of revenge must suffice (3.14f). These schemes, due to fear, stay captive in the imagination, even as the passage of time intensifies the pressure of perceived violation and oppression, fermenting them into the settled disposition of rancour (2.11). All this emotive force has been directed against an other along the way, the offending party (i.e., the strong, the master, the noble).

However, a strange phenomenon has been occurring beneath conscious notice of the injured party (i.e., the weak, the slave, the offended). Keeping the offence in view and seeking redress directly in relation to it becomes moot. The target of accumulated anger, resentment, vengefulness, and rancour in the injured has become the accumulation of emotion itself, divorced from the offence. Were the offence somehow to be redressed, the injured would still find themselves hostile toward the offender because the swirl of emotions still plagues the injured. Furthermore, it may be the case that the significance of the offence has diminished over time to the point where the offended party can no longer recall details of the incident, or even exactly what it was. In such a case, the term ‘blinded by anger’ might be used for the injured party as it

²⁸ On the externalising, or ‘target’, of blame, see Williams 1994:123-45.

²⁹ Separate explorations into concepts underlying and related to agency such as freedom, autonomy, and self would take us too far afield from my interest, but for a helpful single-volume compilation of such essays, see *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy* (Gemes & May 2009). See also *Beyond Selflessness* (Janaway 2007).

relates to the original offence. I will develop this more in the next section. One thing is sure, however. There remains a party who is held responsible for whatever it was that happened. The culmination of all this activity is best diagnosed as an injured party suffering a full-blown case of toxic *ressentiment*.

Ressentiment, as such, places offended and offender at opposite poles, vengefulness carrying with it self-determined authority and righteousness (*OGM* 2.11, 3.14).³⁰ From a self-righteous frame of reference the injured person of *ressentiment* conceives their oppressor as an enemy, and not merely an enemy, but ‘the evil enemy’ (1.10). In *BGE* Nietzsche comments ‘that moral value-distinctions were first applied everywhere to human beings and only’ abstracted later to apply ‘to actions’ (9.260).³¹ Ultimately, then, *ressentiment* paints itself into an embattled corner, threatened on every side by an ‘opposing and external world’ (*OGM* 1.10). Nietzsche would view this as a struggle against life itself, and in doing so, Nietzsche would say it is life is denied (3.17; see *Z* 1.3).

2.4.4 *Ressentiment* Wins Relief: Force Redirected by Priest

This is Stage Two, Phase Two of the *ressentiment* mechanism. All this pain is propelled by accumulating *ressentiment*, which in turn has been driving its victim’s suffering to ever more excruciating levels (*OGM* 3.15). *Ressentiment* is wielded with singular effectiveness by Christianity ‘to break the strong’ (*WP* 2.252; see Wallace 2006:230). ‘Every sufferer instinctively looks for a cause of his suffering; more accurately, a perpetrator, more specifically, a guilty perpetrator who is receptive to suffering’ (*OGM* 3.15; see Azzam 2015:121f). This sets the stage for the ascetic priest, the ‘genuine artist in feelings of guilt’ (*OGM* 3.20). Priests guarantee relief by promising to find a target upon which justifiable redress may be unleashed. This is the deserving ‘other’ of all the suffering endured thus far—‘how at bottom they themselves are ready to make people atone’, indicts Nietzsche (3.14). The target must be certain, unswervingly reliable to receive the onslaught of pain. Nietzsche calls it a sickness, and it is perceived to be terminal (3.13). There is no room for error. Absolute control—mastery—is imperative! In such a state of vulnerability, Nietzsche enlightens us that ‘all sufferers are of a horrifying readiness and inventiveness in pretexts for painful affects’ (3.15).

³⁰ Vengeance carries negative connotations and ‘vindicate’, positive (see Barnhart 1995:855 and 861, respectively).

³¹ This of course also involves the mistake, informs Nietzsche, of separating the deed from the doer discussed in *OGM* 1.13.

The human being, suffering from himself somehow, physiologically in any case, something like an animal that is locked in its cage, unclear as to why, what for? thirsting for reasons ... he gets his first clue about the 'cause' of his suffering from ... the ascetic priest: ... he should understand his suffering itself as a state of punishment. (3.20)

Like sheep led to slaughter, they flock to their shepherd, the ascetic priest, to receive his prescription, the antidote to their toxin. 'Right you are, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame—you alone are to blame for yourself!' (*OGM* 3.15). And so the priest alters the direction of *ressentiment* (3.15, 20). See Figure 2.5.

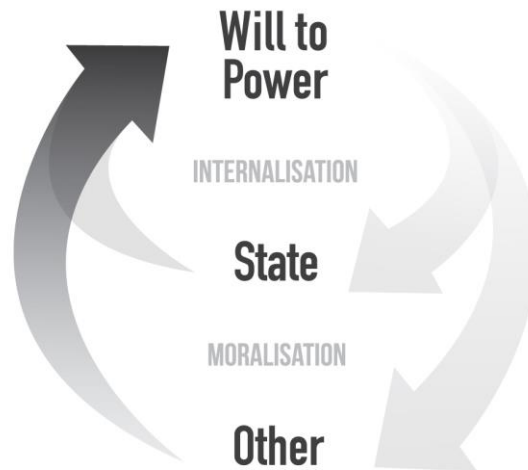


Figure 2.5 Stage Two, Phase Two of *Ressentiment*

The victim is not unfamiliar with this redirecting of force, and may in fact strangely welcome it. Humanity is delimited by the 'bulwarks of society' the first time around in the internalisation stage of *ressentiment*. This time around, obstruction of the outward thrust of *ressentiment* comes via the priest. This move continues to satisfy two deep drives. One is for exertion because the will-to-power must still seek optimisation, the other a target for discharge, against oneself, 'first against the "debtor"' (2.21).

Moving from bad to worse, Nietzsche reveals the formula for the 'most terrible and most sublime pinnacle' of the moralisation stage (*OGM* 2.19, 21)—to toxic guilt in a toxic bad conscience, add a deity concept, and the sick becomes a sinner (2.20-22, 3.15). To perpetuate the condition interminably, the sinner is made the murderer of God (see *GS* 3.125). The self-torment inflicted by this realisation is beyond bearing. Mankind itself is the 'other', the target deserving of anger and vengeance and judgement, so deserving in fact, the self concurs with this judgement: 'It's my fault'. Amazingly, the cure for this is also available. 'Those concepts "guilt" and "duty" ... turn themselves backward ... even against the "creditor"' (*OGM* 2.21). For it is 'God sacrificing himself for the guilt of humanity, God himself making payment to himself,

God as the only one who can redeem from humans what for humans has become irredeemable' (2.21). This is the way it must be—God has willed it 'out of love for his debtor!' (2.21). This becomes the way humanity as oppressed makes sense of its world and can live with its oppressors.

This wider discussion of *ressentiment* has been necessary to highlight self-deception within it. We now move beyond the redirective aspect of *ressentiment* to hone in on the chief elements of this phase. One is the priest's role. Priests save eternally by wounding continually. That is, their cure is not a cure, but a narcotic serving to alleviate pain while perpetuating illness. My attention in this section, however, lies not with priests, but with slaves. Specifically, it lies with the consummating attribute of slavish *ressentiment*, self-deception.

Now that slaves have schemed a way to live with their oppressors, they must work out a way to live with themselves. One thing they must not do is look back upon the path that brought them to power, at least not consciously. 'The human being of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naïve, nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul squints; his spirit loves hiding places, secret passages and back doors, everything hidden seems like his world to him, his security, his refreshment' (*OGM* 1.11). Slaves must not even imagine their thoughts and emotions have resulted in violence against, and subsequent victory over, another. This is the very scenario to which they themselves were subjected and which they despised (see Wallace 2007:215-17). Self-sickness is the soil in which the 'poisonous plant' of *ressentiment* grows, where 'teem the worms of vengeful and rancorous feeling; here the air stinks of secrets and unadmitted things ... And what mendacity not to admit this hate is hatred!' (3.14). Therefore, not only will slaves not view themselves in terms of oppression, they *cannot* view themselves in this way. 'These "good human beings" ... who among them could endure even a single truth "about humanity"' (3.19)! Further, Nietzsche writes if 'the suffering and oppressed' could see their 'will to morality' was merely the 'will to power' disguised, they would know 'they were on the same plain with the oppressors' (*WP* 1.55). Somehow, then, they must account for this new balance of power without admitting it is new or unusual. Functionally speaking, these slaves-turned-masters must see both themselves and the masters-turned-slaves as part of a natural order, as everything in its place. How do they do this?

For Nietzsche, life is will-to-power (*BGE* 1.13; 2.36; 9.259; *OGM* 2.12; *Z* 2.12), the optimisation of power. Even the slaves-turned-masters are motivated by ambition

for such control (*OGM* 3.13), but both their position and ambition have come at an awful cost, that of personal suffering. It is a painful past, to be sure, and can be re-lived in the present if dwelt upon. The affect-objective of *ressentiment*, however, is to minimise pain. They want to forget their ordeal (see 2.1). Psychologically speaking, the former slaves become engaged in denial. They not only look away from what the powerful masters used to be and do, but also what they, the slaves, used to be and do as well. ‘The most common lie is the one you tell yourself; lying to other people is a relatively exceptional case’ (*A* 55). This denial is the capstone of values-inversion and the crowning move in *ressentiment*. This is Zarathustra’s ‘hypocritical word’, the creation of a ‘good conscience’ by the wielder of vengeance (*Z* 2.20).

For a new-to-power group the process works similarly, historically speaking. Nietzsche writes in *A* 57 that law is fundamentally grounded in the notion of what we may call ‘givenness’, and not in its rational origins. In principle, the goal of law is automatic obedience via authority accepted unconsciously. In Nietzsche’s argument, slaves use a supposed legacy of divine law to underwrite their newly created system, which obviates appeal to any higher authority to challenge its legitimacy. Specifically, the slave revolt has devalued the master-system of values to the point where it has become non-threatening, inconsequential, and even erroneous to the point of rendering it incompatible with the new moral system. Pascal, whom Nietzsche numbers in the avant-garde of Christianity’s overthrow of ‘the strong’ (*WP* 2.252), writes of the ‘just rule’ of nouveau-noble orders in terms of imagination. Once the conflict for power

has been settled, then the masters, who do not want the war to go on, ordain that the power which is in their hands shall pass down by whatever means they like; some entrust it to popular suffrage, others to hereditary succession, etc. And that is where imagination begins to play its part. Until then pure power did it, now it is power, maintained by imagination. (Pascal 1995 2.31.828)³²

William Wood interprets this as the subordinate group being induced to believe, through constant projections of ‘benevolent’ power, ‘that the social order is founded on justice instead of force’ (2013:56).³³ Foucault stresses the cruciality of deception in this regard, that ‘power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms’ (1976:86).

³² Numbers of fragments in Pascal’s *Pensées* follow Krailsheimer’s schema: following the year of the edition’s publication, 1995, the first number refers to section, the second number refers to topic, and the third number refers to the fragment itself.

³³ For an extended discussion on the role of imagination in maintaining social order, see the entirety of Wood’s second chapter, ‘The Reign of Duplicity: Pascal’s Political Theology’ (2013:51-91).

This devaluation might also be understood as inertia gained through the progression of emotive phenomena. The vector of *ressentiment* has maintained its magnitude, even though its direction has been altered. Thus, a repressive force is used to deny revenge, resentment, and even anger. The results? Where there is no revenge, there can be no scheme. In the absence of resentment, one cannot find evidence of emotion. Without anger, how can one understand the notion of injury, much less that of an injurer? Thus, all pain and all struggle are recouped, swallowed up in the revolution whose cry is, ‘We good men—we are the just’, to which Nietzsche comments in response,

What they demand they do not call retaliation, but ‘the triumph of justice’; what they hate is not their enemy, no! they hate ‘injustice,’ ‘godlessness’; what they believe and hope is not the hope for revenge ... but the victory of God. (*OGM* 1.14)

He continues by probing, ‘In hope of what?’, and then answers his own interrogative, ‘These weak ones—for they too want to be the strong ones someday, there is no doubt, someday their “kingdom” too shall come’ (1.14).

Depending on how powerful the ‘weak’ become, they may not have long to wait for ‘someday’. Nietzsche enlightens us that as the power of a community increases, so does its sense of leniency. When a full-grown man is kicked in the shin by a child, not only does he not retaliate, he instead may protect the child from slipping. He might even go so far as to praise the tyke’s spunk. Likewise, as a people grows in stature, confidence, and resources—all measures of power—it decreases the discharge of its anger on those who injure it corporately. Speaking of such a prosperous group as a collective ‘creditor’, Nietzsche writes that the degree to which he (the creditor) can tolerate injury is proportional to ‘the measure of his wealth’ (*OGM* 2.10). He continues, ‘A *consciousness of power* in society could be imagined according to which society would be afforded itself the noblest luxury available to it—that of letting its offender *go unpunished*’ (italics original, 2.10; see also *BGE* 5.201). As if the injury had never occurred. ‘*Mercy!*’ (italics original, 2.10).

It is no secret that Nietzsche disdains the morality of his day, first in his native Germany, then across Europe, and ultimately throughout the western world (*OGM* 1.12; 2.7; 23; 3.14). To begin his case in *OGM*, he singles out English psychologists for their investigations which have served only to justify modern humanity’s mediocrity as dictated by accepted morality. How could they (i.e., the psychologist) not conduct such self-serving justification, he wonders, driven as they are by ‘a secret, malicious, base instinct to belittle humanity, perhaps impossible to acknowledge to oneself’ (2.10)? A

decade earlier in *HHI*, Nietzsche is already opposed to such conclusions, that society is, passively, the result of morality. Rather, he claims the current pathetic state of society ‘has not been devised by morality: it wants delusion, it lives on delusion’ (*HHI* ‘Preface’ 1). And while Nietzsche rails against all *ressentiment*-driven systems of morality as self-deceived, he repeatedly claims ‘that the Christian ethos in particular involves self-deception’ (Poellner 1995:229, note 33).

By means of such deception then, the process of the revaluation of all values, with all the painful struggle and attending *ressentiment*, fades from memory. Left standing proudly, but paradoxically, humbly, are new lords of the earth (*WP* 4.958), reigning over the newly achieved state. The meek have inherited the earth (see *OGM* 1.7, 15).

2.5 Paul: Perpetrator or Victim?

That Nietzsche believes *ressentiment* to be a herd characteristic is beyond doubt. Propelled by *ressentiment*, slaves have successfully overthrown masters *en masse*. Nowhere is ‘the symbol of this struggle, inscribed in letters legible across all human history’ more prominent than in the bout Nietzsche bills as ‘Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome’ (*OGM* 1.16). The Romans are the world-power of their day, stronger than any nation to date. Yet, they do not realise what they are up against, for the Jews are ‘the priestly people of *ressentiment* par excellence’, and their genius for war-by-other-means, hitherto, has been unknown (1.16). ‘The decisive figure’ in this conflict is Paul (Huskinson 2009:29). Nietzsche both labels him a priest and portrays him operating as one (*A* 42). Furthermore, though Nietzsche never directly links priests with toxic *ressentiment*, they surely reek of its characteristics. If these connections can be established, it will be possible to associate Paul closely with *ressentiment*.

In *OGM* 3.14 Nietzsche launches a protracted harangue on slaves as the sick, those shot through with *ressentiment*, and also on the risks of the contagion associated with their care. The sick pump madhouses and hospitals full of bad air that ‘stinks of secrets and unadmitted things’, which escapes from subterranean chambers wherein *ressentiment* boils and fumes (3.14). Furthermore, the unhealthy go to great lengths to represent themselves otherwise. They practice forgery, disguise, and propaganda—‘we alone are *homines bonae voluntatis*’ (3.14). They even parade their *ressentiment* in living effigy as ‘they stroll among us as incarnate reproaches, as warnings to us ... [that] we will have to atone someday, bitterly atone’ (3.14). Fomenting this *ressentiment* is will-to-power, Nietzsche tells us, so the sick slaves might ‘represent any form of

superiority' and thus satisfy 'their instinct for secret paths that lead to a tyranny over the healthy' (2.14). Nietzsche leaves no doubt that first-century Judea is full of *ressentiment*: 'the Jews, that priestly people who in the end were only able to achieve satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors through a radical revaluation of their values, hence through an act of the most spiritual revenge' (1.7).

Immediately on the heels of *OGM* 3.14, Nietzsche informs us in 3.15 the ideal physician for the sick is the ascetic priest. He is an 'odd shepherd' indeed since he is both distinct from, and similar to, those he leads. The majority of Nietzsche commentators lean more on the former view, determining the priest to be somehow impervious to *ressentiment*. Against this view, *mutatis mutandis*, there is evidence the priest shares the slaves' malady of *ressentiment*, thus making him very much 'one of them'. First, he is pathologically related to his *ressentiment*-riddled flock through sickness. He is a fellow sufferer. Second, he is fundamentally related to the sick by will-to-power. Yet his distinctive strength over himself and others indicates he is 'unscathed' by virtue of will-to-power, but it remains intact from/through/despite what? Nietzsche moves along too rapidly to say, but his context all along suggests an answer: from/through/despite the suffering that keeps one within the flock. The priest shares the primal urge to increase. Third, he is characteristically related to the sick as revealed by his relations to the healthy and strong. He naturally opposes them, even as do the *ressentiment*-afflicted. He despises them, presuming to attain some superiority; the same is said of those burning with *ressentiment* (see 3.14). Fourth, he wars cunningly, indirectly and by subterfuge, promising one thing while delivering another. The *ressentiment* masses also operate by means of artifice, masquerade, and pretext (see 3.14). He does not lose his *ressentiment* capacity for deception (see Poellner 1995:229), and even self-deception (see Reginster 1997:289, 291, 297). Fifth, he is related through ambition for domination. The priest is on a historical mission such that his herd becomes a kingdom; no less the *ressentiment*-herd itself seeks to extend its tyranny everywhere (compare *OGM* 3.14). He is their ally in revolution. In view of these reasons, it may be fairly deduced the priest, while distinct from the *ressentiment*-herd, is not immune to its ravages, and so is a carrier of *ressentiment* as well. Huskinson concurs. She not only speaks of 'Paul's *ressentiment*' (2009:29), but characterises Paul as, for Nietzsche, 'the most diseased man', the disease being *ressentiment* (see chapter subtitle, 25). 'These herdsmen [i.e., priests] themselves still belonged among the sheep' (Z 2.4).

If such is the case, then Rempel provides a final connection, that between priest and Paul. Rempel takes great pains to establish such a correlation by means of Nietzsche's own word usage. Rempel spends approximately two pages reeling off passage after passage with very little commentary, mostly in *A*, that associate the words 'power', 'lie', and 'priest' with Paul (2002:115-17). Rempel's deduction may be summarised this way. Paul, for Nietzsche, is fundamentally motivated by a lust for power. He therefore sanctifies the lie concerning Jesus' death and resurrection through his personal interpretation of God's law, will, and word. In doing so, Paul assumes the role of priest so he might come into power and also be able to keep it (115f). Beyond Rempel, it is also worth remembering that Paul's heritage connects him with the priestly people, the Jews. Lucy Huskinson states in no uncertain terms, 'If, for Nietzsche, the exiled Jew is full of *ressentiment*, and the priests are even more so, St Paul represents, for him, the most corrupt of them all' (2009:25). Poellner concurs, citing *A* 55 to support his claim that 'the genuine "priests" and believers of the various religious and ethical creeds—Nietzsche of course has again particularly Christianity in mind—are not innocently mistaken; they are in some sense self-deceived' (2000:229).

So as a Jew, Paul is a master of *ressentiment*. Menahem Brinker writes, 'Paul is the characteristic product of the Jewish spirit of *ressentiment*, typical of slave-morality in general, and it is he who deliberately falsified the mystical message of Jesus and conquered the spirit of Europe, poisoning it with decadence' (2002:116). Nietzsche adds he operates 'with the logical cynicism of a rabbi' (*A* 44). By the same Jewish roots, however, Paul is also a victim of *ressentiment*. Brinker points out, along with Jewish priests, Paul has to create and believe in new values, such as salvation by faith alone, out of fear for his enemies (Brinker 2002:116). If this be the case, then at some point in the *ressentiment* cycle, Paul engages in self-deception, which amounts to the following. Due to his inner turmoil over failure to keep God's Law, Paul dissembles to assuage his guilt-induced pain. That lie provides release of his suffering onto a scapegoat, Jesus, who, in turn is said to have been executed because of Paul and his sin. In all this, Nietzsche has a vested interest in engaging Paul on his way to answering humanity's crying question, 'Why do I suffer?'

What is this interest in bringing Paul into engagement with Nietzsche? Happily, the two are already engaged, as evinced by numerous fascinating coincidences that emerge in this study. First, just as Nietzsche writes passionately about Paul, so Paul writes with equal passion about a person whom I will argue resembles Nietzsche in

profile. Second, both authors place heavy emphasis on the human internal environment. Third, their respective moral systems are argued for and against an all-powerful deity. Fourth, some concept of truth is a focal point for both. Fifth, each provides backstory which may be perceived to counter deficiencies in the other's position. Sixth, each regards the other as substituting for the truly ultimate that which is not ultimate, an idolatrous object of positive regard. Seventh, morality (or immorality) manifests a relatively progressive, developmental characteristic in both schemes. Eighth, they both believe themselves to be struggling in a fight of eternal dimensions (*WP* 4.1067; 1 Tim 6:12). Ninth, their aspirations for humanity feature a heroic individual whose overcoming of the tragic paves the way and provides a model for others to follow. Tenth, freedom is a goal of both schemes of thought. While these connections are general, they do suggest commonalities in their backgrounds and their thinking.³⁴ The remainder of the thesis will show specific connections in their thought.

More than suspicious, Nietzsche accuses Paul of playing for power, both in terms of Paul's role in Christianity as well as the promulgation of its message. Nietzsche holds Paul to be the founder of Christianity, and he thrice claims in *D* 1.68 this new religion is generated from Paul's 'lust for domination'. Regarding the message he preached, the Apostle's repository for it are the Gospels, books about which Nietzsche claims, 'every word is problematic' (*A* 44). The power of this supposedly good news lies in its 'use [of] morality as a technique to seduction', and its messengers (i.e., Christians) magnify it in a holy lie (44). The nature of this lie will be taken up in the next chapter.

Just two years prior to this Nietzsche incorporates several 'vengeful' passages in *OGM* 1.15 authored by famous ambassadors of the Christian faith—Dante, Tertullian, and Aquinas—which promulgate the lie under the pretence of championing Kingdom of God morality. Nietzsche considers this hate masqueraded as love to be a world-class and deadly contradiction (1.16). Greater than all these 'apostles of revenge', however, is Paul, that 'madman' and 'appalling fraud' whose falsehood is catalysed by the revenge of *ressentiment* (*A* 46). Nietzsche tells us that he, himself, 'cannot read a single word without seeing gestures' (44), such that under his scrutiny as a philologist, Paul's fraud cannot evade detection behind his 'holy books' (47). Moreover, as 'an old psychologist' and 'someone with ears even behind his ears', he who is ravaged with *ressentiment* 'is made to speak out' even though he 'want[s] to keep quiet' (*TI* 'Preface'). Nietzsche pronounces him 'incurable' (*A* 47). Taking a cue from Nietzsche, we turn our attention

³⁴ Further parallels may be found in Salaquarda 1985:126-29.

to the writing of the Apostle Paul and, more precisely, to the *res* signified by Paul's *verba*. If the Apostle is diseased with *ressentiment*, as charged by Nietzsche, it stands to reason that anything issuing from him bears the same contagion.

Chapter 3: PAULINE FALLENNESS IN LIGHT OF NIETZSCHEAN *RESSENTIMENT*

3.1 Introduction

Chapter One explored the literary and historical contexts for the thesis, and Chapter Two examined the makeup of the phenomenon of Nietzschean *ressentiment*. This chapter uses *ressentiment* as a lens through which to read the first two chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, effectively resulting in a Pauline theology of *ressentiment*. Obviously, when I refer to a Pauline theology of *ressentiment*, I am not assuming its absolute identity with the phenomenon in Nietzsche. From now on, then, I will assume the propriety of speaking in theological terms because Nietzschean *ressentiment* reflects points of Paul's analysis of fallenness.

The chapter follows this outline. First, the rationale for the kind of reading proposed will be specified (section 3.2). That is, a *ressentiment* reading of Romans 1 and 2 gains purchase in what is arguably Paul's most systematic diagnosis of the human condition, whether Jew or pagan. This is made possible by employing a hermeneutical strategy derived from Karl Barth. Second, a theological exegesis of Paul will be performed by mapping the structure of Nietzschean *ressentiment* onto the Pauline text (section 3.3). This brings to the surface for us a creational subtext in Romans 1, which is Genesis 1-3 (section 3.3.1), and in which I locate the internalisation stage of *ressentiment*. I will then map *ressentiment* onto the Romans 1 text proper, wherein we will find the moralisation stage of *ressentiment* (section 3.3.2). This will serve to refine my focus for the next move, which is an examination of Romans 2. Using what we learned from the previous mapping exercise, I will specifically seek evidence in the text of self-deception (section 3.3.3).

3.2 Rationale

Pauline fallenness cannot be strictly equated with Nietzschean *ressentiment*. With respect to the text in view, what is being asked is whether or not the fallen condition bears features which can be usefully conceptualised in terms of *ressentiment*. Hence, the question of hermeneutics looms. Different hermeneutical strategies for reading Romans abound. In one account by Jae Hyun Lee, a spectrum of approaches for reading Romans is specified. They are labelled social-scientific, intertextual, narrative, rhetorical, and linguistic discourse (Lee 2010:1-24). I am not denying any of these approaches may be

valid. Indeed, while I cannot in this thesis defend a full-scale hermeneutic, my exegesis will undoubtedly show the use of one or more of them. Notwithstanding, my project crucially employs an option quite possibly not at all classifiable as a species of hermeneutical theory. That is, theological and philosophical reflection on the text in light of Nietzsche has unearthed what may plausibly be conceived as some kind of *ressentiment* structure in Pauline reasoning. Additionally, in mulling over the proper hermeneutical way to account for this discovery, I have been struck by the possibility of reading Paul in light of a Nietzschean conceptuality. I propose this possibility by using Karl Barth in his treatment of Romans.¹

Though Barth may not have developed a formal hermeneutical theory, he does employ what amounts to a hermeneutical strategy. Barth insists he exegetes Paul, but his critics ‘severely’ handle him, and charge him ‘of imposing on the text rather than extracting meaning from it’ (Barth 1933:8-10). Principally, this is because Barth reads Paul according to a conceptuality alien to Paul. Barth defends his ‘system’ by putting forth his ‘prime assumption’ that his exegetical task can only be accomplished with the illuminating aid of a conceptuality admittedly not found in the text itself. It is one that recognizes ‘what Kierkegaard called the “infinite qualitative distinction” between time and eternity’ (10). Barth believes he can remain faithful to Paul’s language (*verba*) while at the same time affirming that the corresponding theological substance (*res*) fuses horizons between the Pauline world and his own. Thus, Barth recounts his personal wrestlings with the ‘Epistle to the Romans’ to get to Paul’s intent: ‘During the work it was often as though I caught a breath from afar, from Asia Minor or Corinth, something primeval, from the ancient East, indefinably sunny, wild, original, that somehow is hidden behind the sentences’ (quoted in Busch 1976:98). In the preface to his first edition, he talks about ‘penetrating’ Romans to hear ‘the mighty voice of Paul’ (Barth 1933:1). In the preface to his second edition he writes, ‘There “remains” everywhere, more or less in the background, that which subtly escapes both understanding and interpretation, or which, at least, awaits further investigation’ (12). Barth interprets the *verba* of man’s plight in Romans in consideration of what he takes to be the *res*.

I will similarly approach Paul and Nietzsche, proposing to fuse horizons along the following lines. In Barth, I find justification to address the Pauline text with

¹ So-called Barthian exegesis and related hermeneutical theory, setting aside any discussion of historical-critical theory, is not without controversy (see Colwell 1997:163-79; Webster 2005b ‘Karl Barth’; Watson 2007:163-91).

Nietzschean thought, and ask whether it is tolerant of interpretation in terms of Nietzschean *ressentiment* without violating Paul. The objective in using Barth is not to defend his hermeneutics on the level of theory (if, indeed, he may be said to have one), but rather to put forth a model that allows us to perform this reading. I recognise this cannot be done straightforwardly; any attempt would be a blatant exercise in distortion and arbitrariness. Such a procedure must therefore be undertaken with care, in this instance, because the nature of the investigation concerns the deep philosophical adumbration of Paul's *res* to which his *verba* point. I trust my use of this model in reading Paul along *ressentiment* lines will, as Barth does with his project (Barth 1933:10), demonstrate its fruitfulness *ad hoc* through my exegesis.

My proposed reading of Romans will demonstrate a correspondence between Nietzschean *ressentiment* and Pauline fallenness. This will be done by mapping the structure of *ressentiment* onto a Pauline analysis of human fallenness, specifically in Romans 1:18-2:16. That is, Paul's fallen-man can be interpreted in terms of bearing *ressentiment* if Nietzschean language is used to describe fallen-man's actions and attitudes. The project encounters an immediate problem in Romans 1:18-32 in that only half of the map is apparent. That is, the second half of Nietzschean *ressentiment*, moralisation, correlates with elements of fallenness on the 'surface' of the text, but the first half of *ressentiment* seems to be missing. I will argue the first half of the structure of *ressentiment*, internalisation, lies in a creational subtext of Romans 1.

In support of this creational subtext, or sub-layer, NT Wright remarks that 'the line of thought in 1.18-25 has "Adam" written all over it' (2013 3.769).² Just prior to his opening commentary on Pauline theology in 'Romans', Dunn writes that 'one of the most striking features of Romans is the fact that Paul repeatedly calls upon Genesis 1-3 to explain his understanding of the human condition' (1998:90f; see Keener 2009:33). Bell argues that 'Paul refers to the fall of Adam, to Israel and to every generation' (1998:126-31). These assessments have much to commend them. Certainly, there is a creation-wide, universal atmosphere about the Romans pericope, generated by at least eight contributing factors related to the text itself. One factor is the primary conceptual subject of the passage, divinity, presented here in its most general appellative, θεὸς³ (Rom 1:20, 25). A second factor is the primary conceptual object in the passage,

² Pace Campbell 2009:1082, footnote 63.

³ See Kleinknecht, et al. 1965:65-119.

ἄνθρωπος⁴ (18, 23). Consistent coordination with the plural pronouns, as well as concord with the plural verbs, strongly advocates for taking it as a collective singular. All humanity is the object (see Dunn 1998:82f).⁵ A third factor is the sweeping nature of divine initiative directed earthward: ὁργή (Rom 1:18), φανερώω in regards to ἀληθεια (18f), and παρεδίδωμι as God’s judgement in part (24). A fourth factor is the wider context of the passage which reinforces the theme of universality, apparent in the lead-in to the passage in Romans 1 where Paul relates ‘the power of God for salvation to *everyone* who believes’ (italics supplied, 16). The theme continues in Romans 2 (italics supplied): ‘you have no excuse, O man, *every* one of you who judges’ (1); ‘There will be tribulation and distress for *every* human being who does evil, ... but glory and honor and peace for *everyone* who does good’ (9f); ‘For *all* who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and *all* who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law’ (12). Romans 3 carries on with the charge of sin against ‘*all*, both Jews and Greeks’, so that ‘the *whole world* may be held accountable to God’ (italics supplied, 3:9, 19).⁶ A fifth factor is the creational language employed by Paul: κτίσις (1:20, 25), ὁ Κτίζω (25), ποιήμα (20), πετεινον, τετράπουν, and ἔρπετόν (23).

Beyond the previous five factors, MD Hooker helpfully provides a sixth factor by linking Romans 1 (and its context) with the prelapsarian chapters of Genesis by means of a catalogue of thematic connections (1960:300f). A seventh factor involves the pivotal concept of wisdom, insight sought by man, in this case, apart from divine revelation. Both passages in view hinge around verses in which the conceptual term appears, expressed as σοφός (wise, i.e., wisdom) in Romans 1:22 and as חָכְמָה in Genesis 3:6. An eighth and final factor which connects Romans 1 with Genesis 3 and the fall is the key term, εἰκών (compare Rom 1:23 with Gen 1:26f). Regarding this, Hooker convincingly argues ‘that Paul’s account of man’s wickedness [in Rom 1] has been deliberately stated in terms of the Biblical narrative of Adam’s fall’ (1960:301; see Bruce 1985:80).⁷ Altogether, these eight factors make a plausible case for the creation-

⁴ See Jeremias 1964:364-67.

⁵ Sanders would disagree: ‘Paul’s case for universal sinfulness, as it is stated in Rom. 1:18-2:29, is not convincing: it is internally inconsistent and it rests on gross exaggeration’ (1983:125).

⁶ The leitmotif of universality continues throughout Romans to the end of Chapter 15. It may even be found in the ‘excursus’ of chapters 9-11 where Paul seems to detour from his argument and focus on the narrower problem of Israel’s estrangement from Yahweh. However, this narrowing more likely serves the purpose of making the larger and intended point that ‘God has consigned *all* to disobedience, that he may have mercy on *all*’ (italics supplied, 11:32).

⁷ See Dunn 1988:53, 91f; *pace* Fitzmyer (2008:274) and Seifrid (2004:117f), not to mention Witherington who asserts that the *Wisdom of Solomon* underlies Romans 1 but not Gen. 2-3 (2004:63-68), as does Campbell who also adds Deuteronomy 4 and Psalm 105[6] to Paul’s intertextual backdrop (2009:360).

garden chapters of Genesis, arguably the most universal of all settings, to be considered as a substratum for Romans 1:18-25.

3.3 Theological Exegesis

Obviously, to comment on Genesis is not *ipso facto* to comment on Paul. Yet, once Paul authorises this creational sub-layer, consciously or otherwise, a Genesis 1-3 framework must be considered an influence on his Romans 1 subject. This brings us to my secondary, or perhaps subsidiary, aim which is to show that the creation account is patient of exposition in Nietzschean terms. Paul's fallen-man has a history, as he strongly implies elsewhere in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Timothy 2:13. Nietzsche's *ressentiment*-man also has a history.⁸ A *ressentiment* reading of Pauline man, therefore, involves considering how he might interpret his own origins as portrayed in the creation stories of Genesis 1-3. This presupposes fallen humanity could not tolerate a straightforward interpretation of their genesis as described in the biblical text, but would, in Nietzschean fashion, reinterpret and revalue their origins to justify themselves as independent of God, and therefore unaccountable to him.

Wedderburn maintains one foot in this camp, but allows 'that what we have in Rom. 1:18ff. seems to be a synthetic description of which the ideas of Gen. 3 have played a part, along with other Old Testament passages' (1978:419). Another candidate text for what lies in the back of Paul's mind is Jeremiah 2, verse 11. Bell expands Paul's reference of the fall to include that of Israel and of every human generation, in addition to that of Adam (1998:26f, 124-27). Stowers is against reading the fall story in Romans 1:18-32 (1994:86-97).

Lee recognises Fitzmyer's conclusion, but also allows both Moo and Porter who advocate the temporal boundary of Paul's depiction in Romans 1:18-32 to range from the time of creation to his present day (2010:110, footnote 27). Barrett unequivocally states both that 'there are allusions in this paragraph that show that Paul has in the back of his mind the story of creation and the fall in Genesis 1-3', and that 'Paul's conclusion echoes the Wisdom of Solomon, which also sees the root of evil as idolatry, but on a deeper level' (1994:62). Hooker, acknowledging the work of Sanday and Headlam, allows reference to *Wisdom* by Paul (1960:299), also giving room for the other two passages. Moo presents another argument against Pauline allusions to 'the fall of humankind in Adam', while still allowing for 'allusions to the creation story' (1996:109, footnote 85; Keener 2009:34, footnote 79). He asserts that 'in Gen. 1-3, "idolatry" (the desire to "be like God") precedes the fall; in Rom. 1, a "fall" (the refusal to honour God, v. 21) precedes idolatry' (1996:109, footnote 85; see Hays 1993:211, footnote 26). In response, a verse-by-verse comparison of the two passages is offered to support the notion that Paul does have in mind Adam's fall:

<u>Genesis 3</u>		<u>Romans 1</u>	
2-3	Revelation	19-20	Revelation
6a	Reason	21	Rejection
6b	Rejection	22	Reason
7-10	Result	23	Recourse
12-13	Recourse	24	Result
22-25	Reality	25	Reality

Reason and rejection here are intimately associated with one another. In Genesis 3, reason *for* rejection is given; in Romans 1, rejection *based on* reason is presented. Their consideration as a two-part unit is signified by '}'. Whilst each of the above passages shares some terms and concepts with Romans 1, none of them can boast anywhere near the commonalities proffered by Genesis 3.

⁸ Overly pressing this history for details is unwarranted. See section 2.3 of this thesis.

The limitations of this thesis prevent me from expounding the Genesis text comprehensively in these *ressentiment* terms, so I have selected several features to examine. The first three features pertain to man in his createdness: his instinct for freedom, God as a strong master, and the asymmetry of power between God and man. Another separate but related feature is fear. It is separate because it characterises man in his fallenness; it is related because it helps explain why fallen-man would reinterpret the creational features as he does. In the case of each of these features, Nietzsche can read Paul's subject matter in terms of Nietzsche's *ressentiment*. However, the point of this thesis is when Nietzsche diagnoses the Pauline subject in terms of *ressentiment*, this is something which, from Paul's point of view, is characteristic of fallen-man's machinations. In fact, I will go so far as to say that even the peculiarly Nietzschean concepts of internalisation and moralisation may be conceptually mapped onto Pauline discourse to characterise fallen-man. This procedure admittedly requires imagination, but is not arbitrary, since it is guided by the said Barthian hermeneutical strategy. This procedure is also crucial for establishing the correspondence mentioned above, and is foundational for subsequent mapping (section 3.3.2).

3.3.1 Mapping *Ressentiment* onto Genesis 1-3

We turn now to a *ressentiment* reading of the creational setting as depicted in Genesis 1-3, and the aforementioned features that effectively trace the internalisation stage of *ressentiment*. It must be kept in mind that one of the most significant aspects of *ressentiment* is the desire to revalue values; particularly, to invert them. This is typically performed by reinterpreting things and relationships to make them seem different than they are. This includes reimagining past events. I propose fallen-man bears just such a perspective, that through the lens of *ressentiment* he reinterprets the creation accounts.

The first feature to be discussed is the instinct for freedom (*OGM* 2.18, see 17). Paul would hold one of the blessings bestowed on man in creation is freedom (Betz 1994:116). This freedom entails volition in matters pertaining to acquisition, growth, and optimisation for the sake of realising that freedom. Constitutive of this freedom would be man's desire to be free. Nietzsche would view all of this under the rubric of the will-to-power (*OGM* 2.12), for he typically elucidates it in terms of expansion and domination.⁹ Likewise in the biblical garden scene, man is presented from the beginning

⁹ See Stage One, Phase One of *ressentiment* in section 2.4.1 of this thesis.

as both optimiser and ruler in Genesis 1:26-28. This is epitomised in God's charge in v. 28:

And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth'.

