Nietzsche contra Girard: agonistic steps for mimetic studies

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Agonistic Steps for Mimetic Studies

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It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

Friedrich Nietzsche's exemplary position in the history of philosophy owes as much to the untimely content of his thought as to the heterogeneous forms he used to express it. It is thus no accident that both his philosophical logic (*logos*) and the formal affect (*pathos*) that animate his writings are now a source of inspiration for mimetic studies as well—a transdisciplinary field that goes beyond antiquarian approaches to mimesis in order to develop a new theory of imitation that accounts for the becoming other of *homo mimeticus* in the present and future.[1]

If I opt for an agonistic title, then, it is not to set up a violent and rivalrous opposition of false polarities between mimetic theory and mimetic studies—for the debts and genealogical continuities between Girard and Nietzsche

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are numerous, profound, and do not conform to the pathological dynamic of mimetic rivalry. Rather, I opt for this Nietzschean title to alert the reader in advance to the following methodological point: What appears, at first sight, as a straightforward antagonistic opposition might reveal, at a closer genealogic look, mirroring continuities and overturnings of perspectives. The goal is to go beyond rivalrous principles constitutive of violent pathologies to propose a new theory on the logic or *logos* of mimetic *pathos*. This also means that the "contra" in my title should be read with a genealogical understanding of what agonistic confrontations actually entail: namely, a complex double movement with and against worthy predecessors that, as I have shown elsewhere, are already constitutive of Nietzsche's mimetic "patho(-)logies," and that I now group under the rubric of "mimetic agonism."[2] Whether Nietzsche and Girard have the same understanding of agonism, or not quite, is what these further steps for mimetic studies now aim to find out.

If the transdisciplinary field of mimetic studies emerges in the twenty-first century, its genealogy looks back to the foundations of philosophy and reaches, via Nietzsche and other modernist writers of mimesis, into the present. As an introductory gesture, let me first step back to the past century to recall why one of mimetic studies' major precursors, such as Nietzsche, continues to be read and reread today from different perspectives. Considered one of the "masters of suspicion" along with Marx, Freud, and, we should add, Darwin, Nietzsche is mostly known for overturning Western metaphysics, proclaiming the death of God, reevaluating the value of morality, undermining faith in rationality, and affirming an immanent world of becoming in constant tension, conflict, and transformation. Given his perspectival, often conflicted, and seemingly contradictory approach, it is not surprising that the name of Nietzsche has been associated with strikingly different and equally conflicting philosophical traditions: from existentialism to hermeneutics, materialism to psychoanalysis, structuralism to poststructuralism, modernism to postmodernism, critical theory to feminism, deconstruction to queer theory, and new materialism to environmental philosophy to posthumanism, among other emerging perspectives. Despite the disagreements he generates, or perhaps because of them, Nietzsche's perspectival thought powerfully informs, and continues to transform, some of the most heterogeneous philosophical traditions of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Still, as the epigraph whereby we started suggests, Nietzsche was not only a philosopher; he was also one of the most formidable critics of philosophy—and in a characteristic overturning of perspectives, he often turned this critique into an attempt at self-critique. Nietzsche's philosophical diagnostics, in fact,

tend to be double-faced insofar as he is equally implicated in the phenomena he dissects—and this applies to his definition of philosophy as well. There is, in fact, a formal, confessional element at play in Nietzsche's famous account of philosophy as "confession [*Selbstbekenntnis*]" (*BGE* 6;47).[3] The phrase performs what it describes, generating mirroring effects that run, like an undercurrent, throughout Nietzsche's entire oeuvre, giving it an experiential, autobiographical, and experimental tone that informs mimetic studies as well. This doubling of form and content at play in the epigraph also opens up two mirroring lines of genealogical investigation that specifically in-*form* (give form to) his take on mimesis and will guide us in what follows: one *with* Nietzsche and the other *contra* Nietzsche. Both provide steps for mimetic studies that go beyond Girard's mimetic theory.

Since the art of reading Nietzsche—be it with or against him—calls for the ability to ruminate upon his aphoristic sentences, let us take a closer look at the mimetic, confessional thought he invites us to close read. On the one hand, if we read *with* Nietzsche, we immediately recognize in our framing epigraph the master of suspicion who reveals how a discourse that appears to be impersonal, rational, and universal (philosophy) turns out, after an unmasking operation, to be rooted in deeply personal, prerational—perhaps even irrational—and, above all, particular experiences (confessions). Consequently, for Nietzsche, concepts cannot be easily detached from affects, transcendental reasons from immanent experiences, ideal Forms from material bodies, the conscious thinker from the unconscious, instinctual life that thinks through him/her. Hence Nietzsche specifies that "most of a philosopher's conscious thinking is secretly directed and compelled into definite channels by his instincts" (*BGE* 3;35). This unmasking operation is part of Nietzsche's overturning of Platonism, is central to his critique of rationalism, and is considered one of the defining characteristics of his immanent, materialist, and embodied thought that paves the way for some of the most stimulating philosophical developments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

On the other hand, *contra* Nietzsche, we could say that his own philosophy is perhaps *the* paradigmatic example of a personal "confession" as he understands it, thereby adding a self-reflective mirroring twist to his overturning operation. Rather than generating a contradiction, such a move remains, however, faithful to Nietzsche's thought, if only because among philosophers he is arguably the one who speaks most often in *propria persona* in his writings. As he puts it in *Ecce Homo*: "It seems to me indispensable to say who I am" (I; 33). And he immediately adds: "This ought really to be known already: for I have not neglected to 'bear witness' about myself" (I;33). This process of bearing witness is thus

constitutive of Nietzsche's experiential thought, contributes to his rhetorical power, and encourages clinically oriented readers to pay close attention to what he calls "involuntary" (*BGE* 6;37) experiences. That is, affective, embodied, and deeply personal experiences that find in mimetic pathos if not the *via regia*, at least an Ariadne's thread to access the labyrinth of Nietzsche's "unconscious memoir [*unvermerkter mémoires*]" (6;37). This does not narrow the theoretical import of Nietzsche's thought. On the contrary, he uses it to expand its reach. How? By developing a perspectival, diagnostic approach capable of evaluating both the pathological and logical, or, as we call them, patho-*logical* powers of unconscious mimetic phenomena (empathy, affective contagion, inspiration, among others) that cannot simply be studied from a rational distance but benefit from an experiential engagement in bodily affects—what Georges Bataille, echoing Nietzsche called "inner experience"—to be effectively theorized.[4]

Picking up a Nietzschean thread that already traverses mimetic studies, I suggest that a reevaluation of what Nietzsche means, specifically, by "involuntary and unconscious" allows us to articulate a diagnostic of mimesis that is also double, for it is as relevant for mimetic theory and mimetic studies as it is for Nietzsche studies and continental philosophy more generally. On one side, the problematic of the Nietzschean unconscious allows us to further a line of inquiry opened up by one of the few theorists who, *contra* Nietzsche, has taken seriously the personal confessions internal to Nietzsche's philosophical meditations: namely—you will have guessed it—René Girard. Girard, in fact, located the problematic of "mimetic desire" at the center of Nietzsche's thought by inverting a psychoanalytical account of the psyche that retained a triangulation of identification, object cathexis, and rivalry as a *via regia* to the unconscious. This inversion, in turn, generated mirroring confessional effects we shall have to reevaluate, for they cast new light on the affective foundations of mimetic theory. On the other side, *with* Nietzsche, I propose to go beyond Girard by proposing a diagnostic of phenomena that are "involuntary" in order to open up an immanent and embodied conception of the "unconscious" I call *mimetic* because it is rooted in mirroring bodily mechanisms that blur the boundaries between self and others, introducing affective continuities in place of conceptual discontinuities. The mimetic unconscious, as we shall see, departs from triangular models of the psyche in significant ways insofar as it is based on a dyadic, psychological, or as Nietzsche calls it, "physio-psychological" (*BGE* 23;53) conception of subjectivity that includes, but is not restricted to, "mimetic *desire*," and focuses on the contagious (will to) power of "mimetic *pathos*" more generally. For Nietzsche, in fact, it is not only desire that is mimetic. All affects

(or *pathê*) are contagious, and quite unconsciously so—a principle that applies to Nietzsche's philosophical pathos as well.

My wager, then, is that the philosophical confessions dramatized in Nietzsche's thought not only cast light on his personal sickness (or mimetic pathology), but also, and without contradiction, allow us to deepen a critical *logos* on the power of mimetic *pathos* that opens up new perspectives for mimetic studies (or mimetic patho-*logy*). How? By rooting the unconscious back in the immanence of mirroring, physio-psychological actions and reactions that have long been suppressed in the past century dominated by a repressive hypothesis, continue to find oppositions by Oedipal approaches, but are currently being rediscovered by empirical studies in the present century attentive to a mimetic hypothesis. Once both sides of this double diagnostic are joined, a new Janus-faced picture of Nietzsche's relevance for mimetic studies, and of mimetic studies for Nietzsche studies, will progressively take form.

