

**UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**

Anthony Ekpunobi

**REFLECTIVE MIMESIS AND ETHICS OF THE CROSS
IN THE MIMETIC THEORY OF RENÉ GIRARD:
TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE HUMANISM.**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Mentor:

Prof. Robert Petkovšek, CM

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Introduction

According to René Girard's anthropological interpretation of the Event of the Cross of Jesus Christ, the cross represents the historical moment when the unjust nature of the scapegoat mechanism that held sway in primitive society was exposed. In his Mimetic Theory, mimetic desire is the unconscious, involuntary, uncontrollable driving force of human acts. He proffered the Imitation of Christ i.e. a reversal of the will to violence, as the solution to scapegoating. Unfortunately, the Imitation of Christ involves a mental reflection that is inconsistent with the Mimetic Theory. This Christological solution i.e. the Imitation of Christ, to an anthropological crisis as proposed by Girard does not make for a rational understanding of the action of the cross. On the contrary, a reflective mimesis informed by the action of the cross, is supportive of a rational understanding of the cross as such, unaided by any appeal to religious faith. This thesis argues for reflective mimesis as an ethical disposition, a paradigm and a point of reference for social integration.

The distinctive quality of mimetic desire is that we desire according another's desire. We desire according to the desire of others around us. According to Girard, desire is spontaneous, because it is controlled by the Other's desire (Girard 1976, 2). According to Girard, once their natural needs are satisfied, humans desire intensely, but they don't know what they desire, for no instinct guides them. (Girard 2001, 15) Humans do not desire directly the object of desire, rather through the desire of another regarded as a model or mediator. René Girard insists on the triangular nature of human desire in order to point out the Interdividual nature of human desire. Desire is triangular because its most basic structure involves at least three terms: the agent who desires, the object of this agent's desire, and the agent who serves as the model or mediator of the desire (Livingston 1992, 1). Human desire is Interdividual because humans experience a

mediated desire toward an object. The triangle is no Gestalt. The real structures are intersubjective. They cannot be localized anywhere; the triangle has no reality whatever; it is a systematic metaphor, systematically pursued. The triangular desire is such that the object comes first, followed by human desires that converge independently on this object.

Mimetic conflict is the inability of the subject to recognize and acknowledge his desire as that of the mediator. The mediator is the original owner of the desire and it must be acknowledged as such in order to avoid conflict. The contention responsible for the mimetic crisis is between the “object–desire” and the “model–obstacle” conception of mimesis desire. Object–desire conception is an illusion in the mind of the subject. The subject presumes a linear mimesis i.e. the subject desires directly the object of desire. In reality, mimetic desire is Interdividual in the sense that we desire according to the desire of others around us. Human desire is mediated through the desire of another. Model-obstacle conception of desire is the reality because desire is mediated. The mediator or model stands between the desiring subject and the object of desire. The subject must borrow the desire of the model in order to get to the object. The principal source of human violence is mimetic rivalry. This is ‘the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model.’ (Girard 2001, 11)

Desiring according to the other becomes conflictual because the desiring subject’s allusion to the mediated object of desire, unconsciously alludes to the being of the model. Wolfgang Palaver notes that ‘the unconscious processes to which Girard refers concern on the individual or Interdividual level, the misapprehension of the mimetic nature of desire...’ (Palaver 2016, 152). The aim of this thesis is to unravel this unconsciousness that portrays a somewhat passivity that leads to conflict between the subject and the model. The Christological solution proffered by René Girard as

mentioned earlier, presumed this unconscious nature to be irrelevant. As such, it could not feature the interdividuality of mimetic desire. The Christological solution of the Ethics of the Cross failed to feature the fact that desire is not guided by any instinct. This is why this thesis concludes that a Christian bias is responsible for the inability to feature interdividuality of mimesis.

Reflective mimesis is based on the strong conviction that only mimesis can cure mimesis. The invincible and indispensable mimesis presupposes a mimesis that is able to unravel the primary source of conflict located in the unconscious. Hence the question, is the desiring agent really passive in the entire mimetic process? What is responsible for the inability of the subject to recognize the exchange of mimesis between it and the model? To answer this question this thesis is divided into six chapters. It traces the historical development of the term mimesis in order to establish its cultural foundation. Since it is basically an attitude of the mind, the research ventured into what Jean-Michel Oughourlian termed the Interdividual Psychology. Interdividual psychology featured in his work titled, *The Mimetic Brain*. Interdividual psychology revealed the “self between” that is unconsciously concealed in the exchange of desire between the model and the subject. The self between is the actual object of desire. Oughourlian states clearly that desire appropriates for itself the model of desire before it appropriates the object (Oughourlian 2016, 66). Paolo Diego Bubbio is supportive of this fact when he wrote that the self is always an ‘Interdividual’ self, because it is constituted by a set of mimetic relationships (Bubbio 2017). Reflective mimesis is therefore a recognition of this self between as belonging to the model in order to avert conflict in relationship. It is an anthropological solution to an anthropological crisis.

The first chapter explores the life, influence and works of René Girard. It is interesting to note that the discovery of the mimetic theory is from the Romantics. The Romantics

remained untouched by the scientific temperament of the modern era. It opened an avenue of expression for real human realities that are incompatible with the scientific scheme. Girard's enquiry into the relationship between religion and violence that is visible enough in the Romantics, revealed the single mechanism responsible for human actions. Girard's openness to the texts, especially that of great writers—Dostoyevsky, Proust, Cervantes, Stendhal and Flaubert, revealed the reality of a triangular desire.

The second chapter deals with the historical development of the concept of mimesis and the Mimetic Theory of René Girard. It explores the development from antiquity to the modern period. One glaring fact is the cultural background of the term. It carefully exposes the basic facts about the triangular desire and the interdividuality and the unconscious responsible for the mimetic crisis.

The third chapter deals with the Christological solution of the Ethics of the Cross proffered by René Girard. Girard was influenced by the religious foundation of culture and his encounter with the catholic theologian Raymund Schwager. For Girard, religion has the capability to divert the fury of violence as is evident in the single victim mechanism of scapegoating. 'Violence is not originary; it is a by-product of mimetic rivalry' (Girard 1996, 12). As such the sacrificial system of scapegoat mechanism is capable of diverting the fury of violence onto a surrogate victim in order to save the society from collapse. Scapegoat mechanism restores order by sacrificing an innocent victim. This strong conviction motivated Girard to believe that a Christological solution is the sole and adequate solution to mimetic crisis. Girard's religious conviction was greatly supported by Schwager who assisted him to refine the understanding of the term "sacrifice". Raymund Schwager in, *René Girard and Raymund Schwager Correspondence 1974–1991*, edited by Scott Cowdell *et al*, suggested a theological explication of sacrifice in order to protect the unique sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the

Cross. The aim of Schwager is not to align the Mimetic Theory with Catholic Theology, but to preserve the original meaning of the saving works of Christ. The theme of sacrifice in the Scriptures is to be understood in the eyes of the unique sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. His sacrifice was that he had learnt obedience, and this obedience was his faithfulness to the message of nonviolence at the time of his greatest persecution (Cowdell et al 2016, 53). The sacrificial meaning of the Ethics of the Cross is self-donation. Sacrifice as self-donation is for Girard an adequate solution to mimetic crisis. The Ethics of the Cross is a conscious motivation to foster peace not by sacrifice of the innocent but to save them. Unfortunately, it failed to feature the interdividuality of mimesis.

Chapter four marks the beginning of the development of the reflective mimesis. It takes a closer look at mimetic desire and consciousness in order to solve the basic problem of misrecognition in mimetic experiences. This chapter treats consciousness from the phenomenological point of view in order to feature the context of consciousness. Self-definition is informed by experience. Consciousness is born in reference to experience. Linking consciousness with experience will help to prove that the subject is passive in the mimetic experience. The Oedipus Complex of Sigmund Freud was used to study human consciousness because according to Girard, Freud came so close to discovering the mimetic desire. Freud was blinded by an erroneous belief of a linear mimesis rather than a triangular mimesis. Thus, the Oedipus Complex could not feature the interdividual desire. The Interdividual Psychology of Oughourlian came to the rescue by discovering the self of desire that eludes the human mind in the mimetic process. In his rejection of the autonomous self, Girard affirmed in *Resurrection from the Underground: Feodor Dostoevsky*, that, ‘the Self is not an object alongside other selves,

for it is constituted by its relation to the Other and cannot be considered outside of this relation' (Girard 2012, 43).

Chapter five focuses on the authenticity of the self of desire discovered through the interindividual psychology. This chapter employs the findings of James Alison in *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through the Easter Eyes*, to prove the authenticity of the self of desire. He employed the Interindividual psychology in the formulation of a new Christian anthropology that nullified the theology of atonement which was based on an archaic sacrificial system. From a mimetic point of view, Alison fashioned the gratuitous self of desire as capable of recognition of the otherness that created it. The self of desire is created through mimesis of the model. Thus, gratuitous self of desire is an understanding that 'a self-giving other that can be received only as constantly and perpetually self-giving, as gratuitous, and therefore never grasped, never appropriated, but only received and shared' (Alison 1998, 45).

Chapter six works out the practicality of the gratuitous self of desire. The focus is on a behavioural disposition that features recognition of the model as such. Mimesis is basically an attitude of the mind. This chapter explores an attitude of the mind that accommodates recognition of the gratuitous self of desire that belongs to the model. Reflection pops up as the mind's ability to "bend back" or "turn back" in order to capture the exchange of desires between the model and the subject that resides in the past. St. John Paul II in his famous *Fides et Ratio* affirmed the reflective ability of the mind. According to him, 'the capacity to search [reflection] for truth and to pose questions itself implies the rudiments of a response' (*Fides et Ratio* 29. in bracket mine). Reflection must have implication for action in order to achieve the needed behavioural pattern. Reflection is linked with action not as "reflection on action" but as "reflection in action". The works of Michael Polanyi on *Tacit Knowing* is prominent in

this chapter. According to Polanyi, ‘we can know more than we can tell’ (Polanyi 2009, 4). Tacit knowing is a product of the internalization or embodiment of knowledge. All knowledge for Polanyi has a tacit root from the point of view of personal commitment that ensures internalization or the embodiment of knowledge. The hidden realities of experience presuppose that knowledge is not always explicit. The tacit facts hidden in the will, emerge in action. The hidden realities bear in themselves clues to holistic understanding that is not explicit but clarifies the explicit knowledge in action. Action is emphasized as the only means of expression of tacit knowing.

The connection between tacit knowing and mimesis is in the embodiment of knowledge. The embodiment of the knowledge of mimetic desire will automatically form in one the alertness and the wisdom necessary in avoiding conflict. Tacit knowing is acquired implicitly as in apprenticeship; as such when the knowledge of mimetic desire is made available to one, one implicitly acquires tacit recognition in order to avoid conflict in relationship.

The original scientific findings that are expected as a result of this doctoral research is non conflictual relationship and inclusive humanism. Embodied knowledge of mimetic desire will unconsciously form some inexplicit particulars that will be engaged in attending to every relationship. The implicit knowledge of mimetic rivalry will form tacit recognition towards keeping further rivalry at bay. When reflective mimesis as tacit recognition forms part of the knowing process as evident in life of Girard, the alertness against rivalry is created in the self.

1. Life and Works of René Girard

René Noël Théophile Girard was born in Avignon on the 25th of December, 1923. His parents were Joseph Girard and Marie-Thérèse Fabre de Loye. He began his academic pursuit at L'Ecole des Chartes in Paris, a training school for archivists and librarians, from 1943 to 1947. In 1947 he earned his PhD with a dissertation entitled “Private Life in Avignon in the Second Half of the 15th Century”, same year he relocated to the United States to pursue a teaching career. In 1951, he married his wife Martha Girard and was blessed with 3 children. Cynthia Haven wrote in the *Stanford News* wrote that his relocation to the United States was ‘...the single most important decision of his life, to launch his academic career.’ (Stanford.edu. Nov. 4 2015). He got an offer to teach French at Indiana University where he earned his second PhD. In 1957, he was appointed professor of French literature at John Hopkins University Baltimore. He became a professor in 1961. In 1980, he was appointed professor of French language, literature and civilization at Stanford University in California, until his retirement in 1995. René Girard died on November 4 2015 aged 91 years.

According to Wolfgang Palaver, ‘from the age of ten to thirty-eight years, Girard was an agnostic’ (Palaver 2013, 5). He abandoned the Catholic Faith of his mother and tolled the part of his father, who was against the German occupation of France. But little did he know at this time that his agnosticism would lead to an independent and objective inquiry into the violent foundation of religion. *The Telegraph* regards him as a “French Philosopher and Anthropologist” who argued that man’s mimetic propensity for violence creates a need for religion. (*The Telegraph*, 09 Nov. 2015). A twenty-eight-year period of agnosticism led him into literary works of fiction in order to discover the violent foundation of religion—mimetic rivalry.

It was at John Hopkins University that his idea of the Mimetic Theory began to develop. Girard's discovery of the Mimetic Theory is unconventional because it was discovered in Literature—the Romantic, rather than in the scientific temperament of secularization prevalent in his time. The deep instinctive response in mimesis is way beyond the sphere of literary criticism. The Romantics remained untouched by the scientific temperament of the modern era. It opened an avenue of expression for real human realities that are incompatible with the scientific scheme. According to Richard Tarnas;

Arts provided a unique point of conjunction between the natural and the spiritual, and for many modern intellectuals disillusioned with the orthodox religion, art became the chief spiritual outlet and medium. (Tarnas 1991, 373)

Wolfgang Palaver believes that the Mimetic Theory is independent of the influence of theories of secularization '...due to the fact that at the beginning of his career, [Girard] was more interested in theoretical approaches that assumed a maverick role with regard to the question of religion and, in great contrast to the secularist theories dominating the humanities, did not foresee any impending end to religion' (Palaver 2013, 18). Girard's enquiry into the relationship between religion and violence that is visible enough in the Romantics, revealed the single mechanism responsible for human actions. Thus, he unconsciously ventured into the field of arts that is removed from the influence of secularization, but charged with spiritual expressions in order to arrive at the mimetic desire.

In addition to his enquiry was an openness to and conviction of '...an existential connection between the great works of literature and the lives of the authors that created them' (Palaver 2013, 2). Girard's openness to the texts, especially that of great writers—Dostoyevsky, Proust, Cervantes, Stendhal and Flaubert, revealed the reality of a triangular desire. According to Tarnas:

The artistic and literary culture also presented the modern mind with virtually an alternative that is more complex and variable world picture than that of science. The cultural power of, for example, the novel in reflecting and shaping human existence—from Rabelais, Cervantes, and Fielding, through Hugo, Stendhal, Flaubert, Melville, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and on to Mann, Hesse, Lawrence, Woolf, Joyce, Proust, and Kafka—constituted a constant and often unassimilable counterpoint to the power of dominant scientific world conception. (Tarnas 1991, 373)

He saw beyond fiction an expression of human existential reality. Their works reveal a great understanding of the human nature. In mimetic desire, Girard discovered mimesis as the root of the fragility of human relations. From a triangular desire, he saw clearly the mimesis that holds sway of human actions. Humans do not desire directly the object of desire, rather through the desire of another regarded as a model or mediator. Girard observes in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, 'The mediator is there, above that line, radiating toward both the subject and the object. The spatial metaphor which expresses this triple relationship is obviously a triangle.' (Girard 1976, 2). Humans experience a mediated desire toward an object.

For Jean-Michel Oughourlian, the two fundamental structures of his hypothesis are the psychological hypothesis of mimetic desire and the sociological hypothesis of the scapegoat mechanism (Oughourlian 2016, xiv). Paul Nuechterlein wrote in his article titled; "Girard Anthropology in A Nutshell", that 'his central thesis began to brew out of a dissatisfaction with the modern approach to texts, namely, a relativistic one that places the truth of all texts on par with one another' (Nuechterlein 2000).

Girard's first period at John Hopkins University is described in *The Girard Reader* edited by James G. Williams as a momentous spiritual change. In the winter of 1959, he experienced a conversion to Christian faith which had been preceded by a kind of intellectual conversion while he was working on his first book. (Girard 1996, 1). The

dual conversion saw his return to the Catholic Faith of his birth. The conversion heralded by the discovery of the mimetic desire is uncommon because the double bind of mimetic rivalry—the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model—is difficult to perceive and accept. In his first book, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, he mentioned that ‘only someone who prevents us from satisfying a desire which he himself has inspired in us, is truly an object of hatred’ (Girard 1976, 10). Mimetic desire is the unconscious, involuntary and uncontrollable driving force of human events. Girard writes in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*:

This borrowing of desires understood as imitation, occurs quite often without either the loaner or the borrower being aware of it. It is not only desires that one borrows from those whom one takes for models; it is a mass of behaviours, attitudes, things learned, prejudices, preferences, etc. and at the heart of these things the loan that places us most deeply into debt—the other’s desire—occurs often unaware. (Girard 2001, 15)

René Girard’s Mimetic Theory identifies mimetic desire as a single mechanism responsible for the good and bad in the human being. Mimesis is said to be ‘...a mechanism that generates patterns of action and interaction, personality formation, beliefs, attitudes, symbolic forms, and cultural practices and institutions.’ (Livingston 1992, xii). Mimetic desire brings out the dependence and the relational aspect of the human being. According to Girard, ‘the essence of desire is to have no essential goal. ...to desire, we must have recourse to people about us; we have to borrow their desires’ (Girard 2001, 15). The mimetic nature of desire accounts for the fragility of human relations (10). Desire is undoubtedly a distinctively human phenomenon that can only develop when a certain threshold of mimesis is transcended (Girard 1987, 283). The principal source of violence between human beings is mimetic rivalry, the rivalry

resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model (Girard 2010, 11)

The historical development of the Greek word “mimesis” has maintained the confines of arts and culture. According to Matthew Potolsky, ‘...from its very origins in Greek thought, mimesis connected ideas about artistic representation to more general claims about human social behaviour, and to the ways in which we know and interact with others and with our environment.’ (Potolsky 2006, 2). *The Telegraph* quotes Girard; ‘Mimesis ...is an unconscious form of imitation that invariably leads to competition, and desire is the most virulent mimetic pathogen.’ (*The Telegraph*, 9 November 2015). Gabriel Andrade of University of Zulia, Venezuela, wrote that Girard usually distinguishes imitation from mimesis. The former is usually understood as the positive aspect of reproducing someone else’s behaviour, whereas the latter usually implies the negative aspect of rivalry. It should also be mentioned that because the former usually is understood to refer to mimicry, Girard proposes the latter term to refer to the deeper, instinctive response that humans have to each other. (*The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*).

It will take a reflective mind to perceive the vicious circle of rivalry that exists, and overcoming it requires courage. The mimetic crisis is such that we do not detect it because we participate in it without realizing it. And we detect it only in that in which we do not participate, hence we are able to describe it. (Girard 2001, 183). Girard not only described it; he was converted by it. The solution offered by Girard is not an escape from mimesis, because desire is always mediated. He proposes a Christological solution—creative renunciation of the will to violence through the Imitation of Christ.

According to Girard;

What is the basis of imitating Jesus? It cannot be his ways of being or his personal habits; imitation is not about that in the gospels. ... What Jesus invites us to imitate is his own desire, the spirit that directs him toward the goal on which his intention is fixed: ... His goal is to become the perfect image of God. ... In inviting us to imitate him, he invites us to imitate his own imitation. (Girard 2001, 13)

Palaver is supportive of a Christological solution. According to him, Jesus is the only role model who does not instigate violent struggle among those who imitate him; since he knows no “conflictual” desire, it is impossible to fall into rivalry with him over any object. (Palaver 2013, 219). Only mimesis can cure mimesis. The present work proposes the possibility of a reflective mimesis capable of overcoming unconsciousness in the mimetic process.

The Mimetic Theory has different understanding for different scholars. While some are supportive and suggestive of further developments, others are critical of the unanswered questions emerging from the theory. The proponents of Bernard Lonergan denote Girard’s Mimetic Theory as lacking in authenticity. They ask: If all our desires are mimetic, what might it mean to be authentic? (Ormerod 2012). Lonergan proposes an orientational natural desire to know God as the root of authenticity, but Girard proposes a motivational natural mimetic desire that is rooted not in their objects nor in themselves, but in a third party, the model or mediator. (Coward et al 2012, 256). The mediator of the desire holds the key to natural motivation.

The works of Girard for Paul Watson of the University of Tennessee, suggests new opportunities for developing a Christian social science within the present cultural context (Watson 1998). Jean-Michel Oughourlian confessed of a personal encounter with Girard that changed his entire perception. According to him, ‘from the time of my

encounter with René and my mimetic initiation, my whole philosophical and anthropological perspective was modified' (Oughourlian 2016, xiv). Palaver sees in his work an attempt 'to use the truths contained in literature to systematically explain human existence; therefore, can be called a scientific theory'. (Palaver, 2013:30). In the same vein, Robert Pogue Harrison, a professor of Italian Literature at Stanford University is quoted by Cynthia Haven in *Stanford* to have said that, 'René had the same blind faith that the literary text held the literal truth.... his major discovery was excoriated for using the wrong methods. Academic disciplines are more committed to methodology than truth.' (Stanford, November 4 2015). Michael Kirwan SJ, a lecturer at Heythrop College in the Department of Pastoral and Social Studies, wrote his doctoral thesis on the contribution of the Mimetic Theory to modern thinking. He writes about Girard in the official site of the Jesuits in Britain that the 'immense intellectual holiness' is conveyed by the attitude he showed toward his own theory (*The Jesuits In Britain*, 05 November 2015).

René Girard can be described as a man who was touched by his own writings. In *Quand ces choses commenceront*, he wrote;

I finally understood that I was going through an experience of the exact type I was attempting to describe. The religious symbolism embryonic to these novelists began in my case to function on its own and caught fire inside me spontaneously (Girard 1994, 190)

The Mimetic Theory is relevant to economics, cultural studies, literary criticism, sociology, anthropology, theology, psychology, mythology, and philosophy.

2. Mimesis and the Mimetic Theory

2.1. The Original concept of mimesis

Mimesis means imitation in English and *imitatio* in Latin. The word mimesis is derived from the Greek *mimēsthai* which means imitating, representing and portraying. The English word “imitation” does not adequately translate mimesis. For Raphael Foshay in *Mimesis in Plato’s Republic and Its Interpretation by Girard And Gans*, the usual English translation as imitation fails to capture several of the key resonances in its esthetic, ethical, psychological, and epistemological ranges of significance (Foshay 2009, 2). Mimesis is known in antiquity within the context of culture. There is a controversy as to whether the original concept of mimesis is conflictual as expressed by René Girard. The original concept of mimesis is not well defined because what is known of mimesis in antiquity is sieved out of the works of the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. The Platonic and the Aristotelian understanding differ enormously from the Girardian. Both spoke of mimesis from the artistic representation of nature, while Girard considered it from the perspective of its relationship with desire. We shall consider mimesis in Greek antiquity through Plato and Aristotle and the 18th century in order to present the various understanding and the development if any.

2.2. Mimesis in antiquity

Although the original usage of the word “mimesis” is linked to Plato, there is a reason to believe an obscure history of the word. Plato and Aristotle did not define the meaning of mimesis in their works. They merely employed a word with well-established meaning. Evidence of earlier usage is Post-Homeric, in the works of Plato—*Republic*. Terryl Givens in his article, “Aristotle's Critique of Mimesis: The Romantic Prelude”, argues that even though Plato was the first to use the word in an extended discussion of

art, he was appropriating a term with a well-established meaning. According to Aristotle's employment of mimesis in the *Poetics*, it served a technical purpose thereby giving the impression of an established meaning.

In ancient Greek of the 5th century BC, mimesis was for the most part cultural term. The cultural life of ancient Greek encompasses everything ranging from fashion, food, social and aesthetic life. The works of Homer represent a historical compendium of the Greek antiquity. Richard Tarnas in his work, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped Our World*, described the figure of "Homer" as ambiguously both an individual human poet and a collective personification of the entire ancient Greek memory. (Tarnas, 1991: 17). The mythological worldview of the time depicts the world of myth-endowed human experience with an ennobling clarity of vision, a higher order that redeemed the wayward pathos of life (18). From the above ancient milieu, it is not clear the established meaning that mimesis stands for.

A socio-cultural understanding is supported by Göran Sörbom in his article, "The Classical Concept of Mimesis". According to him, fine art is not eternal and constant but culturally dependent. Probably mimesis was used in the context of the Dionysian Cult-dramas, which again reveals the close connection between religious rituals and the development of drama in antiquity (Sörbom 2002). Paul Woodruff in his article "Aristotle on Mimesis", expressed that the appearance of mimesis in the *Poetics* is brought in to settle one issue after another, as if its meaning were clear from the beginning (Woodruff 1992). According to Matthew Potolsky in his work *Mimesis*, 'from its very origins in Greek thought, mimesis connected ideas about artistic representation to more general claims about human social behaviour, and to the ways in which we know and interact with others and with our environment'. (Potolsky 2006, 2) Mimesis is among the oldest terms in literary and artistic theory, and it is certainly

among the most fundamental (1). Post-Homeric usage of mimesis was not strictly connected with arts as we see above. Paul Woodruff observed that the word mimesis is as obscure in Aristotle as it is in other ancient authors. (Woodruff 1992) For Matthew Gream, mimesis is vague and under continuous refinement due to the evolving nature of its study. (Gream 1999). Arne Melberg in his *Theories of Mimesis*, declares that mimesis is not a homogenous term (Melberg 1995, 3). Also, Walter G. Leszl in his work, *Plato's Attitude to Poetry and the Fine Arts, and the Origins of the Aesthetics*, wrote that 'the little we know about the early uses of the verb *mimeisthai* and its cognates, suggest that these terms belonged originally to the sphere of mousiké or performing actions of various sorts' (Leszl 2006, 1). The idea is that the literary application by Plato, and later Aristotle, flows from the non-homogeneous character of mimesis with regards to representation in culture, aesthetics and arts.

2.3.Mimesis in Plato

Platonic development of mimesis is found in *The Republic*, written in the 4th century BC. *The Republic* describes an ideal society that is based upon a particular development and organization of people and their activities (Gream 1999, 1). Plato's understanding of mimesis is linked to the external image of things. He believed that it is essentially an imitation or representation of nature (Kennealy 1958, 2). Matthew Potolsky argues that in the *Republic*, Plato presents mimesis as mere imitation of the real. Potolsky writes that 'it is an illusion, ...and thus needs to be distinguished from truth and nature' (Potolsky 2006, 2). Plato was consistent and maintained this view in all his dialogues on mimesis. Thus, art is the mimesis of nature. There is no explicit definition of mimesis in Plato's dialogues, but the predominant terms are "copying" and "impersonation" as depicted in *The Republic*, *Sophist* and *Cratylus*, where the theme of mimesis featured. The platonic tradition studies the relationship between art and nature. Santiago Juan-

Navarro in his article, “The Power of Mimesis and the Mimesis of Power: Plato’s Concept of Imitation and His Judgement on the Value of Poetry and the Arts”, opines that Plato developed an idealistic doctrine which opposed the permanent ambit of the eternal forms to the mutability of the material world. (Juan-Navarro 2007). His major discussions on imitations are contained in *The Republic*, Books II, III and X. The expressed goal in *The Republic* is to create a stable, well-oiled society, by a controlled and precise execution of physical and mental activities (Gream 1999).

The Platonic tradition diverted mimesis from its cultural milieu to the arts. His tradition was motivated by the decline and instability of Athens as the leading power in the Mediterranean (Juan-Navarro 2007). Prior to this decline, the fifth century BC which ushered in the classical period, boasted of a balance between the ancient mythological tradition and the modern secular rationalism (Tarnas 1999, 25). Still on the fifth Century BC, Göran Sörbom observed that:

When the Greeks of the classical period wanted to characterize the basic nature of painting and sculpture, poetry and music, dance and theatre, i.e. things we today call works of art, most of them agreed that such things were *mimemata* (in singular form *mimema*), the result of an activity they named *mimesis*. (Sörbom 2002)

With the emergence of the Sophists, the balance shifted in favour of man thereby opening the door for ethical decline. The quest for the ideal became imminent. As the age of practical reason took the place of myths, holistic education became the key to the new world. According to Tarnas:

The proper moulding of character for successful participation in polis life required a sound education in the various arts and sciences, and thus was established the *paideia* —the classical Greek system of education and training, which came to include gymnastics, grammar, rhetoric, poetry, music, mathematics, geography, natural history, astronomy, and the physical sciences, history of society and ethics, and philosophy —the complete

pedagogical course of study necessary to produce a well-rounded, fully educated citizen. (1999, 29— 30)

Mindful of the above, Plato saw in the arts an anomaly that is detrimental to the future of the ideal polis. He senses an instability in the society as a result of mimesis.

The sense of Plato's mimesis is captured in the Book III of the *Republic*: He defines it as, 'not likening one's self to another speech or bodily bearing an imitation of him to whom one likens one's self?' (*The Republic* 3, 393c). Mimesis is perceived by Plato as "impersonation". Walter G. Leszl cites the Sophist, Democritus as one of those who cultivated the idea of mimesis as mimicry or impersonation of Plato when he asserts that, 'one must either be good or imitate who is good' (Leszl 2006, 2). Earlier, the Sophists proposed mimesis as the production of images. The stranger who was discussing with Theaetetus concludes by stating '...for imitative art is a kind of production—of images, however, we say, not of real things in each case. ...' (*Sophist* 265b). According to Plato, the production of a copy is a step away from the original. The copy is of no value except with the model. Thus mimesis—the production of copies—is prone to deception and inauthenticity. This is because the model can make mistakes. Socrates states in the *Cratylus*:

And how about him who imitates the nature of things by means of letters and syllables? By the same principle, if he gives all that is appropriate, the image—that is to say, the name—will be good, and if he sometimes omits a little, it will be an image, but not a good one; and therefore, some names are well and others badly made. Is that not true? (*Cratylus* 431d)

The ideal state will be prone to great danger should mimesis be employed in the formation of the leaders. The condemnation of poetry in Book III of the *Republic* is well understood based on the above-mentioned character of deception inherent in mimesis — 'And is not likening one's self to another speech or bodily bearing an

imitation of him to whom one likens one's self' (393c). The ethical implication of mimesis as impersonation is detrimental to the ideal state. The ethical dimension to mimesis, when mimesis is seen as copying, seems obvious: when a person imitates a bad or good model, he or she will become a part of what he or she imitates (Grande 2007, 67). Mimesis in Plato, then, is the reproduction of at least some of the qualities of an original, either through impersonation or image-making, sometimes with the aim of deceiving its audience, and sometimes not. It is neither a good nor a bad thing to do (Woodruff 1992). Plato's rejection of mimesis is rationalized and understood as the reason for instability in society. Mimesis has no value, as mere copy. The essence of the mimesis is with the model, there is no authenticity inherent in the copy.

2.4. Mimesis in Aristotle

Aristotle like his teacher Plato discussed mimesis within the arts, especially poetry. Unlike Plato, he was in the affirmative of the creativity in mimesis. Rather than concentrating on the correctness of representation, he diverts to creativity in the mimetic action. Aristotle's discussion of mimesis is found in his *Poetics*. Gerald Else described Aristotle's notion of mimesis as the "master-concept" of poetics (Else 1963, 12). Aristotle provided a language and logic, a foundation and structure, and, not least, a formidable authoritative opponent—first against Platonism and later against the early modern mind—without which the philosophy, theology, and science of the West could not have developed as they did (Tarnas 1991, 55).

Aristotle's discussion of mimesis is basically a critique of Plato. In comparison, Terry Givens writes that 'if Plato's version of mimesis led him to condemn art as immoral, deceptive, and unphilosophical, and Aristotle's revised theory entailed no such conclusions, then we need to locate the point of departure, and how Aristotle manages

to disarm the Platonic argument' (Givens 1991). The crux of their difference involved the precise nature of the forms and their relation to the empirical world. Aristotle's intellectual temperament was one that took the empirical world on its own terms as fully real (Tarnas 1991, 55). The point of departure then must be from Plato's understanding of mimesis as surface appearance, hence no essence or value. But Aristotle looks at mimesis from the point of nature's entelechy (Givens 1991). The departure from the entelechy is not unconnected with Plato's identification of the essence of mimesis in the model. Entelechy defines mimesis in terms of the model, i.e. the empirical reality of the action of the artist-model.

Nowhere in the *Poetics*, writes Stephen Halliwell in *Aristotelian Mimesis between Theory and Practice*, did Aristotle define the meaning of mimesis. Also, Halliwell, in his article, "Aristotelian Mimesis Re-evaluated", wrote that 'Aristotle speaks of mimesis both as an intrinsic property of works of art [entelechy] and as the product of artistic intentionality...' (Halliwell 1990). To support the above, Richard Tarnas writes that, 'the real world is one of the individual substances which are distinct and separate from each other, yet which are characterized by qualities or other types of being held in common with other individual substances' (Tarnas 1991, 56). Aristotle is not interested in the appropriateness or authenticity of the model, rather his interest lies in the degree of likeness that can be conceivably obtain between them—the model and the object (Givens 1991). The ability in the artist to represent the model is of interest to Aristotle. Mimetic attributes belong to art works in their own right, not merely as communicative intermediaries between artist and audience (Halliwell 1990). For Aristotle the notion of mimesis is intrinsic and of artistic intentionality.

Prior to the *Poetics*, Aristotle observed in the *Physics* of how human professions like medicine or architecture work towards its end like nature. Architecture or medicine

work like nature in that both “*techne*” and nature subordinate their products teleologically, for the sake of ends (Woodruff, 1992). The art of healing stems from profession [*techne*] of medicine. According to Aristotle in the *Physics*;

But if art imitates nature, and it belongs to the same branch of knowledge to know the form and to know the matter up to a point (thus the doctor has knowledge of health, and also of bile and phlegm, the things in which health resides; and the builder knows the form of a house, and also the matter that it is bricks and beams; and it is the same with other arts), then it belongs to the study of nature to know both sorts of nature. (Aristotle, *Physics* 194a, 20–25)

The shift in emphasis between Plato and Aristotle, as demonstrated above, is a path away from the ethical understanding and subsequent rejection by Plato. The interest of Aristotle is pure arts. The impression of the artist on the audience is the interest of Aristotle. Aristotle is not bothered about any ideal state, hence no moral responsibility. The common denominator between Plato and Aristotle is the “model”. Art-as-mimesis [Plato] without reference to the model is valueless; in reference to the model is prone to deception via impersonation. Art-as-mimesis [Aristotle] in reference to the model is an intrinsic attribute of art that is teleological to an end. Plato had in mind the ideal state, while Aristotle had in mind the audience. Mindful of the audience, Aristotle writes in the *Poetics*:

The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad. It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are in the same way as, with the painters, the personages of Polygnotus are better than we are, those of Pauson worse, and those of Dionysius just like ourselves. It is clear that each of the above-mentioned arts will admit of these differences, and that it will become a separate art by representing objects with this point of difference. (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a1-10)

Stephen Halliwell explains further the Aristotelian notion of mimesis as intrinsic and a product of artistic intentionality from the mode of presentation. According to him,

‘since individual arts possess structured means and procedures, within their particular media, for rendering and conveying intelligible configurations of human experience, their mimetic standing can be provisionally formulated as a mode of signification’ (Halliwell 1990). Aristotle gave mimesis an ontology quite distinct from and independent of its model. Since his interest is on the impression of the audience with the art, mimesis is basically representation. Aristotle writes in the *Poetics* that objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity’ (*Poetics* 1448b10). The creativity of mimesis as representation is obvious, especially its creativity to present tragedy in a mild form. Givens adds that imitation may legitimately be considered as motivational or causal, but never as descriptive of the quiddity of art itself, since the distinction between model and product is not accidental but fundamental (Givens 1991). Art can only imitate artistically and not perfectly. This is the aesthetic foundation of mimesis in Aristotle.

2.5. Mimesis from the 18th century CE

During this period, the concept of mimesis shifted grounds within the aesthetics of Aristotle. Although it retained the idea of mimesis as the representation of nature, it moved attention to the insight of what nature reveals. Michael Puetz in his article “Mimesis” expressed the fact that the writings of Lessing, Rousseau, Goethe, Schiller, and Moritz dominated this period. Aesthetic theory emphasized the relationship of mimesis to artistic expression and began to embrace interior, emotive, and subjective images and representations (Puetz 2002). In Goethe’s aesthetics, the emphasis is for art to go beyond the representation of the external beauty of nature to depth of things. Halliwell expressing the mind of Goethe writes that, the capacity of an artwork to “deceive” and “enrapture” (*entzücken*) the mind depends not on making the subject of its “imitation” seem actual, but on the unity and harmony of the work with itself, on its

“inner truth” (*innere Wahrheit*) and the laws of “its self-contained world” (*eine kleine Welt für sich*) (Halliwell 2002, 4). This is a reinterpretation of mimesis as mere “imitation of nature” to “the world-in-itself”.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was prominent in his contribution to the development of mimesis in this period. He is convinced of the highly esteemed human nature. In the *Discourse on Inequality*, he wrote:

Of the passions that stir man’s heart, there is one that is ardent, impetuous and makes one sex necessary to the other, a terrible passion that braves all dangers, overcomes all obstacles, and in its very frenzy seems liable to destroy Mankind which it is destined to preserve. (1997, 154–155)

He deviated from his predecessor Thomas Hobbes concerning man in the “state of nature”. For Hobbes, the man in the state of nature is barbaric, whereas for Rousseau, man in his natural state is endowed with a positive egocentric love “amour de soi”. His writing on mimesis is hinged on “amour propre”, a kind of selfishness that is based on comparison of man in the society. “Amour propre” is opposed to “amour de soi”.

According to Rousseau:

Amour-propre, which makes comparisons, is never content and never could be, because this sentiment, preferring ourselves to others, also demands others to prefer us to themselves, which is impossible. This is ... how the hateful and irascible passions are born of *amour-propre*. Thus, what makes man essentially ... wicked is to have many needs and to depend very much upon. (Rousseau 1979, 214)

For Wolfgang Palaver, ‘whereas “amour de soi” is based on the self in healthy egocentricity, Rousseau describes “amour-propre” as based completely on the comparison with others: “Self-love, which regards only ourselves, is contented when our true needs are satisfied’ (2013, 104). Rousseau’s “amour-de soi” presumes an intrinsic harmony of nature. Society gives rise to scarcity hence the sexual drive that

motivates competition — “amour-propre”. Rousseau’s “amour-de soi” is based on his life experience. Palaver writes in *Mimesis and Scapegoating in the Works of Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant* that his childhood was pure innocence and he only realized first signs of an evil self-will when a teacher disturbed his natural course of life (Palaver 2003). In his own words Rousseau writes:

My desires were so rarely excited and so rarely thwarted, that it never came into my head to have any. I could swear indeed that until I was put under a master I did not so much as know what it was to want my own way. (Rousseau 1979, 22)

The tendency in Rousseau to blame the society is a contradiction of the innocence of man in the state of nature. Society is comprised of human beings hence the expression of individual desires as we shall see René Girard’s mimetic desire.

2.6. Mimesis in René Girard

René Girard’s treatment of mimesis is in connection with desire. He coined the term “mimetic desire”. According to Paisley Livingston, in his article, “What is mimetic desire?”, the term mimetic desire was coined by René Girard, who makes a number of strong claims about the mechanisms of interpersonal and social dynamics (Livingston 1994). The Mimetic Theory of René Girard is about the singular human factor responsible for the best and worst of human action. The mimetic desire is the chief identifying character of human beings (Girard 2001, x). Human desire is modelled or mediated through the desire of another. The object of desire serves a relation between the subject and the desire of the model. Mimetic desire is desire of another’s desire. According to Girard, ‘the essence of desire is to have no essential goal. ...to desire, we must have recourse to people about us; we have to borrow their desires’ (Girard 2001, 15). We depend on the other about what to desire. We desire according to others and

not in terms of our intrinsic preferences (Livingston 1992, xii). Human desire is mediated by a model. The content of desire is difficult to determine, but it is always a desire *to be* another (Girard 1976, 63). The present work is a focus on mimetic desire in relation to conflict. There will be no attempt to stretch it beyond this boundary to the scapegoat mechanism, i.e. the religious foundation of culture. The interest stretches from mimetic rivalry to metaphysical mimesis, i.e. when the object disappears. The key interest is the blind spot between desire and mimesis that eludes our consciousness. The interest is to present a coherent understanding of mimetic desire that is scattered in the works of René Girard.

2.6.1. Interdividual mimesis

For René Girard, we desire according to the other. Human desire depends on another's desire. Human desire is interdividual because it depends on another. Kathryn M. Frost in her article, "Freud, Moses and Monotheism, and the Conversation between Mimetic Theory and Psychoanalysis", pointed out that, Girard uses the term interdividuality to de-emphasize the monadic subject and situate desire in the attraction and movement generated by interpersonal relationships (Frost 2017). We desire according to the other, the one who is always there —the best friend, the neighbour, the colleague etc. Desire is not spontaneous as in emanating from the self. The individual agent is wrongly thought to desire spontaneously, that is, in a direct and immediate relation to the object of desire (Livingston 1992, xii). We desire spontaneously according to those around us. Desire is mediated by another's desire. Jean-Michel Oughourlian in his work, *The Genesis of Desire*, insists in line with his deep understanding of Girard's mimetic theory, that mimetic desire does not draw its energy from anything except the relation to the other, from the interdividual relation (Oughourlian 2010, 32). Interdividual desire is responsible for the openness in individuals. Girard reveals in *The Girard Reader*,

especially in his conversation with Rebecca Adams, that mimetic desire is intrinsically good, in the sense that far from being merely imitative in a small sense, it's the opening out of oneself (Girard 1996, 64). Thus, while the fact that desire is not spontaneous as in emanating from the individual could appear derogatory, in the sense that it does not emanate from our own intrinsic preferences; however, its responsibility towards individual openness to reality is amazing. Extreme openness reveals the possibility that characterizes the human being. According to Girard, extreme openness can be murderous, it is rivalrous; but it is also the basis of heroism, and devotion to others, and everything (64). The possibility heralded by openness, is a more rewarding human attribute than the deceptive authenticity that presents the individual as the source of desire. Interdividuality confirms Girard's statement that mimetic desire is responsible for the best and the worst in human beings.

Girard's interest was provoked by the rivalrous nature of human relations. Experience reveals the brewing of violence and conflict among people especially friends. Those at enmity with each other were once best friends. The conflictual mimesis nullifies the fact that friendship involves closeness without barriers. Uniformity is not as it really appears on the external. Mimetic desire has proven that uniformity is the breeding ground of conflict and violence. While mimetic desire opens one up to the other, the resultant closeness could preclude respect for difference, leading to conflict.

2.6.2. Conflictual mimetic desire

Mimesis is conflictual because of desire. Mimetic desire bears on the being of the Other. Girard's interest in the conflictual nature of human relations led him to the mechanism that guides desire. The rivalry that characterizes human relations is linked to mimesis. 'The principal source of violence between human beings is mimetic rivalry, the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a

model.’ (Girard 2001, 11) Desire is potentially conflictual because it is not guided by instinct. It does not just imitate; it appropriates as its own the being of the other. Desire reflects on itself in the sense that it depends on the other’s desire. Its nature is to be attracted by itself in the Other. Once it is sighted in the Other, the tendency is to imitate spontaneously. According to Girard, desire is spontaneous, because it is controlled by the Other’s desire (Girard 1976, 2). Girard writes in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, ‘once their natural needs are satisfied, humans desire intensely, but they don’t know what they desire, for no instinct guides them’ (2001, 15). For Wolfgang Palaver, mimesis gives human desire its full shape, and this clarifies why the human being can be so much more violent and conflict-prone than other merely instinctual species (Palaver 2013, 38).

The phenomenological description of mimetic desire is that it is guided by the desire of the Other, the model. If imitation does indeed play the fundamental role for man, as everything seems to indicate, there must certainly exist an acquisitive imitation, or, if one prefers, a possessive mimesis whose effects and consequences should be carefully studied and considered (Girard 1987, 9). Appropriation is the blind motive of mimetic desire. In borrowing the desires of the other, mimesis bears on the being as well. Not guided by any instinct, presuppose a blindness that yearns for sight. An emptiness that yearns for content through another’s desire, hence the acquisitive nature of mimetic desire. Acquisitive mimesis derives from the above explanation. Mimetic desire is acquisitive because it yearns for completion through the desire of the other or model. Paisley Livingston argues for a separation of conflict and acquisition in mimesis. His conviction is that ‘not all behaviour, and not all desire, then is mimetic’. (Livingston 1992, 11) Conflictual and acquisitive mimesis should be regarded as distinct forms of mimesis. Girard posits a mimesis that is comprised of both, due to the presence of

desire. Girard insists that there is a link between mimesis and desire and that conflict and violence, as well as a number of pathological and self-defeating behavioural patterns, can be explained in terms of this link (xii). Girard writes that the distinctive character of mimesis, especially when certain threshold is crossed, is acquisitive, hence conflictual. According to him:

Order in human culture certainly does arise from an extreme of disorder, for such disorder is the disappearance of any and all contested objects in the midst of conflict, and it is such a point that acquisitive mimesis is transformed into conflictual mimesis and tends towards the unification of conflict against an adversary. (1987, 29)

The fragility of human relations is based on mimetic desire (Girard 2001, 10). Girard's interest in the conflictual nature of desire led to a phenomenological description of mimetic desire. The desirous aspect of mimesis is acquisitive in nature. From an acquisitive it develops into the conflictual. According to Per Bjørnar Grande's *Mimesis and Desire: An Analysis of the Religious Nature of Mimesis and Desire in The Work of René Girard*:

The transformation from acquisitive to conflictual mimesis is caused by desire. Desire is the factor that makes conflictual mimesis work. In other words, mimetic desire is always acquisitive. It is not necessarily conflictual, though it is always potentially conflictual. In the realm of rivalry, however, it becomes conflictual. (Grande 2007, 61)

Mimesis as a human attribute is good in itself. It becomes conflictual only when in relation with desire. Desire bears on the very being of the Other whose desire is borrowed. The being is what cannot be shared. Palaver affirms that in Girard's understanding of mimesis, conflicts arise when desiring subjects fight over objects that cannot be shared or mutually possessed (Palaver 2013, 44). What it means is that not all objects of mimetic behaviour lead to conflict. Mimetic conflict is limited to those

objects that by their nature cannot be shared. As soon as the object of desire can no longer be shared— as with objects of sexual desire, social positions, and the like— mimetic desire generates competition, rivalry, and conflict (46). Girard states that desire is the mimetic crisis in itself; it is the acute mimetic rivalry with the other that occurs in all the circumstances we call private, ranging from eroticism to professional or intellectual ambition (Girard 1987, 288). The allusion of desire is always on what the Other wishes to keep to himself. From the phenomenology of desire, the triangular desire, we come to understand that whatever belongs to the Other provokes a desirability spontaneously.

