



“BATTLING TO THE END” 1914-2014

**The Escalation of Violence and Victimization
René Girard and Jean-Luc Marion**



Freising, near Munich

COV&R Conference: July 21-24, 2014, at the Cardinal-Doepfner-Haus in Freising near Munich, Germany

The Chair of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Walter SCHWEIDLER) in collaboration with the Institute of Systematic Theology at the University of Innsbruck (Wolfgang PALAVER) will sponsor the 2014 meeting of COV&R.

The memory of the outbreak of the First World War a hundred years ago raises far-reaching questions concerning the source and course of violent confrontation towards total conflict since the beginning of the nineteenth century. René GIRARD's 2007 discussion of the escalation of violence in *Achever Clausewitz: entretiens avec Benoît Chantre* (Flammarion 2007) / *Battling to the End. Conversations with Benoît Chantre* (Michigan State University Press) brings the resources of mimetic theory to the analysis of this increasing departure from limited warfare (“The apocalypse began at Verdun”). The conference will seek to compare the contribution of mimetic theory towards understanding the contemporary history of violence with the insights of the theory of donation developed by Jean-Luc Marion, who has agreed to address the conference. The official call for papers will be issued by the sponsors before the end of 2013.

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

“Battling to the End” 1914-2014: COV&R Conference 2014	1
Obituary for Robert Hamerton-Kelly	2
Award and Grants	3
Program of COV&R at the AAR 2013	3
Letter from the President	4
Musings from the Executive Secretary	6
Reports:	
COV&R 2013 at U.N.I.	7
A First-Time-Attendee’s Reflections	9
Book Reviews:	
Cowdell, S. et al.: <i>Violence, Desire, and the Sacred</i>	10
Hodge, Joel: <i>Resisting Violence and Victimization</i>	13
James G. Williams: <i>Girardians</i>	15
Bibliography	17
Editor’s Thanks	20
Important Addresses	20
Membership Form	20

ROBERT G. HAMERTON-KELLY (1938-2013)

It was a source of great sadness when COV&R members and other colleagues and friends received the news of Bob KELLY's stroke and his subsequent death on July 7, 2013. He lived a large and rich life and did things in a grand way. He first met René and Martha GIRARD in 1981 when René began his appointment at Stanford University. He became their devoted friend. He quickly recognized GIRARD's genius and committed himself fully to understanding and propagating the mimetic scapegoat theory. He could be severe in his criticism of those who opposed GIRARD's thought or who, in his view, misunderstood it. However, the criticism he voiced was always worthy of consideration—particularly his challenge to COV&R in recent years to refocus on the universal human tendency to engage in violence.



Concerning his life and professional career, many of the readers of the *Bulletin* will know a number of the particulars. Robert Gerald HAMERTON-KELLY was born in Cape Town, South Africa on December 26, 1938. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa in 1958. He was accepted for study at Cambridge University, where he received another bachelor's degree in 1961 and a master's degree in 1966. He would affirm that his greatest achievement while in England was wooing Rosemary DALY and winning her hand in marriage. They were wed January 13, 1962. He was accepted for the doctoral program in theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, in 1963, and he received his Th.D. degree in 1966. His first teaching position was at Scripps College. While there he was ordained a minister in the United Methodist Church in 1967. He took a post as Associate Professor of New Testament at McCormick Theological Seminary in 1970, and in 1972 he was appointed Dean of the Chapel and Senior Minister at Stanford Memorial Church. At the same time Bob became a member of the Stanford University faculty as Consulting Professor of Religious Studies and Classics. He retired as chapel dean in 1986 and took a position in the Center for International Security and Arms Control as Senior Research Scholar in Ethics, focusing on international relations. In 1997 he became the senior minister of the Woodside Village Church, which he served until he retired in 2004. He was one of the cofounders of COV&R in 1990, and in 2007 he, in collaboration with René GIRARD and Peter THIEL, started Imitatio, a foundation for supporting research related to the mimetic theory. He was the president of Imitatio until he retired for good in 2010. He and Rosemary then moved to Portland, Oregon, where they could live closer to two of their children and five grandchildren.

Bob KELLY was the author of six books and the editor of four. Of these, four are particularly important in the bibliography of the mimetic theory. He authored *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (1992) and *The Gospel and the Poetics of Violence* (1994). He was the editor of *Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (1987) and *Politics and Apocalypse* (2007).

On a personal level, I found him to be a loyal friend. He arranged my first meeting with René GIRARD, and he supported me and many others in the ongoing work of COV&R, in which he was a founding participant. I am especially grateful for the helpful encouragement he gave when I underwent a difficult time in my professional work. He himself was a man of courage and Christian hope. I speak for the Colloquium as a whole in expressing condolences to his gracious and faithful wife Rosemary and to all his family and friends. We are sad that he is no longer with us and grateful for his life and work among us.

James Williams

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 2014 meeting in Freising near Munich, Germany. To be eligible to compete, students must have registered for the conference and have had their papers accepted for presentation at the conference. 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 pages, double-spaced) in an e-mail attachment to Ann ASTELL (Ann.W.Astell.1@nd.edu). **The due date for submission is June 1.** Winners will be announced in the conference program. Prize-winning essays 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 2014 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** accompanied by a **letter of recommendation by a COV&R member** to that effect to the President of COV&R, Ann ASTELL (Ann.W.Astell.1@nd.edu). Applications are due by the closing date of conference preregistration.

continued from p. 1

The conference will take place at the Bildungszentrum Kardinal Doepfner Haus in Freising, Germany. As usual, the chief conference language will be English. The historic city of Freising is located near the International Munich Airport (MUC) just north of Munich and is easily accessible by taxi and rail service.

All further information will be available soon on the conference web-site and in the Spring Bulletin. If any questions arise in the meantime, please contact: Dr. Adrián Navigante; Lehrstuhl fuer Philosophie; Katholische Universitaet Eichstaett Ingolstadt; Ostenstrasse 24-26; D-85072 Eichstaett, Germany; E-Mail: adrian.navigante@univie.ac.at; or: philosophie@ku.de

*Richard Schenk, OP
President of the University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt*

COV&R AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

Program of the Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD; November 23-26, 2013

COV&R will offer two sessions at the 2013 AAR meeting in Baltimore, MD that will actually be listed as THREE sessions in the program book. Due to changes in the AAR listing protocol, our session on atonement has been divided into two sessions. As has become our

custom, we will have our business meeting to plan the sessions for the 2014 AAR meeting at 3:00 pm Sunday, immediately following the panel on the Girard/Schwager correspondence and in the same room. Please see below for details. Questions about COV&R sessions at the AAR may be directed to Martha REINEKE, coordinator of COV&R sessions at the AAR, martha.reineke@uni.edu.

Session P23-102

Saturday 9:00 AM-10:10 AM: Hilton Baltimore-Tubman

Theme: Darrin Snyder Belousek's *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church*

Martha REINEKE, University of Northern Iowa, Presiding

Speaker: Darrin SNYDER BELOUSEK, Ohio Northern University and Bluffton University

Responding:

Willard SWARTLEY, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

During this session, we will be discussing Darrin Snyder Belousek's book *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church*. The session will begin with summary comments on the book by BELOUSEK. Willard SWARTLEY will offer a response to the book and there will be opportunity for discussion.

P23-110:

Colloquium on Violence and Religion

**Saturday: 10:20 AM-11:30 AM; Hilton
Baltimore-Tubman**

**Theme: Challenges in Teaching and
Learning about Atonement Theories**

Martha REINEKE, University of Northern
Iowa, Presiding

Panelists:

Darrin SNYDER BELOUSEK, Ohio Northern
University and Bluffton University

Michael HARDIN, Preaching Peace

Suzanne ROSS, The Raven Foundation

Daniel LONDON, Graduate Theological Union

This session will immediately follow the first and will be in the same location. It will build on our conversation about atonement and focus on pedagogical challenges in teaching about atonement. Thinking about atonement in terms of penal substitution is so pervasive that when another perspective is presented, learners often fail to comprehend the alternative theory or they rework it in order to change it into a penal substitution theory. Our panelists will facilitate our exploration of ways we can promote more effective learning about atonement theory in educational settings.