An argument can be made that the drive for optimisation is a natural outworking of the *imago Dei* and the created order in general. Will-to-power on this construal is not evil, nor even bad. How is it, then, this impulse becomes corrupted, such that man might lean toward a Pauline fall? A *ressentiment* reading of this divine mandate would interpret the Creator's decree language to bear the force of restrictive permission, and consider it punitive. This reading would willingly ignore at least two possible intentions of the decree. One intention could be to channel man's created energies into the optimisation necessary for expansion and rule. The other intention might be to direct man toward the fulfilment that man could expect from his work. Effectively, the Creator would be viewed as merely allowing man the *guise* of freedom to 'have dominion', thus circumscribing the Nietzschean notion of will-to-power as 'the essence of life' (*OGM* 2.12). Will-to-power *as a grant* is something that *ressentiment* cannot abide (2.18).

The prohibition of Genesis 2:16f is an element of the creation story that bears on man's instinct for freedom:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'.

In terms of *ressentiment*, this decree may be interpreted as further violating freedom *qua* freedom. It would willingly discount the benevolent character of the one who gave it (see Gen 3:5), and treat the prohibition as a denial of privilege instead of a protection from unknown danger. Paul's Romans 1:32 declaration of God's righteous death sentence may thus find its precursor here in 2:16f, but in *ressentiment* terms of negation of life. If man's freedom is construed as will-to-power, then the divine 'blessing' of freedom is merely a gilded form of oppression.

This brings us to a second selected feature in the creation chapters, which in Nietzschean terms is the presence of the Strong, the Master. This corresponds to God as creator in the Genesis text, and of course Paul holds that creation is presided over by an omnipotent being. Not only does God create the world from heaven, inferred by comparing Romans 1:20 with 1:18, but from there he both reveals himself and makes decrees to his creation as well (1:18f, 32). In the Genesis text, this notion is communicated through several aspects. One aspect is the consistent use of the Hebrew

name for deity, אֱלֹהִים, the plural intensive of אֵל being characterised by strength, control, supremacy, ownership, and binding force (Brown, et al. 1951:43; Tenney 1976:761-64).¹⁰

Another aspect of mastery is the power to create, for the God of Genesis 1 and 2 is chiefly a creator. As it happens, Nietzsche indicates the same sort of power is wielded by *ressentiment*, even to the point of creating a world amenable to the *ressentiment*-self (*OGM* 1.10). No greater sign of mastery can be offered than this, a self-authorised world. A *ressentiment* reading would therefore view the God of Genesis as this strong master who does what he does in the knowledge that he has ‘established [himself] and [his] doings as good’ (1.2). With himself as his own reference point, he manages ‘the right to create values, to coin names for values’ (1.2). This permits the valuation of ‘good’ regarding the particulars of his creation (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 17, 21, 25), and ‘very good’ in relation to the whole (31). For ‘nothing at all can find a place unless a “meaning” in relation to the whole has first been implanted in it’ (*OGM* 2.17). In terms of *ressentiment*, the giving of names is ‘the master’s right’ and is connected to origin of language in such authority (1.2). The biblical text reflects this connection by recording the initial creative act via divine fiat—‘And God *said*’ (italics supplied, Gen 1:3a)—that is, creation through language. ‘They say “this is thus and such”’, writes Nietzsche in *OGM* 1.2, to convey the power of language wielded by the master (see Ross 1988:102). Thus, in Genesis 1:5 God calls the light *day* and the darkness *night*. Even more momentously, God calls the zenith of his creation, that unique artefact of his own image, man (אָדָם, 1:26f; compare Acts 17:24f).

Yet another aspect may be considered a subset of the previous one. It is the specific act of naming, which bears the power to define. Genesis 1:2 describes the earth as being ‘without form and void’. In language reflective of *ressentiment*, the world becomes ‘interesting’ (*OGM* 1.7) precisely because of the subsequent forming and shaping activity of the Creator in Genesis 1:3-30. Nietzsche informs us when masters declare ‘this is this’, by necessity of course they mean that ‘this is *not* that’. This defines boundaries and sets limits. Paul also observes mankind lives within divinely prescribed boundaries that are everywhere present in creation (Acts 17:26).¹¹ Here in the Genesis text, there is a sequence to creation: not everything is created at the same time. We might say that there is a prescribed rhythm to creation: each subsequent act transpires

¹⁰ This acknowledges the compound name of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה employed in Genesis 2:4-3:23, into which the characteristics of אֱלֹהִים are incorporated.

¹¹ On the authenticity of Paul’s speech in Athens, see footnote 14 in this chapter.

within the span of evening and morning. There are various delineations: spatial—between atmospheric and topographic waters, and between the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:6-10); chronological—demarcating day from night, and the passing of days, seasons, and years (14-18); biological—reproduction signified by ‘after their kind’ (11, 12, 21, 24, 25).

A final aspect of mastery synergises all three of the preceding aspects. It comes specifically in the creation of a bifurcate-form, inter-dependent creature. Humanity, as portrayed in Genesis, is created and blessed as male and female. This may not be so on a *ressentiment* reading. Humanity’s creation is a manifestation of supreme control, for it is named and fashioned into a pluralistic, self-expression of אלהים—“‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” ... *male and female* he created them’ (italics supplied, 26f). As created, humanity is summoned from non-existence; as named, it is branded with an identity; as fashioned, it is moulded into a predetermined form. Thus, in terms of *ressentiment*, man may in every way be viewed under the control of, even to the point of being a product of, a Master. Not to be overlooked is mankind’s vocation to reproduce its own species as well as to cultivate its environment (Gen 1:28; 2:15). The biblical text plainly issues these under the rubric of ‘blessing’ (Ross 1988:113). While compliance is not explicitly mandated, a *ressentiment* reading would definitely sense force as underwriting the creator’s directives to ‘be fruitful’ and ‘to work and keep’ the garden. Calling creates obligation, and failure to meet the Master’s expectation will surely be regarded as disobedience and result in judgement (see Gen 11:1-9). This connection is embellished by considering Nietzsche’s portrayal of that ‘oldest and most primitive personal relationship of all, [that of] creditor and debtor’ (*OGM* 2.8). It is not difficult to read the creation account in these terms, with God as the creditor and man as the debtor, and this certainly finds resonance in the semiotics of Pauline justification (Rom 4:4). In view of God’s creation of man’s environment, sustenance, and means for pleasure, to say nothing of creating man himself, man’s debt is obedience and obeisance. Failure to repay one’s creditor, Nietzsche reminds us, results in the substitution ‘of something that [the debtor] otherwise “owns” or over which he otherwise still has power, for example his body or his wife or his freedom or even his life’ (*OGM* 2.5; see Gen 2:5). Nietzsche’s further comments in *OGM* 2.9 trade on the principle that an injured creditor is justified in venting hostility on the debtor as an offender and a lawbreaker.

What is fair repayment for refusing such a creditor as portrayed in Genesis, a benefactor to whom man owes everything, even life itself? Might it be forfeiture of that life? Such a conclusion is neither unwarranted nor unreasonable. A *ressentiment* reading would say the structuring of man's very first estate sets in motion his obligatory socialisation as a self-aware, promise-keeping animal. For, regardless of its elemental form, this state, and man's awareness of his place in it through conscience, is still a function of power. Nietzsche would assert such enforcement is exercised through cruelty (*OGM* 2.3-6). The ultimate cruelty, the right of this creditor-master, being the threat of death, finds its biblical analogue in Genesis 2:17. Paul will later write that God, who in this reading is the injured creditor, is thus justified in treating sin-debtors as enemies (Rom 5:8-10; see also Groves 2007:100), and in responding with every manner of wrath and hostility (Eph 2:3; see also 1 Cor 15:25). A *ressentiment* construal, on the other hand, sees it as evidence of bad conscience. From the opening chapters of Genesis to Paul's commentary in Romans 1, its formation begins by redirecting the expansion-seeking will-to-power back into man himself (see Stage One, Phase Two, Figure 2.1). By *ressentiment* lights, all these aspects of mastery serve only to mask the deity's privilege as creational 'givens'. In the spirit of Genesis 3:5, he knows that were he disclosed as such, he would be seen for what he really is, a strong Master who creates a world ultimately for himself.

A third feature flows from the second, a resultant asymmetry of power. To set this up, we focus our attention on various details in the biblical text. Genesis opens by introducing us to אלהים, the supreme, self-sufficient one (Gen 1:1).¹² The creation programme ensues immediately, the text evidently assuming the right of אלהים to create, presumably because of his pre-existence and self-sufficiency (1:3ff). Man is introduced into the creation account at its conclusion (1:26ff), and becomes animated only after receiving the breath of life from the Lord God (2:7). Arguably the most significant element in the creation account, excluding man, is the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (2:9). Beyond Genesis 1:28-30, it is the only thing about which specific instruction is imparted, and negative instruction at that (2:16f).

¹² See Paul's designation of Jesus Christ in 1 Timothy 6:15 as the 'only Sovereign' (μόνος Δυναστέως). That Paul has in mind the character of the deity from the Old Testament should be obvious in the subsequent designations of 'King of kings' and 'Lord of lords', to say nothing of the unique characteristics in the following verse, '[he] who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see'. More may also be said about the nature of worship called for, as indicated in the next verse, 'to him be honor and eternal dominion' (16).

The asymmetry of power between God and man can be detected through a number of ‘givens’ within the Genesis text, and a *ressentiment* reading of them might be as follows. The opening salvo of Genesis, ‘In the beginning, God ...’, presents an archetypal master-figure. God, as creator, is accorded *ipso facto* privilege to establish the first state. Man is placed in this state with the balance of power already against him, i.e., through the implicit limitation intrinsic to creatureliness, and that, for the pleasure of the Creator (Gen 1:31). Man is summoned into existence without his consent (Lewis 1994:64; see also Lowe 1999:118). A further layer of asymmetry may be implied by the necessity of God’s breathing into man for him to be accorded optimal status, that is, as a living being (Gen 2:7).¹³ It is not enough that man is constructed materially after a certain blueprint, but also that life comes only as a result of the dependence-creating circumstance of inspiration.¹⁴

Then there is the matter of the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ (Gen 2:17). The very fact that it is created as such, and plausibly for the prohibitive purpose which unfolds in the creation account, surely serves to instantiate the notion of a gradient regarding who is and who is not in charge, who makes the rules and who must follow them (Mulhall 2005:115). The content of the prohibition—‘you shall surely die’ (Gen 2:17)—reinforces the same and, again, presages the Pauline divine decree of death in Romans 1:32. Prohibition regarded as power stands as the constant threat of the use of that power, and perhaps anticipates the dynamic of ὀργή as Paul uses it in the New Testament—a settled opposition to evil, but building toward its breaking forth (see section 3.3.2). Life given may also be taken, as Paul expresses repeatedly in Romans 5:12-19.

I introduce the final feature by posing a question: why in the first place would anyone construe the creation stories in *ressentiment* terms? The answer, mentioned briefly in the previous chapter and discussed at length in the following chapter, is here stated simply. It is fear. Fallen-man, as does *ressentiment*-man, fears authority and the consequences of being at its mercy. Therefore, he must interpret events and relationships surrounding his origin in a manner that shields him from peril and harm. The fear motivating this reinterpretation is projected into the creation story such that several rudimentary elements, when read through *ressentiment*, will coalesce into fear.

¹³ The moral aspect of this valuation will be addressed later.

¹⁴ This notion is later conveyed in words attributed to Paul by Luke, ‘[God] himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything’ (Acts 17:25c). See Gärtner (1955) on the plausibility of the Areopagus sermon reflecting Pauline thought. Also note that Luke is an associate of Paul.

In the Genesis text, my primary point of reference is the prohibition of 2:16f. Its significance for fallen-man is the consequence of which Paul writes in Romans 5:12, ‘sin came into the world ... and death through sin’. To perform a *ressentiment* reading of man’s response to the garden prohibition, however, we must contemplate two matters.

The first matter to contemplate is the Pauline notion of fear, particularly in the way he uses it to characterise man’s response to God. Paul’s favourite term for fear is φόβος. He uses it to refer to a gamut of human reactions to God, a spectrum that draws on a long history. Balz mounts evidence from ancient Greece to show that the φόβος word group used in the New Testament bears a range of meaning from ‘terror and anxiety to honour and respect’, always in response to an encounter with force (1974:192). The same semantic range may be found in the Septuagint: terror and dread (Exod 15:16; Psa 55:5; Isa 19:16), or respect and reverence (Lev 19:3; 2 Kgs 17:7; Eccl 12:13). The salient *object* of the fear response to my interests is death (e.g., Gen 26:7). Sometimes fear of death in the Old Testament is melded with fear of defeat in battle and/or subsequent subjugation and slavery (Exod 14:10; Deut 2:4; Josh 9:24).

In the New Testament, when Paul writes to the Corinthians about ‘bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God’ (2 Cor 7:1; see 2 Cor 5:11), the meaning of φόβος conveys respect. When he writes to the Romans about fearing state authority because, as ‘the servant of God, [he] carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer’ (Rom 13:4), his sense seems to bear something stronger than mere respect because of divine anger that underwrites earthly authority.¹⁵ Such a fear may also lead to blessing. The Corinthians’ fear is rewarded by deeper spiritual intimacy with God, to say nothing of benefits in the material realm. The Romans’ fear will result in both approbation, mediated through human authority, and a good result, primarily in a material sense.

The second matter to contemplate is how a *ressentiment* perspective reframes the garden scene wherein the tree of prohibition is planted. From the previous three features discussed above, we learned that a *ressentiment* view sees the scene as oppressive for all its fixedness in boundaries and relationships. Based on Nietzsche’s deconstruction of the biblical garden account in *BT* ‘Birth’ 4 (see also *A* 48), I suggest that Nietzsche would be amenable to viewing the garden as the very first State. Taken this way, *OGM* 2.17 is especially compelling where Nietzsche writes that ‘the oldest “state” accordingly

¹⁵ In this regard, consider also Moses (Exod 34:30) and Joshua (Josh 4:14), both of whom were perceived by Israel to be Yahweh’s agents and, therefore, channels of his power.

emerged ... as a terrible tyranny, as an oppressive and ruthless machinery'.¹⁶ Key to the tyrant's authority is the right of might (see 3.15). Cruelty is the prerogative of masters, and the attending self-justification is the means to instantiate rule. It is also the means for shaping the realm.¹⁷ Accordingly, Nietzsche explains the oldest state works violence 'until finally such a raw material of people and semi-animal was not only thoroughly kneaded and pliable [i.e., submissive], but also formed' (2.17). In a state, power becomes law becomes morality; those who break the law violate its morality, and are subject to the authority in power (2.8f, 16f).

We now return to the biblical text and the edict of Genesis 2:16f. Keeping in mind from above the Pauline notion that God is a being to be obeyed because he is to be feared, and the *ressentiment* construal of the garden scene as the original State in which God is an oppressive authority, the prohibition concerning the tree may be read as a threat of force. 'You shall surely die', when uttered by a despotic master (see 2 Tim 2:21),¹⁸ carries with it *ipso facto* wounding. It is injurious to any sense of otherness seeking expansion; advancement must cease and its course be altered, all under duress of confining stricture. Such domination surely catalyses tremendous anxiety, for punishment by its very nature threatens potential.¹⁹

In Genesis 3, man does in fact break the divine command and plunges into sin. According to *ressentiment*, he incurs deep debt. As a result of man's now adversarial position, he perceives 'the anger of the injured creditor (i.e., God) [that] pushes him away' (*OGM* 2.9). He flees and hides from God out of fear (φοβέω, Gen 3:10), specifically, fear of punishment. A *ressentiment* mindset would rather mete out punishment than take it, for it is 'the imperative declaration generally of what in [the authority's] eyes will count as permissible, as just, as forbidden and unjust' (*OGM*

¹⁶ The quotation concludes by asserting that the state is not in accordance with 'that wishful fantasy that has it beginning with a "contract"' (*OGM* 2.17). Rousseau, ironically in his work *The Social Contract*, concurs on the fearsome character of the state: 'In vulgar usage, a tyrant is a king who governs violently and without regard for justice and law. In the exact sense, a tyrant is an individual who arrogates to himself the royal authority without having a right to it. This is how the Greeks understood the word "tyrant": they applied it indifferently to good and bad princes whose authority was not legitimate' (1952:419). If Nietzsche is not familiar with *The Social Contract* (1762), it is hard to believe that he is unfamiliar with its thought. He gives evidence of familiarity with *Émile* (see *BT* 'Birth' 3), published in the same year, which 'closes with a synoptic account of Rousseau's political theory as outlined in detail in the *Du contrat social*' (1991:20). Furthermore, Nietzsche includes Rousseau in a list of only eight thinkers with whom he himself 'must come to terms' (*HH2* 1.408).

¹⁷ See Chapters One and Two of Berger & Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967).

¹⁸ Note Paul's allusion to God as δεσπότης in 2 Timothy 2:21.

¹⁹ I am indebted to Dallas Willard for this insight. What he attributes to the emotion of anger, I have applied to the notion of threat. While his discussion does not relate the two, it most certainly allows for it (Willard 1988:147f). Furthermore, the threat of death in Genesis 2:17 may be read as lying 'behind' God's wrath in Romans 1:18, reinforced by 1:32.

2.10). But fallen-man is not in authority. He cannot retaliate to the threat on his life, so he hides in impotence, and in fear.

It has been previously demonstrated that, generally speaking, unactionable fear leads to anger. This anger within the confines of this earliest of states, biblically speaking, a state characterised by creational limitations as well as commands and attending punishments, reinforces powerlessness. It is such impotence, Nietzsche tells us, that ultimately generates (proto-) *ressentiment* (see section 2.4.2). In such a pressurised environment, one may see how the creation story, read through a *ressentiment* lens, results in man being ultimately evicted from the garden by an oppressive authority. Punishment for disobeying God's law is the price man must pay to realise his potential. The result is 'the internalization of human beings [and] what later is called the "soul"' (*OGM* 2.16). What the soul is to *ressentiment*-man, the guilty knowledge of culpability is to fallen-man.

Nietzsche characterises Paul as 'the greatest of all the apostles of revenge' (A 45), averring that the New Testament, for which he is the spiritual source, is 'born out of *ressentiment*'. 'What follows therefrom', Nietzsche writes next in A 46, is that the New Testament is nothing more than 'cowardice ... shutting of the eyes ... and self-deception'. He continues to use this same lens in A 48 to view the 'celebrated story ... which stands at the commencement of the Bible', and he leaves no doubt that his target text is Genesis 1-3. As he has with Paul's conversion story, Nietzsche claims the creation story, and man's original sin that form the backdrop to Romans 1, have not really been understood.

In this section, I have proposed Romans 1:18-32 contains a theological sub-layer which finds its substance in Genesis 1-3 (Hooker 1960; Dunn 1998). Key features of the creation setting have been identified as subjects for reinterpretation by a fallen perspective, which is to say, through a *ressentiment* reading. A further feature of fallenness, fear, has been identified to help explain the motivation for this reinterpretation. Together, these features find correspondence in the first stage of Nietzschean *ressentiment*, internalisation. From here, *ressentiment* continues cycling toward its second stage, moralisation. To see that, we must return to the surface of the Romans 1 text. There I will continue the mapping of *ressentiment* onto Paul as he builds his case for human fallenness.

3.3.2 Mapping *Ressentiment* onto Romans 1

Exegesis commences in this section with the second half of Romans 1, verses 18-32. Rather than exegete verse by verse or section by section, my procedure will instead seek to identify salient aspects of *ressentiment* to outline the second stage of the mechanism, moralisation. This will be conducted through exegetical investigations involving the concept of God's ὀργή, particularly in association with ἡ ἀλήθεια about which Paul writes. Since this passage is couched in a larger literary section of the epistle, 1:18-3:20, two preliminary words related to context will be helpful.

The first preliminary word concerns the human subjects of Paul's focus. Technically, Romans 1:18-32 is most likely concerned with Gentiles or pagans, and 2:1-3:8 with the Jews. Stowers follows Sanders in discussing the passage under the classification, 'Decline of Civilization Narratives' (1994:85; see also Sanders 1983:125).²⁰ Even though he sees Genesis 3-11 as the backdrop for Romans 1, he does not agree it draws on forms of civilisational decline because it leaves out structural details (Stowers 1994:90f). Against Stowers, one may argue Paul's sweeping description of the world in Romans 1 resonates with that of the narrative of the early chapters of Genesis, including the use of past-tense verbs. Other authors of Hebrew Scripture maintain a similar tone and level of generality (Lev 20:22-26; Isa 34:1-15; Ezek 5:5-17; Mic 1:2-4), such that Paul may be viewed more in their rhetorical lineage than that of the Greeks and Romans (see Collins 2010:138, 160, footnote 64). Furthermore, the topic to hand of Romans 1 and 2 is framed by a wider view of humanity: Romans 1:16 speaks of 'salvation to everyone who believes', and 3:9-20 indicts 'the whole world [as] accountable to God' because of sin. It should also be noted when Paul refers to his Romans 1:18-32 subject, he uses a singular noun ἄνθρωπος (18, 23), which he consistently coordinates with plural pronouns and uses in concord with plural verbs. This strongly advocates for taking ἄνθρωπος as a collective singular, and for construing Paul's subject as the vast population of fallen humanity (Hooker 1960-61:299; Gifford 1977:62; Moo 1996:96; Witherington 2004:58-64; Barth 2010:2.119-21; see Cranfield 1987:105f; Dunn 1988:54; Wright 2002:428; Seifrid 2004b:118-21). Thus, when referring to Paul's subject(s) in this section, I will speak of mankind in general.

²⁰ In reference to this passage in particular, as well as to Romans as a whole, Campbell characterises Stowers' reading as 'simultaneously brilliant, insightful, polemical, and muddled' (2009:465).

A second preliminary word relates to Paul's thesis. The thesis of Romans 1:18-32 is: God is revealing his righteousness in his wrath against all man. The ultimate context for this passage is found just prior to my passage in Romans 1:16-17, and is by all accounts considered the theme of the entire letter (Bruce 1985:73-77; Dunn 1988:36-49; Wright 2002:423-28). I articulate the theme as this: the gospel is God's saving power revealed in his righteousness (see also 1 Cor 1:18). This is hardly controversial, but I state it to discuss the relationship between God's δικαιοσύνη in verse 17 and his ὀργή in verse 18, both of which 'are being revealed' (ἀποκαλύπτεται).²¹ I hold the revelation of God's righteousness, perforce, involves the revelation of his wrath, for divine glad tidings may only be understood against the backdrop of man's grim estate.²² These tidings are being made known through the gospel, the salvation drama that is moving to its conclusion in Jesus. Thus, the gospel is comprised of both offence and offer, which Paul takes up in the balance of his letter.²³ Romans 1:18-3:20 speaks of man's offence to God's righteousness, and 3:21ff speaks of God's offer of righteousness (i.e., status and relationship) to man as offender. Positively, the revelation of God's righteousness finds a historical marker in his faithfulness to the ancient promises to Abraham, such that God will put to right all things and consummate salvation for the whole world in the eschaton (Wright 2013 3.774-815). Negatively, Paul consigns fallen humanity to the status of 'children of wrath' (Eph 2:3), and warns that wrath is being stored up in the present for judgement in the future (Rom 2:5, 16, see 1:32). The palpable tension in the drama is set by divine wrath.

I now engage the exegetical task in earnest. As we shall see, an understanding of God's ὀργή in its association with ἡ ἀλήθεια is foundational for understanding Romans 1:18-32. Therefore, the balance of this section will be given to a cluster of interrelated hermeneutical inquiries related to it. Investigation of God's ὀργή may be framed by two questions. The first question is, what is the nature of God's ὀργή? To answer this question, we must keep in mind that meanings of words are greatly determined by syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships, and any attempt to get to a core sense

²¹ There are debates, however, over the meaning of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, the nature of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, and the relationship between the two terms, and also the content and time-referent of ἀποκαλύπτω. None of them encumber my project.

²² See Barth on the 'shadow side' of God's ἀποκαλυψις (2010 2.1.119-21).

²³ Paul also presents his gospel to the Philippians as a sign with a dual-message: of destruction for those who oppose it, and of salvation for those who promote it (1:28). See also Seifrid who says that the positive message of salvation always comes 'in and through' the negative message of judgement (1998:125).

signified by a word must concern itself with the context(s) in which that word is used.²⁴ Paul primarily employs two words translated as ‘wrath’ in his letters. Five times he uses θυμός,²⁵ and its usage aligns with ‘a root that means “to rush along fiercely,” “to be in a heat of violence,” or “to breathe violently.” The idea is perhaps best captured in the phrase, “a panting rage”’ (Boice 1991:132). Eighteen times he uses ὀργή.²⁶ One does not commit a genetic fallacy by recognising that Pauline usage of the word conforms to a root meaning ‘to grow ripe for something’, portraying ‘wrath as something that builds up over a long period of time, like water collecting behind a great dam’ (132). Paul seems to reserve ὀργή to signify divine wrath, as opposed to human anger. Properly speaking, ὀργή is not an attribute of God such as love or holiness (Hultgren 2011:90), but arises from his nature as ‘a strong and settled opposition to all that is evil’ (Morris, cited in Boice 1991:132). Stählin writes that ‘in the NT ὀργή is both God’s displeasure at evil, His passionate resistance to every will which is set against Him, and also His judicial attack thereon’ (1967:425). Bell concludes from his survey of Old and New Testaments, as well as post-biblical Judaic literature, that Paul’s usage of ὀργή, while not possessing an emotional element, is nonetheless personal because God as judge is completely invested in his righteous judgement, which includes his wrath (1998:27-33). The ἐπί in Romans 1:18 supports the interpretation God’s wrath and resultant disposition stems from human disobedience primordially enacted in the Garden, and has been sustained since then (see Hultgren 2011:91). If there be any uncertainty concerning God’s inclination since that time, a *ressentiment* view of the gospel takes it as entirely malevolent.

The second question to be asked is what is the nature of ἡ ἀλήθεια, for Paul makes it the issue over which God’s ὀργή is justified. Romans 1:18 states it simply as τὴν ἀλήθειαν, and verse 19 qualifies τὴν ἀλήθειαν as τοῦ Θεοῦ (repeated altogether in verse 25).²⁷ What is this truth about God? Paul answers the question in verse 20 by giving two of God’s attributes, αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης. This self-manifestation of God (see

²⁴ For related discussions, see Thiselton (1977:78f) and Silva (1994:137-69).

²⁵ Romans 2:8; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20; Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8.

²⁶ Romans 1:18; 2:5 (x2), 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22 (x2); 12:19; 13:4, 5; Ephesians 2:3; 5:6; Colossians 3:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:16; 5:9.

²⁷ Stripping off the alpha-privative exposes the root λανθάνω, which generally means to escape notice, to be hidden, or to deny (Arndt & Gingrich 1979:466). Virgil, with whom Nietzsche evidences familiarity in *BT* (MacGóráin 2012-13:191f, 225), and about whom he most certainly knows as Dante’s guide through the gate of hell (*OGM* 1.15; see Dante 1952:4f), writes of the river Lethe as the stream all must both pass over and drink from to forget earthly sufferings en route to final Elysian bliss (Virgil 1952:229f; see 39, 98). See also Heidegger who translates ‘the verbal stem -λαθ- [as] “to escape notice”, “to be concealed”’ (1962:57, footnote 1, 264f; see also 1972: 67-73).

ἐφανερώσεν, 1:19), which Paul characterises as ὁ γνωστός and φανερός (1:19), is paradoxically limited in content, yet knowable and perceivable. Its scope is universal, since

the mode in which this manifestation *was made to them* is the mode in which it *is made* to all men, at all times, the explanation is put in the most general and abstract form (Present Tense and Passive Voice), without any limitation of times or persons. (italics original, Gifford 1977:63)

Though incomplete, the manifestation of the infinite God is sufficient for man to perceive. In the explication of God's revelation in terms of his attributes, Paul makes a pre-emptive move against any claim of ignorance of their reality. The race altogether lacks excuse with respect divine truth, and to God's consequent displeasure, as is evidenced in man's innate propensity for ritual and sacrifice to placate him (*OGM* 2.3), or the creation of idols to evade the said truth (Rom 1:25). A *ressentiment* reading would expect no less from the Apostle of *ressentiment*.

The sphere in which man receives this revealed knowledge is said to be ἐν αὐτοῖς (Rom 1:19). Moo takes ἐν to mean 'among', referring to the natural world manifesting 'his works of creation and providence', citing both the typical use of φανερός elsewhere in the New Testament, and also verse 20 to buttress his argument (1996:103f, footnote 56). Schreiner locates the dimension of reception in mental consciousness by stating, 'God has stitched into the fabric of the human mind his existence and power, so that they are instinctively recognized when one views the created world' (1998:86; see Gifford 1977:62f). Wuest understands ἐν αὐτοῖς to be 'in their hearts and conscience' (1956:29f). Keener points to both the conscience, by virtue of the *imago Dei*, and also to God's acts in creation (2009:32). Dunn straddles all fences:

ἐν αὐτοῖς could be translated 'in them,' or 'among them,' but also 'to them' with ἐν standing for the dative ... The ambiguity probably reflects the common belief in a direct continuity between human rationality and the rationality evident in the cosmos. (1998:57)

The postpositive γὰρ of verse 20 explains, or expands on, the 'known knowable' about God from verse 19. This lends credence to interpreting the ἐν αὐτοῖς of verse 19 as 'in them'. That is, a sense of deity, though empirically observed in the natural world, is perceived in 'the mind's eye'. Practically, this surfaces the notion of 'conscience', in keeping with some sort of natural law, neither of which is problem-free. Their discussion is reserved for section 3.3.3.

A *ressentiment* construal of the nature of God's ὀργή also conveys a sense of threat. In the lived-experience, Dallas Willard observes that 'anger is in its own right—quite apart from "acting it out" and further consequences—an injury to others. When I

discover your anger at me, I am already wounded’ (1988:148). As I have put forth in the wider argument of this thesis, *ressentiment* is a universal condition of fallen-man in which wrath is perceived as injury to man, provoking his reaction against it. Through such a lens, therefore, it may be argued in principle that divine wrath causes just such wounding. There is some question as to the effect of this trauma: is it best characterised by fear or by anger, or both? Since Nietzsche expresses interest in criminologists (*TI* ‘The Problem of Socrates’ 3), the work of criminal psychologists Yochelson and Samenow is pertinent (2004). Their research indicates the responses of fear and anger in response to perceived threat are intimately bound.²⁸ They expand on their finding that ‘fear is the most common basis for anger in the criminal’ by remarking that ‘fear gives rise to anger in the noncriminal as well’ (2004:269). Thus, fear may be a concomitant with anger, and its relevance will be explained in the next chapter.

The sense of threat informs the characterisation of the gospel as an offence, which Paul explicitly states elsewhere (σκάνδαλον, Gal 5:11; see Rom 9:33; 1 Cor 1:23). The ungodly and unrighteous (Rom 1:18) interpret such proclamation as a threat of judgement and harm. In turn, such threat and wounding cause a change in humanity. Man is no longer free. Like a hiker forced off a broad safe plateau onto a treacherous mountain path where every step may be the last, man is no longer at liberty to express himself without fear of untoward consequences. Freedom is proscribed.²⁹ Since man’s will-to-power has already been forced back inward by the prevailing external structures of power (i.e., internalisation stage), perceived injury further stresses man’s already pressurised environment, impelling the *ressentiment* mechanism to cycle onward towards the moralisation stage (*OGM* 3.15). Coincident to anger’s delimiting nature, it also possesses a provoking nature. Anger induces anger (Willard 1988:148). Thus, the divine ἀλήθειαν and consequent ὀργή catalyse a response in man.

Further investigation concerning God’s ὀργή focuses on man’s response to it. In *OGM* 1.10 we learned *ressentiment* ‘is reaction from the ground up’, but of what does such a reaction consist? There are two aspects. From fallen-man’s perspective, he cannot admit the problem originates with him, for *ressentiment* morality always implicates what is ‘outside’, ‘different’, and a ‘non-self’ (*OGM* 1.10). Therefore, man’s anger is objectified and externalised. This notion of externalising finds resonance in Romans 1 by man’s exchange of God for created things, of objects (23, 25), as part of

²⁸ See sections 4.5 and 4.6 of this thesis for more on the relationship between fear and anger.

²⁹ See Sartre’s discussion on freedom and facticity in this regard, featuring a rock climb (1956:481-89).

his revaluation project. Man's anger-response is targeted outward against one who appears to tip the scales of power at the outset (i.e., God) to create conditions favourable for himself. Concomitant with this move is that these conditions must be interpreted as adversarial for man (see 'against', 18). As a result, not only is man described as 'ungodly' and 'unrighteous' (18), but branded 'fools' (22).³⁰ In the moral arena, these are fighting words, and in the face of such posturing and castigation, *ressentiment* need not look far for enemies (*TI* 'Morality' 3). The hostility apparent in the wrathful Other ostracises man, at best; more accurately, it transforms him into an antagonist. For *ressentiment* seeks a 'guilty perpetrator ... some kind of living thing upon which ... he can discharge his affects', 'someone or another ... to blame' (*OGM* 3.15). Thus, God is viewed as becoming hostile, a threat to man's very existence. But the passage does not make explicit God is the cause of man's anger-response of blaming. What can be seen, however, are effects. Just as scuttling leaves reveal the presence of wind, so the activities associated with man in Romans 1 reveal a response. Man takes affront to God.

To further develop the answer in relation to the reaction of *ressentiment*, additional questions must be posed. If anger induces anger, and attack provokes retaliation, how does one retaliate when the attacker is God? What does anger look like when it is threatened by omnipotence? Active aggression against so formidable an opponent is absurd. If anger in principle is to be expressed, then it must follow the stratagems of *ressentiment*. Therefore, passive aggression is the only way forward, and finds expression both in what man does and does not do. I will address the latter aspect first.

One aspect of the strategy is something of a non-response. Similar to the way man reacts to the perceived injury of divine, angry judgement in the Genesis 3 account, he also hides from the consequences of violating God's truth in Romans 1, which is the peril of God's wrath. Viewed through a *ressentiment* lens, it is not that man gives up, but that he simply retreats to strategise redress of injury another way. Realising he is so comparatively impotent that direct retaliation is impossible, man *cannot do* anything. Nietzsche writes in *GS* 3.135 that 'the Christian presupposes a powerful, overpowering being who enjoys revenge. His power is so great nobody could possibly harm him, except ...'. Instead, man's tactic must be *not to do* something. Paul writes, 'They [i.e.,

³⁰ Paul typically freights the terms 'fool' and 'become foolish' (i.e., the cognate family of *μωραίνω*) with negative ethical implications, reaching their zenith in 1 Corinthians 2. The end of 1 Corinthians 1 is packed with six such terms which, taken as the context for the second chapter, lends to the understanding that foolishness is responsible for the execution of 'the Lord of glory' (2:8). This becomes ironic in the extreme when juxtaposed with the one who writes of the murder of God (i.e., Nietzsche).

mankind] did not honor him as God or give thanks to him' (Rom 1:21). The *GS* quotation continues, '... except for his honor. Every sin is a slight to his honor, a *crimen laesae majestatis divinae*—and no more'. The German noun for sin, *Verstoß*, bears meanings of 'contravention', 'violation', 'infraction', 'infringement', 'mistake', 'fault', 'blunder', and carries with it the idea of 'casting out' (Messinger 1973:582). Debates on whether man's response consists of two ideas or one divert from my essential point. For the sake of efficiency, the idea of ἠὲχαρίστησαν (giving thanks) will be subsumed under the idea of ἐδόξασαν (rendering honour/glory), so the latter involves the former. Together, they indicate man's reasoned and expected response to the clearly perceived, albeit invisible, attributes³¹ of the Creator-God (Rom 1:20), an inference signified by δίοτι (21). Man withholds his obligation to honour God.³² In the attempt to excuse himself from this debt, he engages in deception.

Man's strategy also entails something that he *does* to avoid ἡ ἀλήθεια God has revealed and the ὀργή that results from avoiding it. Man employs the self-defensive measures of suppression (κατέχω, Rom 1:18) and exchange (ἀλλάσσω, 23, 25).³³ The first self-defensive measure man takes is one of suppression (19).³⁴ He excuses himself from obligation to God's revelation (see ἀναπολογήτους, 20) because he perceives both the obligation, and the power that threatens to punish its violation, to be offensive. Refusing to serve and worship God in obeisance, man is branded as the antithesis of godliness and righteousness in verse 18, those characteristics that originally defined him. Ever since the primeval threat of punitive action associated with God's garden prohibition, man has recoiled at the wrath portended in God's power. Such a threat cannot be met impassively, but neither can it be directly confronted. So man reacts evasively; he suppresses the revealed truth that obligates him as creature to worship God. God's consequent wrath over such wilful deception further causes man to hide

³¹ Dunn connects 'God's majesty (glory) [with] his eternal power and deity' (1998:91), which is apropos since God's glory in Scripture always manifests him who is otherwise invisible. Furthermore, the correlation of man's response of οὐχ ἐδόξασαν (21) to God's δόξα only serves to heighten the futility of their effort and the folly of their offense. The same may be said of Paul's elsewhere attribution of δόξα to Christ, which is the content of the gospel in 2 Corinthians 4:4. In terms of 4:2, Christ is the τῆ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας, conceptual language which Paul also uses in Romans 1:18-19: 'the truth about God is plain' and 'God has shown it'.

³² In a discussion of self-divination, Roberts quotes Nietzsche's ironic identification of 'gratitude as that quality of noble (Greek) religion that *distinguishes* it from Christianity' (italics supplied, 2000:221).

³³ These two key terms are treated as two distinct actions, but see Bavnick (1994:45f) who argues 'repression' happens in terms of 'exchange'.

³⁴ See also Thiselton's discussion, in Freudian terms, on whether or not Paul is aware of subconscious drives (2004:157-59).

from himself both the cause of God's wrath, i.e., his own sin, as well as his plight as an object of that wrath. It is a vicious circle.

A discussion of *κατέχω* is now in order, first in terms of definitions. The term and its cognates occur seventeen times in the New Testament, nine of them in Paul's letters. On the whole, they denote 'holding onto' as in possession, or 'holding down/back' as in restraint (Cranfield 1987:112; Murray 1978:37; Arndt & Gingrich 1979:422). Given the context of the passage, the latter sense seems to fit Romans 1:18 best, and is adequately conveyed through the English term, 'suppress'.³⁵

Regarding possible motivation, the logical question to ask is, why does fallen-man hold down this truth about God? I suggest he suppresses this truth for at least three reasons. One is the truth about God carries with it truth about man, a realisation he would rather avoid. Man does not want to be reminded, or even presented with, the possibility that he is unrighteous. This possibility would signal tacit admission to being diminished, or even acknowledge negative ontological value in the creational economy. Dunn writes that 'any real sense of God's majesty (glory), his eternal power and deity (20), would surely bring home the human creature's finite weakness and corruption' (1998:91).

