



“THE ONE BY WHOM SCANDAL HAS COME”

Critically Engaging the Girardian Corpus



The Gateway Arch and city of St. Louis at night

COV&R Conference: July 8-12, 2015 at Saint Louis University

The Colloquium on Violence & Religion invites you to participate in its 25th Annual COV&R Conference. The theme of the conference, “The One by Whom Scandal Has Come: Critically Engaging the Girardian Corpus”, offers the opportunity to look retrospectively at the relationship between mimetic theory and its critics in order to discuss constructively the role these critiques have played in the development of mimetic theory.

Participants are invited to consider the following questions: What are the most trenchant critiques of mimetic theory? Has the response to critics, both by GIRARD and by his disciples, revealed or concealed the truths that mimetic theory claims to be universal? The Colloquium encourages members and conference participants to revisit these critiques with a spirit of hospitality to determine whether valuable insights have been dismissed that might help to sharpen our articulation of mimetic theory.

Plenary Speakers: Shawn COPELAND of Boston College, and James ALISON have agreed to give plenary addresses.

Call for Papers: September 1, 2014 – April 1, 2015: Submissions should be sent to COVR2015@gmail.com via email and should include contact information, a title, and an abstract of 300 words. Notice of acceptance will be made by **April 22, 2015.**

continued on p. 3

COV&R Object: “To explore, criticize, and develop the mimetic model of the relationship between violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture. The Colloquium will be concerned with questions of both research and application. Scholars from various fields and diverse theoretical orientations will be encouraged to participate both in the conferences and the publications sponsored by the Colloquium, but the focus of activity will be the relevance of the mimetic model for the study of religion.”

The Bulletin is also available online: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/bulletin/>

Contents

“The One by Whom Scandal Has Come”	
COV&R Conference 2015	1
Announcements	2
Program of COV&R at the AAR 2014	3
Letter from the President	4
Musings from the Executive Secretary	5
Reports:	
COV&R Conference in Freising	6
Special Attendees’ Reports	7
Panel on Mimetic Theory and Media Ecology in Toronto	8
Book Reviews:	
Fornari, Giuseppe: <i>A God Torn to Pieces</i>	9
Goodhart, Sandor: <i>The Prophetic Law</i>	11
Moosbrugger, Mathias, <i>Die Rehabilitierung des Opfers</i>	14
Lawtoo, Nidesh: <i>The Phantom of the Ego</i>	18
Reineke, Martha J.: <i>Intimate Domain</i>	20
Bibliography	23
Editor’s Thanks	28
Important Addresses	28
Membership Form	28

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**War, Apocalypse and Peace:
In the Light of the 100th Anniversary of Gallipoli
The 5th Annual Conference of the Australian Girard Seminar
30th-31st January 2015
St Paul's College, the University of Sydney**

In the anniversary year of the Gallipoli landing by the Allies, war has re-emerged to plunge the world order into crisis, especially in Europe and the Middle East. Despite predictions and hopes of its decline, war remains an ever-present reality and threat. Conventional war plagues such places as Syria, Iraq, Ukraine and the Congo, while there are the rising tensions between the US, Russia and China. Reflecting on the "War to end all Wars" and its escalation in World War II and the Holocaust, this conference explores why humans continue to engage in war and what are the prospects for peace, or its opposite, apocalypse. It seeks to analyse the dynamics of war, the relationships in war, and the conditions for war and peace in different contexts and time periods. An area of interest for this conference is Australia, particularly its history of local and foreign wars and its ways of memorialising and mythologising war, especially in relation to Gallipoli and the ANZACs. The conference is grounded in the work of French philosopher, René Girard, whose insights into mimetic desire, violence, culture and religion provide unique resources to assess the dynamics of war and evaluate the prospects for peace. Girard's most recent work, *Battling to the End*, provides pointed analysis and warnings about the nature and extent of war, which will be a point of reflection.

For more information see: <http://www.australiangirardseminar.org>

Raymund Schwager, S.J., Memorial Essay Contest

To honor the memory of Raymund SCHWAGER, SJ (†2004), the Colloquium on Violence and Religion is offering an **award of \$ 1,500** shared by up to three persons, for the three best papers given by graduate students at the COV&R 2015 meeting at St. Louis University. Students presenting papers at the conference are invited to apply for the **Raymund Schwager Memorial Award** by sending a letter to that effect and the full text of their paper (in English, maximum length: 10-12 pages, double-spaced) in an e-mail attachment to Jeremiah ALBERG (jlalberg@gmail.com), COV&R Executive Secretary and chair of the three-person COV&R Awards Committee. **The due date for submission is June 1, 2015.** Winners will be announced in the conference program. Prize-winning papers should reflect an engagement with mimetic theory; they will be presented in a plenary session and be considered for publication in *Contagion*.

COV&R Travel Grants

Graduate students or independent scholars who are **first-time attendees** at a COV&R conference may apply for a travel grant to attend the COV&R 2015 conference. The number of grants is limited. Such applicants will normally be expected to **give a paper** at the conference. Write a **letter of application** to that effect to the organizer of the 2015 COV&R-conference, Grant KAPLAN (COVR2015@gmail.com). An application form and due-date information can be found on the conference web-site: <http://www.slu.edu/departments-of-theology-home/2015-colloquium-on-violence-and-religion>.

continued from p. 1

Other Activities: tours to the Cahokia Mounds and to sites related to the Dred Scott case, both just a few miles from the conference location, are planned. The Cahokia Mounds are the remains of the most sophisticated prehistoric native civilization north of Mexico. In 1982, UNESCO has designated Cahokia Mounds a World Heritage Site for its importance to our understanding of the prehistory of North America. The city of Cahokia supposedly was inhabited from about A.D. 700 to 1400. At its peak, from A.D. 1050 to 1200, it covered nearly six square miles and had 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.

As details for the conference emerge, they will be posted to the conference website: <http://www.slu.edu/departments-of-theology-home/2015-colloquium-on-violence-and-religion>.

Queries can be sent to COVR2015@gmail.com. The 2015 COV&R host is Grant Kaplan, Associate Professor of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University.

Grant Kaplan

**COV&R AT
THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION**

The Colloquium on Violence and Religion is pleased to offer two sessions at the upcoming American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting on November 23 in San Diego, CA. The session descriptions are below. The AAR staff re-entered information for the P23-200 session into their computers after telling me that the computer could not list panelists (Part II of our session) in the same session as a paper (Part I of our session). Our panelists kindly offered titles for their remarks to turn the panel into a set of papers. The results, as you will see if you look at the actual program book, are garbled because the field-settings for computer entry still could not handle our session format. Therefore, please note that session P23-200 is intended to be a panel. Panelists will offer remarks, but plenty of time will be left for discussion among the panelists and with David Dawson, the author of the book under discussion. Our business meeting has also been left out of the schedule. I have included it here. Finally, in a less than stellar year for the AAR program book computer/staff, P23-200 comes several pages after P23-201 in

the program book. Please take time to locate the entry now, using the program page numbers listed below.

**Program of the Annual Meeting
November 22-25, 2014, San Diego, CA**

Session I (P23-100; Sunday, Nov. 23, 9:00 AM–11:30 AM, at Marriott Marquis-Carlsbad) [P. 289 of the print AAR/SBL Program Book]

Theme: René Girard, Secular Modernity, and Politics

Martha J. Reineke, University of Northern Iowa, Presiding

Grant Kaplan, Saint Louis University: *René Girard and Secular Modernity: Christ, Culture, and Crisis* by Scott Cowdell: A Reflection [for a review of the pertinent book see: Bulletin no. 44, p. 13].

Responding: Scott Cowdell, Charles Stuart University

William T. Cavanaugh, DePaul University, and Thomas Ryba, University of Notre Dame and Purdue University: *Resisting Violence and Victimization: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor* by Joel Hodge: A Conversation [for a review of the pertinent book see: Bulletin no. 43, p. 13]

Responding: Joel Hodge, Australian Catholic University

Session II (P23-200; Sunday, Nov. 23, 1:00 PM–3:30 PM, at Marriott Marquis-Carlsbad) [P. 299 of the print AAR/SBL program book]

Theme: New Directions in Mimetic Theory
Nikolaus Wandinger, University of Innsbruck, Presiding

Part I of the session:

David Dawson, University of Costa Rica: *The Head Beneath the Altar: Hindu Mythology and the Critique of Sacrifice* by Brian Collins

Responding: Brian Collins, Ohio University

Part II of the session:

A discussion of *Flesh Becomes Word: A Lexicography of the Scapegoat or, the History of an Idea* by David Dawson [for a review of the pertinent book see: Bulletin no. 44, p. 17].

Matthew Pattillo, The New School for Social Research: “Reflections on *Flesh Becomes Word: A Lexicography of the Scapegoat or, the History of an Idea*”

Robert A. Segal, King's College, University of Aberdeen: "The Use of Girard's Theory of Myth in *Flesh Becomes Word*"

William Johnsen, Michigan State University: "Words alone are certain good: David Dawson's *Flesh Becomes Word*"

Responding: David Dawson, University of Costa Rica

Business Meeting: Please plan to stay for a brief business meeting at the conclusion of the second session. Bring your ideas for the 2015 COV&R sessions at the AAR, which will be held in Atlanta, GA.

Martha Reineke

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Anniversaries stir the memory, awaken reflection, and inspire decision. At this moment in October, 2014, we in COV&R stand between two such anniversaries. The 2014 COV&R conference in Freising, Germany, marked in a special way the centennial anniversary of the outbreak in 1914 of World War I, the first of the terrible modern wars foreseen by Carl von Clausewitz, whose book *On War* inspired René Girard's *Achever Clausewitz* (2007). The 2015 COV&R conference to be held next summer at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., will mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Colloquium—a cause for grateful celebration.

Appropriately so, *Im Angesicht der Apokalypse: Clausewitz zu Ende Denken* (2014), the German-language translation of Girard's *Achever Clausewitz*, appeared in print at the start of the meeting in Freising, "Battling to the End, 1914-2014: The Escalation of Violence and Victimization." The mimetic theory as formulated by Girard (* 1923) is arguably a "child" of war, an intellectual fruit of his youthful experiences in France during World War II—the terrible, historic cataclysm that has spurred his life-long effort to understand the causes of human violence. Through our participation in this Girardian quest, we have all become "children" of war, but also hopeful children of peace.