P24-201

**Sunday 1:00 PM-3:00 PM: Marriott Inner
Harbor-Grand Ballroom A**

**Theme: Beautiful Minds in Dialogue: The
Correspondence between René Girard and
Raymund Schwager (1974-1991)**

Nikolaus WANDINGER, University of Inns-
bruck, Austria, Presiding

Panelists:

Mathias MOOSBRUGGER, University of Inns-
bruck

Józef NIEWIADOMSKI, University of Inns-
bruck

James G. WILLIAMS, Syracuse University

The inventor of mimetic theory, René GIRARD, and the developer of a special “Innsbruck brand” of Dramatic Theology, Raymund SCHWAGER, kept a longstanding, academic and personal correspondence, which was discovered when SCHWAGER unexpectedly died in February 2004. Ninety-nine available letters span almost two decades. These letters cover topics such as Christ’s death and sacrifice and how to

talk about them best, mimeticism and freedom, original sin and the understanding of the story of temptation in Genesis, the meaning of the law, and many others. By the correspondents’ own admission and in accord with many scholars’ assessments, Schwager and Girard considerably influenced each other’s thinking. The correspondence documents this in a unique, historically verifiable, way and has already forced the correction of some previously held assumptions among those who have seen it through. The correspondence is currently being edited for a first bilingual (French-German) edition by a research project in Innsbruck; an English translation is sure to follow soon.

The AAR session will consist of a panel discussion featuring experts who are involved in this first edition and its commentary and can give a first-hand view of the interesting material.

Sunday 3:00 PM-3:30 PM

Marriott Inner Harbor-Grand Ballroom A

Business Meeting to plan the 2014 meeting begins at 3:00 in the same room as the session on the Schwager correspondence.

Compiled by Martha Reineke

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 2013 COV&R meeting at the University of Northern Iowa marked a return to a conference site in the U.S.A. after two successive meetings abroad, in Sicily (2011) and Japan (2012). The word that comes to mind when I recall our gathering at U.N.I., in America’s heartland, is “heart-warming” in the full sense of the root meaning of “heart”. Old English *heorte* can be translated “heart; breast, soul, spirit, will, desire; courage; mind, intellect,” as can the cognate term in other Indo-European languages.

We were cordially hosted by the conference organizer, Martha REINEKE, her colleagues at U.N.I., and the entire staff. The palpable warmth of that welcome was reciprocated and enhanced by COV&R members who renewed old friendships and established new ones, extending the COV&R circle to include new members and supporters. The marked family-like character of COV&R—traceable back to the hospitable spirit of Martha and René GIRARD and those who have engaged in friendly intellectual exchange with them and with

each other over the years—is truly renewed from meeting to meeting and (in Biblical terms) “from generation to generation.”

At COV&R 2013 we could experience the presence of three generations of COV&R members. The founding circle of COV&R was palpably present in Cedar Falls in the greeting sent to the participants from René and Martha GIRARD; in the person of James G. WILLIAMS, whom I had the privilege of interviewing about his memoirs of COV&R in *Girardians: The Colloquium on Violence and Religion, 1990-2010*; in Mark WALLACE (present at the 1990 founding meeting at Stanford University and the Raymund Schwager, S.J., Memorial lecturer at UNI in 2013); in the many long-time members of COV&R who gathered for the conference; in the regretted absence of some other long-time members; and in the lamented loss of Jim GROTE (d. April 30, 2013).

The news of the death of COV&R co-founder Robert HAMERTON-KELLY (December 26, 1938 – July 7, 2013) reached many members of the Colloquium while they were still en route to Cedar Falls. Members joined in prayer for Bob and his family at a Mass at which James ALISON and Andrew MARR presided. Later, Imitatio hosted a convivial open-bar celebration of Bob’s life, with Michael HARDIN leading the toasts. COV&R members at the conference signed Sympathy cards, which were mailed to Rosemary HAMERTON-KELLY. (COV&R members Gil BAILIE, Randy COLEMAN-RIESE, and Wolfgang PALAVER, among others, were also in attendance at the Memorial Service for Bob that was held at Stanford University on August 1.)

In response to COV&R’s remembrance of Bob and expressions of sympathy, Rosemary HAMERTON-KELLY wrote: “I send my deep appreciation to you and to all the members, among them many friends we have known for a long time. I have heard from several of the memorial gathering you improvised at the recent COV&R meeting, a time of reminiscences and conviviality that would have warmed his heart. Many times he said that he would go to scholarly meetings not so much for the content of the papers but to reconnect with his friends and colleagues.” A beautiful witness to what COV&R meant to Bob. And Bob to us! Like Fr. Raymund SCHWAGER (1935-2004), Robert

HAMERTON-KELLY is someone whose life, work, and great-hearted vision have been foundational for COV&R. May his memory always be a blessing!

If I may speak of a middle generation in a scholarly organization as young as COV&R (scheduled to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2015 at St. Louis University), that generation was present in real strength in Cedar Falls. In a series of sessions, the conference program celebrated recent publications by COV&R members: Wolfgang PALAVER’s *René Girard’s Mimetic Theory*, David DAWSON’s *Flesh Becomes Word—A Lexicography of the Scapegoat, or, the History of an Idea*, Jeremiah ALBERG’s *Beneath the Veil of the Strange Verses: Reading Scandalous Texts*—all titles published in the “Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture” series edited by William JOHNSEN for Michigan University Press. James ALISON’s Girardian theology was the topic of papers in another session. Thanks to the Raven Foundation, another series of sessions highlighted the documentary film *Hellbound*, to which Michael HARDIN (COV&R, Preaching Peace) has made an important contribution. Other sessions—for example, the plenary on scapegoating and lynching (organized by Julia M. ROBINSON and Sandor GOODHART), as well as the concurrent sessions on conversion (organized by Tony BARTLETT), on Psychology and GIRARD (moderated by Rusty PALMER), on case-studies of social violence, on literary representations of sacrifice, on key Biblical episodes, and on the Satanic—attest to important, on-going, collaborative work by COV&R members on central themes of the mimetic theory.

The high quality and the number of recent publications on GIRARD—the work mainly of the older and the middle generations, but also of younger scholars like David DAWSON and Matthew PATTILLO—has, as William JOHNSEN noted at the Business Meeting, caught the attention of an expanding group of academic publishers—not only Michigan State University Press, Continuum, Johns Hopkins UP, and Stanford UP, but now also Ashgate (publisher of Joel HODGE’s *Resisting Violence and Victimage: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor*), the University of Notre Dame Press (publisher of Scott COWDELL’s *René Girard and Secular Modernity* and of ASTELL and GOODHART, ed.,

Sacrifice, Scripture and Substitution: Readings in Ancient Judaism and Christianity), Palgrave, and others. The book display at the conference itself, which featured publications by COV&R members, was impressive.

The patient work of Paul NUECHTERLEIN (“Girardian Reflections on the Lectionary”), available on-line to a wide audience of pastors and homilists; the blogs of Suzanne ROSS and Adam ERICKSON (Raven Foundation); the many retreats and talks given by Gil BAILIE, James ALISON, Michael HARDIN, and others—these efforts have increasingly influenced Evangelical and Catholic circles, introducing them to mimetic theory. This influence was made abundantly clear in the televised, on-stage conversation between Brian MCLAREN and James ALISON (sponsored by the Raven Foundation) at the conclusion of the 2013 conference.

The youngest generation of COV&R was also well represented at this year’s meeting. Many graduate students gave papers. The Raymond Schwager Memorial Essay Contest again had three winners: Chelsea KING, Daniel LONDON, and Ryan DUNS, who presented their papers at a plenary session.