AGONISTIC MEDITATIONS: NIETZSCHE'S EXEMPLARY EDUCATORS

Before entering into an interpretation of Nietzsche's mimetic unconscious, let us recall a few biographical facts that inform Nietzsche's philosophical thought in general and his account of *homo mimeticus* in particular. Although he rarely used it, Nietzsche knew the Greek origins of the concept of *mimēsis* well. Trained as a philologist specializing in classical antiquity and appointed professor of philology at the University of Basel at the age of twenty-four, Nietzsche taught courses devoted to classical subjects like ancient rhetoric in which mimesis was center stage. It is thus as a "philologist" that Nietzsche started his career, that is, as a specialist of close reading. Although he soon transgressed the boundaries of this academic discipline, he remained faithful to its method: His perspectives changed but his approach continued to rest on philological principles. He remained, in fact, what he calls "a teacher of slow reading" (*D* 5;5), practicing an "art of interpretation" he considered "thoroughly unlearnt" (*GM* "Preface," 8;10) in the modern period. This art of "rumination" (8;10), as he also called it, allowed him to offer interpretative diagnostics that were "untimely" because they were directed contra his time—yet anticipated times to come. If I opened this article with an aphorism, which immediately turns into an interpretation of an aphorism, it is thus not only to pay tribute to a method of "slow reading" I consider central to Nietzsche's philosophical thought; it is also to alert readers that any interpretation of Nietzsche may consciously or unconsciously reveal as

much about the interpreter's theory as about the facts under scrutiny—a mirroring lesson that, as we shall see, applies to mimetic theorists as well.

If not the concept itself, the problematic of mimesis was not only a subject of Nietzsche's early philological investigation; it also, and above all, allowed him to emerge as a philosophical subject himself. While teaching philology at Basel, Nietzsche, in fact, set out to look for philosophical "exemplars and models among [his] contemporaries" (*UM* III;132) for both conceptual and affective inspiration. His major philosophical influence, as is well known, was Arthur Schopenhauer, whose *World as Will and Idea* (1818/1819) had awakened the young Nietzsche's interests in philosophy as he was still a student of philology in Leipzig in 1865 and who later provided him with an "artistic metaphysics" that will be central to Nietzsche's philosophical debut. Less known, but not less fundamental, is Nietzsche's debt to Plato, whom he taught at Basel and whose influence is more important than often realized. As Giorgio Colli, one of the editors of the authoritative critical edition of Nietzsche's complete works (the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*), points out, "Amongst philosophers, Nietzsche read with consistency only Plato and Schopenhauer," and he immediately specifies: "In so doing his *pathos* was moral and aesthetic, not theoretical."[5] Morality and aesthetics, along with psychology, we should add, will indeed remain Nietzsche's main areas of investigation. What we should also add is that if Plato and Schopenhauer were the "exemplars" who provided Nietzsche with philosophical concepts to investigate—such as "Will," "representation," and the protean masks of "mimesis," including imitation (*Nachmachen, Nachahmung, Nachbilden, Nachschaffen* . . .), but also mimicry, empathy (*Mitempfindung*), compassion (*Mitleid*), among other mimetic affects—the experiential *pathos* that flows through the channels of Nietzsche's *logos* stems from his decisive and life-transformative encounter with a living artistic model: namely, Richard Wagner, who was himself an ardent follower of Schopenhauer and who contributed to propelling Nietzsche's life and thought beyond the confines of a respectable academic career in classical philology within the safe confines of Switzerland.

There will be other influences, of course, from French moralists (Montaigne, Pascal, and La Rochefoucauld), to literary figures (Goethe, Stendhal, and Dostoevsky), ancient Greek philosophers (Heraclitus, Empedocles, Socrates), not to speak of the empirical sciences, to which, as we shall see, Nietzsche will increasingly turn. Yet Plato, Schopenhauer, and Wagner form a sort of primary educative matrix—Nietzsche might say a womb—out of which his untimely thought in general, and his meditations on mimesis in particular, were born. Given the *exemplary* nature of these "educators," and given the central role they play in Nietzsche's aesthetics, morality, and psychology, it is

thus not surprising that, if not the concept itself, the *problematic* of mimesis, while not often discussed in Nietzsche studies,[6] plays a key role in giving birth to Nietzsche's original thought. This mimetic birth, as we turn to see, is at least double, for it operates both at the level of the content of Nietzsche's early meditations (i.e., the mimetic pathos he conceptualizes in his writings) and at the level of his agonistic relation with his models (i.e., the mimetic pathos he feels in real life). Let us thus take a brief and necessarily partial detour via these three educative influences as they are at play in Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)—a book that marks his transition from philology to philosophy and sets his mimetic thought in motion.

Mimesis is not a minor topic in *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is in fact out of the marriage of two forms of "imitation" that, according to Nietzsche, Greek tragedy and, by extension, Western aesthetics were born. The first mimetic principle is luminous, visual, and linked to the Apollonian world of images or representations; the other is dark, bodily, and linked to the Dionysian world of affects and intoxication. The philosophical influences at play in this conceptual polarity are double: One is modern, explicit, and avowed (Schopenhauer); the other is ancient, less explicit, but not less fundamental (Plato). Since a philologist would have moved from the ancients to the moderns, let us follow Nietzsche's path.

Despite Nietzsche's self-proclaimed *anti*-Platonic stance, he is fundamentally indebted to Plato's thought in general and to his diagnostic of mimesis in particular, both at the level of the mimetic content (*logos*) of what Plato says and at the level of the mimetic form (*lexis*) through which he says it. At the level of content, the two forms of "imitation" [*Nachahmung*] that, for Nietzsche, give birth to Greek tragedy—Apollonian "representations" and the Dionysian "ecstasies"—owe much to Plato's double framing of poetry in both *dramatic* and *visual* terms. On the one hand, let us briefly recall that Plato's philosophical *logos* considers mimetic art in general and poetry in particular responsible for setting up a deceiving "mirror" that re-presents (presents again, for the second time) the apparent world of phenomena, generating "phantoms" twice removed from reality, as he says, under the mask of Socrates, in Book 10 of *Republic*;[7] on the other hand, the mimetic poet who impersonates a role via a mimetic "speech" (*lexis*) (3.392e.) and is center stage in Books 2 and 3 speaks in a state of divine inspiration, enthusiasm, or "possession" that generates a type of "ecstasy" akin to the "worshipping Corybantes," followers of Dionysus—as Plato says in *Ion* (535b–536d). It is thus no accident that Nietzsche compares the Apollonian world of appearances to what he calls "mere phantoms" (*BT* I;34). As Nietzsche readily acknowledges, this was "Plato's main objection to the older art—that it

is the imitation of a phantom" (14;90). Nor is it accidental that Nietzsche aligns Dionysian "intoxication [*Rausch*]" with a state of enthusiastic and unconscious frenzy he compares to the Dionysian Maenads when they dance. As he says, in a clear allusion to *Ion*, "For Plato the poet is incapable of composing until he has become unconscious [*bewußtlos*] and bereft of understanding" (12;86). The examples could be multiplied, but these should suffice to show that especially with regard to mimesis, though not only, Plato casts a long shadow on Nietzsche's thought, and, by extension, continues to inform mimetic studies as well—which does not mean that Nietzsche is simply Platonic or fails to overturn Platonism. On the contrary, he provides immanent theoretical foundations for the birth of *homo mimeticus*.[8]

Nietzsche celebrates the mimetic phenomenon Plato condemns. This is part of his much-discussed overturning of Platonism. As is well known, he will go as far as considering dialectical rationalism—dramatized by Plato's Socrates—as responsible for the death of tragedy. Less known is that Nietzsche's opposition to what he calls "the divine Plato" (*BT* 12;85) is not as clear-cut as it appears to be. Let us in fact recall that Plato "himself" is far from being stable in his account of mimesis and does not hesitate to generate an *aporia* that overturns his critical evaluation of poetry. How? By celebrating the mimetic madness he had condemned in *Republic* and *Ion* as nothing less than a "gift of the gods" in *Phaedrus* (245c). Hence, Plato, or better Socrates, says: "the greatest blessings come by way of madness, indeed, of a madness that is heaven-sent" (244a)—a phrase that Nietzsche will echo in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," as he asks, "Should it have been madness, to use one of Plato's phrases that brought the greatest blessings upon Greece?" (*BT* 4;21)—by which "he," Plato, means not only erotic madness (*mania*) but also different forms of mimetic madness: namely, the divinatory or *mantic* madness of Apollo, the ritual or *telestic* madness of Dionysus, and the poetic madness of the Muses, going as far as aligning philosophy with such mad forms of mimetic dispossession.[9]

Plato's mimetic proximity to Nietzsche is accentuated if we consider not only the content, or *logos*, of his critique of mimesis but also its form, or *lexis*. In fact, contra his own philosophical injunction, "Plato" *never* speaks in his proper name (*diegesis*). Instead, like the poet he condemns, he always speaks dramatically, via mimetic speech (*mimesis*), hiding under a mask of a fictional-historical character, namely, Socrates. Such a paradoxical rhetorical move could not escape a philologist. Hence, Nietzsche critiques the genre of the Platonic dialogue for its protean nature via an ironic (Socratic?) evaluation that relegates the father of philosophy to the sphere of literature: he perfidiously writes that Plato, while inventing ideal models, created, despite himself, literary models as

he "gave all posterity the model of a new art form, the model of the *novel*" (*BT* 14;91). In this overturning reevaluation, far from excluding literature from the ideal city, Plato, while developing philosophy via an abstract idealist theory, provides posterity with a literary model to imitate in narrative practice. Yet at the same time, he, Nietzsche, is not deprived of admiration for his antagonist, if only because he does not hesitate to use this Platonic genre's mimetic devices as well: Irony, mythic characters, allegories, dramatic and lyric speeches, changes of perspectives, aporias, and, last but not least, a deeply conflicted stance toward mimesis are, after all, characteristics of a thought hovering midway "between prose and poetry" (14;90). That is, a position Nietzsche explicitly attributes to Plato's style but implicitly mirrors his own hovering stylistic position as well.[10]