This letter is not the place to recall the whole program of papers, so I restrain myself from doing so. I want to emphasize, however, that the 2014 meeting left a profound impression. Truly

an extraordinary event, miraculous in many ways, the conference at Freising was organized by Walter Schweidler and his youthful team, with the support of Richard Schenk, O.P., President of the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. In terms of intellectual quality, thematic coherence, and hospitality, it was one of our very best COV&R meetings. The good spirit that usually characterizes our meetings as a gathering of friends was clearly present. We owe a great debt of thanks to the organizers, to the Raven Foundation, to Imitatio, and to everyone who participated, young and old.

This year COV&R gave four (not three) Raymund Schwager S.J. Memorial awards in the graduate student competition, and each of the young winners (Pedro Sette-Camara, W. Bernard Disco, Simon De Keukelaere, and Markus Wierschem) rose to the occasion of giving a very fine lecture in plenary session. Thanks to a grant from Imitatio, six travel grants were awarded to first-time attendees. Representing AMES, the network of young Girardians within COV&R, Carly Osborn (University of Adelaide, Australia) unveiled <http://skandalonscholars.com>, a new Girardian blog which is a work of former students in the Imitatio-sponsored Girard Summer School in The Netherlands, organized by Thérèse Ondenwijngaard.

Unlike many organizations of a comparable size and age, COV&R continues to attract many young people to our yearly meetings and to welcome back, year after year, an impressive group of core members. Their long-term commitment to the study, development, critique, and application of the mimetic theory has borne fruit in countless articles and books, as is clearly in evidence in the book series from Michigan State University Press, edited by William Johnsen, as well as in recent publications from Continuum and the University of Notre Dame Press, among others. Meanwhile, the collected works of Raymund Schwager, S.J., are being prepared for publication—volume 5, *Dogma und dramatische Geschichte* has already appeared, volume 6, the bilingual French-German edition of the correspondence between Schwager and René Girard, is due in late November.

COV&R will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its founding at its 2015 meeting July 8-12, at St. Louis University (SLU) in St. Louis, MO. Grant KAPLAN, the conference organizer, has issued the Call for Papers and announced the conference theme, “The One By Whom Scandal Has Come: Critically Engaging the Girardian Corpus.” A noted African-American woman theologian at Boston College, M. Shawn COPELAND, has graciously agreed to give the Raymund Schwager S.J. Memorial Lecture. Professor COPELAND will pick up on the theme of scapegoating and lynching to which COV&R has directed its special attention over the past five years, thanks to the project organized by Julia ROBINSON and Sandor GOODHART, to which Patrice RANKINE and others have contributed.

Professor KAPLAN has awakened great enthusiasm at SLU for the conference, and we expect the conference will be very well organized. Centrally located in a large, historic city in the American Midwest, COV&R 2015 should be a very memorable, well attended, anniversary celebration.

Please support COV&R Advisory Board member Kathy FROST (St. Joseph’s College, New York) in her effort to “welcome home” to the anniversary meeting in St. Louis all those who have been active in the Colloquium at some point during the past 25 years. Each one of them, each one of us, has contributed to the history of COV&R. It’s time to remember that and to do so together.

Sincerely yours,
Ann

**MUSINGS FROM THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Niki Wandinger kindly sent me a reminder to have this article to him by October 12th. I always try to comply. I promptly entered it into my calendar but did not notice that I was entering it on *November* 12th. When nothing appeared on my calendar last weekend, I forgot and did nothing. I mention this not just to point to my own foibles but to bring to mind how the *Bulletin* and the way it works stands as a kind of symbol for the whole of COV&R. Many different people take time out of their already busy lives to contribute something to the making of

the *Bulletin*. The editor then takes time from his busy life, herds the cats to get slackers like myself off their duff, edits all the contributions so that an issue can come out by the appropriate date. The *Bulletin* has been an invaluable source of information for the community that is COV&R. It is the one place where book reviews are consistently published on books relating to mimetic theory. Through the bibliography it provides a continual update on the publications that touch upon mimetic theory. It has allowed conference organizers a chance to entice people to make the trip to the annual conference. And through the follow-up reports from participants, it allows those who could not make the trip to at least get a sense of what went on during the conference. It has kept all of us up to date on the activities of COV&R members at the AAR. Finally, it gives the President and the Executive Secretary an easy forum for communicating with members.

All of this buildup is to bring up both a specific question and a broader challenge. Niki has expertly put out the *Bulletin* for over ten years now. We are all massively in his debt. But he has indicated that he is ready to relinquish his post as Editor and that we should look for his successor. This was announced at the Business Meeting at the Conference but I wish to sound the message again now and ask if we have anyone interested in carrying on this important task. If you would like to discuss this as a possibility, please contact either Ann Astell or myself (jlalberg@gmail.com).

Related to this is the request by Martha Reineke to find someone who could take over as our liaison with AAR. Martha, like Niki, has done yeoman’s service for COV&R by arranging the various speakers and activities at these annual meetings. She succeeded in formalizing our relationship with AAR and obtaining precious space in their program and at the annual meeting. So now we need someone to carry on this fine tradition. Again, contact me if you would like to discuss the possibility.

I see part of my responsibility as Executive Secretary to work to maintain the health of COV&R by involving as many people as possible in COV&R’s activities and governance. I think that there are many members who are willing to serve in various capacities and the more who get involved the better.

One of the things that I like very much about COV&R's way of doing things is the way it is continually bringing new people on to the Advisory Board. It gives a number of our members a chance to really exercise some ownership of the organization. We strive to find a balance on the Board but if you feel that something or someone is missing, please let me know.

Finally, we have an outstanding conference being planned for our 25th year as an organization in St. Louis next year. 2016 will take COV&R to the Southern Hemisphere and Down-under. We need to be thinking of 2017 and where we might be holding the meeting in that year.

Jeremiah Alberg

REPORTS ON CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Report on the COV&R-conference 2014 in Freising, Germany, on "Battling to the End" 1914-2014

This year's colloquium was my first, and perhaps readers will be interested in hearing from a newcomer. I begin with superficial, yet baroque, praises of how classy everyone and everything was at the Kardinal-Döpfner-Haus, atop the central hill in Freising, Germany. Where else can one find rooms full of hospitable, capable, multi-lingual scholars, not only enjoying and giving lectures but savoring a string quartet followed by rounds of champagne in some medieval bar? I hasten to praise, as well, one of the famous plenary lecturers, Herfried Münkler, for his magisterial beard, consummate fashion, and exquisite German, if nothing else. Only a French gentleman, reportedly a member of the Dutch Girardian group, came near this grandeur with his estimable handlebar mustache.

But there was far more than mere class at the Döpfner-Haus. The first, highly anticipated event, was Jean-Luc MARION's lecture, devoted to what one might call the apophysis of forgiveness. Drawing partly from the insight of Christ not forgiving, per se, but asking the Father to forgive, MARION highlighted the notion of "letting Being be." By this, he meant the refusal to "fill the space" that judgment and assurance (among other ontological over-presences) so often fill. By not rushing to fill this space, we open up eschatological space. Instead of establishing sheer presence and *ou-*

sious, through, say, casting judgment or hatred, we make space by forgiveness: the *par-ousious*. Hence, the inner logic of love and patience in the "second coming". That is, instead of just practicing the gift, *geben*—the "given," *being*—we must learn to practice *vergeben*, forgiveness.

Other plenary lectures included the four student Schwager award-winners' presentations—all erudite and detailed. Given the conference's theme surrounding WWI, one of them, Simon DE KEUKELAERE, interpreted the binding of Isaac in light of Europe having "killed half its seed" because it refused to "sacrifice the ram of pride," as a poem by Wilfrid Owen (1893-1918) expresses it. In his lecture titled "Do This in Memory of Me" Bernard DISCO offered a Girardian interpretation of the institution narratives, which all include some amount of betrayal, though no retribution. Markus WIERSCHEM proved himself a deft interpreter of the American psycho-social landscape of violence and living with(out) hope, as portrayed through Cormac MCCARTHY's apocalyptic genre. And Petro Sette CAMARA E SILVA interpreted BERNANOS' *Under the Sun of Satan* in the light of mimetic theory.

Some other highlights from plenaries: The aforementioned Herfried MÜNKLER delivered a considerable lecture on the cultural status of sacrifice and myth in Germany surrounding WWI. Benoit CHANTRE not only reviewed the content and backstory of *Achever Clausewitz* but commented on U.S. foreign policy. From the apocalyptic advent of the bomb to the hubristic escalations in Iraq, GIRARD's thought—with its deep suspicion of politics, combined with a world-savvy realism about the *katechon*—is naturally contextualized in, and prophetic to, the U.S. political landscape. Mathias MOOSBRUGGER traced the trajectory of Girardian apocalyptic thought throughout GIRARD's career. And Malise RUTHVEN offered an in depth historical account of the battle of Galipoli—including trench courtesies and mirror neuron empathy. Lastly, Michael STAUDIGL reflected on the disappearance of the face of the enemy and the twentieth century as one long war, while John DUVALL extrapolated the intersection of race, lynching, and print media.

In the parallel session devoted to "Modernity, Apocalypse and Total War," there ensued a

lively debate. All was calm as Robert DORAN traced the insights of *Battling to the End*, discussing how we unfortunately need external constraints (e.g. Geneva Conventions), filling the diminishing role of internal constraints (e.g. the sacred, taboo). But room temperature increased when Stephen GARDNER asserted how “GIRARD’s renunciation of the political is absurd” and “he is a utopian romantic”; chairs were thrown, tables toppled, counter-arguments foisted, and, after reconciling through blood sacrifice, all parties eventually left ready for convivial drinks.