The Schwager Award Winners

In an exciting development, Carly OSBORN (University of Adelaide, Australia) addressed the COV&R Board and later, with the Board’s enthusiastic approval, the members present at the Business Meeting. Representing the younger generation of emerging scholars—many of whom have participated in the 2012 Summer School Mimetic Theory in The Netherlands (organized by Thérèse ONDERDENWIJNGAARD)—Carly proposed the official recognition by COV&R of a network of younger COV&R members called AMES (the Affiliation of Mimetic Theory for Emerging Scholars). A network, not a separate organization, AMES intends to promote events and to provide means

for collaboration among early career scholars and professionals within the ranks of COV&R. Carly’s election in her own right to the COV&R Board helps to ensure that AMES will be fully integrated within COV&R and help COV&R to address the particular concerns and interests of its younger members.

Due to time constraints, the video that Carly and her fellow students at the 2012 Summer School have produced could not be shown at the COV&R Business Meeting. I hope that that video will soon be available for viewing on the web. It contains the personal testimonies of Young Girardians from around the globe—India, South Africa, England, Austria, The Netherlands, the United States—all giving an eloquent, impassioned witness to the impact of GIRARD’s mimetic theory upon their vision of life, culture, and society.

Cross-generational, interdisciplinary, international, COV&R truly offers something special to its members and through its members. After our wonderful gathering in “The Land of Two Rivers,” we look forward, heart-warmed, to the upcoming meetings in Freising, Germany (2014) and in St. Louis, Missouri (2015).

Ann W. Astell

MUSINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

I cannot not write about Bob. The passing of Robert HAMERTON-KELLY from our midst is as much a significant moment in the history of our organization as it is the loss of a friend. In addition to our personal sadness there is the silencing of a voice that did not say what we wanted to hear, but expressed what he felt needed to be said with little care about the situation or other niceties.

We all have our Bob-stories. I will not write about mine beyond saying that I first met Bob in the August of 2001 at the house on the campus of Stanford University where the bi-monthly seminars with René GIRARD were held. I was able to attend most of these meetings until I left the Bay area in the summer of 2003. After that, it was mainly at our COV&R meetings that I would see him. We would always take time to talk. Bob was present at my younger daughter’s baptism in 2007. The last time I saw him was in Salina for the 2011 meeting.

Instead of writing about various episodes involving Bob, I want to reflect on two things that were vital to him and thus should be kept in our own minds as we seek various ways to honor his memory.

As all readers of the *Bulletin* know, Bob was instrumental in the founding of both our Colloquium on Violence & Religion and *Imitatio*. That is, Bob worked tirelessly to get institutions in place that would outlive him. He reckoned the time and energy that he invested in starting and sustaining these institutions as better spent than in accomplishing a myriad of other things he “might have done.” Among the many other things, there were several books that were not written as the price for getting these organizations going.

And in one sense at least the writing of the books would have been easier or at least safer for Bob. By working to influence and vivify COV&R and *Imitatio*, Bob put himself in a vulnerable position. We were able to “see” Bob in the full, with the brilliance and the bluster. It was not difficult to criticize Bob and Bob was the one who made that so. He did that because he believed that if he could help “found” these institutions and protect them from those who might “deform” them in their initial growth, then many, many people would benefit from them. Perhaps not all his judgments about what constituted “deforming” were accurate, but he was right in thinking that small mistakes in the beginning have large consequences later. Who can blame him for being protective of the things he helped bring into existence. COV&R owes at least a part of its present vitality to Bob’s maternal care.

To speak about the second thing that was vital to Bob, I do need to briefly relate a story. In the summer of 2004 COV&R met at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. I was between jobs and there had been a great deal of change in my life, with leaving the Society of Jesus and the priesthood, getting married and beginning life as a lay-Christian. It was Bob who asked me at Ghost Ranch how I was doing with it all. The way he asked it let me know it was not just a polite question. He wanted to hear, he wanted to let me talk. I realized then that Bob, before all else and after all else, was a Pastor. I suspect that there are many people in Palo Alto area who knew him primarily and perhaps only in

this identity. In my encounters with Bob, he was concerned about me as a person, concerned about my faith-journey and completely unafraid of its complexities and failures.

As we carry on now without Bob (the best labourer dead / And all the sheaves to bind) I would like to keep these two aspects of him in mind. He worked hard for these groups and institutions, to bring them to birth and help them grow. Certainly, we honor his memory when we continue this work. He cared pastorally for the members of COV&R. Let us too keep each other in mind and do things for one another.

Jeremiah Alberg

REPORTS ON CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

July 10-14, 2013, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA USA

The theme of the 2013 COV&R conference – “A Land Between Two Rivers” – opened the door to several new disciplines within the COV&R community, including environmental biology, ecology and eco-theology. Despite the challenge of bringing these new fields into conversation with Mimetic Theory (a conversation which was a bit forced at times), the conference did an excellent job of maintaining a consistent focus on its theme. In fact, with a little imagination one could see it reflected in the structure of the conference itself.

Firstly, a steady flow of environmentally and ecologically informed ideas ran through the conference via the three keynote lectures, defining a kind of cardinal direction for the participants. The first lecture, by Dr. Laura JACKSON of UNI, laid the groundwork for subsequent discussions by describing the sort of challenges facing our agricultural lands and the ecological health of our planet. In the Raven Foundation Lecture, Professor Whitney BAUMAN introduced an eco-theological stream of thought by exploring how our religious understanding of ourselves affects our relationship with, and treatment of, the natural world. Can Mimetic Theory help to mold this understanding in an environmentally responsible way? In the Raymond Schwager Memorial Lecture, Professor Mark WALLACE more directly addressed and challenged the implications of Mimetic Theory for a “green theology.” If the Christian gospels are not primarily about human salvation but ra-

ther creation, as WALLACE suggests, then how can we reconcile this with the anthropological approach developed by GIRARD?

The second intellectual “river” provided a channel for the more mainstream currents of Mimetic Theory. It started with the opening session, which presented the indispensable “Introduction to Mimetic Theory.” This year, however, we had the special pleasure of doing this in the context of a panel discussion on Wolfgang PALAVER’s book *Rene Girard’s Mimetic Theory*, in celebration of its recent translation into English. The second day of the conference opened with the special emphasis session on lynching, inaugurated by Sandor GOODHART in the Riverside conference in 2008. This year’s focus was on “literary lynching” in Jewish and African-American literature. Like the keynote lectures, the references to Mimetic Theory were both favorable and critical, but its relevance to this important topic is undeniable. Later the same day the Schwager Award Plenary Session featured three excellent papers by graduate students from Boston College and the Graduate Theological Union. I personally was impressed not only by the quality of each paper but by the depth and maturity of the speakers themselves. It was obvious these young scholars knew what they were talking about and felt comfortable talking about it. If this represents the future membership of COV&R, we’re going to be just fine. Finally, the currents carried us to the concluding session, in which James ALISON and Brian MCLAREN discussed various aspects of Mimetic Theory, theology, religion and the Church. The format was simple and straightforward – two theologians, one protestant and one catholic, sitting on chairs in the middle of the stage, sharing their thoughts and answering questions from the audience. When you have two such intelligent, well-spoken and genuinely honest thinkers as these two men, that’s pretty much all you need.

In between these two rivers was the vast and fertile land of ideas presented in the concurrent sessions. This land contained the wide variety of topics we’ve come to expect at a COV&R conference, including discussions on philosophy, theology, literature, ecology and popular culture. There were also a relatively large number of sessions specifically devoted to recent book publications. Aside from PALAVER’s new

translation mentioned above, there were discussions on David DAWSON’s book *Flesh Becomes Word*, Jeremiah ALBERG’s book *Beneath the Veil of the Strange Verses*, James WILLIAMS’ book *Girardians*, and James ALISON’s DVD set *Jesus the Forgiving Victim*. Thanks in large part to the support of Imitatio and the Raven Foundation, the repertoire of Girardian literature is steadily growing, as evidenced by these sessions and by the large selection of books on exhibit in the conference refreshment area.