This genealogical connection reinscribes a modernist thinker who is usually still considered to mark the twilight of philosophy back in its auroral period of emergence. In the process, it adds both a mimetic and an agonistic dimension to Nietzsche's philological qua philosophical method. It suggests that despite Nietzsche's frequent accusations against Platonism—or rather because of them—the father of philosophy should be considered as an exemplary model that also functions as a valiant opponent, or antagonist. As Nietzsche puts it, in a confessional mood, "I attack only causes that are victorious" (*EH* 7;47). There is thus a generative philosophical principle internal to this personal confession that goes to the bottom of Nietzsche's thought: Nietzsche, in fact, fights *contra* Plato, *with* Plato, in the sense that he opposes and overturns Plato's idealist metaphysics, but he does so via Plato's mimetic style and concepts. As I described it in detail elsewhere and Herman Siemens also convincingly showed, it is through this agonistic opposition that Nietzsche affirms his own mimetic thought—which is also a thought on mimesis.[11]

The reader informed by mimetic theory will have recognized at this point that this agonistic dynamic bears a family resemblance with what René Girard calls "mimetic rivalry": An identification with the model generates an ambivalent relation that often turns into rivalry, jealousy, resentment, and a type of violence that can escalate to the point of annihilation. I will discuss Girard's take on Nietzsche shortly. For the moment, suffice it to say that Nietzsche's personal strife with intellectual father figures cannot, strictly—that is, philologically—speaking, be reduced to the violent logic of mimetic rivalry. Rather, it is part of a more general agonistic strategy that is characteristic of Nietzsche's philosophical method, is central to genealogy of mimetic studies, and that I find important to qualify in terms of *mimetic agonism*. As Nietzsche practices it, mimetic agonism can be traced back genealogically to the Greek concept and practice of *agon* (*ἀγών*), a contest or debate between two characters often staged theatrically in

which a protagonist and an antagonist confront each other along mimetic lines that Nietzsche was intimately familiar with due to his training in classics. Let me open a parenthesis in our genealogy of Nietzsche's agonistic relations with exemplars to explain the mimetic logic that animates it in more detail.

In a youthful essay titled "Homer's Contest," Nietzsche joins forces with his Basel colleague, the historian Jacob Burckhardt, to posit the centrality of the agon in Greek education. They both argue that the Greeks had two different conceptions of "*eris*" or "strife," which Hesiod in "Works and Days" already linked to two goddesses with "completely separate dispositions."[12] The "bad *Eris*," Nietzsche writes, is characterized by "jealousy" "resentment" and "fights of annihilation against one another" (*HC* 3). Here we have arguably the ancient model for what Girard will later call mimetic rivalry, a genealogical hypothesis reinforced by Nietzsche's use of the semantic register of "rivalry," "monstrous desires," and "exclusivity of the genius," among other phrases familiar to mimetic theorists.[13] But this is not the only possibility. As Nietzsche immediately adds, there is a second "*beneficent* deity," or "good *Eris*," that does not lead to "the action of fights of annihilation, but to the action of *contests* [*Wettkämpfe*]" (4, 3). The contest entails an agon based on an Olympic spirit of competition in which "every great Hellene passes on the torch of contests; every great virtue sets afire new greatness" (4). The logic of the agon, Nietzsche specifies, "is hostile to the exclusivity of genius in the modern [romantic] sense"; instead, "there are always several geniuses, who incite each other to reciprocal action as they keep each other within the limits of measure" (5). This account of the agon makes us wonder: Does this logic apply only to the ancient Greeks? Or, as the definition of philosophy as confession suggests and the modern/romantic reference to the concept of the "genius" confirms, does it also apply in a self-reflective way, to Nietzsche's own relation to his exemplary models as well?

Perhaps. What is certain is that this agon is mimetic in the productive sense that it entails the imitation of strategies of the model/opponent in order to go beyond it. Nietzsche makes this clear via the example of one of his own exemplary models who is himself not immune to the *pharmakon* of mimesis as he writes, "What, for example, in Plato is of special artistic significance in his dialogues, is mainly the result of a rivalry with the art of the orator, sophists, and dramatist of his time" (*HC* 6). Plato critiques the poets so vehemently because he is in a rivalry, or better, agon, with them. And this agon is mimetic in the double sense that Plato copies the strategies of orators, sophists, dramatists, which are themselves mimetic strategies for poets and dramatists who write mimetic speeches. The logic of mimetic agon, in sum, does not lead only to resentment, jealousy, rivalry, annihilation, and other violent pathologies—though it can do

that, as Nietzsche speaks of Plato's "monstrous desire . . . to assume the place of the overthrown poet [Homer] and inherit his fame" (4); it also, and for us most importantly, allows the contender to affirm his or her thought *with* and *against* the dominant other, in a process of agonistic overcoming that mimetically assimilates the strategies of the model/opponent in order to go beyond. Thus, Nietzsche, impersonating Plato, writes: "'Look, I can do what my great rivals [the poets] can; I can do it better than they . . . and now I reject it altogether and condemn all imitative arts!'" (6) This is, indeed, the agnostic logic of a positive, affirmative, yet still mimetic conceptual creation that will continue to inform Nietzsche's moral, aesthetic, and psychological meditations. I do not group it under the rubric of mimetic pathologies but of mimetic patho-*logies* instead.

Now, while Nietzsche's patho-*logies* inherit the dynamic of mimetic agonism from classical antiquity, the other models that are simultaneously at play in his emerging thought imbuing it with *pathos* are of romantic inspiration and are thus closer to the moderns than to the ancients. Still, as the romantic concept of genius suggested to philologically oriented readers, the ancient problematic of mimesis, with the agonism it generates, continues to inform Nietzsche's modern philosophical and artistic practices as well. Let us thus briefly turn to the second of Nietzsche's exemplars qua romantic genius: Arthur Schopenhauer.

In the *World as Will and Idea* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*), Schopenhauer argues that art in general, and music in particular, functions as an immediate "representation" (a better translation of *Vorstellung*) and thus "imitation" or, as he also says, in a Platonic mood, "mirror"[14] of the impersonal ground of Being he called "Will." Schopenhauer's "Will" has nothing to do with an individual volition based on a personal, monadic, and self-sufficient subject characterized by the *principium individuationis*. On the contrary, it entails an impersonal, undifferentiated, pre-individual metaphysical force or power that unconsciously strives to reproduce and affirm itself and that provides the ontological "background" for the "artist's metaphysics" (*BT* 2;18) at play in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Translating the dichotomy between the metaphysical Will (Being; the One) and the dream world of representation (appearance; the many) into the mythic couple Dionysus and Apollo, Nietzsche injects a musical, ritual and intoxicating Dionysian pathos at the origins of Greek tragedy. Thus, he argues that the tragic chorus functions as a "general mirror" (*BT* 17:107) of a metaphysical Dionysian pain, or *Ur-Schmerz*, characteristic of the world as Will, which tragic heroes subsequently mediate by Apollonian representations or appearances on the theatrical stage. Hence Nietzsche writes: "Every artist is an 'imitator' ['*Nachahmer*'], that is to say, either an Apollonian artist in dreams, or a Dionysian artist in ecstasies, or finally—as for example in Greek Tragedy—at

once artist in both dreams and ecstasies" (2;38). This dynamic interplay between an embodied imitation based on the immediate, "unconscious" and "contagious" transmission of a mimetic *pathos* on the one hand, and a visual imitation based on the conscious mediation by an aesthetic *representation*, on the other, runs like an undercurrent throughout Nietzsche's aesthetic and moral thought. We shall see that it informs his psychological account of the mimetic unconscious as well.

If Schopenhauer provided the artistic metaphysics that structures Nietzsche's mimetic thesis on the origins of tragic art, Richard Wagner provided the artistic pathos that gives an affective push to *The Birth of Tragedy* in particular and to Nietzsche's philosophical career in general. Starting in 1871, Nietzsche became a frequent guest at Wagner's house in Triebschen on the lake of Luzern, in Switzerland. As he makes clear in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is dedicated to Wagner, he considers the composer responsible for the "*rebirth of tragedy*" (*BT* 20;121) in the modern period. Despite an infatuation with Wagner's significantly younger wife, Cosima Wagner (former Von Bülow), Nietzsche put his philosophical efforts to Wagner's artistic use in order to promote his new opera house in Bayreuth. Still praised in the essays devoted to his educators ("Schopenhauer as Educator" and "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth") collected in the *Untimely Meditations* (1876), Nietzsche will soon become disillusioned with the cultic, bourgeois, religious, and, above all, theatrical (rather than musical) and thus *mimetic* dimension of Bayreuth's mass appeal. After the publication of his first independent book, *Human, All too Human* (1878), Nietzsche's relation to his former romantic models became increasingly critical and distanced. This "*pathos of distance*" (*GM* 2;12) as Nietzsche later called it, generated in turn a mimetic agonism that was not restricted to the pathologies of mimetic rivalry. Instead, it allowed Nietzsche to generate mimetic patho-*logies* that cast a new and far-reaching diagnostic light on the laws of imitation in the modernist period and contributed to opening up mimetic studies in the contemporary period.

In his subsequent nomadic, experimental, and increasingly solitary years, Nietzsche's philological training in slow reading coupled with a strong artistic inclination, a predilection for morality, and a discerning sensibility for matters he consistently grouped under the rubric of "psychology" allowed him—often *contra* philosophy—to go beyond the romanticism of his youthful models in order to address future generations to come. This involved the creation of concepts to which Nietzsche's name is now routinely associated. And rightly so, for it was Nietzsche who, in a phrase Gilles Deleuze would be quick to echo for others to repeat, actually defined philosophy in terms of "creation of concepts."