A second reason for suppression is man does not want to contemplate he has arrived at his new status as 'the righteous', unrighteously. That is, though the process seems imperceptible to fallen-man, at the conclusion of revaluation, whereupon he may now consider himself wise and righteous, he must shield from himself that he has subjugated another. Like the Olympic decathlete who cheats to lay claim to the title of world's greatest athlete, fallen-man cannot countenance the possibility he occupies his new place of power just as unrighteously as his former oppressor. This amnesiac state is the 'Night' fallen-man seeks to conceal the paradox and uncertainty endemic to his world, and to promote the confidence needed to flirt with, as Barth puts it, the abyss of judgement which he so desperately labours to forget (1933:42-54, especially 48f). For either of these reasons, man wants to hide something.

Yet a third reason for pushing down the truth is accountability. Nietzsche himself states it succinctly: 'We reject God, we reject the responsibility in [i.e., accountability to] God' (*TI* 'The Four Great Errors' 8). Man must eliminate the source to eradicate the 'horrific gravity' of consciousness-become-morality-causing-guilt that weighs him

³⁵ See Chapter Two, footnote 22 for a note on relationship between suppression and repression in Nietzsche.

down (*OGM* 2.16). The work of Dan Ariely, the James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at Duke University, lends credence to this notion. His experiments with moral/ethical reminders in the face of opportunities to cheat yield interesting results regarding those tempted to transgress a known code. ‘Reminders’ which resulted in significantly diminished cheating—the results were zero—were the Ten Commandments for a diverse population, and even the ‘swear[ing] on a Bible’ for a group of self-professed atheists (Ariely 2012:40). Ariely cites one such experiment that involved university students signing a pledge not to cheat on pain of damnation to Hell. As one might imagine, students were outraged, including those who did not believe in Hell. Ariely surmises that their irrational outrage stemmed from a feeling ‘that the stakes were very high’ (44). Teasing out an implication, which Ariely does not entertain, suggests that accountability is sensed more powerfully when culpability is connected with God (39-44). In this vein, Christopher Hitchens comments on atheist Thomas Nagel’s admitted fear of God, which he discusses as fear of religion. He writes that Nagel has precious ‘little to say about the precise source of the fear he describes’ (2011:110). ‘Why’, Hitchens interlocutes, ‘would anyone fear the idea of God?’ He supplies an answer: ‘I can think of many reasons, myself, usually concerned with the annoying and lingering possibility of divine punishment for unexpiated wrongdoing’ (110). The ‘pushing down of truth’ has two aspects. Negatively, man wants to be free of consequent judgement, the ultimate expression of which is death. Positively, he wants self-authorised salvation in a world unchained from its sun (see *GS* 3.125).

So what is being hidden? The text expressly states man is hiding τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, but in doing so he seeks to bury something else. As mentioned previously, such revelation implies truth about man, painful truth. Seen through the lens of Nietzsche’s *ressentiment*, fallen-man views this pain as guilt and fear. Man knows both guilt³⁶ stemming from the master’s designation of unrighteousness, and fear in anticipation of consequent judgement. No doubt this involves τὰ κρυπτά (Rom 2:16), upon which the heart-inscribed natural law applies pressure in the present, and which will create exposure to judgement in the future. Coincidentally, this comports tightly with Adam’s response in Genesis 3 of his evasion of responsibility and denial of guiltiness.

³⁶ Budziszewski distinguishes between guilt and feelings that result from it: ‘guilty knowledge ... does not mean guilty feelings’, for guilt stems from ‘deep conscience [which] is knowledge, not feelings’ (2003:81).

But is this all that is being hidden? What is *ultimately* hidden? Posing the question from a different direction refines it: from what or whom is the hiding done? The most natural answer seems to be the hiding is from God. This certainly fits logically with the passage, for if weak and threatened man can somehow dismiss divine indictment (i.e., ‘the wrath of God [being] revealed from heaven’), he may escape the dangerous consequences that flow from God’s anger. This notion of hiding from God also fits nicely with the backdrop-passage to Romans 1, Genesis 3, in which man is portrayed as hiding from God. Paradoxically, even after he emerges from his garden-cover, the ensuing discourse with God reveals continued attempts of concealment (Gen 3:11-13). In Adam and Eve’s excuse-making and blaming, we may see yet another way to answer the question. Man hides (the truth) from himself.

One final word is required concerning κατέχω in terms of its nature. Power that pushes or restrains requires a ‘force that works in opposition’, about which Nietzsche is well aware (*OGM* 2.1). One cannot suppress in a vacuum. For every push down, there must be a pushing up. Foucault states a maxim, ‘Where there is power, there is resistance’ (1976:95). The *ressentiment* mechanism supplies just such resistance, i.e., an opposing force. What reads as τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ in Paul may be understood to effect injury or offense in Nietzschean *ressentiment*. This offense entails perceived truth about man that generates feelings of *ressentiment*, variously characterised by Nietzsche as ‘dreadful’, ‘crushing’, ‘stinging’, and ‘explosive’—powerful enough to require drastic coping countermeasures. Since outward release (i.e., in the context of this paragraph, ‘upward’ release) cannot be permitted, this response-force must be discharged differently. The *ressentiment* mechanism, therefore, redirects the said force backwards (or down) inside of the one confronted with τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. This force against force is so painful something must give, much like a bow bent to a threatening extreme will break (*BGE* 9.262), or a powerful spring when compressed beyond its capacity must buckle (Budziszewski 1999:28). A further aspect of this coping is one must hide even this move from oneself. For to admit it would be to validate the reason for hiding in the first place, which would be tantamount to admitting guilt. One’s very identity would be threatened (*OGM* 1.13f).

The second self-defensive measure man takes in response to God’s ὀργή over ἡ ἀλήθεια is exchange. Etymologically, the term ἀλλάσσω traces to ‘another’, yielding the meaning, ‘to substitute one thing for another’ (Osborne 2004:50). Through the lens of *ressentiment* one may construe this to be revaluation. As an oversimplification of

Romans 1:23, man devalues the Creator (i.e., τὴν δόξα τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ), even as he increases the value of that which is created (i.e., εἰκόνας). The absolute is relativised.

Support for this may be found in Hooker's claim of the uniqueness of Paul's use of εἰκών in the long-enigmatic phrase of ἐν ὁμοιωμάτι εἰκόνας in verse 23. The *LXX* manifests forty-one occurrences of εἰκών, variously referring to 'idol', 'image of God', 'shadow', and of 'Adam begetting a son "in his own image"' (Hooker 1960:297). More germane to my interest, the New Testament inventory of εἰκών in non-Pauline usage includes 'idol' in John's Apocalypse ten times, 'image on a coin' in the Synoptics three times, and 'shadow' in Hebrews once (297). Paul uses the term eight times, seven of which are 'corresponding to the use of the term in the early chapters of Genesis', which is to say they carry a sense of the image of God or Creator (298). Romans 1:23 in 'striking contrast' bears a sense of the loss of this image as evidenced by man's three-fold exchange: 'the worship of the true God for that of idols, ... intimate fellowship with God for an experience which was shadowy and remote, ... [and] his own reflection of the glory of God for the image of corruption' (305). Pascal's famous Fragment 2.8.148 in *Pensées* (1995) furnishes a catalogue of candidate idols whose value is insufficient to warrant replacement of God:

Since man abandoned him it is a strange fact that nothing in nature has been found to take his place: stars, sky, earth, elements, plants, cabbages, leeks, animals, insects, calves, serpents, fever, plague, war, famine, vices, adultery, incest.³⁷

Essentially, man trades εἰκών for εἰδώλον, a consequence of substituting ἡ κτίσις for θεός, including, according to Paul, ἄνθρωπος.

How does man do this? Biblical genealogy lends another clue here regarding the eschewance of personal responsibility, coincident with a shift in culpability (Gen 3:11-13). God, the party responsible for imposing the standard, viewed as oppressive, is assigned blame for injustice. The rationale underlying this is, were the command not so restrictive and perhaps arbitrary, transgression would not be forced. This is because will-to-power of necessity must find expression, and since any sort of open transgression is untenable, it manifests in *ressentiment*. In doing so, man, who occupies the place of the weak, subverts the created order. By means of self-proclaimed righteousness, made possible through *ressentiment*, man displaces the creator and captures the moral high ground of righteousness (*OGM* 1.10). On this reading, God is the antagonist and thus responsible for the painful predicament. The answer to the crying question—why suffering?—may now be heralded. But fallen-man pushes the

³⁷ Unless otherwise specified, Pascal fragments from *Pensées* are from Krailsheimer's translation (1995).

case against God even further, relegating him to the moral subaltern ground of a ‘made-up world’ that is ‘the lie’ and ‘curse on reality’ and, therefore, unworthy of worship (*EH* ‘Preface’ 2). This comports well with that for which man trades τῷ ψεύδει in Rom 1:25. Conzelmann suggests that the fundamental meaning of the verb ψευδομαι is ‘to deceive’ (1974:594), thus allowing the noun ὁ ψεῦδος to characterise ‘the total [deceitful] conduct of sinful humanity’ (601).³⁸ It is worth noting the articulated noun, in addition to rendering the following clause expegetical, may also allude to the first lie articulated in the garden account (Gen 3:4f). If so, Paul is conveying this lie denies ‘the fundamental truth that God is God’, and subsequently permits the redirection of worship due him to the object(s) of man’s choosing (Bruce 1982:174).

But God’s fate grows worse. Staten identifies the ‘most spiritual, most absolute root’ of *ressentiment* thus:

If you will not recognize me and thus confer *Dasein* upon me I will make you go *fort*, I will auto-authorize myself and refuse you that same recognition which you deny me, thereby avenging myself against you by consigning you to that nonbeing with which I was threatened by your nonrecognition [*sic*] of me. (1990:38)

Beyond thinking of God as ‘the evil enemy’ (*OGM* 1.10), man dismisses him entirely. All of this transpires *within* man,³⁹ which is able to create a reconfigured world because it οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν εἶναι ἐπιγνώσει (Rom 1:28). ‘Knocking over idols (my word for “ideals”)—that is more my style’, claims Nietzsche (*EH* ‘Preface’ 2).

In verse 28, man’s refusal to acknowledge (οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν) God finds ironic correspondence in the depraved (ἄδόκιμον) mind that issues from such wilful ignorance (Hooker 1990:86f). Furthermore, the Romans 1:21 linkage of ‘futility of mind’ with ‘darkened hearts’ is paralleled in Ephesians 4:17-18,⁴⁰ and then extended by an attending explanation: ‘because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the *hardness of their heart*’ (italics supplied). This Pauline ‘cardioparalysis’ signifies unbelieving man’s paralysis with respect to the truth about God.⁴¹ As a self-imposed anaesthesia, it causes in the subject a loss of motor skill and sensation, and also perception⁴² (Simpson & Weiner 1992:48). This reflects much of what memory loss looks like in Nietzsche. Again, Zarathustra:

³⁸ Regarding deception in Paul’s writings, see Barrett (1982) for a topical treatment in concept, and Griffith (1991) for an exhaustive treatment of terminology.

³⁹ See τοις διαλογισμοῖς (Rom 1:21).

⁴⁰ Note that ‘understanding’ is substituted for ‘hearts’ in the Ephesians passage. See also Blumenfeld 2001:318.

⁴¹ See πῶρως, Schmidt 1967:5.1025-28; Weiner & Simpson 1992:1391. For a related discussion of hardness of heart, see section 1.4.2 of this thesis.

⁴² When the anaesthetic effect is said to be ‘general’, unconsciousness is induced which prevents memory function (see *BGE* 1.6).

How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? The holiest and the mightiest that all the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood from us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? (GS 3.125)

Comfort comes only by way of completing the inversion. To attempt to overthrow the regime requires⁴³ assuming the vacated place of deity. This, and this alone, holds hope to make one worthy of the anguish-causing deed. So, substitution completes narcosis, and the Dionysian revelries ('festivals'), perhaps intimated in Romans 1:26f and also in the enlistment alluded to in Romans 1:32, serve only to cement the condition. 'Nietzsche preached the miracle of man's becoming his own god', writes Donnellan (1985:176). Wood writes of the phenomenon in terms of a 'false self [which] is nothing but the product of an attempt ... to imitate the Creator', a creator who 'can flourish only in an imaginary world of his own devising' (2013:120). Via links such self-directed deification to Romans 1:24f where Paul speaks 'of the idolatrous worship of the creature rather than the creator' (1990:39), and Budziszewski concurs: 'the sacredness of human life can easily be deflected into various forms of idolatry, in which we reverence ourselves—as God, partly-God, parts of God, gods, or on the way to becoming gods' (2003:35; see also Bell 1998:100, footnote 181). Fallen-man, as a result of his self-determination, rejects God from his knowledge, flouting God's δικαίωμα.⁴⁴ Concealing flaws in order to justify ourselves sums up 'the dynamic of self-deception for Paul', and opens a way 'to interpret the world as if we were the gods' (Via 1990:39).

Paul's list of the ungodly and unrighteous actions and attitudes at the conclusion of his broad indictment of humanity illustrates the folly of man's wisdom. His independence from God results in self-destructive behaviour that can only be accounted for by making himself his own measure for valuation. In Nietzschean terms, this is *ressentiment* run full cycle, from initial infliction-oppression by an other (i.e., God), all the way to justification of the self as the standard for value. At the heart of the entire process lies self-deception. In the next section, I will apply what we have learned from the previous mapping project to Romans 2. With a refined focus on self-deception coming out of Romans 1, I will specifically seek evidence related to self-deception as construed by *ressentiment* in Romans 2.

⁴³ Nietzsche's 'must' in the final question of the immediately preceding quotation is significant.

⁴⁴ Theilmann, for one, takes this to be the moral requirements of God, expressed in the Mosaic law (1994:169). Dunn hears echoes of 'the Adam background', specifically the penal decree that was issued in the garden (Gen 2:16f), of which all men everywhere have a sense (1988:76, also 101; see also Moo 1996:121, but his reference is to Gen 3). Bell takes the unique view of it being a more general pronouncement of retribution issuing from the fall (1998:51-61).

3.3.3 Applying *Ressentiment* to Romans 2

The objective in this section is to apply the gains from our reading of Romans 1 to facilitate a *ressentiment* reading of Romans 2, particularly to identify elements that pertain to self-deception. Our focus will be limited to verses 1-16. While Paul's argument certainly progresses into the second half of the chapter, for my purposes, 17-29 largely reinforce and supplement the *ressentiment* reading performed on the first half.

My exegesis will follow an uncontroversial outline of Romans 2 (Jewett 1971:442; Thielman 1994:290, footnote 35; Carras 1992:193-206). Most scholars include the chapter in a larger section of the epistle, from 2:1 to 3:8, which speaks of Jewish accountability for sin and God's consequent wrath on their unrighteousness (Dunn 1998:vii-xi; Schreiner 1998:vii-viii; Osborne 2004:24-26). Others extend the section to 3:20, and include Gentile accountability in God's righteous judgement (Cranfield 1987:28f; Moo 1996:32-35; Wright 2002:410-12).⁴⁵ Romans 2 may be divided in half, with 1-16 referring generally to God's judgement, and 17-29 to Jewish failure.

I will take the Romans 2 passage in two sections: 1-11 and 12-16. To support my theological exegesis, I will conduct conventional exegesis on contested issues in the text that impinge on my concerns, along with their subsidiary issues; otherwise, they will not be observed. Though of course the scenarios entertained are hypothetical, I will employ an indicative mood for the sake of smoother reading.

Theological Exegesis of Romans 2:1-11, God's Impartial Judgement

To direct his argument away from Gentile depravity toward Jewish culpability (Lamp 1999:39), Paul begins this section in diatribe. Diatribe is a rhetorical device that indirectly addresses an audience. A speaker may use it to establish rapport with an audience, particularly when sensitive matters or convictions may be challenged (Stowers 1981:79-118; Song 2001). Paul uses diatribe in Romans almost exclusively in sections of theological discourse (Witherington 2004:75). Whether Paul's remarks at this point are directed at the Jews (Osborne 2004:60; Murray 1987:54ff), primarily at

⁴⁵ Witherington's socio-rhetorical approach organises the epistle along a different paradigm, in terms of arguments. Thus Romans 2 is broken in two halves, with the latter, 2:17ff, being enveloped into the following larger section ending at 3:20, the rubric of which is 'Censoring a censorious Jewish teacher' (2004:21f). So also Bell, though his partitioning ends at 3:8 (1998:XII). Jewett, however, demands that the entire epistle serve as context for the issue of law in relation to Jew and Gentile (1985).

the Jews with some application to Gentiles or pagan moralists (Moore 1995:49f; Moo 1996:126; Wright 2002:438), equally at Jews and Gentiles (Bell 1998:137f), or the morally superior Gentile and explicitly not Jews (Stowers 1994:103f; Witherington 2004:75-78), the recipients of Paul's accusation stand condemned by their own practice. Their hypocritical judgement on others lends credence to his case against them. I take Paul to be speaking to Jews, while not ignoring the Gentiles in the audience, for several reasons. With respect to 'the riches of [God's] kindness and forbearance and patience' in verse 4, the Jews possess a trove of relevant knowledge from the Psalms and the Wisdom of Solomon (Moo 1996:132f; see also Bruce 1985:83), to say nothing of the divine self-disclosure as 'a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness' (Exod 34:6). The import of Paul's message is to 'the Jew first and also the Greek' in verse 9. He predicates his discussion of God's judgement on the Law in Rom 2:12-16, which would have been more meaningful to Jew than Gentile. Finally, when Paul abandons his diatribe in 2:17ff, he explicitly addresses his reader as 'Jew' (Theilman 1994:290, footnote 34; Wiersbe 2007:414).⁴⁶

A *ressentiment* reading of the Jews' condemnation of τὸν ἕτερον (i.e., the Gentile) in Romans 2:1-3 produces possible signs of resentment. Whether by the military and political might of the Romans or the sheer numbers of the worldwide pagan population, the Jews consider themselves oppressed. Open revolution is impossible, so they seek to gain advantage surreptitiously by replacing the traditional field of battle with one of their own choosing. This is the *ressentiment* contest of which Nietzsche speaks in *OGM* 1.16, 'Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome ... and not only in Rome, but over almost half the earth'. In retaliation, the moralising Jew, as Paul considers him, foists on the Gentiles the demand of righteousness. Though Paul does not explicitly mention it until Romans 2:12, his use of innuendo from early in the diatribe suggests that the law of God is the sole high and holy standard for any self-respecting Jew. This is the predicate for Jewish identity. The Psalmist had spoken of Yahweh's word being exalted above the heavens (Psa 138:2), and it was from heaven that Yahweh descended on Sinai to speak to his people and give his law to Moses (Exod 19:16-20:1ff; Deut 5:22-26). The Jew knew, from the time of its reception, the law was unkeepable (see Bultmann 1975:66; *pace* Schechter 1961:148-69), for his forbearers had promised to keep the commandments issued by Yahweh (Exod 19:8; compare Rom 2:21f), only to be

⁴⁶ Regarding Paul's Jewish audience, his rhetoric suggests, while he may not have Judaism in mind, he may be epitomising the proclivity of its law-based religion for self-righteousness (Longenecker 2016:310).

banished by Yahweh for their arrogant presumption concerning their moral capacity to do so (9ff; compare Deut 5:27-29). Despite this unattainability, the Jew condemnably judges the Gentiles' failure to 'obey the truth', even as he (the Jew) deceives himself about his own sinful failure. Such condemnation echoes from Sinai into the eschaton with dire consequences (Rom 2:3, 5, 8).

In light of the eschatological reference to God's wrathful judgement, one might argue that, psychologically speaking, perception of the law's consequence is weakened for the Jew in that its relegation to some distant future somehow diminishes it. Yet, the Jew's knowledge of God's sure judgement, which he possesses from the Torah (Gen 3:15) to the *Ketuvim* (Dan 12), is belied in his convenient scapegoating of the Gentiles for moral failure. The hypocrisy thus engendered, in terms of *ressentiment*, points to guilty feelings for living as a law breaker while denying being one (Rom 2:21-23). The moralising Jew accomplishes this by devaluing both the deeds of some Gentiles who 'by nature do what the law requires' (2:14)⁴⁷, as well as his own deeds. He accomplishes this by disvaluing the standard of valuation, which is God as he perceives him. The Διὸ that opens Romans 2 allows Paul to import all the Gentile indictments of Rom 1:18-32 onto the Jew (Moore 1995:47-49). His devaluation comes thus by suppressing and exchanging the truth about God for a lie (Rom 1:18f, 25; 2:2, 5, 8); the former reflects righteousness and implied wisdom, the latter the folly of unrighteousness (see 1:18, 22; 2:2, 8). On a *ressentiment* reading, the moralising Jew's real oppression is generated, not by the Romans or pagans, but by God himself. The Jew projects his failure on others to avoid the wrath of God awaiting the unrighteous, whether Jew or Greek (2:6-11). Failure to acknowledge this reality is comparable to the Gentiles who also do not acknowledge God (1:28), and results in a false confidence in the self-deceived, of which Paul speaks in terms of a hard (σκληρότης) heart (2:5). This verbal noun occurs only here in the New Testament, and like its cognate σκληρός, it 'derives from the stem *sqel-*, "to dry (up)," "to desiccate," with which "skeleton" is connected; it means "dry," "arid," "hard," "rough," "unyielding"' (Schmidt & Schmidt 1967:1028). Such hardness renders the Jewish heart ἀμετανόητος and, therefore, insensitive in a spiritual sense—incapable of experiencing warmth, strength, and life that derives from nearness to God, or of detecting the waning of those qualities when the heart is far from him (see Jewett 1971:332f; also Isa 29:13).

⁴⁷ This is not to confer salvific status on them, but rather to convey a sense of relative righteousness, in that there are Gentiles who actually do what the moralising Jew only professes to do.

Israel becomes a victim of Rome's vast imperialism over the course of two centuries (*D* 1.71). The first-century CE context of Paul's epistle, therefore, finds the Jews an oppressed people. In the time of Jesus, Rome has imposed its political authority (Luke 3:1) such that 'Judea [becomes] a prosecutorial province' (Johnson 2009:33, footnote 50). Rome conducts censuses (Luke 2:1-3), exacts economic tribute (Matt 22:21), and requires Jews to seek authorisation on all weighty legal matters (e.g., Luke 23:1-25; Jn 18:31). Daily life in Israel goes on (see Luke 17:26-20), but whatever normalcy is experienced is prescribed by Rome (Wynen 1995; Boatwright, et al. 2004). A yoke by any other name still chafes, and Jesus himself may have encountered it first-hand if he participated in the rebuilding of Sepphoris, a former metropolis just five miles north of his boyhood home of Nazareth. The Romans destroyed it around the time of his birth to quell an uprising (Josephus 3.2:4; Meyers 1999:114f), but they could not extinguish the seething unrest that would simmer in the national subconscious all his life. Ironically, this sentiment would be used against Jesus to turn his popularity into infamy, and toward his execution (Mk 15:11). A generation later it would boil over in a massive but hopeless revolt resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem and the razing of the Temple. In Paul's day, much remains the same. Though some Jews remain in the land, as a people they are broken, having been scattered over the decades around the empire, gathering themselves into enclaves, notably in Rome (Jn 7:35; Acts 2:5, 9-11) (Williams 1998; Esler 2003).⁴⁸ Paul's dealings with displaced countrymen around the Mediterranean speak to this reality (e.g., 1 Cor 9:20; 2 Cor 11:24; Gal 2:13). Around 49 BCE, Claudius expels the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2), this after a previous expulsion by Tiberius in 19 BCE.⁴⁹ The strictures of state delimit Jewish freedom in the early Roman empire.

In terms of *ressentiment*, delimited freedom is restrictive, and when the human spirit is so confined it becomes resentful. Liberty denied is interpreted as threatening injury. Self-determination, as an expression of will-to-power, must find expression. If it cannot be wrested from the Gentile powers on their own terms, then the Jews will 'achieve satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors through a radical reevaluation of their values, hence through an act of the most *spiritual revenge ... the slave revolt in morality*' (italics original, *OGM* 2.17).

⁴⁸ For an extensive treatment of pagan attitudes and resultant effects toward Jews, see Stern's three-volume work, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (1984), especially volumes 1 and 2.

⁴⁹ The date of the Claudian expulsion is contested. Since his reign was 41-54 BCE, the *termini a quo* and *ad quem* are thus delimited. If the deported population was large, as the 'all Jews' of Acts 18:2 suggests, then presumably the event spanned multiple years. See Slingerland (1998); Van Voorst (2000); Lampe (2003); Köstenberger, et al. (2009); Keener (2011); Riesner (2011).

On a *ressentiment* reading, this is the mindset of Paul's intended audience in Romans 2. Just as the reactive character of *ressentiment* always issues forth in a self-perception made in comparison to the strong, Paul effectively accuses the Jew of promoting his superior righteousness over the Gentiles. The Jew views himself as a seeing guide for the blind Gentiles, a light to them in their darkness, a trainer for their folly, and a mature teacher for them as children (Rom 2:19f). Each expression reveals a demotion of Gentiles by the Jew so he may subsequently see himself in a relatively flattering light.

For Paul, this hypocrisy is inexcusable. Here in Romans 2:1-3, the Jew premises a righteous high ground from which to condemn Gentiles. The irony is rich. Paul has just concluded an indictment of the Gentiles in 1:18-32, informing his audience that God's 'sentence of death' (Campbell 2009:544) on them for their unrighteousness is just (see Gen 1:29a). Yet the fact the Gentiles, while knowingly pursuing wrong, *endorse* fellow wrong-doers, hardly makes righteous by comparison the Jew who *condemns* wrongdoing while pursuing it.

Paul's diatribal style veils the endemic problem he perceives to plague his Jewish audience. His initial salvo speaks to a single Jew, 'O man', but his rhetoric quickly expands to address '*every one* of you who judges' (italics supplied, Rom 2:1). On a *ressentiment* reading, Paul's use of the collective singular here ($\pi\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$)⁵⁰ is emblematic of the herd of self-perceived weak Jews who find sufficient strength in numbers to judge Gentiles. The basis of this judgement is an envy and resentment of the other. The Gentiles in this immediate circumstance occupy master status, if for no other reason than their Roman citizenship. The Jews, as alien outsiders, perceive themselves to have little social standing, within the church or without. To the extent that the teachings of Jesus have permeated the Roman fellowship, to say nothing of the manners of civilised society, negative behaviour would of course be frowned upon. Thus, their condemnation can be neither overt nor direct. In modern psychological terms, such might be manifested in what is termed 'passive-aggressive' behaviour (World Health Organization 2016 F60.8), or simply in attitudes of judgementalism. Either way, the comparative nature of *ressentiment* constructs an 'us versus them' situation (see *OGM* 1.10). The purpose is to allow the Jewish have-nots to feel superior to the Gentile haves, and the basis is a negation of the things they themselves desire (see Longenecker 2016:310; Reginster 1997:295-97). Paul will later list some of these desirables (Rom

⁵⁰ Compare ἕκαστος (Rom 2:6).

2:21f). By implication, the very things being evaluated and judged against the Gentile—possessions, sexual pleasure or freedom, sacrilege⁵¹—believe their value to the Jew doing the judging. What is more, this revaluation is hidden from the *ressentiment*-Jew performing it. Paul uses the language of a hard and incorrigible heart (5) to signify self-deception here, and it is stunning in light of the consequence that awaits.⁵²

Paul now combines the escalated rhetoric of ‘wrath’ (Rom 2:5) with a shift from the present to the future (6-11). I suggest his purpose is to break in on the Jew’s false sense of confidence before God. That is why in verse 6 Paul, ‘in scripturally resonant phraseology (Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Sir. 16:14)’ (Campbell 2009:550),⁵³ reminds them that God’s judgement will not be based on covenantal status, but will hold them accountable as individuals (Lamp 1999:39). As Nietzsche would remind us, *ressentiment*-man loves to take refuge in the anonymity of the herd. From this vantage point, the weak relegate the strong to a subaltern position so they can in turn occupy the vacated superior one. In this Roman scenario, the Jew is responsible for the instigation of this same process. Concomitant to winning for themselves power over Gentiles, they are self-deceived in that they become blind to their possession of the very values they previously abhorred.⁵⁴ The Jews are neither guided by well-doing (Rom 2:7) nor do they adhere to the truth (8), and their resultant state leaves them open to the wrath and fury of God. The Jews’ self-deception is so strong⁵⁵ that Paul ratchets up his rhetoric in an attempt to jolt them out of their false security, writing that ‘tribulation and distress [await] every soul (ψυχὴν) of man’ (again, stressing the individual) who does evil (9).

To counter his fellow Jews’ premature trial of Gentiles for their evil works, in this passage Paul has recycled some of the ideas he used in Romans 1:17f to indict the Gentiles. Putting it all together, Paul warns the Jews that God’s righteousness is being stored up for its revelation in wrath (Rom 2:5). In this instance, the object in view is the Jews because they, like the Gentiles of 1:18-32, unrighteously disobey the truth.⁵⁶ As those who boast in the law (2:23), they must know of God’s righteous wrath on sin.

⁵¹ These correspond to stealing, adultery, and temple-robbing in Romans 2:21f. The meaning of the third sin, ἱεροσυλεῖς, is indefinite. Possible interpretations are a literal pilfering of temples for precious metals, withholding a misappropriation of funds intended for the Temple in Jerusalem, or a catachresis for sacrilege (Moo 1996:163f; Dunn 1988:114f). Bell makes a strong case for the last option (1998:190, footnote 35), but all three have their difficulties.

⁵² The self-deception is only strengthened if the sins denounced in 2:21f relate to commandments in the Decalogue (Dunn 1988:132; Bell 1996:190).

⁵³ See also see also Job 34:11.

⁵⁴ See discussion of Romans 2:21f above.

⁵⁵ NB, Paul’s later remark on the sureness (πεῖθω) of their self-perceived righteous position (Rom 2:19).

⁵⁶ See Lee 2010:150.

Paul has not yet explicitly named the Jews as the primary target of his discourse, but his meaning is inescapable. Their disobedience to ‘the truth’ (see 1:18, 25) and obedience to unrighteousness (18, 29-31) implicates them in a vastly wider company—all humanity who does evil (2:9) is in mortal danger. When it comes to God’s righteous judgement, he favours neither Jew nor Gentile (10f). The latter group he now brings to the fore.

Theological Exegesis of Romans 2:12-16, God’s Judgement Based on Law

The purpose of Romans 2:12-16 is not to laud pagan virtue, but to further indict Jewish unrighteousness by exposing a mistaken reliance in possession of the law. To do this, Paul exhibits the Gentiles. The first part of this section is given to an examination of three key interpretive issues: the identity of the law, especially as it relates to Gentiles; the identity of the ἔθνη (Gentiles) in verses 14-15; the nature of συνείδησις in verse 15. These issues are interrelated, and discussing them at length is necessary in evincing self-deception in this passage. This secures a basis to offer a *ressentiment* reading of the passage, which comprises the second part of this section.

The first key issue to be addressed is the identity of the law, for the concept of law overshadows the balance of the chapter. Fitzmyer lists four ways in which Paul uses νόμος in Romans: 1) figure of speech; 2) the Hebrew Scriptures; 3) the Mosaic covenant; 4) the natural understanding of some Gentiles (2008:131f).⁵⁷ One may fairly straightforwardly interpret the preponderance of Paul’s usage here as the law of Moses, with overlap in meanings 2) and 3) from above. He certainly seems to have the law of Moses in mind in Rom 2:12 when he draws the standard distinction between Jew and Gentile. That is, Jews are under the law, and Gentiles are without it. The same holds true for 13a when he intimates the Jews are ‘hearers of the law’.

Interpretation becomes particularly interesting, however, when Paul relates the law explicitly to the Gentiles in Romans 2:14-15. What is the law the Gentiles possess? There are two camps, which may be divided into those who relate law to the Mosaic law, and those who do not. In the first camp, Stowers represents the comparatively few who hold the Mosaic law was available to Gentile cultures in the ancient Mediterranean world, thus ‘the gentiles derived their knowledge of righteousness from the Jews’

⁵⁷ For additional views of νόμος in terms of proposed semantic components, see Winger (1992); for a condensed presentation of general views, see Osborne (2004:64-67, footnote).

(1994:115) through ‘cultural diffusion’ (117, see also 114-17; also Dunn 1988:98f; Eckstein 1983:152).

In the opposing camp, Bell argues Paul cannot here be speaking of the law of Moses, either in its form of extensive commands or that of the Decalogue. Rather, Paul must have in mind an unwritten law,⁵⁸ (1998:153f; see also Barrett 1991:51). Bell gives evidence to show an ontological view of the law was acquired as Judaism encountered Hellenistic thought. The result was a Jewish wisdom tradition of the law as a divine and universal reason pre-existent to creation (156).⁵⁹ Thus, the law would have been known to Adam. Concretely, it would later be manifest to Jews on tablets and parchment; to the Gentiles it would be written on their hearts (157). In that Paul viewed all humanity ‘in Adam’ (see Rom 5:12-21), God’s law would be universally condemnatory. Witherington comments along the same lines by contrasting the law of the Gentiles with the Mosaic Law:

Because Paul speaks of those outside of the Law, he makes clear that they are not judged on the same basis as those under the Law ... [The] Gentiles ... have in a sense the Law written on their hearts. (2004:82)

Thielman basically agrees with Witherington, holding Paul’s phrase, *γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν*, to be an echo from Jeremiah 31 to the effect that Gentiles, while falling ‘technically outside the law’, bear ‘the rudiments of the Jewish law implanted in their hearts’ (1994:171; see also Murray 1987:74). Osborne interprets the law here along the lines of ‘common grace’, with no overt connection with Jewish law, equating it instead with a ‘sense of moral conscience that allows [the Gentiles] to understand God’s basic requirements’ (2004:69). Since it is God-given, it is a form of the divine law (69). Moo claims Paul employs the idea, common in his day, of ‘natural law’, Hellenised but without the associated philosophical baggage (1996:150, see also footnote 35; Bell 1998: 101-18; Mathewson 1999).⁶⁰

I conclude the identity of the law as it is ‘possessed’ by the Gentiles primarily refers to the moral standard reflecting the eternal character of God. In view of Paul’s sweeping generalisation of the Gentiles in Romans 1, it is hard to conceive all of them have access to the law of Moses. In that God is impartial in his judgements, he cannot condemn those who are ignorant of transgression. On the other hand, it is relatively easy to conceive of the law as an unwritten moral code that reflects the character of God. It is

⁵⁸ The exception being the reference in Rom 2:15a.

⁵⁹ Dunn’s commentary on Romans 7:7 is apt (1988:379).

⁶⁰ Lamp views Paul as advocating a ‘natural law’ as well, but owing to the tradition that equates wisdom with Torah instead of Hellenistic categories (1999:45).

generally manifest to all humans, and has been specially and progressively revealed in the Jewish canon and the Christian Bible, and supremely in Jesus Christ. In Romans 1, I explained Paul to be saying that God's nature is communicated to all humanity in such a way that defying it leaves man morally culpable. All humanity does sin, knowingly. They do this because there is no distinction in access to God's law, which also means God's judgement may truly be impartial. Both Gentiles and Jews are without excuse.

The identity of the ἔθνη (Gentiles) in Romans 2:14-15 is a second key issue of interest, and several interpretations are available. The first interpretation views these Gentiles as law-keepers, different from the pagans in Romans 1:18-32 who are incapable of doing good, thus rendering Paul inconsistent between chapters (Räsänen 1983:97-113; see also Sanders 1983:123-25). A second interpretation holds these Gentiles may be Christians in the fullest sense of justification by faith in Christ (Cranfield 1975:158f; Barth 2010 1.2:304; Gathercole 2002). Third, Paul may be referring to Gentiles living prior to Christ, whose proleptic salvation is predicated on their doing good in obedience to the law (Davies 1990 39:53-71). Fourth and relatedly, these Gentiles may be individuals who obey God imperfectly due to a partial understanding of his will (Snodgrass 1986 32.1:73-75). Finally, these may be Gentile pagans who live uprightly as directed by their conscience (Bruce 1985:86; Bell 1998:152f; Witherington 2004:82f, esp. footnote 32; Collins 2010:141-43).

I adopt the last interpretation, that the Gentiles to whom Paul refers in 2:14-15 are unregenerate humans who align their actions with the requirements of the law.⁶¹ Three points support this position. The first pertains to the term φύσει in verse 14, and the ambiguity that results from its placement between two clauses. The tension lies in whether it relates to the participle of the previous clause, τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα (König 1967:58; Cranfield 1975:156f; Achtemeier 1985:44f; Stowers 1994:115f; Wright 2002:441f), or to the verb in the following clause, τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν (Bruce 1985:86; Dunn 1988:98; Fitzmyer 2008:310; Moo 1996:149f; Bell 1998:152f, footnote 97; Schreiner 1998:121f). If the former, the verse signifies that the Gentiles do not possess the (Mosaic) law by birth right like the Jews (see Rom 3:2; 9:4). On this view, these are Gentile Christians who, Paul will go on to say in 8:4, do what the law requires by the Holy Spirit. Grammatically, Paul could have clearly communicated this meaning by relocating φύσει within the clause, as in 2:27. Furthermore, the expression, ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν

⁶¹ It need not be inferred the actions of the said Gentiles are consistent with the law, enacted it perfectly, or are properly motivated. Thus, there is no salvific merit to 'good' behaviour. See also footnote 47 of this chapter.

νόμος, is atypical of Pauline characterisation of Christians (Schriener 1998:123).⁶² The other alternative is to take φύσει with the latter clause. This fits with its typical meaning, as anything existing ‘as the result of [a] natural development or condition’ (Louw & Nida 1988 1:586; see Köster 1974 9:253-55). Apparently, this is Paul’s meaning when he speaks of the essence of olive trees (Rom 11:21, 24), Jewishness (Gal 2:15) and ‘Gentileness’ (Rom 2:27), and human sexual relations (1:26f). Paul is effectively saying the Gentiles have the law innately, as part of their constitution as human. Thus, Paul can claim in one breath that the Gentiles do not have the law (twice), specifically the Mosaic law, and in the next breath claim they do possess the law in some sense (*pace* Dunn 1988:99).