In another session, on “Theological Approaches,” Margaret BLUME drew out how ORIGEN’s grappling with myth helps us frame the Christian revelation—and particularly its Eucharistic practice—as both sacrificial and not sacrificial. Thomas RYBA offered his way past both BULTMANN and biblical literalism, rehabilitating demon language (sounding akin to a Ricoeurian second naïveté). And Nikolaus WANDINGER advanced R. SCHWAGER’s dramatic understandings of Jesus life and death—that each “act” of that drama, from his “failure” to inaugurate the kingdom, to Pentecost, all are continually re-done throughout our lives. (I cannot report on the other sessions, though I heard they were all excellent.)

Besides cherishing my visit, loving the new friends I made, and feeling warmly welcomed into this small cadre of capable scholars, I came away considering how theologians like John Howard YODER, Stanley HAUERWAS, and William T. CAVANAUGH may be of some use in Girardian political discourse. Ambivalence toward the *katechon* requires learning to think and live with or without government and law. The thinkers above, each with weaknesses to be sure, advocate a mode of being “resident aliens” that could offer some ways for Girardians to contemplate being “political”—that is, active and present in this world—but not necessarily governmental, or at least putting much hope in the *katechon*. Unfortunately, not many words at this colloquium were spent in discussion of *praxis*. Besides staring down the last bloody century with insightful theory, and analyzing the potential escalation to extremes in our day, we indeed need to consider how to live—as people, communities, churches, and not merely citizens and nations. We need models more

communal, gritty, engaged, adventurous, and ecclesiological than HÖLDERLIN and his poetic withdrawal. Dorothy DAY and Peter MAURIN are well known exemplars. But who else?

Chris Haw

Special Attendees’ Reports

Some attendees of the conference in Freising in July might have realized that there was a group of very young students among us. They were, in fact, high school students who had come through “Politische und Christliche Jugendbildung e. V.”, or the Foundation for Political and Christian Youth Education. Two of them, Kyra Gerber (16) and Lorenzo Wienecke (17) wrote little essays of their impressions, which we publish here in excerpts.

The fine white historical conference building was in front of me, I took the first step inside and looked around. Excitement and a thousand questions popped up in my mind which was already exhausted from traveling: What can I expect? Will a pupil even be taken seriously in a meeting like this? The enormous impression mixed up with scepticism and turned into a timid but eager curiosity. I hope that you, my readers, still have some idea of what might go on in the mind of an 11th grade high school student before an international meeting for academic scholars. But the 24th conference of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion gave me much more inspiration and experience than the first impression had me expect. – And I would like to share them with you.

Philosophy is a subject I take at school and I think about studying it. I was very excited about the mimetic theory and looked forward to the philosophy lectures. During the conference I learned a lot about mimetic theory and I experienced it as a comprehensive and especially current approach for many different themes and topics. It was also very nice to listen to the historical part of the conference, especially because I had talked about the First World War some weeks ago in school.

The participants at the meeting, whether they were professors from other countries or students from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, were communicative and interested and I was able to talk with everybody about so many varied themes from theology to the latest political situations. The way of communication

was an immense contrast to my usual kind of conversation and to the grade of interest for different themes in school and I was happy to get the chance to discuss topics in such a wonderful way. I am still in contact with some people I met at the conference.

The daily schedule and especially the parallel sessions were also something new for me. I went from one presentation to the next and had so much more interesting input than in school – in quantity and also quality. Between the presentations I talked with a lot of nice and also interesting people while we drank coffee or spent lunch breaks together.

In the end I would like to thank for the opportunity to take part at the COV&R conference and for the experiences I made at it. I hope that this article made it possible for you to take a student's perspective on the conference and I hope that you enjoyed reading it.

Kyra Gerber

At the moment I am for one year as an exchange student in Illinois, USA, and when I look back on the conference in Freising, I remember: A lot of really nice people, interesting lectures, exciting talks, the probably profoundest coffee breaks in a beautiful and impressive environment and much more.

From the first time I heard about COV&R and the conference in Freising I was fascinated by it and I really looked forward to participating. My knowledge about philosophy was small. I'd had the opportunity to attend some philosophy lectures but mimetic theory and the work of GIRARD were completely new to me. Neither had I ever participated in an international meeting and was highly impressed when I saw the list of participants from all over the world. So I started my journey to Freising with many questions, great anticipation and excitement.

The welcome was really friendly and I started directly to talk with people from all over the world. Discussing topics became my favorite activity during the next days. I really liked the lectures, which gave me a lot of information and were a great inspiration. But for me the highlights of the conference were the conversations in small groups. Now we get to the coffee breaks already mentioned at the beginning. These breaks between lectures were always a great opportunity to exchange ideas and learn

more in private talks. Everybody I talked to was completely open and friendly. I am still thinking about some of the conversations we had. Every day I got more into the ideas of GIRARD and the mimetic theory and my fascination for philosophy grew strongly. My main reason for attending the conference was my interest in the history topics, and in *Battling to the End*. The historical lecture of Herfried MÜNKLER was surely one of my highlights, but now I am so fascinated by the philosophy aspects that I seriously think about studying it for a few semesters.

The chamber music concert and the last small group session on Thursday perfectly completed a really good, educational and inspirational time for me, and I was sad that it was already over. I really want to thank COV&R, all participants of the conference, and especially "Politische und Christliche Jugendbildung e. V." for this great time, and I hope that I will have the opportunity to participate again at a COV&R meeting.

Lorenzo Wienecke

Mimetic Theory and Media Ecology A Panel in Toronto

In my research and other activities over the years, I have attempted to bridge mimetic theory and the emerging field known as media ecology—the latter frequently defined as the study of the interactions between communications media, technologies, techniques, and processes, and human thought, feeling, value, and behaviour. Among the better-known media ecologists are Jacques Ellul, Lewis Mumford, Neil Postman, Marshall McLuhan, and Walter Ong. In my ongoing effort to introduce the work of René Girard to the media ecology community – which has been a simultaneous effort to introduce the media ecology tradition to those of COV&R for whom it is unfamiliar—I have made the case that though not a student of technology per se, Girard's work has much to teach us regarding various modes of *mediation*. As current Vice-President of the international Media Ecology Association (MEA), I hosted our annual convention this past June at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada, where I am happy to report that Girard was this year's recipient of our Walter J. Ong Award for Career Achievement in Scholarship. As COV&R pres-

ident Anne Astell recently pointed out to me, the MEA's award conjoins the names of Ong and Girard, which were previously linked some years back when the Conference on Christianity and Literature (CCL) gave its Lifetime Achievement Award to Walter Ong, S.J. in 1996 and then to René Girard in 1997. Our Toronto convention devoted a plenary panel to the topic of 'Technics and the Sacred', which considered Girard's ideas alongside those of Jacques Ellul, Neil Postman, Ernest Becker, Kenneth Burke, and the Canadian philosopher George Grant. The panel featured five scholars: Corey Anton (Grand Valley State University), Arthur Hunt III (University of Tennessee at Martin), William Vanderburg (University of Toronto), Larry Schmidt (University of Toronto) and Nadia Delicata—now at the University of Malta, and the first person I met when I joined COV&R for the very first time in Koblenz back in 2005. It was wonderful to meet so many of my COV&R colleagues again in Germany this year, and I hope to join you again next summer as well. In the meantime, if anyone is interested in further information about media ecology, please don't hesitate to be in touch (dr.philrose@gmail.com), or join us at next year's convention in Denver, Colorado (www.media-ecology.org).

Phil Rose

BOOK REVIEWS

Fornari, Giuseppe, *A God Torn to Pieces: The Nietzsche Case.*

Translation by Keith Buck in Collaboration with the author. Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture. East Lansing (Michigan): Michigan State University Press 2013 (XVII, 143 pp.), ISBN: 978-60917-392-0 (e-book), 978-1-61186-101-3 (pbk).

The title *A God Torn to Pieces* takes up a late note by NIETZSCHE (cf. p. 109f.). It refers to the Greek god Dionysus, but at the same time to NIETZSCHE himself in his self-divinization and identification with Dionysus—and with Christ. The book of a mere 120 pages is a fruit of the cooperation with René GIRARD but partly makes different emphases than GIRARD. FORNARI wants to understand NIETZSCHE's life, philosophy and illness in an inner unity, he wants to grasp the tension in which the philoso-

pher lived and thought, and which finally caused him to break down. Only in this way can NIETZSCHE's intellectual, philosophical and theological importance become clear. NIETZSCHE's thought is tightly interwoven with the political and intellectual situation of Europe at the outgoing 19th century. As "a kind of early-warning device" (p. X) he acquires almost prophetic importance. NIETZSCHE had an intuition of Europe's totalitarian future; the mass-extirminations of later generations are the strongest corroboration of his thinking and at the same time its "most macabre und ironic refutation" (p. 74).

FORNARI commences his book with an image: He compares the method of GIRARD's interpretation of NIETZSCHE with Herman MELVILLE's method in his novel *Moby Dick*—and then proceeds by comparing NIETZSCHE to the novel's main character, Captain Ahab. As Ahab is obsessed with hunting the whale, so that he cannot live without it and as a consequence has to die with it, so NIETZSCHE is occupied by the tension between Dionysus and Christ and is pulled into the abyss by it. The metaphor of the whale-hunt is taken up several times in the course of the subsequent chapters, which analyze NIETZSCHE's life and work.

NIETZSCHE's illness, his manifest mental breakdown around the turn of the year 1888/1889 is often explained as caused by syphilis, which NIETZSCHE was supposed to have incurred as a student. FORNARI denies that, referring to *La catastrofe di Nietzsche a Torino* (Torino 1978) by Anacleto VERRECCHIA. NIETZSCHE's glorifiers do not want to see the inner connection between his thinking and his illness. Yet, reports about NIETZSCHE's final months in Turin clearly testify to his slow descent into madness. His medical records show the ground level of his behavior and his psychological structure becomes visible: his megalomania, his ravenous hunger, the abuse of his excrements show the inner contradiction that ruled him: "the philosopher of the eternal recurrence had to devour himself to demonstrate his own absolute existence" (p. 19). In describing this dramatic development, FORNARI is not without sympathy for NIETZSCHE, above all he rightly emphasizes how much this man suffered throughout his life.