As Nietzsche puts it: "What dawns on philosophers last of all: they must no longer accept concepts as a gift, nor merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them" (*WP* 409: 220; Nietzsche's italics). The overman, nihilism, the eternal return of the same, and the will to power are some of the most discussed concepts that received much attention from major twentieth-century philosophers who belatedly granted Nietzsche a philosophical recognition he didn't achieve during his lifetime.[15] What is less discussed is that the originality of Nietzsche's thought is often—and quite paradoxically—born out of reflections that focus on an apparently unoriginal concept: namely, imitation or, as the Greeks called it, *mimēsis*, and the different forms of visual and affective dynamics it entails.

At the most general level, Nietzsche's subsequent agonistic critique of mimetic phenomena central to his former educators we have just considered can be summarized as follows. Nietzsche's patho-*logy* initially critiques moral and aesthetic phenomena such as compassion, mimicry, affective contagion, and herd behavior, especially among Christians and the modern masses, though not only, in texts of the middle period, like *Human, All too Human* (1878), *Daybreak* (1881), and *The Gay Science* (1882). In addition to these clinically oriented, aphoristic texts that promote a *logos* of cold, critical suspicion, Nietzsche's mimetic *pathos* is subsequently *affirmatively* channeled in a new dramatic, inspired, and thus mimetic form, in his philosophical poem *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883), a lyrical text that stages a mythic character at the origins of morality whose affinities with Christ, but also with Plato's Socrates, have not gone unnoticed.[16] Lastly, it culminates in Nietzsche's critique of the life-negating tendencies inherent in both Schopenhauer's and Wagner's metaphysics, supplemented by a more specific physio-psychological diagnostic of mimetic phenomena such as theatricality, *Schauspielerei*, hysteria, suggestions, hypnosis, and psychomotor induction, in texts of the later period like *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Book V of *The Gay Science*, *Twilight of the Idols* (1889), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1895), and *The Antichrist* (1895), as well as his philosophical memoir, *Ecce Homo* (1908), and the notes first collected in *The Will to Power* and assembled in the *Nachlass*.

Now conventionally grouped under the rubric of "philosophy," these fragmentary, aphoristic, and poetic texts transgress disciplinary boundaries. Despite Nietzsche's canonization, they remain radically at odds with an increasing hyperspecialization and compartmentalization characteristic of academic discourse. Nietzsche, in fact, draws from disciplines as diverse as philology, literature, anthropology, psychology, and history in order to address modern problems via a type of transdisciplinary investigation *avant la lettre* he often

dubbed "genealogy." What Nietzsche says with respect to his genealogy of morality equally applies to the genealogy of mimesis we set out to unearth:

> Fortunately, I have since learnt to separate theology from morality and ceased looking for the origin of evil behind the world [hinter *der Welt*]. Some schooling in history and philology together with an innate sense of discrimination with respect to questions of psychology, quickly transformed my problem into another one: under what conditions did man invent the value-judgements good and evil? *And what value do they themselves possess?* (*GM* "Preface" 3;5)

Nietzsche's genealogical focus was ultimately on the present with an eye to the future. In the process of reevaluating the value of our values, Nietzsche furthers a materialist tradition that is not only internal to ancient, pre-Socratic philosophy but was also reemerging in the modern empirical sciences, finding a source of inspiration in what Karl Jaspers called "real knowledge."[17] As Nietzsche makes clear, he pursued readings in fields like "physiology, medicine and the natural sciences" (*EH* "Human"; 3;91), which he put to use in order to sharpen skills he often grouped under the rubric of "psychology," or, as he also called it, in order to avoid a metaphysical distinction between the body and the psyche he set out to transgress, a "genuine physio-psychology [*eigentlich Physio-Psychologie*]" (*BGE* 23;53). If we were to choose a disciplinary perspective that gives Nietzsche's patho-*logical* thought on mimesis his characteristic sharpness, we could do worse than choosing psychology, understood in this immanent, materialist sense, as his most far-reaching genealogical lens. This is perhaps why Nietzsche consistently defines himself as a psychologist perhaps more than as a philosopher. He also claims that "psychology is now once again the road to the fundamental problems" (*BGE* 23;54), problems that point to the experience of mimetic pathos as an Ariadne's thread to find our way in the labyrinth of the unconscious.[18]

Having outlined, in admittedly broad strokes, the general contours of Nietzsche's mimetic preoccupations at play both in his agonistic relation with his models and in the symptoms he diagnoses, I would like to sharpen my diagnostic somewhat by focusing on Nietzsche as a self-proclaimed "psychologist" qua "philosophical *physician*" (*GS* 2;35) who is affectively involved in the pathologies he diagnoses. This diagnostic door will not only allow us to productively engage with Girard's critical account of Nietzsche's mimetic pathology and the madness it may perhaps have generated (pathological reasons); it will also provide us with an empirical diagnostic of the mirroring mechanisms

at play in a mimetic unconscious that is only now being rediscovered in the empirical sciences (patho-*logical* reasons).

THE SHADOW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS: GIRARD CONTRA NIETZSCHE

In a series of articles on Nietzsche, Girard argued that mimetic theory can cast new light on a major figure in continental philosophy like Nietzsche by taking seriously the confessional elements latent in his thought.[19] The starting point for Girard's reading of Nietzsche departed in original ways from mainstream philosophical commentaries. Girard, in fact, is not in line with a long-standing philosophical tradition in German phenomenological/existentialist thought that, in the wake of Heidegger, considered Nietzsche as the last philosopher of Western metaphysics whose thought could be neatly grouped under late concepts like the eternal return, the overman, nihilism, and the will to power[20]—though the last concept plays an important role in Girard's reading as well. Nor did he align his interpretation with French poststructuralist philosophers who, around the same time, were returning to Nietzsche as a source of theoretical inspiration to go beyond the horizon of structuralism along linguistic lines that aimed to make Nietzsche studies "new" in the 1970s[21]—though productive genealogical connections could be established between mimetic principles at play in both Girard and deconstructive qua pharmacological methods.[22] Instead, Girard, whose home field was not philosophy but literary criticism/theory, took Nietzsche's definition of philosophy as confession literally—and, in an agonistic move, he directed it against Nietzsche himself. In particular, he zeroed in on Nietzsche's ambivalent biographical relation with his youthful model of artistic inspiration and later mimetic antagonist par excellence, Richard Wagner—that is, a quasi-mythical figure Girard places not only at the beginning of Nietzsche's career but also at its end, insofar as he considers Wagner responsible for Nietzsche's final plunge into "madness."[23]

Girard does not explicitly refer to Nietzsche's definition of philosophy as "confession," but it is from the angle of a theory of the "unconscious" that he articulates his diagnostic of the biographical causes of Nietzsche's madness. Not any theory, but the very theory that presumably "discovered" the unconscious. As Girard puts it: "Any effort to make Nietzsche's insanity intelligible will have to focus on those triangular relations that are at the core of Freud's psychoanalytical theory" (SM 61). Freud is thus the alpha of Girard's diagnostic, which does not mean that it is also its omega. Thus, Girard immediately adds, in a more distancing mood: "This does not mean that we have to be Freudian" (61). The

opening of this essay, if we read it closely—and thus philologically—is double: If the *content* manifestly intends to provide a diagnostic answer to what Girard calls Nietzsche's "'pathological'" (74) mimetic tendencies, its oscillating *formal* movement also suggests that there is a patho-*logical* question that—I don't want to say latently, for it is clearly visible but—*structurally* informs Girard's reading method, namely: *to be or not to be Freudian*, that is perhaps the question for any reader seriously interested in reevaluating the question of the Nietzschean unconscious. And this question applies to Girard as well.[24]

At the level of the psychic content being analyzed, Girard is clearly not narrowly Freudian in his diagnostic of Nietzsche. He is already Girardian. Thus, he relies on his triangular conception of "mimetic desire" he had articulated in *Deceit Desire and the Novel* (1961) in order to account for the initial process of identification between Nietzsche and his youthful model, the ambivalence, and rivalry it generates, and the madness that eventually ensues. Girard sums up the case of Nietzsche in a passage worth quoting at length:

> The history of Nietzsche's relationship to Wagner corresponds perfectly to the successive stages of the mimetic process. First, Wagner is the explicitly acknowledged model, the openly worshipped divinity. Later he becomes an obstacle and a rival without ceasing to be a model. The psychoanalyst would say that the relationship has become 'ambivalent.' To seek the cause of this 'ambivalence' in some dead father is to blind oneself to the reality of the conflict. While Wagner is fast becoming the cultural hero of the German people, he prevents his disciple from reaching the goal that he sets for him . . . The difference between the healthy man and the sick one, at this stage, may be their more or less successful relationship to the crowd. (SM 61–62)

This is a critical diagnostic that had generally escaped readers of Nietzsche uniquely attentive to his philosophical logos, yet its relevance becomes apparent if we register the personal pathos that informs Nietzsche's philosophical confessions. Girard is, in fact, particularly sensitive to the aporias at play in Nietzsche's thought—manifested in concepts like "ressentiment," "mastery," and "will to power"—uncovering *reactive* tendencies that, with some exceptions, have remained at the margins of Nietzsche studies.[25] In the process, he offers a highly controversial and empirically indemonstrable hypothesis on the much-discussed riddle of Nietzsche's madness along psychological terms that are informed by, but not limited to, psychoanalysis.