This points to a second reason for construing the Gentiles as non-Christian, which relates to τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν in 2:14b. Though they do not have the law, Paul goes on in the second portion of verse 14 to say, not that they do τοῦ νόμου, but that they do τὰ τοῦ νόμου.⁶³ The *ESV* translation of τὰ as ‘the things’ corresponds nicely to τὸ ἔργον (τοῦ νόμου).⁶⁴ Also, Paul asserts the Gentiles ποιῶσιν the things of the law. However, if he thought of them as Christian, his case would be strengthened by using a form of πληρώω to refer their action in relation to the law (Murray 1987:73). The expression, ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος, also seems strange in connection with a Christian (Schriener 1998:123). If Paul is referring to non-Christians, it makes sense to take the expression as an innate sense of right and wrong, of divine moral standards, broadly construed (Moo 1996:150f).⁶⁵ Paul’s language reveals even pagans can know and do things that reflect the character of God and, as a result, have been revealed in the law of Moses. Paul’s case against Jewish presumption of impunity on account of having the law is bolstered by declaring unbelieving Gentiles also have the law. However, for neither group is this enough to escape judgement, for ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ by not keeping the law entirely (Rom 3:23).

By association, a third reason for viewing the Gentiles as non-Christian relates to the nature and place of ‘the work of the law’ (simply ‘the work’ for the remainder of the paragraph) in verse 15. Paul says the work is γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν (i.e., the Gentiles’ hearts). He characterises the work as ‘written’, which would naturally recall

⁶² Along these lines, consider the twice-occurring ἀνόμως in Rom 2:12.

⁶³ It would be unusual for the neuter article, τὰ, to modify the masculine noun, νόμος.

⁶⁴ Deidun takes τὰ in 2:15 as a ‘collective variant’ (1981:165; *pace* Dunn 1988:100).

⁶⁵ See Collins (2010 ‘Appendix 1’; 139f) for the argument that this broad Pauline construal of the law does not owe to the Stoics, but is readily available in the Graeco-Roman world around him, as well as in the Hebrew Scriptures in which he is steeped. Others take νόμος more narrowly as referring to the Mosaic law, specifically (Ridderbos 1959:106; Räisänen 1983:25f; Dunn 1988:99).

for the Jew the law of Moses inscribed by God on Sinai (Exod 31:18; 32:16; 34:1). Yet the place of engraving in Paul's text is not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts (see 1 Cor 3:3). Many see a reference to the new covenant promise in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (e.g., Cranfield 1975:158f; Ito 1995:26f; Wright 2002:442), whereby people are transformed via the work of God so they might obey him instinctively. However, not only does Paul not quote from Jeremiah, there is no mention of covenant, new or old, in either the chapter or wider context. The covenant promised by Jeremiah was made to the houses of Israel and Judah (31:33); no mention of Gentiles is involved, nor of knowing God (i.e., knowing his righteous demands), or of any of the other promised benefits mentioned by Jeremiah (31:34). In light of the preceding reason, this is because the work engraved by God on Gentile hearts is a universal sense of the character and will of God, demanded by him to be reflected in the lives of those created in his image, which is to say, both Gentiles and Jews. My conclusion regarding the identity of the ἔθνη (Gentiles) in Romans 2:14-15 is they are spiritually unregenerate humans not corporately chosen by God as recipients of special revelation (i.e., Jews). In this context, Paul usage of ἔθνη speaks of those who attempt to live up to the requirements of God's law.

The third key issue of interest is Paul's use of 'conscience' (συνείδησις) in Romans 2:15.⁶⁶ Legions of interpreters have drawn on CA Pierce's exhaustive study of συνείδησις, *Conscience in the New Testament* (1955).⁶⁷ Pierce argues convincingly Paul's use of συνείδησις was not influenced by his Hebrew roots, but was baptised into his personal κοινή glossary from the Hellenised world. While Stoic philosophy made it a technical term, Paul's takes it 'directly and entirely from the everyday speech of the ordinary Greek' (1955:54; see also 13-39, 59f; see also Jewett 1971:407, 11, 14; compare with Sevenster 1961:84f;),⁶⁸ even as he innovates its usage for his own theological purposes (Bruce 1985:86; Jewett 1971:414). The major debate is whether conscience for Paul functions retrospectively in its judgements, or both retrospectively and prospectively. Subsumed in this debate is whether or not these judgements are

⁶⁶ The other two occurrences of συνείδησις in Romans are 9:1 and 13:5. The preponderance of its Pauline usage is found in the Corinthian correspondence: 1 Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27, 28, 29 (x2); 2 Corinthians 1:12; 4:2; 5:11. The remaining occurrences lie in the pastoral epistles: 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2; 2 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:15.

⁶⁷ Pierce's study encompasses the συνείδησις group of words: τὰ συνειδός/σύνοιδα/ἡ σύνεσις.

⁶⁸ Pace Holtzmann (1911), Spicq (1938), Bultmann (1948).

exclusively negative or may also be positive.⁶⁹ Closely related to this is the matter of the ‘identity’ of the conscience.

One group limits the conscience to a judicial function that rules on actions already taken. The emphasis is on knowledge of deeds already performed, specifically, on evil deeds (Pierce 1955:44f, 108f; Jewett 1971:407). Such transgressions normally result in ‘the pain called *συνείδησις*’ (Pierce 1955:50, see also 45f; and Osborne, 2004:24f; Witherington 2004:82), which he calls ‘that combination of fear and shame which is called guilt’ (Pierce 1955:112; see also Thrall 1967:118; Whiteley 1971:210).

Another group extends the function from judicial, ruling only on past actions, to include a legislative function for guidance in decision-making. Harris disagrees with Pierce et al., writing about Romans 2:15, that ‘the conscience surely can commend as well as condemn’ (1962:178). Thrall modifies Pierce because Pierce does not account for passages in which Paul uses *συνείδησις* more positively, and with a prospective influence. She concludes for Paul, the function of the conscience in the Gentile is generally the same as that of the Law for the Jew, even to the point of equating the two (Thrall 1967:124). Osborne describes the conscience as an ‘internal barometer’ to indicate right or wrong (2004:69f; see also Leitzmann 1933:107; Dodd 1949:205; D’Arcy 1961:11f; Stelzenberger 1961:55; Zuck 1969:331-34; Barrett 1991:247; Moo 1996:152). Jewett, in commenting on Romans 13:5, claims that *συνείδησις* acts only retrospectively. Yet, confusingly, in the very next sentence he writes that ‘it is simply because one may have a *prescience* of conscience pangs that one may act so as to avoid them’ (italics supplied, 1971:440). Dunn comments, ‘The rationale [of *συνείδησις* in 2:15] is still that of 1:18-32, of a “natural” sense of responsibility, consequent upon what is known of God and the kind of life appropriate to that knowledge, present in wider society’ (1988:101).

Related to the foregoing is the ‘identity’ of the *συνείδησις*. It is different from the moral standard, or is it somehow the standard itself? New Testament interpretation has been significantly influenced by Rudolf Bultmann, who claims Paul’s use of *συνείδησις* draws on the ancient Greeks and Stoics, and not his Hebrew roots. As a result, he holds to the traditional notion of the conscience as ‘the voice of God in man’, but he recasts it in terms of self-conscious conduct as accountable to the Transcendent (i.e., God) (Bultmann 2007:216f; see also Stacey 1956:206-10; Aune 2004:298). Bornkamm

⁶⁹ Related to the mention of *ποιῶσιν* above, Campbell argues these two debates are irrelevant regarding Paul’s point, which is that Gentile law-doing evinces ‘prior pagan possession of an ethical code’ (2009:556, see also 557).

moderates Bultmann by accepting his basic definition of conscience as ‘man’s knowledge of himself and his own actions,’ but insists it ‘acts independently of God, yet in relation to a sense of divine law (Jewett 1971:410). J-H Eckstein explores the overlap in Paul’s usage of *συνείδησις* and the Old Testament usage of *בִּלְ*. Thiselton reports on Eckstein’s influential work, who finds that the semantic range of *בִּלְ* not only includes the intellect, but also affective states such as pain, joy, and fear, as well as postures of willing such as determination, decisiveness, and evaluation for the sake of decision-making. Eckstein concludes the meaning of *συνείδησις* in both 1 Corinthians and Romans includes ‘awareness of, reflection on, and evaluation concerning, thought, will, decision, and resultant action’ (Thiselton 2000:643). Jewett rejects this, claiming, ‘Paul never speaks of God’s rule of man through the conscience’ (1971:407). Others build on Eckstein’s work, arguing *συνείδησις* be taken as self-awareness (Gooch 1987:250; Gardiner 1994:40-64), or even consciousness (Horsley 1978:582). Sevenster conducts a rigorous comparison of the usage of *συνείδησις* in Paul and Seneca, finding in the latter it not only refers to self-knowledge of man’s own actions, but also extends to his words and thoughts. Thus, it qualifies as a moral guardian bearing the divine presence. Seneca and Paul view the conscience as both knowledge and as a witness, but whereas it is the ultimate arbiter for Seneca, it is always provisional and fallible for Paul (e.g., Rom 2:14f) (Sevenster 1961:84-102; Jewett 1971:446).

One final note on the identity of *συνείδησις*, specifically its *συμμαρτυρούσης*, comes in relation to the final phrase of verse 15, *καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων*. If the prefix of *συμμαρτυρούσης* is taken as vestigial and so without force, then *συνείδησις* bears witness to oneself, and *τῶν λογισμῶν* may be interpreted as an expansion on *συνείδησις* (Moo 1996:153).⁷⁰ Paul’s further description of these thoughts as transpiring *μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων*, well-suited to law court terminology, sets the tension between them as accusatory (*κατηγορέω*) or defensive (*ἀπολογέομαι*). If the conjunction *ἢ καὶ* is taken epexegetically, then Paul may mean while some thoughts are approved by the conscience, most are censured. These thoughts are constantly debated in the conscience, and any temporal judgements are subject to the fallibility and fleetingness of human nature (Campbell 2009:556-58).

⁷⁰ *Pace* Dunn, who sees *συνείδησις* as distinct from one’s thoughts, such that it provides an independent evaluative role in relation to whether or not the heart-inscribed standard is honoured (Dunn 1988a:101f; see also Jewett 1971:442-44). Practically speaking, however, Dunn’s explanation of ‘moral consciousness ... as a sense of confusion or self-contradiction’ is not far from the position I have taken (1988:102).

Verse 16 speaks of a future day when all debates will end in the final and infallible judgement of God rendered by Christ Jesus (Moo 1996:154; Bassler 1982:148).

From this discussion, I take the position the ‘identity’ of the *συνείδησις* is neither an internal law nor the source of law. Rather, it stands independent from this law as the mechanism by which one evaluates their actions and attitudes against this standard. The typical result is a painful awareness for failure to meet this standard,⁷¹ along with occasional approbation of the same. This seems to best reflect Paul’s usage in Romans 9:1 and 13:5, as well as in the rest of his letters.

We now proceed with the exegesis of the passage. Romans 2:12-16 concerns the impartial basis of God’s judgement, the law. My *ressentiment* reading will highlight three concepts found toward the end of the passage: conscience, thoughts, and secrets. The human conscience is the first concept to consider. In a Nietzschean system, it appears in the internalisation stage of *ressentiment*.⁷² Its catalyst lies in the strictures of State (*OGM* 2.17) which, as discussed previously,⁷³ we found in the creational subtext of Romans 1. There, God as creator establishes moral norms as law. Permission for such a reading comes from Nietzsche’s own rendition of the ‘famous story’ of the Garden, replete with elements such as the invention of man and subsequent creation of woman, the ‘tree of knowledge’, the aspiration to be ‘godlike’, and ‘original sin’ (A 48). In the garden state, Adam and Eve, knowing the law of God, transgress it, and so suffer the decreed penalty, death (Gen 2:17). In Romans 2:14, Paul writes that the Gentiles perform the requirements of the law, even though they do not possess it. As I have equated these *requirements* with the *work* of the law written on their hearts (2:15a), the inscription must be ‘readable’ to be intelligible and convey meaning. The conscience performs this function by reflecting one’s performance in relation to the law (15b). It does this by means of the Gentiles’ thoughts.

The second concept to be examined is that of thoughts. Paul’s characterisation of Gentile thoughts in verse 2:15c may be taken as an expansion of the function of conscience. More specifically, he describes their thoughts in ongoing conflict before the bar of God’s law, at which they usually are condemned, but are occasionally affirmed. Such a portrayal of ‘thought process’ finds correspondence in the all-too-human

⁷¹ Consider the parallels involved in the message to Belshazzar during the feast in Daniel 5. It is communicated in writing, it is distinct from its recipient, and it is moral in nature if the king’s terror is considered a judgement of conscience. Some scholars evince Paul’s familiarity with Daniel by connecting his discussion of ἡ ἀποστασία with chapters 7-12 of the prophet’s record (Marshall 1983:190-92; Morris 1984:222, footnote 19; Beale 2003:204-07; Witherington 2006:210-12, 18).

⁷² See sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of this thesis.

⁷³ See sections 3.2 and 3.3.1 of this thesis.

phenomenon of continual self-scrutiny and internal debate. Motives, desires, values, and thoughts,⁷⁴ both conscious and unconscious, are brought to bear on hypothetical behavioural outcomes played out in the mind. This would suit a Nietzschean (and Freudian) interpretation of the conscience from a *ressentiment* perspective, given the concatenation of forces vie for power and expression. The very nature of the struggle itself reveals *ressentiment* at work. At issue in this context is the law of God.

Paul's comment that the Gentiles do not have the law (Rom 2:12, 14) provokes a question, how he can speak of them desiring in any way to conform to it, let alone be held accountable to it (Campbell 2009:552, 57)? Yet the conflict in their conscience reveals they do possess this desire—a sense of moral responsibility—in their self-perceived occasional success in keeping these norms (Rom 2:15c). Regardless, Paul's opening declaration in verse 12 hangs over them: 'all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law'. Even though Paul does not here characterise the Gentiles as cognisant of this consequence, I have claimed from Romans 1 that they have both implicit and explicit knowledge of something calamitous. Paul contends that to sin without the law is still to violate God's moral norm, and to do so knowingly (1:19-21, 23, 25, 28, 32).⁷⁵ In this *ressentiment* scenario, God's moral norm is imposed on man through creation as law. Its restrictiveness is perceived as oppressively injurious. Moral violation of this law carries with it at least tacit knowledge of consequences. Commensurate with God's power as creator, the consequences may be inferred to be dire. Such knowledge is betrayed in the Gentiles evasion of the truth (18, 25). Implicitly, the Gentiles can know that the being who subjugates by law in the first place, is the same being who can be expected to exact punishment on transgressors. Beyond this, Paul reveals the Gentiles know explicitly and specifically the consequence of violating God's moral norm in terms of his decree of death on unrighteousness (32). However, not only do they continue in 'all manner of unrighteousness' (29, also 30f), they recruit others to increase the size of the herd (see 32). The rationale may be either to fashion a refuge in numbers from which no individual can be singled out for punishment, or to generate strength in a majority from which normative values can be imposed. The self-deception of *ressentiment* explains man's ability to conduct his way in the face of the damning peril of universal judgement. I find a clue to it in Paul's mention of 'secrets' in 2:16.

⁷⁴ Hereafter, these are collectively referred to as 'thoughts'.

⁷⁵ Bell claims man possess 'a residue of knowledge, i.e., some knowledge of the law (2.14-16) and some knowledge of a principle of retribution (1.32)', which he claims amounts to no knowledge (1998:106f).

The third concept to discuss is that of secrets. The labyrinth is a frequent image in Nietzsche's writings (Schrift 1990:186-98; Del Caro 2014:153). For my purposes, it provides a convenient link between the conscience and what lies hidden within it. Nietzsche uses the labyrinth often as a metaphor for man's experience of life in all its uncertainty. Alan White writes, 'Nietzsche's labyrinth is our labyrinth, the labyrinth of the human condition' (1990:14). In *BGE* 2.29, life is portrayed as a dangerous maze into which the strong and daring enter, only to get 'lost, isolated, and torn to pieces by some cave Minotaur of conscience [and] perish'. Evidently, only those with requisite strength risk the terrors that lie hidden within 'the labyrinth of the [human] breast' (*OGM* 2.18). In the labyrinth hide 'our most secret ... inclinations, [along] with our most fervent needs' (*BGE* 7.214).

Paul speaks of conflicting thoughts in man's conscience in Romans 2:15, which are constantly being adjudicated to arrive at desires, values, and actions. Paul explains that in the future the secrets of men will be judged (Rom 2:16). By inference, when these secrets are judged they are exposed. Their hidden nature disappears. But nothing is ever hidden from God (2:3; 8:29; 11:31; especially 1 Cor 4:5; also 14:25),⁷⁶ which raises the question, why would anyone try to hide something from him in the first place? One ready explanation comes in the form of other-deception: man consciously and intentionally hides thoughts from God he knows are unacceptable to him, believing somehow a) they will escape God's notice, or b) though God may be aware of them, he will excuse their offense.⁷⁷ The other explanation is supplied by the self-deception of *ressentiment*: man hides unacceptable thoughts from God, unawares, by first hiding them from himself. The critical feature is the revaluative function of *ressentiment*.

According to *ressentiment*, the self is comprised of competing forces and thoughts that vie for expression. Some of these may be acknowledged to the self, but others are hidden, repressed. They are repressed because they, in one way or another, reflect values associated in the strong, and are thus resented. At the same time, these very same values remain prized by the relatively weak person. Repressed thoughts concerning these repressed values are no less real than acknowledged thoughts, so they continue to exert pressure on the self. But not only are these actually-prized values repressed by the self, the conflict involved in repressing them is also denied. Thus, the self-deception of *ressentiment* creates a schism in the self; it 'corrupts or dis-integrates the self'

⁷⁶ See footnote 15 of this chapter, then consider Luke 8:17 (additionally, Hebrews 4:13).

⁷⁷ One could argue this as a case of self-deception in light of the attributes of God's righteousness and omniscience, but it would be difficult to consider it as driven by *ressentiment*.

(Reginster 1997:301).⁷⁸ Normally, the self seeks an integrated identity. *Ressentiment*-man's standard for this identity is measured against a borrowed standard, one that is alien to himself.

The Gentiles' secret thoughts find much correspond in this description. They hide them from themselves because they do not align with the moral standard of God's law. This law has been imposed on them through creation, and it comes with consequences for defying it. *Ressentiment*, however, views all such infringement on self-determination as injury and threat which must be rejected (see *WP* 1.55). Given the nature of the superior other, in this case God the creator, open revolt is untenable. If I may characterise it as 'unthinkable' in the sense that it is pushed out of conscious reflection, this provides a way to understand secret thoughts as self-deception. Since the desire for self-determination is a function of will-to-power, it is ineradicable. Yet it must be suppressed in light of the law of God which demands conformity to *his* will. To achieve any integrity of self, those thoughts which run counter to God's law must be repressed. That they persist and are real is evidenced by the fact that while sometimes their thoughts are manifest as conforming to the good (Romans 2:7, 10), their conscience typically accuses them of those repressed thoughts not conforming to the truth of God (see also 1:18, 25).

Modern man's soul is labyrinthine, writes Nietzsche in *D* 1.169 (see also *BGE* 9.295). This owes to its *ressentiment*-formed conscience and the negative ideas within it (see *CW* 'Preface'). These ideas not only violate the self secretly, they do so continually, precisely because they are secret to the self. Wrong thoughts, successfully kept by the self from the self with the help of revaluation, may in turn be communicated by the self to others sincerely as 'good'. In the case of Paul's Gentiles, the most important perceived other is God. In *Z* 4.7, Zarathustra decries the Christian God, not for his omnipotence, but for his omniscience. 'He saw with eyes that saw *everything*—he saw the depths and grounds of the human, all its veiled disgrace and ugliness ... he crawled into my filthiest corner'. Power, even divine power, is something Nietzsche ultimately admires. However, God's knowledge of, i.e., his ability to see everything in

⁷⁸ See also Sartre's discussion of bad faith in which the self demands to be considered by the Other as a concrete, absolute, and permanent object, i.e., an autonomous self. This projection of a secret vision of oneself is sourced in shame, fear, and pride (1956:288-92). Though Sartre rules out God as the definer of the self (Ixiv, 439f), he illustrates his point with the biblical symbol of the fall of Adam and Eve hiding from God.

the labyrinth⁷⁹ of the human soul causes him to declare, ‘I wanted to take revenge’ (4.7; see also *D* 5.464).⁸⁰ *Ressentiment* is aroused by such anger and revenge, but because open revolt is deemed impossible against another perceived-to-be superior, the associated emotions must be kept secret. The Gentiles harbour these secrets even as they debate their thoughts in the halls of conscience. The essence of self-deception is they keep secrets from God and from themselves.

We have seen how the structure of *ressentiment* paves the way for a fresh reading of Pauline fallenness in Romans 1 and 2. It applies to Gentiles and Jews, and in fact to anyone who perceives themselves disadvantaged or oppressed. It applies to the Gentiles. Paul asserts they suppress and exchange the truth about God’s power and nature, both of which reveal him to be the supremely powerful creator. It applies to the Jews. Paul claims they both condemn the perceived-to-be superior (Roman) Gentiles for their sinful behaviour, even as they themselves practice the very same things, and they also dismiss God as he has revealed himself in the law by excusing themselves from its commands. Furthermore, Paul describes how Gentiles may do the work of the law despite wrestling with it in their conscience against the secrets they and all people carry, i.e., those thoughts that transgress the character and will of God universally revealed in the law. All these behaviours and mindsets, I have argued, manifest self-deception. In this chapter, *ressentiment* has served as a lens for reading Paul’s employment of self-deception as he levels his argument against fallen and sinful humans. In the next chapter, we will explore self-deception at a deeper level in terms of its mechanics.

⁷⁹ Dionysus is the singer of ‘Ariadne’s Complaint’, published in the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus* (1888). He concludes his poem or song with the line, ‘I am your labyrinth’. Nietzsche draws this metaphor from Greek mythology. Ovid’s epic poem, *The Metamorphoses*, chronicles Theseus’ slaying of the Minotaur and triumph over the labyrinth. Theseus possesses enough *strength* but lacks the requisite *knowledge* to complete his quest. He needs no additional *power* to dispatch the beast, but without *knowing* the secret supplied by Ariadne, he will die in the labyrinth for lack of an exit. The moral of the story is, ‘knowledge is power’.

⁸⁰ I am indebted to Stephen Williams for this insight (2006:173f; see also 174, footnote 65).

Chapter 4: THE MECHANICS OF SELF-DECEPTION

4.1 Introduction

Demosthenes (fourth-century BCE) reportedly observed ‘nothing is easier than self-deceit. For what each man wishes, that he also believes to be true’ (Demosthenes 1985:3.19). Self-deception is not a modern phenomenon, but modernity has made its study significant (Crites 1979:109). It is not uniquely religious. Philosophers from Plato to Goethe and Schopenhauer to Sartre have explored man’s intentional blindness. The Apostle Paul explicitly bears witness to it. He warns against self-deception in 1 Corinthians 3:18 (ἐαυτὸν ἐξαπατάω) and in Galatians 6:3 (φρεναπατᾶ ἑαυτόν). Paul uses other terms to describe it in the context of fallen-man’s wilful ignorance of God in Romans 1, as we have discussed in Chapter Three.¹

To this point in the thesis it has been unnecessary to give more than a general account of the concept of self-deception. Now I must go into detail. Many models span the range on this subject including ordinary self-deception, pseudo self-deception (such as bias, prejudice, or wishful thinking), unconscious believing, half-believing, avowed believing, unnoticed believing, and multi-selved believing to name but a few (McLaughlin & Rorty 1988).² I have identified the concept of self-deception in Romans 1 (and 2), but even though Paul mentions two ways in which it works, he does not speak to the inner dynamics of self-deception’s functioning. Nietzsche’s thought in the aggregate, on the other hand, provides needed detail on the subject.

Self-deception features critically in both Pauline fallenness and Nietzschean *ressentiment*. Broadly speaking, I will now bring them together around the focal point of self-deception. I will deliberately focus on certain Nietzsche-centric essays in the first part of the chapter because only so can I make the novel connection offered in this thesis, which is the exploration of self-deception at the intersection of Nietzsche and Paul, and the possibility of elucidating Pauline usage in light of Nietzschean explication. Later in the chapter, I will bring to bear other literature that deals with self-deception, some of it not directly referencing Nietzsche or Paul. This will serve to independently substantiate the inescapability of self-deception in the human experience

¹ Some argue Romans 7 also relies on self-deception. Paul’s describes conflict between the conscious and the unconscious (e.g., Theissen 1987:177-249).

² A solid, recent work on self-deception is Bayne and Fernández’s *Delusion and Self-Deception: Affective and Motivational Influences on Belief Formation* (2009). Still helpful is Baron’s compilation, *Perspectives on Self-deception* (1988).

about which they write. They grapple with the same phenomenon, albeit in different ways.

Specifically, the chapter begins by laying the groundwork of the existential origins of *ressentiment*. Richard Sugarman (1980) lays the foundation here with Nietzsche's *PTG*, itself a commentary on Anaximander (fifth-century BCE). I move then to analyse self-deception in both Nietzschean and Pauline contexts (sections 4.3 and 4.4). Peter Poellner (2004) shows self-deception to be the culminating move of Nietzschean *ressentiment*. Bahnsen (1995) and Via (1990) offer Pauline theological perspectives. I will synthesise these to show how self-deception functions in Paul. Finally, I will discuss fear as a possible motive for self-deception, extensively in Nietzsche, then in Paul.

4.2 Existential Origins of Self-deception

Self-deception, and the *ressentiment* that gives rise to it, is key to the 'revaluation of all values' (*OGM* 1.8). Nietzsche claims repeatedly in *OGM* that this revaluation involves a struggle that stretches long into mankind's past (1.8, 11; 2.2-9). Sugarman retraces Nietzsche's argument that Anaximander originates this conflict by wrestling with existence, and posing the question: why is that-which-is so fleeting (see Staten 1990:64-68)?³ Peering out into the abyss-like 'mystical night', the Milesian utters the enigmatic statement (in English), 'Where the source of things is, to that place they must also pass away, according to necessity, for they must pay penance and be judged for their injustices, in accordance with the ordinance of time' (*PTG* 4).⁴ Sugarman establishes Nietzsche's discovery of the ultimate source of *ressentiment* as 'the first metaphysical reflection of *ressentiment*' (1980:56). Nietzsche's ensuing commentary incorporates Pauline terminology to state a philosophical finding:

The proper measure with which to judge any and all human beings is that they really are creatures who should not exist at all and who are [*expiating*] their lives by their manifold sufferings and their death. What could we expect of such creatures? Are we not all *sinner*s under *sentence of death*? We [*expiate*] for having been born, first by living and then by dying. (italics supplied, *PTG* 4)

Anaximander, according to Nietzsche, recoils at the Law of Time because it insists that transience is the penalty for existence. Nor can Anaximander abide its

³ See Sugarman's astute article, 'Rancor against Time: The Phenomenology of *Ressentiment*' (1980), featuring Anaximander the Milesian, 'the first philosophical author of the ancients' (*PTG* 4).

⁴ Shapiro's excellent article featuring Anaximander's famous declaration does not supply Nietzsche's German text, but rather the original Greek. He notes Anaximander's declaration is a textbook scrap discovered 1,000 years after its author's death (1994:359).

corollary, that transience is the reason for all suffering. Sugarman summarises the Milesian this way: ‘Passing away is the penance paid for the injustice of having come-to-be. For, nothing has the right to be. Coming-to-be is an illegitimate emancipation from the unbroken calm of eternity’ (2010:57). Nietzsche observes Anaximander posing guiltiness as a solution to the otherwise unexplainable suffering of existence. Rather than leave the dilemma of human existence hanging raw in an apathetic universe, Anaximander eases his angst by ‘superimposing an ethical drama upon an ontological datum’ (57). Nietzsche the ventriloquist indicts Anaximander by posing this question through him to all creatures, ‘What is your existence worth? And, if it is worthless why are you still here? Your guilt, I see, causes you to tarry in your existence’ (*PTG* 4). This tarrying exposes Anaximander’s hidden grudge against the march of time, and engenders a response of “‘insolent apostasy” [as] a way of postponing penance, judgment, perishing’ (Sugarman 1980:57).

Nietzsche moves from his early work in *PTG* to devote the whole of *BGE* and *OGM* (perhaps even his entire career) to Anaximander’s quest. What is the answer to suffering (*OGM* 3.28)? *Ressentiment*, set in motion by suffering and ending in self-induced deception, goes a long way in answering his query. It provides an explanation based on creating a new morality and a new reality. Sugarman likewise casts *ressentiment* as the ‘rancor against the ordinance of time’, motivated ‘out of the spirit of revenge, [and responsible for] the aboriginal devaluation of existence’ (1980:57). That is, Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* originates in ‘man’s relation to his own finitude and temporality’ (97), which is swallowed up by what Nietzsche views as the unfathomable abyss of reality. Nietzsche famously portrays the human predicament in Zarathustra’s tightrope walker, suspended between the twin dangers of man’s history and his destiny (*Z* 1.3-8). *Mutatis mutandis*, Pascal speaks of man standing between, not one, but two abysses, one of the Infinite and the other of the Nothing (1995 1.15.199).

Couched in philosophical terms, the problem that befalls everything, including of course every human being, is the penalty that being owes to becoming, essence to existence. Life is probation without the possibility of exoneration. Stated theologically, transience is evidence of sin, and the penalty of sin is death (see Rom 6:23), a judgment from which there is no appeal. The ‘insolent apostasy’ above, from a Pauline perspective, is a mask worn by fallen-man to hide the guiltiness and associated creaturely fear that stem from disobedience to God. In fact, I suggest that failure to seek such protection in the face of such judgment would be abnormal, for as Pascal asserts,

anyone ‘who considers himself in this way [i.e., as culpable for sin] will be terrified at himself’ (1995 1.15.199). Anaximander’s insolence, construed as fallen-man, covers his terror of God’s judgement, described variously as passing away, not existing at all, manifold sufferings, and death. Fallen-man, then, ‘flees into a metaphysical fortress’ (*PTG* 4) of a world ordered by his own wisdom (Rom 1:22). As a result, he accepts himself as the ground of his own value (see Rom 1:25a; Phil 3:9a).

My philosophical discussion of self-deception now transitions from its historical context to one conducted in terms psychological and phenomenological. Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* remains the overall conceptual framework.

4.3 Self-deception in the Context of Nietzschean *Ressentiment*

Peter Poellner, in his ‘Self-deception, Consciousness and Value’ (2004), reconstructs Nietzsche’s observations concerning the phenomenon of *ressentiment* by combining them with other phenomenological insights, namely from Sartre and Husserl.⁵ I will not analyse the complexities of relevant affective behaviour. I will instead focus on his attempt to validate Nietzsche’s view of self-deception as a compelling explanation of that behaviour (2004:44).

Nietzsche’s view of *ressentiment* dovetails nicely and in depth with Paul’s view of the fall. At stake in Poellner’s article is the condition Nietzsche believes to be necessary for morality, that condition in which a subject intentionally misrepresents her own conscious state (60).

4.3.1 Problem of Nietzsche’s Self-deception

Poellner strongly identifies self-deception with Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* (2009b:169), and in fact equates the two by means of a colon at the close of his introduction (2004:45f). Poellner later clarifies *ressentiment* as a particular *form* of self-deception (italics supplied, 62). Further, it is the consummating move of a six-part progression, a ‘masking’ of the entire program from the *ressentiment* subject (48f). Poellner lists six mental states comprising the phenomenon of *ressentiment*: 1) pain from injury; 2) hatred of the offender; 3) desire for superiority; 4) judgement leading to blame; 5) justification of superiority; 6) masking of the entire process (49). Other authors organise their understanding of *ressentiment* along different This highly abbreviated scheme will

⁵ Poellner relies on Sartre (1969) *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, and Husserl (1983) *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893-1917), (2014) *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*.

benefit my critique of Poellner's proposed solution, though others offer different arrangements.⁶

According to Poellner, Nietzsche sees modernists making moral choices, not in a vacuum, but from 'evaluative hierarchies' and 'ordinary practical evaluative commitments' (2004:45). The ideals and values which constitute 'morality' give evidence of 'expressing an unacknowledged, yet conscious, detractive intent', which is to say, *ressentiment* (45). The source of *ressentiment* morality, 'Nietzsche stresses', lies in the 'overcoming of suffering through a "self-affirmation" made possible by the consciousness of a moral superiority over the resented Other'. This superiority, which carries with it the threat of power, 'is the fundamental purpose served by the dynamic of *ressentiment*' (47). The moral superiority of Nietzsche's *ressentiment* subject must be consciously held and intentionally motivated, while at the same time being somehow masked from herself.

Those who challenge Poellner's assessment do not hold that superiority, including its inherent threat of power, must be the impetus for *ressentiment*. Leiter, for example, removes the need for agency in power by abstracting its source (2003:202, also footnote 13). I contend, however, that true power or lack thereof cannot exist in a vacuum. Powerlessness can only happen in the context of powerfulness.⁷ So rather than consider power as conducted in the vagaries of 'states of affairs' or of 'circumstances' as Leiter holds (203f), i.e., apart from *someone* who embodies or wields it, it seems universally natural to seek an agent to blame, a point made repeatedly in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Poellner locates Nietzsche's problem in the snares of two related paradoxes, one static and one dynamic (2004:49). In the static paradox the subject is both aware and unaware of *facts* pertaining to aspects of her own mental state. In the dynamic paradox the subject is both intentional and ignorant of *pursuing a project* to 'mask' her own experience (50).⁸ Poellner ultimately aims to find an explanation of (self-) consciousness compelling enough to account for the affective states of *ressentiment* and pave the way for self-deception (62). He rejects the three major solutions from the literature before offering his own. These are '*Ressentiment* and Split Mind Theories', '*Ressentiment* and Nonintentional Motivated Error', and '*Ressentiment* as "Bad Faith"' (2004:50-60). Each fails to adequately address the two paradoxes above, according to

⁶ See section 1.3.2 of this thesis.

⁷ See also Bittner (1994), Wallace (2007), and Poellner (2011).

⁸ See Mele 2000:59-73 for a concise discussion of both paradoxes, or 'puzzles'.

Poellner. His refutations of each model may be found in their respective subsection of his article.

4.3.2 Solution to the Problem

Poellner's own model of Nietzsche's self-deception may be called a Revised Sartrean-influenced *Ressentiment*. Critical for Poellner is that 'one notable feature of Nietzsche's analysis is his emphasis on the comparative or relational character of the *ressentiment* subject's orientation towards the positive values or virtues she "counterfeits" or "imitates"' (2004:60). A subject confronted with her behaviour that conflicts with such values justifies herself on a relative or relational basis, rather than on an absolute or essentialist one. Not that she meets the standard and the oppressor does not. Rather, she must think of herself *in relation to* the values, or 'disvalues', she associates with her oppressors.⁹ She views herself as "more just *than* x", "more virtuous *than* x", and so forth' (italics supplied, 62).

This distinction allows Poellner to navigate between unconscious values and conscious motivations. Regarding the former, it is by virtue of 'the essentially comparative character of the *ressentiment* subject's evaluative orientation' that Poellner proposes to understand the artful character of *ressentiment* as devoid of 'appropriately "fulfilled" consciousness' (Poellner 2004:62). This leaves the subject with no conscious awareness of the values she avows in their essence (61f). Regarding the latter and by contrast, the subject is aware of the factors motivating her, some of which are only in terms of Sartrean or Husserlian pre-reflective consciousness (62). The subject can now reinterpret her response to injury in thematic terms so that the original offence is not seen to be connected with the object of *ressentiment* (i.e., the perpetrator), but is made against fabricated universal (derivative) values such as injustice and godlessness (63). But this signals the objection that the subject has no 'fulfiled awareness' of these fabricated values such as selflessness or humility that are required to drive the *ressentiment* mechanism. Such fulfilled awareness of values requires of her the sort of ownership of these values that is born of experiential understanding. Yet, if these values are 'created', as Nietzsche so famously asserts, and if there is no antecedent 'fuel' for the engine of value-formation, whence arises *ressentiment*? This creates a conundrum.

⁹ Poellner does not here define what he means by 'disvalues'. Elsewhere, however, he discusses them as anything valued by the *ressentiment*-subject, whose very life state is characterised as intrinsically life-denying (2011:140f).

Poellner offers two possible solutions for it. First, the *ressentiment* subject can adopt values recognised by others in the same culture. This is simple enough. The second explanation is a fair inference from Nietzsche's thought, though Poellner claims he never saw it himself. In this case, the *ressentiment* subject borrows values from herself, values she would own 'in other contexts [in] a genuine (non-self-deceived), albeit relatively weak', way (Poellner 2004:63). Poellner explains it this way. A subject's hatred is directed toward the other (e.g., a boss) because of his superiority over her, either of position or power, real or imagined by the subject. To admit this disparity in power would diminish the subject, so she resents her boss for different and weaker-to-her (i.e., tacitly acceptable) reasons, say for example, his immorality. She can do this because she maintains *ressentiment* values such as chastity, honesty, and trust that are familiar to her from past situations. The caveat is that those values must be pre-reflective and non-thematic in character, such that she has a relatively weak grasp on them. The paramount value for her is really power (i.e., superiority) (63f). When the subject finds herself in the heat of resentment, she imports (i.e., borrows) the 'content' of those past *ressentiment* values into her present *ressentiment* situation. She deceives herself to believe she opposes her boss for his immorality. Her real reason, however, is that she is threatened by his power over her. This would be obvious to her, claims Poellner, if she were confronted with her hatred toward a different supervisor (i.e., over her) who, all things being equal, had none of the 'disvirtues of character' which she found objectionable (Poellner 2011:133). But she would never countenance such a scenario, for fear that her imported values might be falsified.¹⁰ Such an examination would defeat the ultimate aim of control (which Poellner stops shy of expressly stating). That is, it would thwart her *ressentiment* mentality of superiority by assigning blame to her boss, passing judgement on him, and feeling justified entirely in her reinterpreted superiority over him (see Deleuze 1983:123).¹¹ The total scheme for Poellner constitutes a 'project of self-deception' (2004:64),¹² and makes sense of Nietzsche's oft-labelled incoherent statements regarding *ressentiment* (44).

¹⁰ See Fingarette's *Self-Deception* (2000). In Chapter Two, 'To Avow or Not To Avow', he claims the centrality of 'the capacity of a person to identify himself as a particular person engaged in the world in specific ways, the capacity of a person to reject such identification and engagement, and the further supposition that an individual can continue to be engaged in the world in a certain way even though he does not avow it as his personal engagement and therefore displays none of the evidences of such an avowal' (90).

¹¹ See the end of section 4.2.4 for a preliminary discussion on the notion of justification within self-deception.

¹² Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness*, gives us the term 'project' in relation to self-deception: 'project of bad faith' (1956:49).