An example of conflictual nature of mimesis is found in the biblical story captioned, The Judgement of Solomon recorded in the first Book of the Kings. René Girard called it ‘...one of the finest texts in the Old Testament...’ (Girard 1987, 237). He used it in his defence for a non-sacrificial reading of the Passion of Christ. Although Girard employed it within the context of sacrificial reading of the Old Testament, it appears here as an instance of mimetic conflict. The two harlots brought before King Solomon were claiming ownership of the “living child” as one lost her child in the night to carelessness. Faced with such a difficult case, for there were no witnesses to support each of their claims, the king decides to divide the living child among them. At this, the “good” harlot, the true mother of the living child accepts that the baby be given to the other in order to spare its life. The other harlot gave in to the king’s judgement to divide—kill—the child amongst them in order to deprive the true mother of her child. What is at stake is not really the ownership of the child; rather it is the status “motherhood” which the living child attracts. The good harlot, the real mother, is not willing to share her status of mother with her rival. This explains why in order to deprive her of her

child, the other harlot gives in to King Solomon's judgement to divide the living child amongst them. Thus, she betrayed the status of motherhood.

Conflict ensues once desires clash on that which cannot be shared. Rather than model and subject, both become contenders, rivals.

2.6.3. The Triangular Desire

According to Girard, the nature of mimesis is triangular desire. Triangular desire represents a phenomenology of desire. As a literary critic, he saw the reality of a triangular desire in the classical works of Dostoyevsky, Proust, Cervantes, Stendhal and Flaubert. The similarities and the reflection of the triangular desire in his own life motivated the development of the Mimetic Theory. He was able to overcome the veil of what modernity terms fiction in order to get to the human reality featured in the works of writers mentioned above. Girard did not intend a philosophical nor anthropological enquiry when he encountered the triangular desire. Wolfgang Palaver in *René Girard's Mimetic Theory*, writes:

From a perceptive reading of the major novels of European literature, Girard postulates that human desire is not based on the spontaneity of the subject's desire, but rather the desires that surround the subject. He argues that humans do not themselves know what to desire; as a result, they imitate the desires of others. (2013, 35)

Triangular desire involves a model, a subject and an object of desire. The subject looks at the model's desire in order to get to the object. An excerpt from Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *Don Quixote* depicted the triangular nature of human desire. Cervantes writes in *Don Quixote*:

“Yes,” said Don Quixote, “for if thou return soon from the place where I mean to send thee, my penance will be soon over, and my glory will soon begin. But as it is not right to keep thee any longer in suspense, waiting to see what comes of my words, I would have thee know, Sancho, that the famous Amadis of

Gaul was one of the most perfect knights-errant—I am wrong to say he was one; he stood alone, the first, the only one, the lord of all that were in the world in his time. A fig for Don Belianis, and for all who say he equalled him in any respect, for, my oath upon it, they are deceiving themselves! I say, too, that when a painter desires to become famous in his art he endeavours to copy the originals of the rarest painters that he knows; and the same rule holds good for all the most important crafts and callings that serve to adorn a state; thus must he who would be esteemed prudent and patient imitate Ulysses, in whose person and labours Homer presents to us a lively picture of prudence and patience; as Virgil, too, shows us in the person of Aeneas the virtue of a pious son and the sagacity of a brave and skilful captain; not representing or describing them as they were, but as they ought to be, so as to leave the example of their virtues to posterity. In the same way Amadis was the polestar, day-star, sun of valiant and devoted knights, whom all we who fight under the banner of love and chivalry are bound to imitate.” (Don Quixote 1, XXV)

In the above as observed by Girard, Amadis is presented as the perfect example of what it means to be a Chivalry, and worthy of imitation. Don Quixote reveals to Sancho the object of true Chivalry. In *Deceit, Desire and The Novel*, Girard observes in Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra’s *Don Quixote*:

These new desires form a new triangle of which the Imaginary Island, Don Quixote, and Sancho occupy the angles. Don Quixote is Sancho’s mediator. The effects of triangular desire are the same in the two characters. From the moment the mediator’s influence is felt, the sense of reality is lost and judgement paralyzed. (1976, 4)

In the work, *The Red and The Black* by Stendhal, the triangular nature of desire is also portrayed in the main character Julien Sorel’s imitation of the military might and the power of seduction in Napoleon. Stendhal writes:

Julien, standing upright on the high rock, looked at the sky, where an August sun was blazing. Grasshoppers were chirping in the field below. He saw at his feet twenty leagues of country. A hawk he had noticed, after leaving the high crags overhead, was describing in silence its widening circles. Julien’s eye mechanically followed the bird of prey, struck by its tranquil, mighty movements. He envied its force; he envied its isolation. It was the destiny of Napoleon. Would it someday be his? (*The Red and the Black* Ch.10)

The solitude, might and tranquillity of the bird of prey are likened to the qualities of his model, Napoleon. Julien is so engrossed in the mimetic process that he sees in reality a bridge to the distance between him and his model.

The mimetic process according to Girard involves a mediator, a subject and an object of desire. The illusion that the subject desires directly, the object is destroyed by the fact of the triangular desire. Earlier in the Platonic writings on imitation we perceived the faint idea of a triangular desire when he gives the value of the imitation to the model. James Alison, in agreement with Girard states that we desire not lineally, from subject to object, but according to the desire of the other, in a triangular fashion (2014, 12). Desire is triangular because its most basic structure involves at least three terms: the agent who desires, the object of this agent's desire, and the agent who serves as the model or mediator of the desire (Livingston 1992, 1). P.J. Watson writes that 'mimesis is triangular desire involving a subject, a model, and an object. Subjects must look toward some model in order to learn which specific objects should be desired' (Watson 1998). According to Girard in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, we do not each have our own desire, one really our own.... Truly to desire, we have recourse to people about us; we have to borrow their desires (2001, 15). In his work on *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard mentions the presence of a subject, an object, and '... a third presence of the rival [mediator] within the mimetic process.' (1979, 145) The three —subject, object and the mediator form a triangle that constitutes mimetic desire. The triangle is no Gestalt. The real structures are intersubjective. They cannot be localized anywhere; the triangle has no reality whatever; it is a systematic metaphor, systematically pursued (Girard 1996, 33). The triangle of desire is an isosceles triangle (Girard 1976, 83). The triangular desire is such that the object comes first, followed by human desires that converge independently on this object. (Girard 1979, 144).

2.6.3.1. The Object of desire

The object of desire stands at the top of the triangle while the subject and the mediator occupy both ends of the base. The object has no value in itself but depends on the mediator for its value. For Per Bjørnar Grande, value is nothing inherent or static; rather it is regulated by mimetic desire (2007, 63). The desirability of the object does not inhere in it; rather it is accorded with desirability by the desire of the mediator or model. The nature of the object of desire is captured by Palaver as objects of sexual desire, social positions, and the like (Palaver 2013, 46). For Girard, the objects include a mass of behaviours, attitudes, things learned, prejudices, preferences, etc. (2001, 15). The sociocultural nature of the object of mimetic desire tells us more of the conflictual nature inherent in the mimetic process. Thus, Girard affirms that one's culture is not necessarily the one at birth but the culture whose models we imitate at the age when our power of mimetic assimilation is the greatest (15). The desirability of the object is what matters. What the subject seeks is the very aspect, status of the model that he is convinced inheres in the object.

2.6.3.2. The desiring Subject

In *Don Quixote*, the subject is Sancho who has the burning passion for Chivalry. The subject is basically characterized by unknowing. The desiring subject does not know what to desire. He depends on a model in order to know what to desire. Livingston argues that the unknowing that characterizes the subject is a kind of passivity that is not conversant with human attribute of rationality. He observed that the mimetic process from the perspective of the desiring subject asks the question 'what is to be done?' rather than 'who am I?' Livingston (1992, 2). He expresses the point that it is sometimes assumed that the mimetic theory defines the desiring subject as a passive entity whose desiring states are fashioned automatically upon contact with an external reality, the

desires of others. He is interested with what the desiring agent wants from the model. Presenting a lack of rational motivation in the subject gives a negative undertone.

A positive understanding of ‘desiring according to the other’ in the mind of Girard, reflects the social aspect of human life. Girard affirms that mimesis describes the human being as ‘extreme openness’ (Girard 1996, 64). Palaver writes that ‘Girard’s emphasis on imitation must not be understood in the superficial sense of the term. However, his theory is not an anthropological caricature of human beings, portraying them as a merely imitative species, but rather a description of the fundamental—if not extreme—openness of humans to others. The mimetic theory describes man as a social being that is dependent on relations to others. No human being is intrinsically complete’ (Palaver 2013, 36). In his theological work, *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross*, S. Mark Heim, wrote that the mimetic openness brings a supercharged capacity for learning and a radical acceleration in transmission of new behaviours or information through a population (2006, 42). The mimetic process operates within a social context, revealing a dependence and openness to the other. Livingston sees in the extreme openness an ambivalence. It is an extreme openness for good and evil. He recognized the fact that this line of argument implies that the ambivalence mimesis is ‘constitutive of and anterior to, all of the effects that psychological theories may label as the objects and subjects of desire’ (Livingston 1992, 7). But Girard’s argument is that mimesis coupled with desire leads to conflict. But when a certain threshold is crossed, does mimesis operate without desire? Can there be mimesis without desire? I shall attempt an answer in subsequent chapters.

Girard observed that in the mimetic process, the idea of originality is vague. Everything that we know under the titles of apprenticeship, education and initiation rests on this capacity for mimesis (Girard 1987, 290). The subject is always in the denial of the entire

process. Girard argues that modern individualism presents an illusion of originality which in turn makes the subject to deny the mimetic process. We live in a world, writes Palaver, in which imitation is frowned upon, because most human beings strive to be unique and original. Any person caught imitating or following the herd almost automatically attracts our complete scorn (2013, 67). The continuous rejection of the mimetic process brings about its re-enactment (Girard 2010, 20). The modern rejection of imitation does not mean that human beings escape mimesis in any way; in fact, this “rejection” is a product of already intensified mimetic desire (Palaver 2013, 67). The illusion of individualism is hinged to the internal shame of not knowing what to desire.

2.6.3.3. The Mediator of desire

The model or mediator is the original owner of the desire that is imitated. The subject imitates the desires of the model. ‘Chivalric passion defines a desire according to Another, opposed to this desire according to Oneself that most of us pride ourselves on enjoying.’ (Girard 1965, 4) The original desire belongs to the model. According to Girard, the model of the “chivalrous passion” is Don Quixote. The mediator is outstanding in the mimetic process because he is both a mediator and a rival. Don Quixote stands for Sancho as “Amadis, the polestar, day-star, sun of valiant and devoted knights, whom all who fight under the banner of love and chivalry, are bound to imitate”. The object is to the mediator what the relic is to the saint (Girard 1976, 83). The object is an extension of the model in terms of the value attached. The subject desires the object simply because the model desired it first. Should the pattern be accepted and perceived as such, there is no conflict. But the subject is always in the denial of the entire process.

The conflict that ensues from the mimetic contact begins unconsciously with the model. The desirability of the object is elicited by the model unconsciously. The model

suggests this desirability to the subject, while the subject is expected to respond through imitation. The suggestive gestures of the model are always unconscious; Girard writes that the exchange of desires is always an unconscious action i.e. it happens without the model and the subject aware of it. According to Girard, ‘rivalry does not arise because of the fortuitous convergence of two desires on a single object; rather, the subject desires the object because the rival desires it. In desiring an object, the rival alerts the subject to the desirability of the object.’ (Girard 1979, 145) When this imitation becomes perfect, rivalry is ignited. Girard writes:

The master is delighted to see more and more disciples around him, and delighted to see that he is being taken as a model. Yet if the imitation is too perfect, and the imitator threatens to surpass the model, the master will completely change his attitude and begin to display jealousy, mistrust and hostility. (Girard 1987, 290)

The process explains that the model often seems to suggest “imitate me” and “don’t imitate me” simultaneously. This equally reveals another instant of ambivalence of the mimetic process. The birth of desire that emanates from the model coincides with birth of hate (Girard 1965, 40). We are at crossroads as to what the model wants —to be imitated or not? He is always in the habit of suggesting the desirability of objects of desire (1987, 299). Livingston and Girard agree that the model occupies a dual position of model and rival. In his article, “What is mimetic desire?” Livingston writes,

Mimetic desire would appear to be a concept that embraces two highly divergent kinds of cases. On the one hand, mimetic desire is said to involve an agent's emulative relation to another person, a relation that is inherently conflictual: the other person is at once a model and an obstacle, with rivalry being a likely result. (Livingston 1994)

The mediator’s desire confers importance to the object.

The subject has the tendency to exceed the boundaries of mere imitation. Mimetic crisis is defined by Girard as the imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model (2001, 10). Often the object in question is something that cannot be shared—objects that are at the interpersonal, erotic, and political levels (Alison 2014, 13). It happens that the mediator’s refusal to let go of this leads to a reversal of desires. According to Girard, the model imitates his own desire, through the intermediary of the disciple. The disciple thus becomes model to his own mediator, and the model reciprocally, becomes disciple of own disciple.

2.7. Acquisitive Mimesis

The conflictual nature of mimetic desire is acquisitive in nature. Mimetic desire is always a desire to be another, hence acquisitive mimesis. The modality which occupies most space in Girard’s treatment is acquisitive mimesis (Alison 1998, 12). ‘This interindividual nature of mimesis implies that we are constituted by the other.’ (Girard 2001, 137n.2) Robert M. Doran, in his article, “Imitating the Divine Relations: A Theological Contribution to Mimetic Theory” sees in interdividuality the essence of mimesis. According to him, it is here, in these complications, that Girard finds the source of all mimetic desire. Imitative desire, wherever it occurs, is always a desire to be another because of a profound sense of the radical insufficiency of one’s own very being. To covet what the other desires is to covet the other’s essence (Doran 2005). Paisley Livingston defined mimesis according to Girard’s mimetic theory as a mechanism that generates patterns of action and interaction, personality formation, beliefs, attitudes, symbolic forms, and cultural practices and institutions (1992, xii). The Girardian understanding of mimesis is conflictual because of the presence of desire. Desire is undoubtedly a distinctively human phenomenon that can only develop when

a certain threshold of mimesis is transcended (Girard 1978, 283). The mimetic nature of desire accounts for the fragility of human relations.

Mimetic desire is the unconscious, involuntary and uncontrollable driving force of human events (Grande 2007, 56). The unconscious or somewhat eclipse of rationality engulfs the whole mimetic process. Girard remarks that this borrowing [of desire] occurs quite often without either the loaner or the borrower being aware of it. In his distinction between the original concept of mimesis and the contemporary understanding, Grande identified desire as the factor. While the primitive mimesis is conscious and an act of the will, the opposite is the case in the contemporary due to the presence of desire. (2007, 38). The hierarchical nature of the primitive societies is uncomfortable for any outbreak of conflict. Mimesis is not guided by any instinct, because it is linked with desire, its target is the other, hence acquisitive.

René Girard distinguished two types of acquisitive desires: the external mediation and the internal mediation. The distinction is based on the distance between the model and the subject. According to Girard:

We shall speak of *external mediation* when the distance is sufficient to eliminate any contact between the two spheres of *possibilities* of which the mediator and the subject occupy the respective centres. We shall speak of *internal mediation* when this same distance is sufficiently reduced to allow these two spheres to penetrate each other more or less profoundly. (Girard 1976, 9)

The reason for the difference in the distance between the mediator and the subject is based on the relationship that exists between them (Palaver 2013, 58). The isosceles nature of the triangle of desire presupposes that the intensity of desire increases as the mediator approaches the desiring subject (Girard 1976, 83). The object is above while the subject and the mediator are at the base of the triangle. The distance between the

subject and the mediator at the base of the triangle is described by Girard as a spiritual or intellectual distance. He rejected the idea of a physical space that measures the gap between the mediator and the desiring subject. It is a fundamental part of man's constitution and not an external addition (Alison 1998, 12). The human nature is always yearning for completion. Palaver agrees with Girard that human beings strive to possess the exact objects that others already possess or desire. Mimesis is most active in acquisitive human behaviour (2013, 46).

2.7.1.1. External mediation

The external mediation is visible in the relationship between the mediator and the subject. In Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, we see that the relational gap between him and Amadis of Gaul is so wide that conflict is far removed. The distance between them stretches the object of desire beyond any form of convergence that can give rise to contention. The social difference between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza—Quixote's admitted disciple—prevents any form of rivalry from occurring between the two. In short, Sancho Panza would never dare fight with Don Quixote over the same object (Palaver 2013, 58). As long as social difference or any other form of differentiation is present to channel mimetic desire, its conflictual dimension remains contained (59). Similarly, the gap that exists between Julien and Napoleon in the Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, is enough to contain any conflict of interest. Livingston adds that external mimesis involves a desiring agent's relation to a mediator whose hierarchical difference is deemed to be permanent and unassailable (Livingston 1994). We can conclude that the conflictual mimesis that is at the heart of the mimetic crisis is not visible in the external mediation. The external mediation also characterizes the relationship between parents and children.

In external mediation, mimesis is acknowledged by the subject as such, hence no conflict. But Girard did not in any of his work refer to the external mediation as the good mimesis. The hero of external mediation proclaims aloud the true nature of his desire. He worships his model openly and declares himself his disciple (Girard 1965, 10). The idea of Imitation of Christ is a paradigm of the external mimesis. The distance between the human and the Divine is permanent and unassailable. For Oughourlian, in *The Genesis of Desire*, the external mediation is a form of “Adorcism”. According to him, this is a case in which the mediator (the model) is not operating within one’s own sphere of activity, so that he cannot be a competitor; he is, in that sense, external to one’s actual world of potential conflict (Oughourlian 2010, 112). As already mentioned, the subject openly proclaims his admiration and allegiance to the model. Often, when a Divine being is involved, it takes the form of possession. The subject seeks more than imitation. According to Oughourlian,

In the case of adorcistic possession cults, what is sought is that a god, genie, spirit, or other culturally defined higher entity, the culturally idealized Other, might “take possession of” or “incarnate” himself or itself in a receptive subject, for the benefit not only of that subject but also for that of the subject’s community. (112)

The external mediation is predominant in religious communities.

In hierarchical primitive societies, all mimesis is external due to the presence of prohibitive laws. As long as these laws are maintained and enforced, the society is kept in order. The collapse of these laws leads to crisis. Scott Cowdell in his article, “Secularization Revisited: Tocqueville, Asad, Bonhoeffer, Habermas”, argues in this direction that, “The “external mediation” of desire does not give rise to envy and rivalry in traditional hierarchical societies, while modernity brings an end to hierarchy, the rise of equality, and hence of “internal mediation.”” (Cowdell 2017). The possibility of the

external mediation transforming into internal mediation is possible when the social gap or the prohibitive laws are reduced

In *The Girard's Reader* chapter five by René Girard, the good mimesis, is the recognition of the model as such. I shall further explicate the concept of the good mimesis in the fourth and fifth chapters of this research.

2.7.1.2. Internal mediation

The movement from external mediation to internal mediation is featured in the literary works that inspired the triangular desire. The sphere of influence is reduced and physical contact is possible in the internal mediation. Girard defined the internal mediation as a minimum difference producing a maximum affection (Girard 1965, 86).

In Dostoyevsky's *The Eternal Husband*, Girard explains the nature of internal mediation. Palaver makes a synopsis of this internal mediation as featured in Dostoyevsky's work thus:

At the centre of the story in Cervantes's narrative one finds Anselmo, who has just married the young and beautiful Camilla. The two were brought together by Lotario, Anselmo's long-time friend and mimetic model. A short time after the marriage, Anselmo bids his friend to attempt to seduce his wife in order to see if she is truly faithful. Lotario is at first opposed to his friend's strange request. He eventually gives in to Anselmo's insistence, however, and endeavours to seduce Camilla. The novella ends tragically, as Anselmo commits suicide after discovering his wife together with his friend. (Palaver 2013, 60)

The reality of the internal mediation is such that the mediator will feature in the world of the subject, thereby reducing the distance between them. In internal mediation, the mediator features in the subject's sphere of influence and they become equals. It ceases to be a model and a subject, both become contenders. Conflicts between equals have the greatest risk of turning violent, because the social limitations that normally prevent or channel mimetic desire are missing (Palaver 2013, 66). The space is reduced and

identity disappears. Girard describes the distance as an infection. According to him internal mediation is present when one contacts a nearby desire just as one would contact a plague or cholera, simply by contact with an infected person (Girard 1965, 99). In support of the above, Scott Cowdell (2013, 21) defines internal mediation as where the model of desire is close to us, on our level or in our space, becoming an obstacle to the fulfilment of desires that they have awakened in us. Relationships of internal mediation can become so complex and impossible that the only way out of the bind is to break the circle of desire. But even this can be a ploy (Doran 2005). The entanglement is very confusing.

The internal mediation is prone to crisis due to the closeness between the model and the subject. It is such that everything is mixed up in a misrecognition. The shift from external to internal mediation is observed whenever two mimetically prone individuals who were previously perhaps only mildly competitive friends suddenly have to work together at close quarters, or one becomes senior to the other, whereupon mimetic rivalry emerges as the old friendship recedes (Cowdell 2013, 22). The actual source of any desire is so obscured that the subject may even reverse the logical and chronological order of desires in order to hide his or her imitation. That is, one may assert that one's own desire is prior to that of the rival whose desire one is imitating, and that the mediator is responsible for the rivalry (Doran 2005). The coming together rather than foster a healthy mimesis, evokes rivalry.

Girard discovered the reality of the internal mediation in Romanticism of the 17th century. According to him, in his work *Battling to the End*, in Romanticism, there is an excessive belief in individual autonomy, but it is also a necessary stage that has to be passed through in order to understand resentment, reciprocity and the law of the duel. In short, Romanticism is necessary to understand that we have entered a world of

internal mediation, where there is no longer any external model to vouchsafe our conduct (Girard 2010, 33). Individual autonomy is destroyed by the reality of interindividual mimesis; we desire according to the other. Triangular desire contradicts a linear movement of desire from subject to object. He describes the modern era as basically ruled by internal mediation. The fact of the escalation of violence in all parts of the world, is an indication of internal mediation. Duncan Morrow in his article, “Terrorism and the Escalation of Violence” claims that the emergence of global terrorism is clear evidence of the spread of internal mediation and mimetic escalation. He discovered what Girard called the ‘romantic’ lie of individual autonomy at the root of terrorism. (Morrow 2017) The illusory conviction of individual autonomy is the aftermath of internal mediation.

Girard accuses literature of extreme mimeticism. According to his conversation with Rebecca Adams, ‘Literature shifts into hypermimeticism, and therefore writers are obsessed with bad, conflictual mimetic desire, and that's what they write about —that's what literature is about’ (Adams R. et al 1993). Literature promotes the internal mediation that ruins our world. It is a consistent reproduction of the negative mimesis as if that is all there is about mimesis. It contradicts what Girard in *The Girard Reader* called novelistic conversion. A situation where what is presented in literature flows from a conversion from conflictual mimetic desire. What is understood in the Mimetic theory as conflictual mimesis begins from the transition from external to internal mimesis.

2.8. The crisis of Undifferentiation

The major crisis of acquisitive mimesis is the undifferentiation¹: The similarity of behaviour creates confusion and a universal lack of difference (Girard 1989, 14). The internal mediation degenerates into a crisis of undifferentiation. The desire never stops at the observation of the differences, it wants to become the fascinating Other, and so to reduce all that distinguishes itself from its model, because everything in this last one says to the subject: do like me (Cottet 2000). As soon as the space between the mediator and the subject disappears, the object of desire vanishes. It vanishes in the sense that it merges itself to the original owner, the mediator. The desire becomes a desire for the mediator, because the desiring subject is not able to distinguish between the object and its mediator. Here Girard speaks of the metamorphosis into a hyper-real or metaphysical object, because it is difficult for the subject to distinguish the object from the mediator (Palaver 2013, 124). ‘Girard argues that this metamorphosis of the original object of desire into a metaphysical object signals the moment in which one can speak of desire as such. From this stage of the mimetic process onwards, he applies the expression metaphysical desire’ (Palaver 2013, 125). Metaphysical desire presupposes the disappearance of the object. The conflict increases in intensity as both subject and mediator make a reversal of their roles. The subject denies the mimetic process and the model prevents the subject from further imitation. In the words of Girard: the imitation of a mediator who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a mediator. This new situation, where both the subject and the mediator desire each other’s desires is called “double mediation” (Grande 2007, 24). Double mediation implies switching of roles in

¹ Undifferentiation is the fear of seeing the disappearance of differences conceived as fundamental for the preservation of national order. (*The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). Girard used ‘undifferentiations’. According to him, desire can be defined as a process of mimesis involving undifferentiation; it is akin to the process of deepening conflict that issues in the mechanism of reunification through the victim.’ (Girard 1987, 287.)

an intense manner that is not recognizable. The model becomes the subject while the subject becomes the model. The reciprocity between the model and the subject reverse direction over and over with enormous rapidity more than the mind can capture, hence the misrecognition and the consequent misappropriation, rivalry. Mimetic rivalries can become so intense that the rivals denigrate each other, steal the other's possessions, seduce the other's spouse, and, finally, they even go as far as murder (Girard 2001, 11). Everything collapses as soon as the differences disappear.

The reality of the mediator in the mimetic process makes desire a timed bomb ready to explode once the differences disappear. The sociocultural nature of the sphere of influence of the subject makes it that the neighbour will always model our desires. The tendency is that our desires always copy the one who is always present, the neighbour (Girard 2001, 9). The neighbour is one whose social status falls within the sphere of influence of the subject. Our circle of acquaintance features friends, siblings, colleagues within its scope. Mimetic crisis is imminent among equals in the social sphere. The option left for rivals is to maintain identity in order to clear the confusion. But Girard writes that identity is realized in the hatred of the identical (2001, 24). Hatred of the identical is violence. The object of desire is no longer visible; the rivals are left face to face with each other. The subject is bent on compulsive insistence on imitation, while the model is bent on prevention of further imitation by claiming his anteriority of desire. The irony is that every effort at denial brings about a re-enactment of the crisis. The social dimension sets in as the crisis transforms itself into a contagion.²

² Contagion is borrowed from its medical meaning of infectious disease. Girard states that the violence of undifferentiation is similar in character with a contagious disease of which the only option is to flee the scene of violence (Girard 1979, 28).

Once the contagion of mimetic violence is reintroduced into the community, it cannot be contained (Girard 1996, 12). Girard uses the idea of a scandal³ to describe the character of the violent contagion. According to him:

The behaviour of the mimetic rivals who, as they mutually prevent each other from appropriating the object they covet, reinforce more and more their double desire, their desire for both the other's object of desire and for the desire of the other. Each consistently takes the opposite view of the other in order to escape their inexorable rivalry, but they return to collide with the fascinating obstacle that each one has come to be for the other. (Girard 2001, 16)

It cannot be contained because it is a crisis of identity. They continue to stumble on each other at every sincere effort in ascertaining each other's identity. The more the antagonists desire to become different from each other, the more they become identical (22). The vicious circle of violence leaves no room of escape for the antagonists. Girard cites the work of the British psychiatrist, Anthony Storr's *Human Aggression*, where he remarked that it is more difficult to quell an impulse toward violence than to rouse it, especially within the normal framework of social behaviour (Girard 1979, 2). The crisis comes to a climax when the community is thrown into the war *of all-against-all*. The violent contagion has the power to unite the community against a single victim i.e. from a war of all-against-all, to a war of all-against-one. Girard affirms this power and influence of the violent contagion thus;

The qualities that lend violence its particular terror —its blind brutality, the fundamental absurdity of its manifestations —have a reverse side. With these qualities goes the strange propensity to seize upon surrogate victims, to actually conspire with the enemy and at the right moment toss him a morsel that will serve to satisfy his raging hunger. (4)

³ The Greek word *skandalizein* comes from a verb that means "to limp". What does a lame person resemble? To someone following a person limping, it appears that the person continually collides with his or her own shadow. (Girard 2001, 16).

It is natural for violence to settle on a surrogate victim. To break the power of mimetic unanimity, we must postulate a power superior to violent contagion. If we have learned one thing in this study, it is that none exists on the earth (Girard 2001, 188). Violence cannot be denied according to Girard, it can only be diverted (1979, 4). This is the vicious circle of violence that humans contend with when engulfed in the mimetic crisis of undifferentiation. This is the reality as presented by Mimetic Theory. Girard did not envisage any resolution beyond mimesis. He asserts in his “creative renunciation”⁴ that “only mimesis can cure mimesis”. Mimesis is indispensable for human action, but conflictual mimesis can be overcome. The creative renunciation is a kind of mimesis, a mindful mimesis as we shall see in the next chapter.

⁴ Creative renunciation is borrowed from Simone Weil when she wrote of the overcoming of Idolatry. (Weil 1947)
According to Palaver, the only way out of this dangerous path is, according to Weil, the imitation of God's creative renunciation. (Palaver 2011)

3. The Ethics of The Cross

The Ethics of the Cross is the event of the cross that according to René Girard exposed the single victim mechanism of scapegoating that held the sway of humanity since the beginning of time. According to Girard, the Ethics of the Cross has the outright solution to the mimetic crisis discussed in the previous chapter of this work. The Event of the Cross bears all resemblance with the sacrificial system of single victim mechanism. But it differs in the sense that Jesus Christ donated himself wilfully in order to expose the evil of scapegoat sacrifice. Jesus Christ through His cross, invites us not to jettison mimesis but to embrace the good mimesis that is devoid of conflict. Jesus Christ invites humanity to imitate him as he imitates His Father. The double imitation involved in the Imitation of Christ does not reflect the mimetic process as explicated in the previous chapter. Apparently, mindful imitation involves a search for the one who mediates the life of Christ.

Girard offers a religious (Christological) solution to an anthropological crisis. This is connected with his conviction that there is a subtle relationship between violence and religion. For Girard, religion has the capability to divert the fury of violence as is evident in the single victim mechanism of scapegoating. The religious flavour of the scapegoat sacrifice and its subsequent laws of prohibition, form a mechanism capable of feeding violence with what it demands in order to keep the society at peace. The single victim mechanism has proven its worth in the archaic societies, and a similar but different approach inheres in the Ethics of the Cross, namely the renunciation of the will to violence. Another point that supports Girard's insistence on a religious solution to mimetic crisis is the apocalyptic thinking heralded by the dissolution of the sacrificial system. He envisages a fear that crisis will engulf the modern world as is evident in the crisis rocking almost all continents of the world due to disappearance of differences.

The global campaign for equality and unifying cultures heralded by democratic capitalism is plunging the world into a culture of undifferentiation. Religion understands the violence of undifferentiation and is capable of diverting the calamity that is imminent.

Our aim in this chapter is to espouse the Ethics of the Cross in accordance with the mimetic desire that is unconscious. Our underlying of consciousness in this chapter is the undeniable unconscious mimesis, the invincible violence, and the substitution inherent in dealing with violence. The Ethics of the Cross, above all is a Christological solution to a human crisis.

3.1. The Scapegoat Mechanism of Expulsion.

René Girard defines scapegoat mechanism as the mimetic snowballing of all-against-one in order to resolve a crisis brought about by the social consequences of mimetic desire, which creates within the group a war of all-against-all (Palaver 2013, 9). The crisis in question is the violence of the community. It is the crisis of undifferentiation. The disappearance of differences results in war of all-against-all. This crisis emanates from within the community. The undifferentiation underlying the crisis leads to the eclipse of culture. Men feel powerless when confronted with the eclipse of culture (Girard 1989, 14). Also, Charles K. Bellinger notes that in Girard's sociology, the crisis of societal disintegration is resolved through the identification and killing of a chosen victim, a scapegoat. The killing of the scapegoat provides a means for the formation of a new social unanimity and cohesion, as acquisitive mimesis is transformed into conflictual mimesis, which is resolved by the destruction of someone arbitrarily designated as the cause of the conflict (Bellinger 1996). The difficulty inherent in proffering a rational solution hails from the fact that social crisis such as eclipse of

culture is treated as social or moral crisis —due to failure in human relations brought by the crisis —without responsibility on the part of the people concerned. It becomes more convenient to blame the society or other people identified by Girard as scapegoats. ‘Men can dispose of their violence more efficiently if they regard the process not as something emanating from within themselves...’ (Girard 1979, 14) It is more convenient to blame another when one is unable to confront one’s violence.

The weight of any crisis lies in the way it affects human relations. The cause is always within, never difficult to identify, rather it is difficult to bear responsibility for it. A process of bad reciprocity is its own initiator; it gains nourishment from itself and has no need of external causes in order to continue (Girard 1989, 43). Externally motivated crisis is easy to identify and resolve. The solution sought through scapegoating by the community is the resolution of its own internal violence. Girard argues that desire is endemic rather than epidemic (Girard 1987, 288). For Palaver, the crisis is always internal. The conflict is ultimately always internal, as it threatens the relations between the individual members of the community (Palaver 2013, 136). The mimetic foundation of human relations makes it implicit that internal crisis arises very often. The tendency is that humans look for the solution outside of the community. One is always in the habit of conceiving external causes to crisis. We are afraid to confront our own violence because mimetic rivalry is always denied. In the process of the scapegoat mechanism, the persecutory group unloads its negative energy, that is, the entire responsibility for the crisis, onto the victim (Palaver 2013, 153). An external solution to internal crisis is what scapegoat mechanism seeks to achieve.

P.J. Watson in his article, “Girard and Integration: Desire, Violence, and The Mimesis of Christ as Foundation for Postmodernity”, observed two moments of discovery in the works of René Girard: the theory of desire and the application of the theory to social

scientific concerns. The social scientific concerns are the single victim mechanism or the scapegoat mechanism. According to Watson, the scapegoat mechanism distinguishes humans from animals in the face of violence. While animals settle violent escalations through the hierarchy, the single victim mechanism diverts the violence. He observed that social solidarity would move inexorably toward collapse in a war of all-against-all. (Watson 1998) The war of all-against-all is similar to the Thomas Hobbes famous State of Nature. Thomas Hobbes' description although verifiable, gives us a clue to the situation of the primitive time. According to him:

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 1998, 63)

From the above we picture what the state of the primitive society could be. The utmost concern of the primitive society is the safety of its society. The protection of life is paramount to all; as such, crisis naturally implies a rot in the society. The scapegoat mechanism is not an instituted law, rather a natural motivation based on the instinct of self-preservation. The mechanism has the power and the ability to choose its victims. Thus, we conclude that the fundamental aim of the scapegoat mechanism is to ward off violence through a third party, the surrogate victim. This victim serves as a scapegoat for the social discord, and the unanimous satisfaction of violent desire dissipates the

animosity (Watson 1998). Scapegoat mechanism unconsciously tolls the part of the nature of violence itself.

According to Girard, violence is not ordinary; it is a by-product of mimetic rivalry (Girard 1996, 12). Violence erupts from the reciprocity of denial of the mimetic process between rivals. Rivalry comes in the form of violent reciprocity. The contention is on the anteriority of desire. The desire ordinarily belongs to the model but is now subject to misrecognition, and as such, its anteriority is in contention. Both the model and the subject lay claim to this anteriority. Reciprocal violence will overwhelm the rivals except with the presence of a third party. This is because violence requires a third party on which to engage its fury. When unappeased, violence seeks and always finds a surrogate victim. The creature that excited its fury is abruptly replaced by another, chosen only because it is vulnerable and close at hand (Girard 1979, 2). With humans, aggression escalates mimetically until it is discharged in an attack by the group against a single individual (Watson 1988). Violence will not rest until it finds its victim. The mechanism imitates the violence in order to have its effects on curbing violence. It follows no human constituted law, rather the natural path of violence copied from the violence, which is a by-product of mimetic rivalry. Alison affirmed this when he wrote in his work, *The Joy of Being Wrong*, that, violence rages among the members of the group until the group settles, thanks to the working of conflictual mimesis, spontaneously and arbitrarily upon a surrogate victim, who, because unable to retaliate, offers no threat of continuing violence (Alison 1998, 18). This is the wisdom and the principle of the single victim mechanism. Violence requires a substitute; the mechanism offers one in order to appease it. This is fascinating but the effect outweighs the crime inherent in that it works.

The human mimetic crisis gives life to violence. This does not insinuate a violent human nature. Oftentimes Girard's Mimetic Theory is referred to as the theory of human violence. Wolfgang Palaver insists that the postulation of the mimetic rivalry responsible for violence annuls all theories of a violent humanity. According to him Girard's statement '...diverges from Rousseau's faith in the human being's natural goodness and from all theories that branch out from Konrad Lorenz's postulation that aggression or an aggressive drive alone is the cause of all manifestations of violence' (Palaver 2013, 35). Per Bjornar Grande argues against a violent human nature on moral basis. According to him, if there were a violent inclination in human beings, violence would have been instinctual and one would not label it as violence. Calling it violence means that the killing is not instinctual but is related to moral problems (Grande 2007, 89). The violence of scapegoating is motivated by the restoration of order and uniting the society. What is human is the mimesis. Mimesis is interior to the constitution of humans and not merely something external added on to an already independent being (Alison 1988, 12). Conflict erupts when mimesis meets desire. Desire is conflictual.

3.1.1. Scapegoat in Primitive Society

The scapegoat mechanism of expulsion is the primitive solution to the crisis of undifferentiation. It is both an extension of crisis of undifferentiation, the war of all-against-all, and the solution to violence in the community. The scapegoat mechanism seeks to proffer solution to the crisis threatening the very life of the community. The scapegoat mechanism is a primordial way of solving this internal crisis that threatens the very foundation of the community. It is a mechanism with a somewhat positive intent—restoration of order in the society. According to Dennis D. Hughes in *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece*, ritual action is always social action, even if directed only towards a limited social group; and generally, rituals may be seen to perform a

stabilizing and integrating function in society, defining roles within the group and promotion of group solidarity (Hughes 1991, 2). The primitive society is motivated by the nature of violence itself. Violence seeks for victims! Once it gets its victims, it is calmed. The primitive society could not rise above this mechanism, which they stumbled at, partly because of its effectiveness in warding off violence and restoring order.

According to Girard, the beginnings of human civilization had no cultural or social institutions to keep mimetic rivalry in check. The natural outcome was a general crisis because all were drawn into rivalries and violence (Palaver 2002). The war of all-against-all is transformed into the war of all-against-one by the scapegoat mechanism. The community is united by the mechanism cause by undifferentiation. The object has disappeared and the rivals mirror each other —undifferentiation. Rather than self-destruction or collision, the mechanism diverts the violence on a victim. The scapegoat mechanism is an external violence employed to restore order in the society. The violence is not understood as such in order for it to work. It is guided by the impulse of the human mimetic crisis. The scapegoat mechanism is the final point of the mimetic crisis. According to Girard, the mimetic desires, followed by mimetic rivalries, result in the final scapegoat effect (Girard 1989, 127). It is the social dimension of mimetic conflict.

The choice of victim is automatic to the violence. Girard highlighted the fact that the single victim mechanism chooses its victims. The victim of mimetic snowballing is chosen by the contagion itself; he or she is substituted for all the other victims that the crowd could have chosen if the things happened differently (Girard 2001, 24). In *The Scapegoat*, Girard writes that the crowd's choice of victims may be totally random; but it is not necessarily so. It is even possible that the crimes of which they are accused are

real, but that sometimes the persecutors choose their victims because they belong to a class that is particularly susceptible to persecution rather than because of the crimes, they have committed (Girard 1989, 17). Girard is convinced of the stereotypes of persecution. No matter what the argument may be, it appears that violence has its own reasons. It appears that the primitive society is aware of this, hence the aim to save both the guilty and the innocent party at the expense of a surrogate victim.

The underlying conviction of the persecutors is that a single individual or a small group is extremely harmful to the society. The impulse to look for a culprit outside of the normal exposes the fear that exists in the abnormal. The fear to confront one's violence is exposed outwardly in the abnormal. Hence, it is conceived that removing the abnormal that exists outside will stabilize one inwardly. The principle at work in scapegoating works on this assumption: that the innocent abnormal that exists outwardly is capable of harming the entire system. In all the vocabulary of tribal or national prejudices, hatred is expressed, not for difference, but for its absence (22). Scapegoaters are naturally convinced of this fact. This is why the physically challenged, foreigners and national minorities are perceived with reservation. It is at the point of dealing with the chosen victim that the primitive society stumbled at yet another fact; violence seeks victims. When fed with that which is abnormal, it is diverted! The primitive solution works on this assumption to save its members and convince itself of the guilt of the single individual or small group. As such, it appears that violence is rational. What it seeks it gets! It is not denied, but diverted to another object or person. About this Girard concludes in *Violence and the Sacred* that,

It has its reason, however and can marshal some rather convincing ones when need arises. Yet these reasons cannot be taken seriously, no matter how valid they may appear. Violence itself will discard of them if the initial object remains persistently out of reach and continues to provoke hostility. When unappeased, violence seeks and always finds a surrogate victim. The creature

that excited its fury is abruptly replaced by another, chosen only because it is vulnerable and close at hand. (Girard 1979, 2)

The hunt for a scapegoat is the primitive solution for societal crisis. The sole aim is to save the society from extinction due to violence. The primitive societies saw in it an effective means to curb violence. The scapegoat mechanism worked in the primitive society.

3.1.2. The Biblical Scapegoat

The idea of the scapegoat in the Judeo-Christian bible is different from the scapegoat of the Mimetic Theory. The description of the scapegoat in the Bible is in the Book of Leviticus. According to the Book of Leviticus;

And when he has made an end of atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16, 20-22)

The above represents the Lord's command through Moses to the priest Aaron on how to conduct the ritual of the Day of Atonement. The confession of sin is a conscious act. The sins are laid on the goat and it is driven into the wilderness. S. Mark Heim opines that;

The goat driven out in this way was said to belong to "Azazel". The word is an odd one, taken variously to refer to a "goat that departs", or to the place to which it is expelled (a rugged cliff), or to a demon inhabiting the desert (sometimes identified with the ringleader of rebel angels who tempts humanity, similar to Satan). (Heim 2006, 76—

Girard employs the term from the point of view of collective persecution. In *The Scapegoat*, the term stands for all the victims of collective persecution (Girard 1989, 40). The biblical usage has no connection with persecution. Girard warns that as soon as we begin to study the scapegoat or think about the expression apart from the context of the persecutor, we tend to modify its meaning (40). Girard described the scapegoat of the Leviticus thus:

The ritual consisted of driving into the wilderness a goat on which all sins of Israel had been laid. The high priest placed his hands on the head of the goat, and this act was supposed to transfer onto the animal everything likely to poison relations between members of the community. The effectiveness of the ritual was the idea that the sins were expelled with the goat and then the community was rid of them. (Girard 2001, 154-155)

The above is a conscious action engaging the whole community of Israel. Everyone is conscious of his or her guilt and is determined to make amends afterwards. There is no denial similar to the internal mimesis. The guilt is not bestowed on the animal as in being responsible for the crisis. Rather the people are aware of their individual involvement and are resolved to make amends if the guilt is repudiated. The difference between the biblical scapegoat and the modern understanding is the fact of consciousness. While the transfer of sin found in the Leviticus ritual takes place in a completely conscious and controlled manner, modern scapegoating remains an unconscious—or at most partially conscious—psychological phenomenon (Palaver 2013, 152). Girard's usage of the term scapegoat is not of the biblical ritual of cleansing, but in its modern understanding characterized by unconsciousness.

Girard makes a twofold distinction of the scapegoat —ritual and effect. According to him,

The word scapegoat means two things: the ritual described in Leviticus 16 or similar rituals which are themselves imitations of the model I have in mind. I distinguish between scapegoat as ritual and scapegoat as effect. By a scapegoat effect I mean that strange process, through which two or more people are

reconciled at the expense of a third party who appears guilty or responsible for whatever ails, disturbs, or frightens the scapegoaters. They feel relieved of their tensions and they coalesce into a more harmonious group. They now have a single purpose, which is to prevent the scapegoat from harming them, by expelling and destroying him. (Girard 1996, 11)

The reconciliation achieved in the biblical scapegoat is chiefly between God and His chosen people Israel. Social reconciliation is not the primary aim of the Leviticus Day of Atonement. The biblical meaning has no element of persecution and the ritual is that of atonement for sin. The reconciliation is as a result of a conscious acceptance of guilt on the part of the people. Their violence is owned up. The goat, an animal, is different from the scapegoat ritual of human sacrifice evident in primitive societies.