Looking at NIETZSCHE's biography, we see that he hadn't turned 5 yet when he lost his father. As a young man he looked to Richard WAGNER for a substitute father but the admired model soon was to become a hated rival. This doubles-system became the "hidden engine" (p. 48) of NIETZSCHE's thinking. Both central ideas—the *will to power* and the *superman*—are centered around the fighting and overcoming of a rival—an impossible endeavor in its radicalness. NIETZSCHE cloaks the reason for his will to power: rivalry. But he dares to glance into the abyss of his desire. Dionysus becomes the cipher for that.

Dionysus is the god of collective murder by lynching; by professing his allegiance to Dionysus, NIETZSCHE exhibits his awareness of the fundamental importance of sacrifice, of the scapegoat, for human culture. However, it also shows his ambivalence: he constantly defends sacrifice; yet, its being rooted in desire and rivalry never comes to the fore. He celebrates Dionysus as a bright embodiment of the aristocratic principle, as the epitome of a superman. He omits, however, that for the Greeks Dionysus was the embodiment of the *sparagmos*, of collective, murderous excesses that were only commemorated in hidden rituals at night. This is the background against which the well-known aphorism *The mad man* from *The Gay Science* (No. 125) has to be understood. The saying "God is dead" thus is interpreted as an intuition that belief in a deity springs forth from the scapegoat mechanism. When NIETZSCHE derives the genesis of morality from the resentment of the weak, he only criticizes the desire of others but not his own. Otherwise he would have to admit that he does as those whom he so condescendingly criticizes. However, FORNARI emphasizes that NIETZSCHE cannot be held responsible for the misuse of his ideas by the Nazi regime.

NIETZSCHE's thinking about Dionysus becomes critical when in the spring of 1888 he begins to attend to the difference between Dionysus and Christ, especially in *The Antichrist*. FORNARI concentrates on some central passages. Many of the invectives contained in it can be found in NIETZSCHE's earlier writings as well. The new and destructive element of *The Antichrist* is that NIETZSCHE here denies one of his great discoveries: the difference between

Dionysus and Christ. He criticizes the apostles for interpreting the crucifixion as an expiatory sacrifice. Thus NIETZSCHE enters into a self-contradiction: what he rejects in the Apostles' thinking as barbarian paganism, what he censures in the Eucharist as the repetition of bloody archaic rites, is the same thing as what he had celebrated in his eulogies for Dionysus. For a long time, NIETZSCHE had viewed the problem of sacrifice from the point of view of the persecutors; it is only now that it dawns on him that there is also a point of view of the persecuted. He entered a trap and cannot liberate himself again; madness is his way out. And this has to be taken literally: FORNARI hopes that NIETZSCHE has found a way out of his hate towards redemption and love. In the final part of the book he analyzes texts by NIETZSCHE that attest to a true religious experience and even closeness to Christ.

FORNARI deserves credit for energetically posing the question about the meaning of NIETZSCHE's madness for his life and work and develops a pointed solution on the basis of mimetic theory. It is to be hoped that Nietzsche-research will take note of it and discuss it appropriately. FORNARI again and again points out NIETZSCHE's ambivalence. NIETZSCHE's open display of his internal conflict makes for the exceptional standing of his thinking. FORNARI pointedly declares: "Nietzsche was never so right as when he was wrong." (p. XIII) However, FORNARI's attitude towards NIETZSCHE is ambivalent too: He shows how NIETZSCHE falls into destructive aporias, but he also admires him for the radicalness with which he delved into these problems. NIETZSCHE becomes a witness to Christ against his own will. With full force he propagated the Dionysian, thereby unmasking it as absurd. FORNARI, like GIRARD, sees a positive fall-out of NIETZSCHE's radical criticism of religion: the truth of the victim,

Despite its relatively small size, FORNARI's book contains a wealth of material, also covering Thomas MANN's and Gabriele D'ANNUNZIO's attitude towards NIETZSCHE's idea of the Dionysian. Reading this book sometimes is a challenge, also because there is some repetition. Sometimes one could wonder whether statements by NIETZSCHE might be over-interpreted—an objection that FORNARI himself raises. His book has been written with com-

mitment and—also rhetorical—verve. Sometimes it almost seems as if the author identifies with NIETZSCHE. Yet, that is not intended as a criticism. This engages readers and challenges them to get involved with NIETZSCHE's thinking and its current significance. It could be helpful to find orientation in the crises of our present day, especially to come to a "better understanding of Christianity and its uniqueness" (p. 1). Thus FORNARI stresses the positive opportunities of NIETZSCHE's thought and the chances that engaging with it entails. This corresponds to FORNARI's critique of GIRARD's *Achever Clausewitz*. He reproaches this work for too pessimistically concentrating on the apocalyptic dangers of the present, and neglecting its positive challenges.

In conclusion I want to mention that FORNARI further developed the topic of this book in two other volumes. One of it is scheduled to be published in English very soon: *From Dionysus to Christ. Knowledge and Sacrifice in the Greek World and the Western Civilisation*.

Bernhard Dieckmann, Marburg,
translated by Nikolaus Wandinger

Goodhart, Sandor: *The Prophetic Law: Essays in Judaism, Girardianism, Literary Studies, and the Ethical.*

**Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture
East Lansing: Michigan State University
Press, 2014. (296 pp) ISBN: 9781611861242;
\$24.95**

This remarkably rich and engaging book by one of the leading figures in Girardian studies is the fruit of several years of reflection, debate, and discussion. It is indeed, the book long awaited by those who, like myself, have been intrigued by Sandor GOODHART's thought-provoking presentations and interventions at COV&R meetings throughout the years. The book does not disappoint. It will be of interest to a wide variety of readers, but especially to long-standing members of COV&R, who will feel they have been present at its inception and development, since much of it is based on papers delivered at COV&R conferences, or articles written for publication in COV&R-related publications such as the *Bulletin* and *Contagion*. The book indeed bears eloquent testimony to the way in which COV&R itself can provide a

nurturing environment for an important body of work by a highly talented scholar.

The book consists of twenty-five essays written over a period of about twenty years (eighteen of them by GOODHART himself, and the remaining seven short pieces by interlocutors). As such, it invites selective dipping into on the part of those with particular interests, whether literary, biblical, theological, or philosophical. Yet underlying the multi-disciplinary surface of the book is a unity of intention that weaves the essays together effectively into a compelling whole. This unity is signaled in the main title. While "prophetic" certainly refers to the religious vision of seminal Hebrew texts, GOODHART early defines it more broadly as "recognition of the dramas in which human beings are engaged and naming in advance of the end of those dramas in order that human beings may choose whether to go there or not"; and thus the term can include within its scope also ancient Greek tragedy and the modern novel of CERVANTES, KAFKA, and DOSTOEVSKY, as well as Girardian anthropology and Levinasian philosophy. The "law" of the title refers above all to the ancient Hebrew "law of anti-idolatry," not as doctrinal regulation, but as ongoing "teaching" or "reading" (*torah*), which refuses the substitution for the transcendent God of what is not God. Rather than constituting a contradiction, then, the two terms of the title imply each other. Both imply also a close connection between theory and practice, or instruction and ethics. Indeed, at its deepest level, this book addresses the incredibly difficult question of what we ought to *do* in the light of what we *know*, of how the prophetic and the ethical relate to one another.

With these large themes of prophecy, anti-idolatry, and ethics providing a unifying frame, the essays are organized into four parts, which also follow roughly the chronology of the author's intellectual itinerary. The first part, entitled "Dialogue among Girardians," consists of four pieces, two of them essays by the author and the other two responses provoked by those essays. Since GOODHART writes from an unapologetically Jewish perspective, while his interlocutors were leading members of the University of Innsbruck Catholic theological faculty (Raymund SCHWAGER, Jřzef NIEWIADOMSKI, as well as René GIRARD who, in this con-

text, positions himself with the theologians), the exchange offers the reader a fascinating glimpse into what is at stake in the religious implications, and perhaps presuppositions, of mimetic theory. It also offers a model of “inter-faith” dialogue that is honest and forthright, while remaining (so far as this reader knows!) impeccably civil. In response to GIRARD’s claim that his analysis of the scapegoating mechanism is indebted to the Gospel revelation of the innocent victim, and that this revelation is the essential “distinguishing feature” of Christianity, GOODHART argues that there is little GIRARD or Christianity has to say about the innocent victim that is not already found in the earlier Hebrew prophetic texts, for instance and especially the “suffering servant” text of Isaiah 52-53. Beyond the question of the intellectual provenance of GIRARD’s theory, or the closely related question of whether Girardian thought is or is not inherently Christian, GOODHART’s argument points to the yet larger question about Christianity itself: is it unique vis-à-vis its Jewish parent, and if so, what makes it unique? This is but one example of the manner in which GOODHART’s exploration of what appears to be a fairly limited question can bring in its wake larger questions. This might well be his way of practicing the midrashic technique of instruction through questioning, and practicing it in a notably “cagey” manner.

The second part of the book, entitled “Girardian Reading and the Scriptural,” contains two essays that demonstrate what the author has learned from GIRARD about how to read “anti-sacrificially” (and, as he would also say, from the rabbis about how to read “anti-idolatrously”). He chooses two biblical texts for his reading, the account of the Fall in Genesis 2-3, and what he terms the “education” of Moses in Exodus 2-4. The exegeses are careful, sophisticated, and always intriguing. They are, moreover, undertaken with close attention to the original Hebrew. Stories that have become perhaps too familiar and therefore stale, reveal unexpected and fresh levels of meaning; his commentary therefore perfectly matches Everett FOX’s vibrant translation from the Hebrew. To take just one example, GOODHART’s take on the “man’s” naming of the “woman” in Genesis 2:23 lays to rest, in an entirely original and also

amusing way, the notion that Genesis promotes a patriarchal ideology.