There is thus a sense in which Girard's reading has a dual theoretical focus that entails two inversions of perspectives. On the one hand, contra *Nietzsche*,

Girard traces the philosopher's unconscious confessions back to the mimetic pathologies Nietzsche, as an author, struggled to repress. The driving *telos* of this agonistic move is to invert the diagnostic of the prophet of the death of God and celebrate the supremacy of Christ over Dionysus (theological reason).[26] On other hand, contra *Freud*, Girard uses Nietzsche as a psychological "case" to reframe the psychoanalytical primacy of desire over identification. The driving *telos* here is to invert Freud's triangular structure of the unconscious the latter had developed in his case studies (the case of Dora, Anna O., etc.) and affirm the primacy of mimesis over desire (psychological reason) via the case of Nietzsche. Either way, Nietzsche is pathologized. This double theo-psychological operation is part of a single gesture that overturns both the *meta*-physical and *meta*-psychological foundations of Girard's two mimetic antagonists: Nietzsche and Freud. In fact, by inverting Nietzsche's diagnostic of the death of God and affirming the primacy of Christ over the prophet of Dionysus, Girard also inverts Freud's diagnostic of the Oedipus complex by affirming the primacy of mimetic theory over psychoanalysis. Two models are killed with one stone.

The move is deft and violent, but as always in matters of mimetic agonism the opposition is not as clear-cut as it first appears to be, if only because this double operation generates involuntary mirroring effects that implicate mimetic theory in the mimetic triangles that are being diagnosed. Notice, in fact, that the "triangular relations" at the center of Girard's diagnostic are also double: They are at play within the "case" being diagnosed (i.e., in Nietzsche's affective triangulation with Wagner and Cosima) but, at an additional remove, they are also re-presented within the intellectual relations that inform Girard's own diagnostic (i.e., in Girard's theoretical triangulation with Freud and Nietzsche). These are two sides of the same diagnostic; they cannot easily be disentangled because they find in Nietzsche a common denominator. In fact, Girard, *with* psychoanalysis, not only begins by aligning his reading of Nietzsche as an author who "uses writing as a means of repression"[27]; *contra* Nietzsche he also retains the main outlines of the Freudian model by focusing on desire as a *via regia* to the theater of Nietzsche's unconscious—that is, a mimetic, quasi-Oedipal theater in which the biographical triangle Nietzsche–Wagner–Cosima finds a mirroring structure in the Theseus–Dionysus–Ariadne's mythic counterpart. To be sure, the mythic figures change, but the triangle remains in place; the mimetic dynamic is inverted insofar as mimesis has now precedence over desire, but the ambivalences and rivalries continue to cast a shadow on the case of Nietzsche—and, at a second remove, on Girard as well.

In this game of mirrors, if we were simply to "apply" Girard's reading of Nietzsche to Girard himself—which, I hasten to add, is *not* my goal—we would immediately notice that Girard's theoretical relation with Freud is also shot through with mimetico-agonistic tensions. There is, in fact, a latent oscillation toward/away from the father of psychoanalysis introduced by the contradictory imperative, or double bind, at the beginning of the essay—be psychoanalytical, by all means, but don't be Freudian!—generating a structural ambivalence that informs Girard's entire diagnostic operation. On the one hand, *with* Freud, Girard acknowledges in an admiring mood that the father of psychoanalysis was "the first to describe this type of configuration," that Freud's account is "not gratuitous," and that "he comes closer to the truth than anyone before" (SM 80). On the other hand, despite his admiration and theoretical proximity—or should we rather say, *because* of it?—Girard adopts an aggressively agonistic stance *contra* Freud as he repeatedly tells us, for instance, that the father of psychoanalysis "refused to understand its [mimetic desire's] terrible simplicity" or directed "attention away from the truth, toward some ludicrous fable" (62), "failed" (67), "went wrong," "was misled" (68), develops a "weird fairy tale" (67) based on a hypothesis that is "certainly false" (68), and so on. In short, the ambivalence is clearly manifest. One doesn't need to be a card-carrying Freudian or Girardian to detect traces of a romantic "anxiety of influence" (Harold Bloom's term) toward the Freudian model Girard convokes. Nietzsche's method of "slow reading" is amply sufficient. A genealogical perspective to the development of Girard's thought would also note that the Freudian model, which had remained latent in Girard's novelist diagnostic of the love triangles, ambivalences, and rivalries mimetic desire triggers in *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, is now manifestly brought to the fore.[28]

That said, Girard is not Nietzsche, just as Wagner is not Freud. Hence, we should be careful not to conflate the two mirroring triangles. At the experiential level, Wagner operates at the level of what Girard would call "internal mediation" for Nietzsche, since the composer is a close personal influence and obstacle for Nietzsche, who generates a mimetic *pathos* in real life; Freud, on the other hand, operates as an "external mediator" for Girard and is thus a formidable but only theoretical obstacle that can be overcome from the safe *distance* of the written page—a difference that, if we were to follow Girard's diagnostic, could perhaps partially account for the health of the latter and the sickness of the former. More importantly, at the theoretical level, Nietzsche's confessions revealed by his "unconscious memoir" allow Girard to carry out a delicate balancing operation vis-à-vis the father of psychoanalysis via a *romantic agonism* that consists in marking his distance from Freud by inverting the psychoanalytical triangle,

positing the primacy of mimesis (or the desire to be) over object cathexis (or the desire to have), while at the same time retaining psychoanalysis's triangular structure.

The mirroring inversion is subtle and convincing, but it also makes genealogists of mimesis wonder: Is it possible to go beyond this ideal structural model at the foundations of mimetic theory in order to open up new, more historical, and dynamic perspectives for mimetic studies? Perhaps the paradoxes of mimesis needn't always be trapped in an eternal cycle of mirroring triangles in which the subject investigating a psychic case becomes in turn the case being diagnosed—in an endless regress of mirroring diagnostic accusations. If we are primarily interested in the ways in which the *author*'s confessions in-*form* his or her *philosophical* account of the unconscious, rather than the other way around, there is, in fact, an entire side of Nietzsche's mimetic thought that remains underground in Girard's critical diagnostic. Additional patho-*logical* investigations are now needed to bring mimetic theory into the twenty-first century—on the shoulders of mimetic studies.

BEYOND THE TRIANGULAR PRINCIPLE: A DIAGNOSTIC WITH NIETZSCHE

A genealogical operation that looks back to the past to better map possibilities for the present and future should recognize that Nietzsche does not only suffer from mimetic pathologies; he also turns them to productive clinical use. His lived, affective, and experiential conception of mimesis that emerges from his confessional writings is, in fact, far from being simply a means of repression. Quite the contrary, it allows for the emergence of a diagnostic operation I call patho-*logical* because it relies as much on the distancing tools of reason (*logos*) as on the lived experience of affect (*pathos*), generating a spiraling feedback loop that turns the experience of sickness (or pathology) into a critical, diagnostic tool (or patho-*logy*).[29] The logic of mimetic patho(-)logy is paradoxical insofar as a capitulation to mimetic sickness that may have contributed to the death of Nietzsche's consciousness becomes the affective and experiential womb that gives birth to a diagnostic *logos* on mimetic *pathos* central to the mimetic unconscious. Whether this unconscious goes beyond the triangular principle is what we now turn to find out.

Girard rightly stressed that the case of Nietzsche benefits from being read from a mimetic perspective. Conversely, mimetic theory also benefited from Nietzsche's diagnostic insights. Girard is, in fact, correct in saying that "unlike

Freud, who remains entangled in his fathers and mothers, Nietzsche is the first to detach desire from all objects" (SM 91). But Nietzsche goes much further in his diagnostic in providing new foundations for mimetic studies. In fact, he also detaches mimesis from the restricted focus on desire as *the* central affect of investigation (or mimetic desire) in order to focus on the more general diagnostic insights that *all* affects, or *pathê*, are mimetic (or mimetic pathos), from sadness to joy, fear to anger, sympathy to compassion, tragic sorrow to comic laughter, Apollonian inspiration to Dionysian intoxication. Nietzsche's conception of the unconscious consistently transgresses the repressive hypothesis, stresses the contagious power of mimetic pathos, injecting this affective and infective category into his major concepts. In this shift of perspective from mimetic desire to mimetic pathos, the Oedipal unconscious to the mimetic unconscious, a new theory of mimesis is born that finds in Nietzsche a key predecessor.

Take the much-discussed concept of "will to power," for instance. Despite its enigmatic metaphysical status, it is one of the most direct examples that illustrates the centrality of a mimetic pathos in Nietzsche's thought. It is, in fact, important to qualify Girard's evaluation by saying that Nietzsche does not actually "posit an original and spontaneous desire, a desire causa sui called the will to power" (SM 91).[30] Rather, he defines "will to power" as "not a being, not a becoming but a *pathos*" (*WP* 635; 339), which he considers a "primitive form of affect" (688; 366). That this affect or pathos is a mimetic affect is clear. Thus, Nietzsche specifies that the will to power blurs the boundaries of individuation, takes possession of body and mind, extends its force toward life, and triggers what he calls in recognizable mimetic terms "the compulsion to imitation; an extreme irritability through which a given example becomes contagious" (811: 429), a mimetic contagion he also considers "the most elemental fact from which a becoming and effecting first emerge" (635;339).[31] This process of becoming mimetic, then, is on the side of a physics of life rather than of a metaphysics of death, a will to life part of a flux of contagious affects that opens up a mimetic pathos to access the labyrinth of the unconscious.