It is very clear that the principles employed in the ritual of the Day of Atonement in the Book of Leviticus is similar to the single victim mechanism of the Mimetic Theory in the sense that what is laid on the scapegoat as explained by Girard, are the sins that poison the society. In *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross*, Heim affirms that what is striking about the ritual is not that it defers from that model, but that it is so extraordinarily explicit in expressing the underlying dynamic (Heim 2006, 77). The victim of collective violence bears on himself the offence that is responsible for the crisis within the society. The community lays this burden on the victim in a convinced manner. Heim explained the similarities thus;

The community centers its collective violence on a representative sacrifice, which is charged with all the guilt and sins that pollute and threaten the people, and driven out and off a cliff—the very image of mob violence against a human scapegoat. What is striking about the ritual is not that it differs from that model, but that it is so extraordinarily explicit in expressing the underlying dynamic. This is the very reason that we take its language, scapegoat, as the name of the behaviour we are identifying. The classical victim was seen as the cause of the crisis in the city, the sole source of contamination, the single guilty party. (Heim 2006, 77)

The similarities in appearance of the Biblical scapegoat and the modern understanding do not mean the realities are the same. The underlying principle differs greatly. The appearance and the mechanism are the same, but the meaning and its effects are different. The internal preparation before the Day of Atonement serves as a recognition of one's involvement and responsibility. The sins confessed are those committed against God. According to Heim,

The Day of Atonement required not simply that people associate themselves with the collective violence against the scapegoat, but that they all participate by fasting and repentance for their own sins. The blood of the sacrifice may purge the temple from pollution, but only true inward repentance will do the same for persons. And even this is effective by itself only for sins between humans and God. Sins committed against others are included only if one has made restitution and peace with them as well. This emphasis is not found in the Leviticus text, but it is characteristic of later rabbinic Judaism's treatment of the Day of Atonement. (77)

Thus, while the biblical scapegoat resembles the single victim mechanism of the mimetic theory, it differs in intention and effect. The people bear no grudge against the innocent animal of atonement, unlike the participants of the single victim mechanism of persecution.

3.2. Scapegoat and Ritual sacrifice

Paul Nuechterlein in his article, "Girardian Anthropology in a Nutshell", writes that, 'Girard's is the only hypothesis that begins to make sense of why, amidst all the incredible diversity among ancient tribal religions, the one common denominator is ritual sacrifice.' (Nuechterlein 2000) The relationship between the scapegoat and ritual sacrifice is based on the character of violence. Violence is not to be denied, but it can be diverted to another object, something it can sink its teeth into (Girard 1979, 4). According to Girard, the basis for the practice of sacrifice is the hypothesis of

substitution (Girard 1979, 3). Substitution is what keeps the fury of violence in check.

Drawing from the Judeo-Christian Bible, Girard sees the substitution in action:

A frequent motif in the Old Testament, as well as in Greek myth, is that of brothers at odds with one another. Their fatal penchant for violence can only be diverted by the intervention of a third party, the sacrificial victim or victims. Cain's jealousy of his brother is only another term for his one characteristic trait: his lack of a sacrificial outlet. (4)

The scapegoat ritual sacrifice works like miracle. It settles the violence once a victim is chosen, and subsequently killed or expelled. The miracle of sacrifice is the formidable economy of violence that it realizes. It directs against a single victim the violence that, a moment before menaced the entire community. This liberation appears all the more miraculous for intervening in extremes, at the very moment when all seems lost (Girard 2001, 27). The fact is that ritual sacrifice of scapegoats works; it worked when all hope of saving the community was lost. The proof of the efficiency of the mechanism is the unanimity it creates among the people. According to James Alison and Wolfgang Palaver in *The Palgrave Handbook of Mimetic Theory and Religion*, where there is doubt, and thus dissent in the group concerning whether or not the right one has been got, then unanimity and peace are never reached. Where unanimity and peace are reached, these are themselves sufficient, from the surviving participants perspective, to indicate that the right one was expelled (Alison et al 2017, 3). This is apparently an arbitrary selection of a victim, but it must maintain some form of ambiguity in order to achieve unanimity.

The object of sacrifice, animal or a human being does not matter. Both respond to the principle of substitution. According to Girard, 'once we have focused attention on the sacrificial victim, the object originally singled out for violence fades from view' (5). Blaming the responsibility for the crisis on the innocent victim diverts attention from

the original object of rivalry which is the internal violence. This substitution takes place in scapegoat mechanism. The violence of the community is heaped on a victim capable of blame based on abnormality. S. Mark Heim noticed a similar motivation by substitution from his criticism of Atonement Theology. According to him, sacrifice is based on 'penal substitutionary atonement' (Heim 2006, 21). Humanity's enormous indebtedness to God requires a substitution in the form of sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus Christ, in order to appease the Wrath of God. The principle of substitution informed by the nature of violence inspired the scapegoat mechanism.

Grande defined ritual as the re-enactment of the mimetic crisis and the transformation brought through the victimage mechanism (Grande 2007, 93). The re-enactment of the initial sacrifice will always restore peace in the society. This re-enactment as ritual is what gives the mechanism a religious background. The sacredness of the ritual is based on the event that saved the community from extinction. It is not the victim that makes it sacred, but the effect of the event. The victim is sacred because the mechanism makes him so. The ritual re-enacts the founding ritual sacrifice, and the obscurity that keeps the mechanism alive. This obscurity is what justifies the murder. A rational explication is unacceptable because it will destroy the unanimity. Obscurity provides for the concealment of an actual murder. It is not perceived as violence employed to divert violence. This is partly because prevention is of uppermost value in the primitive society. Only the transcendental quality of the system, acknowledged by all, can assure the prevention or cure of violence (Girard 1979, 24). Thus, we can agree with Girard that religion shelters us from violence just as violence seeks shelter in religion (24).

Ritual sacrifice requires some form of ambiguity in order to function. According to Heim,

Sacrifice is successful when no one takes the side of the suffering one, no one thinks that person is innocent, no one withholds participation in the collective violence against the person, no one considers his or her death a murder, no one remembers the victim as such after the victim is gone. (Heim 2006, 65)

Sacrificial substitution implies a degree of misunderstanding. Its vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based (Girard 1979, 5). Heim pictures a similar situation in his critique of Atonement Theology in a sacrificial reading of the event of the cross. He observed that, the cross is a punishment for sin (hence penal). The punishment is applied not to a deserving guilty humanity (us) but to the innocent, divine Jesus (hence substitutionary) (Heim 2006, 21). The ambiguity lies in the supposed fact that, it is a substitution only God can handle. No existing human is able to handle, because God substitutes God's self rather than any other candidate (22). Humanity must convince itself of an overwhelming indebtedness yearning for Divine intervention. Thus, ambiguity performs a dual function of concealing the substitution and the innocence of the victim, hence it is not perceived as murder. Once the ambiguity disappears, the system collapses. The rituals have the ability to persevere in the concealment of the founding murder. To this, Girard notes:

The purpose of the rite is to consolidate this difference, newly restored after the terrible undifferentiation of the crisis. There is nothing arbitrary or imaginary about the difference between violence and nonviolence, but men always treat it as a difference within a process that is violent from beginning to end. That is how the rite is made possible. The rite selects a certain form of violence as good, as necessary to the unity of the community, and sets up in opposition to it another sort of violence that is deemed bad, because it is affiliated to violent reciprocity. (115)

The participants must not understand what they are doing. The emphasis is laid on the restored order and the prohibitions to prevent further escalation of violence. The

violence meted on the innocent victim is understood within the context of the mimetic escalation that almost claimed the very existence of the society. The victim must never be perceived as innocent and the act is not violence. The instinct of self-preservation engulfs the entire process.

3.2.1. The Innocent Victim of Ritual Sacrifice

Pharmakon describes the innocent victim of ritual sacrifice. The *pharmakoi*, singular *pharmakos* (φαρμακός) is a Greek word literary meaning a ritualistic sacrifice or expulsion of a human scapegoat or a victim. According to Girard:

[Pharmakoi] refers to victims who were ritually beaten, driven out of cities, and killed, for example, by being forced over the edge of a precipice. The word *pharmakos*, designating a person who is selected as a ritual victim, is related to *pharmakon*, which means both remedy and poison, depending on the context. (Girard 2001, 51)

The innocence of the victim is not contentious, but it is the function of the mechanism to conceal it. The mechanism is able to conceal it because it chooses its victim. The victim of the mimetic snowballing is chosen by the contagion itself (Girard 2001, 24). The victim is either within or outside of the community. They share a similar character of innocence because of the obvious inability to retaliate and continue the violence. The victim is often liminal, an outsider, someone with physical disability or thought to be too prominent in the group (Alison 1998, 18). These set of people bear the mark of difference that reminds the society of their abnormality. The crime of incest for example sets the victim apart as abnormal. It is a difference that exists outside of the system. His abnormality is a threat to the system. Elimination by expulsion or death will remove the anomaly. The crowd is convinced of the crime but is unaware of the violence imposed on the victim. The violence of the mechanism is not proportional to the crime committed in this regard. The aim to quench violence guides the entire process, hence

no mistake in the choice of the victim as the cause. Thus, it makes sense that a single individual or a small group is capable of inflicting dangerous harm on the rest of the society.

Girard writes about the victim not in terms of expiation which implies guilt, but in a guiltless victim devoid of retaliation. The victim besides his being chosen by the violent contagion must be one who is unable to fight back the violence. The victim's inability to retaliate, assures the victimizers of his guilt. Although the victim may be guilty of crimes that promote undifferentiation like incest, the unanimity against him is overwhelming. The force of the anger vested on the victim is always inappropriate to the crime. He is seen as the cause not of the individual crime, but of all instances in the past of the particular crime. There is no rational proof that one act of incest can ruin the entire community. This is the perceived "wisdom" of the mechanism. There is no form of resistance on the chosen victim. The ability of the mechanism to achieve this beats our imagination. This is exactly what precludes their innocence. The irrationality perceived is based on the observation that the relationship between the potential victim and the *actual* victim cannot be defined in terms of innocence or guilt (Girard 1979, 4). The aim is to divert the violence on something that will break the reciprocal nature of violence.

As seen above, this human victim is a remedy and poison. Once substituted, the innocent victim assumes both responsibilities of "cause and remedy". He is the cause because of the inability to retaliate; he is the remedy because his inability to retaliate quells the crisis. His death or expulsion unites the community once again. It gives the violence something it can sink its teeth into. He is perceived to be the cause of the crisis that engulfed the community as soon as the mechanism chooses him. The veracity of the choice hangs on unanimity. If his selection is able to woo the crowd against him,

then he is the cause. And if the community is united and ordered, he is the cure. The whole community descends on this victim not merely by perception, but is convinced of the involvement in the current crisis. According to Girard, the persecutors always convince themselves that a small number of people or even a single individual, despite his relative weakness, is extremely harmful to the whole society (Girard 1989, 15). The community invests all their anger on this single individual, such that he/she assumes responsibility for the crisis.

Girard describes the nature of the crimes attributed to the victims as enough to bridge the gap between the insignificance of the individual and the enormity of the social body (Girard 1989, 15). The victim is guilty not by any evidence, unanimity suffices in this regard. It is all-against-one. Girard notes that it is possible that the crimes of which they are accused are real, but that sometimes the persecutors choose their victims because they belong to a class that is particularly susceptible to persecution rather than because of the crimes, they have committed (17). These crimes are such that they convince the victimizers of the justification of their actions. All violence, all hatred that was previously interspersed throughout the community in the form of individual rivalries is now directed at a single victim. In the eyes of the mob, the victim is responsible for the emergence of the crisis and is thus the incarnation of all evil (Palaver 2013, 153). The violence is always inappropriate to the crime.

3.2.2. Pharmakon in Ancient Greek Culture

The earliest trace of the *Pharmakos*, human sacrifice in the Greek culture is from the poet Hipponax of Kolophon. According to the findings of Jan N. Bremmer, in *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ‘our source for the fragments of Hipponax, adds that the pharmakos was finally burned on wild wood and his ashes strewn into the sea.’ (Bremmer 2008, 176) The *pharmakon*, though a human

being, it is not clear if this suffices as a real human sacrifice. While the only evidence states the outright killing of the pharmakos by burning, historians dismiss it as mere myth. The insistence is that not all ritual killing is a sacrifice. Religious historians often draw a distinction between properly called human sacrifices—those offered to some superhuman recipient—and other rites, which may require the killing of human beings without belonging to the cult of superhuman beings (Hughes 1991, 3). Hughes in an ability to distinguish between myth and history, concludes that the ‘myths’ of human sacrifice are indeed mythical and not historical (71). While commenting on the 6th century discovery of pharmakos in Hipponax of Kolophon, at the west coast of modern Turkey, Bremmer believes that invective played an important role in ancient poetry, and it is typical of this kind of poetry to disregard the conventions of real life by exaggerating the point the poet wants to make (Bremer 2008, 176). What is not clear yet is whether invective was employed to conceal the real victim, because poetry cannot be expressing reality *ex nihilo*.

The description of the nature of the chosen victim fits into the category earlier stated by René Girard. The victim is always someone who does not have the ability to retaliate violence. Hughes confirms that the essential element of the ritual was the expulsion from the community of one or two persons called (at least in Ionia, Athens, and Abdera) ‘pharmakoi’, with the expressed purpose of purifying the city (Hughes 1991, 139). The function of the scapegoat ritual in ancient Greek society is described thus;

The expulsion of pharmakoi was thought, it seems, to effect the cleansing of the polis from all defilements, which might bring crop failure, drought, or famine, but which also posed the more direct threat to humans of pestilence. (140)

The scapegoats are those relegated to the margins of the Greek society —the strangers, criminals, slaves, ugly persons, young men and women, kings etc. These share the common fate of estrangement. Bremmer writes;

All these categories have in common that they are situated at the margin of Greek society. For the first categories this is obvious enough. Criminals put themselves outside the community, and strangers naturally do not belong to it. Slaves, poor and ugly persons did not count in ancient Greece. As for young women, it has been shown that their place was not inside but at the margin of society. The king distinguished himself from the rest of the population in that he alone could claim contact with the divine. *Diotrephês*, ‘raised by Zeus’, is a stock epithet of kings in Homer. Where criminals are marginals at the bottom of society, the king is the lonely marginal at the top. The myth shows, however, that high and low are interchangeable: the Athenian king Kodros, a representative of ancient times and the saviour of the Athenian community by his death, was killed dressed up as a woodworker. (Bremmer 2008 180)

Virtually everything known about human ritual sacrifice in the ancient Europe is traced to Greece. The Greek culture of civilization influenced all Europe. The myths as earlier portrayed, may be relating stories of real ritual murder. Mythical and not historical ritual killing is suggestive of invention ex nihilo. These mythical stories of human sacrifice in ancient Greek emanate from violent ritual killings that saved the society in the time of great crisis, linking them with violence. Girard’s understanding of myth is linked with violence. The violence, i.e. the ritual killing is related to myth from the point of view of the crowd involved in the scapegoating. Girard is convinced that there are real events of violence behind every myth (Girard 1996, 12). Myths arise in order to justify this practice by deceptively making believe that the victims are truly guilty (Petkovšek 2016). Grande is supportive of Girard’s view, asserting that;

Myths come into play following the sacrificial crises, and are interpretations of the mimetic turmoil which a society has gone through. But because the mythmakers imitate the norms of society, and tell/write from a society’s victimizing point of view, mimesis is not drawn from the events themselves. There is actually an anti-mimetic tendency concerning the real event, which

explains the blurred report of reality. The act which should be imitated is the act of *divinization, which is enacted through ritual*. (Grande 2007, 93)

In *The Scapegoat* Girard asks: how can we not believe that a real victim lies behind a text which presents him in this way and which makes us see him, on the one hand, as the persecutors generally see him and, on the other hand, as he should really be to be chosen by real persecutors? (Girard 1989, 26). Girard is not convinced that ritual murders in primitive societies are mythical and not historical.

3.2.3. Myths and Ritual sacrifice

The story told by myths is the founding murder that saved the society. Its re-enactment in the rituals is preserved in myths. ‘All myths . . . have their roots in real acts of violence against real victims.’ (Girard 1989, 25) The two important facts about ritual are: (a) it tells the story of the real events of ritual sacrifice and conceals the violence by supporting the victimizers’ position, and (b) it repeats the ritual sacrifice. Girard confirms in *The Girard Reader*, that the discovery of the scapegoat mechanism helped him to interpret the myth and rituals in ancient societies (Girard 1996, vii). Rituals imitate or repeat the saving events. The saving events are ritual murders carried out by the society in the hunt for those responsible for the crisis that threatened the very existence of the society. The stories related by myths are real events. Girard reveals a “structural” rather than “thematic” representation of scapegoat mechanism in an enormous reading of myths across cultures. According to James Alison and Wolfgang Palaver, different moments in the originary scenario are described—the imitative built up to frenzy; the loss of order; the ganging together against one; the resulting peace and fruitfulness of what followed; the gradual breakdown of the same scenario (which he refers to as the sacrificial crisis); and the starting up of the mechanism again. (Alison et al 2017, 3) This structural representation captures every moment of the scapegoat

mechanism. This structure enables the reader to always discover myth especially when the most obvious structure of crisis undifferentiation rears its head in a story.

The structure of undifferentiation includes in its presentation a wide range of situations. According to Girard, these include: plagues, great floods, or other mythical scourges that often include an element of conflict between mythical partners generally conceived as close relatives, brothers, or identical twins (Girard 1996, 9). The mimetic reality of undifferentiation is easily visible in these instances, but this is exactly what myth aims at concealing. Myths try as much as possible to present an outlook of anti-mimeticism. The undifferentiated reciprocity of mimetic violence is very difficult to render a rational explication in myths. What myths present is the restoration of peace in a chaotic situation with violence. The anti-mimeticism in myths is based on the nature of violence they are designed to conceal. For Girard the victims of scapegoat mechanism are determined by the criteria of persecution that are faithfully reported to us, not because they want to inform us but because they are unaware of what they reveal (27). The scapegoat mechanism requires some ambiguity in order to function. The persecutors should not know what they are doing. Focus is on the diversion of violence to save the society.

Palaver defined myths from the Girardian perspective as oral accounts or written texts that portray the founding murder from the persecutors' perspective (Palaver 2013, 180). The myths support the testimonies of the persecutors to the detriment of the voiceless victim. The myths transform the event by removing the original violence, while the rituals present the crisis in order to emphasize the way out of chaos into a new, differentiated existence (Grande 2007, 93). Hence, it is difficult to sieve out the original violence in the myths as it features in the rituals. The entire scenario is such that the story (myths) differs from the action (ritual) in such a manner that no one dares to

question the violence. The resultant peace achieved through the rituals overrides the violence. Myths are mythical because they seek to hide the real violence.

The traces of sacrificial crisis are less distinct in myth than in tragedy (Girard 1979, 64). The ability of myths to conceal the real violence of ritual murder stems from the combination of the physical and the monstrous in the innocent victim. Myths do not present the victim from the physical features as we saw on the category of people chosen as scapegoats. It demonizes them into monsters, in order to conceal their innocence and to justify their expulsion. Girard writes, instead of bearing certain faintly monstrous characteristics, the victim is hard to recognize as a victim because he is totally monstrous (Girard 1989, 35). The concealment that characterizes myths is traceable also from the very character of mimetic doubling —when rivals imitate each other’s violence while claiming ownership of the anteriority of mimesis. For Palaver,

This misconception continues in the scapegoat mechanism in the form of the double transference. The agitators fail to see that they themselves are responsible for both the origin of the crisis and its murderous resolution. They attribute both these characteristics to the victim alone; in the eyes of the mob, the scapegoat is absolute “good” and absolute “evil” at the same time. That which during the crisis was observed in the monstrous double is now completely conferred upon the victim alone. (Palaver 2013, 153)

Girard’s conclusion on myths will enable us to understand why religious historians will not accept the historicity of ritual murder. He writes;

As soon as we begin to study the scapegoat or think about the expression apart from the context of the persecutor, we tend to modify its meaning. We are reminded of the rite; we think of a religious ceremony that unfolds on a fixed date and is performed by priests; we imagine a deliberate manipulation. We think of skilful strategists who are fully aware of the mechanisms of victimization and who knowingly sacrifice innocent victims in full awareness of the cause with Machiavellian ease. (Girard 1989, 41)

Our two authors of Ancient Greek culture, Bremer and Hughes, dismiss the historicity of human ritual sacrifice in the Ancient Greek culture on the fact of Ancient Eastern influence on Greek culture and mere mythological foundation respectively. Both authors are unable to see the guilt inherent in myth because they viewed from the persecutors point of view. Mimetic elements can be found circulating through myths in a hidden fashion (Girard 1989, 64). Girard suggests the deconstruction of mythology as the only way forward in reading the actual murder inherent in myths. Deconstruction of myths in mimetic theory is based on the victim's revelation of violence. The victim's revelation of violence can only be a revelation so long as there is the understanding that the victim is innocent (Grande 2007, 95). The gospel remains for Girard an example of deconstruction, for it was told from the point of view of the innocent victim, the innocent Lamb of God. The deconstruction of myths in the mimetic theory begins by sieving out in a wide range of myths what Girard calls "the stereotypes of persecution". In the second chapter of *The Scapegoat*, Girard outlines four stereotypes of persecution. They include; (i) stereotype of crisis —collapse of order; (ii) stereotype of accusation —undifferentiation. If the myth does not explicitly set forth the problem of differences, it nonetheless manages to resolve the problem in a matter both brutal and categorical (Girard 1979, 72); (iii) stereotype of selection of victim —abnormality; (iv) stereotype of violence —expulsion from community or death. These stereotypes are based on the understanding that a single individual or a small group is capable of harming the entire society. Deconstruction of myths features in the Judeo-Christian Bible in the form being a record of the violent persecution from the perspective of the victims. The Bible presents a true reading of the mimetic cycle. For Girard the basic instance of the connection between the two testaments of the bible hangs on the mimetic exposition. Palaver observed that Girard's mimetic theory, however, is capable today of making

the deep truth of the figural reading once again plausible, the connection between the individual occurrences in the Old and New Testaments must be viewed against the backdrop of the uncovering of the victimage mechanism (Palaver 2013, 271).

3.2.4. Rituals and Prohibitions

Ritualistic prohibitions of the sacrificial system prevent further escalations of violence. For Girard, religious prohibitions make a good deal of sense when interpreted as efforts to prevent mimetic rivalry from spreading throughout human communities (Girard 1996, 10). Rituals are connected with prohibitions not only to lay out the guidelines of worship, but to checkmate the reciprocal violence or crisis of undifferentiation. Rituals confirm that primitive societies are obsessed with the undifferentiation or conflictual reciprocity that must result from the spread of mimetic rivalry (10). Palaver defines prohibitions as having the function of preventing any new outbreak of the social crisis. The crimes, for which the sacrificial victim was held solely accountable during the original crisis, are now absolutely forbidden within the community (Palaver 2013, 154). Prohibitions may appear absurd due to their bearing on violence, but they demonstrate a profound archaic understanding of violence and its prevention.

The prohibitions that accompany the rituals focus on the crimes that are capable of destabilizing the community. The mechanism is effective in maintaining order, through the elaborate series of prohibitions and rituals (Alison 1998, 19). Taboos or prohibitions have the function of preventing any new outbreak of the social crisis. People believe that by abiding to these prohibitions is the system strengthened. Prohibitions keep mimetic desire in check.

The argument of anteriority or posteriority of prohibitions as an absolute no to desire ensued between Girard and Raymund Schwager in their correspondence from 1974–

1991. According to that correspondence, Schwager is of the opinion of an anteriority based on the Genesis story of the Garden of Eden, while Girard is convinced of the posteriority of prohibitions whose sole intent is to prevent further escalations. Schwager argues for distinguishing between the content of the prohibitions that proliferate around the victim, and the essence or basis of the law as a general “no” against desire and even the being of the other. The law, as this fundamental “no”, precedes the collective transfer (of violence). The law awakens violence (Cowdell et al. 2016, 21). It is clear from the Eden story that Eve was motivated to disobedience due to prohibition. Rather than preventing the exercise of desire, it promoted it. On the contrary, Girard is convinced that we always have to deal with a mixture here; the law is halting and fallible, always linked to transcendence provided by the sacralized victim, and historically unstable. But the law possesses no absolute “no”. In pre-state societies, sexual prohibitions are not valid outside the community, because they have a purely utilitarian function, inhibiting disorder within the community (24). The primary function of religious prohibition is prevention of escalations of reciprocal violence, and it is posterior to the initial crisis. If violence is unleashed, prohibitions become indispensable, for without them human society would vanish (Girard 1979, 213).

They begin by restoring the internal differences that prevent internal mimesis. There exists in every individual a tendency to think of himself not only as different from others but as extremely different, because every culture entertains this feeling of difference among the individuals who compose it (Girard 1989, 21). These differences maintain the distance between people to ward off collision of desires. The prohibitions are a proof that the archaic society has a good knowledge of violence ‘...and its ways that surpasses our modern comprehension. The reason is clear: the prohibitions were dictated by violence itself, by the violent manifestations of a previous crisis, and they

are fixed in place as a bulwark against similar outbursts' (219). The emphasis of prohibition is to prevent all actions that preclude differences, e.g. incest. We overlook this fact because the primitive concept of a link between the loss of distinctions and violence is strange to us; but we need only consider the calamities primitive people associate with twins to perceive the logic of this concept (58). The major cause of mimetic crisis is undifferentiation, the war of all-against-all. The stereotype of accusation is always on those crimes that preclude differences —incest, rape, bestiality, patricide etc.

Often there is a misunderstanding of the roles of rituals and prohibitions. Girard observed that anthropologists have either minimized the opposition or viewed it as an insoluble contradiction that ultimately confirmed their conception of religion as utter nonsense (Girard 1996, 13). This is due to non-mimetic reading. Rituals and prohibitions make sense when viewed from the perspective of mimetic desire. There is no difference of purpose between prohibitions and rituals. The behavior demanded by the first and the behaviour demanded by the disorderly phase of ritual are in opposition, of course, but the mimetic reading makes this opposition intelligible (13). The context of rituals and religious prohibitions is the mimetic escalations of violence. The primitive societies were guided by the understanding of violence and its ways in the promulgation of prohibitions.

3.2.5. Ritual sacrifice and the Foundation of culture

The initial murder, the very sacrifice of the innocent victim that restored order in the society, is the saving event that rituals re-enact. Girard takes it for granted that the victimage mechanisms exist and that their role in the establishment of religion, culture and humanity itself is an established fact, no longer open to doubt (Girard 1987, 141). Humanity's first cultural initiative is the imitation of the founding murder, which is one

with the invention of ritual sacrifice (Girard 2011, 27). The consistent re-enactment of the ritual sacrifice preserves the community. The myths tell the story in support of the action of the ritual. The scrupulous devotion to the ritual lies in the understanding that anything that adversely affects the institution of sacrifice will ultimately pose a threat to the very basis of the community, to the principles on which its social harmony and equilibrium depend (Girard 1979, 49). Wolfgang Palaver notes that Girard's thesis regarding the creation of order out of an original chaos does not refer to the act of divine creation, but rather to the origins of human culture (Palaver 2013, 225). The foundation of culture is not religiously inspired. It is purely a mimetic creation, the resolution of the chaotic situation through scapegoat mechanism. United against a surrogate victim is a miracle that eludes the understanding of the primitive society; as such a divine attribute is made in form of religious ritual sacrifice. All that the primitive society is able to recount is the relation of their religious practice with violence.

Girard observed that the saving effect of the violent founding murder eluded the philosophers and ethnologists before him. Logical reasoning and historical data steered philosophers like Hobbes and Freud from the direction of the founding murder. Earlier studies arrived at the relation of religious ritual to basic human patterns of behavior and to basic human social structures, but ritual theory was not immediately advanced by this discovery (Mack 1987, 1). Girard agrees with Thomas Hobbes of a chaotic primitive society, but through the violence of the single victim mechanism, violence formed the foundation of human culture. The violence of "homo homini lupus" is similar to the mimetic crisis of undifferentiation. The social contract alludes to a rational resolution of the crisis, which is unacceptable to Girard through the lens of the Mimetic Theory. In *quand ces choses commenceront*, he concludes that he is 'against this idea of any rational origin of culture.' (Girard 1994, 47) The primitive treatment of

violence is not rational. It follows a common sense of simple substitution that characterizes every instance of sacrifice.

Sacrifice is more related to violence than to the gods. Girard observed that sacrifices existed prior to the conception of the gods. He argues that the passion that prompts modern antitheists to shift all blame on to the gods must not lead us astray. Sacrifice deals with humankind, and it is in human terms that we must attempt to comprehend it (Girard 1979, 90). The human terms are related to violence. Girard insists;

If sacrifice has a real origin, the memory of which myths keep alive in one way and rituals commemorate in another, then it seems clear that we are dealing with an event that initially made a very strong impression. Very strong, but not unforgettable—for in the end it is forgotten. But this impression, although subject to later modification, lives on in the religious observances and perhaps in all the cultural manifestations of the society. There is no need to postulate some form of individual or collective subconscious to account for its survival. (92)

The sacrificial foundation of culture features in all the religious activities of a community. The founding murder sets the path of behaviour especially in the prevention of violent escalations.

Sigmund Freud came so close as to identify the clash of desire in the *Oedipus Complex*. In the Oedipus complex, Girard argues that Freud saw the path of mimetic desire stretching out before him and deliberately turned aside (Girard 1979, 171). Freud while developing the concept of the Oedipus complex went as far as discovering the rivalry between the Father and the Son. Their desires converged on one woman —mother and wife. ‘If we pause to consider closely the model-disciple relationship, it should become clear that the so-called Oedipal rivalry, reinterpreted in terms of a radically mimetic situation, must logically result in consequences that are at once similar to and quite different from those attributed by Freud to his complex.’ (174). Freud could not go

beyond 'the interpreted evidence' (164). His diversion from the mimetic crisis deprived him a chance to give a factual explication of the ritual foundation of culture.

The initial ritual murder of the surrogate victim serves as the founding murder that the whole community is obliged to re-enact in the rituals for continued preservation of peace and order in the society. The victimage mechanism divides time into a "before" (a time of crisis) and an "after" (a time of social peace) (173). Human behaviour is determined not by what really happened but by the interpretation of what happened (Girard 1987, 78). Girard claims that the first forms of human civilization were engendered by the collective deterrence of violence in archaic situations of crisis (Palaver 2013, 135). Through the lens of the mimetic theory, Girard could not make sense of people sitting around the dialogue table to make peace. The explication of the anthropological fact of mimesis makes sense of a sacrificial foundation of human culture. The mythological approach results in what Girard calls effacement of traces, which leads to the founding murder, nonetheless concealed (Girard 1987, 65).

3.2.6. Modern Understanding of the scapegoat

Girard uses the term "scapegoat mechanism" to highlight the unconscious nature of this solution to social crisis (Palaver 2013, 153). According to Girard, the borderline between rational discrimination and arbitrary persecution is sometimes difficult to trace (Girard 1989, 19). The guilt of the victim is determined not by any involvement but by the fury of the persecutors against him. The persecutors seek in the individual the origin and cause of all that is harmful (21). According to Palaver, Girard does not use the concept in this ritual sense, but rather more in accordance with its use in contemporary language (Palaver 2013, 152). In *The Scapegoat*, Girard affirms that as soon as we begin to study the "scapegoat", or think about the expression apart from the context of the persecutor, we tend to modify its meaning (Girard 1989, 40). Palaver concludes:

The modern understanding of a scapegoat is someone who—as a result of a spontaneous psychological mechanism—is blamed for the mistakes or sins of others. While the transfer of sin found in the Leviticus ritual takes place in a completely conscious and controlled manner, modern scapegoating remains an unconscious—or at most partially conscious—psychological phenomenon. (Palaver 2013, 152)

The modern usage of the term resembles the archaic in all manners except the employment of the sacred. Palaver observed in all of Girard’s works the varied expressions used to describe the modern mechanism of victimization;

Girard refers to this phenomenon as the mechanism of the surrogate victim in *Violence and the Sacred*, 82, *De la violence à la divinité*, 397. As “mécanisme de la victime émissaire”, the victimage mechanism in *Things Hidden*, 95, *De la violence à la divinité*, 814 and as “mécanisme victimaire”, or the scapegoat mechanism in *The Scapegoat*, 120. In *De la violence à la divinité*, 1376, refers to it as “mécanisme du bouc émissaire”. (Palaver 2013, 152)

This monstrosity—embodied in a single person who is perceived by the community as simultaneously good and evil—corresponds to the essence of the archaic sacred (Palaver 2013, 154). An example of the modern scapegoat is found in the medieval and modern period of “witches and witch hunting”.

3.2.6.1. Witch-Hunting

The thin line separating “rational discrimination and arbitrary persecution” is evident in witch-hunting. According to Scott E. Hendrix, in his article “The Pursuit of Witches and the Sexual Discourse of The Sabbat”, the term “witch” is a product of late medieval and early modern England, being derived from the Anglo-Saxon term for one who divines or casts spells, *wicce*, or the less common, *wicca* in the feminine (Hendrix 2011). However, the obvious fact of scapegoat victimization is undeniable. Girard groups witch hunting in the first stereotype of persecution; it is possible to be persuaded that a small group, or even a single individual, can harm the whole society without being discovered (Girard 1989, 16). The notable manual of witch-hunting is *The*

Hammer of Witches (Malleus Maleficarum) written by Heinrich Kramer in 1486. Heinrich Kramer (1430–1505) a German Dominican, whose work came after the official ecclesiastical recognition of the reality of witchcraft in the papal bull *Summis Desiderantes* of Pope Innocent VIII published in 1484, empowering the inquisition to prosecute witches and sorcerers. Christopher S. Mackay in his introduction to the English translation of the work, writes with a regrettable undertone that;

The Malleus Maleficarum is undoubtedly the best known (many would say most notorious) treatise on witchcraft from the early modern period. Published in 1486 (only a generation after the introduction of printing by moveable type in Western Europe), the work served to popularize the new conception of magic and witchcraft that is known in modern scholarship as Satanism or diabolism, and it thereby played a major role in the savage efforts undertaken to stamp out witchcraft in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (a series of events sometimes known as the “witch craze”). (Mackay 2009, 1)

His effort to give the work a credit based on the understanding of the cultural milieu in which it was written, demands a mature and balanced understanding of what is today understood as an outrageous human hunt based on rivalry. Brian Pavlac in his work *Witch Hunts in the Western World*, affirms that the entire witch hunt was religiously motivated based on the belief in the reality of witches and the power of magic. According to him,

The infamous European witch-hunts happened because people believed that witches conspired to destroy Christian society. The fallen angel Lucifer, Satan, the Devil, allegedly empowered witches to cast spells and so harm people, animals, and property. This belief led authorities to arrest, prosecute, and punish reputed witches through the justice systems and political power. (Pavlac 2009, 3)

Pavlac gives the impression of a Christian conspiracy in witch-hunting. Hendrix confirmed this in his article cited earlier. Christendom championed the medieval beginnings of the witch hunting. Except for a few Jews and Muslims within its borders,

Christendom of the fifteenth century maintained a monopoly of belief. The belief in demons, one of the reasons for the “Great Schism” of the eleventh century, became dominant in the West. The Orthodox of the East had no interest in demons, but it became a matter of continued discussion for the western Roman Catholic. By the end of the Middle Ages, the inheritance of pagan ideas from Greece and Rome, a rise of both minor and major heresies, and the growing concern about demons united to provide a religious platform on which to build gallows for witches (26). Pavlac further observed that ‘To an outside observer, these beliefs seem like magic. Christian theologians disagreed, however, claiming that saints and blessed objects operated according to God’s benevolence. They may have been supernatural, but they were not magical, as the Church defined it’ (Pavlac, 2009: 27). The veneration of saints and their relics formed unconsciously in Christendom the belief of magical/miraculous healing and assistance in moments of danger. *Canon Episcopi* (AD 900), written by Regino of Prüm, was the church’s juridical response to the “acceptable miracles and sinful magic” (29). The veneration of saints and their relics contributed greatly to belief in demons and sorcery because both operate on the inexplicable supernatural realm.

According to him, what we have here is a category of person created by the clerical elite in Europe, that of the “witch,” an apostate who had made a pact with Satan, which would then be imposed over the identities of those who had never thought of themselves in these terms (Hendrix 2011). Furthermore, it was targeted at the women folk due to their involvement in the healing process that developed during the period of the Black Death. Single women who worked as nannies to families were often accused as being responsible for the deaths of children in this period. The fourteenth century saw the rise of “wise women” who were gifted with the cure of vast range of illnesses through the use of spells. Hendrix opines that,

Such women would often be seen as repositories of secret lore allowing them to make a living for themselves as wise women, but they would also exist on the fringes of society, marginalized by the same esoteric knowledge that made them valuable to the community. This vulnerable condition was most dangerous in times of societal stress, when people looked for an explanation for disasters affecting the community. (Hendrix 2011)

Still on the conspiracy against the women folk of this era, Michael D. Bailey in his work *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages*, writes that a witch,

Usually a woman, who performed harmful sorcery against others, but the fully developed stereotype of witchcraft involved crimes far worse than simple *maleficarium*. Witches were commonly assumed to work their magic through demonic agency, and hence came to be accused of idolatry, since clerical authorities were convinced that such magic always involved the supplication and worship of demons. (Bailey 2003, 29)

Mackay's English translation from the Latin version makes use of 'sorcery' in order to emphasize the point that what we are dealing with are the notions that were held about magic and its practitioners in the late medieval and early modern periods (Mackay 2009, 2). The manual provides a basic and insightful understanding of sorcery for preaching and prosecuting culprits. It serves the ecclesiastical and the juridical spheres of the time. Thus, part 1 provides material for the correct method of preaching on the topic of the reality of sorcery. Part 2 deals with the procedures of the sorceresses and the ways to counteract these. Part 3 lays out the method of prosecuting heretical sorceresses, and an introductory passage (193D) indicates that it is addressed to both ecclesiastical and secular judges for their practical use (8). For Heim, *Malleus Maleficarum* as a kind of witch-hunter's handbook provided the blueprint for an unrestrained programme of Christian persecution, specially targeted at women (Heim 2006, 183). The above states clearly of a world view that believes in the reality of sorcery and demons.

The *Cautio Criminalis* (1631) of Friedrich Von Spee Langenfeld (1591–1635) was the beginning of open confrontation and gradual abolition of witch hunt. Friedrich Spee von Langenfeld, a Jesuit priest, stated the reason for the outrageous legal prosecution of witch-hunting, which sent many innocent people to their torture and death, especially in Germany. In his analysis of medieval witch trials, Langenfeld was able to demonstrate the unequivocal injustice of witch hunts (Palaver 2013, 189). Spee was very outspoken about torture at a time when everyone did not find it offensive and a threat to love. His particular interest was in using torture to bring the truth in the accused. Marcus Hellyer, in his Translator’s Introduction to the English version of *Cautio Criminalis*, expressed the deep involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in witch-hunting. According to him,

In the late 1620s a wave of witch-hunts swept across large areas of Germany. Their ferocity rivalled anything that Germany, which had already endured the very worst excesses of the European witch-hunts, had ever seen. Although Protestant areas were also affected, the regions that suffered the most trials and executions were the territories along the Main and Rhine rivers governed by Catholic prince-bishops, such as Bamberg, Würzburg, Mainz, and Cologne. In each of these small territories hundreds, or even over a thousand, women, men, and children were brutally tortured and executed, usually by being burned at the stake. (Langenfeld 2003, vii)

Langenfeld did not cease to believe in the possibility of witchcraft, but he insisted that the greater imperative was to avoid becoming the crucifiers of the innocent (Heim 2006, 186). According to him;

It is the most enormous, the most serious, the most atrocious. The reason is that the most enormous crimes come together in it: apostasy, heresy, sacrilege, blasphemy, homicide, even parricide, often unnatural sexual intercourse with a spiritual creature, and hatred of God—nothing can be worse than this. (Langenfeld 2003, 18)

Prima facie we see similarities in Girard's stereotype of accusation by victimizers of the crimes capable of overturning the society. They are crisis caused by the lack of differentiation (Girard 2001, 17). The association of witchcraft with the nocturnal participation in the "sabbat" makes prosecution easy because physical presence of the accused is not necessary to establish proof. Participation in criminal assemblies can be purely spiritual. (17). According to Marcus Hellyer's Translator's Introduction;

A further essential element of the cumulative conception in Germany was the reality of the witches' Sabbath. This was where witches sealed their pact with the devil, often by a kiss on his ass or sexual intercourse. At these wild dances they celebrated with their master, often performing inversions of Christian rituals such as desecrating the host or murdering children for their blood. But it was the 'Sabbath' that permitted judges to identify witches. Since all the witches saw each other there, if one witch could be made to name her accomplices, then all the witches could be detected. So the investigators' main goal was to get the suspected witch to denounce her accomplices. (Langenfeld 2003, xviii)

This lack of rational understanding of witchcraft created an avenue in the Middle Ages for mutual accusations that feeds rivalries. Because witchcraft was difficult to prove using normal court procedures, few people accused their neighbours of "maleficia" during the Middle Ages (Pavlac 2009, 30). The major point being the involvement in the sabbat; the coast clears for mutual accusation and victimization motivated by rivalry. Langenfeld decried the malicious manner of torture and interrogation of suspects of witchcraft thus:

It is very much the nature of torture that when I consider from all angles in my memory the type of things I have seen, read, and heard, I cannot conclude anything other than it does put innocent people in moral and frequent danger and fills our land of Germany with witches and unheard-of crimes—and not just Germany, but any land whatsoever that starts to use it too. (Langenfeld 2003, 72–73)

This mutual fear and insecurity are what gradually exposed to the seventeenth century the baseless foundation of witch-hunting. Although the collapse of the belief in magic and miracles coincided with the emergence of science in the seventeenth century, Heim insists on the mutual insecurity as the sole foundation of the collapse of witch-hunting. He recognized the criticism of Langenfeld when he wrote that the first and most significant objections to the witch crazes, and even to the reality of satanic witchcraft, came from the churchmen in the Inquisition, not from early scientists (Heim 2006, 183–184). Girard observed that the moral and religious reasons ended witch hunting, giving rise to the emergence of science (Girard 1994, 86). Science began to question the reality of witch-hunting long after it stopped. The moral concern for the innocent nailed witch hunting.

3.3. Creative Renunciation

Creative renunciation is Girard's solution to the mimetic crisis of undifferentiation. It is a Christological solution to an anthropological crisis. Simone Weil, the French philosopher, mystic, and political activist, first coined the phrase "creative renunciation". The anthropological crisis is reciprocal violence that single victim mechanism breeds. Undifferentiation is the polarization of violence. Scapegoat mechanism is the primitive solution to polarization of violence informed by violence itself. On the social level a whole community is united in anger to destroy the innocent, while on the individual level, two friends engage in meaningless rivalry. Both share similar characteristics —unconscious and irrational: unconscious due to the very character of the mimetic crisis and irrational because the object of desire is an illusion. The persecutors of the scapegoat are naïve to conceive that a single individual unaided is capable of destroying the community. Girard observed that each time a community is saved by the scapegoat mechanism, it rejoices, but it is soon alarmed to find that the

effects of the founding murder are temporary, and that it risks falling back into rivalries it has only just managed to escape (Girard 2011, 27). The drama of mutual suspicion, as we saw earlier, put an end to witch-hunting and by extension, the belief in magic. The effects of mimetic rivalry do not last. Single victim mechanism gives us limited peace. Once the crisis erupts again, the hunt for scapegoats intensifies.

According to Girard, the way out of the mimetic contagion is via renunciation of the will to violence. Renunciation is a rational decision on the part of the individual. Renunciation requires courage. According to Girard, it is precisely because the violent contagion was all-powerful in human societies, prior to the day of Resurrection, that archaic religion divinized it (Girard 2001, 189). Girard borrowed the idea to renounce the will from Simone Weil. What is not clear is where the consciousness will come from within the mimetic crisis. According to Girard, we can only discuss the rivalry in which we are not part of. The mimetic crisis at any stage of its development is characterized by misrecognition, a kind of unconsciousness. The exchange of desires is usually without the awareness of the subject and the model.

The theological flavour of renunciation is informed by the Ethics of the cross. The cross is for Girard the only instance that scapegoat mechanism was ever exposed for what it is, victimization of the innocent. He is convinced that only religious disposition can confront violence, hence his obsession for the Ethics of the Cross. We shall x-ray both the thoughts of Simone Weil and Girard, bringing out the similarities and trying to see how Girard, influenced by Weil settled the issue of misrecognition.

3.3.1. Renunciation in Simone Weil

Simone Weil speaks of a reflective mechanism known as “creative renunciation”. It is a Christological mechanism derived from God’s love for creation. She expounded this theme in her works: *Gravity and Grace*, 1947, and *Waiting for God*, 1951. Her

understanding of creative love of God inspired in her a deep desire to reciprocate God's love. In his introduction to *Gravity and Grace*, Gustav Thibon stressed the balanced approach of Weil in the non-factional approach of her life. According to him;

Before recalling Simone Weil's attitude during the developments which caused the French to be so deeply divided during the years 1940 to 1944, I want to stress the fact that it would be harmful to her memory were the eternal and transcendent part of her message to be interpreted in the light of present-day politics and confused with party quarrels. No faction, no social ideology has the right to claim her. Her love of the people and her hatred of all oppression are not enough to place her among the leftists any more than her denial of progress and her cult for tradition authorize us to class her on the right. (Weil 1947, xvii)

She took a neutral approach to social, political and, religious engagements. Thus, her balanced approach reveals her innate desire to set the same balance to life. Thibon is convinced that this idea of "counterbalancing" is the driving force of her political and social engagement. The counterbalancing character is what she perceived in God's approach to creation. She did not explicitly treat the mimetic desire as a theme, but it is implied in her writings.