In the third part, “Girardian Reading and the Literary,” the author offers two essays concerned with literature: one is a retrospective evaluation of GIRARD’s first book, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*; the other his own interpretation of *Othello*, inspired by and at the same time contesting certain features of GIRARD’s readings of SHAKESPEARE in *A Theatre of Envy*. Although this is the shortest section of the book, it is fundamental to GOODHART’s larger thesis that the prophetic and the ethical, knowing and doing, are very much a matter of learning how to perform a “reading of adults,” which might well be our “single remaining hope” in an apocalyptic age. Girardians will be especially interested in GOODHART’s account of GIRARD’s “turning” after the publication of *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* from a preoccupation with literature to anthropology – and his observation that this did not have to be the case, that despite GIRARD’s own intellectual trajectory, “the understanding of the literary that the earlier book inaugurated for us remains to this day underutilized.” Here is a significant challenge and a direction for future thought that, for this reviewer, is welcome.

The fourth and final part, “Girardian Reading and the Ethical,” constitutes a reprise of many of the themes raised earlier in the book, especially in the first part, but now enriched by several more years of scholarly reflection, and above all, by a profound engagement with the philosophy of Emmanuel LEVINAS. In it we are offered four essays, written from 2002 to 2012. The first, “Reading Halachically and Aggadically,” is a polemical *tour de force* that showcases GOODHART’s capacity for edgy humour, while nonetheless making serious points about the relation of GIRARD’s analysis of violence to Biblical notions of “holy war” and “just war.” The next two essays, “The Self and Other People” and “From the Sacred to the Holy,” are the most philosophically penetrating of the book; in both, the author brings GIRARD’s thought into dialogue with the philosophy of LEVINAS. His declared motive for doing so is the absence in GIRARD’s thought of a response to the ethical question: “What next?” In his view, GIRARD offers an incomparable *knowledge* of the origins and mechanism of human violence, and of the

sacrificial crisis of our age, but not an ethical *practice* that might help us out of the crisis. Beyond the rather obvious exhortation to *refuser la violence*, there is little or nothing to suggest *how* this is to be done: “Girardianism ... leads us to the door of the ethical by providing the critique of the sacrificial on which it is necessarily to be based, but does not – by constitution cannot – take us through that door. To do that we need another orientation.”

GOODHART is well aware that some Girardians would argue, on the contrary, that GIRARD does suggest a remedy for sacrificial violence – the *imitatio Christi*, and by inference from this, a Christian (or more specifically, Catholic) ethic: “Girard himself has declared publically that he is a practicing Christian, a member in good standing of the Roman Catholic Church, and Girardianism, therefore, these researchers argue, must be a Christian intellectual phenomenon. It is not unreasonable that fellow Christians (especially fellow Catholics) should surmise that Girard’s view is specifically a Catholic one.” Despite this at first sight “not unreasonable” surmise, GOODHART maintains that Girardianism as an intellectual movement is not Catholic; nor is it Christian, Jewish, Greek-tragic, Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim. Although clearly related to specific religious orientations, and to some more than others, mimetic theory finally remains distinct, and distinctly neutral, in regard to religious ethics for the simple reason that “it is not an ethical system.” GIRARD’s analysis of the sacrificial is an extraordinary accomplishment – in GOODHART’s view, which he shares with Michel SERRES, it might well be discerned by future ages as the intellectual watershed of modernity – but one can only ask so much of one thinker. It remains *our* challenge to “complete” mimetic theory on the ethical plane. The author’s own efforts in taking the “next step,” once he realized that a specifically Christian ethic was not the necessary consequence of Girardian thought, was to turn to a cultivation or *approfondissement* of his own Jewish heritage. This *approfondissement* has entailed the anti-sacrificial reading of the Hebrew scriptures and of western literature (ancient and modern); and it has entailed a profound engagement with the philosophy of LEVINAS. It is apparent that GOODHART does not see the relation between GIRARD and LE-

VINAS as a one-way street, with the former simply being a stage on the way to the latter. The relationship, rather, is mutually enhancing, for GIRARD offers to LEVINAS’s evocation of the perspective of the victim a social-cultural completion, just as LEVINAS offers to GIRARD’s analysis of the sacrificial crisis of culture completion by a personal ethic of infinite responsibility for the other.

The fourth essay in this last part of the book, “The Prophetic and the Apocalyptic,” contains astute observations, drawing from Martin BUBER, on “strong” and “weak” understandings of both Biblical prophecy and apocalypse, in relation to GIRARD’s highly apocalyptic – and prophetic – book, *Battling to the End*. A final short essay, offered by way of a conclusion to the entire book, takes up the theme of GIRARD and world religions. This brings us full circle back to the opening essay, based on a paper given by GOODHART near the beginning of his scholarly career, in which he addressed the question of the relation of GIRARD’s thought to Judaism, and by implication to Christianity itself. This concluding essay addresses the same question, but within the larger context of other world religions and scriptures, such as Hinduism and the Vedic texts. The principal focus, however, remains GIRARD’s relation to Judaism, and here GOODHART comes close to claiming that if Christianity is not the inevitable implication of Girardian thought, Judaism might be. As he puts it provocatively: “... are we not led, after all is said and done, to an unexpected conclusion: namely that Girard and Girardianism are Jewish?” The wording is rather tongue-in-cheek, but the reasoning is serious and, to this reader, persuasive. GIRARD reads sacrificial violence with a minimum of theological mediation, indeed from the point of view of Jesus himself, and Jesus, as the Jewish prophet he was, reads it above all under the influence of Isaiah (40-65). This emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus, and therefore on the prophetic Jewish strain animating GIRARD’s perspective is, as GOODHART rightly observes, entirely in keeping with the incarnational teaching of Christianity itself; because Christ was also fully human, his person and words cannot be separated from the historical particularity of post-exilic prophetic Judaism. The argument assumes, of course, that GIRARD’s focus is on the human nature rather

than the divine nature of Christ, an assumption that seems warranted by the evidence of his own writing. He writes as an anthropologist not a theologian.

Now what of the question of the relation of GIRARD's thought to other world religions? Despite the direction in which his argument seems to lead, GOODHART does not want finally to say that Girardian thought is exclusively Jewish (albeit in an extended sense) any more than it is exclusively Christian. He states, on the contrary that "one can sustain a Girardian reading of the sacrificial and the mimetic, I submit, and remain a Christian, a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Muslim, or a Jew." Indeed, in consistency with his own experience, he would likely want to add that one can become a *better* Christian, Muslim, or Hindu through an *approfondissement* of faith inspired partly by GIRARD's thought.

Perhaps the central theme of this book of essays is that mimetic theory is not an end in itself, but the doorway to an ethical vision and corresponding set of practices that are our only hope in an apocalyptic age. The author shows us that the way forward, which his own essays illustrate, lies in the cultivation of a "close, textual, literary, prophetic, anti-sacrificial reading" – not as an abstract intellectual activity, but as a form of prayer and of ethical practice. This will entail a turning, in the light of GIRARD's thought, to the anti-sacrificial resources already there within the world religions. GOODHART insists, moreover, that this turning must entail a "translation" from the language of faith into the universal language of philosophy for the sake of communication in a religiously plural (and secular) age. In the light of GIRARD's own affirmation, in *Battling to the End*, of the indispensable role of Greek reason in avoiding planetary violence, GOODHART's proposal will appear especially timely to Girardians. His own choice of LEVINAS as "translator" of Hebrew and Girardian anti-sacrificial thinking seems entirely appropriate, and the two essays devoted especially to this thinker offer an exemplary demonstration of the benefits of an engagement of mimetic theory with philosophy. One can, moreover, think of other candidates for this role of translation, beginning with PLATO himself, whose thought can speak to Judaism (e.g. PHILO of Alexandria), Christianity (e.g. AUGUSTINE), Islam (e.g. Ibn Rushd, known also as AVERROES), and

has clear affinities with the Hindu Vedanta. Not the least of the many achievements of Sandor GOODHART's illuminating book is that it sets such an ambitious agenda for further exploration and development.

Bruce Ward

Moosbrugger, Mathias, *Die Rehabilitierung des Opfers: Zum Dialog zwischen René Girard und Raymund Schwager um die Angemessenheit der Rede vom Opfer im christlichen Kontext.* (Innsbrucker theologische Studien 88) Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia Verlag, 2014 (394 pp.). ISBN 978-3-7022-3322-8.

This book by Mathias MOOSBRUGGER won the 2013 Karl Rahner Prize for theological research. Uniquely situated as the cofounder of the Raymund Schwager Archive at the University of Innsbruck and the coordinator of the research project, "Raymund Schwager: Dramatic Theology," the author covers an extraordinary breadth of relevant scholarly literature and has keen insight into the historical context of the thought-world of GIRARD and SCHWAGER. His fundamental methodology is *werkgenetisch*, a word difficult to translate succinctly into English. It means to follow the basic thought processes of the thinker's career, focusing on whatever question or questions are unresolved in each stage of the career that form the problematic to be resolved at the next stage.

For GIRARD, the central concept of his first book, mimetic desire, was the function of the triangle of subject, mediator (or model), and object of desire that the great novelists he studied brought into such sharp relief in their great works. Although they did not have a critical, meta-literary category to name this dynamic structure of human interaction, they all reveal a stage of novelistic conversion in the life of some primary protagonist. Indeed, GIRARD ends this first work by connecting these conversions to the image in the Gospel of John of the grain of wheat that must fall into the ground and die before it bears fruit.

But the leitmotif of conversion and resurrection with which *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* ends raises the question: How exactly does the force of mimetic desire work out in the history of individuals and societies? This is the generative question taken up in the next stage of GIRARD's career, which is represented in the

master work, *Violence and the Sacred*. The answer is of course the *scapegoat mechanism*, the non-conscious working of mimesis through the process of imitation, conflict and rivalry, scandal, and collective violence. This monumental work covers a spectrum from the genesis of sacrifice, myth and ritual, the interpretations of FREUD and LEVI-STRAUSS, to the conclusion that all rituals are united in the concealment of violence through its immanent management in sacrificial rites. But as MOOSBRUGGER points out, this led GIRARD to an aporia with a twofold consequence: “The cultural-anthropological theory of sacrifice he developed stands ... in no connection to his positively intended interpretation of the [Gospel] saying of the grain of wheat that dies in order to bear fruit” (183; all translations mine), which is the key metaphor capping his exposition of novelistic truth in 1961, and Girard became convinced that “any language of a positive or Christian sacrifice was to be rejected” (184).