There were a few unique twists on the usual conference structure that are worth noting. One was the showing of the documentary film “Hellbound” in each of the session time slots. The film was then discussed in a separate panel session later in the week. Another interesting experiment was the use of breakout sessions after each keynote address. Rather than the usual question-and-answer after the lecture, the audience broke up into small groups and discussed the topic independently amongst themselves. There are certainly advantages and disadvantages to this strategy, but the jury is still out on whether or not this will become standard practice in future conferences. Finally, the dinner banquet at the end of the week included another original, and entertaining, feature. Professional magician James WARREN gave a truly impressive show, combining magic and Mimetic Theory in ways that made everyone laugh (especially some of the “volunteers” from the audience). As the author of yet another recent book on Girardian Theory entitled *Compassion or Apocalypse?*, we can hope to see more of WARREN in future conferences, both on stage and behind the podium.

Overall, the conference was fairly well laid out and organized, especially considering some of the new features mentioned above. There was the usual problem of cramming too many concurrent sessions into a single time slot, but having too many choices, after all, is not a bad problem to have. Within each session and panel discussion the papers usually complemented each other very well, allowing for a more fruitful and interesting discussion afterward. It should be a goal for every conference to achieve this kind of synergy within sessions, but of course that may lead to even more sessions.

One trend that was especially evident this year was the willingness to approach Mimetic Theory from a more critical point of view. One of the Schwager papers, two of the keynote lectures, and all three of the special emphasis papers offered, to various degrees, some form of criticizing analysis of Mimetic Theory. I personally feel that it is the intellectual responsibility of COV&R to encourage and take seriously these efforts to critique, correct or shed new light on GIRARD's work and on Mimetic Theory in general. It is equally important, however, to ensure that these efforts are grounded in a clear and solid understanding of Mimetic Theory in the first place (which was indeed the case for some of the papers). Pointing out issues that have been addressed already, or are not really there at all, can do more harm than good. We Girardians know the terrible power of an accusing finger.

On a related and more somber note, there was a noticeable absence this year of several of the original COV&R heavyweights to which we look for that guidance and grounding I just mentioned. But no absence was more sadly felt than that of our own Bob HAMERTON-KELLY, who died of complications from a stroke only a few weeks before the conference. There were numerous times throughout the proceedings in which I thought to myself, "If only Bob were here," and I know others felt the same way. He will be sorely missed.

Despite this dark note, the conference itself was definitely a success. More than one of the new scholars that attended commented on how it "exceeded all expectations." Congratulations to Martha REINEKE for pulling it all off, and for bringing the COV&R community together again under a theme that was clearly very close to her heart. Well done!

Pablo Bandera

And a First-Time-Attendee's Reflections

Nikolaus Wandinger kindly asked me to share some reflections from my first COV&R conference—which was this past conference in Cedar Falls, Iowa. In addition to being my first COV&R conference it was one of the first academic conferences I have attended at all—ensuring that I had little idea what to expect.

Much like my first accidental with GIRARD's work—I was blown away.

A lot of what went on is what you would expect to find at a conference—there were papers, presentations, discussions, and opportunities to meet and interact with those whose work has been occupying one's own time. And while many of the papers and presentations were extremely interesting—some even breaking what seems to be new ground for and with mimetic theory—it was not the papers or presentations that blew me away.

Walking into a group of people working with mimetic theory I think might mean necessarily walking into a group of people who have undergone some profound transformations of insight and character—with their whole lives rather than simply their academic careers. You get the sense of a group of people who recognize that what they are working on is on the tip of the spear of human intellectual achievement—but there isn't any of the pretension or fussiness one would traditionally expect from an academic community, instead I found a warm community of welcoming co-workers in the truth, eager to welcome the stranger and bring new people and ideas into the discussion.

Ann ASTELL opened the conference by remarking that COV&R often feels like a family reunion. Having certainly felt like I gained a new family of colleagues and friends in such a short period of time—and being constantly taken aback by the down-to-earth-ness of the people I met—it's easy to see how this is the case.

All families have to be constantly alert to the realities of scapegoating and creating insider/outsider dynamics—thankfully COV&R is a group of people with their fingers on the pulse of these very dynamics themselves—and it is amazing to see proof of the concepts we are working with in the ease with which charity flows from a desire transformed by an opportunity to see itself at work.

Craig Stewart, M.A.

Cowdell, Scott / Fleming, Chris / Hodge, Joel
 (eds.): *Violence, Desire, and the Sacred:
 Girard's Mimetic Theory
 Across the Disciplines.*
 New York, London; Continuum; 2012;
 312 pp.
 U.S. \$ 120; ISBN-10: 1441194010

This volume demonstrates both strong interest in and quality work on Girardian studies in Australia as evidenced in these papers presented at the first Australian Girardian Seminar held in Sydney in 2011. Here, many stimulating thoughts are offered over a wide variety of topics. I will offer brief comments on the papers to give you an idea of what this book has to offer.

Scott COWDELL: "René Girard, Modernity, and Apocalypse." A succinct and clear overview of Girard's thought to orient the reader not familiar with mimetic theory.

James ALISON: "'Like Being Dragged through a Bush Backward': Hints of the Shape of Conversion's Adventure." A typically loopy and disorienting romp through the Parable of the Good Samaritan that reorients the reader to the Gospel as rarely, if ever seen, before. This paper is the final chapter of ALISON's masterful *Jesus the Forgiving Victim*.

Drasko DIZDAR: "Finding the Way: How to Study Scripture with the Help of Scripture and the Desert Fathers." A sharply focused essay using the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:27-35 to explore a basic orientation for biblical hermeneutics with attention to 1) beginning with the admission that we do not understand the text, 2) the insider/outsider dialectic as the Ethiopian Eunuch is a foreigner, automatically ritually impure, and a slave, 3) the necessity for a Christological lens for right interpretation with reference to Luke's story of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus.

Debra ANSTIS: "Sacred Men and Sacred Goats: Mimetic Theory in Levitical and Passion Intertext." Using Girardian exegesis, ANSTIS uses the Yom Kippur ritual of the scapegoat and the holocaust as a type for the coupling of Jesus and Judas. Jesus is the holocaust, of course. Judas is the scapegoat, the one who is cast out, handed over to the demon Azazel. The suggestion that Judas is a scapegoat, although a guilty one, is worth considering. I personally

find more grounds for seeing Judas as a scapegoat in John's Gospel as Judas represents his fellow disciples in questioning the anointing of Jesus with oil. In any case, we have some things to think about here.

Anthony KELLY, CSsR: "Beyond Locked Doors: The Breath of the Risen One." Explores what it means for Jesus to send the Paraclete as promised in John 16. Natural Law is not autonomous as nature needs the breath of the Holy Spirit to draw us out of our scapegoating culture. A Girardian take on the traditional gifts of the Holy Spirit as enumerated by Thomas AQUINAS is a fine example of pointing to ways GIRARD's insights can renew and deepen wisdom from the Church's Tradition.

Joel HODGE: "Torture and Faith: the Violent Sacred and Christian Resistance in East Timor." Recounts the state-sponsored terrorism inflicted on Catholic citizens in East Timor during the Indonesian occupation of 1975-1999 and the Catholic witness in the face of that terror. GIRARD's thought makes it easy to see how the occupying government designated enemies and targeted them as scapegoats. HODGE also makes extensive use of William CAVANAUGH's brilliant and disturbing book *Torture and Eucharist* and Elaine SCARRY's equally important book *The Body in Pain* to articulate the concrete horror of such scapegoating programs. The centerpiece of this article is a narrative of the torture Christiano, a village "king", suffered after he was arrested. HODGE demonstrates that this was a typical scapegoating scenario where community members in conflict with one another and with Christiano resolved their social crisis by blaming him and wrongfully informing on him to the authorities. Using Christiano as an example, HODGE lays out the way the state tried to create a "transcendent evil," using torture as a means to remake the victim and, through the remade victim, to remake society to its specifications. Although there was a brief period when Christiano confessed his guilt, he otherwise resisted this remake. Likewise, his fellow Catholics also resisted this societal remake at the cost of much suffering. Here, GIRARD's thought is totally on the ground in flesh and blood. Much the most powerful paper in this book.