4.3.3 Significance of Poellner's Solution

Poellner's explanation of Nietzschean self-deception offers three significant insights. First is a general explanation of self-deception, with specific expository reference to Nietzsche's *ressentiment*. This he places at the centre of the late Nietzschean philosophical enterprise, the revaluation of morals (Poellner 2004:46). Poellner defines *ressentiment* as a double-deception, pulling the wool over one's own eyes, so to speak, while keeping one's self in the dark at having done so (49). He schematises *ressentiment* into six constituents, relegating the 'act' of deception to the finale (49). This dovetails well with my four-phase treatment.¹³ It is important to note that though both schemes view the act of self-deception at their end, self-deception occurs earlier as well. The tinge of it appears in Poellner's fourth and fifth components, in the judgement of object values and consequent adoption of novel values made possible only by a psychologically generated position of superiority. This approach brings two paradoxes into view that Nietzsche's *ressentiment* subject must face. In the static paradox the subject must deceive herself about the *facts*. In the dynamic paradox she must deceive herself about her *strategy* concerning the facts. Poellner organises the balance of his article around these challenges.

Poellner's second key insight relates to his reasons for rejecting the three major approaches to self-deception. He argues that split-mind theories do not account well for self-deception in terms of Nietzsche's *ressentiment*, and I concur. Nietzsche does not seem to allow for a conscious split-mind. This makes it necessary to find an alternative explanation of how a subject may, in a given circumstance, a) behave in a systematic way commensurate with unconscious *ressentiment* values, b) notice that such behaviour is inconsistent with consciously held values, and c) not act to change the systematic behaviour (Poellner 2004:53f).¹⁴

Regarding nonintentional motivated error, Poellner's argument on nonintentional motivated error is compelling enough to accept as it stands. The relation between pre-articulated and interpreted conscious episodes, however, needs illuminating. Poellner does not say why it is that a particular 'previously conscious, but more inchoate, less articulated mental state' is imported into a present one (2004:56). I posit that two events

¹³ See see Chapter Two of this thesis.

¹⁴ One may argue that Nietzsche does not conceive of the self as unified at all, but as an agglomeration of drives (*GS* 4.333; *BGE* 1.6, 19, 2.36; *WP* 3.677, 715; see also Parkes 1994:278, 81, 90f, 351). Poellner treats the Nietzschean self as a practical individuated self, for which he makes the case elsewhere by appealing to the idea of phenomenal objectivity (2000:199-256; 2003; 2009b; 2011).

may share enough similarity in characteristics that they warrant association by the subject. In order to ‘connect’ them, an affective response to a past event is tied to a present event precisely by association of event-specific characteristics. This allows the earlier mental state experienced to be brought forward and attached to a new experience. This association of characteristics may be conscious or unconscious, but importing the former mental state to shape the latter response must remain unconscious. For example, a school boy who is bitten by a black Doberman on Tuesday cowers unreasonably when facing the black-jerseyed football opponents on Friday, the *Dobermans*.

Poellner addresses the Bad Faith approach in a similar vein. He concludes it adequately addresses the dynamic paradox, but fails with respect to the static. His use of Sartrean second-order bad faith is sufficient to account for the dynamic paradox. His assertion that the high intensity of initial stimuli in *ressentiment* could not go unnoticed bolsters his rejection of the static paradox. Thus, Poellner leads us past the still-popular Sartrean model in search of a more satisfying solution to the problem.

Poellner’s third key insight deals with his own Revised *Ressentiment* approach. Two questions guide the discussion. The first raises a challenge to Poellner’s view: if the *ressentiment* subject has no genuine acquaintance with the values ultimately avowed (e.g., humility), then how will she know when she achieves the said values, and thus fulfil the reinterpretation of a negative affect (Poellner 2004:62f)? Since Nietzsche himself describes *ressentiment* values to be derivative of prior values (*OGM* 1.7, 10, 11), Poellner concludes that ‘Nietzsche’s ... attempt to show that “moral values” in some sense are “created” by *ressentiment* ... has not been found defensible’ (2002:64). Nietzsche’s failure here is salient to my thesis and is discussed below.

Before moving on, I want to explore a further and important avenue of inquiry by applying the preceding to a Pauline enquiry. Humility for Poellner is artificial and opposed to the ‘natural’ value of pride. This presents us with the impossibility of ‘fulfilled consciousness’ (i.e., regarding humility) accounting for its occurrence. Paul’s valuation is the inverse of Nietzsche’s. The noble par excellence in Paul’s system, the dominating other, is the Creator. Humility, along with values that he sanctions such as honesty, mercy, and patience constitute the moral status quo. If the words Nietzsche uses to characterise his own noble human are applied to man prior to the fall, it may be fairly construed that such a one lives these values ‘confidently and openly’ (*OGM* 1.11). Approval is unnecessary, either by external comparison or internal reflection. After the fall, the same person *still* knows these values intimately, though she wishes she did not

(see A 55). The values may be considered ‘resident’ because the divine image is only effaced, not erased. If, however, the fall is put in terms of *ressentiment*, it involves ‘an essential *preoccupation* with the locus of (ostensible) disvalue’ (italics supplied, Poellner 2004:62). By this, the *ressentiment* subject *qua* fallen ‘constructs [her] happiness artificially’ (62; see *OGM* 1.11) out of values which are opposite those of her ‘oppressor’ (i.e., the Creator).

How can these *ressentiment* values be construed as novel, yet feel so instinctive? A partial answer at least may be found in one of the ways Paul speaks of fallen-man. Paul characterises the fallen person, i.e., *ressentiment*-man, as living according to the flesh (Eph 2:3; Rom 1:29-31 cp. Gal 5:16; Rom 7:14-25). Nietzsche commentator and psychiatrist, Jefferey Satinover, would agree, and comments that on both psychological and behavioural levels that the homogenisation of values (i.e., the relativising of good and evil in Pauline categories) ‘tend[s] to increase our propensity to choose evil, considering it to be our good, since it often feels good’—that is, natural (1996:238). Thus, if we apply Poellner’s third insight to the Pauline context, then fallen-man’s (*ressentiment*) values are really disvalues. They are not new in the sense of having been ‘created’, but are derived from prior values bestowed by the Creator in the *imago Dei*.

A second guiding question from Poellner’s approach asks, could it be that self-deception is generated by a motive more fundamental than what he proposes? His discussion of a subject reinterpreting her response to injury in thematic terms suggests it does. Importantly, the subject’s response is not directed at the object of *ressentiment* per se (Poellner 2004:63), so it makes sense to ask why she responds in this less than natural way. Poellner discusses the object perceived as superior in both position and power, which of course connects with the ‘injury’. This ignites the mechanism of *ressentiment* in the first place. Since outward manifestation of hatred is not an option, the impulse is suppressed. The subject, now forced to ‘live with’ such a powerful internalised force, reinterprets her hatred in terms of acceptable values. These ‘acceptable values’ she must import from somewhere else, pre-reflectively yet still intentionally, while refusing to acknowledge doing so. Why not, and why expend the energy to such tormenting lengths (see *OGM* 2.19-22)? A prime candidate for an emotional response to each of these questions is fear: of the other, perceived-to-be superior or actual; of disintegration of the self by allowing the driving force of *ressentiment*, will-to-power, to fester within; of exposing the deception program—

hidden to, but justified by the self—and thus destroying the path to a legitimately-perceived upper hand.

We now change directions to consider self-deception from a Pauline theological perspective. The particular frame of reference will be Pauline.

4.4 Theological Perspective on Self-deception

Two Christian scholars who focus on self-deception guide this discussion. Philosopher and theologian Greg Bahnsen studiously attempts a philosophical explanation of Paul's teaching on self-deception in Romans 1. New Testament theologian and ethicist Dan Via discusses self-deception in the context of a wider Pauline theology, from which I will make application for my own interests.

Bahnsen defends and supplements Cornelius van Til's presuppositional apologetics, with particular reference to the role of self-deception therein. Bahnsen writes, 'That self-deception which is practiced by all unregenerate men according to the apostle Paul's incisive description in Romans 1:18ff is at once religiously momentous and yet philosophically enigmatic' (1995:1). It is also problematic. How can the fallen mind believe what it knows not to be true? Peter Berger explains self-deception sociologically, speaking of the 'intrinsic human propensity for unified thought. Honest, sustained reflection recoils from cognitive schizophrenia. It seeks to unify, to reconcile, to understand how one thing taken as truth relates to another so taken' (1971:44). Bahnsen agrees, stating that 'while men deny their Creator they nevertheless possess an inescapable knowledge of Him' (Bahnsen 2002:38). Pascal concurs in the paradoxical observation that humanity is both great and wretched (Kreeft 1993:51-72). Mankind as creature possesses a capacity for truth, good, and happiness, which is ultimately a desire for God himself. This is humanity's greatness. Yet this desire remains unfulfilled though pursued, claims Pascal, precisely because mankind as sinner rejects the only sufficient source of satisfaction for this desire, God himself. This is humanity's wretchedness (Wood 2013:1-9).

Bahnsen follows van Til's insistence 'that we must do justice to the twin facts that every unbeliever knows God and, yet, that the natural man does not know God' (quoted in Bahnsen 1995:7). So he is committed to "'save the phenomenon," while at the same time respecting the law of contradiction' in order to find 'an adequate and coherent analysis of ["strong"] self-deception' (15). He concludes non-paradoxically 'that unbelievers culpably deceive themselves about their Maker' (31). Bahnsen, therefore,

addresses the classic and most difficult form of self-deception by giving ‘necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of the assertion, “S deceived himself into believing that p,” as it is taken in the full-fledged ... sense’ (15).¹⁵

Modelled on other-deception,¹⁶ Bahnsen argues that self-deception simultaneously holds two incompatible beliefs (1995:25f). The self-deceived hold a first-order belief that disturbs his psychic composure. Some perceived ‘distressing’ reality catalyses ‘a special kind of belief: one which [the subject] dreads, cannot face up to, or wishes were otherwise since it brings some unpleasant truth before him’ (26). The self-deceived must then generate another, second-order belief to deal with this angst. This enables the subject to deny not only the distressing matter induced by the first-order belief, but also deny his denial of the belief altogether (i.e., first-order belief). The subject denies both ontological and psychological realities. To preserve the sought-after characteristic of coherence (26f) in the face of believing the angst-inducing (first-order), S adopts an additional belief that he believes angst-alleviating not-p (second-order), evidencing behaviour to show such.¹⁷ Thus, conflict between the two beliefs does not violate formal conditions, but is a matter of practicality: ‘S believes p, but his assent to it is blocked by acquiring the (false) second-order belief that S does not believe p’ (27).

Two questions surface regarding this conflict. The first question concerns means. How can S in good conscience believe p, and at the same time believe that he does not believe p? Bahnsen’s explanation begins with a *demand* on S’s second-order belief, i.e., that belief which concerns his self-perception. This *pressure* drives S to super-ordinary exertions, which may be both mental and physical, in order to sustain his belief that p, contrary to evidence readily available to him.

In the face of evidence adverse to his cherished second-order belief (about himself), S engages in contrived and pseudo-rational treatment of the evidence. That is, he manipulates, suppresses, and rationalizes the evidence so as to support a belief which is incompatible with his believing that p. He ignores the obvious, focuses away from undesirable indicators, twists the significance of evidence, goes to extreme measures to enforce his policy of hiding his belief that p from himself and others. (Bahnsen 1995:27)

The second question concerns motive. Why does S subject himself to such extremes of rationalising? Bahnsen’s response is simple. ‘S distorts the evidence in order to satisfy a

¹⁵ ‘S’ stands for subject; ‘p’ stands for proposition.

¹⁶ Bahnsen disclaims his model being taken as a case of literal deception, and gives several elements that it shares with other-deception (1995:25f).

¹⁷ But such posturing—intellectually, emotionally, and behaviourally—is also stress-inducing in itself. That is, the exertions thus called for are extra-ordinary, themselves requiring uncommon measures of accommodation, attended by commensurate stress and fatigue. See J Budziszewski’s discussion of ‘The Five Furies’ (2003:139-60).

desire—namely, the desire to avoid the discomfort, distress, or pain associated with believing that p’ (27).

Bahnsen now leaps into the jaws of human self-deception by addressing questions pertaining to its crucial features of awareness and purpose. Pertaining to awareness, he refines his thesis question this way: ‘If S is intentionally trying to deceive himself (thus being conscious of what he is up to), how could he ever be successful (making himself believe contrary to that of which he is conscious)?’ (Bahnsen 1995:27f). The remainder of this paragraph is a paraphrase of Bahnsen’s answer (28f). While S perceives that p, and manifests evidence of belief in the same, he does not assent to p due to the adoption of the incompatible and false belief that not p by virtue of strategies of selection, distortion, and rationalisation regarding the presenting evidence. Thus, S, in a state of conscious ignorance relative to his holding mutually incompatible beliefs, avows mistakenly his belief that not p while believing that p.

Pertaining to the purpose of self-deception, Bahnsen asks whether or not it is possible for S to deceive himself intentionally. His answer has to do with the special self-covering character of the intention to deceive oneself:

It is one of a special class of human intentions which obscure awareness of themselves, in which case S can purpose not only to hide his belief that p, but also—to preserve his self-esteem as a rational agent—to *hide his hiding* of it. (italics original, 1995:28)

The intent to deceive oneself—with respect to obscuring the initial distressing belief that p carries with it—is such that further intent to deceive is no longer necessary (28).¹⁸ To substantiate this explanation of self-covering, Bahnsen gives the example of sleep. We observe a person who intends to go to sleep, acting on the belief that he is going to sleep. Once asleep, however, he becomes unaware of his intention to go to sleep precisely because he is asleep. Likewise, ‘if successful, the “strong” self-deceiver will reach a point where he no longer looks back and spells out what he was doing’ (29).¹⁹ The notion of self-covering per se is necessary to account for both of the coverings required in a non-paradoxical model of self-deception, while at the same time cutting

¹⁸ Fingarette also speaks of ‘self-covering’, but in respect to a strategy to both hide truth from oneself and others, as well as to persuade oneself and others to believe ‘a more or less elaborate “cover-story”’ (2000:48f). Fingarette’s term applies to a policy adopted in self-deception, while Bahnsen’s use refers to a characteristic intrinsic to self-deception.

¹⁹ Bahnsen connects this with *habitual* human activity (1995:29, footnote 91), and it is commonly observed that repeated action without consequence desensitises. After years of living under the threat of God’s wrath (Rom 1:18), one may endure without discomfort the ‘injury’ that is guilty knowledge of the sort associated with God’s general revelation, Man misinterprets, albeit unconsciously, God’s patience unto repentance as inability, inattention, apathy, or change of mind with respect to promised judgement on sin and unrighteousness (2 Pet 3:3-9). Self-deception may thus be promoted by desensitisation.

the Gordian tangle of infinite, subsequent deceptions.²⁰ Bahnsen gives no support beyond the example of the common experience of going to sleep,²¹ which leaves his explanation of ‘self-deception as self-covering’ wanting.

I suggest that the ‘content’ of self-covering as proposed in Bahnsen’s example is not entirely sufficient for the effects required to shield oneself from something potentially traumatic or fearsome which, in present application, is the inherent threat of living in disobedience to God’s self-revelation. I allege that just as sleep does not inherently involve an intention (i.e., motive) strong enough to cover itself, so self-deception does not possess that which is necessary to obscure itself. I do agree with Bahnsen’s explanation of self-deception per se. There must be a compelling reason for S to want to hide his project of self-deception. He claims that the subject desires to avoid ‘discomfort, distress, or pain associated with believing’ when he discusses that motive for self-deception (Bahnsen 1995:27), and he describes the object of self-deception as a ‘*dreaded* belief’ (28). In the *ressentiment* glossary, these would fall under the classification of ‘fear born of injury’. Therefore, while I take issue with the inadequate accounting of the motivation for self-deception, I do agree that Bahnsen’s philosophical explanation of the phenomenon ‘is adequate to explain Paul’s description in Romans 1 of men who know (believe) that God exists and yet suppress that belief unrighteously’ (30f).

Dan Via, in *Self-deception and Wholeness in Paul and Matthew* (1990), also provides us with guidance in finding sources of and explanations for self-deception in Paul. To aid his endeavour, he employs modern psychological categories to interpret both Pauline texts²² and Paul the author expressed therein (see 148, footnote 83). Via claims to hold to ‘some kind of partition theory’.²³ The self must, to some degree, be divided to account for the repression of disavowed unwelcome beliefs (what he calls the inaccessible ‘real story’). Yet, the self must be integrated enough to allow these beliefs to manifest symptomatically and/or behaviourally, even while the self consciously

²⁰ See section 4.3.2 for Poellner’s rejection of split-mind models as they require an infinite regression of self-deception. For thoughts on sleep as possible delusion, see *Pensées*, Fragment 7.131.

²¹ Lloyd Arden and John Linford claim it is possible in the first stage of sleep that a person may still be somewhat aware of external stimuli (e.g., I hear the phone ringing, but I do not care to answer it), as well as their internal thoughts and motivations (e.g., I am aware of my desire to go to sleep, and I am glad that I did because I am feeling peaceful now) (2009:236-38).

²² Via also analyses Matthean texts with respect to self-deception (1990:77-132).

²³ Via’s thought here follows Freud (1989), White (1988), Davidson (1986), and McLaughlin (1988).

maintains an avowed belief so as to achieve some level of psychic comfort (what he calls the conscious ‘cover story’) (16-18).²⁴

Via holds that the real story in Paul has both negative and positive editions. The negative edition knows that human wisdom is folly, that no one is righteous, and that any righteous achievement by the law is rubbish. The positive edition states God accepts people on the basis of his grace and not for their righteousness or wisdom. This is unwelcome news because fallen-man finds his identity in self-achievement. Though the real story is believed, it is unconscious enough to reduce the psychic tension produced by the unfavourable evidence of transgression. At the same time, it must be accessible enough both to generate the pain of fear and shame, as well as to account for the anxious zeal for the law whose violation bears death.²⁵

The real story motivates the manufacture of an untrue cover story. This also has positive and negative editions. In the positive edition, a person believes they are righteous and wise in and of themselves. In the negative edition, a person believes their righteousness and wisdom must be earned in never-ending pursuit. The cover story requires much psychic energy to maintain, for beneath the surface lies the suspicion that the person is not righteous, or at least not righteous enough (1990:29-33). Believing both these stories requires self-deception, which Via describes as ‘an instance of the violation of human wholeness, a rupture of the correspondence of the self with the self’ (77; see also Reginster 1997:297-305).

Via’s chief Pauline exhibits are two warnings against self-deception, Galatians 6:3 and 1 Corinthians 3:18. He supplements his findings with analysis of several other passages (Rom 7; 2 Cor 3; Gal 6; Phil 3; 2 Thess 2). Via’s metaphorical view of the contents of Scripture generates a paradox in which ‘God and Satan stand in a metaphorical relation to each other. Each is somehow seen as the other’ (Via 1990:21). All humanity has been placed under God’s law which, in principle, has been inscribed on their hearts (23f, 29). Via’s hermeneutic creates links that lead him to conclude the law is an agent of sin. Its demand for righteousness of sinful man (i.e., unconscious real story) actually leads him away from God’s righteousness. Instead of receiving righteousness by faith, man is compelled to accomplish righteousness by himself (i.e.,

²⁴ Via substitutes the terms ‘real story’ and ‘cover story’ for the philosopher’s ‘p’ and ‘not-p’ (1990:141, footnote 63). I will employ this terminology for the most part throughout the remainder of the thesis. Also, while Via prefers the term ‘inaccessible’ over ‘unconscious’, he uses the two interchangeably, and holds that there are degrees of self-deception (17f).

²⁵ Via also notes that, for the sake of the divine perspective, the real story must function well enough for Paul to hold people responsible to God for sin. Darkened minds are no excuse for rejecting God’s self-revelation (Rom 1:19-21, 28) (1990:32).

cover story) (24f). Man must repress his repeated failure to achieve life through obedience (Rom 7) in order for Paul to assert the cover story of a good conscience before God (Phil 3:4-9). At the same time, man must somehow be conscious of his real story in order to account for the extraordinary lengths he pursues to attain the said righteousness (Gal 1:13f; Rom 10:2) (Via 1990:26f). Metaphorically speaking, Paul views 'the law [as] a power that entices me into misinterpreting itself and thus into misinterpreting the nature of my existence ... [It is] the metaphorical equivalent of the cosmic powers' (44, see also 40). Via deduces that deception is perpetrated by God, Satan, the law, and even sin, even while man deceives himself according to Galatians 6:3 (30).

Via concludes self-deception for Paul results from deliberate choice and a kind of cosmic fate, each stemming from four factors. First, man's self-claim to wisdom is itself the claim of a darkened mind. The claim results from or is concomitant with an intentional choice (Rom 1:21f). Second, creation offers general knowledge of God (1:19f, 21). Man rejects this knowledge both by suppressing it so as not to acknowledge God (1:18, 21, 23), as well as by exchanging that it for a lie (1:25). Third, the divine response to this wilful rejection is to release man to the confines of his darkened mind such that he cannot see or act according to the truth (1:24, 26, 28). Fourth, the law, with sin, deceives us (Via 1990:20-30).

Via then makes three inferences for Pauline self-deception. One is that man mistakenly believes that obedience to the law rather than faith in God's provision results in salvation. Another is that man cannot completely conceal from himself the real story. That is, no amount of 'works of the law' will ever make him righteous before God. Further, his futile attempts to live up to the law only results in the inner tension he feels between the self he is but does not want to be, and the self he wants to be but cannot achieve (see Rom 7:14-23).²⁶ Finally, self-deceived man believes he is righteous but 'half-knows' he is not. He then lowers the moral bar of the law's requirements so that he feels he can achieve them (Via 1990:44f).

The very different contexts in which self-deception has been analysed, first by Poellner in Nietzsche and subsequently by Bahnsen and Via in Paul, may seem to make any synthesis of their perspectives impossible. However, the fact that they all ostensibly deal with the same phenomenon does give hope that some compartment is possible. It is toward that possibility we direct our attention now.

²⁶ Via holds that this conflict pertains to Paul's pre-conversion experience (1990:26).

4.5 Synthesis of Perspectives on Self-deception

Nietzsche and Paul share the concept of self-deception. This opens the possibility of a dialogue between them. Nietzsche, in fact, did so through critique of Paul in terms of *ressentiment*. This in turn enabled Nietzsche's allegation of *ressentiment* to rebound on Nietzsche. Poellner analysed Nietzsche this way. I now propose to apply the theologies of Bahnsen and Via to Poellner's analysis of Nietzsche. Synthesising their accounts will offer a clearer picture of self-deception at work in Paul's fallen man, viewed through Nietzsche's *ressentiment*.

Bahnsen's 'orders of belief' (1995:25-29) and Via's 'double-storied' man (1990:29-33) comport well with Poellner's two-fold self-deception in fact and process (Poellner 2004:49). Bahnsen's first-order belief (1995:26) corresponds to Poellner's static paradox (2004:49f). In this case, the subject believes *p*, but denies it because of the stress it provokes. In Via, this relates to the Pauline real story in which the subject suppresses the unwelcome news that he is both unrighteous and foolish, the reversal of which can only come about by God's gracious initiative (1990:32). Bahnsen's second-order belief, that the subject is able 'to deny something about himself (namely, his believing *p*)' (1995:26), corresponds to Poellner's dynamic paradox, in which the subject may be understood to be 'deceiv[ing] herself about her own current mental state' (2004:49). This move brings about a measure of comfort from the distress (2004:49f). Both of these correlate with Via's Pauline cover story in which the subject does not believe the real story, but rather that he is righteous and wise of himself. His relentless quest for righteousness and wisdom actually reveals both his unrighteous status and his sinful strategy for coping with it (Via 1990:32).

Nietzsche's *ressentiment* cycle began with injury by and hatred of the Other. These generated matters of awareness and purpose of self-deception. Poellner's view of awareness claims such intensity cannot be ignored (2004:59), which forces the false belief of *ressentiment*. This corresponds to Bahnsen's first-order belief and Via's real story. The story cannot end there, however, for it forces a further false-belief such that *S* does not believe *p*.²⁷ This is made possible by a distortion and/or rationalisation of the belief that *p*. In Poellner's terms, this manifests in an indirect hatred of the Other by means of values associated with the offending Other, which permits us to understand his

²⁷ Poellner distinguishes between logically contradictory beliefs and those whose 'inferential and behavioral' effects conflict (1995:26f, also footnote 90).

notion of self-deception functioning this way. S is conscious of being true to herself in her expectation of fulfilling *ressentiment* values (albeit mistakenly). At the same time, she refuses to countenance the possibility, ‘pre-reflectively, but intentionally’, that her values are illegitimate (i.e., foreign to her and, therefore, illusory and unattainable), and that her pursuit of them is less than honest (Poellner 2004:63f). This corresponds to Bahnsen’s second-order belief and to Via’s cover story.

Poellner only glancingly discusses the purpose of self-deception. It offers the subject the ‘happiness’ that ensues from thinking of himself as living under authority [i.e., of *ressentiment* values]. This justifies the subject’s consciousness of superiority (62). Bahnsen claims that sinful man is ‘noble and rational’ in coming to his belief of not believing in God, even while he hides from himself his true motivations in misinterpreting the evidence to arrive at that belief (1995:31). Via’s cover story corresponds in that sinful man convinces himself that righteousness by the law is possible as a self-achievement and worthy in its own right as a quest (1995:32).

Translated in terms of this thesis again, the subject tries to control their relationship with the offending Other, to whom they now consider themselves superior. Via’s commentary on Romans 1 is apropos here: ‘This for Paul is the equivalent of the idolatrous worship of the creature rather than the creator (Rom. 1:24-25). We want to interpret the world as if we were gods’ (1995:39). Man desires control.

Paul sees the irony of self-deceived creatures who believe cosmic treason will end in creaturely control. Rather, he implies, idolatry leads to slavery (Rom 1:22-25). Absolutising a relative good ascribes supreme value to it. Worship reflects worth. Humans, then, naturally stake their identity and security on it, giving it god-like status. Such idolatrous investment obligates the investor to act according to the dictates of the idol.

Paul tells the Corinthians, however, that an idol has no reality. How can a ‘nothing’ (οὐδείς) enslave a worshipper? He answers in Romans 6:12-23. Slavery is obedience. Obedience is a choice, and the choice to obey entails yielding to authority. These are binary options. Either one chooses to obey sin via idolatry (1:22-31), resulting in death (1:32; 6:21, 23), or one chooses to obey God, resulting in righteousness and life, temporally and eternally (6:22f). Man chose the former. The idol, then, is merely a channel for man’s own sinful desires in contrast to the Creator’s supreme authority and worthiness of worship (Rom 1:24-31). The result is irony: freedom is enslavement to

God while freedom from God is enslavement. Only the self-deceived can see things so upside down (see Acts 17:6).

Further synthesis may be made concerning the impetus of *ressentiment*. Bahnsen and Poellner stay on the mundane level, speaking theoretically and hypothetically. Bahnsen, however, circles back to his point of origin. He applies self-deception to man in relation to God. This opens the door for Poellner's view of Nietzsche's self-deception to Bahnsen's ends. In place of Poellner's 'injurious Other', one may easily read, 'God', as perceived by unregenerate humanity. Poellner speaks of the Other in three ways: a 'not-self' who causes a suffering or discomfort resulting in *ressentiment* (2004:46f); the inspiration 'to hatred of that Other . . . , and thence to a desire for superiority over the Other' (62); 'being in a position of power over' the subject (63). God's disposition toward fallen-man in Romans 1 warrants seeing his wrath as sufficient catalyst for 'high affective intensity' conscious states. Poellner claims these attend the initial cause of *ressentiment* (62f). Via also takes up Anaximander's recoil from the abyss of existence to discuss Sartrean bad faith. 'For Sartre the dynamic of self-deception is the felt desire to escape the burden and anguish of [existential] freedom' (Via 1990:9).²⁸ Bad faith causes a person to define their identity by negation. Undesirable traits, which everyone has, must be turned into their positive opposites. Thus, unrighteousness becomes righteousness and folly becomes wisdom. Via uses Sartre's insight to make the point that both the truth that is hidden from the self, as well as the pursuit of such a program of deception, are generated by fear and anxiety about the self (9f, 31f). This aligns with my discussion of anger-hatred at the end of section 3.3, and thus suggests that Poellner's affective state might be caused by fear.²⁹ Bahnsen touches on this idea when he speaks of 'a special kind of [first-order] belief: one which [the subject] dreads, cannot face up to, or wishes were otherwise since it brings some unpleasant truth before him' (1995:26).

One would expect investigators who do not avow Christian commitment to source the motive for self-deception in something other than the fear of death and divine judgement. It is surprising that Bahnsen does, and I might add in this context, so does William Wood. From his thoroughly Augustinian framework, Wood teases out of Pascal's lengthy fragment on self-love (1995 4.C.978) that fallen-man is caught in a dilemma. By nature, he loves himself and aspires to greatness, but also knows that the

²⁸ 'In bad faith we are-anguish-in-order-to-flee-anguish' (Sartre 1956:45).

²⁹ This point is significant for the argument which follows in section 4.6 of this thesis.

only qualities he possesses ‘are, in the classical Greek sense, shameful, wretchedness, faults, and flaws that deserve only the contempt of others’ (Wood 2013:106). We must reject any beliefs, e.g., in God or our fallenness, ‘that *threaten to destabilize* our false self-understandings’ (italics supplied, 107) as a ‘defence against distress’ (Fingarette 2000:63f). None of these directly rely on fear of God as a psych motive for *ressentiment*. It is, however, the natural conclusion for each. Fingarette describes suppressing ‘belief-knowledge’ into unconsciousness ‘as defence against distress’ (2000:63f). Thus, while none of Bahnsen, Poellner, Wood, nor Fingarette directly attribute fear—and fear of God—to be a significant psychological mover in *ressentiment*, it is toward this conclusion that all their contributions seem to point.

God continues to reveal his righteousness (Rom 1:17). His self-revelation should be sufficient for mankind to regard him as its moral ground, but it has rejected him (1:18). In a transgression of unbelieving inversion, this God becomes the catalysing basic belief³⁰ that must be suppressed. Fear³¹ can be a most powerful psychological impetus to self-deception (Pears 1998:42-44),³² which is the crowning move of *ressentiment*.

4.6 Fear of Death

I have argued fear fuels self-deception in *ressentiment*, specifically, the fear of death. Paul claims in Romans 5:12ff sin entered the world. Evidence of its reality is ‘death reigned from Adam until Moses’ (14). He views spiritual and biological death as the penalty of moral condemnation (Schreiner 1998:272; Dunn 1988a:273).³³ Nietzsche admits to biological death but denies its origin in divine judgment. When he analyses what may be justifiably termed the spiritual death of humans, he also agrees with Paul that people perish spiritually.

³⁰ ‘Implications from contemporary research into the cognitive science of religion suggests that “atheism is not the default option”. Some inchoate religious belief is. ... We are believers by default’ (Trigg 2013:176).

³¹ Pears also includes jealousy here as an impetus. If it may be construed as an emotion whose psychic energy is expended along an anger-fear continuum and directed toward perceived disadvantage, he corroborates my work.

³² The experiments of Derakshan and Eysenck (2005) find that most repressors are successful in managing anxiety and defensiveness, thus becoming self-deceivers.

³³ Most of the vices Paul indicts in Romans 1:32 are conducted in the sphere of earthly life against, or in the presence of, other humans. It is reasonable to consider death in a physical sense, in addition to a spiritual one.

4.6.1 In Nietzsche

I explore Nietzsche's work here for expressions of the fear of death, with the proviso that he does not necessarily spell out the notion when he trades on it. I am concerned with any parallel that may be seen to the Pauline perception of the sad fate that comes from falling short of our humanity. Significantly, Nietzsche connects this with pain and 'suffering', for it foreshadows the ultimate pain of death (*OGM* 2.7, 21, 22; 3.15). I will examine two ways in which Nietzsche views death, but my focus in this section is fear of death, and whether it is explicit or implicit. I will show it to be intrinsic to Nietzsche's *ressentiment* morality. In secular form, Ernst Becker and Martin Heidegger, chief amongst others, sharpen our insight into the fear of death. In its religious form, Nietzsche himself links such fear with 'the last judgment' (*OGM* 1.14) and 'the gate of hell' through which the damned will be punished (1.15). The damned will be 'covered in shame ... as one fire consumes them ... the dissolving flame [and] the fiery billows' (1.15; see also 3.14, 16).³⁴ Even Jesus, claims Nietzsche, 'had to invent hell in order to have a place to send those who did not love him' (*BGE* 9.269). For Paul, fear of death lies behind his discourse on God's judgement. Paul argues those who sin in defiance of God's self-revelation (Rom 1) can only expect his wrath and fury, without escape (Rom 2:2-9; see also 3:5-8; 5:9; 9:22; Eph 2:3). Fear of death also underlies his discussion of slavery and redemption, most notably found in Romans 8, which I will discuss at the end of the section.

In what sense does Nietzsche speak of death and dying, and what significance do they hold in his philosophy? To the first question, Nietzsche speaks of death in both literal and figurative terms. Taking the second question first, death bears heavily on his problem with Pauline morality, as well as his (i.e., Nietzsche's) remedy for it. Nietzsche overcomes the problem of imposed morality through 'lucky strokes', those rare healthy cases of humanity that do not resent suffering and death (*OGM* 3.14). *Real* life, of which Nietzsche speaks, is so hard that the lure of escape to bliss through death is very strong. The healthy, strong cases must be protected from, not other strong ones, but from the weak and sickly, the *ressentiment*-driven. Nietzsche wants to quarantine his 'solutions' from those who preach death. Consequently, he bids these preachers of 'eternal life' success in wooing follower-types out of this plane of existence in order to purify the gene pool, and that 'they pass on to it quickly!' (*Z* 1.9; *OGM* 3.14; *TI* 36).

³⁴ Nietzsche quotes from Dante, Aquinas, and Tertullian here, the latter two in Latin, but we have rendered in English excerpts from the quotations (see Del Caro's notes 58 and 59, pages 411f, in the Stanford edition of *OGM*, 2014).

Thus, Nietzsche can and does refer to death in the literal sense of the termination of biological life, as this example illustrates when he seeks to remedy humanity of those who pollute the race.

Nietzsche occasionally mixes literal and figurative senses of death.³⁵ Such is the case in *TI* where his quiver-full of ‘Arrows and Epigrams’ leads into ‘The Problem of Socrates’. Socrates’ death frames the entire essay and raises several questions. Is he courageous to the end in taking the cup (‘Socrates’ 12), or does he balk in breathing his last by pledging the cock (1)? Whichever his motive, Nietzsche strongly suggests that this most fabled philosopher is plagued by revenge, which is wielded formidably through reason (7-10; see White 1990:29f).

Socratic reason has historically been a tyrant as well as a deceiver. Nietzsche exhibits Egyptian burial practices as rational arguments against death (Young 2006:171; *TI* ‘Reason in Philosophy’ 1). The Platonists extend Socrates. They ‘insist on the true world of absolute permanence’ so as ‘to overcome fear of death’ (Young 2006:172). Yet their failure is evident in the endless performance of guilt-laden rituals to address their fear. Heraclitus takes no part in this, which causes Nietzsche to regard him ‘with the greatest respect’ and as ‘an exception’ for his abstinence (*TI* ‘Philosophy’ 2). He does not succumb to deception—a favourite term of Nietzsche in *TI*—of the senses, of reason, of dialectics. Instead, he adopts a healthy perspective whereby one can release control of (and be released from) the totality of all that this world is.

Nietzsche’s thoughts on suicide may belong precisely here. Zarathustra speaks of suicide as triumph over death: ‘Whoever consummates his life dies his own death, victoriously’ (*Z* 1.21). To go out on one’s own terms, to ‘die at the right time ... the free death ... because *I* will it (italics original, 1.21), is the ultimate formula for freedom as wielded by the sovereign individual of *OGM* 2.2. Paolo Stellino refines this as ‘a freedom over death, or to use a better expression, over the human, all too human fear of death which is “maybe older than pleasure and pain” (*Nachlass* 1884, 25[399], KSA 11.116)’ (2013:6, see also footnote 13). Nietzsche claims from this ‘the thought of suicide is a strong consolation: it’s a good way to survive many an evil night’ (*BGE* 4.157). Racked with pain all his adult life, this is no detached position for Nietzsche. He confides to Overbeck in a February 1883 letter, ‘the barrel of a revolver is for me now a source of relatively pleasant thoughts’ (Middleton 1996:206).

³⁵ Nietzsche expends great energy on the topic, as Young points out, from *BT*, through *GS* and *Z*, and on to *TI* (2006:14f, 102-04, 107-11, 171-76). Curiously, Young omits *OGM*, but we will not.

Nietzsche treats death in an especially figurative or spiritual sense when he considers the problem of morality. Zarathustra concludes the avoidance of suffering and death is to turn away from life (see ‘On the Despisers of the Body’). Life is freedom and the natural impulse to feel happiness as well as to feel (or even create) affliction (Z 1.4). When Zarathustra describes death as unconsciously motivated anger at life, he reprises the *OGM* 1.10 discussion of the *ressentiment*–motivated person who despises the material world, reacts against all that is natural, and resigns himself to a life of No-saying.

This death is the end result of a degenerating life that fights a losing battle to preserve existence (*OGM* 3.12, 13). ‘Life [that] wrestles in and through [the ascetic ideal] with death and against death’ is nonsense to Nietzsche (13). The only explanation for the misguided instincts of this ascetic-Christian ideal is ‘artifice’. Paradoxically, ‘the deepest instincts of *life*’ (i.e., those impulses that amalgamate in will-to-power) are responsible for waging ‘the physiological struggle of humans with *death*’ (italics supplied, 3.13). He qualifies this death-struggle as ‘weariness of life’, ‘exhaustion’, and ‘the desire for the “end”’. It is a sickness that makes humanity ‘*the sick animal*’ (italics original). Nietzsche hopes mankind, ‘the great experimenter with himself, the dissatisfied and insatiable one who struggles with animal, nature and gods for ultimate mastery’, will not be cowed by death or discouraged by degeneration. Rather, it will press on and through death as ‘destruction and self-destruction’ unto the limitless freedom of real life. Christianity’s message, according to Nietzsche, is more than paradoxical. It is ‘psychic cruelty’ born of madness, and so powerful ‘that we have to forcibly forbid ourselves from looking too long into these abysses’ even though we would normally eschew such ‘black, gloomy, unnerving sadness’ (2.22). Christianity preaches wholeness, joy, and life only to hide sickliness, cowardice, and death. Death for negates life. It is the loss of freedom and meaning.

Nietzsche’s discussion of Christianity’s life-denying message substitutes nihilism for divine judgement. It is for Nietzsche what spiritual death is for Paul, the worst possible fate that could befall a person. ‘What does nihilism mean?’ asks Nietzsche straightforwardly in 1887. His notes reveal nihilism is ‘that the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; “why?” finds no answer’ (*WP* 1.1). It is ‘the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability’ (*WP* ‘Toward an Outline’ 1). Accordingly, nihilism and death become primary concerns for Nietzsche and Paul, respectively, and the target of much of their discourse.