In the next major work, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, which is set forth in the central part of a three-part work like the central tableau of a triptych, is GIRARD’s response to the human condition as depicted in *Violence and the Sacred*. His answer, however, presents another disconnect with his prior interpretation. That Jesus is the forgiving victim who exposes the victimary mechanism and takes away the sins of the world is affirmed, but *how* this could occur, given his previous conclusion concerning the all-determining power of the collective scapegoat mechanism, is not addressed. Yet he could not be comfortable with an act of God, a *deus ex machina*, that provides no space for human freedom. And how could he completely side-step the Gospel language of sacrifice and completely deny the validity of the letter to the Hebrews because of its sacrificial imagery? His understanding of sacrifice as developed in *Violence and the Sacred* seemed to leave him no other choice. Conceiving the death of Jesus as sacrificial could not fall within his purview. “Only the dialogue with Raymund Schwager, who was trying to achieve elucidation of this specifically Christian mode of thought, which in the Christian tradition had by no means been sufficiently clarified, would bring about a turning point” (129).

For many if not most of us, the most important new knowledge that MOOSBRUGGER brings to light is the contribution that SCHWAGER brings to the dialogue with GIRARD as a thinker in his own right. The Swiss theologian had already laid the groundwork for understanding and applying the mimetic scapegoat theory when he first encountered *Violence and the Sacred* in 1974, and he was prepared to modify it for the better in the pastoral and spiritual dimensions of his work. His first published work stemmed from his dissertation, *Das dramatische Kirchenverständnis bei Ignatius von Loyola* (Zürich/Einsiedeln/Köln, 1970). In focusing on IGNATIUS’s ecclesiology, which actually encompasses explicitly or implicitly all basic aspects of his theology, SCHWAGER offers an appreciative critique. He highlights IGNATIUS’s respect for tradition, including the imitation of saintly models, his emphasis on personal religious experience (which often seems to lack integration with the communal aspect of Christian life), and the basis of the Society of Jesus, the apostolate to produce “greater fruit” for God in the world. The Cross as the sacrifice of Christ for humans and personal self-sacrifice were important for him, and he energetically instructed individuals to internalize the saying of Jesus about the grain of wheat that must die. However, his point of view was typically fixed on externals and the quantitative dimension of “greater fruit.” “He could never completely harmonize his efforts for ‘greater fruit’ with the demand for Christian humility and finally with the foolishness of the Cross” (Schwager, *Kirchenverständnis*, 183, partially quoted on 178).

The famous Spiritual Exercises of IGNATIUS are important for understanding his ideas and assumptions about the individual’s relation to God; yet they “reflect ... a juridically determined and persistently external relation to the church” (153). IGNATIUS was formerly a knight, and he viewed the church in a militaristic manner. Its commander in the world, the pope, was to be venerated, its discipline was necessarily strict. Likewise he viewed its mission in a more or less quantitative sense: the “greater fruit” of his apostolate meant winning new members, though he did not really try to relate this evangelization to the meaning of the Cross. He thus thought of the Christian apostolate as “a sacrifice in a military sense” (185).

SCHWAGER deeply appreciates the dynamic, “dramatic” quality of IGNATIUS’s understanding of the church, and in fact we see the beginning of SCHWAGER’s dramatic approach to salvation history, particularly the Gospels’ account of Jesus’s life, in this first book (cf. especially Schwager, *Kirchenverständnis*, 186 and Moosbrugger, 158-160 and nn. 48, 49). To understand IGNATIUS, SCHWAGER thought that the idea of drama best integrated the truth of divine revelation in history and subjective religious experience; it was the best existential mode to bring together reason, emotion, and the relative freedom of the human will. However, he sharply opposes IGNATIUS’s individualistic concept of the individual in relation to God and the church. Moreover, he is critical of IGNATIUS’s view of the church primarily in terms of its hierarchy and official representatives and numbers in the world. It is rather an assembly of communion whose members are called to live in light of the sacrifice of the Cross, but this can occur only in the context of a freedom that is not under the sway of collective powers, either societal or ecclesiastical. This concern for the freedom of faith led him to follow up on his dissertation with a closely related monograph, *Jesus-Nachfolge. Woraus lebt der Glaube?* (Freiburg i. Breisgau: Herder, 1973). This was a pastoral work in constructive theology that was widely discussed, reviewed, and eventually translated into French and Italian (185-186). In this short volume he placed sharply in question any kind of collective or militaristic logic of the relation of individuals to the whole.

Holding the revelation in Jesus as unique, SCHWAGER engages in an analysis of faith; but faith in the Christian sense, he argues, must begin with the faith of Christ. Summarily considered, he undertakes an *analysis fidei Christi*. Theologizing on the basis of the faith of Christ has many antecedents in the Christian tradition but has been largely neglected in more recent theology. For how can “God”—the Son of God—have faith given that he is the object of faith? From the standpoint of SCHWAGER, as also of Hans Urs VON BALTHASAR, who influenced him, this objection is a misunderstanding of Jesus and the Trinity.

Jesus as human being manifests the way of faith, showing how humans can become liberated from imprisonment in the mechanisms of so-

biological processes. His self-consciousness integrated the awareness of being the Son of Man, that is, *the human*, and it was in this connection that he accepted his divine nature. (This is developed narratively in SCHWAGER’s *Jesus of Nazareth: How He Understood His Life*.) For understanding this way it is necessary to follow the Gospel narratives; therein the central act of faith is his self-offering, his *Hingabe*, on the Cross. Schwager thus emphasizes the *freedom* of Jesus, a freedom that his faith potentially mediates to all who encounter his offering of himself. “Jesus could even defeat the ‘anxiety in face of death,’ this ‘greatest enemy of freedom,’ in the power of [his] faith on the Cross and thus show ‘his special freedom’” (209, citing Schwager, *Jesus-Nachfolge*, 42, 43).

As for the initial correspondence between SCHWAGER and GIRARD, their first meeting, and the total course of their correspondence and friendship, much has been written about these topics, including articles in *Contagion*. Here I will restrict my comments to a few crucial highlights from MOOSBRUGGER’s study.

I have already noted GIRARD’s social-scientific interpretation of the sacred, including the all-pervasive reach and force of the scapegoat mechanism, which stands in tension with the tenor of his great work on the novel and led him to deny that the gospel message was one of “sacrifice.” For him the life and death of Jesus offered a revelation exposing and judging the victimary mechanism leading to scapegoating and sacrifice and it provided a divine model of compassion and forgiveness (the “good contagion” of which he speaks in *Things Hidden*). For SCHWAGER, as we have seen, his perspective on the meaning of Christ was centered on the faith of Jesus, whereby he freely gave himself over to death in obedient communion with the Father. He lived out the parabolic saying about the grain of wheat that must die in order to bear fruit. Thus there was a clear heuristic difference between GIRARD and SCHWAGER. GIRARD has often said and written that his approach is “scientific,” although its motor is commitment to the meaning and power of the biblical revelation. Therefore his point of view methodologically was that of the external observer. SCHWAGER’s approach is theologically and social-scientifically well informed (witness his *Banished from Eden!*), but its basic stance is

that of the eyes of faith looking into the faith of Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2). He holds, as MOOSBRUGGER says, “that Jesus himself gave his death [the] meaning [of atonement],” and “that the significance of Jesus’s death on the Cross is to be inferred from the inner perspective of Jesus—out of his trusting faith in his Father even in the Passion—and not from outside” [of it] (250).

The exchange of messages ranges from 1974 to 1991. Basic differences appeared in the letters in the early years. One way to put the most basic difference was that GIRARD understood the unveiling of the collective violence stemming from the victimary mechanism as the center of Jesus’s proclamation, whereas SCHWAGER proceeded on the conviction that his self-consciousness of Sonship is the center of his words and deeds (cf. 293, n. 540.) But these differences and the later open disagreement over sacrifice did not induce SCHWAGER to denigrate or discredit GIRARD’s work. He discerned the importance of his anthropological breakthrough, he valued his friendship, and so he continued patiently to engage in dialogue. Likewise GIRARD, in his own way, held to the notion that they had a fundamental agreement that enfolded their particular “*désaccord*” within it.

Their controversy in the narrower sense broke into the open in 1978 when they both published major books. GIRARD’s *Things Hidden* came out a few weeks before SCHWAGER’s *Brauchen wir einen Sündenbock?*. Schwager wrote Girard a letter on March 29, 1978, before he had even finished reading the book. He congratulates GIRARD, but he raises a number of important questions. He questions GIRARD for arguing that the crucifixion of Jesus is a source of knowledge. He states that most theologians will view it as a source of life. As we have seen, SCHWAGER would be one of these, for he sees the Cross as the salvific event whose source is Jesus’s obedient Sonship. He mildly reproves GIRARD for not mentioning the Holy Spirit, then returns to the Cross as source of life in that Jesus remains faithful to his Father in not wishing or calling for violence on his persecutors and the Father responds to their violence by sending the Holy Spirit.

SCHWAGER objects at length to his friend’s interpretation of the letter to the Hebrews, and

this objection is all of a piece with his previous criticisms. He emphasizes the difference between the Old Testament sacrifices and the death of Jesus, points out that the primary positive significance of the Old Testament in Hebrews is the litany of great predecessors in *faith*, and states that the believer is one who bears persecution in imitation of Jesus. He is concerned that interpreters would use GIRARD’s position on sacrificial language in Hebrews to argue that GIRARD was wrong, as the whole New Testament should be construed sacrificially. In a later message of August 19, 1979, he distinguishes between collective violence in which a mob or a gang transfers its violence onto a victim and the victim who willingly offers himself for the sake of others. The latter is the sacrifice of Jesus and the authentic meaning of Christian sacrifice.