She explains the relationship between God and the universe in terms of withdrawal after creation. In *Waiting for God*, she wrote:

God causes this universe to exist, but he consents not to command it, although he has the power to do so. Instead, he leaves two other forces to rule in his place. On the one hand, there is the blind necessity attaching to matter, including the psychic matter of the soul, and on the other the autonomy essential to thinking persons. (Weil 1951, 157)

This attitude of God towards creation is the paradigm of love. She calls it creative renunciation. In a sense, God renounces being everything. We should renounce being something. That is our only good (Weil 1947, 33). She speaks of "decreation", i.e. to jettison judgement in order to get to the real. 'The past and the future hinder the

wholesome effect of affliction by providing an unlimited field for imaginary elevation. That is why the renunciation of past and future is the first of all renunciations.’ (Weil 1947, 19) In *Simone Weil and Theology*, A. Rebecca Rozelle-Stone and Lucian Stone, wrote that ‘Attention and decreation together represent the crucial elements of the “conception of human life” revealed by the Gospels to Weil’s mind’ (Stone & Stone 2013, 5). Thus, when we give up the natural impulse to judgement of things, we gain in return the reality of things. The aim of decreation is to restore what she calls balance. In all human relations, balance is expected to keep the ego in check. She makes a comparison of the exchange between the weak and the strong. She compares thus;

The sympathy of the weak for the strong is natural, for the weak in putting himself into the place of the other acquires an imaginary strength. The sympathy of the strong for the weak, being in the opposite direction, is against nature. That is why the sympathy of the weak for the strong is pure only if its sole object is the sympathy received from the other, when the other is truly generous. This is supernatural gratitude, which means gladness to be the recipient of supernatural compassion. It leaves self-respect absolutely intact. (Weil 1951, 148)

It takes respect to get to the state she describes as “sympathy of the weak for the strong”. The respect of being inherent is possible when the perception of the other is pure, i.e. renunciation of prior prejudices. This attitude to reality will keep mimetic desire in constant check. According to Weil, material goods would scarcely be dangerous, if they were seen in isolation, and not bound up with spiritual advantage (13). It is clear that Weil does not know about the mimetic theory of René Girard, but her counterbalancing through decreation, pictures the reality of the conflictual desire at the root of the mimetic crisis. As mimetic rivalry is reinforced by prohibition, it makes sense to renounce rivalry in order to put an end to violence. ‘To detach our desire from all good things and to wait. Experience proves that this waiting is satisfied. It is then we touch the absolute good.’ (13) She foresees the illusive value imposed on the object of desire

by the mediator, as the motivation in memetic desire. Decreation will break the mind loose from this illusion, in order to see the deception inherent.

Simone Weil made a distinction between decreation and destruction. Destruction is a blameworthy substitute. Decreation is to make something created pass into the uncreated (Weil 1947, 32). Decreation is understood as a kind of “detachment” found in “the presence of God.” She describes God’s presence thus;

This should be understood in two ways. As Creator, God is present in everything which exists as soon as it exists. The presence for which God needs the co-operation of the creature is the presence of God, not as Creator but as Spirit. The first presence is the presence of creation. The second is the presence of decreation. (He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent. Saint Augustine.). (38)

God is present in creation but at the same time detached from it. She cites Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians, chapter 2, in order to buttress her concept of detachment. ‘He emptied himself of his divinity.’ To empty ourselves of the world. To take the form of a slave. To reduce ourselves to the point we occupy in space and time—that is to say, to nothing. To strip ourselves of the imaginary royalty of the world. Absolute solitude. Then we possess the truth of the world (Weil 1951, 12). The extinction of desire (Buddhism)—or detachment—or *amor fati*—or desire for the absolute good—these all amount to the same: to empty desire, finality of all content, to desire in the void, to desire without any wishes (Weil 1947, 10). The aim is to get to the things as they are presented to us without judgement.

Attention and Detachment, cited in Stone & Stone earlier, will allow the things to speak for themselves. Attention and detachment will achieve the decreation prescribed by Weil to enable the object of desire to have importance other than that imposed by the desire of the mediator. For Weil, attention is the decreative release of self to receive the

world in all its reality (Stone & Stone 2013, 102). Thus, attention involves a detachment from all goals and projects—that is, a replacing of the future with a void, so that we do not escape into our projective imaginations to avoid what stands before us (105). For Henry Leroy Finch in *Simone Weil and the Intellect of Grace*, this requires detachment from our own private egoisms and our regard for an impersonal Good that is not measured by them and not limited by them (Finch 1999, 10). To jettison judgement on things will remove the veil of desire invested by the mediator according to the Mimetic Theory.

It is not difficult to read the substitution that characterize every form of sacrifice in the creative renunciation of Simone Weil. Her illustration of the Catholic Holy Communion is explicated:

Catholic Communion. God did not only make himself flesh for us once, every day he makes himself matter in order to give himself to man and to be consumed by him. Reciprocally, by fatigue, affliction and death, man is made matter and is consumed by God. How can we refuse this reciprocity? (Weil 1947, 34)

Renunciation is rewarded with a good that is of a higher value. We participate in the creation of the world by decreasing ourselves. We only possess what we renounce; what we do not renounce escapes from us (33—34). The substitution, as explained earlier, follows the law of vengeance: violence is not destroyed but diverted. Substitution is at the heart of sacrifice. Substitution is the sacrificial weapon against violence. By detaching from things, one deprives the self of them in order to regain “what” one renounced. What is substituted in order to attach to things is gained when a reverse movement is made. Thus:

Renunciation demands that we should pass through anguish equivalent to that which would be caused in reality by the loss of all loved beings and all possession, including our faculties and attainments in the order of intelligence

and character, our opinions, beliefs concerning what is good, what is stable, etc. In order that the love of God may penetrate as far down as that, nature has to undergo the ultimate violence. Job, the cross... (38)

The renunciation proposed by Weil demands great responsibility and courage. Her deep relationship with God and detachment from the material is undeniable, but the average person battling with materialism may find this highly placed spirituality a problem. Besides it presents a conscious engagement that is contrary to the mimetic process.

3.3.2. Renunciation in René Girard

René Girard agreed with Simone Weil in the adoption of Creative Renunciation as an antidote to violent mimetic rivalry. Palaver observes that Girard does not mention Weil in his first book, but an interview with Christian de Maussion from 1987 tells us that he read Weil during the time he was working on this book. If we read Weil's *Waiting for God*—the book in which we find the expression “creative renunciation”—we discover important parallels between Weil and Girard (Palaver 2011, 145–146). When Girard speaks of creative renunciation, he has in mind “conversion” from mimetic rivalry. The vision of renunciation is already a conclusion found in novelistic conclusions (Girard 1996, 47). Conversion from mimetic rivalry determines a true novelist. In *The Girard's Reader*, he argues that the victory over a self-centeredness, which is other-centered, this renunciation of fascination and hatred, is the crowning moment of novelistic creation. Therefore, it can be found in all the great novelists (Girard 1996, 50). The realization of one's involvement in the rivalry marks for Girard the beginning of conversion. How does one get to this realization? We detect the mimetic snowballing in which we do not participate, and then we can describe it as it actually is (Girard 2001, 183). This is not clear, but the realization works in dealing a blow to reprisal violence. Reprisal violence is irresistible owing to the mimetic desire that controls it. He further argues that ‘even

if persons cannot resist it, they can convert away from it' (Girard 1996, 62). There is no clear means of arriving at the recognition of one's involvement in mimetic rivalry. But Girard takes it for granted that it is the early process to renunciation.

Girard saw in the event of the Cross a perfect paradigm of renunciation of the will to reprisal violence—vengeance. The Cross represents for Girard, '...the moment when a thousand mimetic conflicts, a thousand scandals that crash violently into one another during the crisis, converge against Jesus alone' (Girard 2001, 21). Jesus Christ gave in to the crucifixion plot without self-defence. Caiaphas the High Priest had suggested to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people (John 18, 14). Thus, Caiaphas ignited the fire of the single victim mechanism. By giving in to the plot, the single victim mechanism, the illusion of restoring peace via murder comes to the fore. By so doing, Jesus Christ offered no resistance, something that can be interpreted as suicidal. A sacrificial understanding of his actions gives us a clue to the self-donation as opposed to a surrogate victim of the single victim mechanism. Self-donation, like Weil's detachment, requires both courage and responsibility.

Girard did not perceive the renunciation of the will as the renunciation of desire, rather, as a move towards the positive mimesis. He upholds the indispensable mimetic desire.

Through the event of the cross, Girard understood that;

Not the renunciation of mimetic desire itself, because what Jesus advocates is mimetic desire. Imitate me, and imitate the father through me, he says, so it's twice mimetic. Jesus seems to say that the only way to avoid violence is to imitate me, and imitate the Father. So, the idea that mimetic desire itself is bad makes no sense. It is true, however, that occasionally I say "mimetic desire" when I really mean only the type of mimetic desire that generates mimetic rivalry and, in turn, is generated by it (Girard 1996, 63)

Girard found in the life of Jesus Christ a “good” mimesis. Imitating the desires of Christ, will not lead to any clash of interest or rivalry. Wolfgang Palaver further explains Girardian renunciation by stating that;

Creative Renunciation ...shows that he sees the solution to mimetic rivalry not in a renunciation of life, as such, but rather of the death resulting from man’s arrogant attempt at self-empowerment, which obstructs the way to the biblical God and creator. Girard distances himself in later writings explicitly from interpretations of renunciation as any kind of oriental escapism, in order to make clear that a Christian existence does not denote an extinguishing of desire, but rather a redirecting of desire towards an end free of violence and rivalry. (Palaver 2013, 221)

The idea of conversion that characterizes the creative renunciation above depicts the responsibility and the prior reflection within. Neither Girard nor Weil made a rational demonstration of how an individual arrives at the reflective ability to renounce violence.

3.3.3. The Event of The Cross

Girard defines the anthropological aspect of the Cross as that moment when a thousand mimetic conflicts converged against Jesus Christ alone. The single victim mechanism features greatly in the Crucifixion. The plot of the gospel centres on the single victim mechanism of the crucifixion. The anthropological understanding of the gospel is made possible by a mimetic reading of the event of the cross. Girard could picture in the Passion a replica of ritual sacrifice, especially the founding murder. According to him,

Because it reproduces the founding event of all rituals, the Passion is connected with every ritual on the entire planet. There is not an incident in it that cannot be found in countless instances: the preliminary trial, the derisive crowd, the grotesque honours accorded to the victim, and the particular role played by chance, in the form of casting lots, which here affects not the choice of the victim but the way in which his clothing is disposed of. The final feature is the degrading punishment that takes place outside the holy city in order not to contaminate it. (Girard 1996, 164)

James Alison, in the same vein, believes that a mimetic anthropological reading of the Passion will give a vivid understanding of the gospel message. He writes,

By positing in Jesus an anthropological understanding founded on an intelligence of the working of mimetic desire and its victimary consequences, it becomes possible to understand a key feature of the Gospels, which is the simultaneous presence of this understanding in the words and actions of Jesus and of the misunderstanding of these same words and actions by the disciples. (Alison 1998, 53)

A mimetic anthropology is the key to unravelling the theological solution of René Girard to the mimetic anthropological crisis. The Cross is the first moment when the single victim mechanism failed to unite the society. The cross exposed and expelled the mechanism. The ethics of the cross is the moral disposition of Jesus Christ which lies in his “self-donation or self-sacrifice” on the cross in order to expose and expel the single victim mechanism. We have to view the Passion of Christ from a mimetic standpoint in order to key into Girard’s solution. Mimetic anthropology of the gospel will remove the veil covering the true understanding of what the gospels reveal. Jesus Christ *ab initio* recognized the illusion of the object of mimetic desire; hence he constantly referred to his imitation of his Father. In his passion, he did not respond with denial as is expected, rather he gave in to the accusations convinced of his innocence. Jesus is convinced that resistance can only enforce and empower the fury of his accusers. But his unexpected surrender confused his accusers and exposed their plans.

The Cross is at the center of the Christian faith. From a mimetic point of view, it best describes the exposition of the evil of the single victim mechanism. The salvation ministry of Christ is created around the event of the Cross. Girard recognized the divinity of Christ as the Son of God. From the outset, Jesus Christ preached and lived the nonviolent life. The nonviolent life has every character of sacrifice in the form of

renunciation. The nonviolent character of the Jesus's ministry is spelt out in the gospel according to Matthew;

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5, 43-45)

Girard finds the above citation of Matthew's gospel the evidence of a nonviolent campaign. According to him, 'the following is the basic text, in my opinion, that shows us a God who is alien to all violence and who wishes in consequence to see humanity abandon violence' (Girard 1987, 183). However, the dilemma posed is that of a sacrificial or non-sacrificial reading of the gospels. Girard believes that a sacrificial reading will fail to unveil the mechanism thereby sinking humanity deeper into the mimetic crisis. A non-sacrificial reading in the sense of sacrificing the innocent, will divert the entire theory from the "violent substitutionary" disposition of dealing with human violence. Violence is diverted and not denied.

In *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, Girard supports the Non-sacrificial reading of the Passion of Jesus Christ, although the plot reveals the single victim mechanism. According to him,

If we can rid ourselves of the vestiges of the sacrificial mentality that soil and darken the recesses of our minds, we shall see that we now have all the elements to hand for understanding that the death of Jesus takes place for reasons that have nothing to do with sacrifice. (Girard 1987, 205)

Heim recognizes the caution expressed by Girard as serious in the sense that;

Sacrificial religion assimilates the divine into the dynamics of human rivalry and revenge. The problem it addresses begins with the escalation of mimetic conflict in human social life and ends with the reconciliation granted to the

community when it enlists divine powers in unanimous violence against the outcast. (Heim 2006, 91)

Girard is afraid that the sacrificial connection with myth will deprive the Cross of its victory over mimetic rivalry. Heim notes that the collective dynamics of sacrifice generates misapprehension and an active collective blindness where what would otherwise be seen as bad is viewed as necessary and good (121). The sacrificial reading of the gospel has its implications. The implication observed by Girard is the fate of the Letter to the Hebrews that speaks of sacrifice similar to that of the single victim mechanism. His fear is that a sacrificial reading will make Christians persecutors of innocent victims as seen in anti-Semitism. The anti-Semitic interpretation fails to discern the real intention of the gospels (Girard 2001, 26). According to Girard, a sacrificial interpretation of the Passion will place the Christians in the same position as the Pharisees in the scriptures (Girard 1987, 224). The sacrificial and non-sacrificial interpretations exposed the theological deficiency of Girard. His encounter with Raymund Schwager brought a turning point to his mimetic anthropology of the Cross. Raymund Schwager in *René Girard and Raymund Schwager Correspondence 1974–1991* made a distinction between what he called ‘texts structured by sacrifice and others that name and reveal it’ (Cowdell et al. 2016, xii). Schwager explained to Girard in the correspondence of March 29, 1978, the nature of the sacrifice recorded in the Letter to the Hebrews. According to him,

(1) The epistle underlines at great length the difference between the sacrifices and the death of Jesus. (2) The same epistle shows continuity between the Old and the New Testament, but this continuity does not appear under the name of sacrifice, but under the name of faith (11:1–12:4). And the epistle says clearly that the believer is one who withstands persecution. Jesus is the one who persevered against such opposition from sinners (12:3). (Cowdell et al. 2016, 53)

The aim of Schwager is not to align the Mimetic Theory with Catholic Theology, but to preserve the original meaning of the saving works of Christ. The theme of sacrifice in the Scriptures is to be understood in the eyes of the unique sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. His “sacrifice” was that he had learnt obedience, and this obedience was his faithfulness to the message of nonviolence at the time of his greatest persecution (53). Schwager insists that the understanding of self-donation of Jesus Christ presents a unique experience that gives an understanding to the letter to the Hebrews. Petkovsek supports the fact that Jesus Christ uniquely establishes the culture of sacrifice as self-donation (Petkovsek 2016).

Girard saw in the Judeo-Christian bible the beginning of demythologization. With regard to the Old Testament, one must first note that it contains many texts, or at least textual elements, that display no fundamental difference from archaic myths (Palaver 2013, 200). In his view, the Old Testament begins a prophetic process that criticizes the ancient mythological mindset of the sacrificial culture which always tells the story from the perspective of the persecutors. For Girard, this process comes to full fruition in the New Testament (Stork 2011). The voice of the victim was heard through the Old Testament and found its full revelation in the passion narrative of the gospels in the New Testament. ‘The biblical treatment of these myths offers something, which is absolutely distinctive...’ (Girard 1987, 144) The bible, while bringing out all the features of victimization, focused more on the voice of the innocent victims. Demythologization in mimetic theory is based on the victim’s revelation of violence (Grande 2007, 95). Myths are the account of the event from the point of view of the victimizers. The Bible differentiates fundamentally from myths because it sides with the victims of persecution (Palaver 2013, 200).

The mimetic crisis in the Passion is ignited by the tension between the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Jewish religious authority. Girard summarized the teaching of Jesus Christ in one phrase —the Kingdom of God. The kingdom of God comes down to the project of ridding men of violence (Girard 1987, 197). It is the substitution of love for prohibition and rituals. The Jewish religious authority in a move to protect the prohibitions and the rituals unconsciously employed the single victim mechanism in their relation with Jesus Christ. The words of the High Priest Caiaphas invoked the single victim mechanism in the Passion. Caiaphas had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people (John 18, 14). According to Girard:

Many traces of scapegoating remain. Then, even these traces may disappear, except for two, I believe, that remain forever. The first is the innocence of the sacrificers; and the second, inseparable from the first, is the idea that the violence is necessary, justified by some higher good, even when it degenerates into political opportunism. This is exemplified in another great Gospel definition of scapegoating, Caiaphas's definition: It is better that one man should die and that the whole nation not perish. (Girard 1996, 219)

Prior to the crucifixion, the world knew only the single victim mechanism as the effective means to deal with violence. Thus, we cannot say that the high priest acted in error; rather he applied blindly the principle that is in vogue! The Passion has all the characteristics of the single victim mechanism. According to Girard,

It is necessary that the violent contagion against Jesus be both unanimous and not unanimous. It must be unanimous for the mechanism to work, and yet the unanimity must fail in the end for the mechanism to be unveiled (Girard 2001, 188).

The evidence of the success of the mechanism is that the son of God died. The evidence of its failure is that the witnesses to his death went sorrowfully away. In the gospel of Luke, we find the evidence;

Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, and said, certainly this man was innocent! And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things. (Luke 23, 47–49)

The sorrow that reigned in the hearts of the persecutors is not able to unite them further. Unanimity against Jesus ended at the point of his death. This gave rise to a new reality that is original to the New Testament. The event was told by His sympathizers, i.e. those who belong to the Kingdom of God. They were the only ones who could find life from the crucifixion.

The mechanism was tricked on the cross. The trick is not violence but the inability to understand self-donation, nonviolence. The single victim mechanism only functions by means of the ignorance of those who keep it working. They believe they are supporting the truth when they are really living a lie (Girard 2001, 41). What the mechanism expected was reciprocal violence that keeps it alive. It is used to blinding its victims with the ambiguity of sacrifice while immersing them in a vicious circle of violence. Other than this, it knows no other means to propagate its activities. Jesus' surrender weakened the force of the accusers' fury. The cross exposed and expelled it.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is a sacrifice that is understood as self-donation. Jesus Christ willfully accepted to die on the cross in order to reveal the single victim mechanism that claims the life of innocent victims. The crucifixion reduces mythology to powerlessness by exposing violent contagion, which is so effective in the myths that it prevents communities from ever finding out the truth, namely, the innocence of their

victims (Girard 2001, 138). Girard speaks of a Triumph of the Cross not in the military sense of conquest, rather ‘a public exhibition of what the enemy had to conceal in order to defend himself’ (140). The violence of crucifixion is deceived into believing that it is able to conceal the innocence of Jesus Christ. The mechanism is used to employing violence in order to divert violence. It is similar to the gospel explication of ‘Satan casting out Satan’ (Mathew 12, 26). Girard writes;

Satan attempts to cast out Satan through murder, especially collective violence, but he is defeated in principle by the Cross. This defeat is accomplished because the disciples, with the aid of the Paraclete, the Spirit of God as defender of the falsely accused, break away from the mimetic consensus of the social order that is undergirded and constantly regenerated by the scapegoat mechanism. (Girard 1996, 193)

Schwager confirms that the mimetic theory gives an explication of the Cross that surpassed that of the patristic Fathers. According to him,

None of the Fathers manages to formulate a coherent theory. In one of my articles, I show how this theme was so widespread that we are obliged to take it seriously; and after that I am trying to prove that it is only through your theory that one will arrive at a coherent articulation. (Cowdell et al. 2016, 91)

The mimetic anthropology of the Cross gives a better understanding of the gospel message than Atonement Theology of the Cross credited to St. Anselm. S. Mark Heim in his criticism of Atonement Theology of the Cross discovered in it a penal substitutionary atonement, which is not consistent with self-donation as seen above. It gives hope to the oppressed who see in the cross an affirmation of self-worth. That Christ was willing to suffer and die for them is a message of hope and self-respect that can hardly be measured, one that transforms their lives (Heim 2006, 31). From the above it becomes clear that atonement theology does not in any way reveal the single victim mechanism of persecution.

3.3.4. The Ethics of The Cross

The Ethics of the Cross is the re-enactment of the saving event of the cross as is perceived in the action of Jesus Christ. On the Cross, Jesus Christ through his crucifixion exposed and expelled the single victim mechanism, which in the works of Girard, held the sway of humanity since the beginning of time. The moral implication of the Cross is expected to continue the exposition and expulsion wherever it appears. The passion reveals that Jesus Christ understood the antics of sacrifice. He is aware of the misapprehension and the active collective blindness characteristic of ritual sacrifice, hence he exclaimed from the cross, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23, 34) Jesus’s nonviolent disposition through his life and Passion presents a consciousness that is beyond the clutches of the mimetic contagion.

The consciousness in focus is the character of the Kingdom of God—a kingdom, which rids men of violence. This is opposed to the “closed” kingdom of violence that sinks men deeper into violence. According to Girard, violence is the enslavement of a pervasive lie; it imposes upon men a falsified vision not only of God but also of everything else. And that is indeed, why it is a closed kingdom (Girard 1987, 197). Armed with this consciousness, the event of the cross exposed the closed kingdom of violence. This exposition is not a complete break away from the sacrificial reality; rather it is a sacrifice of a different kind. A sacrifice rids of all violence that consumes the innocent. Raymund Schwager calls it “self-donation”.

The ethics of the cross is a self-donation that is sacrificial in character in the sense that it is not devoid of violence, but the violence inherent is voluntarily upon one in solidarity with the innocent. Heim best describes the event thus;

The sacrificial necessity that claims Jesus is a sinful mechanism for victimization, whose rationale maintains it is necessary for that one innocent

person die for the good of the people. The free, loving “necessity” that leads God to be willing to stand in the place of the scapegoat is that this is the way to unmask the sacrificial mechanism, to break its cycles of mythic reproduction, and to found human community on a non-sacrificial principle: solidarity with the victim, not unanimity against the victim. (Heim 2006, 114)

Self-donation tricked the mechanism into submission. It created a familiar scenario that benefits the mechanism. Unlike the archaic sacrifice shrouded in unconsciousness, self-donation is a conscious effort to save the innocent. This is played out in the Judgement of Solomon in the first book of Kings Chapter 3. The real mother renounced her motherhood in order to save the innocent child. Her sole motivation is to save the innocent child.

The Ethics of the Cross is a conscious motivation to foster peace not by sacrifice of the innocent but to save them. The kingdom of God presents a new understanding of sacrifice, namely nonviolence. The mechanism of violence employed to divert violence is over. The substitution inherent in the new understanding is a self-donation motivated by nonviolence. Although the character of violence is not affected, it lacks the will to further torment humanity under the clutches of ambiguity. Violence at the face of self-donation is still related to sacrifice, but a distinction is made between “sacrifice as murder and sacrifice as renunciation” (Girard 1996, 271). The Ethics of the Cross is sacrifice as renunciation of the will to violence through self-donation. The Ethics of the Cross is not a denial of mimesis but a mimesis of the saving event of the cross. Jesus Christ invites us to imitate Him. Jesus overcame in himself what Girard identified as self-centeredness in order to make self-donation possible. Self-donation is a realization of one’s involvement in the crisis. Once this awareness is created in the self, one sets on the path of self-donation.

Finally, we have exhausted the Christological solution of René Girard, the renunciation of the will to violence through self-donation. The mimetic evidence inherent in Girardian solution is “*Imitatio Christi*”. It is a double imitation contrary to the triangular mimesis. Girard affirms in his conversation with Rebecca Adams that the Imitation of Christ is twice mimetic (Adams et al. 1993). The basic structure of interdividuality is not featured in the Imitation of Christ. One wonders how a person would encounter another whose desire is focused on Christ. Interdividuality is possible from the perspective of universal mimesis—imitation in space, repetition in time, and reproduction in the species (Oughourlian 2016, 34). It does not feature because desire and not imitation is the guiding principle, except one is immersed in a Christological context, Christianity.

The basic distinction evident in self-donation is the distinction between “sacrifice as murder and sacrifice as renunciation”. The latter is a movement toward freedom from mimesis as potentially rivalrous acquisition and rivalry (Girard 1996, 272). The conclusion is that the Imitation of Christ of René Girard is a Christological dogma! He is so engrossed with the primitive sacrificial understanding of violence and its ways. Violence is not denied but diverted. He replicates this understanding in the imitation of Christ after his encounter with the German theologian, Raymund Schwager. In doing this he omitted the most important aspect of mimetic theory which is the interdividuality.

Sacrificial renunciation requires a responsibility that can only be motivated by “grace”. This is the supernatural help that will assist the accused, the victim. Girard affirms that ‘wherever you have that desire, I would say, that really active, positive desire for the other, there is some kind of divine grace present’ (Girard 1996, 64). Grace is the boundary of Girard’s anthropological apologetics, in particular where he demonstrates

that it is essential for overcoming the scapegoat mechanism (Palaver 2013, 229). Palaver observed that Girard combines his insights regarding grace and the Resurrection to form his conception of the Holy Spirit (231). Girardian employment is etymological: ‘The principle meaning of *parakletos* is lawyer for the defence, defender of the accused.’ (Girard 2001, 189–190) This proves the imitation of Christ as basically Christian.

The renunciation of the will to violence is faulted in this research because of a breach of the mimetic process. Girard affirmed that ‘mimesis reflects on mimesis’ but it does so only interindividually—the neighbour is always the model of our desire. The good mimesis is not suggestive of a moral disposition as featured in self-donation, rather is it a non-conflictual imitation, an ethical disposition. Ethics should be understood from its etymology, ἦθος (ethos) which translates “character”. It should not be perceived from the point of view of right and wrong of behaviour. The moral undertone in Girard is not unconnected with the moral implications of mimetic rivalry. The implications of rivalry however moral, does not necessarily require moral solution. What is responsible for conflict is the misappropriation or misrecognition inherent in mimetic desire, which involves both the model and the subject. The solution is a disposition of character that involves mimetic recognition of the model as such. My concern is how to restore recognition in the mimetic process in order to keep conflict at bay. Mimetic recognition guarantees inclusive humanism.

4. Mimetic Desire and Consciousness

René Girard consistently maintained the position that there is an innate link between mimesis and desire. According to him, human conflicts are better explained in terms of this link. The Christological solution, informed by the mimetic theory, proffered by Girard, falls short, in my opinion, of an important aspect of the theory, namely the undeniable interindividual mimetic desire. The “desiring according to the Other” does not feature in the process of conversion that begins with the realization of the illusory object and culminates in the Imitation of Christ. The conversion from mimetic desire presupposes a withdrawal of the will to violence. What he proffered is a conscious mimesis that involves the choice of a model. Desire is not guided by any instinct⁵ thus, it must be by chance that the one’s desire rests on Christian principles. The ambivalent nature of desire is taken for granted. As expressed by Paisley Livingston⁶, the desiring subject is caught in between Who am I? and What is to be done? Desire seeks the being of another. It is at one time the being and at another the property of the other. There is no explication as to how this is resolved in the Imitation of Christ, other than the established fact that Jesus Christ is the only ONE whose desires does not lead to conflict. I am not in doubt of a Christological solution evident in the Event of the Cross. The cross remains the first historical instant, according to Girard, of the defeat and exposition of the sacrificial system. What the Imitation of Christ presupposes is that a model bearing the signs of this victory on the cross must be identified as such.

⁵ According to Girard in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, wrote that once their natural needs are satisfied, humans desire intensely, but they do not know what they desire, for no instinct guides them. (Girard 2001, 15).

⁶ In another variant, instead of puzzling over the problem of identity, the uncertain mimetic creature puzzles over the nature of the world, especially the question of its values. (Livingston 1992, 6).

Instinctually, I am convinced of an anthropological solution based on a critical review of what Girard termed “novelistic conversion”⁷. Wolfgang Palaver observed that Girard arrived at his discovery of mimetic desire through the analysis of great novelistic texts (Palaver 2013, 3). What is expressed in the works of the great novelists like Cervantes, Proust, etc. are subtle knowledge of the mimetic crisis. Their involvement and conversion are what gave Girard an insight into his own mimetic indulgence. This discovery is not as a result of religious conversion. He simply featured it into the texts. It is not difficult to read their obsession with rivalry. Besides we are able to describe the rivalry which we are not part of. Novelistic conversion gives us an insight into the relationship between mimesis and desire. I am convinced that an anthropological solution is likely to emerge from this relationship judging from the embodiment of mimetic knowledge inherent in these great works.

Therefore, this chapter takes a closer look at the mimetic process through the lens of Interindividual Psychology with a view to unravel the reason behind the misrecognition, the unconsciousness that beclouds the vision of rivals on the illusory object. Interindividual psychology through hypnosis struck at the depth of the relationship between mimesis and desire in other to discover the “self between”. The very being that desire seeks is the self between. The self between is the real object of desire, the very being of the model. This is the very being that is subject to contention. Unfortunately, it is the very product of mimetic desire. The stunning revelation by Interindividual psychology makes it a part of both the model and the subject. The self between is engendered by desire. I rely greatly on the works of Jean-Michel

⁷ Girard summarizes his argument that in the best work of the great novelists such as Cervantes, Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust, and Dostoyevsky, the novelistic (non-romantic) conclusions represent conversions from the death to which rivalrous desire leads. (Girard 1996, 45)

Oughourlian in order to attempt a coherent presentation of the misrecognition of the self between in the mimetic process.

4.1. Consciousness

There is no consensus among cognitive scientists and psychologists on the definition of consciousness. Scientific study of consciousness depends on the observation of reportable features across a vast range of contents. One distinctive thing about consciousness is that it can be studied both from “the inside,” that is, from the perspective of the conscious subject, and from the “outside,” that is, by any of the academic fields that study the mind (Velmans et al. 2007, 1). Scientific study of consciousness is traced to the Cartesian Dualism of René Descartes. Descartes’ “cogito, ego sum” is the beginning of the argument for the existence of the “thinking self”. With all the advances in the cognitive science, the study of consciousness remains elusive. The scientific study of mental processes has revealed that consciousness is not necessary for rational thought. Inferences can be drawn and decisions made without awareness. This raises a new problem for our understanding of consciousness (18). In the conclusion of his paper on “Consciousness and Control of Action”, Carlo Umiltà of the Department of General Psychology, University of Padova, observed that we are not aware of most of our own behaviour is disturbing, but the evidence to date, clearly indicates that very few aspects of action generation and execution are accessible to consciousness (Umiltà 2007). Ian Tattersall, a curator at the American Museum of Natural History New York, made a realistic observation of all scientific enquiry of human consciousness in his article “How Did Modern Human Cognition Evolve?” He wrote, although we now know quite a lot about which brain regions are involved in which mental activities, we are still utterly ignorant of how a mass of electrochemical signals in the brain is converted into what we experience as our consciousness

(Tattersall 2007). David Chalmers in his article, “The Hard Problem of Consciousness”, affirms that the hard problem of consciousness is the problem of experience. My treatment of consciousness within the mimetic process is experiential and as such, I will not treat consciousness from the cognitive or psychoanalytic perspective, but rather from a phenomenological perspective. The holistic approach of the phenomenology depends on experience. Phenomenology includes the experience, the very context of consciousness.

Etymologically, the Greek φαινόμενον (phainómenon) translates “thing appearing to view”. Phenomenology grows out of the recognition that we can adopt, in our own first person case, different mental attitudes or stances toward the world, life, and experience (Evan Thompson & Dan Zahavi 2007). From the point of view of experience, consciousness is awareness of one’s involvement with experience. Consciousness is a self-reference in relation to experience. One’s relationship with experience is consciousness. The content and context of consciousness is experience. Thus, the self emerges as an essential part of consciousness. Thomas Nagel in *Mortal Questions* is supportive of the subjective character of conscious experience. According to him, fundamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to be that organism—something it is like for the organism (Nagel 1979, 166). Self-definition is informed by experience. In reference to experience is consciousness born.

The obvious shift in emphasis from consciousness to self-consciousness derives from the subjectivity of conscious experience. Donald Perlis treats consciousness from the subjectivity of the conscious experience. In his article, “Consciousness as Self-Function” published in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, he asked the question, “How can an experience be like something and yet not be distinguishable from other

experiences (i.e. possessed of qualia)?” (Perlis 1997) For him the subjective experience is the only quality of consciousness that subsists. He states further;

To feel pain or have a vivid experience requires a self. There is no such thing as pain simpliciter, or experience simpliciter, in the absence of an agent that is (has) a self, an I to be the feeler (as in I am feeling pain). Thus, I think that recognition of self (personal identity) is an essential ingredient in conscious experience; I think it may even be what it is to be consciously experiencing. (Perlis 1997)

To stop at the subjectivity of the conscious experience will not be enough. The social context of experience is implied in the understanding of the self-consciousness. Relationship creates the experience that forms our consciousness. The Mimetic Theory shows that desire is born out of a relationship. Self-awareness is the resultant effect of the mimetic desire. In the bid to be another through mimesis of desire, awareness of the self is created. The details of this created self are what elude the human mind. The experiential relationship between mimesis and desire is what creates the self. This relationship eludes the mind, hence the misrecognition.

René Girard discourages any psychoanalytical enquiry of the unconscious mimesis. His argument is based on the fact that the factors responsible for the unconsciousness are not farfetched. According to him, in *The Girard Reader*,

We need not take time to consider the ultimate causes of this belief, such as the unconscious desires described by psychoanalysts, or the Marxist concept of the secret will to oppress. There is no need to go that far. Our concern is more elementary; we are only interested in the mechanism of the accusation and in the interaction between representation and acts of persecution. They comprise a system, and, if knowledge of the cause is necessary to the understanding of the system, then the most immediate and obvious causes will suffice. The terror inspired in people by the eclipse of culture and the universal confusion of popular uprisings are signs of a community that is literally undifferentiated, deprived of all that distinguishes one person from another in time and space. As a result, all are equally disordered in the same place and at the same time. (Girard 1996, 110; 1986, 15)

What gives the outward impression of crisis is the lack of differentiation. It is easily perceivable in rivalry. Thus, the unconscious mimesis requires a phenomenological approach. In like manner, Pierpaolo Antonello, a teacher of Italian Literature and Culture at the University of Cambridge, and Fellow of St. John's College, suggested a socio-religious rather than a biological approach. He understands the indispensable subjectivity of consciousness and its experiential context as affirmed earlier by Chalmers. According to his article on "The Emergence of Human Consciousness in a Religious Context":

Without entering into a thorny and convoluted discussion, and taking mimetic theory as our point of reference, we could simplify its definition by referring to the Bible, following the reading of Genesis where the serpent's "gift" to Eve was "self-knowledge" and the ability "to discriminate between good and evil." This connection between self-awareness and moral outlook points to the need to think about the problem of consciousness not so much in terms of a naturalistic description, but as a product of social, institutional, and religious dynamics and as phenomena that cannot be simply reduced to their underlying biological properties. (Antonello 2017)

The social, religious, and psychological aspects of experience feature in the mimetic theory. The enquiry into the human conflict made the critics of the Mimetic Theory give it different understanding due to its phenomenological approach to the consciousness and human crisis.

The critics of the Mimetic Theory often referred to it as a theory of conflict, a theory of religion, or a theory of the mind. The interdisciplinary nature of the mimetic theory points to the obvious fact of it being the best approach to consciousness. In each of the mentioned aspect of consciousness, the Mimetic Theory approaches from an interpersonal perspective. In his defence of the Mimetic Theory as a theory of religion, Wolfgang Palaver wrote that it describes the "religious" dimension of interpersonal relations—the idolatry of models or sexual partners—just as it explains the origins of

archaic religions and the qualitative difference between these and the Judeo-Christian tradition (Palaver 2013, 15). Also, as a theory of conflict, he wrote that 'it is one that both elucidates the causes of interpersonal clashes and offers solutions to them' (33).

René Girard is explicit in the self-consciousness of the mimetic theory. According to him, identity is realized in the hatred of the identical. The obstacle posed by the model is faced with the insistence of the subject. Each in denial of the mimetic experience becomes aware of self in a subtle way. Thus, self-awareness is achieved in the denial of mimetic desire. Our aim is to find out what is responsible for the unconscious or misrecognition in mimetic desire. The self that is created out of the mimetic process is both in contention and unconsciously denied. Everything about the mimetic process suggests that only the awareness and acceptance of the process will ensure peaceful human relationship.

4.2. Unconscious Mimesis

Mimetic desire as we have seen so far is the unconscious driving force of human actions. René Girard specified that mimetic desire is always a desire to be Another (Girard 1976, 83). Desire is born in an unconscious relationship with another known as the model. The major challenge posed by mimetic desire is its unconscious nature. The mimetic experience is always subject to misrecognition. Both the subject and the model are often not aware of it, until crisis erupts. The conflictual nature of mimetic desire is based on the unconscious nature of the mimetic process. We are never aware that we are imitating another's desires. The exchange of desires is done in an unconscious manner. According to Girard, neither the model nor the subject is aware of the borrowing and loaning of desire (Girard 2001, 15). The principal source of conflict is on this unconscious nature of mimetic desire. The unconscious character of the Mimetic

Theory permeates every aspect of the process —the illusive object, the rivalry, the victimization mechanism, the sacrificial substitution. All possess the character of unconsciousness.

The value of the object is regulated by mimetic desire. The desire of the model gives value to the object. The model awakens the desirability of the object in the subject.

According to Girard,

Rivalry does not arise because of the fortuitous convergence of two desires on a single object; rather, the subject desires the object because the rival desires it. In desiring an object, the rival alerts the subject to the desirability of the object. The rival, then, serves as a model for the subject, not only in regard to such secondary matters as style and opinions but also, and more essentially, in regard to desires. (Girard 1979, 145)

The subject buys into the above illusion and unconsciously targets, not the object, but the social status conferred on the model through the acquisition of a particular object. The subject targets the desire of the model indirectly through the object. Once desire sets towards an object, it plunges headlong without reservation. The subject does not conceive in himself of the impending collusion with the being of the model as he makes for the object. This is the unconscious mimetic desire.

Rivalry is imminent in mimetic desire. René Girard observed that the principal source of violence between human beings is mimetic rivalry, the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model. The desiring subject has no premonition of the possible resistance by the model, the determinant of his desire. The role model who designates to us the desirability of an object soon becomes our rival and obstacle, once we also desire the acquisition of this same object (Palaver 2013, 46). Robert Petkovšek alludes to this point in his article, “Apocalyptic Thinking and Forgiveness in Girard’s Mimetic Theory”. According to

him, for the desire to be fulfilled, the other is not only a model but also a contender, whose interest in the same object awakens rivalry, duels, and conflicts (Petkovšek 2016). Unconsciousness is the fundamental problem of mimetic desire. The unconsciousness that characterizes mimetic desire, affects the entire system. The model and the subject are unaware of the exchange of desires. The subject is never aware as the limits of imitation. Likewise, the model is not aware that his actions are capable of suggesting desirability for anything. Pierpaolo Antonello insists on the neutrality of mimesis when he describes imitation as unintentional. According to him, imitation is mostly unintentional and unwitting. Imitation is prelinguistic and preconscious, and therefore, it works at the level of “reflex” rather than of intentionality and is partially blind to itself (Antonello 2017).

The ability of the mimetic theory to explicate the root cause of violence denotes it as a theory of conflict. The “hyper” mimetic human nature as the source of human conflicts makes mimetic theory appear as a theory of conflict. Wolfgang Palaver is convinced that the Mimetic theory is both—a theory of religion and a theory of conflict (Palaver 2013, 33). The mimetic theory has been used to explain the root cause of interpersonal and communal conflicts. The scapegoat mechanism unites the community through the expulsion of the innocent victim. Girard explained it thus:

By a scapegoat effect I mean that strange process through which two or more people are reconciled at the expense of a third party who appears guilty or responsible for whatever ails, disturbs, or frightens the scapegoaters. They feel relieved of their tensions and they coalesce into a more harmonious group. They now have a single purpose, which is to prevent the scapegoat from harming them, by expelling and destroying him. (Girard 1996, 11)

The stereotype of persecution in the scapegoat mechanism hinge on the assumption that the persecutors always convince themselves that a small number of people or even a single individual is, despite his relative weakness, extremely harmful to the whole of

society. (Girard 1986, 15) The persecutors must convince themselves of the above, while unconscious of its falsity. On this lies the unanimity of the all-against-one.

Besides, the sacrificial system of the archaic societies bears the characters of unconsciousness. The sacrificial system based on substitution, is informed by the nature of violence. Its nature is such that it is not to be denied, but can be diverted. The role of sacrifice in the archaic society is to ward off the menace of violence. The relationship between violence and sacrifice is substitution. The substitution is an unconscious diversion of the fury of violence on a surrogate victim. Girard writes:

Sacrificial substitution implies a degree of misunderstanding. Its vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based. It must never lose sight entirely, however, of the original object, or cease to be aware of the act of transference from that object to the surrogate victim; without that awareness, no substitution can take place and the sacrifice loses all efficacy. (5)

The above concealment in substitution is a necessary unconsciousness that engineers the sacrificial system.

The efficiency of the mimetic theory in the explication of violence and its causes is undoubtable and very convincing. Unfortunately, the solution proffered by René Girard, namely the Ethics of the Cross—the renunciation of the will to violence—is far from attainable because of the principal factor of an unconscious mimesis. The unconscious character features in both the personal and the social dimensions of mimetic desire. It is responsible for the fragile human relations. On the interpersonal level it is responsible for rivalry, while on the social level it is motivation behind the Scapegoat Mechanism and the sacrificial system. Only a conscious mimesis can guarantee the Ethics of the Cross—the renunciation of the will to violence.

It is proper to note at this point that the quest for a conscious mimesis will not affect the character of violence. Violence cannot be denied! The human tendency propelled by mimetic desire is to feed violence through reprisal—vengeance. He further states that the nature of violence requires a third party, a substitution, in order to divert its fury (12). The real source of victim substitution is the appetite for violence that awakens in people when anger seizes them and when the true object of their anger is untouchable. The range of objects capable of satisfying the appetite for violence enlarges proportionally to the intensity of the anger (Girard 2001, 156). Violence retains its destructive character even amidst a conscious mimetic desire. Substitution remains the proper way of diverting the fury of violence. The function of consciousness is already featured in the Ethics of the Cross as self-sacrifice. It is not suicidal, but a conscious diversion of violence based on the understanding of the illusion inherent in rivalry. It is sacrifice as renunciation of the will to violence through self-donation. It is a Christological solution to an anthropological crisis. Conscious self-donation is better than an unconscious expulsion or elimination of the innocent.

The understanding of the illusion inherent in rivalry does not come easy. According to Girard, we are not aware of the rivalry in which we are part, but can only discuss that which we are not part of (Girard 2001, 183). The fact that we are unaware means that something about mimetic desire precludes consciousness. From the point of view of the external and internal mimesis, the distance between the model and subject checkmates rivalry. The external mimesis is characterized by a reasonable distance between the model and the subject, hence no conflict. However, the internal is charged with conflict because the model and the subject are too close to mirror each other. The impulse in mimetic desire is the same in both; it is an impulse towards the model. The distance is not conscious but unconsciously maintained. Because the model is also a contender,

whose interest in the object awakened the desire of the subject; he will resist the desire if given the opportunity in external mimesis. Fortunately, in external mimesis, the model is often unknown to the subject, or separated by social status.

4.3. Desire and Cognitive Constraints

René Girard is not explicit on what is responsible for the unconscious mimesis. However, he is convinced that the understanding of the conflictual human relationship lies in the relationship between desire and mimesis. The relationship directs us to the triangular nature of human desire. We desire according to the other, i.e. the model. It raises the question of passivity of the human being in the mimetic process. Does Interindividual mimesis presuppose passivity? Desire is not instinctual but mimetic. What attracts the subject to a model? What is responsible for the choice of a particular model?

The work of Paisley Livingston, *Models of Desire: René Girard and the Psychology of Mimesis*, is acknowledged as the first rigorous critical reconstruction of the Mimetic Theory. I agree with Livingston on the point that the uninitiated reader, who turns to Girard's texts in search of a systematic presentation of the mimetic theory, is likely to be disappointed. For what Girard in fact offers are many highly insightful and far-reaching general suggestions, as well as a number of provocative readings and intricate analysis of a range of particular texts (Livingston 1992, xiii). In the course of a systematic presentation of the mimetic theory, Livingston encountered the problem of unconsciousness on the side of the desiring agent or subject. He asked the question: what does the imitative agent, i.e. the subject really want? The question is directed to the mimetic system of motivation. It boils down to the issue at hand, consciousness. Livingston is interested in the cognitive constraints associated with mimetic desire (Livingston 1994). He observed that 'it can be assumed that the mimetic theory defines

the desiring subject as a passive entity whose desiring states are fashioned automatically upon contact with an external reality, the desires of others (Livingston 1994, 2). Girard insists that the fundamental blind spot in the various conceptions of human agency in the humanities and social sciences is failure to understand the link between mimesis and desire. Conflicts, violence and behavioural patterns can be explained in terms of this link (Livingston 1992, xii). What it means is that the answer lies in the relationship. Livingston is interested in the proximal conditions of the subject's desire. He disagrees with Girard's spontaneous desire because it lacks a definition of the self. What he calls "the tutelary beliefs" are the factors at the background of the choice of a model. According to him, '...the assumption that some content of some kind of additional belief, or set of beliefs, is what serves to make an agent into a model for some desiring agent (which is not the same as saying that the agent must foreground the idea that the other "is a model")' (Livingston 1992, 34). In other words, he is looking for the background knowledge of the desiring subject responsible for the choice of a model. He is convinced that desiring '...agents often recognize the nature and role of at least some of their own passions...' (Livingston 1994). What this means is that at certain conditions, the desiring agent's state of mind determines the attraction to a particular model. Cognitive constraints on a mimetic agent's self-knowledge are contingent and relative to particular constellations of belief and experiences (Livingston 1994). He suggests that mimetic desire should not be the only determining factor of human behaviour.