Nietzsche's defence against nihilism is *amor fati*, 'love of what is "necessary", that is to say, of everything that has happened to now' (Young 2006:174). Young borrows from *GS 276* to point out that this faith is truly liberating, for by it, Nietzsche writes,

A person is necessary, a person is a piece of fate, a person belongs to the whole, a person only is in the context of the whole,—there is nothing that can judge, measure, compare, or condemn our being, because that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, and condemning the whole ... *But there is nothing outside of the whole!* ... The concept of 'God' has been the biggest *objection* to existence so far ... We reject God, we reject the responsibility in God: *this* is how we save the world'. (italics original, TI 'The Four Great Errors' 8)

Thus, Nietzsche bases his account of reality on the claim of alternatively sufficient grounds.³⁶ This obviates the traditional perspective of suffering as a sign of sin and as an indicator of future judgement in eternal death. The nauseating fear of death, inherent in western rationality and epitomised in Christian morality, is overcome.

Nietzsche has not yet exhausted his theme. He advocates a new etiology for mankind as a promise-keeping animal (*OGM 2.2-3*). Humanity must overcome its natural bent for forgetfulness, caused by what Nietzsche terms both a 'faculty of repression' and a 'repression apparatus' (*OGM 2.1*). Humanity must become responsible. This requires freedom and sovereignty. Such autonomy enables will, and willing separates it from other animals. Humanity, then, becomes conscious of its value, its distinctiveness, and its capacity to make a promise, coupled with its obligation to deliver on it. Ultimately, mankind develops a conscience (2.2f).

Nietzsche speculates on the 'long history' of mankind's conscience (*OGM 2.3*). In 'those millennia before human history' (2.14), the conscience is formed in a 'terrible and uncanny' process (*OGM 2.3, 9*). The ascetic redacts the record to create an alternative explanation of humanity's moralisation (3.11; see also *BT 'Spirit' 10*). Thus, the foundation of human conscience is memory, the ability to connect intention with action. A person as an agent may take pride in their causal powers, which in turn enable them to envision a future, and *their* future (*OGM 2.1*). All of this, for Nietzsche, is bound up in the notion of promise, and promise depends on memory. This compels Nietzsche to ask, 'How [then] does one make a capacity for memory in the human animal? How does one impress upon this partly dull, partly distracted momentary understanding, this forgetfulness incarnate, in such a way that it remains present' (2.3)? His answer is succinct: pain.

³⁶ Fingarette discusses self-deception as the origin of 'story' which corresponds to natural facts in the lived experience (2000:48-61).

Human memory develops only through physical pain. ‘Something has to be burned in so that it stays in the memory: only whatever does not cease *to hurt* stays in the memory’ (italics original, *OGM* 2.3). By means of the creditor’s right to ‘all kinds of indignity and torture’, the promises made in a contractual relationship are *made into memory* in the promisor (2.5). More precisely, it is ‘that instinct that inuit[s] pain to be the most powerful mnemonic aid’ (2.3). That instinct is the fear that is associated with pain, and not just any fear. Fear is the instinct associated with pain. Fear encompasses the entire scale of cruelties that convey the hazard of death, leading to death itself.

Nietzsche unfolds the story of pain necessary for morality to explain how such pain grows to its ‘most terrible and most sublime pinnacle’ (*OGM* 2.19). The debtor-creditor relationship is analogous to that of the primeval tribe and its ancestors. The living owe the ancestral dead, and they repay their ancestors’ prior accomplishments and sacrifices with their own. The greater the success of the tribe, the greater the debt to the ancestors. Yet one never knows when the debt is met, so ‘this suspicion remains and grows’ to the point of maximum payment, human blood (2.19). The tribe’s nagging sense of debt is rooted in ‘the *fear* of the ancestor and his power’ (italics original, 2.19). With the passing of time, tribal ancestors take on the character of spirit which grows prodigiously until it becomes a god. The uniqueness of deity is power for weal or woe. Supremely, it is control over life and death. Nietzsche drives home his point: ‘Perhaps here we have even the origin of the gods, hence an origin from *fear*! (italics original, 2.19). Nietzsche interprets the ancient Brahmins as using the ‘innovation’ of fear, the ‘pressure of valuation ... to violate the gods and traditions in themselves’, thus giving rise to their caste system (2.10). It is in the Christian God, however, that humanity experiences the ‘maximum of guilt feeling’ (2.20). Under the circumstance, and perhaps also a residue of Nietzsche’s pietistic heritage, anger might be a controlling move to cover the fear of failure, and of facing its consequence, death.

Regardless of religious tradition, Nietzsche explains in *OGM* 3.15 that *ressentiment* is redirected by the priest back into the sufferers by threatening them with the cause of their pain. The sufferers-turned-culprit are thus culpable for causing their own pain. This inspires fear, for this blame is moral, upheld by god. Before deity they must stand in answer for their guilt. This is the ‘main trick’ of the ascetic priest, ‘his exploitation of the feeling of guilt’ and ‘sin’ (3.20), threatening punishments with the fearful tyranny of damnation (3.16), ‘the inventiveness of hell itself’ (2.20). *Ressentiment* affords a way to live with such fear-anger-guilt through self-deception. It

is a ‘reinterpretation [of suffering] into feelings of guilt, fear and punishment’ (3.20). It is ‘ingrained innocence in moralistic mendacity’ (3.19). Nietzsche uses language from the Christian doctrine of judgement, i.e., the ultimate accountability before God resulting in a verdict of eternal death, to expose the secrets of the ascetic priest’s manipulation. These secrets Nietzsche interprets as the ‘mute torment, the most extreme fear, the agony of the tortured heart, spasms of an unknown happiness, the cry for “redemption”’ (3.20). It is this fearful guilt which Nietzsche concludes to be the deeply inward, toxic, and ‘life-gnawing’ conclusion of *ressentiment* to mankind’s ‘crying question, ‘Why suffering?’ (3.28). It is the question everyone must face. Like Anaximander, however, it is the question at which everyone blanches.

Facing or denying this question is framed nicely by Walter Cannon’s putative expression, ‘fight or flight’.³⁷ ‘Fight’ reveals some strength and hope in overcoming perceived injury or threat to survival. In ‘flight’, the consciousness becomes fugitive (see section 4.3.2), and reveals weakness and a fear that threat will overwhelm. Avoidance, wilful ignorance, diversion, and preoccupation are some of the many forms that flight can take. My interest in the flight response comes in relation to fear of death.

No one is exempt from these strategies. Mark Johnston comments that ‘mental flight, like physical flight’ exhibits a lack of ‘ability to contain one’s anxiety and face the anxiety-provoking or the terrible’ (1995:454). Thoreau probes the same phenomenon when he writes, ‘The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation ... A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind’ (1960:10).³⁸ No doubt Nietzsche would agree, but only with the stipulation that ‘mass of men’ refers to ‘the herd’, that corpus of humanity whose lives have been shaped powerfully but unknowingly by *ressentiment*. Christian thinkers from different eras, Pascal (1995 1.8.136) and Os Guinness (2015:100), heartily agree. Rolph, on whom Nietzsche relies, argues ‘not the pursuit of pleasure, but rather the *flight from pain* ... that is the primary motivation of action’ (italics supplied, quoted in Moore 2002:75, footnote 25).

Does flight from pain include flight from or fear of death? Ernst Becker, cultural anthropologist and sometime philosopher, explores the question via the human urge to heroism in his seminal book, *The Denial of Death* (1973). Though not a Christian work,

³⁷ This phrase is typically credited to Walter Cannon. Some references assert Cannon’s first usage in 1914 in *The American Journal of Physiology*, others in the 1915 edition of *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*. Still other place his first use of the term in a 1929 or a 1932 edition of the same book.

³⁸ See Pascal’s musings on the notion of diversion in his *Pensées*, Fragments 8.132-39 (1995).

‘it does contain no small amount of Christian truth’ (Vanhoozer 2007:225). The heroic impulse for Becker rests on the concealment of endemic unconscious despair. This makes an obvious parallel to the self-deception at the heart of *ressentiment*.³⁹ He argues the fear of death is ‘*the* universal human problem’ (italics original, 1973:8). His work will guide much of the discussion below.

Fear of death is natural. Death is a threat. Flight from this threat is repression, and manifests as pursuit of optimisation. Violation of conscience results in painful guilty knowledge, which triggers repression. Each of these will be taken in turn below.

Death as Threat

J Marion opposes Nietzsche’s notion of death as a gateway ‘to a hierarchy of forces (quoted in Becker 1973:110). He designates it the ‘crisis par excellence’ and the ‘ultimate crisis’ (112). Becker avers that this phobia ‘is a mainspring of human activity—activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny of man’ (ix). Freud, whose influence Becker freely acknowledges, writes ‘that at bottom no one believes in his own death, or, to put the same thing in another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality’ (2001a:289). French philosopher, Luc Ferry, holds that philosophy, like religion, seeks salvation from death ‘(but without the help of God)’, the irreversibility of time, and unhappiness (2010:3-8).⁴⁰ Psychoanalyst Gregory Zilboorg asserts, ‘No one is free of the fear of death ... [It] is always present in our mental functioning. (1943 cited in Becker 1973:16). Thanatophobia, the fear of death, is the fear to end all fears.

Why fear death, something so natural, so expected? Guinness asserts that ‘man is never at rest east of Eden ... because [he] cannot escape the fear of non-being’ (2015:32f). The threat of death naturally causes fear. For Paul Tillich ‘fear ... has a definite object’ (1965:44), ‘the outstanding example’ of which is death (46), while ‘anxiety has no object’ and is concerned with ‘after death’ (45). He links the two when he writes that ‘fear and anxiety are distinguished but not separated. They are immanent within each other: The sting of fear is anxiety, and anxiety strives toward fear’ (46). Such fear induces anxiety, which Tillich characterises as ‘the negation of every object’

³⁹ Contemporary psychology scholarship deals with this phenomenon under the rubric of ‘terror management theory’ (Greenberg, et al. 1986; Burke, et al. 2010), a key term of which is ‘mortality salience’ (Whitely, Jr. & Kite 2010). Primary sources are Becker (1962, 1971, 1973, 1975) and Rank (1936, 1941).

⁴⁰ The quotation itself is parenthesised, and is found on page six of the book.

leading to ‘fear of the unknown’ (45). It is this existential anxiety ‘of not being able to preserve one’s own being which underlies every fear and is the frightening element in it’ (46f). Becker adds, ‘Fear is actually an expression of the instinct of self-preservation, which functions as a constant drive to maintain life *and to master the dangers that threaten life*’ (italics supplied, 1973:16). The gravity of ‘disintegration’⁴¹ is so great and so final that motivation stemming from its related phobia is the only counter-force sufficient to allow one to break its pull. Becker maintains that most healthy-minded people do not consciously struggle with ‘the terror of death’ (11).⁴² However, such psychological force must be contested, else it would burn out the organism in its drive for maintenance and mastery (6). Tillich concurs: ‘It is impossible for a finite being to stand naked anxiety for more than a flash of time’ (1965:47). He explains that the typical human response to the existential horror of death as non-being

is ordinarily avoided by the transformation of anxiety into fear of something, no matter what. The human is not only, as Calvin has said, a permanent factory of idols, it is also a permanent factory of fear—the first in order to escape God, the second in order to escape anxiety; and there is a relation between two. For facing the God who is really God means facing also the absolute threat of non-being. (47)

This is repression, a contrived avoidance, a flight from threat.⁴³ Zilboorg says we use it to ‘keep us living with any modicum of comfort’ (cited in Becker 1973:17). Repression, negatively, means ongoing active struggle against the terror of death.

Flight as Optimisation

Positively, repression work by replacement and reformation. ‘It is not simply a negative force opposing life energies; it lives on life energies and uses them creatively ... Fears are naturally absorbed by expansive organismic striving’ (Becker 1973:21). This absorption signifies self-deception.

The struggle often goes unnoticed because of fear; fear that humanity is not divine, but also that it is merely dirt. Thoreau describes the ‘misfortune’ of those inheriting a farm. They begin digging their graves at the moment of birth. Then they creep down the road of life toward treasures they have laid up without realizing theirs ‘is a fool’s life’ whose end is ‘compost’ (2008:6f). Thoreau asks, “How godlike, how immortal, is he?”, then answers his own disdainful question:

⁴¹ This is the oedipal plunge into what Nietzsche calls ‘the abyss of destruction [so as to] suffer the dissolution of nature in his own person’ (*BT* ‘Spirit’ 9).

⁴² This serves as the title of his second chapter.

⁴³ See Chapter Two, footnote 22 regarding repression and suppression with respect to the phenomenon of self-deception in this thesis.

See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely all the day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, a fame won by his own deeds. Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion. (9)

Absorption with striving and struggle is failure to achieve one's potential, to realise the heroic ideal. Nietzsche longs for even a glimpse of such a complete, 'happy, powerful, triumphant, something in which there is still something to fear [i.e., awe]! Of a human being who justifies the human being, ... for whose sake we can hold on to our faith in human beings!' (*OGM* 1.12; see 11; 2.7). Yet Nietzsche jettisons this profile of 'hero' when it comes to the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He refers to Jesus with several aphorisms, for example, 'The Psychology of the Redeemer' (*A* 28; see 29). From this, he argues the common notion of hero (i.e., one who embodies moral values) is most 'unevangelical' (*A* 29). The Jesus of the gospels who saves the day by saving the world is, for Nietzsche, an appropriation of myth and tradition. He is 'Christian propaganda' (31).

Nietzsche extracts 'the fanatic of aggression' from this constructed Jesus (31). Rather than resisting instincts which make for morality and become noble values, Jesus abandons all struggle. Rather than preaching about eternal life, he spends his days demonstrating how to live here and now. Instead of filling out the profile of a Messiah mighty to save souls for another kingdom, he becomes as a child devoid of anger and sword, who has no agenda to judge people as good or evil, but who experiences 'every moment [as] its own miracle, its own reward, its own proof, its own "kingdom of God"' (32). Jesus is no servant subject to law, but a son of God who has no need for morality (*BGE* 4.164), obviating any sense of struggle against sin and temptation (*A* 33). Jesus, as Nietzsche's anti-Christian hero, dies to give people 'the superiority over every feeling of *ressentiment*' (40). By contrast, he accuses Paul and Christianity of a 'shrewd blindness' (39), of exacting revenge on their enemies (i.e., turning masters into slaves) by elevating Jesus in the same way that the Jews have elevated Jehovah, 'both [now] products of *ressentiment*' (40). The power of *ressentiment* to create so powerful an ideal lies in its capacity for self-deception, i.e., repression.

Violation Triggers Repression

How does repression work to cultivate the heroic? It manifests in society through character formation (Becker 1973:46). As a child develops, he begins to encounter not only limits, but dangers, in the world around him. These of course block unmitigated

desire and instinctual growth along such lines. The child must adapt and compromise his expectations in order to

act with a certain oblivious self-confidence, when he has naturalized his world. We say 'naturalized' but we mean unnaturalized, falsified, with the truth obscured, the despair of the human condition hidden, a despair that the child glimpses in his night terrors and daytime phobias and neuroses. This despair he avoids by building defenses; and these defenses allow him to feel a basic sense of self-worth, of meaningfulness, of power. They allow him to feel that he controls his life and his death, that he really does live and act as a wilful and free individual, that he has a unique and self-fashioned identity, that he is somebody. (55)

A life is fashioned to promote an illusion of a 'somebody', pertaining both to the falsified self and the preferred situation. Scheler speaks of an 'organic mendacity' which lies deeper than conscious lying. It is at work when a person shapes their perceptions and interpretations, and even convictions and values, to fit their biases. Self-deception precludes the need for 'conscious falsification', for the false appears to be true, genuine, and honest.

For all the truth, genuineness, and honesty that is generated, the pursuit of that elusive something continues.

I argue here it is order, 'control'. Failure forces a move to an alternative, suppression. Bahnsen comments, 'Unbelievers, who genuinely know God (in condemnation), work hard—even if habitually (and in that sense unconsciously)—to deceive themselves into believing that they do not believe in God or the revealed truths about Him' (2002:123). Suppression occurs as 'exchange' through the substitution of knowledge for volition. Budziszewski writes,

By and large we do know right from wrong, but wish we didn't. We only make believe we are searching for truth—so that we can do wrong, condone wrong, or suppress our remorse for having done wrong in the past. If the traditional view is true, then our decline is owed not to moral ignorance but to moral suppression. We aren't untutored, but 'in denial'. We don't lack moral knowledge; we hold it down. (1999:25-26)

Nietzsche engages in both strategies, suppression and exchange. His first use of 'sublimation' dismissed 'unegoistical actions' and 'moral, religious, [and] aesthetic representations and sensations' (*HHI* 'Of First and Last Things' 1.1). Since the metaphysical is really the material in disguise, all 'moral, religious, aesthetic representations and sensations', whether societal or personal, have been derived from 'base, even despised materials' (i.e., chemicals) (1.1). Morality and rectitude are, for Nietzsche, comfortable metaphysical illusions based on self-deception. Becker agrees:

One's life style a vital lie ... We don't want to admit that we are fundamentally dishonest about reality, that we do not really control our own lives ... All of us are driven to be supported in a self-forgetful way, ignorant of what energies we really draw on, of the kind of life we have fashioned in order to live securely and serenely. (1973:55)

Comfortable metaphysical illusions cannot reinforce the self. They inherently insulate the self from reality. As a result, they falsify self-value measured by the flourishing fulfilment one desires and believes one is achieving. In all actuality, self-valuation is held in tension between such an outlook and the nagging suspicion that life is fruitless. In order to carry on, the self fends off this suspicion by subconsciously contriving meaning, and infusing its life with it. Becker maintains we seek stress and push the boundaries of our experience—extreme sports and ‘living on the edge’ lifestyles spring to mind—in order to fend off despair, not to engage it (1973:56). If this defensive strategy fails, one is left with ‘the full flood of despair, the full realization of the true human condition, what men are really afraid of’ (57)—no blond beast, no conqueror, no hero. Such fears may be put to rest (alternatively, ‘pushed down’), though, by means of what Thoreau calls ‘games and amusements’ (1960:10).

Nietzsche’s most significant exhibit in his fear of death museum is the doctrine of the eternal recurrence. Giles Fraser conjectures it is Nietzsche’s attempt to generate something of a framework for value to counter the tension issuing from the framelessness of time (2002:114). Nietzsche unawares, according to Fraser, uses eternal recurrence ‘to become a moral centrifuge, a way for the self to generate its own gravity’ (116). Borrowing from the Greek’s distinctions of time, Fraser asserts ‘that the temporality of the eternal recurrence is *kairos*—temporality rather than *chronos*—temporality’ (117). The latter refers to the simple passage of moments, while the former is realised in the singular moment of decision (117). *Kairos* is the stuff of the eternal return, the moment charged with the ‘possibility of redemption. It is the fulcrum of Nietzsche’s alternative soteriology’ (119). His aspirational hero, Zarathustra, loves life. Thus, in contrast to the ‘preachers of death,’ he loves life (Z 1.9). He even composes a seven-sealed song⁴⁴ to celebrate life as eternity (3.16). Whether taken metaphorically as a metaphysical principle or literally as a cosmological theory, Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence is his attempt to win victory for life over death (Williams 2006:166f).

Nietzsche’s amoral components of admission of guilt and repayment of debt raise the issue of redemption (*OGM* 2.5, 8). In ancient religious traditions, especially Christianity, this translates as sacrifice to God (2.20-22). Self-deception makes sacrifices, to be sure, but alternative ones. Nietzsche knows all about payments of debt, but his morality calls for sacrifices beyond those of tradition. They must be directed by one’s own determination.

⁴⁴ This is no doubt intended as a counterpoint to the seven-sealed scroll in John’s Apocalypse (Rev 5:1).

The coupling of Nietzsche's *amor fati* and eternal return serves as an example. Nietzsche muses near the end of his productive life that his character remains untainted and his personality undaunted despite a dearth of 'any happy memories whatever from [his] childhood and youth' (*EH* 'Clever' 2). He also laments the 'widespread illness' he has suffered in the past decade (10). He thus sums up his formula for greatness, to which his life testament, *Ecce Homo*, bears witness. It is *amor fati*, a life that does not 'want anything to be different, not forwards, not backwards, not for all eternity' (10). Could it be that his *amor fati* is the sacrifice that must be made under the all-encompassing judgement of the eternal return? That is, the highs and, particularly, the lows which comprise life experience, are unchangeable. If man must exist in an eternal recurrence of them, then his only way to live in harmony within such a system—a cheerful mien and absence of internal tension being two chief Nietzschean characteristics—is to resign himself to that which is, and must be—his life.

Nietzsche's sacrifice, then, may actually be happiness, a willingness to embrace pain. Conversely, one may say that moral debt denied still produces guilty knowledge, and such knowledge generates 'pain after pain, price after price, in a cycle which has no end because we refuse to pay the one price demanded' (Budziszewski 2003:148). This recalls the Pauline notion in Romans 1 that immoral defection from the creator results in death. In this light, Nietzsche's alternative immoralism-as-a-way-to-life may be seen as nothing more than flight from reality.

Zarathustra's story climaxes with this question, 'Who shall be lord of the earth' (*Z* 4.19.5)? Nietzsche signifies here mastery, the control of life and death, of history and destiny. He calls for redemption *from* Christianity's 'reigning ideal', as well as from the ensuing 'great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism', that has enthralled mankind (*OGM* 2.24). The one with heart enough for such a mission has not yet come. When he does, however, he will face reality and not fly to an alternative one in order to redeem humanity from all decay and tragedy. He will conquer the God who wields the power of eternal punishment (2.21, 24). 'End of the longest error; climax of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA' (*TI* 'How the "True World" Finally Became a Fable' 6). Zarathustra thus paves the way for understanding the notion of eternal recurrence (*Z* 3.13.2).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Though delving into them would go beyond the scope of this thesis, Robin Small in *Nietzsche in Context* (2001) discusses aspects of the eternal recurrence in terms of probability (99-115), mathematics (117-34), and physics (135-52). See Williams 2006:167, footnote 40. Also, sometimes the eternal recurrence is referred to as the eternal return or eternal return of the same.

The problem for Nietzsche, transposing the existential into the everyday, begins in the present. People are bound to death, and history gives no hope for a different future. Zarathustra says, “Everything passes away, therefore everything deserves to pass away! And this is itself justice, that law of time that time must devour its children” (Z 2.20). Christianity, however, offers a future different from the past. Those who live rightly in the world of *ressentiment*-generated concepts of evil, guilt feelings, and a god who can rescue mankind from neither, Christianity holds that ‘the present evil age’ (Gal 1:4) will give way to future shalom. Nietzsche rejects this on two grounds: working to control the material world of the here-and-now is an illusion, and longing for immortality in a spiritual world-beyond is a lie. So Nietzsche finds cause for distress over the state of his day. When it comes to the eternal recurrence, however, he is obsessed with neither the present nor the future. His passion is the past.

Zarathustra’s mountain trek brings him to a critical point at a gateway called ‘Moment’ (Z 3.2). This gate turns out to be the nexus of two paths that stretch to eternity, one into the past and the other into the future. ‘Moment’ serves as the present in which Zarathustra makes his way to mountain heights, chronicled after a fashion by the narrative of the entire book. His trek along the stony and cheerless mountain path is, presumably, toward the future, made all the more difficult by ‘the Spirit of Heaviness’ that wants to pull him ‘downward ... abyssward’ (3.2.1). His ambitions⁴⁶ are thwarted and, like everything that goes up, he goes down. He falls and cannot progress. He cannot overcome. He is stuck.

There he lies in utter disillusionment until something within calls him to courage, and he resumes his pilgrimage. This time, however, he faces the other direction. This introduces the infinite regression problem of every feedback loop, purposelessness. Zarathustra says,

From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane runs backward: behind us lies an eternity ... Must not whatever among all things can happen have happened, and been done, have passed by already? ... Must not this gateway too not already—have been? And are not all things knotted together so tightly that this moment draws after it all things that are to come? (3.2.2)

No wonder Zarathustra is going nowhere. All his forward ‘progress’ has actually taken him down ‘this long and dreadful lane’, forcing him to venture the question amidst his fears, ‘must we not eternally come back again?’ (3.2.2). As of yet, the nature of this question remains ominous.

⁴⁶ See ‘I climbed, I climbed, I dreamed, I thought’ (Z 3.2.1).

Zarathustra also faces an immovable stone in his pathway to the past. It represents ‘Will—that is the liberator and joy-bringer’ (Z 2.20). People believe it works for their advantage, determining their preferred future and securing their happiness, but does it? Schopenhauer argues that the will is never satisfied, that far too often the ideals and goals at which one aims give way to inadequacy, frustration, and suffering. No matter the turns in the kaleidoscope of choices, the result is ultimately the same for all: death colours the future. What lies ahead is pain, therefore, and not delight. Humanity knows this deep down. The evidence of a suffering world is all around. The obvious solution, therefore, is to work in the other direction and try to change the past. This proves to be impossible, and only exacerbates mankind’s frustration. So Zarathustra: ‘That time does not run backwards, this arouses the will’s fury; ‘That which was’—that is the stone which it cannot roll away’ (2.20). Mankind’s frustration-turned-wrath points us precisely to the existential origins of *ressentiment*. His inability to move the stone of That Which Was is, uniquely, ‘what revenge itself is: the will’s ill-will toward time and its “It was”’ (2.20). Where is the redemption in this eternal recurrence?

The will remains the key. As *liberator*, the will only provokes revenge against time, but as *creator* it promotes reconciliation with time. The former leads to resignation and subjugation, the latter to assignation and domination. Zarathustra declares, ‘All “It was” is a fragment, a riddle, a cruel coincidence—until the creating will says to it: “But thus I willed it”’ (Z 2.20). To strengthen his inchoate doctrine here, Zarathustra has the creating will repeat itself verbatim, ““But thus I willed it””, followed by a resolute coda, ““Thus *shall* I will it”” (italics supplied, 2.20).

Zarathustra renounces his ‘deadly enemy’, the Spirit of Heaviness (Z 3.11.1). Life is heavy because of gravity’s rule, and the only way to break its rule is to kill it (1.7). With gravity’s power broken, humanity will learn to fly even as Zarathustra has learned to fly (3.11.2; cp. 1.7; see *BGE* 5.193). The results of gravity’s death transcend humanity’s ascent, for all ‘boundary-stones will themselves fly into the air’ (Z 3.11.2). This defeated foe, the spirit of gravity, also denominated ‘arch-enemy’ and ‘primal enemy’ (3.11.1), seems to possess a similar power to the stone named That Which Was. The former, the Law of Gravity, prevents progress up the mountain, while the latter, the Law of Time, blocks the portal to the past. Both incarcerate humanity in present space and time, leaving them with nothing more than their will, which is a prison in itself. Hence, maximum security imprisonment! Eternal justice. ‘Can there be redemption when there is eternal justice?’ (2.20), cries Zarathustra.

Nietzsche offers the Old and New Tablets behind these moral forces.⁴⁷ The old tablets are the Law of Moses, engraved in stone (Exod 31:18), which according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, condemn (see v. 56). In the same context, Paul speaks of resurrection, when the body will rise from its sleep to eternal life as a result of faith in God's gift of Christ. Zarathustra, too, arouses a sleeping audience. They believe in 'an old conceit ... [of] what good and evil [are] for the human being' (Z 3.12.1), 'an old delusion that is called good and evil' (3.12.9). So he urges them to smash the old tablets of God (or the gods) containing Thou Shalt Nots (3.12.10), and replace them with new tablets written by men-as-gods (3.12.10). Above all, thou shalt not accept a gift (3.12.4)! Christianity lays a heavy burden of written law on mankind. Anaximander's Law of Time only intensifies it. Zarathustra's 'old Devil and arch-enemy, the Spirit of Heaviness and all that he created: compulsion, statute, need and consequence and purpose and will and good and evil', implements and enforces it (3.12.2; see *GS* 3.335).

The overman is born (or discovered) from this struggle (Z 3.12.3). He is named for that '*over* which [he] dances', which includes '*moles and heavy dwarves*' (italics original, 3.12.2) ... and dogs that howl at midnight in long, moonlit, dreadful lanes. Does this mean Nietzsche is preoccupied with death? Zarathustra becomes afraid of his thoughts, the more he entertains the eternal recurrence. This provokes a 'vision and a riddle (3.2.1). A dog's howl transports him back to his earliest childhood memory of a dog howling (3.2.2). Zarathustra (or Nietzsche) 'stood at once, alone, desolate, in the most desolate moonlight' over that which appears to be a corpse ... and the dog, which howls yet again (3.2.2). Amazingly, the dog then cries, reflecting overwhelming pity as he sees Zarathustra. It believes death is theft perpetrated by beings from beyond. Though Zarathustra does not interpret the vision, in the 1973 published translation of Z,⁴⁸ Hollingdale comments:

This scene is a memory from Nietzsche's childhood. Nietzsche's father died following a fall, and it seems that Nietzsche was attracted to the scene by the frightened barking of a dog: he found his father lying unconscious. It is not entirely clear why the scene should have been evoked at this point. The most likely suggestion is that Nietzsche at one time thought that events recurred within historical time, and was troubled by the idea that he might meet the same death as his father. (The idea seems to have assumed the nature of an obsession: its origin probably lay in Nietzsche's fear of madness, which was strengthened by the fact that his father died insane. The insanity was caused by the fall, but Nietzsche was probably doubtful whether the fall did not merely bring to the surface an inherited weakness.) This old idea may have come into the author's mind at this point, and have been included in the text as a cryptic 'history' of the theory of the eternal recurrence. What follows is, of course, symbolic and not actual. (Nietzsche 2003:341, note 25)

⁴⁷ Nietzsche composed the passage, 'On Old and New Tablets, 'during *the most tiring climb* from the station up to the glorious Moorish eyrie of Eza' (italics supplied, *EH* 'Zarathustra' 4).

⁴⁸ Republished in 2003.

This 'vision of hell' concludes in terrific fashion (Graybeal 1990:74). A heavy, black snake has taken hold down the throat of the corpse-become-shepherd, and is hanging out of his mouth, thus causing him to writhe and gag and convulse. If the man was only mostly dead before, the adder seems bent on finishing him. Zarathustra screams from the depths of his being for the shepherd to bite of the serpent's head to kill it: 'my horror, my hate, my disgust, my compassion, all my good and bad cried out of me' (Z 3.2.2). The shepherd does so, and the horror ends. Zarathustra riddles in four questions: 'What did I see then in the parable? And *who* is it that must yet come some day? *Who* is the shepherd into whose throat the snake thus crawled? *Who* is the man into whose throat all that is heaviest and blackest will crawl' (3.2.2)? The answer seems to be Zarathustra, himself ... and also his ventriloquist master, Nietzsche (see *EH* 'Destiny').

How does one extract so fundamental a part of oneself, the conscience-bound will that precludes any resolution to this damning riddle, leaving one resigned to future sentencing due to present sin? Zarathustra calls this a 'fable-song of madness' (Z 2.20). Does it help to know that the conscience is soaked in the spirit of revenge, that it rages against the unassailable law of time so that 'existence must eternally be deed and guilt again' (2.20)? Or is one left to lament the life-to-death cycle for all eternity into which one must inevitably pass? If the preceding scene does in fact reflect Nietzsche's childhood experience, what hope might flicker within him upon hearing Zarathustra's cry, "Redeem all the dead!" (4.19.5)? In view of the love Nietzsche seems to sustain for his father, such redemption is highly desirable, but only in Zarathustra's way: 'Will you not, like me, say to death: Was *that*— life? For Zarathustra's sake, very well! One more time!' (4.19.1).

Nietzsche knows facing death nakedly with no escape can paralyse (Harmon-Jones, et al. 1997:24). His account of Anaximander's death (i.e., passing away) compares to our own imagined deaths. Death is the ubiquitous and unforgiving reminder of human guiltiness and fear for, whether one violates the Ordinance of Time or the law of God. This in turn activates the *ressentiment* mechanism yet again to deal with the rage that arises in response. Then the *ressentiment*-created new value of 'morality of pity' takes over (*GS* 3.338), baptised as love of neighbour.⁴⁹ Love thy neighbour means helping those who suffer, and this instinct is strong, though it binds

⁴⁹ For a brief comparison and contrast of 'pity' and 'compassion', see Williams 2006:171; Nussbaum 1994. Nussbaum's argues Nietzsche is *anti* pity but *pro* mercy, as construed by the Stoics.

the helper to the wrong thing for the wrong reason (see 3.269). To overcome it one must be able to fly and to levitate boundary stones so as to create a future out of the past. One must be able to rewrite tablets so as to be a worthy lord of the earth and of eternity. One must be able to hike the lonely road to the peak of redemption that runs through the abyss of death, to travel ‘the path to one’s own heaven ... through ... one’s own hell’, so joined in the eternal recurrence (3.338; see Z 3.1). Nietzsche substitutes eternal recurrence for Christian redemption. It cannot, however, efface what drives it, revenge against passing away, which is to say, a fear of death.

Martin Heidegger, who admits to thinking and writing in the shadow of Nietzsche’s brilliance (1958:107), addresses these issues, *inter alia*, in a book dedicated to Nietzsche’s doctrine, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (1984). He claims that ‘Zarathustra’s doctrine does not bring redemption from revenge’ (1984:229). In order to appreciate his conclusion, it is necessary to consider the entirety of Heidegger’s philosophy as a ‘lifelong project ... to answer the “question of being”’ (Guignon 1995:317). Heidegger’s highly original approach to the meaning of Being sees humans as embedded in the lived-experience, which, ‘in its totality involves death as Being-towards-the-end’ (Heidegger 1962:293). For, ‘as soon as a man comes to life, he is at once old enough to die’ (289). Thus, in keeping with Ferry’s comment above, Heidegger’s philosophy is conducted in view of the phenomenon of death, taken in its widest sense (290). Heidegger considers death as the omnipresent ‘possibility of no-longer begin-able-to-be-there’ (294, see also 307). It is humanity’s unique possibility that sets an absolute and unsurpassable boundary to the lived-experience. It goes beyond biological demise, and so must be considered an existential phenomenon (280-85). It is here the distinction between fear and anxiety becomes important.⁵⁰

Heidegger uses the term ‘fear’ for the natural state of mind or mood of being in the world (Heidegger 1962:179-82).⁵¹ People flee what they fear, whether other people or events, especially the event of our (physical) death (295). Such fear causes us to live inauthentically, that is, in denial of its reality. Heidegger reserves the term ‘anxiety’ (or *angst*) to describe flight towards the threat of our very existence in all its possible meaninglessness. (187). It is this anxiety that approximates what I refer to in this thesis as ‘fear of death’. It also recalls Anaximander’s experience as Nietzsche recounts it in

⁵⁰ See footnote 39 in this chapter.

⁵¹ Matthew Radcliffe (2015:55f) remarks that Heidegger’s term, *Befindlichkeit*, has been variously translated ‘affectedness’ (Dreyfus 1991), ‘attunement’ (Stambaugh 1996), ‘sofindingness’ (Haugeland 2000), and ‘disposedness’ (Blattner 2006).

BT. Anxiety is always latent in *Dasein*, but it can promote courageous, authentic living (i.e., freedom) by acknowledging the reality of death (307, see also 234). However, anxiety can be perverted into cowardly fear (310f), or inauthentic living, which, ‘as such, [is] hidden from itself’ (234). Heidegger doesn’t talk specifically about self-deception or repression, but he does say that is ‘possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically’ (234). This generally comes through the tranquilisation of everyday living. That is, the routines of our lives give evidence of what is evaded, namely ‘death [as] conceived as one’s ownmost possibility, non-relational, not to be outstripped, and—above all—certain’ (*italics original*, 302).

This everydayness of our lives transpires in the matrix of what Nietzsche calls the ‘true world’, which is merely the ‘seeming world’, and closes us off from the true world (*TI* 5; see also Heidegger 1987:123-30). This is the projected world of semblance (1987:131). Heidegger claims that Nietzsche’s understanding of ‘truth as holding-to-be-true’ is an unwitting surrender to the presuppositions foisted upon philosophy since the Greeks. Truth serves to fixate and make permanent Becoming, which in turn petrifies and makes hollow the notion of Being (137-41; 164f). It is to take that which is most vital to life, and, in Heidegger’s translation of Nietzsche’s *WP* 617, ‘To stamp Becoming with the character of Being—that is the supreme will to power’. For Heidegger, this means that Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence falls prey to the error, or cowardice, of Anaximander, that of the rancour against time (Heidegger 1984:227-30; see also *PTA* 4, *Z* 2.20). Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence, taken as the bridge to redemption from revenge, winds up being nothing more than a circular path to *ressentiment* that originates in *ressentiment* (*Z* 2.7).

4.6.2 In Paul

The Apostle Paul also speaks of fear of death in the heart of his letter to the Romans, in chapter 8: 12-25.⁵² By means of Ἄρα οὖν (Rom 8:12), the Apostle segues from present tense *realities* in the previous paragraph to present tense *results* in this one. His discussion of the previous realities suggests that humanity be viewed as two distinct groups. One group is characterised as being in the flesh, slaves in bondage, and condemned to die. The other group is characterised as being in the Spirit, sons of God, and destined to live. The first group lives under a death sentence, and bears both

⁵² Other passages may be put forth as possible exhibits to fear of death: Romans 8:31-39; 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 24-29, 50-58; 2 Corinthians 3:1-18; 4:1-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

physical and spiritual aspects. Since they will go the way of all the earth, they may as well live *according to* the flesh.⁵³ This reveals their fundamental identity as debtors (ὀφειλέται) to the flesh. This humanity will die in the future (13). But another aspect of this death sentence may be detected when Paul describes ‘the sufferings of this present time’ (18) as ‘bondage to corruption’ (21), the operative term, φθορά, here meaning ‘decay’ (Arndt & Gingrich 1979:858). Such a connotation suggests that in some sense fallen humanity is already dead. This might be referred to as a living death, as Nietzsche hints in his characterisation of Socrates’ life as a long illness (A 3.12), and also as Nietzsche seems to view it in *D* 1.68.

How can this be? Paul seems to have something similar in mind when, to those living in both Ephesus and Colossae, he writes about those who are dead in sin (Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13). Both these passages, in a wider context, suggest that people are *biologically animated*, busy about their daily lives. Yet, since they conduct their lives apart from God, they are *spiritually dead*, possessing no life force sufficient to sustain them beyond their temporal and terrestrial existence. Like cut flowers, they appear vibrant and alive, but are not. What is more, Paul communicates this being dead in sin as a way of life, as simply ‘the way things are’.⁵⁴ I have made the case that no one can live under the constancy of such a threat, so the self-deception of which Paul speaks elsewhere recommends itself as a strategy for managing it.