Kevin LENEHAN: "Girard and the Tasks of Theology" uses Hans WALDENFELS to outline three theological tasks as they apply to René

Girard. 1) *apologia*: LENEHAN suggests that GIRARD's analysis of mimetic desire and the rivalry that can rise from it does not elucidate God's purpose toward humanity but it "grounds the human openness to divine revelation in the relational structures of human being, complementing the more cognitive approaches of scholasticism and transcendentalism" (p. 114). Also important is the social element of GIRARD's anthropology that moves away from an individualistic approach. The importance of this move away from an intellectualistic apologetics and a grounding in history via the concrete reality of the victim cannot be overstated. 2) Hermeneutics: Notes GIRARD's belief that literary texts bring the reader in contact with the "real world." This is especially important for the way texts point to the reality of collective violence. At the same time, texts suffer from *méconnaissance*, a misrecognition that fails to see the reality of scapegoating. Some texts of scripture reveal the *méconnaissance* present in other texts. This point is strengthened by ALISON's citing Jesus on the Road to Emmaus revealing himself to be the "living interpretive principle" of scripture. 3) Dialogue with other religions: GIRARD opens up a mutual enquiry "into which religious practices, narratives, and thought-forms best limit and transform human violence for the sake of more secure and cooperative human communities" (p. 118). In relation to other Christian denominations, GIRARD's anthropology opens up new understandings of theological issues such as sacrifice.

Vijay MISHRA: "René Girard, Jacques Derrida's *The Gift of Death*, and Salman Rushdie." MISHRA compares GIRARD's novelistic repentance where the protagonist repents of mimetic rivalry and turns to God with Gibreel Farishta's rivalry with the prophet Mohammed. DERRIDA's *The Gift of Death* provides a background to this analysis. The Girardian novelistic protagonist repents by turning from the obstacle (the scandal) to God. Mediation in Salmon RUSHDIE's *The Satanic Verses* is very different as RUSHDIE's protagonist puts himself in rivalry with the Prophet by aligning himself with Satan who tempted the Prophet with the "satanic" verses. This episode in the Koran bears comparison with the temptations of Jesus in the desert. In both cases, Satan tempts a religious leader with expediency. Both reject the temptations by

submitting to God (Allah for the Prophet). It is this very submission that RUSHDIE eschews. I am far from certain that I have understood what MISHRA says about the "gift of death" as I am usually uncertain about what DERRIDA is saying about anything. DERRIDA's thrust seems to be a submission to a degree of uncertainty which fits well with RUSHDIE but not GIRARD. At the end of this paper, MISHRA seems to pit both DERRIDA and RUSHDIE against GIRARD by suggesting that a Messianic love of all people requires renunciation of an "absolute mediator" while GIRARD would consider submission to an "absolute mediator" as essential for overcoming the obstacle of external mediation.

Jeremiah ALBERG: "Grace can be Violent: Flannery O'Connor's Novelistic Truth." This paper comprises the final chapter of ALBERG's fine book *Beneath the Veil of Strange Verses*. The thrust of the book is the exploration of scandal and ALBERG analyzes O'CONNOR's great novel *The Violent Bear it Away* to probe its many levels of scandal. The most central scandal is the backwoods preacher experienced by Rayber as a youth and then by his grandnephew Tarwater. After the death of the prophet who raised him, Tarwater is in turn scandalized by Rayber's cold secularism. A stunning analysis of the work.

Wolfgang PALAVER: "Europe and Enmity: How Christianity can Contribute to a Positive Identity." PALAVER contrasts parochial closed societies that require enmity with others for their own cohesion to open societies. Closed societies are solidified by "static religion" which is synonymous with the violent sacred while an open society eschews collective victimization. PALAVER notes that historically, Christianity has also been "parochial," using designated enemies, usually the Moslems, to hold society together. Today's populist xenophobia continues this "enemy-construction." PALAVER calls for a move towards a fully open society. Paradoxically, such a move requires renunciation of one's homeland and becoming "exiles and aliens" as Christians were said they should be in 1 Peter 2:11. By not identifying with "any earthly political entity," small Christian groups, far from being parochial, were open societies. At the end of his essay, PALAVER encourages Europe to renounce defining

itself against Islam or any other enemy and embrace a truly open society.

Ivan HEAD: "Herodian Aspects of the English Reformation Monarchy: Anglican Brutality and Girardian Insight." Anglicanism has a reputation for being a "nice" and "reasonable" tradition, and that in spite of the vituperative debates in recent years over subjects such as gays and lesbians in the church and the ordination of women. HEAD shows that the most boisterous of contemporary debaters have strong precedent in the English Reformation by tracing the history of violence starting with HENRY VIII's break from Rome through the "Glorious" Revolution of 1688. The well-known execution of CHARLES I was followed by the execution of John COOK under CHARLES II in retaliation for the monarch's death. "From a simply human point of view, the deaths of John Cook and his colleagues exceeded in brutality the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and most other barbarous executions" (p. 185). This violence isn't just an Anglican problem as the Catholic Mary TUDOR executed enough people to fill the many pages of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, the most popular book in England at the time except for the Bible. HEAD could have said more about the brutality of William LAUD in promoting "the beauty of holiness." This historical background is not pleasant but we have to come to grips with the deadly mimetic rivalry and spirals of revenge in our history if we are going to overcome them in the present rather than repeat them.

Peter STORK: "Human Rights: Controlling the Uncontrollable?" Human rights are treated by many as a sacred cow while others, especially political leaders, try to undermine them. Stork uses mimetic theory to alert us to how human rights activists can undermine what they are advocating. He recounts how heads of state have tended to use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a weapon against other countries, designating others as enemies of human rights while overlooking their own violations of these same human rights. So it is that the US denounced STALIN's show trials and the Soviet Union denounced racial segregation in the US. Although NGOs do much good work, the large number of them tend to lead to mimetic rivalry among them for the scarce resources of donations. NGOs also get locked into rivalry with

sovereign states in a way that prevents helping the people they want to help. None of this is meant to diminish the need for human rights in the sense of truly respecting the other and caring for the other. This paper is a solemn caution for the pitfalls involved with advocacy for the powerless.

Scott COWDELL: "Hard Evidence for Girardian Mimetic Theory? Intersubjectivity and Mirror Neurons." A brief summary of recent neurological discoveries, particularly mirror neurons, that seem to indicate a physiological and neurological basis for mimetic desire as formulated by René GIRARD. This may prove to be the most important scientific work of the past two decades.

Chris FLEMING and John O'CARROLL: "Nietzsche, the Last Atheist." An overview of the reception history of Friedrich NIETZSCHE with an emphasis on how consistently the anti-Christian stance of the philosopher continues to be overlooked. GIRARD, who focuses on this aspect of NIETZSCHE, is a prominent exception. The authors follow GIRARD in examining the famous passage in *The Gay Science* where a madman carries a lantern at noonday while accusing the townspeople of killing God. For GIRARD, it isn't just that NIETZSCHE believes there is no god, or god is dead, but he rejects the revelation of a self-sacrificing god in favor of the archaic violent sacred. GIRARD himself expresses his bemusement that other commentators and especially followers of NIETZSCHE pass over the madman's charge of murdering god and move straight to an obituary of the divinity. The paper concludes with a discussion of *Ecce Homo*. The title alludes to Pilate's words while presenting the scourged Jesus to the crowds. Over and over again NIETZSCHE pleads for readers to *listen* to him. GIRARD does just that. It is in this book that NIETZSCHE most specifically presents the fundamental choice between Dionysos and the crucified and he chooses Dionysos. Put this way, the Gospel is not a book to be put in the parlor.