Livingston is pre-empting the goal of this research, which is the "good" mimesis. This is surely lacking in the entire work of Girard. He rejects the idea of a mimetic mechanism; by "mechanism" is meant a closed system of factors that function together to produce certain invariable types of effects (Livingston 1994). The tutelary beliefs are

undeniable, but Girard insists that we are able to describe and analyse only the rivalry which we are not part of. Unconsciousness characterizes the whole process of mimetic desire. Emphasis of the state of mind of the desiring subject will not lead to the good mimesis. Girard sets the motion towards the good mimesis by pointing to the relationship between desire and mimesis. A critical investigation into the relationship is the focus of this research. Mimetic crisis is preventable when the mind is conscious of the entire process. When the model is recognized as such, conflict is avoided, as we observe in external mimesis. We should focus on the mind's disconnection from the relationship between mimesis and desire. If we are able to describe the mimetic crisis when not involved, why are we not able to when involved in the crisis? Mimetic desire is the unconscious, involuntary and uncontrollable driving force of human events.

The consciousness that I hope to establish in this doctoral research is of a behavioural pattern. It is an attitude of the mind in relationship. This is because mimesis is a constant and unavoidable human reality. The network of human relation presupposes a network of mimesis. From the social dimension of the mimetic crisis, the Scapegoat Mechanism, we understand that violence is contagious. According to Girard, Scapegoat indicates both the innocence of the victims, the collective polarization in opposition to them, and the collective end result of that polarization (Girard 1986, 39). Therefore, we are looking at a consciousness that will form part of behaviour. It must be a mimetic process that keeps consciousness alive in order to detect and divert the development of mimetic crisis. For Girard, mimetic desire *per se* is not to be done away with, but is to be fulfilled—transformed, “converted.” (Girard 1996, 62) It is a conviction in the regulatory function of the human mind.

4.4. Freud and Identification

Sigmund Freud is the famous Austrian neurologist who treated psychopathology through the clinical method of Psychoanalysis. His “Theory of the Oedipus Complex” is used to explain object identification in psychoanalysis. In his work, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, he defined identification in psychoanalysis as the earliest expression of emotional ties with another person (Freud 1922, 60). He found a clear expression of this form of identification in the Greek Oedipus legend.

Rhona M. Fear in her work, *The Oedipus Complex: Solution or Resolution?*, articulated the background of Sigmund Freud in relation to the Oedipus legend. According to her, the idea of identification is derived from the “cluster of ideas” between the Oedipus the King and Oedipus of Colonus (Fear 2016, 3). For her, it is interesting to note the particular way the main protagonists of the story —Oedipus and his mother/wife Jocasta, repeatedly “turned a blind eye” to the truth of their incestuous relationship. Fear is convinced that Oedipus ignores “warnings” time and again; evidence placed before him about his parentage —evidence that should have raised the suspicions and thought-processes of any reasonably intelligent person (4). I find in the above a first expression within the Oedipus legend of the unconsciousness which I hope to use later in my critique, as well Girard’s criticism of Freud.

In the introduction to her work, Fear argues the oversimplification of Freud’s theory of the Oedipus complex by psychoanalysts who present it as purely involving “sexual love for the opposite sex parent” (xvi). Her investigation on the background of Freud and the category of his patients reveal an oversimplification mentioned above. Freud wrote his works within the social conventions, norms and values of his time. She noted that Freud wrote at a time influenced by Paternalism and feelings of anti-Semitism. According to her, it is also pertinent for us to be aware that the European society was

paternalistic and patriarchal, and consequently his theories of the Oedipus complex focused upon the male child and adolescent, and say very little about the female child (xvii). Her mention of the “adolescent male” will assist us later in the critique of the complex concerning the expression of desires.

Freud treated patients within the upper middle class, mainly Viennese women. According to Fear, he labeled them ‘hysterics’ because these patients perhaps suffer from pathologies that had sexual issues at their roots, and this may have led Freud’s promulgation of the notion of drive theory: that we as humans are driven to behave as we do by the drives of sex and destruction/aggressive instincts (12). Alasdair Macintyre in *The Unconscious: A Conceptual Analysis* recalled that Freud discovered the unconscious through his hysterical patients. According to him, what was to become Freud’s doctrine is stated aphoristically in the dictum: hysterical patients suffer mainly from reminiscences. (Macintyre 2004, 49) He went further to state that Freud used *abreaction* to bring out the contents of traumatic events. Abreaction is the release of pent up emotion, of which Freud had experience in patients treated by hypnotic suggestion. This release is associated with the recalling of memories, which in normal consciousness could not be recalled (50). Freud did not work with adolescent patients. From his encounter with his female Viennese patients, he developed a universal theory of identification.

4.4.1. The Oedipus Complex

Freud employed the theory of Oedipus complex in his famous work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The book was written after the death of his father. Freud discovered in the Oedipus legend playing out of the unconscious phantasies. Rosine Jozef Perelber admits in her work, *Murdered Father, Dead Father: Revisiting the Oedipus Complex*, that Freud’s analysis of his own dreams revealed the ambivalent feelings towards one’s

own parents: the incestuous desires towards them on the one hand and the desire to kill them on the other (Perelberg 2015, 13). We are using Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex to unravel the unconscious identification. It is unconscious although Freud's treatment reveals a "conscious" act of identification. I am not interested in the complex as such, but I had to bring it in because it is the foundation of Freudian "identification". His theory of identification is founded on the Oedipus Complex.

Three of Sophocles' plays center on Oedipus and his family—*Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. We saw earlier that Freud developed his complex from the first two. Freud's summary of the Oedipus legend is found in his famous work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*:

I am referring to the legend of King Oedipus and the Oedipus Rex of Sophocles. Oedipus, the son of Laius, king of Thebes, and Jocasta, is exposed as a suckling, because an oracle had informed the father that his son, who was still unborn, would be his murderer. He is rescued, and grows up as a king's son at a foreign court, until, being uncertain of his origin, he, too, consults the oracle, and is warned to avoid his native place, for he is destined to become the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother. On the road leading away from his supposed home he meets King Laius, and in a sudden quarrel strikes him dead. He comes to Thebes, where he solves the riddle of the Sphinx, who is barring the way to the city, whereupon he is elected king by the grateful Thebans, and is rewarded with the hand of Jocasta. He reigns for many years in peace and honour, and begets two sons and two daughters upon his unknown mother, until at last a plague breaks out which causes the Thebans to consult the oracle anew. Here Sophocles' tragedy begins. The messengers bring the reply that the plague will stop as soon as the murderer of Laius is driven from the country. But where is he? (Freud 2010, 279)

From the outset, Freud saw in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, a connection between drama and dream. The *Oedipus Rex* has the substance of a dream. The scenes were like that an expression of something hidden from public view. It is like an exposition of the unconscious. According to him, there is an unmistakable indication in the text of Sophocles' tragedy itself that the legend of Oedipus sprang from some primeval dream-

material, which had as its content the distressing disturbance of a child's relation to his parents owing to the first stirrings of sexuality (Freud 1900, 281). Freud saw in dreams an expression of the unconscious that takes the form of the gratification of a wish. He writes "I think it is to the opposition between conscious daily life and a psychic activity remaining unconscious, which can only make itself noticeable during the night." (Freud 1900, 67) In the dreams such as the botanical monograph and Irma's injection, it is the nature of one's unconscious, forbidden desires that is discovered. (Perelberg 2015, 14) Through his female patients, he alludes to the unconscious childhood phantasies hidden in dreams. In the Oedipus Complex, the child's wishful phantasy that underlies it is brought into the open and realized, as it would be in a dream (Freud 1900, 282). This is the foundation of Freud's theory of identification, which Girard sees as the human mimetic desire.

4.4.2. Identification

Freud deduced from the *Oedipus Rex* the reality of identification. According to him:

A little boy will exhibit a special interest in his father; he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere. We may say simply that he takes his father as his ideal. This behaviour has nothing to do with a passive or feminine attitude towards his father (and towards males in general); it is on the contrary typically masculine. It fits in very well with the Oedipus Complex, for which it helps to prepare the way. (Freud 1949)

His treatment of the Complex begins at the adolescent stage as seen above. The Oedipal conflict is predominant in the adolescent age. This identification actually begins in early childhood as noted by Freud's contemporary, Melanie Klein. Unlike Freud, Klein had direct contact with adolescent male patients. She is not opposed to the Complex but is convinced of an earlier stage. She is convinced of an early detection of the Oedipus Complex in children. According to her, early analysis shows that the Oedipus conflict sets in as early as the second half of the first year of life and that at the same time the

child begins to modify it and to build up its super-ego (Klein 1960, 28). In her work, *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, she writes about “the Oedipus situation” in order to accommodate the early stages. Rhona Fear notes that,

Klein through her psychoanalytic work with very young children came to believe that pre-genital does not equate with pre-Oedipal. ...children are struggling with Oedipal conflict during the oral, anal, and genital phases. (Fear 2016, 23)

Her real contact with children gives her an edge over Freud in terms of the early stages of the complex. While Freud speaks of the adolescent without contact with them, Klein speaks of children in her development of Child Analysis.

Freud states that the interest of the boy is to grow and be like his father and take over his position. At the depth of this interest is a twofold form of identification. Freud (1922, 61) notes them

1. A straightforward sexual object-cathexis towards his mother
2. A typical identification towards his father.

The above depicts the mother as an object and, the father as a model. Both exist simultaneously at the early stage of the interest. The boy wishes for an uninterrupted attachment to the mother that began at the breast. The father is what he hopes to become as an adult. At this point, both interests subsist as separate wishes. Freud continues by stating that the Oedipus complex results in the merging of the two. According to him, in consequence of the irresistible advance towards a unification of mental life they come together at last; and the normal Oedipus complex originates from their confluence (61). There is no explanation from Freud as to the actual connection between the interests.

The father is not a model pointing to the mother nor the mother an object connected with the father. Freud describes this identification as ambivalent—it can turn into an expression of tenderness as easily as into a wish for someone's removal (61). Ambivalence arises from the father being an obstacle in the boy's way with his mother. The presence of a model and an object presupposes that the child imitates the model. Rather what Freud postulates is a direct access to the object in the presence of the model. What is the identification with the father when there is a direct access to the object—the mother? Does the boy wish to be like the father in relation with the mother? Freud mentioned the importance of identification with a model in the shaping of character. According to him, we can only see that identification endeavours to mould a person's own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken as a 'model' (63). Freud's identification theory did not answer this question; rather it focused on the Oedipus crisis and its resolution.

Melanie Klein's "Oedipus situation" widened the scope of the Oedipus Complex to include early infancy. As Rhona Fear noted in her explanation of Kleinian Theory of the Oedipus Situation, Mother is experienced as a breast, as a face, even as a part of the breast (Fear 2015, 24). Hanna Segal, a leading exponent of Melanie Klein's work, in an introduction to the article written by Britton et al, "The Missing Link: Parental Sexuality in the Oedipus Complex" (1989), affirmed that, Klein considered that the Oedipus Complex starts in the first year of life, and is fundamentally affected by the child's relation to the breast. For Ronald Britton in his article "The Missing Link: Parental Sexuality In the Oedipus Complex", if the encounter with the parental relationship starts to take place at a time when the individual has not established a securely based maternal object, the Oedipus situation appears in analysis only in primitive form and is not immediately recognizable as the classical Oedipus Complex.

(Britton et al. 1989, 85). The Oedipus Complex focuses on the crisis of “obstacle” posed by the father in the little boy’s way with his mother. Thus, the identification is not clear in content. What is clear is that it is based on object-desire approach. The little boy’s desire is fundamentally directed at the mother. The emphasis is on the incestuous phantasy.

Besides, there is the conscious aspect of the complex, which is visible only in the resolution of the complex. According to Freud, the resolution necessitates that the little boy represses his sexual wishes towards his mother, and this allows for the concomitant internalization of his father (Fear 2016, 17). The little boy’s identification is conscious, because his desire is directed to his mother. The boy’s realization of the relationship with his parents closes according to Britton, the Oedipal triangle, and the repression of the incestuous desire. According to him, the closure of the Oedipal triangle by the recognition of the link joining the parents provides a limiting boundary for the internal world. It creates a “triangular space”—i.e., a space bounded by the three persons of the Oedipal situation and all their potential relationships (Britton et al 1989, 88). The Oedipal triangle makes no sense as long as the child directs his desire lineally towards the mother. Repression is attempted to bring the father into the triangle. It is a rational attempt to explain the obstacle posed by the father. This is the core of René Girard’s critique of the Freudian identification.

4.4.3. Identification and Mimetic Desire

René Girard is convinced that Freud came close to discovering the mimetic theory but ignored it. There is a clear resemblance between identification with the father and mimetic desire; both involve the choice of a model (Girard 1979, 170). The difficulty encountered by Freud in the explication of the unconscious, stems from his individual approach rather than the Interdividual approach. The Interdividual approach is related

to the triangular desire. The triangular desire featured in the Freudian identification. The triangle of subject, object and the model were observable in his analysis of identification: the little boy, the mother and the father. Mimetic desire is the tone of the phrase “he would like to grow like him and be like him and take his place everywhere”. Freud directed the little boy’s desire to the mother, ignoring the model whom he wants to be like. Ignoring the role of the model will not direct the subject to the desirability of the object. It is the function of the model to direct the subject to the object. Girard noted that Freud asserts that the identification has nothing passive or feminine about it; a passive or feminine identification would mean that the son wanted to become the object of his father's desire. How, then, will the active and “typically masculine” identification realize itself? (170). Identification according to the mimetic theory would mean a desire to be the model that seeks fulfilment, naturally enough, by means of appropriation; that is, by taking over the things that belong to his father (170). This is the only condition under which the Oedipus Complex is understood. The cause of the conflict results in the subject appropriating the desire of the model.

The little boy cannot attach to his mother at the breast. He has grown into an adolescent, hence new forms of attachment is required to keep him close to his mother. He needs this attachment but does not know how to go about it. He identifies with his father in order to learn how to be with his mother. The model, his father, has demonstrated unconsciously to him a ‘new’ desirability of the mother, thus a sure means to the mother. The boy unconsciously imitates the desirability in the father’s desire in order to get to the mother. ‘As Freud says, the son seeks to take the father's place everywhere; he thus seeks to assume his desires, to desire what the father desires’ (170). The little boy unconsciously imitates the desire of the father in order to get to the mother. The little boy has seen the easy access the father has towards the mother.

The little boy's desire cannot be termed conscious as the dissolution of the Oedipus Complex proposes. Rather is it a continuation of the unconscious attachment to the mother that began at the breast as Klein suggested. The father becomes an obstacle in his way with the mother not because of incestuous desire, but an assumption of the father's desire. Freud's eagerness to prove the unconscious phantasies of the dream pushed him towards the line of object-desire. The mimetic theory advocates a triangular desire, implying that the subject must rely on the model in order to get to the object. According to Girard, the mimetic process detaches desire from any predetermined object, whereas the Oedipus Complex fixes desire on the maternal object (Girard 1979, 182). Thus, Girard insists on the "Oedipal triangle". Freud cannot evoke one of the three elements of the mimetic configuration without the other two putting in an appearance. The reappearance of the Oedipal triangle was not in his programme (182). Having mentioned the presence of the three elements of the triangular desire, Freud ignores the initiator of the desire, the father, and directs the little boy's desire directly to the mother. The resultant effect was to state that the identification with the father is ambivalent.

According to Freud as mentioned earlier, identification is ambivalent because it can turn into an expression of tenderness as easily as into a wish for someone's removal. His inability to explain the root cause of the conflict gives rise to ambivalent identification. He was fixed with the incestuous phantasies of his psychoanalytic research, which the Oedipus Complex seems to explicate. The object of the Oedipus Complex when viewed from the object—desire cannot explain the ambivalence. Rather as Girard suggests through the triangular desire, the obstacle—model explains the father's resistance of the little boy's identification (182). For Freud, ambivalence explains the conflict i.e. the obstacle that ensued between the father and the little boy.

Ambivalence does not explain the unconscious in the boy's identification with the father. The Oedipus Complex was employed by Freud to explain the unconscious in dreams. This is the message of his work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The unconscious was omitted in his explication of the identification theory. The main protagonists— particularly Oedipus himself and Jocasta—repeatedly demonstrate that they “turn a blind eye” to the truth. The story portrayed instances of warnings of the moral implication of the incestuous relationship between Oedipus and Jocasta that were not heeded. Fear brings back the unconscious that Freud left out in his identification theory. As the story played out, it is obvious that Oedipus did not consciously choose Jocasta as his incestuous partner. They were not aware of the implication of their incestuous relationship. Fear argues that ‘this was partially because they were only semi-conscious, partially because they were driven to behave the way they did by the drive towards sex (Freud's theory) ...’ (9). This is similar to the unconsciousness that characterizes the entire mimetic process as stated by Girard.

Girardian unconsciousness is not connected with any psychoanalytic theory. It is derived solely from the victimage mechanism that formed the cornerstone of the mimetic theory. Wolfgang Palaver notes that, although Girard makes use of concepts here that are central to psychoanalysis, his insistence on the unconscious nature of the victimage mechanism is not a concession to any psychology of “the unconscious.” (Palaver 2013, 154). Girard would reject Freudian “incestuous drive” as the unconscious motivation. The incestuous drive is based on object-desire i.e. desire fundamentally directed towards an object, which runs contrary to the mimetic theory. Girard's unconscious process derives from the interindividual nature of the mimetic desire. The unconscious to which Girard refers concerns the individual or interindividual level, the misapprehension of the mimetic nature of desire and, on the collective level,

the religious disguising of these interpersonal processes (154). The unconscious is understood in the mimetic theory as the misapprehension or ignorance that characterizes the entire process. The mimetic conflict is because of this misapprehension on both the model and the subject. The unconscious in Girard has no connection with psychoanalysis.

Girard derived the idea of the unconscious, i.e. misapprehension from the scapegoat mechanism in archaic societies. The unanimity of the crowd against the surrogate victim restores order in the primitive societies. The victimizers are unaware or ignorant of the innocence of their victim. Only when the members of the group are unaware that they are transferring their own guilt and responsibility onto the victim can the crisis truly be overcome (152). The victimizers must convince themselves of the guilt of the victim for the mechanism to work. It is the character of sacrifice to include some form of ambiguity. According to Girard, ambiguity is essential to the cathartic functioning of the sacrifice (271). Thus, the unconscious has no connection with psychoanalysis. Our quest is to unravel the misapprehension that holds sway of the entire mimetic process. Freud alludes to a conscious identification based on object-desire, hence the burden of repression. Scott Cowdell cites Chris Fleming on this: Where the Freudian unconscious defines an individual repository of repressed trauma, the Girardian subject is constitutionally imbricated in a public field of misrecognized beliefs and behaviours that inheres between individuals and which, in turn, shapes them. (Cowdell 2013, 30)

René Girard's conclusion on Freud is that the insistence on object-desire relation rather than the model-obstacle prevented him from seeing the mimetic desire. According to him, it is the hard core of the Oedipus complex: that brief interval of consciousness when the patricide-incest desire is felt to become a formal expression of the child's intentions. It is clear that this Freudian view makes Freud's full discovery of mimetic

desire impossible (Girard 1979, 183). Incestuous relationship is not the conscious intention of the little boy. He identifies with his father, the model of his desire to be a man. In his father lies what it takes to be a man. By giving everything to the incestuous drive, Freud created the cumbersome problem: repression of desire. The dissolution of the Oedipus Complex is repression of desire, which is impossible because desire is unconscious and indispensable. Our quest is the good mimesis—the mimetic desire that is devoid of conflict.

4.5. The Interdividual Psychology

Interdividual psychology is founded on the social dimension of the mimetic desire. It capitalizes on the relationship between desire and mimesis in the constitution of the self. It incorporates all aspects of the mimetic theory, especially the interdividual nature of desire and the triangular desire. The proponents of Interdividual Psychology—René Girard, Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*—understood clearly the social relationship of mimetic desire—how one is related to the other in a universal mimesis. Scott Cowdell in his article, “Secularization Revisited: Tocqueville, Asad, Bonhoeffer, Habermas”, affirms that the full articulation of Girard’s mimetic theory—with an interdividual psychology of desire, the false sacred, and its Judeo-Christian overcoming—comes with his magnum opus, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* (Cowdell 2017). Sandor Goodhart in his article, “Oedipus and Greek Tragedy” listed the writers that influence the interdividual psychology. According to him, Girard reads Lévi-Strauss and the so-called Cambridge armchair anthropologists (like Sir James Frazer) and is drawn to Freud who founds his interdividual psychology upon an anthropological foundation in *Totem and Taboo*, a work more commonly discredited than read (Goodhart 2017). Freud concentrated on the incestuous sexual drive i.e. on the subject

as a monad, thus he failed to establish a coherent and convincing identification. Interdividual psychology focuses on the subject within the mimetic triangle of desire. The subject is not a monad, but a “self” produced by the relationship between desire and mimesis.

Jean-Michel Oughourlian, a major proponent of Interdividual Psychology, sought to revolutionize Psychology and Psychiatry, through the mimetic theory. According to him, Interdividual Psychology sought to evacuate the notion of the individual, of the monad, the subject, and to replace it with a psychology grounded essentially in the mimetic relationship and the interdividual rapport (Oughourlian 2016, xii). It is used ‘to express our conviction that the monadic subject doesn’t exist, that the self is formed only in relations with the other, and that psychology cannot focus on individuals but only on rapports and relationships’ (33). In her analysis of the mimetic theory, Tiina Arppe of the University of Helsinki, Finland, in her work, *Affectivity and the Social Bond Transcendence, Economy and Violence in French Social Theory*, affirms that Interdividual Psychology solved the problem of the unconscious in Freudian identification as we treated above. According to her, in this “interdividual psychology”, mimetism is truly foundational in the sense that it replaces the notion of the “unconscious” as a reservoir of repressed desires; the unconscious, if such a term is at all appropriate here, is the Other (not in the sense of the Freudian superego, but as the other person elevated to the position of a model) (Arppe 2014, 168–169). It is Paolo Diego Bubbio in his article, “The Development of the Self” who captured Girard’s conception of the identification centered on desire. According to him, the self can only be grasped by an interdividual psychology centered on desire, and not by an “individual” psychology centered on the subject (Bubbio 2017). The very focus of Interdividual psychology is the relationship between mimesis and desire. Much of what

we shall expound about Interdividual Psychology is owed to Jean-Michel Oughourlian. Through his study of hypnosis, he arrived at a new understanding of the object of mimetic desire, which he termed the self of desire. The self of desire merged from his close observation of the universal mimesis and the reciprocal back and forth movement of desire between the mediator and the subject. His views on Interdividual Psychology are found in his works, *The Mimetic Brain*, 2016, *The Puppets of Desire*, 1991, and *The Genesis of Desire*, 2010.

4.5.1. Universal Mimesis

The first stage to the discovery of the Interdividual Psychology is the universal mimesis. The Interdividual nature of mimetic desire is a human reality with regards to learning and acquisition of culture. He was interested in what is responsible for cohesion in human relationship. His particular interest was in the force of cohesion. He noticed an irresistible and indispensable force of cohesion in children with regards to imitation. This force is lacking in autistic children. According to him, a young child has no power to resist that attraction. To feel such attraction is the child's very nature, to the degree that he or she is "normal." A child lacking this capacity would be deprived of something basic to his or her humanity; he would become isolated, autistic (Oughourlian 2011). He described this force and likened it to the force of gravity. The natural force of cohesion, which alone grants access to the social, to language, to culture, and indeed to humanness itself, is simultaneously mysterious and obvious, hidden in and of itself, but dazzling in its effects—like gravity and the attraction of corporeal masses in Newtonian space (Oughourlian 2011). The connection with gravity is influenced by the Viennese doctor, Franz Anton Mesmer, who practiced hypnosis.

According to him, Mesmer observed in a clinical setting that there was at work between humans a force of attraction or repulsion that played a fundamental role in the contagion

and propagation of ideas and feelings (Oughourlian 2016, 34). He called this force of attraction mimesis. Mimesis is responsible for the attraction and repulsion between humans. He likened this force of attraction to the Newtonian Gravitational force. He formulated an initial hypothesis similar to the gravitational force. He termed this force the universal mimesis. According to Oughourlian, ‘there existed in the human race a force that I called universal mimesis that was imitation in space, repetition in time, and reproduction in the species.’ (34) He went further to state that the universal gravitation discovered by Newton governed the physical realm and that universal mimesis governed the human realm according to mechanisms that could be comparable, making a unified metaphysical conception of the universe possible (Oughourlian 2016, 35). The celestial bodies under the influence of gravity attract but do not collide because of their movement of rotating about their axis and revolving round the sun.

Oughourlian devoted the third chapter of *The Genesis of Desire* to the idea of the universal mimesis. He defined the universal mimesis as the mimetic principle from which none can escape and that, like the principle of universal gravitation that governs physical movements, is able to illuminate decisively a number of human phenomena that appear contradictory: love and hate, alliance and conflict, attraction and repulsion (Oughourlian 2010, 81). His idea of the “mimetic cohesion and the mimetic movement” is developed from the understanding of a single universal gravitation responsible for physical attraction and movement.

On the mimetic cohesion, he notes that Freud saw the unconscious that governs human action as harbouring the force responsible for human cohesion in his theory of identification as we saw earlier. Mesmer’s “animal magnetism” is a bold and imaginative attempt to address serious questions about the inward forces that draw

people together and lead them to engage in the sort of implicit imitation of the wishes of the hypnotist that he was observing (84). Like Oughourlian, Mesmer featured his Animal Magnetism in the Newtonian gravitational force. Mesmer saw correctly, however, that the fundamental problem in psychology is that of explaining psychological movement (86). Oughourlian found a model in the Newtonian law of gravity which he employed in his explication of universal mimesis. Taking as a model the theory of universal gravitation in physics, let us propose the hypothesis that there is a single principle at the foundation of all the human sciences: “universal mimesis” (Oughourlian 2011). Gravity governs the celestial bodies while mimesis governs human cohesion. He observed further that ‘just as the force of attraction between two physical objects, in Newtonian gravitation, is directly proportional to their mass and inversely proportional to the distance that separates them from one another, so also is the force of attraction between two psychological subjects’ (Oughourlian 2010, 85). Mass is related to quantity, in mimesis mass represents the power of influence. The power of influence one has over another—as in the case of a child and adult—determines the force of cohesion. What is important in human cohesion in relation to universal mimesis is the number of people in the crowd and the distance between them. ‘The mimesis that a crowd triggers, the power of influence a group has, is proportional to the number of individuals in it.’ (Oughourlian 2011) This corresponds to Girard’s view on the power of the mimetic contagion.⁸ For Girard, what determines the scandal’s power of attraction is the number and prestige of those it succeeds in scandalizing (Girard 2001, 23). This is similar to the role played by mass and distance in the force of gravity. People in the crowd are attracted by and formed as a single group by ideas.

⁸ Contagion is mimetic escalation that motivates the entire community in moments of crisis of undifferentiation against an innocent victim. It transforms the community from the war of all-against-all to the war of all-against-one.

This according to Oughourlian corresponds to Girard's casting of the first stone. The first stone demonstrates how an idea is able to form a group out of a crowd in a situation of crisis. The responsibility of casting the first stone demonstrates the power of this force of cohesion in a larger scale, the universal mimesis. The one who casts the first stone demonstrates to others of his not having a model. In *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, Girard describes the miracle of Apollonius of Tyana among the Ephesians as an example of the responsibility of casting the first stone. Girard recounts that prior to the first stone the crowd was without form, undifferentiation. The mention of epidemic is a subtle way of expressing crisis or lack of identity in myths. Apollonius through his miracle will form the crowd of Ephesians into a people united against an "enemy of the gods". Girard notes that the miracle consists of triggering a mimetic contagion so powerful that it finally polarizes the entire population of the city against the unfortunate beggar (Girard 2001, 50). The beggar is identified by Apollonius as the one responsible for the epidemic affecting the city. The beggar is to die by stoning, but the Ephesians were reluctant at first because there was no model to imitate in the stoning. The first stone that models their desire is that of Apollonius. According to Girard, the first stone is decisive because it is the most difficult to throw - because it is the only one without a model (56). Thus, the motivative first stone of Apollonius is the idea around which the Ephesians gathered as a people to stone the unfortunate beggar in order to cure the epidemic destroying the city. The cohesive power of idea in forming a crowd into a people is thus demonstrated.

The mimetic pull in the crowd destroys every form of individuality as featured in the miracle of Apollonius. The previously hesitant Ephesians are pulled together by Apollonius to stone the unfortunate beggar. Oughourlian, responding to this mimetic pull notes that in a crowd, the mimetic pull is such that abominable things become

possible, things of which an individual alone would usually be incapable (Oughourlian 2010, 87). All autonomy is lost as ‘individuality dissolves into mimetic interdividuality’ (87). The universal mimesis spares no one. Human cohesion is prevented from collision by desire. Desire is compared to the movement that prevents collision among the celestial bodies.

On the mimetic movement, he wondered why the celestial bodies do not collide. He asked: how do these celestial bodies avoid crashing into one another? (Oughourlian 2016, 35). The answer is by means of movement. If the moon doesn’t crash into the earth, this is because the movement that it makes around the earth keeps it separated while at the same time obliging it not to move farther away (35). Mimetic desire is responsible for the attraction and repulsion between humans. Imitation begins as discipleship, in which the model is taken simply as a model—but before long the imitation of a gesture will cause the model and the disciple to grasp at the same object: the model will become a rival, and mimesis will take on the character of conflict (Oughourlian 2011). Oughourlian explained that, in psychology this movement that obliged them to orbit around one another, to alternatively come closer or pull back, seemed to be desire. Indeed, the adult’s hand, moving toward an external object, pulls the child’s desire and movement toward that object, even as the child follows a centripetal trajectory that distances it from the adult’s body (Oughourlian 2016, 36). Thus, in psychological world, mimesis governs human cohesion. It is the movement towards and away from within human relation. Oughourlian concludes on universal mimesis:

The movement of bodies toward one another is deflected by the movement that separates them from one another. Thus, physical and psychic bodies can neither simply wander off from one another nor collide and crush each other; they circle about each other perpetually. If a meteorite or other spatial object leaves the orbit that holds it, it is because it has been drawn into the orbit of

another object with superior attractive force. If one subject becomes detached from another subject, it is because he or she has succumbed to the attraction of still another subject. (Oughourlian 2010, 88)

4.5.1.1. The Mimetic Movement

Imitative desire is always a desire to be Another (Girard 1965, 83). Desiring according to the other is the triangular nature of desire. It is Interdividual because it depends on another, the model. The movement of desire from subject to object is not lineal as we read in Freud, but it is triangular in the sense that it passes through the model. Paolo Diego Bubbio in his article “The Development of the Self” captured this thus: In the elaboration of his central thesis about the mediated nature of desire, Girard engages in a “debunking of subjectivity” that takes the form of an attack on those literary and philosophical forms that endorse the autonomy of the self (Bubbio 2017). The subject is not a monad. The movement of desire between the subject and the model is our focus in this subsection.

The mimetic movement captures the context of relationship between desire and mimesis that is passionate to Girard. Girard is convinced that the reason why philosophy, cognitive science and psychoanalysis missed the discovery of the mimetic theory is due to lack of the knowledge of this relationship. This relationship explains, according to Girard, all there is about human relation—violent or peaceful. In *The Genesis of Desire*, Oughourlian expounded the nature of the relationship between mimesis and desire. Every desire is born from a relationship; it emerges from within it (Oughourlian 2010, 19). The exchange of desire between the subject and the object is within a relationship that is governed by desire. He underscores this relationship as a psychological movement. It is founded on the conviction as stated above that desire controls the psychological world just as the law of gravity controls the celestial bodies.

According to him, in psychology, there is no movement that is not desire, and there is no desire that is not movement (17). Desire directs the subject to the object through the model. The model awakens in the subject the desirability of the object. The movement constitutes a relationship in which desire is exchanged. In *The Mimetic Brain*, Oughourlian states that human interaction is based on this principle of reciprocal imitation (Oughourlian 2016, 36). This exchange of desire between the model and the object is based on a reciprocal suggestion and imitation. According to Oughourlian in his explication of the nature of the mimetic exchange in *Interdividual Psychology*:

In the interdividual relation between the self and the model, the vector running from the self to the model is *a vector of imitation*. The self imitates the model. This imitation bears first on his appearance, on the model's gestures and words. Then it comes to bear on the being itself of the model. The vector that runs from the model to the self is *a vector of suggestion*. Imitation and suggestion are correlative with one another. (Oughourlian 2010, 63)

The vector of suggestion and the vector of imitation describe the psychological movement. The vector of suggestion is based on the primary aim of mimetic desire, which is the being of the model. The model unconsciously suggests "desirability" to the subject. The subject unconsciously responds to this desirability by imitation. As explained in *The Mimetic Brain*, the first one's extended hand is a suggestion, which is supposed to entail the second one's imitation. This relational reciprocity is mimetic in its essence, and it is universal (Oughourlian 2016, 36). The being that the model confers on the object is what mimetic desire wants. Oughourlian notes that, Mimetic desire is born from the imitation of the model's desire. The objects that are most desired by the model, to which he holds on most tightly, are those he is keeping for himself, that he forbids (Oughourlian 2010, 63). What the model wishes to keep to himself, is always unconsciously suggested to the subject. It is close to his being hence it is mixed-up with his being.

The suggestion is unconscious in the sense of being different from an order. The model does not order the subject to imitate his desires as in making it explicit rather it comes as an unconscious suggestion. Oughourlian described it thus: an order differs from a suggestion. To carry out an order, one must remember that one is doing so. To carry out a suggestion, on the other hand, one must forget the suggestion during the process of imitation that follows from it. We appropriate to ourselves the action or thought that has been suggested to us, while forgetting that it comes from another (64). The same applies to imitation in the sense of unconsciousness. The model and the subject are not aware of the exchange that takes place in the psychological movement desire. In all the stages of the Mimetic Theory, the “suggestion-imitation” characterizes the relationship between mimesis and desire. Suggestion-imitation is for the most part an unconscious exchange. It is an unconscious psychological movement.

4.5.1.2. The self of Desire or self between

Mimetic desire as such does not lead to conflict. In *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, Girard speaks of an intrinsically good mimesis in terms of freedom against animalistic fixation. If our desires were not mimetic, they would be forever fixed on predetermined objects; they would be a particular form of instinct (Girard 2001, 15). The mimesis that constitutes the self is the acquisitive mimesis. Appropriative [acquisitive] mimesis brings with it, therefore, a tendency to rivalry that cannot be resolved by any sort of “dominance pattern” or instinctual schema for the ritualization of conflicts such as those operating among animals (Oughourlian 2011). This is what Girard and other proponents of Interindividual Psychology termed in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1987), mimesis without an object. What is the object exchanged through suggestion-imitation? The model determines mimetic desire. What is at stake is his being conferred on the object of desire. The object acquires its value based on the desire

of the model. The subject desires it because the model desired it first. The desirability of the object is determined by the desire of the model for it. As such, what the subject aims at is not necessary the object between them, rather he aims at this desirability conferred on the object by the model. Oughourlian states clearly that desire appropriates for itself the model of desire before it appropriates the object (66). Any allusion to the model is to his very being. Unfortunately, the desirability is closely connected with the being of the model. The illusion of the object is established as soon as the desirability fades. In other words, the object fades as soon as the desire of the model is withdrawn from it. Thus, we can say that the object in contention is a “self” of the model. What the model suggests unconsciously is a self that the subject lacks. Interindividual psychology calls for a psychological solution, a noninstinctual solution.

Interindividual psychology speaks of a “self of desire” or “desire self” as the real object of mimetic desire. The self is what emerges from the relationship we now know as psychological movement. Paolo Diego Bubbio is supportive when he wrote that the self is always an “interindividual” self, because it is constituted by a set of mimetic relationships (Bubbio 2017). According to Oughourlian, this relationship with the other seems to me so close and so fundamental that it should not be seen as merely a relation between two individuals, two subjects, but as a reciprocal movement of back and forth, carving out in each of its poles, by its very motion, an entity that can be designated as the “self” (Oughourlian 2010, 31). On the same point, Wilson notes that the desire self reflects the model it imitates, and the model also imitates the imitator, back and forth in ungraspable feedback loops of constant transition (Wilson 2017). Therefore, the self can only be grasped by an interindividual psychology centered on desire, and not by an “individual” psychology centered on the subject (Bubbio 2017). The validity of the self of desire features in the very need for mimetic desire which is lack of being. In *Violence*

and the Sacred, Girard states the lack of being that prompts mimetic desire. The subject desires being something he himself lacks and which some other person seems to possess. The subject thus looks to that person to inform him of what he should desire in order to acquire that being.

The discovery of the self of desire in the Interdividual relationship we now understand as psychological movement, presents a better understanding of the state of the subject. Oughourlian discovered the self of desire through hypnosis. His encounter with Girard's *Desire, Deceit and The Novel*, motivated in him a research into what he called Phenomenology of desire as is observable in the work of Girard. According to him, 'I had observed it, especially as it related to the phenomena of hysteria, possession, and hypnosis.' (Oughourlian 2010, 12) He insists that hypnosis helps to get to the unconscious. Freud made use of hypnosis in his psychoanalysis. Oughourlian went further to state:

In our mimetic perspective, hypnosis is especially interesting because it reveals and manifests a mechanism that operates in us without our noticing it: the imitation of the other's desire, the otherness that penetrates into us and works changes in us in every moment. Hypnosis thus reveals concretely how the self is constituted in the interdividual relation. It is the ultimate proof and illustration of mimetic desire. (33)

James Alison in his theological application of the findings of the Interdividual Psychology affirms the work of Oughourlian thus;

The point of this is to indicate that the relative success of hypnosis in producing a self is precisely because the method follows the mimetic working of desire: the self is called into being by the suggestion of the other at the level of desire. (Alison 1998, 54)

The interesting thing here is that hypnosis follows the path of mimetic desire. The self created within hypnosis is not remembered after the process, indicating misrecognition or unconscious mimesis.

Bruce Wilson uses the term “intersubjectivity” rather than interindividual to describe the shift in emphasis from desiring object to desire self. According to him, intersubjectivity means that, being a desire self and not a desiring self, we are inherently changeable and unstable, subject to the changing models we imitate (unawares) and to the reciprocal back and forth of our models’ imitating our imitating them (unawares). He uses unawares to denote the unconscious nature of the entire process. It follows Girard’s explication that the exchange of desire takes place without the model and the subject knowing about it. As desire self, the negative connotation of being a contender is reduced. The reciprocal suggestion-imitation exchange of desire makes both model and subject good imitators. This is also the beginning of the possibility of fashioning out the good mimesis which is the primary focus of this research. The somewhat conflictual tone of the mimetic theory is greatly reduced through the “self of desire”.

4.5.2. The Psychological Time

Jean-Michel Oughourlian stated categorically in *The Mimetic Brain*, that it is an undeniable and systematic fact that each time a self is forged in the interindividual relation by copying the desires of another, it immediately forgets the origin of its movements and the influence it is subject to and seeks to appropriate this origin to itself by claiming the anteriority of its desires over those of its model—and it does this with the confident feeling that it is acting in good faith (Oughourlian 2016, 95). The explication of the psychological movement that produces the self of desire is subject to what René Girard called misrecognition. It is not readily available to consciousness due to the nature of the exchange. The suggestion and the reciprocal imitation happen

simultaneously that the misrecognition stated by Oughourlian above takes place. Interdividual psychology fashions us with the psychological time that witnesses the mimetic psychological movement.

Girard uses many terms to describe the unconsciousness of the mimetic process. In *Violence and the Sacred*, he used the French, “méconnaissance”. In *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, he used “unconsciousness” and “ignorance” to describe the attitude of the persecutors. In *The Girard Reader*, “méconnaissance” translates as ‘misunderstanding’ (Girard 1996, 69). These terms express the confused vision inherent in the mimetic process responsible for the unconsciousness. Scott Cowdell in the second chapter of his work on the mimetic theory, *René Girard and Secular Modernity*, translated the term “méconnaissance” to mean misrecognition. According to him, Girard gives to all such misrecognition, perennially necessary for a smoothly functioning scapegoat mechanism, the French name “méconnaissance” (Cowdell 2013, 81). The misrecognition runs through all the stages of the mimetic process making it a distinct character of mimetic desire. From rivalry, to the scapegoat mechanism, the participants must express some form of misapprehension for the system to work. Agreeing to this fact, Cowdell confirms that this “méconnaissance”, shared by the whole crowd, extends to the fact of the whole scapegoating mechanism itself, not just to the individual so designated (100).

Although the usage of unconsciousness resembles that of the psychoanalysis, Girard, as well as Wolfgang Palaver and Jean-Michel Oughourlian warns against such understanding of the term and its usage. In *The Girard Reader*, the scapegoat effect is real; it is an unconscious phenomenon, but not in the sense of Freud (Girard 1996, 11). It is part of the reality of the Interdividual relationship that constitutes the self. For Palaver, the unconscious processes to which Girard refers concern the individual or

interdividual level, the misapprehension of the mimetic nature of desire and, on the collective level, the religious disguising of these interpersonal processes. His concepts of misapprehension, ignorance, and unconsciousness must therefore not be understood in connection with psychoanalysis (Palaver 2013, 152). The “self between”, using the expression of Eugene Webb (1993), means that the misrecognition operates in between the model and the subject. The object is identified as the self of desire, but the ownership is in contention. From a didactic point of view, we know that it belongs to the model, but the rivals are not aware of this. Even the observers are often confused as to the ownership of the desire, especially in the double bind, when the rivals mirror each other.

Interdividual psychology designates the phenomena of suggestion and imitation as the back and forth psychological movement of desire between the model and the subject. The idea of a “back and forth” rather than a “straight forward” triangular movement from model to subject, arose from the double bind. We recall that in the double bind, rivals mirror each other to the extent of undifferentiation. Hence the universal mimesis is a back and forth movement of desire. Oughourlian notes that at the points where the model and the subject are located, the back and forth movement of desire is of equal intensity. ‘They are able to reverse direction over and over with enormous rapidity within the permanent framework of the relation between [model and subject].’ (Oughourlian 2010, 97; in bracket mine) The exchange at both ends takes place simultaneously that they become one and the same thing. The time of the psychological movement of our discussion becomes what is known in Interdividual psychology as the “psychological time”. This whole psychological sequence will constitute a new time—psychological time, the time of memory, the only time that has any meaning for the subjectivity of human beings, the only one that appears true and in accord with reality (Oughourlian 2010, 97). The psychological time captures the simultaneous exchange

that eludes us in the “physical time”. The psychological time features what is misrecognition in the physical time. The psychological is the time of memory as opposed to the physical time, ‘the time of objective reality, of clocks and universal gravitation’ (98).

What created the necessity for the creation of the psychological time is explained by the psychological movement. Interindividual human relationship possesses as it were a character of misappropriation. It is always in the habit to forget the origin of its movements and the influence it is subject to. The resultant effect is a violent appropriation of the “self between”. The physical time moves from the past to the future, while the psychological time, the time of memory, moves in reverse direction, from the future to the past. The sequence of the psychological movement is open only to the psychological time. For it is only when the mind is directed in reverse of the physical time, can the reality of the source of the self of desire be determined. In the words of Oughourlian (2016): the psychological time “climbs back up” physical time.

It takes the reversing of time in memory to capture the psychological movement. According to Oughourlian, this is what happens in hypnosis. According to him, when a patient is in a hypnotic trance, this allows us to gain direct and easy access to his “unconscious”—from the point of view of mimetic psychology we would say, to the “otherness” of his desire—bypassing the habitual psychological roadblocks (forgetfulness, worldview, denial, and so on) (Oughourlian 2010, 33). The patient is made to relive and experience in a reverse of time. The psychological time is similar to what happens in hypnosis. He gives an example of how the psychological time works:

I know that I have been in a certain city before, and I have vivid memories of some of the things I did or some of the people I saw in that city, and I can make those moments present to my mind now—but I am totally unable to tell you whether they occurred ten or twenty years ago. In other words, I am totally

unable to evaluate the physical time between today and the time that my memory presents to me. “Time regained” in the Proustian sense is not physical time, because what Proust “regains” are not “durations” but sensations, emotions, and images. (Oughourlian 2016, 40)

The way the mind works in psychological time entails the accumulation of events within a short space of time, different from the physical time. One can travel twenty or fifty years in a second, and suddenly remember an emotion, a sensation, a feeling or an entire scene that happened thirty years ago, and that scene becomes present before one’s eyes (41). The psychological time, “significant in lived experience”, according to Oughourlian (2016), is possible through reflection. If reflection is able to capture the psychological time, then we are on the right path to the good mimesis.

4.5.3. Misrecognition and Unconsciousness

The psychological movement of desire constitutes the self of desire that is captured in the psychological time as we have seen so far from our explication of Interindividual psychology. It has become obvious that what is misrecognition is not unconsciousness as in the psychoanalytic sense of the word. It is not forgetfulness, but misrecognition as stated. ‘...it is not a matter of mere forgetting because if one forgets something, this implies that one once knew it. It is in fact a matter of active misrecognition...’ (Oughourlian 2016, 39) The mind is not able to immediately reverse to memory due to the sequence and nature of the psychological movement. The reciprocity between the model and the subject reverse direction over and over with enormous rapidity, more than the mind can capture, hence the misrecognition and the consequent misappropriation, rivalry.

It is important to note that misrecognition and unconsciousness, with regard to the mimetic theory, are of different origins as we have seen. Consciousness, as I expressed through the Freudian identification, is based on an individual relationship with the object, object-desire. It operates outside the circle of the mimetic theory, i.e. the Interdividual relationship that accommodates the triangular desire. It is unconscious because triangular desire is precluded. While the misrecognition results from an inability of the mind to capture in psychological time the Interdividual relationship.