The second group, by contrast, live in the Spirit. They manifest their identity as God’s children. They have been released from obligation to the flesh, i.e., set free from slavery to sin, and most salient to my argument, protected from experiencing fear. Fear of what? Paul states that ‘all who are led by the Spirit of God’ and who are ‘sons of God’ (Rom 8:14) ‘did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear’ (15). The English, ‘to fall back’, is actually a single Greek word. The preponderant usage of this adverb in Paul and the entire New Testament conveys the idea of repetition, often translated as ‘again’ (πάλιν). In this case, it modifies ‘did [not] receive’ ([οὐ] ἐλάβετε), signifying that when the Roman believers were brought into God’s family, they did not experience the fear they had previously known when in slavery. In that state, they were bound for God’s wrath unto the day of judgement (see Rom 2:5, 8; 5:9).

Paul assures his Roman readers that they have grounds for hope in the relationship made possible through the Spirit’s work. Freedom through adoption into God’s family

⁵³ ‘Flesh’ here is concretely represented as the ‘body ... [which is] dead because of sin’ (Rom 8:10).

⁵⁴ The aorist tense controlling both Ephesians 2 and Colossians 2 indicates this status quo.

and the glory of bodily resurrection will supplant bondage to corruption, subjection to futility, and pain of suffering. This promised revolution has repercussions in the here-and-now. In Nietzschean terms, this is a major values-inversion, one which manifests tacit agreement between himself and his counter-revolutionary, Paul. Staten writes,

[Nietzsche] says no to the ascetic because he wants to say yes to the body—the animal, the senses, change, becoming, death. But what he rejects in the ascetic (when he rejects him) is his sickness and decay, which means that in saying no to the ascetic Nietzsche says no to the body, change, becoming, death. Sickness and decay are precisely what is bodily about the body, at least in the Christian tradition, which always figures the anarchy of desire as corruptibility and bondage to death. Nietzsche pretends to affirm the body and this earth in his affirmation of the strong and healthy, but Saint Paul when he preaches a body of life pursues just the same freedom from the fundamental conditions of embodiment as Nietzsche does in his idealization of strength and health. (1990:60f)

In the present, all those who are trapped in this fallen estate live under a slavish fear of death (Rom 8:15). Against this fear, Paul exhorts present-day believers to hope in a re-ordered world of tomorrow. Hope, as the emotion of faith, so to speak, contends with all the previously mentioned signals of death on the strength of promised redemption. Contra Nietzsche, who castigates Christianity as life-denying, Paul highlights the enduring goodness of the material world by extolling God's purpose for the transformation of all creation, including the body (see Lippitt 2000, especially 84f).⁵⁵

Romans 8 begins with Paul exhorting his Roman readers that there is 'now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death' (Rom 8:1-2). Instead of groaning under fearful bondage leading to death, the redeemed and all creation can hope in release from that struggle and thus obtain life. For Nietzsche, the struggle is all there is, eternally. In the subconscious hell of suffering, man's illusory metaphysical identity is dashed with each turn of the wheel of Ixion (*OGM* 3.6). Against all contrary sensory indicators, one must break through the veil of Maya with heart-rending courage to find the salvation that comes in eternally 'going out to meet at the same time one's highest suffering and one's highest hope' (*GS* 3.268). Only the one 'who knows fear, but *conquers* fear, who sees the abyss, but with pride' can make his way through the labyrinthine mystery of the morally perceived world to realise his true integrated self (*Z* 4.13.4). Infernal destruction is paved with the hope of this rebirth; life must brave death in an odyssey of tragic joy that pursues becoming a full self (see *EH* 'Birth' 3). The way to Olympic glory runs through the horror of Tartarus (see *Z* 3.1; *GS* 4.338; *OGM* 3.10).

⁵⁵ By way of example, a David Jensen chapter entitled, 'Eschatology and Sex: Making all Things New', understands Paul's envisioned transformation to extend to a revolution in sexual identity (2013:55-72).

Fear of death is fundamental to self-deception in both Nietzsche and Paul. Self-deception is the crowning move which results from injury that threatens one's self-perception as 'right' and 'sufficient' in relation to the powerful other. Others impose on us their values, or at least constrain our values, in either case delimiting our freedom. In Nietzschean *ressentiment*, values are unconsciously revalued by the self in order to promote this view of oneself as independent, and even autonomous. This revaluation project is then hidden from the self so as to maintain the illusion of self-righteousness and sufficiency. In Pauline fallenness, truths are unconsciously suppressed and exchanged to the same end, that of perceived self-righteousness and wisdom. The ultimate other for Nietzsche is a raw, amoral, purposeless existence. Paul's ultimate other is a good and purposeful God. Nietzsche's *ressentiment*-man cannot bear merely to pass into and out of existence on the tides of eternity. *Ressentiment*-man views this as the ultimate penalty, and he resists this as a wrong by fashioning for himself an essence, which is the origin of morality in the universe and the source of self-deception. The ultimate other for Paul is God who, as an expression of his love and power, brings into existence mankind, creating them in his image. For the creature to know the Creator is the ultimate blessing; to deny this relationship is the essence of self-deception. To know God is freedom for Paul; not to (have to) know God is freedom for Nietzsche.

The functioning of self-deception, whether in a framework of Nietzschean *ressentiment* or Pauline fallenness, bears the same result: a self-validated right to autonomy. 'Way of life' becomes nothing more than what 'is'. For Nietzsche, this is ultimate freedom. For Paul, it is a manifestation of self-deception. Bahnsen's comment is a fitting summation here: 'Unbelievers, who genuinely know God (in condemnation), work hard—even if habitually (and in that sense unconsciously)—to deceive themselves into believing that they do not believe in God or the revealed truths about Him' (2002:123).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Conclusions of Thesis

This thesis has explored connections between aspects of Pauline fallenness and Nietzschean *ressentiment*. I operated on the hypothesis that the reaction of Paul's fallen-man, as portrayed in Romans 1 and 2, could plausibly be construed in terms of Nietzsche's *ressentiment*-man. The chief characteristics they share are values-inversion and self-deception. I then used this construal to make a Pauline assessment of Nietzsche.

My goal was to perform a Nietzschean *ressentiment* reading of Paul, principally of the Apostle's understanding of sin involving self-deception as practised by the 'unrighteous' in Romans 1 and 2. I immediately encountered a problem. There was much creational language and allusion in verses 18ff, and my hermeneutical approach suggested the exegetical consideration of a subtext to the passage. Based on numerous factors in the text, I determined Paul builds his account upon the creation stories of Genesis. I contended Paul's disquisition on God's wrath on man may be more fully appreciated by attending to fallen-man's reinterpretations of this primordial setting. The result of man's 'injury', his perceived threat of the penalty attached to the prohibition concerning the tree (Gen 2:16f), is he finds himself powerless in the face of absolute power. He reacts to his vulnerable state by pressing against his restrictive original state. The psychic energies that strive for life are bent back into him when he is confronted by the penalty of death. The associated painful emotions and cognitive reflections are only possible in such an internal, reflective environment. Man develops from a two-dimensional, brutishly instinctual animal to an introspective and 'interesting' creature. Nietzsche's means for how this evolution is the shaping force of proto-*ressentiment*. Thus, the earliest chapters of Genesis are, for Nietzsche, the seedbed from which man grows into a soulish being, one capable of transforming the value of 'bad' into 'evil'. This constituted the internalisation stage of *ressentiment* in my argument.

Having concluded an examination of the subtext of Romans 1, we returned to the surface of Paul's text. There I identified the second stage of *ressentiment*, moralisation. Here, man effectively fashions himself into a moral being, and shapes the world around him accordingly. Paul founds his argument on 'the gospel', declaring it reveals the power of God both in salvation (Rom 1:16f) and in condemnation (18ff). The gospel consists of both the offer of divine help and the offence of divine judgement. Focusing

on the latter, Paul says God is revealing his wrath on ‘all ungodliness and unrighteousness’, i.e., fallen humanity (18; see also 3:10f). Paul indicates this wrath is predicated on ‘the truth’ (1:18), and particularly man’s response to it. Before discussing man’s response to the truth, I conducted an enquiry into relevant aspects of that truth.

The truth about which the Apostle writes is ‘the truth about God’ (Rom 1:25). Using a Barthian approach, I concluded this truth is unattainable to man in his own lights. Paul claims truth about God can only be known if God reveals it (19). The content of this self-revelation is comprised of God’s ‘invisible attributes’. Like a painter known through their art, so God’s eternal power and divine nature are on display in his creation (20). I concluded this self-disclosure is intended to be perceived by man through two means. The first comes by man’s empirical perception of the material world governed by natural laws. My investigation of the Romans 1 text revealed a subtext. A straightforward reading of this subtext showed God’s work in creation reflects his identity as a just and powerful creator. Yet a *ressentiment* perspective of this same material reads him as a powerful, oppressive master. The second means whereby man perceives the work of God in creation comes by human conscience. A straightforward reading of the Romans 1 text assumes the faculty of conscience as part of man’s created constitution. In *ressentiment* terms, however, human conscience results from the oppressive first state, the internalisation stage, set up by the creator. This stage gives rise to the soulish internal environment from which the moralisation stage develops. Nietzsche himself designates this environment as the conscience, and though it formally conforms with a natural law interpretation, the origin story Nietzsche gives it is subversive to a traditional reading of the text. This said, whether man encounters the truth about God through creation or conscience, Paul claims he clearly perceives it. This truth is God is the eternally powerful Other. Though it is not enough to save, Paul does insist it precludes any excuse for not properly responding (20f).

The truth about God engenders an improper response in man, one that will culminate in self-deception. Man’s response provokes, in turn, God’s wrath, which fallen man perceives as a threat. In *ressentiment* terms, Nietzsche would characterise such as injury and offence (*OGM* 2.4, 11). This is precisely how Paul later defines his gospel (Gal 5:11; see also Rom 9:33). To cope with such perceived wrong, man responds with the stratagems of *ressentiment*. Since God in his omnipotence is unassailable, man cannot overtly achieve retribution. Thus, the first *ressentiment* strategy is a non-response: man withholds the honour that is God’s due (Rom 1:21). To

use the modern psychological term, passive aggression, it is the only way to redress man's offence (*GS* 3.135). The sin of slighting God is the only way man can devise repayment for the (perceived) debt he incurs because of God's wrath (*OGM* 2.5).

The second *ressentiment* strategy identified was a response comprised of two actions. The first action is to suppress the truth about God (Rom 1:18). If man can succeed in this, the issue of God's anger for him is moot. I suggested at least three motivations for this suppression. One is man cannot countenance the possibility he is ontologically contingent and morally unrighteous, and thus does not warrant autonomy in the absolute sense. Second, man does not want to admit his process of revaluation has been faulty. This would invalidate his judgements, the most important being he is justified in and of himself, as well as the justifier of all he esteems. Third, and a logical concomitant to the previous two, man wants to avoid accountability to a more just and/or powerful party than himself. These are three powerful reasons why man suppresses the truth. Effectively, Paul claims guilty knowledge *cannot not* be known (1:19-21). *Ressentiment* suggests a reason for this, that because this knowledge carries such threatening force (*OGM* 2.16), it must be redirected and pressed down. It must be suppressed.

The second action man takes in reaction to the truth about God is to exchange it (Rom 1:25). The same motives that activate suppression apply in this action. Paul communicates in Romans 1:23 and 25 that the truth about God, which reveals that he is altogether worthy of homage, is displaced by a lie. The lie is man the creature is worthy of worship in place of God the creator. Nietzsche would endorse this exchange as 'the authentic lie, the genuine, resolute "honest" lie' by which men 'open their eyes to themselves, that they know how to distinguish between "true" and "false" in themselves'. Nietzsche seeks to rally *ressentiment*-man to acknowledge this to overcome 'the dishonest lie', which entails man's willingness to be subjugated to another (*OGM* 3.19; see also *A* 55). Paul, on the other hand, considers this exchange to be fundamentally dishonest. He would have no problem construing it as the crowning move of *ressentiment*, self-deception. Moreover, he would consider one who promotes such a move for autonomy to be full of *ressentiment* and in the thrall of self-deception.

We next performed a *ressentiment* reading of Romans 2. I proposed that insights gained from the reading of Romans 1 validated my hermeneutical strategy of reading Paul in light of Nietzsche. I particularly focused on the first half of the chapter to conduct a theological exegesis. In verses 1-11, Paul discusses God's impartial

judgement, and he principally addresses the Jew. I noted the historical and political context of the Apostle's letter finds the Jews a subjugated people due to Roman imperialism, including those of the diaspora, as Paul's audience is. Nietzsche tells us that the Jews were thus placed in 'impossible conditions' in which they are 'confronted with the question of being or not being' (A 24). This psychological pressure is a necessary factor in the origin of 'the *ressentiment* of the masses' (43; see also *GS* 3.137).

Paul addresses his Jewish audience in diatribe, not merely to highlight what he perceives to be their hypocrisy in condemning the Gentiles for sinful behaviour, but to reveal their 'practice [of] the very same things' (Rom 2:1) leaves them condemned. I interpreted the Jew's¹ failure to 'obey the truth' (8) as self-deception, and *ressentiment* helps us understand how this could be. The fundamentally reactive nature of *ressentiment* causes one who perceives himself to be disadvantaged as oppressed. The socio-political circumstances of Rome likely left the average Jew feeling inferior to the Gentiles. To rectify that imbalance, he must do something both to the standard of valuation and to the perceived-to-be superior oppressors. The Jew in Paul's address inflates his own capacity to keep the law (1f, 9), and devalues the deeds of some Gentiles who 'by nature do what the law requires' (Rom 2:14). The commonality in both is God's law. This opens the Jew up to all Paul's indictments of Gentiles in Romans 1:18-32. The lawbreaking Jew may thus be seen as a suppressor of truth about God (i.e., his absolute and impartial righteousness and wisdom), and also as an exchanger of truth about God for a lie made possible by false valuation. I confirmed this by associating two behaviours of the Jew to those of *ressentiment*-man. The first comes by way of viewing the Jew's hypocrisy as a projection of his own failure onto the Gentiles (Rom 2:2). The second comes in noting the Jew's self-perception is made in comparative, even inverted, terms to the Gentiles (19ff). The parasitic nature of *ressentiment* is crucial for Nietzsche in that any claim to superiority made by the oppressed must find its source in the strength of its oppressor (*OGM* 1.10). For Paul, the reality is the Jew is the one who is blind, in the dark, and foolish.

I concluded the motivation for such self-deception spills over from Romans 1. In keeping with previous findings, this would be avoidance of the wrath of God's judgement on sinful behaviour, which the Jew by virtue of his knowledge of the law, must know in some sense 'rightly falls on those who practice such things' (Rom 2:2).

¹ Paul uses the singular.

Paul explicit talk of God's wrath tacitly nullifies any benefit of the Jew's covenantal status by warning him that he will be subject to God's judgement if he does not humbly submit to his law (5f; see also 25, 27). A huge aspect of *ressentiment* is the creation of a mass of humanity that shares the same ideals and morality—what Nietzsche calls the herd and herd morality—and the safety afforded by strength of numbers. Anonymity is found in the herd, and it is from this sense of security that *ressentiment*-driven individuals are emboldened to moralise. In so doing, they create for themselves a perception of superiority over others, even as they distance themselves from the very values they denounce in them. Paul's rhetoric searches the moralising Jew out of the crowd by stating that 'wrath and fury' and 'tribulation and distress' await 'every soul of man who does evil' (8f). Like the Gentiles of Romans 1, the Jew in Romans 2 is unrighteous and disobedient to the truth about God revealed in creation. Though he seeks to hide that truth from himself, God has revealed it in the law. He will judge all who transgress it, Jew or Gentile.

In Romans 2:12-16, Paul expounds God's impartial judgement by the law. I concluded the law of which Paul speaks is the standard of morality that reflects the eternal character of God. It is generally manifest to all humans and, at the time of Paul's writing, is specially revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Paul's subject in this passage is the Gentiles, unregenerate humanity. Even though they do not have special access to God's revelation as do the Jews, they attempt to align their actions with the requirements of the law. They do this by virtue of the conscience, which is not the same as the law, but is rather an independent mechanism that evaluates one's actions and attitudes against the standard of the law. Typically, the conscience condemns for failure to keep the law. Sometimes it signals approval, but not in a salvific sense.

Paul assumes the reality of the conscience in this passage. On a *ressentiment* reading, it carries over from the subtext of Romans 1, wherein we saw the formation of the conscience in the internalisation stage of *ressentiment*. I took Paul's description of the Gentile 'thought process' in 2:15 to refer to the functioning of their conscience. Motives and thoughts, both conscious and unconscious, are debated and evaluated in the conscience. In *ressentiment* terms, this is the famous internal struggle of forces competing for outward manifestation. Paul's account indicates the Gentiles experience such a struggle over the law of God. Yet elsewhere he says the Gentiles do not have the law (2:12, 14). So how can they be held accountable for violating it, let alone desire to conform to it? The answer lies in other, somewhat puzzling statements of Paul. He says

the Gentiles are ‘a law unto themselves’ (14), and ‘they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts’ (15). I determined these statements to reveal the function of their conscience, by which a sense of moral responsibility to keep the law is expressed. From Romans 1, we gathered God’s moral norm is given to man as law, and a *ressentiment* interpretation of such limitation is seen as oppressively restrictive, and therefore injurious. Violation of this law carries with it tacit knowledge of consequences which may be seen in the Gentiles’ self-deceiving behaviour (Rom 1:18, 25). This self-deception finds further support when Paul speaks about ‘secrets’ in 2:16.

A *ressentiment* construal of the self views the self as a sea of forces clashing against one another for the sake of dominant expression. These forces include emotions, motives, and thoughts (collectively, ‘thoughts’), any of which may be conscious to the self. Other forces may be unconscious due to repression, with the result they are hidden from the self. Paul deftly moves from discussing the Gentiles’ self-arbitration of thoughts in the present (Rom 2:15) to the future when the secrets of all men will be exposed in the final judgement of God (16).

The concept of self-deception recommends an explanation as to why secrets are kept in the first place. The conscience functions by measuring thoughts against the law of God, which is universally and unavoidably known. Thoughts that transgress that standard must be hidden for their condemnatory nature. That is, they are made secret, first from God and then from the self. The revaluative function of *ressentiment* sheds light on how this happens. In the internal struggle of the weak person, those thoughts that are repressed reflect values associated with, and resented, in the strong. Their (i.e., the values) worth is still maintained by the weak, however, so they continue to exert pressure on the self. On top of this, the conflict involved in repressing these values and thoughts about them is repressed. This results in a disintegrated self, which violates the pursuit of wholeness and the manifestation of an integrated identity. The revaluation of *ressentiment* is completed by borrowing a standard alien to the self to use in measuring the self’s identity.

Paul’s description of the Gentiles’ secret thoughts finds resonance with this model. Gentiles hide certain thoughts from themselves because they deviate from God’s law. In this sense, the law serves as the moral standard imposed at creation. It comes with consequences of judgement and death for transgression, and these in turn are portended by God’s wrath. Fallen-man as *ressentiment*-man is so offended by such limitation on his freedom that he rejects the imposition of the law, effectively rejecting

the one who gives it. Man cannot reject God openly because he is overwhelmingly powerful. He therefore unconsciously revalues his situation, hiding both the results and the process from himself, so he can feel justified in what he perceives to be his resultant superior position. Desires and thoughts of freedom and self-determination still exert force, but they must be repressed to achieve a unified sense of self that conforms to God's law. This is how the self-deception of *ressentiment* works. Thoughts hidden from the self that comprise it are parallel to the Pauline 'secret' thoughts of Romans 2:16.

Further conclusions regarding the nature of self-deception were reached by analysing the work of four scholars. The existential origins of *ressentiment* and self-deception were explored in Sugarman's work. In *PTG*, Nietzsche concludes that *ressentiment* is rooted in animosity toward the fleeting nature of existence. Life is nothing more than existential transience, or change (*PTG* 4). There is no cause or purpose, just existence. Man, however, wants purpose and permanence. This, Nietzsche claims, belies resentment at his circumstance of suffering and death. He wants to overcome death, but without a purpose for his existence, he is left without recourse for violation of that purpose. He invents morality, featuring a sense of guilt, to supply himself with purpose, and to fashion of himself being (i.e., a self). Thus, I concluded morality owes its success to self-deception. Ultimately, that is the move that makes permanent man's sense of being and justifies his existence.

Poellner's philosophical treatment of *ressentiment* supplied a clue to an impetus strong enough to account for the energy required for self-deception. The goal of Nietzschean *ressentiment* is to overcome the suffering inherent in subjugation. It is achieved through moral superiority over a perceived-to-be more powerful and threatening other. This comes about by revaluing one's circumstances, which must be consciously held and intentionally motivated, but at the same time masked from the self. I hypothesised that the initial injury catalysing *ressentiment* not only results in anger, but in a paradoxically-close emotional relative, fear. This accords with the conditions of *ressentiment*-man in relation to the perceived threat of the oppressive other, and also of fallen-man who finds himself in transgression against the ultimate other, God.

I used the work of Bahnsen to test this hypothesis. Couched in a Romans 1 framework, Bahnsen claims self-deception in fallen-man is demonstrated by denying the creator despite possessing knowledge of him. Like Poellner, he concluded it is possible to intentionally deceive oneself, yet be genuinely deceived. The key is sufficient motivation to explain the extraordinary lengths undertaken to accept evidence

favouring a desirable belief about the self, while a) avoiding, perverting, or otherwise hiding distressing and painful evidence that would falsify that perception, and b) covering that policy of hiding. To escape the infinite regress of deception (i.e., covering the coverings), I concluded this policy of covering must have the property of self-covering. Bahnsen's work confirmed the plausibility that fear is sufficiently strong to completely cover, experientially speaking, a belief that threatens a desirable self-perception. In terms of Romans 1, this means fallen-man suppresses truth about God, about himself, and the enmity between God and himself.

Via's work on Paul helped round out the study of self-deception. Fallen-man mistakenly but willingly fashions a cover story of belief that obedience to the law of God (i.e., his values), rather than faith in his provision apart from the law, results in salvation. But man cannot completely conceal from himself the real story that no amount of law-keeping will achieve righteous standing before God. Man's efforts to live up to the law yield only an inner tension between the undesirable self he does not desire to be, and the preferred self he desires to be but cannot realise. This tension generates the kind of fear and anxiety (Rom 8:15; Phil 4:6) that drives him to assuage them. As self-deceived, fallen-man zealously pursues the acquisition of righteousness on his own merits against warranted beliefs to the contrary. Thus, he devalues the law's obligations in a way conducive to a preferred self-righteousness image.

Synthesising these findings permitted me to speak of certain relevant aspects of man's fallenness in terms of *ressentiment*, with self-deception serving as the nexus between Nietzschean and Pauline systems. Poellner's double-deception, Bahnsen's orders of belief, and Via's cover stories all dovetail in the notion of self-deception. They speak to man's dual quest. Half of the quest is for life and well-being. It comes in pursuing both the belief he lives according to his own law and authority, and the awareness he is worthy of that existence. The other half of the quest is overcoming death and judgement. It comes in a desperate fleeing from both the penalty of not living according to God's law and authority, and the awareness he is worthy of the penalty for violating them. Fallenness as *ressentiment* is manifested in revaluing man's circumstances such that God, the law, and man's own self are revalued and inverted. God is unworthy of obedience and worship for the oppression that comes by way of his injurious law, and man is adequate to achieve his own righteousness by attaining a standard which he himself sets. Man considers himself *ipso facto* worthy of existence based on a world that supports his carefully crafted self-image. Nietzsche endorses such

a man powerful and wise enough to create a world without gravity (Z 3.11) that revolves around a new sun (GS 3.125). Paul would see this as the folly of self-deception, and fallen-man's extraordinary efforts in world-creation as evidence he knows deep down he is deserving of death.

I therefore suggested that fear of death may be a plausibly sufficient motive in self-deception. It is intrinsic to Nietzsche's *ressentiment* morality, and is amenable to Paul's notion of consequence to sin. Nietzsche treats death in the normal sense of biological cessation of life, as well a figurative or spiritual sense. His problem with morality comes in dealing with death, and its resultant fear, in a figurative sense. Nietzsche claims that acquiescence in suffering and death is to turn away from life and give up hope of creating anything beyond oneself (Z 1.4).² Death is the result, figuratively speaking, of the slaves' losing battle to preserve their existence (OGM 3.12, 13). Therefore, Nietzsche rails against the message of Christian redemption because it is a tacit reaction to this fear of death (2.22). He considers this death to be nihilism, an existential threat which he defines as the abandonment of all 'value, meaning, and desirability' (WP 'Toward an Outline' 1).

I borrowed sociological insights from Becker, among others, to provide resolution on my argument that fear of death drives self-deception. Becker acknowledges unconscious despair over the certainty of death to be an endemic human trait. It is so powerful that no one can bear its constant threat, so it must be concealed from the self. Nevertheless, it manifests in general anxiety. A person must fashion a superior, heroic, image of the self to combat it. This is done by revaluing the world around the self. I determined this flight to one's preferred reality is a form of repression, and a way to overcome the fear of death. In this vein, I proposed Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and *amor fati* amount to a different way to cope with fear of death, a Nietzschean alternative redemption. Nietzsche's construal of death as nihilism recommended the use of Heidegger. He views fear of physical death, and anxiety over existential death, to be so powerful it forces us to live inauthentic lives. We desire the certainty and permanence Anaximander sought, so we seize on being a certain way in the world, a world of our choosing. This, I claimed, is resonant of the revaluation of self-deception in *ressentiment*.

Finally, the Apostle Paul recognises the powerful force of fear of death in the domain of fallen humanity. His discussion of redemption in Romans 8:12ff treats

² Nietzsche's text here is intentionally ambiguous, referring to both figurative and literal death.

suffering in the world as a harbinger of ultimate demise. Life under the fall may continue in the sense of biological functioning, but given man's separation from God due to sin, he is spiritually dead. Paul discusses man's life as dead in sin/transgression (Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13), so he sees it as characteristic of the way life in the fallen world *is*. Paul tells us the threat of death, revealed in the wrath of God on sinful creation, is both being suppressed and exchanged for an amenable view of the world, and of oneself. Nietzsche would view it as the self-deception of *ressentiment*.

5.2 Contributions of Thesis

No matter which way one turns, scholarship abounds in Nietzschean philosophy and Pauline theology. Pairings of Nietzsche with religious studies³ or Paul with philosophical studies⁴ are likewise numerous. When it comes to Nietzsche's analysis of Christianity in specific, however, few authors feature Paul and his role, tending instead to favour Nietzsche's own use of Jesus. For example, Karl Jaspers leaves Paul at the margins in discussing Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, preferring instead to focus on Jesus as the centre of that account (1961:26-36). Walter Kaufmann acknowledges Nietzsche's designation of Paul as the first Christian, but goes no further than Jaspers in saying that Paul's evangel comes by inverting the figure of Jesus to become a rallying point for resentful people to overcome their leaders and rulers (1974:343-45). Even fewer authors directly relate Nietzschean and Pauline thought to one another.⁵

Narrower still is the field on which Nietzsche and Paul are brought into engagement over matters of morality. Tim Murphy (2001) takes Nietzsche's issue to be ills he perceives in modern Christian Europe, and his view that Paul, even more than being the instigator of Christianity, stands as the origin of a sign-chain extending through the early church as Peter, and on into the historical Church as Luther. Jörg Salaquarda (1985), Christa Acampora (2013), and Abed Azzam (2015) all highlight the contest between Nietzsche and Paul. Salaquarda views the relationship between the

³ Relevant works on Nietzsche and religion include Bonifazi 1953; Scheler 1998; Jaspers 1961; Küng 1980; Geffré & Jossua 1981; Deleuze 1983; O'Flaherty 1985; Valadier 1985; Ratschow 1988; Salaquarda 1996; Roberts 1998; Kee 1999; van Tongeren 2000; Westphal 2000; Marion 2001; Murphy 2001; Santaniello 2001; Benson 2002; Fraser 2002; Moore 2002; Deane 2006; Milbank 2006; Williams 2006; Young 2006; Hovey 2008; Huskinson 2009.

⁴ Relevant works on Paul and philosophy include Pflieger 1906; Adams 1992; Sandnes 1993; Gooch 1997; Vattimo 1999, 2003; Fredrickson 2000; Winter 2002; Badiou 2003; Žižek 2003; Agamben 2005; Jennings 2006; Wasserman 2008; Caputo 2009; Engberg-Pedersen 2008; Blanton & De Vries 2012; Frick 2013.

⁵ Relevant works include Lea 1972; O'Flaherty, et al. 1985; Schacht 1994; Kee 1999; Lippitt & Urpeth 2000; Fraser 2002; Girard 2000; Taubes 2004.

‘revaluator’ Nietzsche and the ‘revaluator’ Paul, not in terms of simple conflict, but in terms of dialectical overcoming (Salaquarda 1985:127). Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence of the same, as the positive Dionysian promise of life, overcomes what Nietzsche considers the old system of values ensconced in Christianity and promulgated by the Pauline negative notion of the destruction of the law. Acampora takes Nietzsche to contend with Paul in a bid to end traditional morality. At stake is Nietzsche’s vision for mankind’s future. Thus, he contests the very type of battlefield. If the contest takes place on a spiritual, other-worldly plane, Pauline motives and values have the advantage. If the battle transpires on a this-worldly plane, then slave values may be overcome by Dionysian values. They promote a desire for becoming, which is more basic and enduring than that of being, and bears its own seeds of demise (Acampora 2013:110-28). For Azzam, it is their respective efforts to authorise a radical system that liberates humanity from the past—for Nietzsche’s Paul, it is Christ as the anti-Dionysian; for Nietzsche, it is the Antichrist as the ‘anti-anti-Dionysian’, which is to say, the truly free and active Dionysus (Azzam 2015:49).

The area to which this thesis contributes is the moral space contested by Nietzsche and Paul that features *ressentiment*, and thus opens avenues to explore its inherent self-deception. Two works stand out in this regard, Morgan Rempel’s *Nietzsche, Psychohistory, and the Birth of Christianity* (2002), and Bruce Benson’s *Pious Nietzsche* (2008). Rempel conducts a psychohistorical analysis of Nietzsche’s psychological approach to understanding Jesus and, crucially for my purposes, Paul, in the birth of Christianity (Rempel 2002:9f). He finds that while Nietzsche’s intent concerning Jesus is to rescue him from Pauline Christianity (139-41), he trains his sights on the Apostle Paul in open hostility, with ‘the occasional indication of begrudging respect’ (61). Rempel makes much of Nietzsche’s aphorism, ‘The First Christian’ (*D* 1.68), in which he recounts Saul the young Pharisee tormented by the demands of God’s law (2002:63-65). As a transgressor of the law, he unconsciously projects his failings on others, making them transgressors, whom he then pursues in hope of winning favour from God (65-68). No favour is forthcoming, however, even as the pain of guiltiness over moral failure increases.

This failure underlies Paul’s official mission to the Syrian capital (Acts 9:2). Nietzsche claims his fragile psychological state gives way to ‘the thought of thoughts, the key of keys, the light of lights’ (*D* 1.68). This insight relieves Paul of the fatigue of zealotry by virtue of the Cross of Christ. God no longer persecutes transgressors

because he has destroyed the law through the death of Jesus. ‘And where there is no law’ Rempel reminds us from Romans 4:14, ‘there is no transgression’ (2002:77). This is ‘essentially what happened’ to Paul, asserts Nietzsche, detected through a psychologist’s eye able to ‘really read’ Paul (*D* 1.68). Every claim reveals something about the one who claims it, claims Nietzsche (*BGE* 5.187). So the key to interpreting Paul lies in discovering his psychological needs, not in uncovering any historical ‘truth’ (2002:77; *WP* 2.171).⁶

Thus, Paul’s ‘second enlightenment’ was bound to happen (*D* 1.68). That is, his need for deliverance from the excruciating pain of guilt generates a reality-induced perception of deliverance, embodied in the resurrected Christ. Nietzsche redacts Paul’s conversion through psychological analysis.⁷ Rather than the unconditional surrender of wholehearted admission of guilt before the demands of God and his law—genuine repentance—Nietzsche reads into Paul’s thinking what may be viewed as a ‘second enlightenment’. Rempel’s analysis turns on two key thoughts in the Apostle’s mind, summarised as follows. Here is a way to deal with my problems. First, as Saviour he can rescue me from my pain by his death on the cross. Second, this revelation to me allows me to control the message of the destruction of the law. Heretofore, forgiveness shall come exclusively through the message which I publish! (see Rempel 2002:71-77; *D* 1.68).

Rempel explains Nietzsche’s perspective is the source of Paul’s enthusiasm for his new-found direction (2002:77-81). Running along with Paul’s pain are his ‘psychoconstitutional deficiencies’ (78), from which stem an intolerance of the ambiguity that inheres to liberty. Dissonance and scepticism inhabit the domain of grand intellects, the psychologically strong, and free spirits. By contrast, in *A* 54 Nietzsche asserts convictions and beliefs are proclivities of the weak, the intellectual prisoner. The believers’ truth must conform to their belief, given they are ‘not free to have any sort of conscience for the question “true” or “untrue” ... People with convictions have pathological conditioned optics, which makes them into fanatics’ (*A* 54). Listening to Nietzsche, one hears Paul is a faithful fanatic. For neither prior to his vision, nor subsequent to it, does he really want to know what is true (*A* 52). Nietzsche goes on to explain such conceptual epileptics are not really sincere in their belief-

⁶ As one who cannot abide such an interpretive strategy, Foot criticises Nietzsche as a ‘partly wonderful psychologist and partly a mere speculating philosopher far exceeding any plausible basis for his speculations’ (1994:13).

⁷ Rempel’s section entitled, ‘Phase Two: Paul’s Conversion’, features Nietzsche’s audacious rereading of the Damascus Road event.

conviction, but are rather self-interested. They adopt what they need in the beginning (i.e., a lie), then build up a tradition of belief to strengthen their own position into that of fact, and on to orthodoxy (i.e., truth, A 55).

Nietzsche argues believers compensate for and camouflage their false truth, so to speak, with fanaticism (A 54). The fanatic lives by the peril of the pendulum in that ‘extreme positions are not succeeded by moderate ones but by extreme positions of the opposite kind’ (WP 1.55).⁸ So it is with Paul, explains Rempel. Nietzsche claims Paul merely exchanges the object of his conviction—from faith in Law to faith in Christ—without disrupting his epileptic expression of will-to-power, i.e., fanaticism. Altogether, this creates a very powerful messenger indeed (Rempel 2002:81).

How could Paul the Apostle hijack Jesus the Master’s message? The answer lies in a confluence of factors, the first of which is a very impressionable first-century milieu ripe for misunderstanding the gospel (Rempel 2002:85-112; see Magnus 1985:297-305). Nietzsche numbers himself and Jesus among a very few ‘emancipated spirits’ (A 36) who remain untainted by their surrounding culture (Rempel 2002:99, 101f). Another factor relates to the death of Jesus. Had he evaded premature death, no doubt he too would have hardened along with the rancorous *ethnos* which Judaism had become, and been locked into its diseased system. He would thus have preached a very different message (16-20). Jesus does indeed die too early, according to Nietzsche, which leaves ‘Jewish Christians’, the ‘first congregation’ (A 44), those ruled by a ‘priestly aristocracy’ (OGM 1.6), free to translate his message in conformity with their needs (Rempel 2002:90-92). Now available for the masses, Christianity is born, its Saviour ‘only possible in a Jewish landscape—I mean one over which the gloomy and sublime thunder cloud of the wrathful Jehovah was brooding continually’ (GS 3.137). The soil of this landscape is toxified with the ‘deepest and most sublime hatred’, yielding a values-inverted morality, the present system of good and evil (OGM 1.6; see 7). Rempel rightly identifies the main toxifying agent as *ressentiment* (2002:92-112).

Rempel rightly addresses Nietzsche’s questioning of Paul’s Damascus Road vision, wherein Nietzsche claims that what Paul ‘really sees’ is generated by a strong, felt reaction to the pain of condemnation. Rempel makes clear that in reading the Apostle’s own account, one cannot deny Nietzsche radically reinterprets Paul’s

⁸ In Philippians, the Apostle uses cognates of *διώκω* to describe both his pre-conversion *persecution* of the church as a religious zealot (3:6), and his post-conversion *pursuit* of Christ as a believer (3:12). The former manifests his faith in the Law, the latter his faith in the Christ-God.

experience (2002:72f).⁹ This thesis has turned the equation around to ask why it is Nietzsche reacts this way, with such a profoundly divergent interpretation of Paul? As I have shown, such a reactive mode is characteristic of *ressentiment*, and *ressentiment* entails the threat of exposure to that which has been previously hidden. A Pauline construal would argue this is truth about God and its consequences for humanity. I posit Nietzsche's contestation with Paul's god is too difficult a prospect to countenance, so Paul himself becomes the face of opposition and the focal point of Nietzsche's wrath. Therefore, he spends the rest of his life locked in mortal combat with the Apostle, for the self-image and life arising from Nietzsche's own philosophy depend on overcoming him (see Danto 1965:154f).

Nietzsche's attack may be understood in two ways. In terms of defence, one must account for his disproportionate response to Paul—'There has not been since Voltaire such an outrageous attack on Christianity [as mine]' (Middleton 1996:219). Based on Rempel's work (see 2002:70), it must be considered whether or not, in Pauline perspective, Nietzsche just as much seeks to escape reality as Paul himself is accused of doing from Nietzsche's point of view. If, deep down he knows he cannot overpower Paul (or Paul's message), he must seek to circumvent the pain. Granted, Nietzsche's philosophical path is also pockmarked with pain, but not nearly so much as the way he perceives Paul's message leads, which is to ultimate rejection by God. Concomitantly, Nietzsche's path is also a means by which the self devises control. Offensively, Nietzsche critiques Jesus and attacks Paul. Nietzsche links Jesus' 'instinct of hatred for every reality' with his 'flight into the "unimaginable," into the "inconceivable" ... [into] a world that has become completely "internal", a "true" world, an "eternal" world' (A 29). Whereas Jesus may be excused for his immaturity and incapacity for such a perspective, Paul may not. His distortion and promulgation of Jesus' message into a dysevangel is diabolical and designed for control. Therefore, Nietzsche undermines Paul's psychological state as a fledging Pharisee, arguing he is the one incapable of or unwilling to grasp reality as it is. Nietzsche also employs a strategy of defusing the Apostle's power as an apologist for Christianity, casting aspersions on his motives.

All of this I contend is a manifestation of *ressentiment*. The alternative is repentance and would signal defeat, inadequacy, wretchedness, and humiliation for

⁹ See also Badiou, who remarks on Nietzsche's recounting of Paul's 'Damascene moment' in A 58 that 'nothing in this text fits' (2003:31).