In a letter dated April 17, 1978 GIRARD responds to SCHWAGER’s letter of March 29. He concedes there is a “slight difference” (*léger écart*) between their respective proposals. To the central question that would engage them for another 13 years, he also concedes that perhaps he has been intransigent on the question, but goes on to say the main thing is to “perceive the abyss between the gospel perspective and that of the persecutors.” He also defends his position about the Cross as a source of knowledge as well as a source of life. Concerning the Spirit, he informs his friend that he concludes *Things Hidden* with a quotation of Ezekiel 37:1-10, although this reference to the Spirit does not represent a theme informing his whole view of the New Testament. In a later book, *The Scapegoat*, he has a chapter dealing with the Spirit as Paraclete or advocate in the Gospel of John. However, he does not mention the work of the Spirit as liberating victims internally through the influx of grace sparking the freedom given to every person, but as “the chief defender of all victims, *the destroyer of every representation of persecution*” (*The Scapegoat*, 207).

The constraints on the length of this review permit me to go no further. There is much more to say concerning the exchanges between SCHWAGER and GIRARD, who each maintained mutual respect and gratitude for the other’s friendship throughout their controversy. GIRARD eventually accepted his friend’s understanding

of sacrifice based on the *Hingabe*, the self-offering of Christ. He was also indebted to him for helping him to rethink the quandary of the overwhelming determinism of the sacrificial mechanism. Eventually both men “saw their concerns basically affirmed” (362). Whether GIRARD completely internalized and preserved the insights of his Innsbruck friend, who died in 2004, is a question that this book could not pursue.

MOOSBRUGGER’s work provides both extensive, often new information and rich insights. It is an outstanding volume of research and writing that should be a key work of reference for scholars concerned with the mimetic theory, especially in its theological ramifications, for a long time to come. It would be highly desirable to make it available in English translation.

James G. Williams

Lawtoo, Nidesh: *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious. Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013. 366 + x pp. US \$29.95; ISBN: 978-1-60917-388 (e-book), 978-1-61186-096-2 (pbk.)

In *Phantom of the Ego*, Nidesh LAWTOO breathes new life into the study of mimesis and the modern subject with a rereading of several 19th and 20th century authors not necessarily known as mimetic theorists. If mimesis is that unconscious communication that spreads contagiously from one being to another, where do we now stand in our theorizing and discourse about the human “boundaries of individuation” in a post-Nietzschian, Girardian world? If, as NIETZSCHE suggested, there is a phantom “in our head” determining who we are, where does this phantom originate and what is its role in self-other communication? To what life-negating or life-generating properties does it contribute? LAWTOO uses these guiding questions and a reassessment of the pre-Freudian unconscious to uncover a structural framework for the modern identity.

Structural analyses of the modernist subject have not generally been a predominant focus for students of GIRARD’s mimetic theory. Since his work with OUGHOURLIAN and LEFORT on “interdividuality”—an intersubjectivity informed by mimesis, GIRARD himself, has generally

avoided discussions of identity so as not to slip into a [Freudian] psychology of the subject. OUGHOURLIAN’s theorizing since then, informed by a historical rendering of “otherness,” has been aimed primarily at the acceptance of the mimetic primacy of the ego as the lynchpin of a mimetic psychotherapy. Eugene WEBB’s work toward a deeply relational “self-between” drew on several French thinkers including GIRARD and Jean-Pierre DUPUY, to give further constitution to this malleable, other-dependent self. Andrew O’SHEA has offered a serious critique of the modern subject by putting GIRARD in conversation with Charles TAYLOR. Still others operating out of the mimetic theory framework have wrestled with various aspects of the self-other, interior-exterior, origin-copy dichotomies of mimetic theory, but few have drilled down into these messy entanglements at the ontological level.

LAWTOO does so using the work of NIETZSCHE, CONRAD, LAWRENCE, and especially, BATAILLE, authors with extensive personal and familial histories of what he calls “mimetic sickness,” and brings unique sensitivity to an understanding of the individual in the midst of a “socius.” He further embarks on crowd psychology, contagion research, and hypnotic suggestion by pre-Freudian psychologists, like Pierre JANET, whose theoretical inclinations LAWTOO finds justified by current research in infant psychology.

As a scholar of comparative literature, LAWTOO bravely ventures into infant research to support philosophical and literary theorists who show that we come into the world with a psycho-physiological property awaiting mimetic stimulation from the other. Access to an-other’s psychic life, available due to “involuntary communicative reflexes ... not under volitional control of consciousness,” offers our initial connection to the larger world of understanding. With this suggestion that consciousness or ego *follows* mimetic communication, LAWTOO sees reason to question whether we are dealing with a “phantom of the ego” or more accurately, an “ego of the phantom.”

Much emphasis in this book is placed on subject formation or genesis of the self because LAWTOO, following BATAILLE, sees it as linked to our tendency toward mimetic contagion throughout life. The property or reflex present

at birth that opens us up to the affect of the socius is the same propensity that makes the ego subject to ongoing mimetic communication. BATAILLE is used to give specificity to that for which we are open, namely “laughter,” which has the ability to “tickle the ego into being (‘I feel—I am’).” More importantly, though, is the communication of joy that is expressed in the exchange of laughter. The reference to joy is perhaps not unlike the concept of “delight” that infant psychologists often point to as key to parent-infant communication. LAWTOO shows how BATAILLE was convinced that this joy that brings the ego into being has such intensity that it sets the course for a lifetime of mimetic vulnerability.

LAWTOO’s ego of the phantom is “con-divided (both united and divided) with a multiplicity of others that are both interior and exterior to *ipse*.” He revives and refreshes our understanding of NIETZSCHE’s “soul hypothesis” to show that the groundwork was laid for what BATAILLE (following NIETZSCHE) would call “being multiple singular.” In doing so, LAWTOO recovers a “life-affirming” stance to NIETZSCHE’s view of mimesis, arguing by way of appreciation for infant-mother mimicking, that it is the grounding of interpersonal understanding.

What, however, does it mean that the modern subject is both “united and divided” or “a community of multiple, yet singular souls?” LAWTOO assures us that we have not slipped into a “fusion” of self-other sameness, nor is it con-fusion of self and other as described by JANET in his clinical description of patients who felt possessed. Rather LAWTOO uses a reading of BATAILLE by BORCH-JACOBSEN offering that mimetic communication “bends me in two but, in the end, leaves me standing, at a distance.” The fact that we always at least partially fail to identify with the other “keeps the subject on the solid ground of life” and prevents what would otherwise be a possession (a la JANET) or a reproduction of identity. Instead, our partial failure allows us to experience “being *with* the other *as* other.” And yet, the phantom or mimesis cannot be “dissociated from what the ego is” and does not communicate “*with* me, but *through* me” because it is “chained into me—part of the experience of ‘being multiple singular.’” This interplay is reminiscent of BAKHTIN’s consciousness that lives on the border be-

tween self and other, though LAWTOO does well to keep his focus on those writers who emphasize the pre-linguistic and affective nature of interdividuality.

LAWTOO’s work brings new considerations to the discourse of the modern identity after mimetic realization where we can speak about “the self,” “ego,” “a Life,” “the I” without the presumption of lapsing into a Romantic, ego-centric psychology of the autonomous subject. And by invoking BATAILLE, LAWTOO opens another pathway to the positive mimesis discussion with his emphasis on life-affirming, healthy and associative forms of mimesis (laughter, joy) juxtaposed to GIRARD’s conflictual, life-negating forms. He sees laughter as having many of the same properties that Girard gives to mimetic rivalry—intersubjective, contagious, and borrowed from the other. Just as mimetic desire leads to envy, jealousy and the like, LAWTOO offers that laughter leads to life-affirming emotions such as sympathy and friendship. This point is arguable as there are many ways to see how laughter does not lead to positive emotions (sarcasm, mocking) and LAWTOO would do better to stick to the experience of what is communicated (joy, delight).

LAWTOO further seeks to expand mimesis beyond its association with desire and by recovering a Platonic mimetic pathos. His hope is to capture the twenty-first century move away from snobbery, coquetry, and narcissism and toward the effects of mass communication with its hypermimetic emphasis on the medium and its “turbulent, spiraling, and infectious” properties. Unlike the significant theoretical contributions that LAWTOO makes to the formation and structural aspects of the modern identity, more support is needed to justify why and how mimetic pathos accounts for more than a shift in emphasis away from the violence of mimetic desire. As GIRARD has long claimed, a positive mimesis surely flows from mimetic desire, even if GIRARD himself has focused less on its affective qualities (e.g., love) than its cognitive and anthropological ones (learning, culture formation). Whether or not LAWTOO’s mimetic pathos offers enough distinction from mimetic desire, *Phantom of the Ego* stands as a significant contribution to the study of interdividual ontology.

Kathy Frost

Reineke, Martha J.: *Intimate Domain. Desire, Trauma, and Mimetic Theory. Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014. 368 + xxiv pp. US \$22.61; ISBN: 978-1-61186-128-0 (pbk.); several e-book versions available

In *Battling to the End* René GIRARD provides an apocalyptic scenario: mankind – suffering from metaphysical illness – is standing at the abyss of self-destruction, as the fetters that once were “put in place by the founding murder” and replicated by sacrificial religion were “unshackled by the Passion” (*Battling to the End*, xi). While having elaborated intensely on these pitfalls and blind alleys of mimetic desire, GIRARD has not given much guidance on how to exchange acquisitive mimesis for positive mimesis. Rather, he has expressed ambivalent views on the topic, whether and how healing from metaphysical sickness can be attained, thus opening space for an ongoing discussion among Girardian scholars on that issue. When GIRARD discusses the change of life, this conversion that renders possible a new type of relationships, it more or less seems characterized like a bolt out of the blue, a sudden intervention of the Holy Spirit at the margins of life (close to death or in deep crisis), an abrupt lucidity, whose emergence is not explained in detail.