Misrecognition is a character of Interdividual relationship because as Oughourlian observed, the self exists by misrecognition of its origin in desire. According to the logic of these hypotheses, the self, which is engendered by the desire that constitutes it, and is in turn simply the desire of the other mimetically transposed, will in most cases maintain itself in existence by way of two forms of misrecognition, or *méconnaissance* (Oughourlian 2011). The character of misrecognition is not negative; rather it is the very character of the mimetic process to achieve its aim through some form of ambiguity. The psychological movement takes place in psychological time.

This misunderstanding will remain “normal” and functional to the extent that the other is taken as a model, that is, to the extent that the interdividual relation remains peaceful (Oughourlian 2011). This is not always the case because in mimetic relationship, both model and subject are contenders. Once rivalry sets in, the misrecognition becomes pathogenic because it embraces a double claim: a claim on the part of the self to ownership of its own desire, and a claim on the part of the desire to its anteriority to the desire of the other, to priority over the other’s desire (Oughourlian 2011). The model will resist the imitation of his suggestion, while the subject will insist on imitation of what is suggested. The resolution of this conflict, according to Girard, is to focus on the object. In this sense, the self of desire, the very aim of desire. The self must bear in

mind the desire that constituted it. The object of desire is the focus of the next chapter. We shall consider the authenticity of this self of desire emanating from the Interindividual psychology.

5. Self of Desire and Authenticity

According to Interindividual Psychology, desire gives life to the self and animates it through its movement. The psychological movement, similar to mimesis, recognizes the Interindividual nature of desire and the rejection of the autonomous self. Jean-Michel Oughourlian recognizes the psychological movement as the only movement capable of producing the self. The self cannot lay claim of the desire that constitutes it. The self is in the habit to lay claims on its anteriority thereby denying its alterity. Conflict results in the denial of the alterity that created the self. The self, due to misrecognition, is in denial of the alterity by claiming anteriority, i.e. ownership of the self. The reality is that it is foremost a created self, and must be understood as such. How authentic then is this “self” produced by desire? The question presumes the stand of the proponents of Lonergan on desire and authenticity. They asked the question: Is all desire mimetic? They are convinced of a human desire that is not constituted of the other. A desire that intrinsic to what it means to be human. Following the natural desire of Christian philosophy, Lonergan proposed an a priori condition of possibility of a human desire, a core to human identity. His demonstration of this authentic core is more idealistic than practical. It is proper to mention here that there is no single publication of a systematic development of the Mimetic Theory. As Paisley Livingston mentioned in his work *Models of Desire*, that what the works of Girard offers are highly insightful and far-reaching general suggestions. This thesis among other things, is a systematic presentation of the development of the Mimetic theory. Thus it happens that critics often do not have a complete view of Girard’s thought.

The criticisms from the proponents of Lonergan theory advocate that all desires are not mimetic. They see a complementarity of Lonergan’s desire in the mimetic theory,

especially Neil Ormerod, a professor of the Australian Catholic University. He defended the stand of Lonergan in two articles: “Desire and the Origins of Culture: Lonergan and Girard in Conversation” (2011), and “Is all desire Mimetic? Lonergan and Girard on the Nature of Desire and Authenticity” (2012).

I shall employ James Alison’s construction of a new anthropology informed by the Mimetic Theory. His deconstruction of the theology of atonement is a critique of Lonergan’s Christian anthropology. His work, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes* (1998) is helpful in this regard. Alison demonstrates in his work a good understanding of both mimetic theory and the Interdividual psychology. His work represents a coherent mimetic anthropology. John P. Edwards in his article, “James Alison’s Theological Appropriation of Girard”, acknowledged the obvious influence of Girard on Alison. According to Edwards, ‘What Alison means here is that a theory can only be applied to a particular question effectively if the one applying it understands the historical and relational context within which the theory first became possible.’ (Edwards 2017) Alison’s deep understanding of the originating context of the mimetic theory, namely the Interdividual experience, featured in his application of the theory to Theology of the Cross. He studied carefully the mimetic understanding of the Cross according to Girard in order to sieve out the inherent mimetic anthropology. Edwards notes that;

The mimetic theory has illuminating power for Christian theological method because it became discoverable through the apostolic witnesses’ reception of Christian revelation in the resurrection of Jesus. In other words, Christian theological method and mimetic theory share a common context of origin (Edwards 2017).

He went further to state that Alison believes that applying mimetic theory to theological questions is most effective in the realm of theological method, rather than within the

realm of the particular doctrines or content of Christian faith (Edwards 2017). I will not reflect this last point of Edwards because the aim of this research is a presentation that has no reference to religious faith, a point stressed by Girard himself.

The influence of the great theologian, Raymund Schwager on Girard is obvious in the development of the non-sacrificial reading of the gospels. My preference for Alison is on his insistence and conviction in a mimetic humanity capable of good and evil. Petra Steinmair-Pösel in her article, “Original Sin, Positive Mimesis” noted the difference in approach between Schwager and Alison; Schwager and Alison suppose a historical core behind the text. However, they differ slightly in their hypothetical reconstruction of the original scene at the verge of hominization:

While Schwager interprets the fall as “anthropoids” not living up to the full potential for self-transcendence into which they were evolving, Alison suggests that, in a situation of mimetic conflict, the “humanandi” tread a path of violence rather than a path of yielding to each other. (Steinmair-Pösel 2017)

Schwager insists on a wounded humanity in need of divine healing, which is the very foundation of the theology of atonement. He uses the term anthropoids to refer to human species created by God. Our interest in Alison is basically his understanding and application of the mimetic theory. He uses “humanandi” to emphasize the aspect in all humanity that is prone to violence.

The authenticity of the self between will enable us to set the path to the good mimesis which according to this research is reflective mimesis. Oughourlian had already suggested the possibility of getting to the psychological time through reflection. The authenticity of the self between defines the good mimesis which is basically the recognition of the model as such. The recognition of the model implies the acceptance

of the self that is created by the mimetic process. The reflective effort is boosted by the authentic self between. The embodiment of knowledge that informs reflective mimesis depends on this authenticity. The behavioural pattern to be developed as reflective mimesis, promises to be an authentic disposition towards every relationship.

5.1. Bernard Lonergan and natural desire for God

Bernard Lonergan was a Canadian Jesuit priest born in Buckingham, Quebec, on December 17, 1904. His major work, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* was greatly influenced by the cognitive theory of Thomas Aquinas. The key to his academic enquiry is the 'self-appropriation' which describes him as a transcendental Thomist. Other influences include Augustine and his fellow Jesuits, Emerich Coreth, Karl Rahner, and Joseph Marechal. He died on the 26 of November, 1984.

In the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, self-appropriation is considered to be fundamental to being authentic. Self-appropriation is presented in a manner that its definition is more difficult than its attainment. 'Insight may be described as a set of exercises in which, it is hoped, one attains self-appropriation.' (Lonergan 1980: 3) For Lonergan, the existence of an ideal presupposes the pursuit of this ideal through knowledge. Knowledge is therefore the pursuit of the unknown in the sense of a lack of the method of attaining such knowledge. This intimate tendency to pursue knowledge is built on the Aristotelian dictum: 'All men naturally desire to know.' (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1,1) Thus, for Lonergan, self-appropriation is the understanding of the self as the ideal of knowledge: myself as intelligent, as asking questions, as requiring intelligible answers (Lonergan 1980, 14). The ideal knowledge we seek is unattainable because 'there does not exist naturally, spontaneously, through the whole of history, a set of propositions, conceptions, and

definitions that define the ideal of knowledge' (14). The ideal knowledge is not conceptually explicit. Thus, through self-appropriation, the natural desire to know, we come to the ideal knowledge, God. Self-appropriation is like moving backwards into the intelligent "self", the self that is asking the question—the natural self that constantly desires to know. According to him, by moving into this intelligent self, '...is reaching what is pre-predicative, pre-conceptual, pre-judicial' (15). Self-appropriation is the insight into the natural tendency in us to desire the ideal. Insight is a series of exercises in which we move towards the functionally operative tendencies that ground the ideal of knowledge (17). Self-appropriation presupposes the presence of an ideal in the self, thus, 'we already have our ideals of what knowledge is, and we want to do self-appropriation according to the ideal that is already operative in us—not merely in terms of the spontaneous, natural ideal, but in terms of some explicit ideal' (18). This is the existential element of self-appropriation. From the above, we understand that desire for Lonergan is a desire for the ideal knowledge. The desire to know the ideal is not mimetic, it is natural to man. This forms the spring board of the Lonergan affirmation of an authenticity that is not mimetic.

5.2. Neil Ormerod: Not all desire is mimetic.

According to Neil Ormerod, Lonergan defines desire as 'an appetite for, or an act of striving after an object that is absent or not possessed' (Ormerod 2011). Desire implies insight in the sense that insight, 'the pure, detached, disinterested desire to know' (Ormerod 2011). For Lonergan, the ideal knowledge is the knowledge of God. The natural desire to know the ideal is the desire to know God. Ormerod affirms that, the desire to know which Lonergan thus identifies as a desire for God becomes the central theme of his major work, *Insight* (Ormerod 2011). He argues in his article, "Is All Desire Mimetic? Lonergan and Girard on the Nature of Desire and Authenticity"

(2012), that this very desire to know God is not mimetic. It is natural to man to seek God. He linked this affirmation with the famous quotation from Augustine's *Confession*, 'You have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.' (Augustine *Confessions*, Bk 1) Ormerod completely agrees with Lonergan on the natural rather than mimetic desire. According to him, the most important is his distinction between natural and elicited desire, between transcendental notions of being and value revealed in our fundamental orientation to meaning, truth and goodness, and its categorical manifestations in particular apprehensions which elicit particular desires within consciousness (Ormerod 2011).

He understands the mimetic desire of René Girard but argues that it is not the only way desire is elicited in us. According to him:

Girard's account of the mimetic desire is a psychological account which prescind from the more spiritual dimension of consciousness; that is, it prescind from the intelligent grasp, reasonable judgment and responsible deliberation of the subject which Lonergan highlights. (Ormerod 2011)

He joined Lonergan to underscore mimetic desire as elicited desire. This is based on Lonergan's distinction between natural appetite and appetitive act. Girard's mimetic desire will come under what is known as appetitive acts. This is because it does not involve what Lonergan termed unconscious appetite which is a mere tendency towards an object. The emphasis is on the absence of intelligent grasping, a conscious tendency towards the ideal. For him then, in seeking knowledge, not only do we tend towards it, not only do we do so consciously, but we also do so intelligently (Lonergan 1980, 5). The distinction gives the impression of an instinctual mimesis desire.

Neil Ormerod's approach exposes the "transcendental Thomistic" influence of Lonergan's thought. The scholastics distinguished natural, acquired, and infused habits (5). Ormerod premised the mimetic desire from a negative approach of a conflictual mimesis. Girard did mention in his analysis as mentioned in the third chapter, that mimetic desire is unconscious. The Interdividual nature of desire presupposes this unconscious. As such, Lonergan's natural desire shares the same unconsciousness with the mimetic desire. Ormerod's inability to link the mimetic desire with the natural desire to the ideal, God, is because of Girard's proposition of the Imitation of Christ as the solution to the anthropological crisis caused by mimetic desire. For him, authentic desire need not be mimetic, but natural. Mimesis is viewed from its negative implications, reminiscent of Platonism.

5.3. James Alison: the mimetic definition of the human being

James Alison in his work, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes*, outlined a brilliant definition of the human being from the mimetic point of view using the principles of the Interdividual psychology. The second chapter of his work summed up all the conclusions of Interdividual psychology while exposing the subjectivism of the transcendental approach of theological anthropology. He fashioned a new anthropology modelled after the conclusions of Interdividual psychology. The arguments of Doran and Ormerod hinge on the issue of authenticity. Authenticity is for them a naturally given, hence their insistence on Lonergan's intellectual desire. The intellectual desire is the insight that is accessed through self-appropriation. Instead of individual criticism of Ormerod and Doran, I prefer to do so through Alison's mimetic anthropology. Alison blended the mimetic self of desire into the authenticity of what he calls 'gratuitous receivers of what is lived in gratuity'.

5.3.1. A New Anthropology

Alison acknowledges the need for a new theological anthropology that will accommodate the reality of the human condition as understood in the modern time. He advocates for an anthropology that will accommodate the mimetic nature of human experience as “a divinely revealed one” (Alison 1998, 24). He dismissed the propositions of Walter Kasper and John Milbank, as to what should inform any Christian anthropology in order to avoid any altering of the faith. “Kasper's dogmatics to a critical elaboration of a Christian anthropology” and “Milbank's ontological analysis to practical Christian living” represent for Alison, an entrapment into some special private insight into what humankind is like (24). The reality of human mimetic nature is undeniable. It is responsible for the best and the worst in human beings as Girard rightly stated.

From the outset, Alison affirms that;

It is in the context of an anthropology of wisdom, or conversion, as revealed discovery mediating between a revealed perspective and a dialectical anthropology that [he] would like to situate the mimetic understanding theorized by René Girard (24).

Conversion according to Girard is the realization of one's involvement in rivalry. This realization does not come to mind easily but works towards resolution of the mimetic crisis. Alison relies on mindful recognition rather than the religious foundation of the discovery of the mimetic solution of human crisis in the sacrificial system. He does not see any arbitrary connection between the religious foundation of the sacrificial system and the possibility of a divinely revealed anthropology.

5.3.2. The failure of the theology of atonement

The theology of Atonement as Alison portrayed it, is based on the understanding of a humanity stained by sin. It is, as mentioned above, hinged on the penal substitution model. He articulated this theology thus:

It dictates the terms of reference within which we understand who God is—someone who is first pleased with creation, then angry with sin, then pleased with his Son's sacrifice; it dictates the understanding of the sort of atonement offered by Christ, and thus of his life and ministry; and it dictates the parameters of the sort of struggle with which we engage in our moral lives. (Alison 1998, 8)

The sacrificial benefit of the cross is the saving solution that will substitute for the transgressions of humanity. Humanity sinned; God is angry and demands a sacrifice. He sends his Son to die on the cross in order to liberate humanity from the wrath of God. The major failure of the theology of atonement is its inability to state the distinctive significance of the cross. This question is expressed in the opening chapters of the work of S. Mark Heim's *Saved from Sacrifice: a theology of the cross* (2006). The church owes the theology of Atonement to the Patristic era, especially to Anselm of Canterbury. In his *Cur Deus Homo*, he expresses the inability of humanity in offsetting the debt of original sin. This warranted divine intervention of the incarnation. The cross represents the divine intervention. It is a saving act.

The Atonement theology of Anselm presented the understanding of a bargain. Restitution is to be made in order to release humanity from the infinite debt due to the original sin. According to Heim,

Anselm's departure is to insist with new systematic rigor that it is actually coming from God. What we need to be saved from is the deserved wrath and punishment of God. God wishes to be merciful, and so God becomes the one

to be punished on behalf of us all. God strikes the blow that God protects us from. (Heim 2006, 299)

By presenting salvation as undeserved, it is proper to present God's mercy as a gift. But why must it be a violent death of an innocent that will appease God?

In the same stance, Michael Hardin in his article "Practical Reflections on Nonviolent Atonement" (2014) supports the deconstruction of this edifice of penal substitution because it has no direct effect on humanity. According to him,

In the penal theory, Jesus' death involves nothing more than a forensic transaction between the Father and the Son, which, if believed, functions as an eternal fire insurance policy. Atonement has nothing to do with our actual living of the Christian life. (Hardin 2014)

The cross is the insistence on the use of violence as experienced in the fight against terrorism by the United States. Although Hardin's emphasis is on the Protestant theology traced to Calvinism, its employment in this research is not a criticism of Protestantism. It is rather a research into a new anthropology, one that will work for humanity towards peaceful coexistence.

The above, through the lens of the mimetic theory presents the cross as a paradigm of the scapegoat mechanism. The cross conceals what it was meant to reveal. God cannot approve the violent death of the innocent as atonement for sin. The evil of victimization is what the cross opposes. It makes sense to present the cross thus. Besides it adds up the logic that "Jesus died for us", i.e. died on the cross to abolish the scapegoating. At this, the logic of guilty humanity becomes obvious. We are guilty of the scapegoating which still rears its ugly face in our contemporary society. It is against the above that

Alison advocates for a new anthropology that will accommodate the reality of the mimetic desire responsible for human error.

5.3.3. The Gratuitous Self of Desire

James Alison agrees with the psychological movement of mimesis that constitutes the self, by affirming the three dimensions of mimesis as imitation in space, repetition in time, and reproduction in the species (Alison 1998, 28). By this he affirms an anteriority of the other prior to any self-consciousness. This point rarely reflects in treatises of anthropology. The anteriority of the other is the important aspect of the new anthropology. It accommodates the anteriority that is clearly denied in other anthropologies as we saw in Lonergan. The emphasis on an intellectual desire is to establish the subjective self. According to the triangular desire, the object is mere illusion. What is at stake is the “desirability” conferred by the model on the object. Desirability of the object cannot be shared; it belongs to the model. The model keeps that which cannot be shared to himself. What it means is that the subjectivity we claim is always a reflection of the anterior otherness. The value of the object is determined by the model, the anterior otherness that is denied. It is denied because of misrecognition that characterizes it. The desirability of the object is first suggested by the model before ever it is imitated by the subject. Oughourlian insists that misrecognition is a character of Interdividual relationship because the self exists by misrecognition of its origin in desire. The self, which is engendered by the desire that constitutes it and is in turn simply the desire of the other mimetically transposed, will in most cases maintain itself in existence by way of misrecognition.

The universal mimesis presents both a network of mimesis and a continuous movement as can be observed in the galaxies. The continuous movement of the celestial bodies

prevents them from collision. The same is applicable to the psychological movement. The continuous psychological movement presupposes continuous creation of the self of desire. Avoidance of collision rests on the recognition of the self as created by the other anterior to it. It is the recognition that prevents collision of the psychological movement. The first step towards the good mimesis is the recognition of the mimetically created self. The subject recognizes the anteriority of the desire of the Other that it imitates. When the object recognizes the model as such, then the mimesis is non-conflictual. Again, we reiterate that the major concern of this research is how to live with this recognition.

The authenticity of the subjective self from the critics of the mimetic theory is founded on a phantom misrecognition. This is clear through the lens of Interindividual psychology. Authenticity lies in the expression of the self as “gratuitous receivers of what is lived in gratuity”. Alison is supportive of this fact when he notes that, in principle, the recognition of the alterity of the desire which forms the “self” is possible, and therefore the other is not an object over against “me,” and my knowledge of the other is part of being consubstantial with it (39). The self-centeredness at work in the subject is visible due to the resistance of anteriority of the other. For Girard this self-centeredness is other-centeredness as well; it is not one-sided egotism; it is an impulse in two contradictory directions which always ends by tearing the individual apart. (Girard 1996, 50)

Recognition therefore implies both otherness and anteriority in a manner that is gratuitous. The dichotomy is collapsed to the degree in which the “self” shifts from a pattern of rivalistic *meconnaissance* of the other, which is anterior to it, to the

beginnings of a pacific reconnaissance. (50). A mindfulness that will accommodate simultaneously, the self and the anteriority of its alterity is the meaning of recognition.

This idea of the self as “gratuitous receivers”, aligns with the “self” constituted by desire. The universal mimesis establishes the network of receiving and giving, (the back and forth movement of suggestion and imitation). What is received is what was given.

This brings us to the question of the character of the self as good or bad?

The new anthropology established by Alison is summed up thus;

The great anthropological transformation, therefore, is of the way in which we move from being constituted by an anterior desire which moves us into deadlock, by grasping and appropriating our sense of being, to being constituted by a self-giving other that can be received only as constantly and perpetually self-giving, as gratuitous, and therefore never grasped, never appropriated, but only received and shared. (Alison 1998, 45)

The challenge is to fashion out a mental attitude that will imbibe the realization of the self-giving “other” that can be received only as constantly and perpetually self-giving.

The obstacle of misrecognition is the factor that impedes the realization of the self-giving other that must be shared as received. The giving and receiving is the human character and identity. “Gratuitous” as Alison used it, has two aspects. The receiving and giving aspect on the one hand and on the other hand is the recognition of this movement. Both aspects constitute the gratuitous self of desire.

5.3.4. Non-conflictual Mimetic Desire and the Gratuitous Self of Desire

Mimetic desire is responsible for the fragility of human relations. The tendency of mimetic desire to misrecognition results in conflict. Desire is always in the habit of appropriation of another’s being. If we uphold the dictum “agere sequitur esse”, can we equally uphold the gratuitous self as a “good self”? It is important to ask a direct

question: Is mimetic desire good? The emphasis is on mimetic desire *per se*. This is different from the question: Is all desire mimetic? Here we are looking at desire as such. Although we can see the relation of the two from the point of desire, Girard envisaged these questions in any form they appear in his writings. This is the case in his interview with Rebecca Adams in “Violence, Difference, Sacrifice: A Conversation with René Girard”. He argues from what he calls the “Literary shift into hypermimeticism” (Adams and Girard 1993). Girard observed that modern literature expresses the mimetic crisis as if that is all there is to reality. However, he blamed himself for oftentimes not specifying *conflictual mimesis* instead of mimetic desire. Often times when Girard mentions the mimetic desire, it has a negative understanding. He switches between mimetic desire and conflictual mimesis. Our emphasis of the self emerging from mimetic desire is a presumption of mimetic desire in general. In *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, Girard affirmed the intrinsic goodness of the mimetic desire. According to him, mimetic desire is intrinsically good (Girard 2001, 15). This goodness is based on freedom. Although freedom is not vividly experiential going by the misrecognition of the mimetic process, Girard argues in comparison to the animalistic fixation on determined objects. This is understood, but not convincing enough.

We need to distinguish the crisis that results from mimesis due to misrecognition and the act of mimesis itself. In other words, is the problem in mimesis of the human element engaged? This is not a kind of Cartesian dualism. In his conversation with Rebecca Adams, he recognized his unconscious emphasis in the negative usage of the term mimetic desire. According to him, mimetic desire, even when bad, is intrinsically good, in the sense that far from being merely imitative in a small sense, it's the opening out of oneself (Adams and Girard 1993). Openness is the reality that is constant in mimesis. It takes the form of mimesis itself in the sense that mimesis is responsible for

the best and the worst in us. For Girard, this openness is for rivalry or devotion to others. Openness as a quality of mimesis is a pathway to possibilities. Nothing is as worthwhile as that imbued with possibilities as the human being. In her own opinion, Steinmair-Pösel from the point of view of a distinctive humanizing trait, the mimetic desire is good. She observed the simultaneous development of the invincible and the indispensable mimesis in the works of Girard. She agrees to a good mimesis by citing Girard's work, *Battling to the End*. According to her, Girard describes how—for a long time—he had tried “to think of Christianity as a higher position.” But he has arrived at the realization that “we cannot escape mimetism” (Steinmair-Pösel 2017). Therefore, I agree with Girard on the intrinsic goodness of mimesis. Like a double-edged sword, all depends on who handles it. The continuous goodness of mimetic desire depends on the human agent that inheres it.

Also, the understanding of mimetic desire as that responsible for the best and the worst in us, gives the impression of “ambivalence”. Here ambivalence is understood as the coexistence of contradictory realities, e.g. love and hate. R. Scott Appleby's explication and usage of ambivalence in his work *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, is of special interest. He characterized ambivalence as a human experience. This is because his work is centred on the human understanding and interpretation of the “sacred” in religion. From an experiential perspective, ambivalence lies not in the sacred but in the human interpretation. According to him, ambiguity characterizes human experience, as any adult well knows, because reality presents itself as a series of interacting changes with often unpredictable effects, leading one to choose among variously imperfect courses and competing explanations, and forcing one to accept the consequences of the decision (Appleby 2000, 29). Ambivalence is a problem of perception, experience. This corresponds to Girard's *méconnaissance* or misrecognition. The misrecognition is on

the part of the human agent. In all his allusion to misrecognition, Girard refers not to mimetic desire but the human agent. Palaver notes that “the unconscious processes to which Girard refers concern, on the individual or interindividual level, the misapprehension of the mimetic nature of desire...” (Palaver 2016, 152). Misappropriation or misrecognition is always a human attribute in relation to mimetic desire. Mimetic desire *per se* is intrinsically good.

Another consideration pointed out by Rebecca Adams with regard to the nature of mimetic desire is the idea of “pharmakon”. Pharmakon as “a medicine” or “a poison”, fits well to the nature of mimesis. On the one hand, it is the reason for the fragility of all human relations, and on the other hand responsible for human relationship. Girard mentions consistently in all his works the inevitable and invincible mimetic desire. What he proposes is a mimetic conversion and not a total abandonment which is not possible. For him, conversion from conflictual desire is possible. “Even if persons cannot resist it, they can convert away from it.” (Adams and Girard 1993) The solution to the mimetic crisis is mimesis. Only mimesis can cure mimesis.

5.3.5. Recognition and the Gratuitous Self of Desire

There is no doubt about the goodness of the gratuitous self of desire derived from the Interindividual psychology. The gratuitous self is the real object of desire. It is the *being* targeted by every mimetic allusion. It is the embodiment of what Girard regards as “a mass of behaviours, attitudes, things learned, prejudices, preferences” (Girard 2001, 15). Mimetic desire is the desire to be another. The gratuitous self of desire is received and shared simultaneously in a psychological time. The psychological time is different from the physical time. The psychological time is the time of memory. It “climbs back up” physical time. Human thinking will have to climb back up time in order to picture the exchange of desire as such. The human mind will have to habitually shift in

functionality in order to capture reality in the psychological time. For Oughourlian, the realization of this fact is what I call the recognition of the otherness of my desire, which leads to peace and wisdom (42). The challenge is how to condition the mind in a mimetic manner, attuned to recognition.

What Interdividual psychology gave us is the real object, the very being that every mimetic desire strives, which is the gratuitous self of desire. Interdividual psychology failed to offer a mimetic mindset or disposition towards the gratuitous self of desire. The understanding of a psychological timing signifies the nature of the mimetic disposition adequate for constant recognition. The bone of contention is recognition and how to develop it as an attitude of the mind. It is basically an attitude of the mind. The human factor of misrecognition thus explained in Interdividual psychology, is difficult to overcome. Could this difficulty explain the recourse of Girard to a Christological solution?

Recognition is what characterizes a good mimesis. What is good in mimesis is the non-conflictual imitation. Non-conflictual imitation is the recognition of the model as such. Recognition is an attitude of the mind in relationship. What is recognized is the gratuitous self of desire. Recognition recalls what took place in the psychological time. There is nothing religious about recognition in terms of how it comes about in the desiring person. It is an attitude of the mind that must be developed. It is basically a lost human possibility in the events of life. Girard's obsession for the sacrificial system lured him to a Christological solution. There is no doubting the fact of a religious understanding of the fury of violence. The relationship is between violence and religion. But Girard seems to be making a connection between mimesis and religious. Mimesis is not fundamentally religious; it is basically a human attribute. It is endemic and not epidemic. The collapse of the sacrificial system presupposes the ascent of human

reason. The regulatory function of human reason is what is achieved in recognition. I wish to distinguish this connection in order to explicate my shift from a religious solution. Sacrifice is substitution. The violence that results from mimetic conflict is what religion diverts through substitution. Recognition is the recollection of the mind of the mimetic process formerly misrecognized due to the rapidity of the mimetic exchange of desires. The rapidity of the exchange of mimesis is subject to misrecognition. The mind will climb back time in order to recover what was lost. Recognition does not divert nor substitute because it does not foresee conflict. Recognition affirms the mimetic process, hence non-conflictual. It accepts mimetic desire as such, a human reality. It recollects both the anteriority of the model and the created self resulting from the relationship with the model. Recognition is nipping crisis in the bud.

5.4. Substitution and Mimesis

The conflict that religion diverts is due to misrecognition. The renunciation of the will to violence presupposes a substitution characteristic of the sacrificial system. Withdrawal from vengeance implies a responsibility that self-donation guarantees. The crime to which the act of vengeance addresses itself is almost never an unprecedented offence; in almost every case it has been committed in revenge for some prior crime (Girard 1987 14). The ethics of the cross is the imitation of Christ through self-donation. The responsibility involved is connected with the violence that threatens human relationship due to mimetic desire. Girard is obsessed with the sacrificial system due to its ability to understand and tame violence. The function of sacrifice is to quell violence within the community and to prevent conflicts from erupting (14). Violence is not denied but diverted. Girard did not foresee any nipping in the bud of conflictual

mimesis. The unanimity that the sacrificial system enthrones is real. It sustained communities in the primitive era irrespective of its relativity and short-lived.

Sacrificial substitution does not target the “right” victim, rather its targets a surrogate victim devoid of retaliation in order to save both the guilty and the entire community. As such, violence is tamed and diverted. According to Girard, if primitive man insists on averting his attention from the wrongdoer, with an obstinacy that strikes us as either idiotic or perverse, it is because he wishes above all to avoid fuelling the fires of vengeance (22). This character features in self-donation. The ethics of the cross presents Jesus Christ as the innocent lamb of God. Jesus Christ gives in to death by crucifixion in order to save both his accusers and the rest of humanity. It is not about right or wrong. This is the responsibility that befalls one in the ethics of the cross. The decision not to retaliate presupposes a blameless situation. The difference between the sacrificial system and the ethics of the cross is a deliberate self-donation. It is motivated by love and encouraged by grace. It is purely a religious affair.

René Girard’s Christological solution to an anthropological crisis, explained above, is influenced by Raymund Schwager. He proffered the renunciation of the will to violence through “imitatio Christi”. This reality and the path to peaceful coexistence are feasible in the imitation of Christ. While it appears plausible and practical, it does not portray the Interdividual nature of mimetic desire. It is considered a Christian bias. The imitation of Christ as proffered by Girard does not bear the character of the interdividuality of mimetic desire. There must be a model through which the imitation of Christ is transmitted, otherwise mimesis is impossible. It is presented as in the object-desire model. The individual will make a direct attempt at the life of Jesus Christ in order to overcome conflictual mimesis. Girard takes it for granted that the following of Christ will automatically appeal to everyone. Paul Dumouchel in his article “Emotions

and Mimesis” (2011) reminds us that mimesis is experiential. According to him, the “experience” of imitating, for example, as a result of explicit instruction, as when you are learning a sport or craft, typically disappears into the experience of doing whatever it is that you are doing, archery or baking a cake, and the particular feeling of succeeding or failing at it. This is the point that I am making about the imitation of Christ. The good mimesis will follow the basic principles of the mimetic theory in all its entirety.

The Christian bias that is visible in the solution is critical of modernity and dogmatic. The modern world recognizes other religions as authentic paths to peaceful coexistence. Although the cross remains a moment of exposition and expulsion of the scapegoat mechanism, the idea of ascent through grace remains an obstacle to the modern world that has adapted to relativism. What Girard understands by the modernity’s “death of God” is a misrecognition of the death of the sacrificial organization of society. According to Girard,

The death of God is nothing but a misinterpretation of the tremendous desacralizing process brought about by the Christian revelation. The gods who are dying are the sacrificial gods, really, not the Christian God, who has nothing to do with them. (Rebecca and Girard 1993)

He affirms that the demystification of scapegoating is a specifically Christian and Jewish phenomenon. It is prominently displayed in the Hebrew Bible, mostly in narrative form (Rebecca and Girard 1993). This is enough for the modern world to heed to the Christian message.

Girard did not foresee any possibility of victory over conflictual mimesis other than divine grace. The apocalyptic reading of the catastrophic end of conflictual mimesis unchecked is expected to call the modern world to reason. The modern disappearance of differences due to equality is bringing humanity to an apocalyptic end. While the

Cross destroyed the sacrificial order, the modern world has no replacement for the respect of differences. Rather the rise of relativism of the post-modern period creates a breeding ground of undifferentiation for the rise of conflictual mimesis. He senses hypocrisy in the lack of propagation of the Christian faith as the only solution to the mimetic crisis, especially with the collapse of the sacrificial model and its prohibitions. He goes further to say that,

I sense some hypocrisy in those Christians who do not want to acknowledge Christianity's uniqueness anymore. Let us give up all Christian truth-claims, they say, in the name of Christian charity. They do not want to offend the believers of other religions. Behind this attitude I see not so much a genuine respect for other creeds as a lack of respect for all religions, a gnawing suspicion that all are equally mythical, including Christianity. All our attitudes are really a deepening of the crisis of faith which the early twentieth century called modernism. (Rebecca and Girard 1993)

We cannot undermine the reality of secular modernity, especially in the recognition of other religions of the world. While we may not have a definite language to address the facts of Girard's uniqueness of Christianity, this research proposes an anthropological explication that will assist in arriving at a mimetic disposition of the mind and body without reference to any religious faith. Just as the mimetic theory remains the very first rational explication of the cross outside of theology and the Christian faith, it is possible to continue in the path of scientific exposition of mimesis and its possible mimetic cure.

What will follow in our next chapter will be the very contribution to this research which is a mimetic solution to this anthropological crisis. The conviction of this thesis is built on the possibility presented by Girard himself in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*. Here he emphasized the rational apprehension of the triumph of the cross. According to him,

It is possible to give a good and rational explanation of the triumph of the cross without recourse to psychological hypothesis. The triumph of the cross reflects and corresponds to a tangible reality that can be rationally apprehended. The cross has indeed transformed the world, and we can interpret its power in a way that does not have to appeal to religious faith. We can give the triumph of the cross a plausible meaning in a completely rational frame of reference. (Girard 2001, 141)

This is the conviction of a rational analysis and solution to the mimetic crisis without a Christological recourse. The discovery of the mimetic theory has no theological foundation in the sense of a divine inspiration. The scientific explication of literary works of the Romantics revealed a mechanism operating in the world. Further research into sacrificial institutions revealed the victimage mechanism that held the world hostage prior to the cross. Interdividual psychology has provided a solid foundation on which to establish a rational mimetic solution. The challenge is the mindful attitude that will accommodate both the self and the psychological timing of its creation in order to ward off conflict. It is my conviction in this research of arriving at a scientific solution through the enthronement of the regulatory function of reasoning as I propose the “Reflective Mimesis”. The reflective mimesis is an anthropological solution to an anthropological crisis.

6. Reflective Mimesis and Inclusive Humanism

Reflective mimesis is a mimetic rational relationship that does not lead to conflict. It is fundamentally mimetic because it features the Interdividual nature of human relationship. In his rejection of the autonomous self, Girard affirmed in *Resurrection from the Underground: Feodor Dostoevsky* (2012), that, “the Self is not an object alongside other selves, for it is constituted by its relation gratuitous to the Other and cannot be considered outside of this relation” (Girard 2012, 43). The reflective subject recognizes the self between as gratuitous, and responds to it as such. The bone of contention in the conflictual mimesis is the lack of recognition. It eludes the mind, the anteriority of the alterity that creates the self. Through the mind’s ability to reflect, the psychological time can feature the Interdividuality of mimetic desire. In reflective mimesis, recognition becomes part of the mimetic process through tacit knowing. Through tacit knowing, the mind imitates in alertness and not awareness because human consciousness is not steady in the sense of a habitual being aware. Reflection through tacit knowing is conditioned to “alert” recognition.

Recognition in principle is the good mimesis. Girard has suggested that we have to focus on the object if we are to resolve the mimetic crisis. A focus on the object resulted in the discovery of the gratuitous self of desire by overcoming misrecognition that blurs our vision and informs our resistance. Recognition is the ability of the mind to move back and forth. Reflective mimesis is the good mimesis because it is a habitual recognition. Reflection conditions the mind to accept the reality of the alterity anterior to us, to whom we owe our being and from whose being we share with another. This conditioning comes in the form of tacit knowing, which is the experience of reflection in action. To achieve this, we shall take a brief etymological course on the word

“reflection”. I am convinced of the regulatory function of the mind; thus, we shall try to demonstrate the psychological time of Oughourlian as “climbs back up” physical time, through Rodolphe Gasché’s philosophical interpretation of Jacques Derrida’s writings. The attitude of the mind towards reflection could be traced from the optical understanding suggestive of the mirror’s reproduction of image of the self.

I will rely on Daniel Siegel’s exposition that “mindfulness” is the product of a relationship in the brain. The mind can translate into action the product of reflection in relationship with the body. John Paul II in his famous *Fides et Ratio* affirmed this ability of the mind. According to him, “the capacity to search [reflection] for truth and to pose questions itself implies the rudiments of a response” (*Fides et Ratio* 29. in bracket mine). This implies that reflection is related to action. The relationship characterizing the human knowing process through mimesis is featured in the brain and mind relationship. Siegel defined the mind in his work *The Mindful Brain* as an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information (Siegal 2007, 5). Siegel is convinced that ‘we can actually focus on our minds in a way that changes the structure and function of the brain throughout our lives’ (96). In the process of knowing, the mind and body work together to establish what we know. Tacit knowing is an expression of the body’s involvement in the knowing process.

Recognition of the otherness will improve human relationship. Recognition involves respect and understanding. The good mimesis is non-conflictual. It is not the self between that makes mimesis good, but the recognition that is lacking due the mind’s misrecognition. Conflict results from misrecognition. Reflective mimesis on its own will circulate due to universal mimesis. Inclusive humanism in the secular world is hinged on recognition. The disappearance of the prohibitions that controlled human

behaviour towards peace, calls for a new approach to inclusive humanism. The reflective mimesis as a paradigm of inclusive humanism depends on the mind's ability towards reflection in action, i.e. tacit knowing and universal mimesis.

6.1. Etymology of Reflection

Reflection is from the Latin nominative *reflexio*, which literary translates “bend back, turn back”. In the late 14th century English, *reflexio* translates as reflexion. Originally it was an action noun from its Latin past participle stem, *reflectere* — “to bend back”. The word *reflectere* is made up of two syllabi, *Re* (back) and *flectere* (to bend). The *Collins Dictionary* defines it as “an image that you can see in a mirror or in glass or water”. The optical understanding of the word comes from the throwing back of the image of an object from a surface. The object does not pass through, but the image is reflected from the surface. This is typical of the surface of a mirror and other reflective surfaces. From the late 17th century, *reflexion* assumed an attitude of the mind, and in the 18th century, the spelling changed from “reflexion” to “reflection” due to the influence of the verb *reflectere*. The act of reflection is used to describe the mind's action in self-cognition. This came to be known as self-reflection or self-consciousness.

6.2. The Mind and Reflection

The mind has been observed to possess the ability to bend back on itself and its actions. The optical etymology of reflection is used to demonstrate the action of the mind in cognition. Rodolphe Gasché's philosophical interpretation of Jacques Derrida's writings in his book *The Tain of the Mirror* (1986) agrees to the fact that as a consequence of this optic metaphoricity, reflection, when designating the mode and operation by which the mind has knowledge at itself and its operations, becomes analogous to the process whereby physical light is thrown back on the reflecting surface

(Gasché 1986, 16). He attempted a preliminary definition from the convergence of the etymological meaning and the metaphoricity of light thus: reflection is the structure and the process of an operation that, in addition to designating the action of a mirror reproducing an object, implies that mirror's mirroring itself, by which process the mirror is made to see itself (16). This initial attempt at a definition of the mind's action of reflection falls short of an actual definition of the real process of the mind. Different understanding emerged in the course of philosophical history of the proper description of the phenomenology of reflection. The logical, empirical and the transcendental definition of reflection emerged from an attempt at converging the optical etymology and the metaphoricity of light. Gasché observed that the bone of contention "is how reflection as a unitary phenomenon can at once be reflection of Other and reflection of the mirroring subject" (20). A unitary definition is traced back to Thomas Aquinas in his theory of cognition.

In *De Veritate*, Aquinas employed the convergence of the etymological meaning of *reflectere* and the metaphor of light to describe the mind's cognition of itself. In article 6 of *De Veritate*, "Does the human intellect⁹ know singulars?" he was writing of the human mind's ability to extract from matter. He began by affirming the mind's ability at a universal knowledge. According to him, since the likeness of a thing existing in our intellect is received as separated from matter and all the conditions of matter, which are the principles of individuation, it follows that our intellect, of itself, does not know singulars but only universals (*De Veritate* II, 6). The distinction between the likeness of the object and the knowledge of it in the mind is the distinction he is trying to unite in an act of reflection. The mind is fed through the senses and as such is presented with

⁹ For Thomas Aquinas, the intellect is the same as the mind.

what he called *phantasms*.¹⁰ Phantasms are true representations of real objects; as such they contribute to knowledge. With regard to the metaphor of light and the etymological “bending back” of the reflective process, Aquinas states that ‘the likeness in sense is abstracted from the thing as from an object of knowledge, and, consequently, the thing itself is directly known by means of this likeness. The likeness in the intellect, however, is not abstracted from the phantasm as from an object of knowledge but as from a medium of knowledge after the manner in which our sense receives the likeness of a thing which is in a mirror; it is directed to it not as to a thing but rather as to a likeness of a thing.’ (*De Veritate* II, 6) What is achieved here is ‘...that reflection is directed both at the reproduced image or concept of an object and at the act of reflecting itself’ (Gasché 1986, 21). The act of reflection is a mindful process that features the reflecting mind and the content of reflection. It is a unitary process that involves the entire self. This is suggestive of a relationship that involves the mind and the body. In throwing back its light on completed human action, the mind is able to feature itself and the action, thus producing a unitary knowledge of itself in relation to the action.

The sequence of action within the mimetic process had been described by Oughourlian as subject to misrecognition. Misrecognition of the origin of the self in desire is what eludes the mind. The reciprocity between the model and the subject reverses direction over and over with enormous rapidity, more than the mind can capture. The psychological time, the time of memory features the exchange and the anterior alterity. Psychological time is bending back a reflection as we have explained above. Reflection

¹⁰ It is found at the level of the internal senses and constitutes an indispensable step in man's knowing process, where its principal role is to supply a representation of concrete reality from which the intellect extricates the essential meaning. (Aquinas 1952)

is the ability of the mind to capture the psychological time. Through reflection the mind can view the physical time in a kind of replay.

From a psychological perspective, Daniel Siegel explains the relationship that characterizes the brain's activity in support of the above. In his work on the *Mindful Brain*, he notes that mind is not "just" brain activity; energy and information flow happen in a brain within the body and it happens within relationships (Siegel 2007, 49). From a biological perspective, the mind is both embodied in the brain and related to the brain in its functioning. We can say that the mind is biologically part of the brain, but must be in relationship with the brain in order to regulate the flow of energy and information. The regulatory functioning of the mind is possible within the mind's relationship with the brain. The quest for reflective mimesis depends on this fact. The human agent within the mimetic process is not passive and the mind is not veiled but confused due to the sequence of events. He defined the mind as a process that regulates the flow of energy and information (5). As such mindfulness is possible within the relationship of the mind and brain, body and mind. Siegel's explanation of mindfulness as an activity of the mind is like reflection. According to him, mindful awareness is the mind entering a 'conscious attention ... [to] both appreciate its contents and also come to regulate its flow in a new way'. (5). Consciousness or awareness depends on reflection.

Siegel's *Mindful Brian* gears towards achieving a kind of awareness that is habitual. He writes of mindful awareness as a habit that can be inculcated through mediation exercises. His work is a clinical application of mindful awareness in mental health. My interest in his work is the explication of the relationship within mind's activities. His demonstration of this relation in the brain's relation with the mind is my sole interest.

He is convinced that permanent change is possible through the utilization of this relationship. We can focus on our minds in a way that changes the structure and function of the brain. He employs mindful awareness towards achieving a non-judgmental paying attention in order to open up to novelty in every experience. Similarly, we can focus the mind through reflection to be alert to recognize the model as a model. Recognition of the alterity that created the self in the mimetic process can feature as part of human relationship.

6.3. Recognition and Reflection

Recognition and reflection are both attitudes of the mind. We shall engage a phenomenological explication of these mindful activities within the context of mimetic relationship. Recognition is achieved through reflection. Recognition, according to Oughourlian, leads to wisdom. To gain wisdom and peace, to escape from the rivalry that lies in wait for us, we have to see reality as it really is, to learn the truth about the mimetic desire that runs through us (Oughourlian 2010, 96). The model must be perceived as the model in order to avoid conflict. This is only possible through recognition. He defines recognition as the ability of the mind to perceive the otherness of my desire. According to him, only the past related by memory is considered as real. And this past, this psychological time, is in reality the inverse of physical time, which means also the contrary of the reality of things (Oughourlian, 2016, 42). Reflection is the mind's ability to inverse the physical time in order to get to the actions deposited in memory.

Reflection is the mind's relationship with memory. It is the bridge between the past and the present. The misrecognition is unravelled through the mind's ability to reflect memory. We have stated earlier that misrecognition is a character of the desiring

subject, the self. The self is always in the habit to deny the anterior alterity. The psychological movement of desire is not ambiguous in itself; rather the mind is not able to conceive it. The rapid exchange eludes the mind. Thus, it is in the mind to misrecognize the psychological movement. Misrecognition is an attitude of the mind that leads to appropriation of the self between, self of desire. Two things are subject to misrecognition; the mimetic self and the psychological movement. The mimetic self is the gratuitous self of desire established in the previous chapter. It presupposes the alterity that created it. Recognizing the otherness as the model is wisdom. The second, the psychological movement restores in the mind the gratuitousness implied in mimesis. The universal mimesis presupposes a continuous creation of mimetic self. It is the realization of the above which summarizes in the recognition of the model as model and not a rival. When the self realizes the source of its mimetic self in the model, recognition is achieved.

Reflection captures these two aspects of recognition according to the explication of Thomas Aquinas above. Reflection mirrors the act of reflection and the object reflected. Alison alludes to this point indirectly in *The Joy of Being Wrong*. According to him, in principle, the recognition of the alterity of the desire which forms the “self” is possible, and therefore the other is not an object over against “me”, and my knowledge of the other is part of being consubstantial with it (Alison 1998, 39). Reflection features the “self between” and the fact of its “anteriority” which is subject to unconscious misrecognition within the physical time. The anteriority of the self between features in reflection as ‘...a self-giving other that can be received only as constantly and perpetually self-giving, as gratuitous, and therefore never grasped, never appropriated, but only received and shared’ (45). Recognition kills rivalry in the sense that it does not place the model above the subject, rather it presents the real situation of

consubstantiality and continuous self-giving implied by all mimetic relationship. Once the otherness is recognized as such, the model becomes a model and not a rival.