Nietzsche: in a word, impotence. In a world where the self equals power, this is a fate worse than death. Surely Rempel's ultimate conclusion is correct, that

the first Christians and St. Paul are not alone in their tendency to 'adjust' their image of Jesus 'into an apologia of themselves.' Nietzsche of course does this precisely as well ... The redeemer Nietzsche eventually extricates from Christianity ends up resembling the philosopher's self-image to a remarkable degree. (2002:141)

What Nietzsche proffers as wisdom about others, then, rebounds on himself: I realise 'what every great philosophy has been so far: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unnoticed *mémoires*' (BGE 1.6).¹⁰ Solomon concurs, writing of Nietzsche, 'There are all of those pages unmasking *ressentiment* in some of the greatest minds in Western thought, but they are self-evidently animated by the same unmistakable resentfulness and envy in their unloved and unappreciated author' (1996:215). Huskinson, among others, accuses Nietzsche of hypocrisy over the very same matter, using Paul as a 'mere motif' to his own ends of deconstructing and discrediting Christianity. 'We could even go further in our psychological speculation,' she writes, 'and suggest that Nietzsche's Paul is a product of Nietzsche's own *ressentiment*'. (2009:31). What Nietzsche despises in others, he boasts in himself, ironically falling prey to 'the most common lie', 'the one you tell yourself' (A 55). Staten places this realisation under scrutiny by posing the question at the beginning of his *Nietzsche's Voice*, "'Every great philosophy so far": does this mean up to, but not including, Nietzsche's?' (1990:10) Staten responds to his own question, at least preliminarily, at the end of his first chapter:

So it appears that Nietzsche is here falsifying his own insight, using it to justify his pose of autarky and ataraxia. He is engaging, in fact, in an economic subterfuge of a type that is all too human, perhaps the most human subterfuge of all. Specifically, and ironically, one motivated by what Nietzsche teaches us to call *ressentiment*, the vengefulness of the impotent against those who have power over them. (:38)

Girard agrees, commenting that Nietzsche 'shares' in *ressentiment*, from which 'none of Nietzsche's achievements as a thinker can be divorced' (2000:246). Finally, Giovanni Papini argues Nietzsche is 'actuated by resentment', causing him to fail 'to understand the vitality of Christianity' ... thus revealing 'his own blindness, which was the sign of his weakness' (Ledure 1981:44). This notion that Nietzsche, himself, might be a candidate for self-deception via *ressentiment*, particularly in view of his discourse over Pauline morality, led to the contemplation of a Pauline riposte to Nietzsche as self-deceived.

¹⁰ Along these lines, see Safranski's *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (2003).

This recommends consideration of a theological perspective on the Nietzsche-Paul engagement afforded by the work of Benson. Reminiscent of Jaspers,¹¹ Benson claims that Nietzsche's mature philosophy bears a striking resemblance to the Christian Pietism of his youthful Christianity. Benson identifies significant similarities, in form if not in content, between the respective beliefs of the younger Fritz and the older Friedrich.¹² The younger sees a spiritual/moral fall; the elder, decadence. The younger overcomes suffering through salvation; the older, by embracing it. The younger affirms metaphysical reality, both now and hereafter; the older, only the present material world. The younger believes in the transcendent, loving God of truth from Christianity; the older, in the Dionysian reality of *amor fati*, resulting in the affirmation of all that is Life, including the self. Regardless of the development of his thought, however, not only does Nietzsche not rise above the life-denying decadence of philosophy, art, or religion by eschewing faith in anything transcendent, Benson believes he cannot. Instead, Benson exposes Nietzsche's all-too-human, and implicitly Pauline, need for meaning. Küng, amongst others, anticipates Benson's association of Nietzsche and Paul in demanding Nietzsche's atheism 'be taken wholly seriously in theological terms' (1980:371). Benson asserts fundamentally Nietzsche argues most with those whom he resembles: Socrates, Wagner, and Paul (2008:73). Regarding the latter figure, Benson coalesces his reasoning by putting forth Nietzsche as a 'second Paul' (119). I tease out and distil into two points of comparison from Benson's discussion of Nietzsche in relation to Paul. A third comparison, derived from Benson, is subsequently be offered.

Scope of impact is one characteristic shared by Nietzsche and Paul. Both catalysed explosive, history-altering movements. Paul's Christianity numbers more than two billion adherents worldwide according to a survey by the Pew Research Center (2011:9). Many of Nietzsche's views were appropriated by the fascist regimes of both Italy and Germany (Shirer 1960:99-101; Sluga 1993:29-52). Nietzsche scholars, Solomon and Higgins, assert that 'Nietzsche is now the most often cited philosopher in the Western tradition' (2000:3). Their claim gains traction in Nietzsche's influence on twentieth-century thinkers such as Klossowski, Heidegger, Bataille, Kojève, Danto, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida, Camus, Kaufmann, and Nehamas to name a few. This is to say nothing of commonplace terminology today that he either coined or

¹¹ See Jaspers' third chapter in *Nietzsche and Christianity*, entitled, 'Nietzsche's View of World History Stems from Christian Motives Drained of Their Substance' (1961:46-85).

¹² 'Fritz', the sobriquet for 'Friedrich', is how Nietzsche is affectionately known in his youth.

popularised such as aesthetics, values, will-to-power, free spirit, sublimation, cultural philistine, nihilism, superman, and self-overcoming.

Nietzsche views Paul as his ‘chief rival’, but also respects him as ‘the exemplar for what he himself wants to accomplish’ (Benson 2008:136). He envies Paul’s genius insight into the *ressentiment*-motivated, ‘secretly seditious ... antichrist intrigues in the Empire’, as well as the scope of his vision for discovering ‘how ... to kindle a “world fire”’ (A 58; see Benson 2008:119, 37; Salaquarda 1985:103-10). Benson cites Nietzsche’s summation of Paul’s mastery over Rome (2008:135; A 58). For Nietzsche, Paul is the first Christian—Benson substitutes, ‘first theologian’ (124)—the one who single-handedly transvalues all values. Nietzsche proclaims his desire to realise the same feat (119):

Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for an act of humanity’s highest self-examination, an act that has become flesh and genius in me. My lot would have it that I am the first decent human being, that I know myself to be opposing the hypocrisy of millennia ... I was the first to discover the truth because I was the first to see—to smell—lies for what they are’. (EH ‘Destiny’ 1)

In light of declarations such as this, Benson finds it hard to believe Nietzsche does not recognise himself as ‘a kind of modern Paul, or even anti-Paul’, in ‘overturning Paul’s “perversion”’ (2008:75). Benson is surely right, and paves the way to view Paul’s success as rivalling that which Nietzsche envisions for himself, thus rendering the Apostle an equal and worthy enemy (EH ‘Why I Am so Wise’ 6f).

Deception as a motive is a second characteristic shared by Nietzsche and Paul. *Ressentiment* evidences decadence par excellence. Nietzsche blasts Paul as a master of *ressentiment* for his ‘high priestly’ sway over the masses. Of course, the mature Nietzsche is confident that

anyone who knows how seriously my philosophy has taken up the fight against lingering and vengeful feelings, right up into the doctrine of ‘free will’—the fight against Christianity is just one instance of this—anyone aware of this will understand why I am calling attention to my own behaviour, my sureness of instinct in practice. (EH ‘Wise’ 6)

Benson points out that Nietzsche views himself untouched by *ressentiment*. But vengeful hatred is fundamentally chameleonic (2008:152f, 190). As such, it may be alleged Nietzsche knows all too well it is often sublimated in other forms (152f; *OGM* 3.16-20), and may even go ‘underground’ (3.14; Benson 2008:131f).

Nietzsche has no trouble with intentional deception. In fact, it may amount to self-artistry (*BGE* 4.192). However, deception is also a major facet of *ressentiment*. Though Nietzsche forbids himself such dabblings in decadence (EH ‘Wise’ 6), his words betray

him. For instance, since he discusses doing good as a means of evil (Z 1.19; see Rom 12:20), the same may be attributed to his own do-gooding:

You just need to do to me [i.e., Nietzsche] some wrong ... I 'retaliate', you can be sure of that: I quickly find some opportunity to thank the 'wrong-doer' (occasionally even for the wrong)—or to ask him for something, which can be friendlier than giving him something. (EH 'Wise' 5)

Here Nietzsche speaks of retaliation in terms of repaying good for evil, but in his economy of revalued values, doing so runs the risk of actually doling out evil (i.e., good borne of love). How does Nietzsche, therefore, avoid what he rails against? Benson suggests it comes by a hatred that blinds even as it compels, and draws one into the vortex of *ressentiment* (2008:59f). Nietzsche speaks of repayment, presumably as a means of avoiding the *ressentiment* he goes on to discuss in the following aphorism. Through Zarathustra, he says that it is even better to respond with open anger than to mask an offence with a response of kindness (Z 1.19). Yet in *EH* Nietzsche advocates reprisal via kindness. What is this if not indirect retaliation? Nietzsche, himself, seems caught in the trap he so earnestly desires to escape. Poellner's thought¹³ concurs in theory the strength of the pull of *ressentiment*:

Ressentiment is essentially a purposeful distortion of the character of its objects in order to justify a negative affect—hatred—regarding them which is motivated by their possessing some power over the *ressentiment* subject, and which remains unacknowledged by the subject. (2009:247)

Nietzsche would no doubt disavow any such motive or behaviour on his part, and does so in his auto-biopic, *EH*. Benson presses his case against Nietzsche's 'who I am' (*EH* 'Preface' 1) by cataloguing the ways in which he is in the dark about himself. First, Nietzsche has not transcended all dealings with God, but is rather 'obsessed with God throughout his life' (Benson 2008:210). Second, Nietzsche's rejection of his German ancestry for Polish is a strategy of masquerade, a useful lie needed to justify personal transformation (*EH* 'Wise' 3; 'Clever' 4; see Middleton 1996:293). This denial is fatal to Nietzsche's *amor fati* commitment to 'yes-saying' (Benson 2008:210). Third, Nietzsche appears unaware he has resurrected the redemption project. In *EH*, the indispensable vehicle for Nietzsche 'to say who I am' ('Preface' 1), Benson quotes the philosopher as dismissing any personal awareness of spiritual need. 'Really religious difficulties, for example, I don't know from experience ... "God," "the immortality of the soul," "redemption," "beyond"—without exception, concepts to which I have never devoted any attention, or time; not even as a child' (Benson 2008:210). Benson

¹³ See section 4.3 of this thesis.

identifies a troubling ambiguity in Nietzsche through perceptive readings of his ‘Sorcerer’ (Z 4.5-7), and ‘Ariadne’s Complaint’ derived from it. He desires both the absence and presence of God:

True, he moves from his old faith in the God of Christianity to faith in Life, resulting in both a desire to serve Life and a willingness to say ‘Yes and Amen’ to Life rather than God. But he has not left what Salomé terms the ‘mystical God-ideal’ behind. (Benson 2008:211)

At the same time, he longs to escape such tension, revealing in the end he is mired in decadence. He

wishes to be free from the very hope of redemption. But ... it would seem that to be saved from salvation—or redeemed from redemption—is once again to repeat the very logic from which one wishes to escape. Nietzsche does realize that one cannot escape decadence merely by making war against it ... but how, then, can Nietzsche truly escape from escaping, overcome overcoming, redeem himself from redemption, or save himself from salvation? (213)

As Nietzsche is left with nothing more than a ‘religious move’ of faith, Benson purports to have exposed his shortcomings in faithfulness as a Dionysian disciple. Nietzsche fails to attain the childlike faith necessary for the overcoming to which he aspires and, ironically, to which he is much closer in his youthful pursuit of Christ (213f). There is also incongruity in Nietzsche’s late period when he explicitly teaches redemption through Zarathustra’s speech, ‘On Redemption’ (2.20). It may be argued that in doing so, Nietzsche tacitly acknowledges the need for liberation, albeit on his own terms. In the end, his apparent flight from reason into madness may secure for him his dream (Benson 2008:201f, 216). Perhaps he obtains his Dionysian ideal and ‘feels himself to be a god’ (*BT* ‘Spirit’ 1; see Roberts 2000:221f).

Nietzsche considers Paul to function as a priest (A 42; Benson 2008:130), and all those of the priestly class are shot through with a hatred of ‘tremendous and uncanny proportions, to the most spiritual and poisonous variety’ (*OGM* 1.7). This gives rise to *ressentiment*, ‘an entire trembling earth of underground revenge’ against the powerful and happy (3.14). But Nietzsche recognises the priest (i.e., Paul) is able to somehow control *ressentiment*, i.e., to direct it. Thus, to accomplish his desired ends, the priest turns back the force of hateful revenge stemming from guilt upon the self, moralising it in the process (3.15). This second turn in the *ressentiment* cycle results in the formation of religion, Christianity its acme. As the architect of Christianity, Paul is the master of deception, for he must use it to blind his followers to the real cause of their pain. Nietzsche believes ‘Paul understood that lying—that “belief” was necessary’ (A 47). Paul consciously trades in deception, which is an exceptional accomplishment. Genius!

(58). By contrast, Nietzsche may be considered self-deceived, ironically, by his own words:

By lie I mean: wishing not to see something that one does see; wishing not to see something as one sees it. Whether the lie takes place before witnesses or without witnesses does not matter. The most common lie is that with which one lies to oneself; lying to others is, relatively, an exception. (Benson 2008:162f; see 95, 210f; also *A* 54)

Benson's work allows theological extrapolation for the sake of positing control as an ultimate objective, and thus a third characteristic linking Nietzsche and Paul. Benson appreciates the centrality of power for Nietzsche, and no one states it more essentially than Nietzsche himself: '*I am dynamite*' (italics supplied, *EH* 'Why I Am a Destiny' 1). As a philologist and expert on classic Greek civilisation, Nietzsche is fully aware of the etymology of his appellation (Solomon 1996:56f).¹⁴ In his mature philosophical thought it is hardly contestable that power, for Nietzsche, is the 'guiding' force in the world: 'the world is the will-to-power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will-to-power and nothing besides!' (Nietzsche 1968:550). Kaufmann refers to it as 'the central conception of Nietzsche's later thought' (1974a:211), and Carson writes that 'his whole project of going back to uncover the origins of morality is in fact predicated on the need to replace morality with power' (2006:21). Persistent detractors notwithstanding (Magnus & Higgins 1996:215f), Nietzsche equates 'the essence of life' in no uncertain terms with 'will to power' (*OGM* 2.12; see *BGE* 2.36). As far as Nietzsche is concerned, will-to-power is neither moral nor immoral in the traditional sense. It merely *is*, and what *is* stands as good. On the other side of the equation, Paul is also about power, per Nietzsche: 'The "God" that Paul invented for himself, a God who "confounds all worldly wisdom" . . . , is in truth just Paul's firm decision to do it himself' (*A* 47). God is the Apostle's sock-puppet that allows him to exercise his own will. Further, Paul's soul-burdened preaching of the sin-bearing cross of Christ reveals his own insatiable lust for power (*D* 1.68). Benson describes Nietzsche's will-to-power

as a concatenation of wills or forces or instincts that are continually shifting in their hierarchy. At any given point, there can be a kind of 'contract' that spells out the hierarchy of forces, although it is always subject to revision. (2008:62; see *WP* 2.380f)

Will-to-power is good. It is good because it is the essence of life. Evidently, however, too much of an essential good is bad. Relative to the competition between forces comprising will-to-power, Benson quotes Nietzsche in his concern over too great a contest. It is too great because it is 'very unhealthy, inner ruin, disintegration, betraying

¹⁴ 'Dynamite' is rooted in the Greek, *dunamis*, meaning 'power' (Barnhart 1995:227). Kaufmann suggests that Nietzsche also has in mind *potentia* (1974a:186).

and increasing and inner conflict and anarchism’, a state overcome only, he continues, when ‘one’s passion at last becomes master’ (62). Health is achieved when competing wills, forces, or instincts are unified.

Benson quickly ushers in both *GS* 4.333 and Nietzsche’s quoting of Spinoza’s dictum on knowing, ‘*Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere!*’, as a foil for his own explanation.¹⁵ Knowledge is the ‘[singular] result of the different and mutually opposed desires to laugh, lament, and curse’, rather than the exclusion of one or more of any of them (4.333). As these competing *perspectives* press their view, ‘ultimately, we must decide which perspective we wish to accept as the “ruling” perspective’ (Benson 2008:62). This refereed result does not come primarily through ‘conscious thought’; rather, ‘the greatest part of our spirit’s activity remains unconscious and unfelt’ (*GS* 4.333; see Benson 2008:63). In that Nietzsche does not dismiss the knowledge process entirely from conscious thought, he leaves himself room for mastery, more commonly understood as control. Benson quotes Nietzsche from *BGE* 6.211, ‘*True philosophers are commanders and legislators: they say, “That is how it should be”*’ (italics original, 2008:63). Nietzsche’s discourse on true philosophers continues: ‘their “knowing” is creating, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is—will to power’ (*BGE* 6.211). Benson highlights the tension between viewing will-to-power either as a physical or as a metaphysical principle, eventually landing on the latter (2008:36-39). Kaufmann disagrees (1974a:204-07). On either view, power is a many splendored thing.¹⁶ In the former, it might be construed as muscular capacity, electro-mechanical force, or military might. In the latter, it may be understood as capacity in the abstract, majority right, legal authority, persuasion, or influence. It is this last sense of ‘influence’, which I term ‘control’, which is now taken up.

Merold Westphal, positing Nietzsche as ‘right in his interpretation of Spinoza’s *conatus* as the “will to power”’, concludes, ‘then everything tends to absolutize itself, to treat the world as its oyster, as the collective means to its own flourishing’ (2001:288).¹⁷ Applying this to Nietzsche’s account of Paul’s conversion, one cannot dismiss the likelihood that Nietzsche has control in mind when referring to Paul, and Benson marshals Nietzsche’s *Dawn*¹⁸ as well as his *Nachlaß* as evidence (2008:121-25).

¹⁵ Kaufmann’s translation: “Not to laugh, not to lament, nor to detest, but to understand.” *Tractatus Politicus*, I. § 4’ (*GS* 4.333, footnote 62).

¹⁶ Solomon and Higgins lead a brief exploration into the multifaceted nature and ambiguous use of Nietzsche’s term (2000:215-22). Kaufmann provides a more detailed discussion (1974a:178-333).

¹⁷ Further discussion of will-to-power, and *conatus* in particular, see section 3.3.3.

¹⁸ Benson cites *Daybreak*, Hollingdale’s 1982 translation.

Nietzsche asserts Paul's 'lust for domination' supersedes his need to ease his troubled conscience. This directly leads to Paul's reinterpretation of Christ's crucifixion, on Nietzsche's lights, so that 'history will turn around [Paul] alone!' (*D* 1.68). This is control indeed, manifested in two ways. The most obvious is seen at the end of the quotation in Paul's manipulation of the Damascus event to effect a desirable result for himself: a self-centred history to instigate a self-centred world. What is not quite so obvious is power in the sense of that which 'controls' Paul. Earlier in the same aphorism (*D* 1.68), Nietzsche speaks of Paul's need to assuage his troubled conscience stemming from the demands of the law of God. Imagined or not, the pressure Paul feels to conform to the law builds to the point where something must give. At such a point, Paul's motive for relief catalyses the vision that 'could only have been the case' (see 2.2.1). This controlling power does not relegate him to victim status, however. Rather, Nietzsche identifies this as Paul's lust for domination. It is important to recall, according to Nietzsche, the world as power is never 'other' so as to yield plural essences. There are only competing currents which comprise the world of power. These are forces of will-to-power, and they converge at any given moment to manifest and/or masquerade as the self, then flow onward and outward to seize more power. Thus, Paul is controlled by *ressentiment* as 'an insatiable instinct and power-will that wants to become master not over something relating to life, but over life itself' (*OGM* 3.11). He seeks to control the world both around and within him, both past and future. For Nietzsche, Paul is a control freak.

What does Nietzsche's claim say about Nietzsche (*BGE* 5.187)? This section began with Nietzsche pointing an accusatory finger at Paul. Now the accusation rebounds. Benson effectively faults Nietzsche for being full of *ressentiment* and self-deception (2008:162f). This harmonises with Poellner, who writes, 'It is evidently impossible to state Nietzsche's *ressentiment* hypothesis without a concept of self-deception' (2000:229, note 33).¹⁹ Perhaps Nietzsche's revaluation project may even be viewed as dishonest, for Nietzsche notes this in other authors, but not in himself (Benson 2008:134). Benson finds support regarding Nietzsche's complicated interpretation of Paul from Bernstein, who writes such revaluation is

in part based upon what Paul wrote, in part on a travesty of what Paul wrote, and in part on Nietzsche's own psychologizing, from someone who did not disclaim an intimate acquaintance with the 'lust for power.' By not making any distinction between these, however, Nietzsche obscured the difference between the confessions by Paul, made with a purpose, and that which seems to penetrate beneath what Paul himself thought and can

¹⁹ Benson frequently associates and even equates the two concepts in Nietzsche (2008:202-11).

serve to cast aspersions on him and his thought in their entirety. And by obscuring this distinction Nietzsche could avoid raising the question whether Paul's struggle with the law was at all related to the most legitimate aspects of his own 'immoralism,' if aspects that were often obscured by Nietzsche himself. (2008:134)

By means of his psychologising, Nietzsche effectively silences Paul. Then he places words in his mouth that purportedly issue from thoughts and 'beliefs' in his own mind, i.e., 'Here is truly the way out! Here is truly the perfect revenge' (*D* 1.68). In this way, I note Nietzsche frames Paul as a swindler who pushes that which is unnecessary, and even harmful from Nietzsche's perspective, on the unsuspecting. Benson says as much by using Nietzsche's words, alluding to Paul's supposed dual need for relief from pain and desire for control (2008:135). In *A* 58 he claims Paul uses 'the belief in immortality in order to devalue "the world", and that the idea of "hell" could still gain control over Rome ... that the "beyond" could be used to kill life'. Yet Paul's attitude and words toward others reflect a genuine sharing of life, not the withholding of it, as Benson astutely cites 2 Corinthians 1:19-20 in this regard,

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not 'Yes' and 'No,' but in him it has always been 'Yes.' For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. (2008:135)

Paul may also be heard to accuse Nietzsche in his own right. He is fundamentally about power, even though he is not entirely aware of it, i.e., projecting his quest to meet his own needs onto others (210f). In view of this, I find Westphal's contribution constructive:

Nietzsche didn't intend his doctrine of the 'will to power' to be a secular, phenomenological account of original sin or his practice of suspicion to be an extension of the Pauline, Augustinian, and Lutheran employment of sin as an epistemological category; but he can be fruitfully read in that way. (2000:26)

Far from overcoming traditional morality shackled to sin, Westphal claims Nietzsche may be seen as giving evidence of sin. Driven by will-to-power, Nietzsche cannot bear the limitation exemplified in his own paramount exhibit of Christianity-as-the-law-of-God. Thus, we can conceive of Paul asserting Nietzsche, in a Gentile heritage devoid of the Law (of Moses), becomes a law to himself (Rom 2:14). It is in this light one may consider *amor fati* to be Nietzsche's law, 'saying yes to life, even in its strangest and harshest problems' (*TI* 'Ancients' 5). But this is

Nietzsche wearing a mask to help make himself into the person he so desperately wants to be. Making this claim turns out to be a strategy Nietzsche employs for overcoming his religious concerns, a way of viewing his life from a different perspective in order to reframe it and, ultimately reshape it ... He is full of denial' (Benson 2008:210).

If Benson is correct, Nietzsche may be employing a strategy of self-deception for fear of the inadequacy he might see—and deep down, knows—in himself to be true (see

2 Cor 3). Furthermore, the self-deception involved in denying this inadequacy extends to denying the reality of the standard against which he himself is measured.

With this in mind, and leaning on our gains from Chapter 4, I venture two questions. Might a subject who is aware of, and holds true belief about, some threatening reality, manipulate evidence²⁰ to create within the self a false belief concerning that reality? Furthermore, might this deception be ‘self-covering’, permitting the subject to operate according to a preferred perception of the self (or ‘selves’ in Nietzsche’s case), while at the same time maintaining their strategy of concealing true belief from the self? Benson’s argument leads me to think would answer these questions in the affirmative. He claims that Nietzsche ‘is all too aware of his own failings to live up to his own teachings’ (2008:214), and supports this by his confession from *EH* ‘Why I Am so Clever’ 4: ‘When I have looked into my Zarathustra, I walk up and down in my room for half an hour, unable to master an unbearable fit of sobbing’ (214). These are no tears of joy because Nietzsche discovers abysses in himself that reveal the depth of his despair over ‘the nothingness within him and the nothingness without’ (214; see also 211-15; *EH* ‘Clever’ 4). Benson’s insight here is perceptive:

What Nietzsche calls ‘the free spirit par excellence’ is able to dance ‘even beside abysses’ ... As the supposedly free spirit with ‘Dionysian faith’ enabling him to say ‘Yes and Amen’ to all that comes, he ought not to be sobbing. Instead, he should have the resolution ... to say: ‘All life gives I will joyfully accept: happiness and unhappiness ... and boldly look even death in the face. (2008:215)

Nietzsche’s sobbing exposes him as the antithesis of the ‘Dionysian man’, more closely resembling the fallen, quintessentially ‘wretched man’ of which Paul speaks in Romans 7:24.

Combining insights from Rempel and Benson allows the novel contribution of bringing Nietzschean *ressentiment* and Pauline fallenness into engagement with each other. The impetus for this project resulted from the tentative identification of a shared feature within each of their respective systems, self-deception. Nietzsche’s explication of the phenomenon of self-deception, in the context of his analysis of *ressentiment*, alerted us to potential similarities with what may be termed self-deception in Paul, as set in the context of his anthropological diagnosis of man’s fallen condition. By employing a hermeneutical strategy derived from Barth’s approach to Romans, I was able to surmount the ‘translation problem’ and pave the way for a fruitful interaction.

²⁰ Read ‘suppressing’ as one connotation of such manipulation.

I am now in a position to summarise the thesis argument rehearsed in section 5.1, specifically in relation to the contribution it makes to the field. This dialogue began with a Nietzschean reading of Paul through a *ressentiment* lens, principally an understanding of sinful self-deception on the part of the ‘unrighteous’ in Romans 1 and 2. From a *ressentiment* perspective, we understood fallen-man’s opposition to God as hatred for his authority over him. The truth about God, particularly his powerful wrath as a portent of divine punishment on sin, was seen to catalyse the Pauline moves of suppressing and exchanging this reality (i.e., truth) about God in relation to fallen-man. A *ressentiment* reading of these moves informed us the impetus of these moves on the part of fallen-man was hatred and revenge toward God. Fearing reprisal, however, fallen-man repressed external expression of these motives. Not only did this mask relevant affects to the outside world, but crucially, these motives were also hidden from the one who possessed them, as was the process by which they were hidden; hence, the notion of self-deception. I was also able to propose a further motivation for self-deception, that of fear. Since the divine punishment for sin was death, this made plausible that fear of death should also be considered a powerful force driving self-deception. An exposition of Romans 8 brought this out in Pauline thought. Effectively, therefore, this aspect of the engagement allowed Nietzsche to equate Paul’s fallen-man, and even Paul himself, with *ressentiment*-man.

Turning the equation around to say that *ressentiment*-man is fallen-man introduced the second aspect of the dialogue, a Pauline riposte to Nietzsche. I demonstrated Nietzsche’s thought bore significant resemblance to Pauline theology in relation to fallenness. For example, nihilism for Nietzsche was in many respects analogous to spiritual death for Paul. This was a threat that provoked a tremendous philosophical reaction for Nietzsche, the creation of the doctrines of *amor fati* and the eternal recurrence of the same. I argued these together constituted an alternate form of redemption for Nietzsche, a salvation from nihilism that overcomes the nauseating and enervating fear of death. At the end of his life, Nietzsche made a self-assessment in which he denied being concerned with such ideas as God, the soul, redemption, and the beyond, even from childhood (*EH* ‘Clever’ 1). He also claimed to have overcome *ressentiment* (‘Wise’ 6). I have shown, however, that Nietzsche’s thought is permeated with these ideas. Typically, he mounts polemical arguments to wrest any power these ideas might have, and allow him to overcome them. I claimed this displayed blindness. And since he often waged these arguments in the first person, I found permission to

read his claims as the self-deception inherent to *ressentiment*. Nietzsche's mask-wearing strategy helped him overcome the religious obligations he felt, and adopt a different perspective on life to reshape the world to fit his desires. In this, he retraces the moves of the Pauline fallen-man in Romans 1:25 who exchanges worship of the Creator-God for man himself. In light of this ultimate value inversion, I proposed that Nietzsche's accusation of Paul rebounded onto himself: Nietzsche, as *ressentiment*-man, resembled also the Pauline fallen-man.

5.3 Significance of Thesis

The deeper significance of this thesis lies in that to which it points. In as far as it is important to understand ourselves, this enquiry on self-deception points to the complex field of psychology of religion. One of the most contested issues in this field is whether or not ontology and religion should be mixed. More specifically, can ontological claims made in the service of religious experience be evaluated scientifically, or is religious experience driven by the unconscious, and therefore influenced by immaterial factors (Grünbaum 1987)? Freud believed the two were incommensurable. He classified the grounding of transcendent reality in religious experience as delusion or simple wish fulfilment (2010:147-59). A generation of psychologists of religion, led by the work of Edmund Husserl, sought to work around this impasse by borrowing a method from phenomenology known as 'bracketing'. Husserl, who conceived this method, wrote, 'We do not abandon the thesis we have adopted, we make no change in our conviction ... we set it, as it were, "out of action," we "disconnect it," "bracket it"' (2014:54). The focus is thereby limited to the psychological processes in religiously interpreted phenomena as they are analysed from the natural standpoint (Hood 2014:13; see also Belzen 2009).

Though the firmament of the psychology of religion is dotted with such luminaries as Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, Alfred Adler, and Otto Rank, two figures eclipse them all. William James and Sigmund Freud represent opposite sides of the issue. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, concludes that religion is a hindrance to the analysis of psychic functions and to the goal of integrating the personality (Johnson 1959:210). In so doing, he particularly rejects the central historical truth-claims of Christianity, considering them a strategy to unify conflicting psychic forces. This, however, opens him up to the criticism of preferring his own conclusions based on certain ontological realities to deny claims of another tradition based on different

ontological realities (Hood 2014:16). James, one of the founders of psychology of religion (Spilka, et al 2009:22), on the other hand, relies on empirical data in his study of varieties of religious experience, concluding that they may in fact validate ontological claims of the great world religions (James 1990:342-86).

Researchers in the train of Freud who bracket truth-claims of the faith-content of religious experience tend to direct their investigations toward matters of mental health and coping (Hampson & Boyd-MacMillan 2008). Researchers in the train of James are persuaded that bracketing is not warranted for the study of the psychology of religion. Hence, they challenge their Freudian counterparts to show how and why their evaluative theories based on one set of ontological possibilities may be used to invalidate those based on a different set. Jamesian researchers are therefore typically more open to philosophical and even theological considerations in the study of human religious phenomena (Poloma & Hood 2006).

Nietzsche inveighs against the morally inverted world as he saw it (*EH TI 1*). The mass of humanity is full of *ressentiment*, and yet ignorant of its decadent condition. To rectify his world, Nietzsche must destroy the reigning moral systems, and he trains his energies on the acme of all such systems, Christianity.

I want to write this eternal indictment of Christianity on every wall, wherever there are walls ... I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great innermost corruption, the one great instinct of revenge ... And time is counted from the *dies nefastus* when this catastrophe began,—from the first day of Christianity!— Why not rather from its last day instead?—From today?— Revaluation of all values! (*A 62*)

Yet, even a philosopher (and self-proclaimed psychologist) the stature of Nietzsche is unable to realise his vision for mankind in the foreseeable future. Perhaps in acknowledgement of this, he claims to a friend that his is a ‘future philosophy’ that can’t, or shouldn’t, be read until ‘about the year 2000’ (Middleton 1996:256). The year 2,000 has come and gone, and still Nietzsche’s commentators wrestle over the myriad issues stemming from his moral psychology. They include the functioning of self-deception in the *ressentiment* mechanism, and the relatively thin body of literature on it has invited this further research. While I do not pretend to be that ‘lucky throw of the dice,’ a Nietzscheism used to signify evolutionary leaps forward in human development, this thesis has examined the phenomenon of self-deception at the intersection of Nietzschean philosophy and Pauline theology.

This project has innovated a way in which a Pauline text concerning self-deception, together with its ontological claims, may be understood in philosophical and psychological terms Nietzsche uses devoid of those claims. Parties who have previously

engaged the subject only in the language of their respective sides may now ‘speak’ to the another. This does not promise immediate resolution of contested issues, but I hope to have aided in removing stigmas relative to the interpretive side taken and more clearly defined their differences, thus making arguments more productive. For example, Pauline scholars inclined to investigate Nietzsche’s moral philosophy may do so in terms other than outright fallenness or depravity due to the ‘translation’ of such concepts in the Nietzschean categories of internalisation and moralisation. They thus avoid unnecessary entanglements in accusations of religious pique, and are even able to go deeper than considering Nietzsche as a general case of *ressentiment* (State 1990:10; Solomon 1996:215). On the other side of the engagement, by removing ontological bracketing, Nietzschean scholars can find resources in Paul to explore new aspects of *ressentiment* and self-deception. For example, how might a Pauline construal of sin in terms of wages (e.g., Rom 6:23) strengthen the psychological impact of *ressentiment*, and how might the state of self-deception be deepened? When Paul speaks of religious obligation to God in terms of slavery (Gal 4), how might this reinforce, and perhaps refine, the motives of anger and fear that fuel self-deception?

Recent research in Terror Management Theory (TMT) offers possibilities for further exploration into my proposal of fear of death as a force in the self-deception of *ressentiment*. TMT indicates awareness of mortality in the human subject provokes terror that causes the subject to ‘flee’ to the safety of a cultural worldview. This worldview crucially provides the psychological means for negotiating a potentially paralyzing fear by providing meaning, stability, and safety beyond the finality of death (Solomon, et al. 2000:200). Extensive empirical research shows reminders of mortality, or mortality salience (MS), results in defense mechanisms both positive and negative (Burke, et al. 2010). Positively, it involves the bolstering of one’s own worldview construct. Negatively, it involves the derogation of beliefs and ideas contrary to one’s own. Both aspects are motivated by the fundamental human need for existential psychological security (Greenberg, et al. 1986; Harmon-Jones 1997; Dechesne, et al. 2000; Wojtkowiak & Rutjens 2011). TMT and MS provide a framework for further consideration of Nietzsche’s philosophy along these lines. Specifically, his postulates of the eternal recurrence and *amor fati* might be considered positive aspects of the said defense mechanism, and his prolonged campaign against moralistic worldviews that promise a world beyond the present might be considered negative aspects of the same—both as potential expressions of the self-deception phenomenon.

There are implications for those on the Pauline side of the equation as well. For the theologian, the structure of *ressentiment* provides explanatory power to Pauline fallenness. Mapping the one onto the other provides a way to explicate self-deception as it functions in Paul's thought. By association, it also lends credence to his doctrine of the flesh, suggesting future projects in which such an understanding spells out the tremendous influence Paul grants to it. Another benefit for the scholar concerns additional biblical material for interpretation in terms of Nietzschean *ressentiment* and self-deception. Pauline passages to exegete might include Romans 3:1-19; 7:7-25; 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Galatians 6:2-10, 11-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Via's work on self-deception in Matthew alerts us to the further possibility of investigating non-Pauline texts, for example, Matthew 7:15-20 and 12:33-27 (1990:77-132). This is to say nothing of other religious texts that involve self-deception such as *Bhagavad-gita* 2.63; *The Holy Qur'an* Surahs 3:28-30, 16:101-10, 67:20f; and *Doctrines and Covenants*, Section 10. For the psychologist and counsellor, my research recommends exploration into resources for dealing with matters related to repression. It supplies a lens for a theological viewing of phenomena rooted in psychology. For the pastor and the university worker, it may supplement apologetical discussion. In conversations with those who reject God, an understanding of Nietzschean self-deception could help identify psychological roadblocks to address beyond those obstacles typically considered to be intellectual.

In the end, Nietzsche's vision for humanity entails a revolution of life on earth that would break through the self-deception of the traditional moral order. Since neither he nor mankind's few 'lucky hits' in history accomplished this, he looked to the future for a hero. That hero is the *Übermensch*, but he is presaged in Prometheus as the one who can overturn the 'natural' order. By overturning this order, Nietzsche meant transgressing it. In *BT* 'Spirit' 9, he contrasts Adam's failure in the biblical fall with Prometheus' feat of stealing divine fire to showcase fearlessness. But Prometheus must embrace the terrible consequences of his deed, which include intellectual darkness, psychological fettering of guilt, spiritual confinement to solitude, and physical shackling with decrepitude. The ultimate consequence is death (which for Nietzsche was eternal pain and meaningless existence), but it is precisely in facing death that Nietzsche's hero is supposed to find life. One of the lessons from the juxtaposition of Adam's and Prometheus' tales is those who submit to the morality of tradition, especially the Christian tradition, cannot see how restrictive and life-denying morality is

because they do not want to see it. Thus, the way of Nietzsche and of his *Übermensch* is to defeat self-deception by living courageously in the wisdom of irreverent defiance. The goal is liberation to pursue the dictates of one's spirit.

Paul's vision for humanity also calls for the revolution of a morally disordered world (see Gal 1:4). He also viewed the world as power in struggle, both as human internecine conflict and as a battle pitched by humanity against God (see Eph 6:10-12). In the fall, man became sinfully self-directed (i.e., fleshly) instead of responsive to God (i.e., spiritual), which is why he came to struggle. To make matters worse, man is also blinded by his condition to his condition, even while he futilely seeks to remedy it. The solution to this self-deception is not further rebelliousness, but humble reverence before God (see Rom 1:21). This is the gospel Paul preached so that the power of God may result in salvation for man (16f). The salient aspect of this salvation, for my purposes, is breaking through the self-deception of man's victimisation so that he need neither blame God out of anger or fear, nor seek life apart from him (22f). This, according to Paul, reflects true wisdom and results in real life. Though this solution will ultimately be realised in the future, its benefits can be experienced now. By submitting to the divine moral order perceived in creation and via conscience, man can anticipate with joy and not anxiety that day when all opposition to God will be subdued, and wholeness and freedom will be restored to all creation (1 Cor 3:21-23; 15:20-28).

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CUP	Cambridge University Press
IVP	InterVarsity Press
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
OUP	Oxford University Press
PUP	Princeton University Press
SUNYP	State University of New York Press
SUP	Stanford University Press
TML	The Modern Library
TNP	The New Press
UCP	University of California Press
YUP	Yale University Press

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