Neil ORMEROD: "Is all Desire Mimetic?: Lonergan and Girard on the Nature of Desire and Authenticity." GIRARD's concept of mimetic desire is brought up against Bernard LONERGAN's positing of "the pure, detached, disinterested desire to know" (p. 252). This desire is rooted in a natural desire to know God that is

un-elicited from outside the human person. This desire is not mimetic but is rooted in each individual. ORMEROD raises the question that if all desire is mimetic, how can any desire be authentic? ORMEROD suggests that only if fundamental desires such as the disinterested desire to know are “natural” is authenticity possible. An un-elicited desire for God could be an inherent natural appetite as is hunger, but this natural desire for food is then triangulated into the desires of other people and I assume GIRARD would say the same for the natural desire for God. That is, a natural desire for God cannot be separated from the desires of other people in relation to God, let alone from God’s Desire. Moreover, if knowledge is rooted in the reality of the victim, as GIRARD says, then fundamental knowledge can never be disinterested. Søren KIERKEGAARD ranted about authenticity grounded in the individual, but this individuality was grounded firmly in God, which hardly makes this authenticity autonomous. Perhaps authenticity is best found within relationships rather than an autonomous individual. The issues raised in this paper are of capital importance in mimetic theory and my questioning of LONERGAN’s position is hardly the last word. We all need to continually evaluate our experiences in our desire to know and take note of how our desires interact with the desires of others and if and when they don’t.

Andrew Marr, OSB

Hodge, Joel:

Resisting Violence and Victimisation.

Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor.

Farnham /Burlington: Ashgate, 2012. 232pp.

\$ 99.95; ISBN-10: 1409445879

Joel HODGE, an Australian Scholar in Catholic Theology and Philosophy who is quite well-known in COV&R, published a book about a core theme of Mimetic Theory: victimizing violence and the possibilities to resist it. One could say: Another book dealing with this topic is more or less superfluous. Girardians have already elaborated on this enough. That may be right, as far as merely theoretical approaches are concerned, although one could argue that even on the theoretical level not everything in this context is sufficiently clarified. The special thing about this book, however, is its concrete and practical background. Joel HODGE is very

familiar with the conflictive and painful history of East Timor, which is the Eastern part of the Southeast Asian island of Timor, reaching over about 15,000 sq-km (approx. 5,791 sq-miles), and is populated by about 1.1 million people. This small area was a Portuguese colony until 1975. Only then did the country become independent; but it did not stay so for a long time. Exploiting conflicts within East Timor, Indonesia occupied the territory just a few days later. The occupation lasted until 2002 and caused the indigenous people enormous suffering. The UN reported “that at least 102,800 people, and likely even more than 183,000 people, died from unnatural and conflict-related causes during the Indonesian occupation. This total came from a population of approximately 700,000 when Indonesians invaded, which is one of the worst per capita losses of life in the twentieth century” (54). HODGE has visited East Timor several times and had a lot of conversations there with contemporary witnesses of the occupation-period. He can’t hide his siding with the people of the country and thus he does not write as a distanced spectator but as an involved person. This is in accordance with his approach, which aims at a real encounter with the other whose story should be told. Thus HODGE writes: “Dialogue between the researcher and the other is not merely an intellectual exercise but involves an existential encounter with the other that seeks truth” (7). To approach this truth narrations are often more adequate than pure statistical facts. Therefore stories told by particular people from East Timor are one pillar on which the whole book is built. The other one is Mimetic Theory. These two parts should be brought into a dialogue to elucidate and interpret each other. In accordance with this conception, Section I of the book provides a short but sound introduction to Girardian thought on the one hand and an overview of the situation and development of East Timor on the other. Sections II to IV try to realize HODGE’s intention by telling concrete stories, which form the starting point for systematizing reflections; these are revolving around faith, reconciliation, solidarity, state-violence and victimization. The real aim of these reflections is to prove the power of the Christian faith to generate peace and foster nonviolence.

When reading the story of East Timor, it is quite interesting to note that the percentage of Christians increased from 25 % to over 90 % during the Indonesian occupation, although the Catholic Church had been present in the country for centuries, apparently without much influence on the people. The reasons for this seem to be diverse. One essential aspect—according to HODGE—is the local church’s siding with the victims. The church was not involved in violent resistance against the occupiers but she did shelter refugees, gave people a lot of material and spiritual support and provided possibilities for encounters between the rebels and their families. This means that during the long-lasting period of harsh conflict the church developed a new way to conduct herself as more conforming to the gospel and that made her also more attractive to the people. One possibility, however, would have merited more consideration, I think, particularly in a study inspired by GIRARD, namely the possibility that the trend towards Christianity might also be the result of a demarcation from hostile, Muslim-dominated Indonesia.

Still, HODGE identifies examples of behavior which seems to be shaped by unmistakably Christian attitudes. One example is given by the story of João, an elderly leader of a group of refugees, who upheld non-violence and finally was ready to die in the place of the people who had entrusted themselves to him. It is stated that in some way João was “supported by his Christian faith that offered a pathway through violence and a framework to come to terms with suffering” (73). Another story is that of a group of religious sisters who were spared from the violence of a mob. The mob massacred hundreds of refugees without regard for their age or sex, but let the nuns go, who were united in prayer and previously had helped people on both sides. To HODGE these sisters are an example of a community that gains identity and communion by other means than distorted imitation and scapegoating. Their anchoring in real transcendence enabled them to break the cycle of violence. Furthermore, the story of the village king Cristiano is told, who became an arbitrary victim of torture. To HODGE this was an occurrence of the violent sacred, as it is described by William CAVANAUGH, a self-reproduction of power by the demonstration of

inescapable violence that is able to smash everybody. But the majority of the Timorese population resisted the urge to answer this arbitrariness with counter-violence, meaning that they did not allow themselves to be pushed in the role of the enemy. This again seems to be a fruit of the Christian attitude of these people. To HODGE the experience of Eucharistic solidarity “in which Christ identifies himself with human suffering and overcomes death, gave rise to personal and collective resources in East Timor that enabled forms of resistance” (143). In the case of the village king Cristiano, this resistance was realized by an intense practice of prayer in prison and also by catechizing other captives, which sustained the self-esteem of the unjustly persecuted. Their faith nurtured “a change in the way each person gains identity” (105). After his release, Cristiano was not driven by hate or vengeance, HODGE reports. The last example given by the author is the one of eight Catholic charity workers who were killed in 1999 and are admired as martyrs by the Timorese people now. He concludes: “East Timor is a kind of triumph for the innocent victims, catalyzing local and international networks against the totalitarian nation-state.” (197)

This book is a convincing witness for the power of a vivid young church and it is also committed partisanship for innocent victims. As far as Christianity is characterized by the concern for victims, the stories told by Joel HODGE are pure narrative Christian theology. Furthermore these real stories are impressive illustrations of mimetic rivalry and mimesis-spurred violence, as well as of what Mimetic Theory depicts as specific revelation of the Gospel. So we can gain a lot from reading the offered reports and reflections. I consent to HODGE’s understanding of the role and duty of the church. I think this conception is very close to what Pope FRANCIS has demanded since he has been elected Bishop of Rome.

Nevertheless, I want to make one critical remark on Joel HODGE’s book. I think the recent history of East Timor as well as the behavior of the mentioned agents should have been interpreted somewhat more diffidently. What drives people and, even more so, societies may be very complex and diverse. Even if I hope that the Christian faith and the encounter with Christ’s self-giving love has motivated all the

people to act in the described way, even if I wish HODGE is right, it seems not absolutely evident to me that it has to be so. The author does not tell us much about the kind of his conversations or the methodology of his interviews. His “heroes” do not get much of a chance to speak to us in their actual words. This may be good concerning the form of the book, which is pleasantly written. But it also invites criticism. One could ask whether HODGE might not over-interpret the facts to confirm a theory. For example, it remains astonishing to me that so many Timorese people are so much affected by the gospel, although they have converted only a little while ago. Maybe this is due to the enthusiasm of new discipleship. But it could also be that there have been older traditions, which are similar to the message of the gospel. It could also be that other motives were at play, motives which are not quite Christian, as for example kinds of parochial altruism. I do not state that it is likely so. But I fear skeptics will not be convinced of the opposite. Of course, this is more a methodological remark and should not prevent you from reading this very interesting book, which unfolds Mimetic Theory and brings us close to both Timorese history and to a committed theologian author.

Wilhelm Guggenberger

James G. Williams: *Girardians. The Colloquium on Violence and Religion, 1990-2010.*

Wien Berlin: LIT Verlag. (322 pp.)