Girard affirms that the knowledge of mimetic desire is not enough to checkmate violence. As such, reflection must have an implication for action. Girard did not foresee any psychological disposition towards the good mimesis. While I agree totally with the indispensable mimesis, I am optimistic of psychological and physical disposition towards the good mimesis. Girard viewed the invincible mimesis from the point of view of the apocalypse. In his article, “On War and Apocalypse”, published in *First Things* (2009), he writes on this issue:

Freed of sacrificial constraints, the human mind invented science, technology, and all the best and worst of culture. Our civilization is the most creative and powerful ever known, but also the most fragile and threatened because it no longer has the safety rails of archaic religion. Without sacrifice in the broad sense, it could destroy itself if it does not take care, which clearly it is not doing. (Girard 2009)

The fear of the apocalypse can only suggest an immediate or automatic resolution in a Christological solution as proffered in the conversion and the renunciation of the will to violence. The “Christian” bias of such a move is unwelcoming to the modern mind. Hence the reflective mimesis may appear more attractive and beneficial.

6.4. Reflection and Action

Reflection is an attitude of the mind that is spontaneous for the most part. It comes as a disruption of action when the mind is faced with inconsistency in the sequence of events. It works as reflection on action. Recently, philosophers and psychologists are beginning to think of a new understanding and approach which is reflection in action. The works of John Dewey (1933), Donald A. Schön (1983), and Max Wertheimer

(1971), have been widely cited by contemporary authors on the application of reflection in action. I will use Marc Clarà's criticism to make a general presentation of their works.

Marc Clarà, in his article: "What Is Reflection? Looking for Clarity in an Ambiguous Notion" (2014), observed in the works of the theorists mentioned above, a somewhat ambiguous explication of the meaning of reflection. Although their definition flows from the general optical etymology of reflection, two variants of understanding stand out. Clarà noticed the confusion between "descriptive" and "prescriptive" understanding and application of the term in their works. According to him, the writings of Dewey, Schön, and Wertheimer on reflection are descriptive notions—not a prescriptive one—which refers to spontaneous, common, real thinking (Clarà 2014). John Dewey expresses the function of reflective thought in *How We Think* (1933), as the transformation of a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious (Dewey 1933, 195). In the same vein, Schön in *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) defines reflection as the entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the "art" by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict (Schön 1983, 50). Max Wertheimer indirectly refers to reflection in his *Productive Thinking*, 1945. He basically referred to the content of reflection as a situation. Thinking is the transition from situation S_1 to situation S_2 . According to him, the process does not start with S_1 and end with S_2 , but rather S_1 is a part of a development, and the solution S_2 does not represent an end but by its nature leads to further dynamic consequences (Wertheimer 1945, 241). Clarà attempts a definition of reflection as a thinking process which gives coherence to a situation which is initially incoherent and unclear (Clarà 2014). The scope of action of the reflective

thinking is what he calls a “situation”. He adopts Dewey’s explication of situation in *How We Think*. Dewey writes that,

What is designated by the word “situation” is not a single object or event or set of objects and events. For we never experience or form judgments about objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole. This latter is what is called a “situation.” (Dewey 1933, 72)

It is pertinent to note here that Clarà’s application of reflection, like Dewey, is in the educational field. The field is immaterial in our consideration of reflection and action because the process and application of reflection is the same in all works of life. Our consideration is basically anthropological, and as such is applicable to every field of human endeavour.

From the criticism above, the unravelling of incoherent situation through reflective thinking recalls the mimetic crisis. Misrecognition is an example of an incoherent situation. If reflection’s descriptive character can unravel an incoherent situation, it can also capture the appropriation due to misrecognition. The solution sought by this research is how to make reflective thinking an implication for action. As we have seen, reflective action features recognition in terms of unravelling incoherence. A return to the definition of reflection by Schön in *The Reflective Practitioner* is helpful at this stage.

6.5. Reflection-In-Action

Schön defined reflection from a descriptive perspective as the entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the “art” by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict. In this definition, he distinguished between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. The

traditional understanding of reflection from a descriptive perspective is reflection-on-action. It is the unravelling of incoherent situation. Clarà observed that one of the most widespread contributions by Schön to the literature on reflection is his distinction between reflection on action and reflection in action (Clarà 2014). The major objective of Schön is to connect reflection and action, hence the coinage —reflection-in-action. As a professional, he is convinced that the expectation is knowing-in-practice. The ability to utilize the knowledge of reflection is what makes a professional. He was arguing against the modern demand of Technical Rationality that has reduced professionalism to problem solving.

For him Technical Rationality consists of instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique (Schön 1983, 21). This entails professionals that are passive and employed as problem solvers. To be a professional implies the application of scientific theories and technique in solving of problems. Technical Rationality is borne out of the 19th century Positivism. According to him, Technical Rationality is the heritage of Positivism, the powerful philosophical doctrine that grew up in the nineteenth century as an account of the rise of science and technology and as a social movement aimed at applying the achievements of science and technology to the well-being of mankind (31). Schön is convinced that Technical Rationality has its limits. The fixation on problem solving approach of Technical Rationality neglects the setting of problems. For him, in real-world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling, and uncertain (40). Technical Rationality is remote to real life situation in that problems have their settings, a unique context that requires some form of deliberation.

When Schön mentions reflection-in-action, he has in mind the reflective practice. Reflective practice fuses thinking and acting, there is no stopping to think. Work is not disrupted in reflection-in-action as against reflection-on-action. He explained the fusion of thinking and acting thus: the unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changes through the attempt to understand it. (132)

The knowing applicable to reflection-in-action is such that it has to come upon the practitioner spontaneously. With regards to mimetic desire, the knowledge of the alterity of my desire (recognition) comes up spontaneously and simultaneously in every experience. It is not similar to consciousness; rather it is more of alertness. The knowing applicable to reflection-in-action is implicit in the sense of making an initial incoherent situation coherent. According to him, once we put aside the model of Technical Rationality, which leads us to think of intelligent practice as an application of knowledge to instrumental decisions, there is nothing strange about the idea that a kind of knowing is inherent in intelligent action (50). The etymology of reflection implies knowledge. The bending back of the mind is a kind of knowing, hence reflective knowing.

Also, reflection is unitary in the sense that it involves the reflecting mind and the act of reflection itself. The reflecting mind is the self; as such we speak of self-consciousness. The act of knowing involves the whole self as in skillful practice. Schön writes that although we sometimes think before acting, it is also true that in much of the spontaneous behaviour of skillful practice we reveal a kind of knowing which does not stem from a prior intellectual operation (51). Reflection in action involves the self. The knowing process implies some bodily understanding that is not captured in words. As such, “we know more than we say” is visible in skill exhibition. *Knowing more than we*

can say is at the root of what is known as “tacit knowing”. Reflection-in-action is tacit knowing.

6.6. Tacit Knowing

Tacit knowledge according to Michael Polanyi means that “we can know more than we can tell” (Polanyi 2009, 4). The word tacit is a 16th century word derived from the French *tacite*—unspoken or silent. It was originally translated from the Latin verb *tacere*—to be silent. The concept of tacit knowing is treated in his work, *The Tacit Dimension* (2009). The major argument of tacit knowledge is the involvement of the body in cognition. It is taken for granted that the body aids in sensation but tacit knowing has proved that the body produces a kind of knowledge that is not captured in language, especially in skill acquisition. Tacit knowing is a product of the internalization or embodiment of knowledge.

The explication of tacit knowledge is found in the works Michael Polanyi. They include; *Personal Knowledge* (1958), *The Tacit Dimension* (1966), and *The Study of Man* (1959). Michael Polanyi is a Hungarian-British polymath, known for his contributions in Philosophy of Science and Social Science. He was born in Budapest into an upper-class Jewish family. His central theme was that knowledge is personal. M. K. Smith in his article, “Michael Polanyi and tacit knowledge”, published in *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education* (2003), writes that Polanyi’s argument was that the informed guesses, hunches and imaginings that are part of exploratory acts are motivated by what he describes as passions. They might well be aimed at discovering truth, but they are not necessarily in a form that can be stated in propositional or formal terms (Smith 2003). Like the etymology, tacit knowledge is expressed in action and not words. Schön affirmed this when he wrote that professionals exhibit more than they

know while performing their work. According to him, often we cannot say what it is that we know. When we try to describe it, we find ourselves at a loss, or we produce descriptions that are obviously inappropriate. Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action (Schön 1983, 49). Reflection has serious implication for action not just in the professionalism, but life in general. This is the reality of the internalization or embodiment of knowledge.

6.6.1. The Concept of Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowing is simply knowing more than we can say. This presupposes that not all knowledge is explicit. Polanyi stresses the personal side to knowledge in order to bring to the fore the embodiment of knowledge at the foundation of tacit knowing. According to Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund, and David Kaldewey in their article “Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge”, it is embodied and pre-reflex knowledge that underlies all of our actions and all knowledge production (Adloff et al. 2005). The difficulty in definition is implied in Polanyi’s expression “more than we can say”. Tacit knowing features in skills, ideas and experiences that involve bodily performances. Yu Zhenhua describes tacit knowing in his article, “Tacit Knowledge/Knowing and the Problem of Articulation”:

When one is engaged in a certain activity, like playing piano, riding a bicycle, swimming, etc., one has to rely on a certain unproblematic background; otherwise the activity cannot be fluently carried on. If a person focuses on the background and tries to articulate it by linguistic means, the person will obstruct the performance of the activity. That is to say, the unarticulated background that is necessary for the performance of a certain activity cannot be articulated by the agent himself in the process of performance. The knowledge that the agent has about this unproblematic background is a kind of tacit knowledge. (Zhenhua 2003)

The embodiment of knowledge reveals the “hidden reality” of knowledge. The “unarticulated background” presupposes a hidden reality, hence non-explicit.

The reality of tacit knowing was discovered within the professional life; hence it is better expressed as knowing in action as Schön suggested in his criticism of Rational Technicality. He pointed out that every problem has its setting. This setting must be discovered in order to apply any solution. The discovery of the setting offers grounds on which tacit knowing emerge. According to Schön:

Technical Rationality depends on agreement about ends. When ends are fixed and clear, then the decision to act can present itself as an instrumental problem. But when ends are confused and conflicting, there is as yet no problem to solve. A conflict of ends cannot be resolved by the use of techniques derived from applied research. It is rather through the nontechnical process of framing the problematic situation that we may organize and clarify both the ends to be achieved and the possible means of achieving them. (41)

Arriving at the setting of any problem requires experiential knowledge. The setting of any problem encountered by a professional provides opportunities for the expression of professionalism beyond concepts. The experiential aspect of knowledge is often disregarded. The setting of any problem is always unique, hence no unified approach of determination. Knowledge is experience that should involve the whole self. The dilemma is the reality of two aspects of knowledge, one of which we know and one which we can only tell. What we know is divided into what we can tell and what we know but cannot tell, but can be expressed in action. Georg Hans Neuweg in his article, “Tacit Knowing and Implicit Learning”, exposed the reality of the above when he asked in what sense knowledge is ascribed to people. It is a fact that people need not necessarily think before acting intelligently: consider intelligent speakers who talk fluently because they do not contemplate which words to use before they speak. Also,

people cannot prescribe all their intelligent behaviour: infinite regression would mean one could never start acting at all (Neuweg 2004). Professionals always come up with solutions that often are not part of the theoretical studies. There is really another side of knowing that reside elsewhere other than the intellect. This knowing is expressed in action.

Polanyi observed a missing link in the neglected aspect of Gestalt Psychology.

According to him:

Gestalt psychology has assumed that perception of a physiognomy takes place through the spontaneous equilibration of its particulars impressed on the retina or on the brain. However, I am looking at Gestalt, on the contrary, as the outcome of an active shaping of experience performed in the pursuit of knowledge. This shaping or integrating I hold to be the great and indispensable tacit power, by which all knowledge is discovered and, once discovered, is held to be true. (Polanyi 2009, 6)

A holistic approach to the pursuit of knowledge involves embodiment. Tacit knowledge resides in experience. The body is always involved in the process of cognition. Polanyi is not distinguishing between knowing what and knowing how; rather he is stating that tacit knowing will be shown to form the bridge between the higher creative powers of man and the bodily processes which are prominent in the operations of perception (Polanyi 2009, 7). This description is not an attempt to explicate tacit knowing, but to state the form, conditions and content of tacit knowing. It is not explicit, but implicit in the embodiment of knowledge. This implicit knowing express itself in action.

6.6.2. Terms of Tacit Knowing

Tacit knowing depends on two terms that attend to each other. The distinction of proximal and the distal terms is made by Polanyi in order to explain how tacit knowledge works. The terms *proximal and distal* are borrowed from anatomical

vocabulary. He explained the functional structure of tacit knowing as relying on our awareness of a combination of muscular acts for attending to the performance of a skill. We are attending from these elementary movements to the achievement of their joint purpose, and hence are usually unable to specify these elementary acts. We may call this the functional structure of tacit knowing (10). If we are to demonstrate the proximal and the distal term using the example of Yu Zhenhua above, the “performance of playing the piano” stands for the distal term, while the “unproblematic background” represents the proximal term. We must rely on the control of this unproblematic background in order to attend to the performance of playing the piano, without obstructing the performance. A balanced performance will involve the control of the unproblematic background. The proximal terms according to him are the particulars or the features of a thing as we perceive them through the senses; while the distal terms are the characteristics of appearance. The particulars are often taken for granted, but in them reside facts that enable the understanding of what is explicit.

The phenomenal structure is based on the functional structure. All knowledge involves the terms as mentioned above. According to him, we may say, in general, that we are aware of the proximal term of an act of tacit knowing in the appearance of its distal term; we are aware of that from which we are attending to another thing, in the appearance of that thing (11). The proximal are the forms and particulars that enable us to attend to the meaning, the characteristic appearance and the distal. The distal is what we can tell while the proximal is what we are unable to tell. We need what we cannot tell in order to tell what we can. He alludes to the fact that meaning comes to us through the unitary of the proximal and the distal. Since tacit knowing establishes a meaningful relation between two terms, we may identify it with the understanding of the comprehensive entity which these two terms jointly constitute. Thus, the proximal term

represents the particulars of this entity, and we can say, accordingly, that we comprehend the entity by relying on our awareness of its particulars for attending to their joint meaning (13). The gap between the “higher creative powers” of man and the “bodily processes” is bridged in tacit knowing. This comes about through the internalization or embodiment of knowledge.

6.6.3. Tacit Knowing and Embodiment of Knowledge

The proximal and the distal terms of tacit knowledge gear towards the unitary approach of cognition. They form the embodied knowledge that features in skill acquisition. This features the initial motivation of Polanyi, i.e. that knowledge is foremost a personal engagement. In his magnum opus, *Personal Knowledge*, he explains briefly personal participation of the knower in the Preface to his work thus:

Skilful knowing and doing is performed by subordinating a set of particulars, as clues or tools, to the shaping of a skilful achievement, whether practical or theoretical. We may then be said to become “subsidiarily aware” of these particulars within our “focal awareness” of the coherent entity that we achieve. Clues and tools are things used as such and not observed in themselves. They are made to function as extensions of our bodily equipment and this involves a certain change of our own being. Acts of comprehension are to this extent irreversible, and also non-critical; for we cannot possess any fixed framework within which the re-shaping of our hitherto fixed framework could be critically tested. (Polanyi 1958)

The particulars that are abstracted through the senses leave a residue of the knowledge as clues or tools. This is the evidence of embodiment because as he argued, clues and tools are not observed in themselves, but they hold some truth about knowledge. The act of knowing involves a personal commitment. Personal commitment to knowledge is non-verifiable. Jean-Pierre Dupuy in his article, “Intersubjectivity And

Embodiment”¹¹ affirmed this point while citing Friedrich Hayek’s *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism*. According to him,

The mind does not so much make rules as consists of rules of action, and we can make use of so much experience, not because we possess that experience, but because, without our knowing it, it has become incorporated in the schemata of thought which guide us. (Dupuy 2004)

These are discovered in acts of doing. Personal commitment does not nullify objective knowledge which he acknowledged to be impersonal. He affirmed that true knowledge is deemed impersonal, universally established, objective (Dupuy 2004). Yet he insists that the personal commitment brings out the objectivity and universality of what is known in a more unified form. This involvement of embodiment in cognition takes Polanyi a step ahead of the Gestalt psychology. Gestalt psychology as we have seen acknowledges the particulars but does not feature them as contributing to knowledge. Polanyi insists that through this particular, we are able to attend to what is known.

All knowledge for Polanyi has a tacit root from the point of view of personal commitment that ensures internalization or the embodiment of knowledge. The embodiment of knowing presupposes a universal human character. Yu Zhenhua acknowledged that according to Polanyi, not only is there knowledge that cannot be adequately articulated by verbal means, but also all knowledge is rooted in tacit knowledge in the strong sense of that term (Zhenhua 2003). Polanyi makes a distinction in *The Study of Man* between explicit knowledge that is spelt out in verbal or written means, and the tacit knowledge which is unformulated knowledge, such as we have

¹¹ First draft of a paper presented at the Third Annual Symposium on the Foundations of the Behavioural Sciences—entitled “Dewey, Hayek and Embodied Cognition: Experience, Beliefs and Rules”—sponsored by the Behavioural Research Council of the American Institute of Economic Research, Great Barrington (Mass.), July 18–20, 2003.

knowledge of something, we are in the act of doing, which is another form of knowledge (Polanyi 1959, 12). Polanyi is convinced that man discovers himself in every act of knowing. According to him, the moment man reflects on his own knowledge, he catches himself red-handed in act of upholding his own knowledge (12). Reflection as a means of cognition features the object and the act of reflection. We saw how Aquinas clarified this fact in his explication of reflection as cognition.

The internalization of knowledge through embodiment helps to uphold the truth of objective knowledge. The embodiment of knowledge is what connects explicit and tacit knowledge towards the unification of what is known. According to Polanyi, we always know tacitly that we are holding our explicit knowledge to be true (12). Polanyi uses the word “understanding” to explicate internalization. According to Joseph G. Gerard in his article, “The Tacit Knowing Framework: A Look at Sustained Competitive Advantage under a Unified Tacit and Explicit Knowledge”, the connections between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge with knowledge in general, depend upon the extent to which the human animal, through experience, perceives and is capable of understanding a “hidden reality” (Gerard 2001). There are hidden realities of knowledge that are not explicit but are necessary in the full meaning of what is explicit. He begins by claiming that the tacit powers are the decisive factors in knowledge. The residue of knowledge in the particulars, the proximal terms attend to the distal terms, in order to define knowing in action. When we want to prove our understanding of something, we must rely on our tacit powers of the hidden realities that control what can be made explicit.

The hidden realities of experience presuppose that knowledge is not always explicit. The tacit facts hidden in the will emerge in action. The hidden realities bear in

themselves clues to holistic understanding that is not explicit but clarifies the explicit knowledge in action. Action is emphasized as the only means of expression of tacit knowing. The embodiment of knowledge is responsible for human understanding of the hidden truth that is lacking in explicit knowledge. According to Polanyi,

Nothing that is said, written or printed can ever mean anything in itself: for it is only a person who utters something or who listens to it or reads it--who can mean something by it. All these semantic functions are the tacit operations of a person. (Polanyi 1959, 22)

The tacit powers expressed in understanding are the deciding factors of knowledge. Understanding or the embodiment of knowledge features the hidden reality of what is known which often eludes explicit knowledge. It is these hidden realities gained through our tacit powers that are the deciding factors of knowledge. This is very clear in the act of invention. He explains,

Discovery, invention—these words have connotations which recall what I have said before about understanding as a search for a hidden reality. One can discover only something that was already there, ready to be discovered. The invention of machines and the like does produce something that was not there before; but actually, it is only the knowledge of the invention that is new, its possibility was there before. This is no mere play with words, nor is it meant to derogate from the status of discovery and invention as creative acts of the mind. (35)

What the above means is that explicit knowledge depends on tacit knowledge, the hidden reality that is beyond language. Polanyi is here inspired by the words of Plato in the *Meno*:

To search for the solution of a problem is an absurdity; for either you know what you are looking for, and then there is no problem; or you do not know what you are looking for, and then you cannot expect to find anything. (Polanyi 2009, 22)

The internalization of knowledge produces tacit knowing of hidden realities not featured in explicitly.

There is no justification for tacit knowledge except the motivation it inspires in one. Polanyi adds that the pursuit of discovery is conducted from the start in these terms; all the time we are guided by sensing the presence of a hidden reality toward which our clues are pointing; and the discovery which terminates and satisfies this pursuit is still sustained by the same vision (24). To hold such knowledge is an act deeply committed to the conviction that there is something there to be discovered. It is personal, in the sense of involving the personality of him who holds it, and also in the sense of being, as a rule, solitary; but there is no trace in it of self-indulgence (25). Knowledge is personal because it is internalized. Embodiment of knowledge presupposes that we know more than we can tell.

Our discussion so far is not an explication of tacit knowing. It is a description of the phenomenological reality of tacit knowing. Tacit knowing remains an inexplicable reality of cognition. We feel it, we know it, and yet we are unable to explicate it. It is real in the sense that it expresses itself in act of doing. Tacit knowing differs from intuition in the sense that the tacit knowledge is there in experience but is not featured in it to the extent of being explicit. It is tacit because it lies hidden in experience, but it manifests in action due to embodiment. Practical skills and practical experience contain much more information than people possessing this expert knowledge can ever tell. Particulars that are not known focally are unspecifiable, and there are vast domains of knowledge, relating to living things, the particulars of which are largely unspecifiable (Polanyi 1959, 33). The aim of a skilful performance is achieved by the observance of

a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them (Neuweg 2004). Tacit knowing is not unconscious. It is articulated in action rather than in verbal expression. Neuweg calls it “the residue left unsaid by a defective articulation” (33). It embodies knowledge.

6.6.4. Tacit Knowing and Mimesis

The connection between tacit knowing and mimesis is in the embodiment of knowledge. The foundation of tacit knowing is the embodiment of knowledge. Our interest here is the possibility of a mimetic transmission of tacit knowing. We relay “tacitly” on Friedrich Hayek’s conviction that mimesis is perhaps the most important capacity with which the human individual is genetically endowed; beyond innate responses, is his ability to acquire skills by largely imitative learning (Hayek 1988, 21). As such a *prima facie* possibility is possible. Polanyi and Schön agree to a mimetic transmission of tacit knowing. The transmission of tacit knowledge is in action and not as explicit knowledge. We recall that tacit knowing is for Schön a paradigm of reflection in action in contrast to reflection on action. What is transmitted as tacit knowledge is work-process knowledge. The reflective practitioner combines research and practice in a manner of “reflection-in-action”. Georg Hans Neuweg describes this as the ability to perceive, to think, and to act skilfully, to do certain things in an expert-like way (Neuweg 2004). The acquisition of skills is for the most part mimetic, and not an organized intellectual acquisition of knowledge. It is basically the observation of rules. These rules are embodied and not memorized.

Polanyi affirmed the skilful acquisition of tacit knowing thus: by watching the master and emulating his efforts in the presence of his example, the apprentice unconsciously picks up the rules of the art, including those which are not explicitly known to the

master himself. (Polanyi 1962, 53) Polanyi in *Personal Knowledge* used the word “connoisseurship” to demonstrate skilful acquisition of knowledge. He gives a description that involves personal knowledge as embodiment. According to him, Connoisseurship, like skill, can be communicated only by example, not by precept. To become an expert wine-taster, to acquire a knowledge of innumerable different blends of tea or to be trained as a medical diagnostician, you must go through a long course of experience under the guidance of a master (56). Connoisseurship in this sense will capture both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of the job. The body language involved in skill acquisition will all be captured by the apprentice when a personal commitment is made towards learning.

Apprenticeship, according to René Girard, takes the form of mimesis. In *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, he affirmed that, everything we know under the titles of apprenticeship, education and initiation rests on this capacity for mimesis. (Girard 1987, 290) Girard notes that while apprenticeship rely on highly developed mimetic capability, it is charged with conflict in the sense that there is no way of distinguishing on an objective basis, no way of making a systematic overall distinction, between forms of behaviour that are “good” to imitate and those that are not (290). What determines a good apprentice is not only acquisition of the skill but the necessary distance that will control the mimetic process and put conflict in check. According to Girard, conflict will sure arise and the apprentice will be blamed for being the best among the rest. This is because he lacks the necessary “distance” to put what is happening “in perspective”. He does not recognize the signs of rivalry in the behaviour of the model (290). What is lacking is the clear understanding of the mimetic process that propels apprenticeship. The situation will change if the apprentice has a good knowledge of mimetic desire. In the above situation there is no knowledge as such,

hence the lack of necessary distance. The necessary distance which is similar to recognition will come upon the apprentice tacitly when an acquisition of the knowledge of mimetic desire is in place. He will know tacitly the boundaries of an apprentice and the scope of the apprenticeship.

6.6.5. Tacit Recognition

The expression “tacit recognition” is deliberate in the sense that what this research seeks is the possibility of non-conflictual mimetic desire. The expression is coined for didactic purpose. What is real is just tacit knowing in action. Non-conflictual mimetic desire is the recognition of the model as model and not a rival. This is achieved through recognition of the model as such. Recognition is the ability to experience within the mimetic relationship the alterity of the self, and its anteriority. One understands that one is created by the other whose desire is anterior. The gratuitous self of desire is recognized as the self that is realized in continuous self-giving. What kind of embodied knowing will produce within it the tacit understanding of the model as such?

Tacit recognition is the ability to realize in every relationship or acquaintance the mimetic movement and the necessary distance required to keep conflict at bay. Tacit recognition is the result of a balanced understanding of the entire mimetic process. The embodiment of the knowledge of mimetic desire will automatically form in one the alertness and the wisdom necessary in avoiding conflict. Tacit knowing is acquired implicitly as in apprenticeship; as such when the knowledge of mimetic desire is made available to one, one implicitly acquires tacit recognition in order to avoid conflict in relationship. The knowledge of mimetic desire should not be undermined as not being able to resist conflict.

Tacit knowing is already exhibited in what Girard called the novelistic conversion. In the Girard reader he asserted that 'all novelistic conclusions are conversions; it is impossible to doubt this' (Girard 1996, 48). He observed this in the Proust's *The Past Recaptured*, alongside others. Novelistic conclusions relive the past characterized by mimetic rivalry. Thus, a realization of one's involvement in rivalry begins the process of conversion which is the content of romantic literature. The realization is as a product of reflection. Reflection, as mentioned above, is the bridge between the present and the past. Girard observes in Proust a conversion that it informed by knowledge of mimetic desire, especially from his involvement. According to him,

In The Past Recaptured, Proust emphasizes that self-centeredness is a barrier to novelistic creation. Proustian self-centeredness gives rise to imitation and makes us live outside ourselves. This self-centeredness is other-centeredness as well; it is not one-sided egotism; it is an impulse in two contradictory directions which always ends by tearing the individual apart. To triumph over self-centeredness is to get away from oneself and contact others, but in another sense, it also imposes a greater intimacy with oneself and a withdrawal from others. A self-centred person thinks he is choosing himself but in fact he shuts himself out as much as others. Victory over self-centeredness allows us to probe deeply into the Self and at the same time yields a better knowledge of Others. (51)

The ability of reflection to open up the past in order to expose the misrecognition responsible for self-centeredness or misappropriation of the self of desire is motivation for novelistic conclusions. Everything is revealed to the novelist when he penetrates this Self, a truer Self than that which each of us displays. This Self imitates constantly, on its knees before the mediator (51). Rivalry, like all forms of perplexity, induces the mind into reflection. According to John Dewey, in *How We Think*, the 'demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steady and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection' (Dewey 1933, 14). Reflection of one's involvement in the rivalry in the past reveals to one a coherent understanding of mimetic rivalry seen in novelistic

conclusions. The novelist having realized his involvement develops the tacit recognition in the form of “alertness”, through his embodiment of the knowledge against future engagements. The painful reflection of the past experience will help in developing this tacit alertness.

Girard recognizes reflection of the past rivalry as a painful experience. This is because in recognition, the subject does not only see the model as such; he also sees his involvement in illusion. Girard describes this as a victory over self-centeredness. One must ‘give up one's dearest illusions’ (Girard 1996, 52). The tacit knowledge of mimetic desire will definitely heal all stages of rivalry. Oughourlian stated that the recognition of the otherness of “my” desire can occur at any moment and immediately modify all other misrecognitions (Oughourlian 2016, 42). The tacit knowledge is not a kind of mindful awareness of each second of the psychological movement, which is not feasible. The tacit knowledge we seek is the kind of knowledge that is expressed in action. The fact is that the psychological movement, mimesis, takes place in the psychological time, the time of memory. The physical time does not feature this movement, hence misrecognition.

Reflection is the only means to connect to memory in the psychological time. Reflection on action is not feasible in mimetic relationship because there is no room to disrupt action of mimesis in order to recall memory. Rather tacit knowing is a reflection in action, featuring the “hidden realities” of mimesis that is not explicit. These appear as clues or skills within the mimetic process. We are seeking for a reflection in action, i.e. a “tacit alertness” that will form part of every relationship. I have stated earlier that what is needed to overcome mimetic conflict is not awareness of consciousness as such, but an alertness that accompanies action. This is only possible tacitly.

6.7. Reflective Mimesis as Tacit Recognition

I will define reflective mimesis as tacit recognition of the model as such in a relationship. Reflection has implication for action as such; we talk of reflection-in-action. Reflection features the model as such and one's shameful involvement in illusion. The illusion of misappropriation is similar to self-centeredness. It is the other-centredness. Reflection captures all these in a manner that will form a coherent knowledge that will have direct implication for action in the present and in the future. Reflection in action is tacit knowing. Through the particulars that are not explicit, one gathers bodily knowledge that will emerge and serve as an alert towards recognition. Embodied knowledge of mimetic desire will unconsciously form some inexplicit particulars that will be engaged in attending to every relationship. The implicit knowledge of mimetic rivalry will form tacit recognition towards keeping further rivalry at bay.

The initial exposition of reflective mimesis appeared as novelistic conclusion. The awareness of mimetic rivalry in the novelist, though shameful, leads to wisdom. The novel's inspiration springs from the break with the mediator. The absence of desire in the present makes it possible to recapture past desires (50). There is no sense of loss in the awareness of one's past involvement. Through renunciation of the will to rivalry, 'great novelistic art loses nothing and regains everything' (51). What is gained is the true self, the gratuitous self that is constantly giving as a result of the universal mimesis.

When reflective mimesis as tacit recognition forms part of the knowing process as evident in life of Girard, the alertness against rivalry is created in the self. Girard as a literary critic saw beyond fiction an expression of human existential reality, the mimetic desire. The conversion heralded by the discovery of the mimetic desire is uncommon

because the double bind of mimetic rivalry—the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model—is difficult to perceive and accept. Through reflection, Girard discovered his involvement in the mimetic conflict. He conquered mimetic rivalry through the development of tacit knowing. It is certain that Girard is not aware of his tacit knowing, but he has an embodied knowledge of mimetic desire. In *quand ces choses commenceront*, he wrote:

I finally understood that I was going through an experience of the exact type I was attempting to describe. The religious symbolism embryonic to these novelists began in my case to function on its own and caught fire inside me spontaneously. (Girard 1994, 190)

Reflection guarantees a coherent understanding of mimetic theory. The knowledge of mimetic desire because of its existential reality will always make an impression on anyone. Similarly, Jean-Michel Oughourlian confessed to the influence of the knowledge of mimetic desire through his encounter with René Girard. According to him, Girard ‘gave me what I would call “mimetic spectacles” enabling me to see all around me, in daily events as well as in the texts of world literature, hitherto invisible realities’ (Oughourlian 2016, xiii). The above is the fact that the embodied knowledge of mimetic desire changes something about perception especially towards the awareness of rivalry.

6.8. Reflective Mimesis and the Ethics of the Cross

Reflective mimesis is the tacit recognition of the model as such in a relationship. The Ethics of the Cross is the creative renunciation of the will to violence that begins with conversion, the realization of the illusion of rivalry. Imitation is the common denominator between Reflective mimesis and The Ethics of the Cross. They differ in their individual underlying principles. While the underlying principle of reflective

mimesis is the embodiment of knowledge, the Ethics of the Cross is informed by the sacrificial exposition of the victimage mechanism on the cross. Reflective mimesis is phenomenological, while the Ethics of the Cross is Christological or religious. The former is an anthropological solution to an anthropological crisis while the latter is a Christological solution to an anthropological crisis. The Ethics of the Cross depends on the gift of grace, the Holy Spirit. Reflective mimesis is basically rational, a reflection in action. It depends on the normal human ability at spontaneous reflection at the face of perplexity.

The Ethics of the Cross has sympathy for the Judeo-Christian religion. Wolfgang Palaver noticed this tendency in Girard's approach to novelistic conversion in all his works especially in *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*. Girard writes that,

If only our prejudices pro and con did not erect a water-tight barrier between aesthetic experience and religious experience, we would see the problems of creation in a new light. We would not cut off Dostoyevsky's work from all its religious meditations. (Girard 1965, 310)

The religious sensitivity in the Modern World is real, and sympathy for Christianity against other religions is repulsive. Girard understands this repulsion as the aftermath of Modernism. In his conversation with Rebecca Adams stated earlier, he observed that the uniqueness of Christianity is traded for an inauthentic sympathy for other religions. It is more of a hypocrisy because the real attitude is a lack of respect for other religions. Religion is reduced to mythology and this includes Christianity.

This sympathy as mentioned earlier is connected with the "apocalyptic thinking" of René Girard. Apocalypse creates both fear and immediacy of action. Girard believes

that the fastest solution is a return to religion devoid of scapegoat sacrifice. The Christian religion offers the best alternative in this regard.

Girard is deeply convinced that only a replica of the sacrificial system devoid of victimization can save humanity. According to him, in *Battling to the End*, the mechanism that reintroduces difference into a situation in which everyone has come to resemble everyone else is sacrifice. Humanity results from sacrifice; we are thus the children of religion (Girard 2010, ix). The alternative to sacrificial system of archaic society inheres in self-donation after the example of Christ. It takes the form of Imitation of Christ. Girard defines apocalypse as a prescience which means that Christianity is the only religion that has foreseen its own failure (Girard 2010, x). Scott Cowdell observed in *René Girard and Secular Modernity*, an understanding of Girardian apocalyptic thinking. According to him, apocalypse for Girard is not about unleashing divine violence on the unrighteous, for which the mythically minded fundamentalist longs. Rather, it concerns our own self-destructiveness, which could lead us via nuclear, genocidal, and environmental disasters to the likely extinction of human and much other life on Earth (Cowdell 2013, 161). The sacrificial system with its prohibitions for the most part religious, kept mimetic desire in check. It introduced differences that kept the society alive through scapegoat sacrifice of a surrogate victim. The sacrificial system collapsed due to the event of the Cross. But humanity deviated from the Christian principles modelled after the Cross capable of sustaining it. Girard is convinced that the avoidance of global chaos to which the world is heading to can only be avoided through a similar religious sacrificial alternative devoid of victimization. Christianity demystifies religion. Demystification, which is good in the absolute, has proven bad in the relative, for we were not prepared to shoulder its

consequences. We are not Christian enough (Girard 2010, x). The imitation of Christ, i.e. the Ethics of the Cross, is a formidable force against rivalry.

The bone of contention behind the apocalyptic thinking and the failure of the Christian alternative is the prevalence of undifferentiation. This chaotic situation in Girard's articulation is worrisome and fearful. According to him, violence has been unleashed across the whole world, creating what the apocalyptic texts predicted: confusion between disasters caused by nature and those caused by humans, between the natural and the man-made; global warming and rising waters are no longer metaphors today. Violence, which produced the sacred, no longer produces anything but itself (x). This imminence of chaos is the motivation in Girard towards the Imitation of Christ. 'Jesus seems to say that the only way to avoid violence is to imitate me and imitate the Father.' (Adams and Girard 1993) The double mimesis expressed in the statement of Christ does not conform with the basic mimetic principles. One would have to look for another whose desire aligns with that of Christ. From the point of view of universal mimesis, it features an extra rational process that is strange to mimetic desire.

Reflective Mimesis poses as a better alternative in the sense that mindful of the impending chaos, a basic anthropological understanding of the human mimetic constitution will instil respect for differences. Respect rather than fear is what motivates. Respect will be embodied through the realization of the illusion of rivalry. The realization of the illusion inherent in rivalry is already operational in literature. Great novelists realized this illusion and expressed it in writing. When the gaze is lifted above "fiction" to the reality of rivalry in novels, a coherent knowledge of mimetic desire is articulated. The realization in people of the falsity in witch-hunting brought it to an end. Witch trials came to an end when enough people realized that the witch

hunters behaved with their presumed witches more or less in the same fashion as a previous mob had behaved with Christ. For the first time, the witch hunters were perceived as a mob on the rampage and this is still the way they are perceived today. (Adams and Girard 1993). Reflective mimesis is a realization that is embodied and able to tacitly alert one on the respect of differences. My personal reading of the works of Girard, enlightened me on the pros and cons of the mimetic desire. It unconsciously formed tacit alertness in me to the extent that I can perceive rivalry as it unfolds. My greatest strength with regards to this enlightenment is the ability to open myself to the existential reality of the mimetic desire. I was able to feature in the anthropological reality of Girard's writings and the truth expressed.

Modern literature's concern with conflictual mimetic desire will present a coherent understanding that is embodied based on the reader's ability to identify with the reality of the story. A research carried out by Anne Bartsch and Marie-Louise Mares respectively 'suggests that, in addition to other motivations such as suspense, some types of violent and even gory content might be sought as an opportunity for meaning-making' (Bartsch and Mares 2014). The title of the research published in the *Journal of Communication*, reads: "Making Sense of Violence: Perceived Meaningfulness as a Predictor of Audience Interest in Violent Media Content".

The observation that people watch gory and violent movies in search of meaning according to this research is based on the ability of movie makers to combine gore and violence with enjoyment. Our researchers observed that 'a common theme that emerges in many theories of the appeal of violence is that images of bloodshed and aggression are not intrinsically attractive to most audiences, but that there are other pleasures that accompany exposure to violence' (Bartsch and Mares 2014). These pleasures

accompanying violent or gory exposure range from intense emotions and arousal, social gratifications, to content features.

Our researchers agree that the above ‘highlights hedonic pleasures, or sources of relief from unpleasant states, that do not reside in the violence itself but seem to contribute to the appeal of violent content in an indirect manner’ (Bartsch and Mares 2014). But there is an opposite non-hedonic pleasure that attracts growing interest, namely, perceived meaningfulness. Our attention is drawn to the distinction between “enjoyment” and “appreciation” with regards to watching movies. The hedonic pleasures aim at enjoyment while the non-hedonic pleasures seek for meaning. Citing Oliver and Bartsch (2010), our researchers define non-hedonic pleasures as ‘an experiential state that is characterized by the perception of deeper meaning, the feeling of being moved, and the motivation to elaborate on thoughts and feelings inspired by the experience’ (Oliver and Bartsch 2010). Movie makers understand that people often reflect on negative experiences with a view to gaining insight and finding meaning. Non-hedonic pleasures aid movies makers to combine violence, a reality representation of the real world to match the viewer’s belief in a just world. As such, applied to the context of media violence, the meaning-making literature suggests that one motive for watching acts of violence perpetrated against likable characters on the screen may be the need to make sense of similar acts of violence in the real world that threaten the viewers’ just-world beliefs (Oliver and Bartsch 2010). From the above we see that the embodiment of knowledge is possible in movie production as well as in literature. The literary art is able to reproduce the rivalrous reality of human relationship in a way that promotes embodiment of knowledge of mimetic desire. There is every possibility that novels or movies that feature mimetic violence and its resolution will motivate in the viewer a tacit recognition. It helped Girard, and it will still assist people today.

6.9. Reflective mimesis and Inclusive Humanism

The mimetic theory as we have seen so far in this research implies an inclusive humanity. The extreme openness of the self in the mimetic process is implied in the gratuitous self of desire. The mimetic theory proposes a positive mimesis towards an inclusive rather than exclusive humanity. This is contrary to Charles Taylor's "buffered self" in his work, *A Secular Age*. According to him, 'A crucial condition for this was a new sense of the self and its place in the cosmos: not open and porous and vulnerable to a world of spirits and powers, but what I want to call "buffered".' (Taylor 2007, 27)

The buffered self is caused by disenchantment traceable in part to a facet of Deism: the shift towards the primacy of impersonal order (221). As such the buffered self can form the ambition of disengaging from whatever is beyond the boundary, and of giving its own autonomous order to its life. The absence of fear can be not just enjoyed, but seen as an opportunity for self-control or self-direction (38). This exclusive humanism of the buffered self is the manifestation of the rivalrous conflictual desire. Girard's mimetic theory shows that in an important sense we all remain porous. The independent buffered self is in reality a fragile metaphysical poseur, and the modern romantic individual is an illusion (Cowdell 2013, 11). The mimetic theory has succeeded in presenting a humanity that is basically open to the other through an undeniable Interdividual mimetic desire.

The inclusive humanism proposed by this thesis is in accordance with the understanding of the mimetic theory. The reflective mimesis is a respect for differences. Girard pointed out the reality of differences in human society in *The Scapegoat*. Undifferentiation is what gives rise to social crisis—eclipse of culture. No culture exists within which everyone does not feel "different" from others and does not consider such "differences" legitimate and necessary (Girard 1989, 21). The respect for differences is

what reflective mimesis advocates. The preservation of differences is thus conceived as a necessary condition for the survival of any group (Almeida 2014). Non-conflictual mimesis stems from the recognition of the model as such. The model is the anteriority of the created self that one imitates. This should not be understood as subordination by the model, which is what Modernity abhors. Rather it is as James Alison explained that, in principle, the recognition of the alterity of the desire which forms the “self” is possible, and therefore the other is not an object over and against “me,” and my knowledge of the other, is part of being consubstantial with it. The inclusivity implied is hinged on the consubstantiality. The relationship of desire involves the model and the subject. The “co-creation” in principle began with the model. The created self features both the model and the subject. According to Oughourlian, the relationship of suggestion and imitation defines the mimetic relationship. Besides, from the perspective of the universal mimesis, Oughourlian states that it is imitation in space, repetition in time, and reproduction in the species. It is a network of mimesis where everyone is a potential subject and model. Like the celestial bodies that do not collide as they rotate about individual axis and revolve round the sun, the mimetic space does not collide because of the mental distance resulting from reflective mimesis. Respect is inclusive and exclusive.

The modern society is characterized by the “autonomous self” which according to Palaver, in a quasi-divine manner produces its own desire without the help of others (Palaver 2013, 49). The autonomous self similar to the buffered self is the bane of the modern society. The modern society’s obsession with originality is based on the erroneous object-desire relationship. We presume a linear relation between the subject and the object of desire. Unfortunately, the principal source of violence between human beings is mimetic rivalry, the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes

a rival, or of a rival who becomes a model. Interindividual desire is always in the habit of model-obstacle relationship. The model resists the imitation of the very desire that he unconsciously suggests to the subject. Object-desire is an illusion! It is motivated by the outright rejection of imitation. Palaver observes that, we live in a world in which imitation is frowned upon, because most human beings strive to be unique and original. Any person caught imitating or following the herd almost automatically attracts our complete scorn (67). Human relationship is motivated by mimetic desire. The relationship between mimesis and desire is crucial in the understanding of human relationship. Inclusive humanism implies non-conflictual mimesis of which reflective mimesis is but a paradigm.

6.10. Reflective Mimesis: The Contribution of the Research to Theological Science

Reflective mimesis is the contribution of this research to Theological Science. It is defined as an embodied recognition of the model of our desire in every human relationship. Reflective mimesis is a rational solution to the anthropological crisis caused by mimetic desire. According to Girard, mimetic desire is responsible for human relationship crisis. Mimetic crisis occur because the model of the desire is not recognized as such. The interindividual nature of the mimetic desire is responsible for the conflict of interest between the desiring subject and the model. The model is the mediator between the object and the desiring subject.

Girard overlooked the possibility of reflection in his Mimetic Theory due to his obsession with the relationship between religion and violence. He proffered a Christological solution to the anthropological crisis of mimetic desire. The possibility of reflective mimesis was already uncovered in what Girard called novelistic

conversion. By novelistic conversion he meant the realization of one's involvement in mimetic rivalry. The reality of novelistic conversion is what according to Girard informs all novelistic conclusions. The novelist tells the story of his or her involvement in mimetic rivalry and in the end resolves all crisis by recognizing the model of his or her desire which leads to a happy ending story. The realization of one's involvement in rivalry is already a rational approach to mimetic crisis. It is the experience of mimetic desire that is embodied in order to checkmate future occurrences. Unfortunately, his obsession led him towards creative renunciation informed by the biblical example of the Cross.

In chapter three, it was pointed out that religion has a subtle way of diverting the fury of violence. The sacrificial system of the archaic society resolves violence through the scapegoat mechanism. His meeting with Raymund Schwager helped him to shape a Christological solution known as the renunciation of the will to violence. The renunciation of the will to violence follows the example of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus Christ did not resist nor retaliate the violence of his executioners. He resolved the violence in himself by taking in the pains of the crucifixion, thus he dissolved the sacrificial system. It is not suicide but a wilful self-donation in order to save humanity from the sacrificial system. The Ethics of the Cross, which is the renunciation of the will to violence, exposed the evil shielded by the sacrificial system, namely the killing of an innocent victim. Girard believes that the imitation of the Ethics of the Cross through the renunciation of the will to violence, will resolve human conflicts the same way the sacrificial system resolved violence in the archaic society. The reality is that it does resolve violence, but it does not obey the basic principles of human desire which is interdividuality, thereby making it a Christian bias lacking in universal application and unable to achieve inclusive humanism.