To be sure, Nietzsche did not write a book about the unconscious or loudly proclaim its revolutionary discovery; and yet, his critical stance toward philosophy stems from his realization that human actions and reactions are not primarily driven by rational consciousness but are open to the (will to) power of the unconscious. This is a leitmotif in his thought. As he puts it in *Gay Science*: "Only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remains unconscious [*unbewusst*]" (333;262). He specifies: "For we could think, feel, will, and remember, and we could also 'act' in every

sense of that word, and yet none of all this would have to 'enter consciousness'" (354;297). In *Beyond Good and Evil* he adds that "a thought comes when 'it' wants, not when 'I' want" (17;47), thereby casting a shadow on a volitional notion of the subject based on autonomy, rational control, and free will. For Nietzsche, in fact, it is not the subject that thinks; "*It* thinks [*Es denkt*]" (17;47). And in a posthumous fragment, he sums up the predominance of unconscious life as he says, "we as conscious, purposive creatures, are only the smallest part of us . . . By far the greater number of motions have nothing whatever to do with consciousness" (*WP* 676;357).[32] These are radical claims if we consider that they precede, by over a decade, the much-discussed decentering of consciousness in terms of a narcissistic blow that—after Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud—introduces a Copernican "revolution" in our understanding of an ego that is "not even master in their own house"—a phrase usually attributed to Freud that actually mirrors (and inverts) Nietzsche's admiration for "men who are within themselves masters of their own house" (*UM* III;134).[33] Be that as it may, if we thought Freud discovered the unconscious, Nietzsche encourages us to think again. In the process, he also urges genealogists to uncover an entire psychological tradition that had mimesis as a *via regia* to the unconscious and inaugurates what he calls a "phase of modesty of consciousness" (*WP* 676;357).

This modesty did not prevent a self-proclaimed philosophical physician from diagnosing the physio-psychological principles that trigger motions, as well as emotions, actions, and reactions, that operate below the soil of consciousness and are in this sense un-conscious. And yet, they can be brought to consciousness nonetheless. How? Not through an interpretation of (Apollonian) dreams but, rather, by paying close diagnostic attention to (Dionysian) bodies whose muscular reflexes are rooted in an immanent conception of the unconscious that generates what Nietzsche calls a "compulsion to imitate" (*WP* 811;429). This concern with an unconscious mimesis predicated on what Nietzsche calls "the automatism of the whole muscular system" (811;429) is central to the notes first assembled in the *Will to Power* and now available in a much more exhaustive and scholarly forms in the *Nachlass*.

Yet unconscious imitation is far from being a late, unpublished concern. As early as in *Human, All too Human*, for instance, Nietzsche articulates a diagnostic of the mimetic unconscious that has been suppressed in the past, Freudian, century but that is currently returning to haunt the present, post-Freudian, century. Here is a passage that should speak to the psychologists of the future Nietzsche is addressing:

> Older than speech is the mimicking of gestures [*Nachmachen von Gebärden*], which takes place involuntarily [*unwillkürlich*] and is even now, despite a general suppression [*Zurückdrängung*] of gestural language and a cultivated mastery of muscles, so strong that we cannot look upon facial movements without innervation of our own face. (*HH* 216:143)

Nietzsche does not use the concept of *the* unconscious, but his account of "imitation" describes gestures and facial expressions that are "involuntary," are not under the control of conscious awareness, and are in this literal sense unconscious. While the mention of suppression [*Zurückdrängung*] calls to mind Freud's repression [*Verdrängung*],[34] what is at stake for Nietzsche is not the repression of Oedipal desires that call for symbolic interpretations to be decoded. Rather, the suppression of bodily mimicry, for Nietzsche, is the last step in a long genealogy of consciousness predicated on a "*symbolism* of gestures" that has its roots in "dramatic music" (216;144), has in "fear" and "timidity" the source of fluency "in the imitation of the feelings of others" (*D* 142; 90), and, as I have argued elsewhere, is central to the birth of human communication and consciousness.[35] For our purpose, suffice it to say that since these mimetic gestures and expressions can actually *not* be "suppressed" in everyday life and do not find in desire (mimetic or not) their starting point, they do not rest on a repressive (Oedipal) hypothesis. Rather, they offer a clear manifestation of a bodily, intersubjective, and unconscious that rests on a Nietzschean (mimetic) hypothesis.

For Nietzsche, then, the unconscious and imitation are two sides of the same coin. This Janus-faced coin flips our common understanding of what is both *mimetic* and *unconscious* upside down. On one side, *imitation*, in its most basic, physio-psychological manifestations, is not based on a conscious, volitional action that stems from the ego. It rather originates in an unconscious reflex reaction triggered by a movement of the other. On the other side, this *unconscious* is not based on a repressive hypothesis to be discovered within a singular ego considered in isolation, let alone be subjected to Oedipal interpretations. On the contrary, it hinges on a mimetic hypothesis that is attentive to affects that flow in between subjects engaged in a dynamic relation of mirroring communication. As we now turn to see, in guise of conclusion, this hypothesis provides a prelude for mimetic studies of the future that has *homo mimeticus* as its starting point.

HOMO MIMETICUS: PRELUDE FOR MIMETIC STUDIES OF THE FUTURE

As Nietzsche reloads the ancient problematic of mimesis from the perspective of modernity, he paves the way for discoveries that were soon to come: From the discovery of the unconscious at the dawn of the twentieth century to the discovery of mirror neurons at its twilight, I think it is fair to say that his immanent, embodied, and intersubjective account of a mimetic pathos that transgresses the boundaries of individuation provides far-reaching diagnostic foundations for mimetic studies that revolutionize dominant philosophical accounts of consciousness, the unconscious, subjectivity, and communication. Girard was thus right in turning to Nietzsche for theoretical inspiration, but far too limited in his pathological reading. We shall go further and rely on Nietzsche as a springboard to promote a theory of imitation that does not have dreams as a *via regia* to the unconscious; nor does it take desire as the main starting point for a theory of imitation. Instead, it focuses on the relational, contagious, and affective logic of mimesis itself to develop a theory of mimetic communication that goes beyond the rivalry principle and introduces a mirroring principle constitutive of *homo mimeticus*.

If we step back to the ancient mimetic principles whereby Nietzsche's career started, we notice that for him, communication is based on a form of intersubjective, immediate, and unconscious understanding that is not mediated by words or mental (Apollonian) representations, but is directly channeled through bodily (Dionysian) gestures and expressions that transgress the boundaries of individuation. Continuing his diagnostic of what we have called the mimetic unconscious, but amplifying its patho-logical implications to articulate, in embryo, an hypothesis of the origins of language and communication tout court, Nietzsche writes:

> The imitated [*nachgeahmte*] gesture led the person who was imitating back to the sensation that expressed itself in the face or body of the person being imitated. Thus, people learned to understand one another; thus, the child still learns to understand its mother. (*HH* 216; 219)

As a philosopher attentive to the body, Nietzsche knows, because he feels, that there is a mimetic power of gestures that has been neglected by mainstream philosophers but that philosophical physicians of the soul can register and theorize. His diagnostic of the mimetic unconscious is not predicated on a clear-cut opposition between consciousness and unconsciousness, the ego and the id,

what we see outside and what we feel inside. Nor does it set up a clear-cut distinction between desire and identification, having and being, that can be neatly triangulated in a meta-psychology of the psyche not deprived of metaphysical traces. On the contrary, the mimetic unconscious is truly immanent, relational, and embodied; it manifests itself in the movements of the bodily expressions that reveal the movements of the soul. Nietzsche, in fact, articulates a dynamic interplay between gestures and sensations, self and others, unconscious mimesis and conscious thoughts, out of which language, communication, and understanding emerge, at the level both of child development (ontogenesis) and of the evolutionary development of the species (phylogenies). Since mimesis is at the origins of both developments, the power of this insight to reframe that eminently rational species which is *Homo sapiens* in both logical and affective principles internal to *homo mimeticus* should not be underestimated.

If we were wondering why Nietzsche considered psychology as the road to the most fundamental problems, we now have a specific illustration of how he puts his patho-*logical* sensitivity to use to solve a problem that had troubled, and continues to trouble, many philosophers, and goes under the rubric of theory of mind: namely, how do we access the mind of others and, by extension, understand their affects, beliefs, intentions, and eventually sympathize and communicate with them, since the other is by definition exterior to the ego? Contrary to dominant rationalist trends in analytic philosophy that consider that in order to access other minds we need to have a conscious understanding, or a theory, of what the other thinks or feels (theory theory), Nietzsche proposes a more immediate, embodied, and unconscious solution that rests on a mimetic hypothesis. Thus, he argues that an involuntary imitation of a gesture or expression the subject sees the other perform leads to a disconcerting mirroring effect responsible for an immediate inner "sensation" of the external emotions corresponding to that gesture or expression. Thus, the subject understands the other directly, *as if* s/he were that other.

How is such a leap from self to other, an external pathos to a shared *sympathos* (feeling with not for), possible? As Nietzsche comes back to this "theory of empathy" [*Theorie der Mitempfindung*] in *Daybreak*, he explains this mimetic principle thus:

> [We] produce the [other's] feeling in ourselves after the *effects* it exerts and displays on the other person by imitating [*nachbilden*] with our own body the expression of his eyes, his voice, his walk, his bearing (or even their reflection in word, picture, music). Then a similar feeling arises in us in consequence of an ancient association between movement and sensation [*Empfindung*]. (*D* 142;89)[36]

This is a truly disconcerting mirroring phenomenon—at least for pure rationalists—that looks back to ancient mimetic principles in order to better see discoveries that were still ahead. It not only troubles the boundaries of individuation along past-oriented, Dionysian principles Nietzsche inherited from Plato, from Schopenhauer, and from a pre-Freudian tradition of the mimetic unconscious I map in more detail elsewhere;[37] he also offers an untimely "theory of empathy" (142;90), by which he means *sym-pathos*, that offers a serious challenge to metaphysical oppositions that oppose *psyche* and *soma*, self and others, inside and outside, activity and passivity, movements and sensations, physiology and psychology, along future-oriented mirroring principles that can be summarized as follows: I involuntarily mimic your gestures and facial expressions (or representations in music, images or words) and, by doing so, thanks to an "ancient association" between movement seen and sensation felt with pathos, I have an embodied and thus nonmediated access to the sensation you feel, or thought you think.[38]

Think of it: The movements you *see* trigger the sensations you *feel*, and all this happens without the mediation of rational consciousness but via a mirroring reflex that, Nietzsche specifies, takes place "involuntarily" and is thus in the Nietzschean, pre-Freudian sense, "unconscious." Thus, he continues: "We have brought our skill in understanding the feelings of others to a high state of perfection and in the presence of another person we are always almost involuntarily [*unwillkürlich*] practicing this skill" (*D* 142; 89). The mimetic unconscious, in other words, does not need solipsistic dreams, slips of the tongue, or neurotic symptoms to be rendered manifest; it is constantly operating in our normal waking lives as we interact with others, providing us with an affective mediation that does not necessarily lead to rivalry but to understanding instead, which does not mean that mimesis cannot consciously be put to use by actors to generate spectacular misunderstandings—quite the contrary.[39] In sum, for Nietzsche there is an unconscious, mimetic principle at the heart of prelinguistic forms of communication that makes *homo mimeticus* conscious of what others feel and think in chameleon terms that stretch mimicry in the animal world to include unconscious mirroring principles in the human world. This mimetic unconscious rests on a physio-psychological, intersubjective, and above all mirroring dynamic that troubles the distinction between *psyche* and *soma*, self and others, the movements I see outside and the pathos I feel inside, leading the others' thought to become a shared thought, their pathos a *sym-pathos*.