It is this deficit in GIRARD’s theory, among others, that religious scholar Martha J. REINEKE wants to remediate in her new book *Intimate Domain: Desire, Trauma, and Mimetic Theory*. The title alludes to the field of relationships she is primarily going to address: the intimate, familial realm. She thus aims to provide a necessary amendment to mimetic theory, since GIRARD – while having explored the functioning of mimetic desire in a wide range of settings – has given little attention to this fundamental social institution that humans encounter first. Thus, her explicit ambition is “to augment the explanatory power of Girard’s mimetic theory by drawing attention to themes that come to the fore in the examination of family life: sensory experience, trauma, and intimacy” (xii). Emphasizing the importance of sensory experience, REINEKE insists that she doesn’t introduce something completely alien to Girardian thinking. Rather, she argues, GIRARD himself in his early writings had attributed to *sensory experi-*

ence the power to transform lives [REINEKE mentions: René Girard (ed.) *Proust: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 6-7], enabling humans to exchange violence with compassion. Unfortunately, she regrets, GIRARD hasn’t attended to this insight in his later works, thus bereaving his theory of a possibility to explain how the shift from mimetic rivalry towards compassionate and loving relationships can take place. Along with this, she observes, goes a pessimistic turn of mimetic theory,

“a mounting uncertainty about humans’ ability to demonstrate positive mimesis. Increasingly, individuals who engage in acquisitive mimesis are portrayed by Girard as *active agents* of conflict and aggression; however, those who display positive mimesis are portrayed as wholly *passive recipients* of grace. [...] With Girard unable to establish a propensity for an active aggressor to become a nonviolent agent of compassion, mimetic theory takes on a dualistic cast.” (xv-xvi)

The tendency to disregard positive mimesis within Girardian thought, REINEKE thus argues, can be remedied by a deepened attention to sensory experience.

Building especially on insights of psychoanalyst and literary theorist Julia KRISTEVA and her *corporeal hermeneutics*, REINEKE intends to re-incorporate sensory experience into mimetic theory as a “vehicle for positive mimesis” and to identify “pathways for ongoing transformation from negative to positive mimesis” (xvi). Doing so also means for her to contribute to feminist scholarship on Girardian thought: “I take as my guidepost in this work Kristeva’s assertion that close attention to sensory experience is among the most lasting legacies of feminism and one that offers important lessons for our time.” (xxii) Not diminishing this important undertaking and the great benefit it certainly brings to mimetic theory (as will be shown below), it should be noted that it is a particular kind of feminism which is advanced here, with KRISTEVA being a broadly received though controversial thinker in the very diverse field(s) of feminist thought (Owing to her disambiguation of three types of feminism and her rejecting two of them, she sometimes is even considered to reject feminism altogether. Cf. <http://>

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julia_Kristeva (last access: 12.10.2014). REINEKE proves to be well aware of this fact, but doesn't discuss it in more detail.

After an extensive introduction, REINEKE elaborates on the topic of "family romance" – a term she uses "to typify fundamental patterns of mimetic desire among family members" (180) and to describe the "site of our earliest mimetic rivalries" (179). This involves three comprehensive parts, each focusing on a specific type of relationship—respectively "familial functions" in the process of subject creation. (In order to avoid any misunderstandings, it is important to keep in mind that "familial function" must be understood in the framework of psychoanalytic theory and not confused with a sociological understanding of family relations. "Familial functions" as REINEKE explains refer to "a *process of becoming* that must occur if there are *to be* subjects in a social world". (xxxix)) Each part also draws on a specific piece of literature: Part 1, focusing on maternity, largely builds upon PROUST's *In Search of Lost Time*; Part 2, inquiring into sibling relationships, draws on SOPHOCLES's tragedy *Antigone*; and Part 3, addressing paternity, takes up insights from Julia KRISTEVA's novel *The Old Man and the Wolves*. REINEKE reads all of these texts as traumatic texts – addressing "our earliest experiences of conflict and desire" (xxxv) – but including healing subtexts as well. Thereby she proceeds from the assumption that "literature is reflective and revelatory of human experience in the world" (179) and – as both GIRARD and KRISTEVA assert – "literature can *transform* human experience" (180) and guide the way to a different, healed and converted existence. In the final chapter of *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, GIRARD describes this transformed experience: "Every level of his existence is inverted, all the effects of metaphysical desire are replaced by contrary effects. Deception gives way to truth, anguish to remembrance, agitation to autonomy, deviated transcendence to vertical transcendence." (*Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, 294)

But how is it possible that literature can actually transform our being? Drawing on Guillemette BOLENS's research, REINEKE points to the phenomenon of *kinesis*, the "interactional perception of movements performed by oneself

or another person" (xxx), through which narratives are linked to sensory experiences. She also relates this concept to Vittorio GALESE's notion of intercorporeity, which is grounded in mirroring neural mechanisms and is fundamental for our capacity for empathy and interaction with others. Emphasizing "that humans are not released from the grip of violent mimesis when we acquire the *idea* of nonviolence", she argues that "positive mimesis requires the conversion of our entire being, not only cognitive realignment. At its core, conversion is a sensory experience grounded in kinesis that restores and protects intimacy." (xxxvii) Therefore, the corporeal constitution of human beings is emphasized throughout the whole book. Thus, REINEKE does not only show how sensory experience and affective memory allow the protagonists to overcome metaphysical illness and leave the economy of sacrifice. She also explains how the readers – through kinesis corporeally involving themselves in the story – can shift from acquisitive mimesis to positive, loving relationships. In the remainder of this review, I will pick out and highlight some of REINEKE's main insights without covering the whole path of her profound and detailed arguments.

Discussing PROUST's *In Search of Lost Time* in Part 1 of her book, REINEKE characterizes this novel as a powerful account of mimetic desire, describing an ontological sickness that infects not only the protagonists of the narrative but all human beings. Like the narrator, being aware of our insufficiency and painfully perceiving our lack of being, we seek to fill this void by mimetically turning toward the other. Informed by KRISTEVA, REINEKE argues that "if we are to understand how metaphysical desire can be overcome, we must return to sensory experience and affective memory" (4). For example, it is the taste of a small cake called Madeleine dipped into his cup of tea, which breaks the narrator's protective shield and opens the way to healing a strong trauma buried deep in his history, taking him back to the origins of metaphysical desire: the ambivalent relation to his mother's body. This body is both model and other, desired object to which the proto-subject of the child-narrator yearns to be ecstatically connected, as well as monstrous threat: "In its divisibility, turned toward or away from the infant, the maternal body tutors the infant in pat-

terns of mimetic desire that are foundational for all later patterns of desire” (13). Through a long process of regaining time, the narrator in PROUST’s story is finally healed. By the end a conversion has taken place. But, as REINEKE emphasizes, it turns out to be not a sudden conversion, like “a thunderbolt that confers lucidity wholly and immediately on one who is thus emancipated from the strictures of metaphysical desire” (75). Rather than being sudden and marked by a linear pathway of recovery from acquisitive rivalries, the way to grace turns out to be uneven. The narrator “must surmount chasms and overcome backslidings. Fear and the repetition of past violence shadow him” (76). Thus, according to REINEKE, *In Search of Lost Time* introduces the readers to the origins of metaphysical illness in earliest childhood as well as to an experience of a fragile grace, attained over time by “processes of affective memory and sensory experience” (75).

In Part 2, drawing on SOPHOCLES’s Theban circle (consisting of the tragedies *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*) as a whole but on *Antigone* in particular, REINEKE points to the importance of sibling relationships, which – for better or worse – foreshadow later adult relationships. Reading *Antigone* as a “timeless story about the vicissitudes of sibling relationships” (81), about “differences that fade into an annihilating sameness and a sameness that transforms into threatening differences” (85), REINEKE highlights not only the abysses of an economy of sacrifice, in which the members of the family of Labdacus are trapped. She also follows the paths to an intimate domain inscribed into the narrative: an offspring of an incestuous relationship, Antigone finally has the courage to confront the uncanny – her family history, haunted by too much closeness and too much strangeness at the same time. Confronting her origins, she does so not to defy or violently assault her problematic legacy, but to welcome it as her own. In the very process of caring for her dead brother’s body, by offering cries of pain and lament for him, Antigone moves outside the confusing history of her family trauma and embraces the healing potential of “singular-

ity” and love, singularity being “the potential for recognition of a specific other as oneself” and as “the decisive feature of sibling relationships” (xl). By reaching down into the depths of woundedness and death in order to affect healing, she accesses – and takes the reader to – an ethics of intimacy that leaves the economy of sacrifice behind and opens onto an alternative space.

While the first two parts have taken up narratives which were crucial for or at least have been addressed by GIRARD, Part 3 draws on a more recent novel by Julia KRISTEVA in order to “more fully flesh out ways in which a post-traumatic future may be accessed” (xlv). The focus in this last part lies on the paternal function, thereby differentiating between the dead father of the sacrificial economy and the life-giving father of individual prehistory. With *The Old Man and the Wolves*, REINEKE retells a story about a threatening invasion of violence not only in the city of Santa Varvara, but in our global village. It’s a tale of sacrifice and scapegoating, of lurking wolves signaling an invasion of the hidden violence of banality and meaninglessness as well as open violence, which is countered in the very novel with a story of compassion and intimate mediation. The old men in the novel are presented as fathers who do not succumb to the violence that threatens to destroy the society. Rather, interweaving several layers of narration, the novel presents them as men of sorrow, who are in a certain sense Christ-like figures, who with their loving compassion can “inspire us to build a posttraumatic future” (xli).

Offering a profound and psychoanalytically informed re-reading of the three pieces of literature, Martha J. REINEKE’s new book provides highly recommendable and sophisticated reading for all interested in advancing mimetic theory, in particular for those interested in the question whether and how metaphysical sickness can be healed and which paths might be taken to escape the apocalyptic scenario of violent self-destruction.

Petra Steinmair-Pösel

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We invite you to send books and articles dealing with René Girard and Mimetic Theory to Dietmar.Regensburger@uibk.ac.at (digital format and references) or to Girard-Documentation, c/o Dr. Dietmar Regensburger, University of Innsbruck, Karl-Rahner-Platz 1, A-6020 Innsbruck / Austria (print copies).

The *Bibliography of Literature on the Mimetic Theory* (Vol. I–XXXVII) is Online available at: http://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/girard/mimetic_theory.html

Editor's Thanks

I want to thank all who contributed to this issue of the Bulletin. Please continue to alert me to important things that go on in and around COV&R and please continue to write in the Bulletin about them.

Nikolaus Wandinger

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