ISBN: 978-3-643-90280-8

Girardians is first and foremost a book about the development of mimetic theory, from René GIRARD’s discoveries on human interaction in the early 1960s, developing into a small international research group founded at Stanford in 1990, and gradually becoming one of the most important theories on culture ever. The author, James G. WILLIAMS, a professor emeritus of Old Testament Studies at Syracuse University, was himself a key player in founding the interdisciplinary research group, Colloquium on Violence and Religion, which has enabled me and hundreds of other people to exchange views and dig deeper into the fertile ground of mimetic theory.

I clearly remember the first time I myself partook in a COV&R conference, in Wiesbaden, in 1994. Since then I have attended around

two thirds of the COV&R conferences, and I have got to know the group fairly well. One of the things which have always impressed me is the group’s lack of rivalry with René GIRARD. It probably has something to do with what WILLIAMS mentions as René’s humility, but also has to do with the humility among many of the founders of the group.

Girardians is primarily a book for insiders. Yet WILLIAMS writes so well, so detailed and in such an interesting way that it will be relevant for anyone who wishes to know more about the history of mimetic theory. WILLIAMS’ encyclopedical knowledge is not limited to GIRARD’s work only but spans the work done by all Girardians. I think he, and perhaps PALAVER, are the only ones who have that knowledge. Luckily this knowledge is now preserved.

Girardians is written in a generous manner. Not many would be able to write such a book with such clarity and honesty. Desire is always hottest amongst those nearest to us. James WILLIAMS neither gets sentimental nor nostalgic, regardless of how much this intellectual and spiritual journey has meant to him. Neither is he afraid to mention the conflicts which have occurred along the way. The readers get to experience the bumpy road, which helps them to understand how difficult it was to get mimetic theory accepted in the academic world. Mimetic theory today, however, is known to most of the academic world, thanks, not only to René, but thanks to people like Raymund SCHWAGER, Robert HAMERTON-KELLY, Cesareo BANDERA, James WILLIAMS and others.

To really appreciate *Girardians* one must have been a member of COV&R for some time. The conferences where I myself have attended are much more exciting to read about than the others. But WILLIAMS’ summary on what he considers the most memorable talks gives the reader a valuable overview, whether you attended or not. Reading about the different people who belong to COV&R is also very interesting. Other parts of the book discuss different aspects of the mimetic theory and are enjoyable and interesting in a different way.

WILLIAMS gives impressive summaries, not only of each conference but of each different talk. He mentions at length vintage talks, such as DUPUY’s on the market at Wiesbaden in 94, NIEWIADOMSKI’s on faith and the media at

Innsbruck in 2003, and Stephen GARDENER's talk at Riverside (2008) on Phillip RIEFF's tendency to make rivals out of his models. In addition to those mentioned in the book, I especially remember Tyler GRAHAM's talk on origins, Guiseppe FORNARI's on Leonardo, and GIRARD's summary of the theory at St. Denis. Also Sandy GOODHART's introduction to mimetic theory in Amsterdam, where he explained the theory without any manuscript, was really marvelous. And listening to Gil BAILEY is always exciting, provoking and enjoyable.

What partly makes *Girardians* so readable is the composition; the variations of chronological history, concerning the development of the group, with presentations of different aspects of the theory, alongside biographical sketches. What I find really remarkable is how little René GIRARD has revealed (except his conversion), even to his closest of friends, about himself and about how his personal experiences have framed his insights. One wonders: When did GIRARD experience the effects of metaphysical desire, scapegoating etc. in such a manner that it became something worthwhile spending the rest of his life investigating it? (Maybe it has been wise not to reveal too much of one's personal experience, as everyone would think that mimetic theory is just a response to personal experiences.) But I must admit I was a bit disappointed to find so little in this book about how mimetic theory has been shaped by GIRARD's own life. However, WILLIAMS gives some interesting descriptions from his own academic life, telling the reader about how he became a Girardian. As I love biographies, I always enjoy those bits the best, so also in this book. However, I am very much hoping that someday I will read a biography on GIRARD's life.

WILLIAMS explains mimetic theory in a clear way. I do not know anyone else who explains it better. *The Girard Reader* has been a marvelous introduction to mimetic theory, both because of the relevant selection of GIRARD's own work and WILLIAMS' fine explanations. In *Girardians* there is a fine analysis of FREUD and his influences on GIRARD, focusing on FREUD's fallacies in understanding the interdividuality of desire. I have never read anything more to the point on FREUD in relation to mimetic theory, and would like to challenge WILLIAMS to write a much needed longer article on the subject. Al-

so WILLIAMS' interpretation of *Battling to the End*, a book many found puzzling, is excellent.

In *Girardians* the reader gets to know how different people belonging to COV&R have interpreted the theory. It tells the world that this is not only GIRARD's theory, but many different theories based on GIRARD's original thought. I myself have my own version: I would like to see the relation between mimesis and scapegoating as something less automatic, especially when approaching our modern world. I would also like to see mimesis as something not only taking place in the present, but being an effect of mimetic encounters of the past.

Even if WILLIAMS in *Girardians* presents different views on mimesis and scapegoating, it is clear that he is an orthodox Girardian. He is not exactly praising modern individualism. At the same time he seems relaxed as to what different Girardians have tried to turn the theory into. In some instances, as this book shows, the group has retracted to self-preservation, which, I think, has resulted in—minor and mild forms of—scapegoating. However, WILLIAMS is very clear on the issue of violence in relation to mimesis. He claims that violence is a consequence of mimesis and not vice versa, which is important to emphasize as some Girardians seem to see violence as the primary force, thereby making mimetic theory look like it were founded on a dark and somber world-view in which love and compassion are only weak and decorative attempts to hide the original violence. Also WILLIAMS claims that in order to be able to understand GIRARD's theory, one must relinquish one's cherished illusions about oneself, and understand the banalities of our desires. In this respect COV&R is, more than most academic groups, quite explicit in pronouncing that reaching any kind of rational truth requires a change of heart.

However, there is one mystery or paradox I have never received any answer to in all the books I have read on GIRARD and his mimetic theory, a paradox which I will, even after reading *Girardians*, continue pondering about: How can a man who denounces originality and individualism, himself become such an original thinker? Perhaps a biography on GIRARD will one day give us the answer?

Per Bjørnar Grande
Bergen University College, Norway

1) Books concerning the entire work of René Girard

Cowdell, Scott. *René Girard and Secular Modernity: Christ, Culture, and Crisis*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013.

Warren, James. *Compassion or Apocalypse?: A Comprehensible Guide to the Thought of René Girard*. Foreword by *Brian McLaren*. Lanham: John Hunt Publishing, 2013.

2) Articles concerning the entire work of René Girard

Antonello, Pierpaolo, Maspero, Giulio, and Porta, Marco. "René Girard: Subjectivity, Desire, Truth." In *acta philosophica* 22/1 (2013): 153-166.

García-Durán Bayona, Xavier. "René Girard: una aproximació. Des de 'Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque' a 'Achever Clausewitz'." In *Comprendre: Revista catalana de filosofia* 14/2 (2012): 71-84.

Hetzl, Andreas, Palaver, Wolfgang, and Regensburger, Dietmar. "The Reception of the Mimetic Theory in the German-Speaking World." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 25-76.

Neuhaus, Gerd. 2013. "'Positive Mimesis' – christologische Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Rezeption von Girards mimetischer Theorie." In *Mein Herr und mein Gott: Christus bekennen und verkünden. Festschrift für Walter Kardinal Kasper zum 80. Geburtstag*, edited by G. Augustin, K. Krämer, and M. Schulze, 379-399. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2013.

Pechmann, Ralph. "Tätermoral und Opferdenken: Einführung in die Opferthematik bei René Girard." In *Bulletin DIJG* no. 18 (2009): 25-32.

3) Books with references to René Girard

McLaren, Brian. *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?: Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith Road*. New York: Jericho Books, 2012.