Does this mirroring principle sound familiar? The contemporary reader attentive to recent developments in mimetic studies will not have missed the astonishing fact that Nietzsche, writing in the 1880s, is anticipating by more

than a century what has been hailed as a revolutionary discovery in the 1990s, a scientific discovery of a set of neuronal cells that has done much to trigger a renewed interest in mimesis at the dawn of the twenty-first century and that has been grouped under the heading of "mirror neurons." Initially discovered in area F5 of the premotor cortex of macaque monkeys by Giacomo Rizzolatti and his team at the University of Parma, and later found in humans in the form of a "mirror neuron system" (MNS), mirror neurons are motor neurons (neurons responsible for movement) that activate or "fire" not only as we perform a movement but also—and this is the discovery—as we see others performing a movement, especially goal-oriented movements such as grasping and holding, but also facial expressions, images, and sounds.[40]

The parallels with Nietzsche's diagnostic are striking. As one of the originary members of the Parma team, Vittorio Gallese, puts it: "When perceiving others expressing emotions by means of their facial mimicry, the observer's facial muscles activate in a congruent manner . . . Both observation and imitation of facial expression of emotions activate the same restricted group of brain structures."[41] And articulating a hypothesis of how we understand others' intentions on the basis of what he calls "unconscious mimesis" (TSM 94), Gallese adds, along lines that should now sound familiar, "A direct form of understanding others from within, as it were—intentional attunement—is achieved by the activation of neural systems underpinning what we and others do and feel" (100). The sight of a gesture or expression performed by the other, in other words, triggers the MNS to fire, and this mirroring effect allows for a "direct and implicit access to others as subjects of experience as we are" (99). While this hypothesis of a "shared manifold of intersubjectivity" has not failed to generate controversies and is likely to be debated for some time, the presence of an MNS in humans is now established on the basis of recordings of single-neuron activity.[42] For theorists familiar with how the mimetic unconscious operates, it seems to provide a plausible (but not totalizing) neurological explanation for the all-too-human tendency to imitate Nietzsche had already registered. In the process, this discovery challenges a self-enclosed conception of autonomous subjectivity by suggesting that the distinction between self and others, inside and outside, what I feel and what you feel, is not always as clear-cut as it appears to be, thereby opening up the ego to others in mirroring terms characteristic of a phantom ego.

This discovery opens up new lines of inquiries for mimetic studies of the future. Still, genealogical lenses also reveal that it would be more historically correct to say that this is a revolutionary *re*-discovery and groundbreaking confirmation of a mirroring principle that was well known by the tradition of

the mimetic unconscious, a tradition that was erased in the past Freudian century but that is returning to haunt our own post-Freudian century. As Gallese puts it, explicitly addressing Girard's mimetic theory but implicitly challenging a structure that, as we have seen, originates in psychoanalysis: "These results suggest that prior to any triangular mimetic relationship, the main object of infants' mimesis is the affective behavior of the 'other'" (TSM 97). The unstated genealogical implication of this affirmation confirms our genealogical reading: Despite its innovative emphasis on mimesis, Girard's preference for triangular relationships keeps mimetic theory in the shadow of psychoanalytical structures by prioritizing desire, ambivalences, and violent rivalries. This side of mimesis remains relevant, especially in an aggressive capitalist world in which appropriative reflexes have become second nature, lead to escalating forms of pathological competition, and continue to deserve clinical attention. At the same time, our genealogy of mimesis from Nietzsche to mirror neurons reopens a direct intersubjective form of unconscious communication that mediates all types of mimetic *pathos*—good and bad—along mirroring, embodied, and intersubjective lines that the tradition of the mimetic unconscious had inaugurated and that now inform mimetic studies as well.

Nietzsche, the philosophical physician, and recent physician philosophers agree, in the end: In the beginning we do not find a distinction between mimesis and desire, but a flux of mimetic pathos that crosses the boundaries of individuation, leading an embodied ego to mirror, for better and worse, the affects of the other. Hence, Nietzsche's untimely meditations on the mimetic unconscious not only trigger repressive pathologies that lead to madness and the death of consciousness. They also lead to affirmative patho-*logies* that favor conceptual creation and the birth of consciousness—a relational, embodied, and social consciousness characteristic of an eminently mimetic species I called, for lack of a more original term, *homo mimeticus*.

NOTES

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case in mind"): May it serve as a "kick off essay to reconsider authors Girard chased off from the mimetic theory field"—a building stone for future bricks in mimetic studies to come.

1. My interpretation of Nietzsche informs a more general effort to open up the transdisciplinary field of *mimetic studies*, a pluralist approach open to theoretical differences. I have articulated the foundations of mimetic studies in relation to violence, catharsis, the mimetic unconscious, and other topics in a trilogy of books each with a chapter on Nietzsche. See "Birth of Homo Mimeticus" in Nidesh Lawtoo, *Homo Mimeticus: A New Theory of Imitation* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022), 43–68, 112–25; "Beyond the Cathartic Principle: Nietzsche on Influence," in *Violence and the Oedipal Unconscious: vol. 1. The Catharsis Hypothesis* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2023), 127–48; "Dionysian Intoxication" and "The Mimetic Unconscious" in *Violence and the Mimetic Unconscious: vol. 2. The Affective Hypothesis* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2023), 123–38, 159–81. This article originally commissioned for a volume on Girard and philosophy assembles insights scattered in these books.

2. See Nidesh Lawtoo, "Nietzsche's Mimetic Patho(-)logy: From Antiquity to Modernity," in *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 27–83.

3. I use English translations, editions, and abbreviations of Nietzsche's following works: *Beyond Good and Evil* (*BGE*), tr. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 2003); *The Birth of Tragedy* (*BT*), tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967); *Daybreak* (*D*), tr. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); *Ecce Homo* (*EH*), tr. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979); *The Gay Science* (*GS*), tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); *On the Genealogy of Morals* (*GM*), tr. Douglass Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); "Homer's Contest," tr. and ed. Crista Davis Acampora *Nietzschean* 5 (1996), 1–8; *Human, All too Human* (*HH*), tr. Gary Handwerk (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press,1997); *Untimely Meditations*, tr. R. J. Hollingdate (*UM*); *The Will to Power* (*WP*), tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). The German edition of Nietzsche's works I refer to is *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 15 vols., eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–1977). References to the primary texts shall henceforth be given in the body of the text. Title abbreviations as well as part, section, and, when necessary (i.e., long sections), page numbers, are given in parentheses (e.g., *GM* III,17;110)

4. For precursors who take seriously the experiential/affective side of Nietzsche's thought and informed my patho-*logical* approach, see Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. Bruce Boone (St. Paul: Paragon House 1992); Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1969); Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). Starting with *The Phantom of the Ego*, which also focuses on Bataille, the reader will find Nietzsche as central to mimetic studies. In addition to texts mentioned in note 1, for recent Nietzschean contributions to mimetic studies see also Willow Verkek, "A Feminist Genealogy of the Post-Enlightenment Subject with the Marquis de Sade's *Juliette*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 42, no. 1 (2021):27–51; and Marina Garcìa-Granero, "Nietzsche's Legacy for Posthuman Mimesis: Metamorphoses, Embodiment, Immanence," in *Mimetic Posthumanism: Homo Mimeticus 2.0 in Art, Philosophy and Technics* (Leiden: Brill, 2024).

5. Giorgio Colli, *Dopo Nietzsche: Come si diventa un filosofo* (Milano: Bompiani, 1977), 68; my translation.

6. For important exceptions that inform my argument here, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Subject of Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 14–56; "Typography," in *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Harvard University Press, 1989), 43–138; *L'Imitation des modernes: Typographie* 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 87–133; Herman Siemens, "Agonal Configurations in the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*: Identity, Mimesis and the *Übertragung* of Cultures in Nietzsche's Early Thought," *Nietzsche-Studien* 30 (2001): 80–106.

7. Plato, *Republic* in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, tr. P. Shorey, eds. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 575–844, 821;596e, 824;599d. Hereafter in-text citation.

8. See Lawtoo, *Homo Mimeticus*, ch. 1. On Plato's rather complex and aporetic evaluation of mimesis that cannot be reduced to a simple condemnation and exclusion, mimetic studies draw on a genealogy that includes figures like Eric Havelock, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Adriana Cavarero, and Jean-Luc Nancy, among others (see ch. 2).

9. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244a–495d.

10. As Nietzsche's friend Erwin Rohde was quick to recognize in a letter to Nietzsche: "Plato creates his Socrates and you your Zarathustra." Rohde quoted in Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 48. Lacoue-Labarthe takes this insight as a starting point for his claim that "*Zarathustra* functions quite as a Platonic myth" (71). I will return to the specific case of Zarathustra and its link to Plato elsewhere.

11. See Lawtoo, *Phantom of the Ego*, ch. 1, esp. 52–68. For a thorough and incisive study of the role of agon in Nietzsche's thought that—for genealogical reason noted in note 6—productively resonates with the argument presented here, see Herman Siemens, *Agonal Perspectives on Nietzsche's Philosophy of Critical Transvaluation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021).

12. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," trans. and ed. Christa Davis Acampora, *Nietzscheana* 5 (1996): 1–8, 3; hereafter HC. See also Jacob Burckhardt, *The Greeks and Greek Civilization* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), 150–213. I discuss both texts in Lawtoo, *Violence and the Oedipal Unconscious*, 45–57. On the role of "measure" in containing escalation see also Siemens, *Agonal Perspectives*, ch. 2.

13. "Homer's Contest" is included in Walter Kaufman's highly popular *The Portable Nietzsche*, first published in 1954; it is not unlikely that Girard was familiar with this text and drew direct inspiration from it—a hypothesis for mimetic studies of the future to confirm.

14. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. 1, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1948), 274.

15. See, for instance, Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volume I, The Will to Power as Art; Volume II, The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, tr. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volume III, The Will to Power as Knowledge and Metaphysics; Volume IV, Nihilism*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1991); Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: Introduction à sa philosophie*, tr. Henri Niel (Paris: Gallimard, 1950); Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962).

16. See Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 391–410; and Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography," 47–54.

17. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, 40 (my translation).

18. Despite Nietzsche's repeated insistence on psychology, few studies take this perspective seriously. For an informed and penetrating exception that reevaluates the value of Nietzsche's psychology, see Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

19. See René Girard, "Strategies of Madness—Nietzsche, Wagner, and Dostoevski," in *"To Double Business Bound": Essays on Literature, Mimesis, and Anthropology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 61–83; "Nietzsche et la contradiction." *La Conversion de l'art* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010), 127–46; "Dionysus versus the Crucified," *MLN* 99 (1994): 816–35.

20. See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*.

21. David B. Allison, ed. *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation* (New York: A Delta Book, 1977).

22. See especially Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typography."

23. See Girard, "Strategies of Madness," hereafter abbreviated SM. I discuss Girard's pathological hypothesis in more detail in Lawtoo, *Phantom*, 45–52. The case of Nietzsche's madness has been much discussed, has generated many controversies, and, given the impossibility of offering a reliable medical diagnostic, is likely to remain an open case. In what follows, I refrain from speculation on the possible causes of Nietzsche's madness. For a detailed psychopathological account that frames Nietzsche's madness in the general context of his severe health problems since 1873 (migraines, myopia, stomach pain, etc.), which had caused him to abandon his professorial post at Basel in 1879, as well as the subsequent "limit experiences" involved in a nomadic life of solitude and existential anguish, see Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, 92–119. Jaspers, who had a double training in psychiatry and philosophy, does not mention the often-discussed possibility of syphilis as a cause of Nietzsche's progressive cerebral paralysis, yet he offers a cautionary diagnostic we shall bear in mind in what follows: "In order to understand Nietzsche in a truly philosophical manner, medical categories should enter into consideration only if they are certain" (103). Hence, he continues, "the pathological consideration entails a danger for the one who employs it. Instead of directing the gaze to the summits of what is created, it risks, instead, if it is employed in an unauthorized manner, to cast a shadow on the greatness of a creation and of a human being" (104; my translation).

24. I discuss Girard's debt to Freud and psychoanalysis in more detail in Lawtoo, *Violence and the Oedipal Unconscious*, ch. 1.

25. For an important exception that carefully traces the reactive affective tendencies at play in Nietzsche's thought from a psychological perspective in line with Nietzsche and mimetic studies, see Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

26. See Girard, "Dionysus versus the Crucified." For a reading that pursues this Girardian line of inquiry see Giuseppe Fornari, *A God Torn to Pieces*: *The Case of Nietzsche*, tr. Keith Buck (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013)

27. Girard, "Nietzsche et la contradiction" 136 (my translation).

28. Given the focus on the triangular relation between subject, model, and object that triggers ambivalence, rivalry, and violence, Freud—or any reference to psychoanalysis for that matter—is strikingly missing in Girard's first book. I suggest that this omission can be retrospectively accounted for by Girard's "romantic agonism" with Freud that

becomes manifest later on. Schematically put, if mimetic agonism is based on a direct confrontation with/against the predecessor, romantic agonism denies any influence to preserve the myth of originality, while mimetically appropriating the model's thoughts. See Lawtoo, *Violence and the Oedipal Unconscious*, 54–57.

29. I track this perspectival shift in more detail in Lawtoo, *Phantom*, 6–8, 27–83. For one of the first accounts recognizing that "the mysterious interconnection between the healthy and the pathological in Nietzsche brings us to the essential Nietzsche problem," see Lou Salomé, *Nietzsche*, tr. and ed. Siegfried Mandel (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 24.

30. Girard's Freudian emphasis on "desire" in his understanding of Nietzsche's "will to power" leads him, in my view mistakenly, to conflate Freud and Nietzsche on the slippery "terrain" of the "unconscious." René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, tr. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 189.

31. Deleuze is correct in stressing that for Nietzsche, "power as will to power is not what the will wants, but what wills in will (Dionysus in person)" and that "Nietzsche's concepts are categories of the unconscious." Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2015), 21, 27 (my translation). We can only add that Dionysus' will entails a pathos at the heart of the will to power in particular and of the mimetic the unconscious in general.

32. Along similar lines presented here, William E. Connolly draws on Nietzsche's claim that "'conscious thinking, especially that of the philosopher, is the least vigorous . . . and thus precisely philosophers are most apt to be led astray about the nature of knowledge'"; he then incisively adds, with Nietzsche and contemporary neurosciences, that "'philosophers' tend to give too much self-sufficiency to consciousness and to limit thinking too much to the discovery of knowledge. They therefore tend to confine themselves to that part of thinking in which logic plays its most active role." William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 64–65.

33. For an informed historical reframing of psychoanalysis as a mimetic theory in the double sense that, on the one hand, it is based on a mimetic assimilation of theories of predecessors (Janet, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche among others) and, on the other hand, it led patients to "mime Freud's intentions," see Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Sonu Shamdasani, *The Freud Files: An Inquiry into the History of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 155.

34. Interestingly, Nietzsche uses the same term for suppression [*Zurückckdrängung*] that Jakob Bernays used in the theory of catharsis, which, as I have argued elsewhere, may have inspired Freud's notion of *Verdrängung*. See Lawtoo, *Violence and The Oedipal Unconscious*, 88–91. As Freud was certainly familiar with Nietzsche's thought in general, and the hypothesis of the "*internalization* of man" [Verinnerlichung *des Menschen*] (*GM* II: 16;65) in particular developed in *The Genealogy of Morals*, I also argue that Nietzsche, while developing a different (mimetic) unconscious, played a key role in the birth of the Freudian (Oedipal) unconscious (see 129–40).

35. See Lawtoo, *Homo Mimeticus*, ch.1.

36. For a thorough account of the role *Empfindung* plays in Nietzsche see Herman Siemens, "Empfindung," in *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch Online*, eds. Paul van Tongeren, Gerd Schank, and Herman Siemens (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

37. See Lawtoo, *Violence and the Mimetic Unconscious*.

38. Nietzsche's theory of empathy goes back to the very birth of *Homo sapiens* (out of a mimetic reflex). In short, drawing once again on a confessional, patho-logical perspective, he argues that out of "fear" and "timidity" rooted in a "fragile nature" (142;90), humans have, over time, become fluent in mimicking the bodily gestures and expressions of others (including nonhuman animals) so as to divine their intentions. If survival depended on such "quick understanding" derived from the "imitation of the feelings of others" (142;90), such a mimetic drive to infer the emotions from gestures and expressions became second nature over time. At one further remove, this will to mime became the "rightful home of the imitative arts" (142;90), music *in primis*, which for Nietzsche "reveals to us most clearly what masters we are in the rapid and subtle divination of feelings and in empathizing" (142;89). Thus he specifies: "Though music is an imitation of an imitation of feelings, it nonetheless and in spite of this degree of *distance* and indefiniteness often enough makes us participant in these *feelings*" (*D* 142;89; my emphasis). Once again, the pathos of distance we identified as the organizing principle of Nietzsche's account of mimesis in general is at play in his theory of empathy revealed by the pathos of music.

39. For a use of Nietzsche to diagnose (new) fascist mimetic pathologies dramatized by actors on the political scene see Nidesh Lawtoo, *(New) Fascism: Contagion, Community, Myth* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2019).

40. Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia, *Mirrors in the Brain—How Our Minds Share Actions and Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

41. Vittorio Gallese, "The Two Sides of Mimesis," in *Mimesis and Science: Empirical Research on Imitation and the Mimetic Theory of Culture and Religion*, ed. Scott R. Garrels (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 87–108, 95. Hereafter TSM.

42. The existence of an MNS in humans has been empirically confirmed via single-cell measurement in epileptic patients; see Roy Mukamel, Arne D. Ekstrom, Jonas Kaplan, Marco Iacoboni, and Itzhak Fried, "Single-Neuron Responses in Humans During Execution and Observation of Actions," *Biology* 20 (April 2010): 750–56.

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