Neuhaus, Gerd. *Fundamentaltheologie: Zwischen Rationalitäts- und Offenbarungsanspruch*. Regensburg: Pustet, 2013.

Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred: 'They Shall Be Called Children of God', edited by Pfeil, Margaret R., and Winright, Tobias L. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012.

4) Articles with references to René Girard

Gans, Eric. "More on the Humanities." In *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* no. 447 (September 14, 2013): <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw447.htm>

Gans, Eric. "The Meme, Revisited." In *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* no. 446 (July 20, 2013): <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw446.htm>

Gans, Eric. "Thomas Nagel's 'Mind and Cosmos'." In *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* no. 444 (July 6, 2013): <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw444.htm>

Goldman, Peter. "Why Generative Anthropology?" In *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* no. 445 (July 13, 2013): <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw445.htm>

MacDougall, Scott. "Scapegoating the Secular: The Irony of Mimetic Violence in the Social Theology of John Milbank." In *Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred: 'They Shall Be Called Children of God'*, edited by Pfeil, Margaret R., and Winright, Tobias L., 85-98. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012.

Rose, Dominik. "Ein ungeliebtes Stiefkind: Eberhard Th. Haas belebt die Diskussion um Sigmund Freuds 'Totem und Tabu'." In *literaturkritik.de*, August 12, 2013: http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=18261

Vonholdt, Christl R. "Moderne Opferrhetorik – über die Instrumentalisierung eines Begriffs." In *Bulletin DIJG* no. 18 (2009): 2-4.

5) Books applying the mimetic theory

Alison, James. *Jesus the Forgiving Victim: Listening to the Unheard Voice*. Doers Publishing, 2013.

- Bandera, Cesáreo. *A Refuge of Lies: Reflections on Faith and Fiction*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 2013.
- Breitenfellner, Kirstin. *Wir Opfer: Warum der Sündenbock unsere Kultur bestimmt*. Diederichs Verlag: München, 2013.
- Fornari, Giuseppe. *A God Torn to Pieces: The Nietzsche Case*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 2013.
- Girard, René. *Anorexia and Mimetic Desire*. Translated by Mark R. Anspach. Breakthroughs in mimetic theory. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 2013.
- Hodge, Joel. *Resisting Violence and Victimisation: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor*. Farnham Surrey: Ashgate, 2012.
- Lawtoo, Nidesh. *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 2013.
- Merrill, Trevor C. *The Book of Imitation and Desire: Reading Milan Kundera with René Girard*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

6) Articles applying the mimetic theory

- Alberg, Jeremiah. "Scandals Must Come." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 77-86.
- Antonelli, Emanuele. "The Child of Fortune: Envy and the Constitution of the Social Space." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 117-140.
- Barber, Benjamin. "Expositions of Sacrificial Logic: Girard, Žižek, and Cormac McCarthy's 'No Country for Old Men'." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 163-179.
- Bott, Nicholas. "How Can Satan Cast Out Satan? Violence and the Birth of the Sacred in Christopher Nolan's 'The Dark Knight'." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 239-251.
- Buchoul, Samuel. "The Nonself of Girard." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 101-116.
- Collins, Brian. "The Sacrificial Ram and the Swan Queen: Mimetic Theory Fades to Black." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 207-237.
- Dumouchel, Paul. "Naturalizing Ethics: A Girardian Perspective." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 77-86.
- Girard, René. "Die moderne Sorge um die Opfer." In *Bulletin DIJG* no. 18 (2009): 33-37.
- Girard, René. "Nietzsches zweifaches Erbe." In *Bulletin DIJG* no. 18 (2009): 38-43.
- Humbert, David. "Re-Visiting the Double: A Girardian Reading of Alfred Hitchcock's 'Rope' and 'Strangers on a Train'." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 253-261.
- Merrill, Trevor C. "The Labyrinth of Values: Triangular Desire in Milan Kundera's 'Dr. Havel After Twenty Years'." In *Heliopolis* 8/1 (2010): 111-123.
- Pesenti Gritti, Martino. "Nietzsche's Double Binds: Giuseppe Fornari and René Girard on Nietzsche's Thought." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 141-162.
- Robinette, Brian. "Deceit, Desire, and the Desert: René Girard's Mimetic Theory in Conversation with Early Christian Monastic Practice." In *Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred: 'They Shall Be Called Children of God'*, edited by Pfeil, Margaret R., and Winright, Tobias L., 130-143. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012.
- Schenk, Richard. "The Place of Mimesis and the Apocalyptic: Toward a Topology of the 'Far and Near'." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 1-24.
- Schwartz, Sanford. "TO-NIGHT "GOLDEN CURLS": Murder and Mimesis in Hitchcock's 'The Lodger'." In *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 20 (2013): 181-205.

- Van Coillie, Geert. "Abraham, Odysseus en Aeneas: Drie verhaalfiguren in literair-antropologisch en Bijbels perspectief, (part 1)." In *Kleio: Tijdschrift voor Oude Talen en Antieke Cultuur* 42/1 (2012): 2-22.
- Van Coillie, Geert. "Abraham, Odysseus en Aeneas: Drie verhaalfiguren in literair-antropologisch en Bijbels perspectief, (part 2)." In *Kleio: Tijdschrift voor Oude Talen en Antieke Cultuur*, 42/2 (2013): 50-63.
- Vasko, Elizabeth: "LGBT Bullying at the Crossroads of Christian Theology: Girard, Surrogate Victimhood, and Sexual Scapegoating." In *Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred: 'They Shall Be Called Children of God'*, edited by Pfeil, Margaret R., and Winright, Tobias L., 38-53. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2012.
- Wolf, W. Clark. „Desired Baptisms: A Mimetic Reading of Baptismal Rivalry.“ In *The Heythrop Journal* 54/5 (2013): 880–890.

Dietmar Regensburger

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–XXXV) 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

COV&R-President: Ann W. Astell, Dept. of Theology, University of Notre Dame, 130 Malloy Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA, E-Mail: aastell@nd.edu

COV&R-Executive Secretary: Jeremiah Alberg, International Christian University, 3-10-2 Osawa, Mitakashi, Tokyo 181-8585, Japan, E-Mail: jalberg@gmail.com

COV&R Bulletin Editor: Nikolaus Wandinger, Institut fuer Systematische Theologie, Karl-Rahner-Platz 1, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria, E-Mail: nikolaus.wandinger@uibk.ac.at

We invite you to become a member of COV&R. Annual dues are \$ 55 U.S. resp. 50 € per household, or \$ 27.50 U.S. / €25 for matriculated students. Those in soft currency areas who find it difficult to pay this amount in the currencies mentioned are invited to apply to the executive secretary for a special rate. Membership includes voting rights, research collaboration, discussion, and opportunity to support the aims of the Colloquium, also subscription to this *Bulletin*, to *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, and to the Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture Series, published by Michigan State University Press. Please do not delay to join COV&R if you are committed to our raison d'être.

COLLOQUIUM ON VIOLENCE AND RELIGION MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a member of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion. My membership fee is enclosed (\$ 55 U.S. / €50, \$ 27.50 U.S. / €25 for matriculated students).

COV&R membership includes a free copy of each new book published in the Studies in Violence, Mimesis, and Culture Series by Michigan State University Press.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

My special interests are in the following fields:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literary Criticism, Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology and Psychiatry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Political Science, Economics, Social Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> Education, Practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biblical Theology | <input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology, Religious Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Theology, Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Concerns | |

Send money check, order, or transfer to:

COV&R c/o The Raven Foundation
2624 Patriot Blvd
Glenview, IL 60026
USA

Contact:
Keith Ross
p.: 224-521-2701
f.: 224-521-2720

kross@ravenfoundation.org

COV&R c/o Institut für Systematische Theologie
Karl-Rahner-Platz 1
A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria
Fax: +43/512/507-2761

Money transfer:
Within Austria: P.S.K. BLZ 60000, account no.: 93012689
Euro-zone:
IBAN: AT10 6000 0000 9301 2689
BIC/SWIFT: OPSKATWW;
dietmar.regensburger@uibk.ac.at