Reflective mimesis is based on the human ability to reflect and the tacitly embodied knowledge of mimetic desire. It happens that due to the rapid nature of the exchange of desire between the model and the subject, the human mind is unable to capture the anteriority of the model's desire. The subject depends on the model because he or she must desire according to the model. This is the undeniable interdividuality of human desire. This rapid exchange of desire can only be captured by the mind's ability to reflect.

Reflection alone will not guarantee the recognition of the model's desire. An embodied knowledge of mimetic desire is required to enable one to have a habitual disposition towards avoiding relationship crisis. The embodied knowledge is tacitly acquired. Once an individual experiences a mimetic crisis, the knowledge is embodied. Through reflection, the right disposition against future crisis is averted. This is what Michael Polanyi calls thinking in action. In reflective mimesis, reflection and tacitly embodied knowledge of mimetic desire act simultaneously to avert crisis.

Reflective mimesis is a rational solution that follows the basic principle of human desire which is interdividuality. Interdividuality is the distinctive character of human desire that is responsible for relation. Reflective mimesis is a proof that the human mind can condition desire in order to achieve non-violent human relation. The rapid exchange of desire precludes the otherness responsible for desire. Since the bone of contention is the alterity and the anteriority of desire, reflection captures these without any reference to religious faith. An act of reflective recognition due to the embodied knowledge of mimetic desire uncovers both thereby keeping rivalry at bay. The will to violence is withdrawn at whatever stage reflective recognition takes place. Therefore, the distinctive contribution of reflective mimesis to theological science is a rational foundation on which to build an inclusive humanism. Mimetic desire is responsible for

human relation, but reflective mimesis will make that relation non-violent for the most part. The embodied knowledge of mimetic desire will aid the mind in reflection in order to avoid any form of conflict of interest. Because of its mimetic nature, this rational disposition is easily transferable to others. An act of respect can be admired and imitated!

Conclusion

This research is focused on the Reflective Mimesis as a more realistic alternative that fully represents the basic fundamental features of Girardian Interdividual mimesis, than the Ethics of the cross which proposes the Imitation of Christ. The criticism and the contribution of this research are based on two facts: the Interdividual and the indispensable mimesis. Reflective mimesis is a reflection that only mimesis can cure mimesis. Mimetic desire is responsible for the best and the worst in us. The imitation of Christ, however plausible, falls short of the Interdividual mimesis. It proposes a mimesis that is guided by instinct. On the contrary the reflective mimesis is motivated by the embodiment or the internalization of the knowledge of mimetic desire.

Interdividual psychology motivated by hypnosis exposed the very being in contention, the self between. The misrecognition that characterizes the mimetic process is captured in the psychological time, the time of memory. The rapidity of the mimetic exchange eludes the mind. It can only be recovered through reflection, a “bending back” in time. Reflection does not disrupt the mimetic process rather it fosters a thinking in action similar to the external mimesis. In external mimesis, the model is recognized as such. The self between is not subjected to misrecognition because it acknowledges the desire that created it.

Authenticity of the “self between” captured by reflection, lies in the expression of the self as “gratuitous receivers of what is lived in gratuity”. Reflective mimesis bridges the gap of subordination behind modern opposition to imitation, because it clarifies the reality of a universal mimesis where everyone is both a model and a subject simultaneously. This is what is meant by gratuitous receivers of what is lived in gratuity. The other is not an object over and against “me” and my knowledge of the

other is part of being consubstantial with it. Mimetic desire implies continuous giving and receiving of the self between. Oughourlian rightly affirmed that at whatever stage recognition steps into the process, rivalry is rooted out. Reflective mimesis is both behavioural and rational. It is an attitude of the mind capable of creating a behavioural pattern against rivalry and violence.

What Girard termed the “novelistic conversion” is a realization of involvement in rivalry. The novelists are able to tell the story of rivalry because of involvement. They unconsciously developed what is known as tacit knowledge of mimetic desire. Tacit knowing is based on the internalization of knowledge. Polanyi argued for the personal aspect of knowing. The involvement of the body in the knowing process is what we exhibit tacitly. Tacit knowing implies that we know more than we can tell. Body gestures exhibit non-explicit knowledge. Girard said that we are not aware of the rivalry that we are involved in, but can describe that which we are not involved. The ability to describe past involvement is in itself an embodiment of knowledge. Oughourlian confessed to forming alertness for mimetic desire after reading Girard’s works. Unfortunately, the obsession with the sacrificial system prevented Girard from discovering the reflective mimesis. What is known tacitly are the hidden facts of knowledge. These hidden facts, although not explicit due to tacit embodiment, enable a coherent explication of what is explicit. The hidden facts help us to attend to what we are able to render explicit. The rapidity of the mimetic process requires a thinking in action that reflective mimesis captures tacitly through the internalization of knowledge. In a way, reflective mimesis is referred to as tacit recognition. Reflective mimesis has serious implication for action. One reflectively imitates, fully alert with the necessary distance to put every relationship into perspective.

Imitation of Christ is informed by the sacrificial system, except for the exclusion of victimization of the innocent. It takes the form of self-donation. Imitation of Christ takes after the event of the cross, namely the exposition of violent sacrificial system that eliminates the innocent. The apocalyptic thinking of Girard features in his conviction of the Imitation of Christ. The apocalypse is the self-destruction that characterizes the modern world's fast disappearance of differences. The collapse of the sacrificial system has only one alternative replacement in the Christian religion. The Imitation of Christ, however effective, falls short for two major reasons: the inability to feature effectively Interdividual mimesis and the Christian bias.

7. Summary

According to René Girard's anthropological interpretation of the Event of the cross of Jesus Christ, the cross represents the historical moment when the unjust nature of the scapegoat mechanism that held sway of primitive society was exposed. In his Mimetic Theory, mimetic desire is the unconscious, involuntary, uncontrollable driving force of human acts. He proffered the Imitation of Christ i.e. a reversal of the will to violence, as the solution to scapegoating. Unfortunately, the imitation of Christ involves a mental reflection that is inconsistent with the mimetic theory. This Christological solution i.e. the Imitation of Christ, to an anthropological crisis as proposed by Girard does not make for a rational understanding of the action of the cross. On the contrary, a reflective mimesis informed by the action of the cross, is supportive of a rational understanding of the cross as such, unaided by any appeal to religious faith. This thesis argues for reflective mimesis as an ethical disposition, a paradigm and a point of reference of social integration.

Keywords: mimesis, mimetic theory, memetic desire, triangular desire, interdividuality, pharmakon, Interdividual psychology, self of desire, unconscious, tacit knowing, recognition, misrecognition, alertness, reflection, reflective mimesis.

Chapter one: Life of René Girard

René Noël Théophile Girard was born in Avignon on the 25th of December, 1923. His parents were Joseph Girard and Marie-Thérèse Fabre de Loye. He began his academic pursuit at L'Ecole des Chartes in Paris, a training school for archivists and librarians, from 1943 to 1947. In 1947 he earned his PhD with a dissertation entitled *Private Life in Avignon in the Second Half of the 15th Century*, same year he relocated to the United States to pursue a teaching career. He got an offer to teach French at Indiana University

where he earned his second PhD. In 1951, he married his wife Martha Girard and was blessed with 3 children. In 1957, he was appointed professor of French literature at John Hopkins University Baltimore. He became a professor in 1961. It was at John Hopkins University that his idea of the Mimetic Theory began to develop. In 1980, he was appointed professor of French language, literature and civilization at Stanford University in California, until his retirement in 1995. René Girard died on 4th November 2015 aged 91 years.

The Mimetic Theory of René Girard (1923 – 2015) is about the singular human factor responsible for the best and worst of human action. He coined the term mimetic desire in order to describe the chief identifying character of human beings. Human desire is modelled or mediated through the desire of another. The object of desire serves a relation between the subject and the desire of the model. Mimetic desire is desire of another's desire. We depend on the other about what to desire. We desire according to others and not in terms of our intrinsic preferences. Mimetic desire brings out the dependence and the relational aspect of the human being.

Although a literary critic, Girard is described as a French philosopher and anthropologist. At the age of ten he abandoned the Catholic Faith of his mother and took the part of his father, who was against the German occupation of France. But so little is known of him at this time that his agnosticism will lead to an independent objective inquiry into the foundations of religion. A twenty-eight-year period of agnosticism in his life, led him to the discovery of the foundations of religion – the mimetic rivalry. The discovery of the Mimetic Theory is rather unconventional because it was discovered in Literature – the Romantic, rather than in the scientific temperament of secularization.

As a literary critic, he saw beyond fiction an expression of human existential reality. Girard's openness to the texts, especially that of great writers—Dostoyevsky, Proust, Cervantes, Stendhal and Flaubert, revealed the reality of a triangular desire. Their works reveal a great understanding of the human nature. In the mimetic desire, Girard discovered mimesis as the root of the fragility of human relations. From a triangular desire, he saw clearly the mimesis that holds sway of human actions. Humans do not desire directly at the object of desire, rather through the desire of another regarded as a model or mediator. Human desire is Interindividual. Humans experience a mediated desire toward an object.

Chapter two: Mimesis and Mimetic Theory

A historical review of mimesis reveals the choice of Romanticism in his understanding of mimesis. The deep instinctive response in mimesis is way beyond the sphere of literary criticism. The Romantics remained untouched by the scientific temperament of the modern era. It opened an avenue of expression for real human realities that are incompatible with the scientific scheme. Girard's enquiry into the relationship between religion and violence that is visible enough in the Romantics, revealed the single mechanism responsible for human actions. Thus, he unconsciously ventured into the field of Arts that is removed from the influence of secularization, but charged with spiritual expressions in order to arrive at the mimetic desire. According to Richard Tarnas, arts provided a unique point of conjunction between the natural and the spiritual, and for many modern intellectuals disillusioned with the orthodox religion, art became the chief spiritual outlet and medium. In addition to his enquiry there was an openness to and conviction of an existential connection between the great works of literature and the lives of the authors that created them.

Mimesis means imitation in English and “imitatio” in Latin. The word mimesis is derived from “mimeisthai” which means imitating, representing and portraying. The English word ‘imitation’ does not adequately translate mimesis. The usual English translation as ‘imitation’ fails to capture several of the key resonances in its aesthetic, ethical, psychological, and epistemological ranges of significance. What is known of mimesis in antiquity is within the perspective of culture. In ancient Greek of the 5th century BC, mimesis, according to Greek thought, was for the most part cultural. There is a controversy as to whether the original concept of mimesis is conflictual as expressed by René Girard. The original concept of mimesis is not well defined because what is known of mimesis in antiquity is sieved out of the works of the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Both spoke of mimesis from the artistic representation of nature, while Girard considered it in the perspective of its relationship with desire.

Platonic development of mimesis is found in *The Republic*, written in the 4th century B.C. There is no explicit definition of mimesis in Plato’s dialogues, but the predominant terms are copying and impersonation as depicted in *The Republic*, *Sophist* and *Cratylus*, were the theme of mimesis featured. According to Plato, the production of a copy is a step away from the originality. The “copy” thus produced is of no value except with the “model”. Thus mimesis—the production of copies—is prone to deception and inauthenticity should the model make a mistake. Mimesis has no value, as mere copy. The essence of the mimesis is with the model, there is no authenticity inherent in the copy. The Platonic tradition diverted mimesis from its cultural milieu to the arts. His tradition was motivated by the decline and instability of Athens as the leading power in the Mediterranean. Aristotle like his teacher Plato discussed mimesis within the arts, especially poetry. Unlike Plato, he was in the affirmative of the creativity in mimesis.

Rather than concentrating on the correctness of representation, he diverts to creativity in the mimetic action. Aristotle's discussion of mimesis is found in his *Poetics*. Aristotle gave mimesis an ontology quite distinct from, and independent of, its model. Since his interest is on the impression of the audience with the Arts, mimesis is basically representation. The creativity of mimesis as representation is obvious: the creativity to present tragedy in a mild form. Art can only imitate artistically and not perfectly. This is the aesthetic grounding of mimesis in Aristotle.

In the 18th century, the understanding of mimesis shifted from aesthetics to the representation of nature. The writings of Lessing, Rousseau, Goethe, Schiller, and Moritz dominated this period. Aesthetic theory emphasized the relationship of mimesis to artistic expression and it began to embrace interior, emotive, and subjective images and representations. Girard's Mimetic Theory followed the spirit of inquiry proper to this period in history. Girard distinguished 'imitation' from 'mimesis'. The former is usually understood as the positive aspect of reproducing someone else's behaviour, whereas the latter usually implies the negative aspect of rivalry. It should also be mentioned that because the former usually is understood to refer to mimicry, Girard proposes the latter term to refer to the deeper, instinctive response that humans have to each other.

The Mimetic Theory was developed from of the observation of the relationship between violence and religion. Religion always has a subtle way of dealing with violence. The polarization of violence propagated by the common denominator —mimetic desire is put in check by religion through a sacrificial mechanism that demands the expulsion or elimination of a surrogate victim. His understanding of the sacrificial system induced an obsession that led to a Christological solution to a purely anthropological crisis. This research discovered some inconsistencies in the Christological Ethics of the Cross.

Although devoid of victimization, and is capable of bringing lasting solution to human crisis, the Christian bias and the inconsistencies with the main point of the mimetic theory is however evident. This Christological solution i.e. the Imitation of Christ, to an anthropological crisis as proposed by Girard does not make for a rational understanding of the Action of the Cross. On the contrary, a reflective mimesis informed by the action of the cross, is supportive of a rational understanding of the cross as such, unaided by any appeal to religious faith. This thesis argues for reflective mimesis as an ethical disposition, a paradigm and a point of reference of social integration. The scope of this research is limited to the mimetic theory as it's purely a critique of the theory. The aim of reflective mimesis is to reconcile the somewhat unconsciousness that engulfs the one in the mimetic process leading to inability to recognize the model as such. The key concept responsible for this difficulty in establishing a solution to mimetic desire is the "méconnaissance"—misappropriation, misrecognition – that characterize the entire mimetic process. It is a key concept responsible for the realization of mimetic desire.

The contention responsible for the mimetic crisis is between the object-desire and the model-obstacle conception of mimesis desire. Object-desire conception is an illusion in the mind of the subject. The subject presumes a linear mimesis i.e. the subject desires directly the object of desire. In reality, mimetic desire is Interdividual in the sense that we desire according to the desire of the other around us. Human desire is modelled or mediated through the desire of another. The object of desire serves a relation between the subject and the desire of the model. Mimetic desire is desire of another's desire. We desire according to the other, the one who is always there – the best friend, the neighbour, the colleague etc. The triangular desire is the nature of mimesis in the Mimetic Theory of René Girard. Triangular desire represents a phenomenology of

desire. Triangular desire involves a model, a subject and an object of desire. The triangle is no Gestalt. The real structures are intersubjective. They cannot be localized anywhere; the triangle has no reality whatever; it is a systematic metaphor, systematically pursued. The triangle of desire is an isosceles triangle. The triangular desire is such that the object comes first, followed by human desires that converge independently on this object. The triangular desire destroys the argument of object-desire conception and is supportive of the model-obstacle conception.

The object of desire stands at the top of the triangle while the subject and the mediator occupy both ends of the base. The object has no value in itself but depends on the mediator for its value. Value is nothing inherent or static; rather it is regulated by mimetic desire. For Girard, the objects include a mass of behaviours, attitudes, things learned, prejudices, preferences, etc. The desirability of the object is what matters. What the subject seeks is that very aspect, the status of the model that he is convinced inheres in the object. The desiring subject does not know what to desire. He depends on a model in order to know what to desire. A positive understanding of “desiring according to the other” in the mind of Girard, reflects the social aspect of human life. Girard affirms that mimesis describes the human being as “extremely openness”. He argues that modern individualism presents an illusion of originality which in turn makes the subject to deny the mimetic process. The illusion of modern individualism is hinged to the internal shame of not knowing what to desire. The model is the original owner of the desire that is imitated. The subject imitates the desires of the model. The desirability of the object is elicited by the model unconsciously. The model suggests this desirability to the subject, while the subject is expected to respond through imitation. The suggestive gestures of the model are always unconscious. The exchange of desires is always an unconscious action i.e. it happens without the model and the subject aware of it.

According to Girard, rivalry does not arise because of the fortuitous convergence of two desires on a single object; rather, the subject desires the object because the rival desires it. In desiring an object, the rival alerts the subject to the desirability of the object. This is the reality of internal mimesis where the gap between the model and the subject is greatly reduced or no existent. But in the external mimesis, the distance is maintained hence no crisis. As long as social difference or any other form of differentiation is present to channel mimetic desire, its conflictual dimension remains contained. The internal mimesis lacks this social difference.

The internal mimesis degenerates into a crisis of indifferenciation. The crisis of indifferenciation features the imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model. This new situation, where both the subject and the mediator desire each other's desires is called double mediation. The reciprocity between the model and the subject reverses direction over and over with enormous rapidity more than the mind can capture, hence the misrecognition and the consequent misappropriation, rivalry. Mimetic rivalries can become so intense that the rivals denigrate each other, steal the other's possessions, seduce the other's spouse, and, finally, they even go as far as murder. The archaic society solved the crisis of indifferenciation through the sacrificial system of scapegoat mechanism. The indifferenciation underlying the crisis leads to the eclipse of culture. René Girard defines scapegoat mechanism as the mimetic snowballing of all-against-one in order to resolve a crisis brought about by the social consequences of mimetic desire, which creates within the group a war of all-against-all. This reality reveals the granite fact that violence is never denied but diverted. What it seeks it gets! It is not denied, but diverted to another object or person.

Girard affirms in his works that the scapegoat mechanism worked for the archaic society. The killing of the scapegoat provides a means for the formation of a new social

unanimity and cohesion, as acquisitive mimesis is transformed into conflictual mimesis, which is resolved by the destruction of someone arbitrarily designated as the cause of the conflict. The weight of any crisis lies in the way it affects human relations. Violence is not originary; it is a by-product of mimetic rivalry. The cause is always within, never difficult to identify, rather it is difficult to bear responsibility for it. The fact is that ritual sacrifice of scapegoats works; it worked when all hope of saving the community was lost. The proof of the efficiency of the mechanism is the unanimity it creates among the people. Ritual sacrifice requires some form of ambiguity in order to function. Sacrificial substitution implies a degree of misunderstanding. Its vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based. Myths recount this ritual murder from the point of view of the perpetrators in order to conceal the crime. Thus, myth reveals exactly what it hopes to conceal, murder.

Chapter three: The Ethics of the Cross

Girard is obsessed with the effectiveness of the sacrificial system that he found a resemblance in the event of the cross. He defines the anthropological aspect of the Cross, as that moment when a thousand mimetic conflicts, a thousand scandals that crash violently into one another during the crisis, converge against Jesus Christ alone. The single victim mechanism features greatly in the Crucifixion. The Cross is the first moment when the single victim mechanism failed to unite the society. The cross exposed and expelled the mechanism. The crucifixion bears a similar mark of substitution inherent in ritual sacrifice, but with a difference. The Ethics of the Cross is the moral disposition of Jesus Christ which lies in his “self-donation or self-sacrifice” on the cross in order to expose and expel the single victim mechanism. We have to view the Passion of Christ from a mimetic standpoint in order to key into Girard’s solution. Mimetic anthropology of the gospel will remove the veil covering the true

understanding of what the gospels reveal. Jesus Christ ab initio recognized the illusion of the object of mimetic desire hence he constantly referred to his imitation of his Father. Jesus is convinced that resistance can only enforce and empower the fury of his accusers. But his unexpected surrender confused his accusers and exposed their plans. The Ethics of The Cross is a self-donation that is sacrificial in character in the sense that it is not devoid of violence, but the violence inherent is voluntarily upon one in solidarity with the innocent. The basic distinction evident in self-donation is the distinction between “sacrifice as murder and sacrifice as renunciation”. Unfortunately, the Imitation of Christ does not feature an important aspect of the mimetic theory, the Interdividual of human desire. It does not feature because desire and not imitation is the guiding principle, except one is immersed in a Christological context, Christianity. My conclusion is that Imitation of Christ of René Girard is a Christological dogma!

To fashion out a rational mimesis, I propose a “reflective” mimesis as a rational disposition bearing all features of the mimetic theory, and capable of non-conflictual mimesis. What is responsible for conflict is the misappropriation or misrecognition inherent in mimetic desire, which involves both the model and the subject. The solution is a disposition of character that involves mimetic recognition of the model as such. My concern is how to restore recognition in the mimetic process in order to keep conflict at bay. Mimetic recognition guarantees inclusive humanism. The basic argument that is responsible for misrecognition of the model as such is the conflict between the object-desire conception and the model-obstacle conception of mimetic desire. For the most part, Sigmund Freud failed to discover the Mimetic Theory due his focus on the object-desire conception of human desire. His conception of identification is similar to the Girardian mimetic desire. The Oedipus Complex presents a little boy’s straight forward sexual object-cathexis towards his mother, similar to the object-desire model. The

complex arises because the father poses an obstacle to the boy's unconscious desire of the mother. Freud's identification theory focused more on the resolution of the Oedipus crisis. His diversion from the "obstacle" of the Oedipus Complex robbed him the discovery of the model-obstacle mimetic desire. René Girard is convinced that Freud came close to discovering the mimetic theory but ignored it. There is a clear resemblance between identification with the father and mimetic desire; both involve the choice of a model.

Chapter four: Mimetic desire and Consciousness

The unconscious mimetic desire which prevents the subject from acknowledging the alterity of the desire and its anteriority is unravelled by Interdividual Psychology. Interdividual Psychology is founded on the social dimension of the mimetic desire. It capitalizes on the relationship between desire and mimesis in the constitution of the self. It incorporates all aspect of the mimetic theory, especially the interdividual nature of desire and the triangular desire. The focus of Interdividual Psychology is the relationship between mimesis and desire. The proponents of Interdividual Psychology - René Girard, Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*- understood the social relationship of mimetic desire; how one is related to the other in a universal mimesis. Jean-Michel Oughourlian, in his works *The Mimetic Brain* and *The Genesis of Desire*, coherently explained the emergence of the self of desire or the self-between as the real object of mimetic desire through the employment of hypnosis. The relative success of hypnosis in producing a "self" is precisely because the method follows the mimetic working of desire: the "self" is called into being by the suggestion of the "other" at the level of desire. The real object in contention is a self of desire in which rivals lay claims, unaware that it is basically a joint creation initiated by the disposition of the model. The exchange of desires between

the model and the subject reverse direction over and over with enormous rapidity within the permanent framework of the relation that is difficult for the mind to capture. Conflict results due to misrecognition of this alterity and anteriority of the self of desire. Misrecognition is responsible for both the emergence of the self and denial of the Otherness that created it. Hypnosis is able to reveal the time of memory in order to arrive at the real object of mimesis, the self of desire.

Misrecognition is a character of Interindividual relationship because the self exists by misrecognition of its origin in desire. Misrecognition is not negative rather it is the very character of the mimetic process to achieve its aim through some form of ambiguity. This ambiguity is “normal” and functional to the extent that the other is taken as a model, to the extent that the interindividual relation remains peaceful as it is in the external mimesis. The space between the model and the subject is wide enough to contend any collision. But the internal mimesis is the sphere of rivalry because the model and the subject are contenders. Once rivalry sets in, the misrecognition becomes pathogenic because it embraces a double claim: a claim on the part of the self to ownership of its own desire, and a claim on the part of the desire to its anteriority to the desire of the other, to priority over the other’s desire. The resolution of this conflict according to Girard is to focus on the object. Reflective mimesis is a focus on the object in order to restore recognition without altering the entire mimetic process. Recognition will ensure non-conflictual mimesis.

Chapter five: Self of desire and Authenticity

The authenticity of the self of desire or the self-between is of utmost importance for two reasons. First, the self of desire is a fundamental outcome of the mimetic relationship. What the subject seeks is the desirability that the model confers on the

object. Secondly, it must be acknowledged as such. The only way to establish a non-conflictual mimesis is to replicate the example of the external mimesis where the space between the model and the subject is maintained to checkmate collision. With regards to internal mimesis, the space must be a mental space. The reflective mimesis aims at establishing this fact in order to achieve a non-conflictual relationship. The contenders or rivals are not aware of these facts hence the crisis. The self in contentions belongs to the model by anteriority, but it is an alterity that must be acknowledged as such by the subject. Contention ensues because rivals are removed from the reality of interindividual “model-obstacle” conception. It is the resistance of the alterity, the self of desire that assures identity portraying a dependence of the “object-model” conception. What is denied is what ensures identity.

In principle, the recognition of the alterity of the desire which forms the “self” is possible, and therefore the other is not an object over and against “me”, and my knowledge of the other is part of being consubstantial with it. This is taken from the point of view of the universal mimesis. Humanity is immersed in a social network of mimesis where everyone shares dual role of model and subject. At one moment one receives and at the other one gives, bringing us to James Alison’s idea of an authenticity that lies in the expression of the self as “gratuitous receivers of what is lived in gratuity”. The self of desire is always in the process of continuous giving. Recognition therefore implies both otherness and anteriority in a manner that is gratuitous. The dichotomy is collapsed to the degree in which the self shifts from a pattern of rivalistic “meconnaissance” of the other which is anterior to it, to the beginnings of a pacific reconnaissance. This idea of the self as “gratuitous receiver” rhymes with the “self” constituted by desire. The universal mimesis establishes the network of receiving and giving. What is received is what was given. The gratuitous self is the real object of

desire. It is the being targeted by every mimetic allusion. It is the embodiment of what Girard regards as “a mass of behaviours, attitudes, things learned, prejudices, preferences”. The habitus that will establish the interindividual mimesis and ensure a gratuitous receiver of what is given in gratuity is what reflective mimesis hopes to achieve.

The gratuitous self of desire is received and shared simultaneously in every mimetic relationship. The rapidity of exchange is not captured in the present, as such it has to be recalled from memory. The mind must “climb back time” in order to capture the exchange that gave birth to the gratuitous self of desire. This is the derivation of the reflective mimesis. Reflective mimesis is meant to overcome the greatest challenge posed by mimetic desire. According to Girard, we are not aware of the rivalry in which we participate, but we can detect rivalry in the ones we do not. The above discovery by Interindividual Psychology of the self of desire through hypnosis reveals what is responsible for this inability to detect rivalry we participate in. Interindividual Psychology offered reflective attitude of the mind as the only bridge “to climb back time” to memory in order to feature the exchange of desires. Reflection must have implication for action in order to achieve this aim.

Reflective mimesis is a mimetic solution to this anthropological crisis. It is clear from the works of Girard that only mimesis can cure the mimetic crisis. Mimetic desire is the unconscious, involuntary, uncontrollable and the driving force of the events. Mimetic desire is undeniable and inevitable. The chief obstacle that I have discovered is the lack of a mental activity that will enthrone recognition in place of “meconnaissance”. By reflective mimesis I am attempting to override Girard’s conviction of the impossible mimetic desire in the last chapter of *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*. My conviction is based on the possibility of a rational explication of mimetic process. If it can be

explicated, then it can be controlled. The discovery of the mimetic theory has no theological foundation in the sense of a divine inspiration. The scientific explication of literary works of the Romantics revealed a mechanism operating in the world. Further research into sacrificial institutions, revealed the victimage mechanism that held the world hostage prior to the cross. Interindividual Psychology has provided a solid foundation on which to establish a rational mimetic solution. The challenge is the reflective attitude that will feature the alterity and its anteriority of the self of desire in order to ward off conflict. It is my conviction in this research of arriving at a scientific solution through the enthronement of the regulatory function of reasoning as I propose the Reflective Mimesis. The reflective mimesis is an anthropological solution to an anthropological crisis.

Chapter six: Reflective mimesis and Inclusive Humanism

Reflection conditions the mind to accept the reality of the alterity anterior to us, to whom we owe our being and from whose being we share with another. This conditioning comes in the form of tacit knowing, which is the experience of reflection in action. The word *reflectere* is made up of two syllabi, *Re* “back” and *flectere* – “to bend”. The optical understanding of the word comes from the throwing back of the image of an object from a surface. The object does not pass through, but the image is reflected from the surface. This is typical of the surface of a mirror and other reflective surfaces. Reflection has serious implication for action tracing from the mind and brain relationship. The brain is understood from biological perspective while the mind is both embodied in the brain and related to it in its functioning. We can say that the mind is biologically part of the brain, but must be in relationship with the brain in order to regulate the flow of energy and information. The act of reflecting is a mindful process that features the reflecting mind and the content of reflection. It is a unitary process that

involves the entire self. This is suggestive of a relationship that involves the mind and the body. In throwing back its light on completed human action, the mind is able to feature itself and the action, thus producing a unitary knowledge of itself in relation to the action.

The human agent within the mimetic process is not passive and the mind is not veiled but confused due to the sequence of events. Recognition and reflection are both attitudes of the mind. Recognition is achieved through reflection. Reflection is the mind's relationship with memory. It is the bridge between the past and the present. The misrecognition is unraveled through the mind's ability to reflect memory. The anteriority of the self between features in reflection as a self-giving other that can be received only as constantly and perpetually self-giving, as gratuitous, and therefore never grasped, never appropriated, but only received and shared. Recognition kills rivalry in the sense that it does not place the model above the subject rather it presents the real situation of consubstantiality and continuous self-giving intended by all mimetic relationship. Once the otherness is recognized as such, the model becomes a model and not a rival.

Reflection is an attitude of the mind that is spontaneous for the most part. It comes as a disruption of action when the mind is faced with inconsistency in the sequence of events. Like all instances of reflection, reflective mimesis does not promise a break in action in order to recall what transpired in the exchange of mimesis, rather is as Donald A. Schön stated in his work, a reflection in action. The thinking process has serious implication for action. The ability to utilize the knowledge of reflection is what makes a professional. Schön was arguing against the modern demand of Technical Rationality that has reduced professionalism to problem solving. Girard affirms that the knowledge of mimetic desire is not enough to checkmate violence. As such, reflection must have

an implication for action. Unfortunately, Girard did not foresee any psychological disposition towards the good mimesis. The invincible mimesis is viewed from the point of view of the apocalypse, the disappearance of sacrifice.

Reflection in action is central to the “art” by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict. Reflection is a mind’s disposition that is relevant to all works of life. It is the mind’s movement from one situation to another. “Reflection on action” is different from “reflection in action” because the former involves a break in action at the face of inconsistencies. But in reflection in action, there is no break with action, the movement of the mind from one situation to another is a combination of both situations leading to further dynamic consequences. In reflection in action, the unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changes through the attempt to understand it. The understanding applicable to reflection-in-action is such that has to come upon the practitioner spontaneously. It is not similar to consciousness rather it is more of “alertness”. The knowing applicable to reflection-in-action is implicit in the sense of making an initial incoherent situation coherent. Schön is convinced that although we sometimes think before acting, it is also true that in much of the spontaneous behaviour of skillful practice we reveal a kind of knowing which does not stem from a prior intellectual operation. The reflection proper to averting the crisis of mimetic desire is such that is spontaneous and without break in action. Reflection in action involves the self. The knowing process implies some bodily understanding that is not captured in words. As such, “we know more than we say” is visible in skill exhibition. Knowing more than we can say is at the root of what is known as “tacit knowing”. Reflection-in-action is tacit knowing.

Tacit knowing is a description of reflection in action which is the reflective mimesis. The concept of tacit knowing is treated in the work Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 2009. Tacit knowledge means that ‘we can know more than we can tell’. The major argument of tacit knowledge is the involvement of the body in cognition. It is taken for granted that the body aids in sensation but tacit knowing has proved that the body produces a kind of knowledge that is not captured in language, especially in skill acquisition. Tacit knowing is a product of the internalization or embodiment of knowledge. What is rendered explicit is a fraction of meaning that is residing in the embodied knowledge. A strong argument for embodiment is that to be aware of our body in terms of the things we know and do, is to feel alive. This awareness is an essential part of our existence as sensuous active persons. The body is the only thing that we do not perceive as an object, rather we experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body. It brings home to us that it is not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning.

Tacit knowing depends on two terms that attend to each other. The “distal” and the “proximal” terms are anatomical vocabularies employed by Polanyi to describe the terms of tacit knowing. The proximal terms are the particulars or the features of a thing as we perceive them through the senses, while the distal terms are the characteristics of appearance. In the playing a piano, the performance of playing the piano stands for the distal term, while the ‘unproblematic background’ represent the proximal term. We must rely on the control of this unproblematic background in order to attend to the performance of playing the piano, without obstructing the performance. A balanced performance will involve the control of the unproblematic background. We attend from the proximal to the distal. The distal is what we can tell while the proximal is what we

are unable to tell. We need what we cannot tell in order to tell what we can. He alludes to the fact that meaning comes to us through the unitary of the proximal and the distal.

The distal and the proximal terms of tacit knowledge respond to different constitutive laws. The laws guiding playing a piano are different from the control of the unproblematic background. The things in themselves do not reveal any knowledge except we become aware of them in terms of the whole on which we have fixed our attention. The participation of bodily processes in perception reconciles the two distinct realities. The internalization of knowledge, tacit knowing, is able to explain this logical absurdity through the reflective attitude of the mind. Reflection in action reacts to critical situation such as mimetic crisis not as a given but from the materials of problematic situations. Reflection will not result in a disruption of action. The unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changes through the attempt to understand it. Simultaneously, the mind attempts the detection, the understanding and the transformation of the problematic situation. The knowing applicable to reflection-in-action is such that has to come upon the practitioner spontaneously.

Novelistic conclusion is an after experience of mimetic rivalry. Every novelistic conclusion is a Past Recaptured. They represent conversions from the death to which rivalrous desire leads. What the Romantic writers renounced is, according to Girard, the self-centeredness that leads to self-destruction. The writer gives up through the hero of his work the self-centeredness that could be described as Other centered. The triangular nature of desire directs the subject to the illusion that dwells in the person of the model. Novelistic conclusion is a realization of the illusion of rivalry. It is not clear in Girard's work as to how a person comes to the realization of the illusion of rivalry. According to Girard, this victory over a self-centeredness which is other-centered, this

renunciation of fascination and hatred, is the crowning moment of novelistic creation. Therefore, it can be found in all the great novelists. Every novelist sees his similarity to the fascinating Other through the voice of his hero. What is clear is that we are not aware of the rivalry that we participate, but we can identify that which we are not part of. The realization of the illusion of rivalry comes with a decision to renounce violence. The illusion realized that rivals mirror each other.

Novelistic conclusion is the starting point of reflective mimesis. Tacit knowing is already exhibited in novelistic conversion. The recognition of the otherness of “my” desire can occur at any moment and immediately modify all other misrecognitions. A realization of one’s involvement in rivalry begins the process of conversion which is the content of romantic literature. The realization is as a product of reflection. Reflection as mentioned above is the bridge between the present and the past. The expression ‘tacit recognition’ is deliberate in the sense that what this research seeks is the possibility of non-conflictual mimetic desire. The expression is coined for didactic purpose. What is real is just tacit knowing in action. Non-conflictual mimetic desire is the recognition of the model as model and not a rival. This is achieved through recognition of the model as such. Recognition is the ability to experience within the mimetic relationship the alterity of the self, and its anteriority. The gratuitous self of desire is recognized as the self that is realized in continuous self-giving. Tacit recognition is the ability to realize in every relationship or acquaintance the mimetic movement and the necessary distance required to keep conflict at bay. Tacit recognition is the result of a balanced understanding of the entire mimetic process. The embodiment of the knowledge of mimetic desire will automatically form in one the alertness and the wisdom to avoid conflict. Tacit knowing is acquired implicitly as in apprenticeship, as such when the knowledge of mimetic desire is made available to one, one implicitly

acquires tacit recognition in order to avoid conflict in relationship. The knowledge of mimetic desire should not be undermined as not being able to resist conflict.

Reflective mimesis is not a kind of mindful awareness of each second of the mimetic process which is not feasible. Rather, it is the kind of knowledge that is expressed in action. I define reflective mimesis as tacit recognition of the model as such in a relationship. Embodied knowledge of mimetic desire will unconsciously form some inexplicit particulars that will be engaged in attending to every relationship. The implicit knowledge of mimetic rivalry will form tacit recognition towards keeping subsequent rivalry at bay. When reflective mimesis as tacit recognition forms part of the knowing process as evident in life of Girard, the alertness against rivalry is created in the self. Through reflection, Girard discovered and is able to conquer tacit knowing. It is certain that Girard is not aware of his tacit knowing, but he has an embodied knowledge of mimetic desire. An embodied knowledge of mimetic desire changes something about perception especially towards the awareness of rivalry.

Reflective Mimesis poses as a better alternative to the Ethics of the Cross in the sense that mindful of the impending chaos, a basic anthropological understanding of the human mimetic constitution will instil respect for differences. The Ethics of The Cross is a Christological solution founded on substitution while focusing on the mimetic crisis. But the Reflective Mimesis is a rational approach founded on the reflection of the entire mimetic process. It is a step ahead because it recognizes the indispensable mimesis and is a reflection on mimesis. It is a high level of self-consciousness. Respect rather than fear is what motivates. Respect will be embodied through the realization of the illusion of rivalry.

The extreme openness of the self in the mimetic process is implied in the gratuitous self of desire. The mimetic theory proposes a positive mimesis towards an inclusive rather than exclusive humanity. The inclusive humanism proposed by this thesis is in accordance with the understanding of the mimetic theory. The reflective mimesis is a respect for differences. Indifferentiation is what gives rise to social crisis – eclipse of culture. The preservation of differences is thus conceived as a necessary condition for the survival of any group.

Conclusion

This research is focused on the Reflective Mimesis as a more realistic alternative that fully represents the basic fundamental features of Girardian Interindividual mimesis, than the Ethics of the cross which proposes the Imitation of Christ. The criticism and the contribution of this research is based on two facts: the Interindividual and the indispensable mimesis. Reflective mimesis shows that only mimesis can cure mimesis. Mimetic desire is responsible for the best and the worst in us. The imitation of Christ, however plausible, falls short of the Interindividual mimesis. It proposes a mimesis that is guided by instinct. The reflective mimesis is motivated by the embodiment or the internalization of the knowledge of mimetic desire. Reflective mimesis is the contribution of this research to Theological Science. It is defined as an embodied recognition of the model of our desire in every human relationship. It is a rational foundation on which to build an inclusive humanism. Reflective mimesis is a rational solution to the anthropological crisis caused by mimetic desire. Mimetic desire is responsible for human relation, but reflective mimesis will make that relation non-violent for the most part.

7.1. Povzetek v slovenskem jeziku

V skladu z antropološko interpretacijo križanja Jezusa Kristusa (angl. *Event of the Cross*), ki jo je podal René Girard, križ predstavlja zgodovinski trenutek, ko se razodene nepravilnost mehanizma grešnega kozla, ki je obvladoval prvotno družbo (angl. *primitive society*). V mimetični teoriji Renéja Girarda je mimetična želja nezavedna, nehotena in neobvladljiva gonilna sila človeških dejanj. Girard je v posnemanju Kristusa (angl. *Imitation of Christ*) – to je v odvritvi od volje do moči – našel odgovor na pojav žrtvovanja grešnega kozla (angl. *Scapegoating*). Vendar pa je posnemanje Kristusa rešitev, ki ni v skladu z mimetično teorijo. Ta Girardov kristološki odgovor (= posnemanje Kristusa) na antropološko krizo ne omogoča dogodka križa razložiti kot racionalno dejanje. Nasprotno, reflektivna mimesis, ki jo dogodek križa sugerira, govori v prid racionalne razlage dogodka križa in ne kliče po religiozni razlagi. Naša teza utemeljuje reflektivno mimesis, in sicer kot etično razpoloženje, kot paradigmo in referenčno točko družbene integracije.

Ključne besede: mimesis, mimetična teorija, mimetična želja, trikotna želja, interdividualnost, pharmakon, interdividualna psihologija, sebstvo želje, nezavedno, tiho védenje, prepoznanje, zmotno prepoznanje, čuječnost, refleksija, reflektivna mimesis

1. poglavje: Življenje Renéja Girarda

René Noël Théophile Girard se je rodil v Avignonu 25. decembra 1923. Njegova starša sta bila Joseph Girard in Marie-Thérèse Fabre de Loye. Akademsko pot je v letih 1943–1947 začel na *L'École de Chartres* v Parizu, na šoli, namenjeni usposabljanju arhivarjev in knjižničarjev. Leta 1947 je doktoriral z disertacijo *Zasebno življenje v Avignonu v*

drugi polovici 15. stoletja. Istega leta se je preselil v Združene države, kjer je postal na Univerzi Indiana učitelj francoščine in drugič doktoriral. Leta 1951 se je poročil z Martho Girard in imel z njo tri otroke. Leta 1957 je začel učiti francosko literaturo na Univerzi John Hopkins v Baltimoru, kjer je bil leta 1961 imenovan za profesorja. Tu je začel razvijati idejo o mimetični teoriji. Leta 1980 je bil imenovan za profesorja francoskega jezika, književnosti in kulture na Univerzi Stanford v Kaliforniji, kjer je ostal do upokojitve leta 1995. René Girard je umrl leta 2015, star 91 let.

Mimetična teorija Renéja Girarda govori o edinstvenem dejavniku, ki določa najboljše in najslabše v človekovem delovanju, o mimetični želji. Izraz »mimetična želja« je skoval z namenom, da bi opisal glavno značilnost, ki identificira človeško bitje. Človeško željo pa modelira in posreduje želja drugega. Predmet želje – to je predmet, na katerega se želja usmerja – služi kot vez med željo subjekta in željo modela. Mimetična želja je v jedru želja po želji drugega. V tem, kaj želimo, smo odvisni od drugega. Človek želi v odvisnosti od drugih in ne v skladu s svojimi notranjimi preferencami. V mimetični želji se kaže odvisnost in relacijski vidik človeškega bitja.

Čeprav velja za literarnega kritika, Girarda opisujejo kot francoskega filozofa in antropologa. Pri desetih letih je opustil katoliško vero svoje matere; postavil se je na stran očetovega agnosticizma. V tem času ni bilo mogoče slutiti, da ga bo njegov agnosticizem privedel k neodvisnemu raziskovanju temeljev religije. Osemindvajsetletno obdobje agnosticizma v njegovem življenju ga je vodilo k mimetičnega rivalstva, v katerem vidi temelj religije. Odkritje mimetične teorije je prejkone nekonvencionalno glede na dejstvo, da jo je odkril v literaturi – v romantiki in ne v znanstvenem ozračju moderne sekularizacije.

Kot literarni kritik je v literarni fikciji videl izraz globlje človeške eksistencialne resničnosti. V svoji odprtosti do besedil – zlasti do velikih pisateljev, kakor so to bili Dostojevski, Proust, Cervantes, Stendhal in Flaubert – Girard odkriva mimetično željo, katere struktura je trikotna (trikotna želja; angl. *triangular desire*). V teh delih se kaže globoko razumevanje človeške narave. V mimetični želji Girard odkriva mimesis kot korenino krhkosti človeških odnosov. Prek trikotne želje je jasno prepoznal mimesis kot tisto, kar vlada nad človeškimi dejanji. Želja ni neposredno usmerjena na predmet želje – prejkone se ta na svoj predmet usmerja prek želje drugega, ki ima vlogo modela ali srednika. Človeška želja je interdividualna, je želja, ki se na svoj predmet usmerja prek srednika.

2. poglavje: Mimesis in mimetična teorija

Zgodovinski pregled mimesis pokaže specifično romantičnega razumevanja mimesis. Globoka instinktivna dovzetnost za mimesis je Girarda vodila onstran sfere literarne kritike. Romantikov se znanstvenost moderne dobe ni dotaknila. Romantika je omogočila resnični človeški realnosti, ki je nekompatibilna z znanstvenimi shemami, da se je izrazila. Girardovo raziskovanje odnosa med religijo in nasiljem, ki je dovolj vidno v romantiki, je razodelo edinstveni mehanizem, odgovoren za človeška dejanja. Tako je – ne da bi se tega zavedal – vstopil na področje umetnosti, ki se izmika nadzoru sekularizacije, a je polno duhovnih izrazov, ki omogočajo pronikniti do mimetične želje. Po Richardu Tarnasu so umetnosti edinstvena točka, na kateri se stikata naravno in duhovno; za mnoge moderne intelektualce, razočarane nad pravoverno religijo, je umetnost postala glavni duhovni izhod in medij. V zvezi z njegovimi iskanji velja

dodati njegovo prepričanje o eksistencialni povezanosti med velikimi literarnimi deli in življenji avtorjev, ki so ta dela ustvarili.

Mimesis se v slovenščini prevaja kot posnemanje (angl. *imitation*), v latinščini kot »imitatio«. Beseda »mimesis« izhaja iz glagola »mimeisthai«, ki pomeni posnemati, predstavljati ali upodabljati. Slovenski prevod »posnemanje« ali angleški prevod »imitation« ni povsem ustrezen za grško besedo »mimesis«. Običajen prevod »posnemanje« – angleško »imitation« – ne uspe zajeti več ključnih odtenkov, ki sodijo v estetski, etični, psihološki ali epistemološki red pomena. To, kar vemo o mimesis iz antike, pokriva kulturno perspektivo. V stari grščini 5. stol. pr. Kr. je imela beseda grščina v skladu z grško mislijo predvsem kulturni pomen. Obstaja spor o tem, ali so mimesis v njenem prvotnem razumevanju pripisovali konfliktnost, kakor ji to pripisuje Girard. Izvirni koncept mimesis ni dobro opredeljen; to, kar vemo o mimesis v antiki, poznamo iz del grških filozofov, Platona in Aristotela. Oba sta o mimesis govorila z vidika umetniškega upodabljanja narave, medtem ko jo Girard obravnava v perspektivi njene povezanosti z željo.

Platon pojem mimesis razvije v *Državi* (4. stol. pr. Kr.). V Platonovih dialogih ne najdemo eksplicitne opredelitve mimesis, njeni prevladujoči pomeni pa so posnemanje in igranje, kakor to opisujejo *Država*, *Sofist* in *Kratil*, ki tematizirajo mimesis. Po Platonu posnemanje pomeni odmik od izvirnega. Tako ustvarjeni »posnetek« je brez vrednosti, če »model« ni navzoč. Mimesis – ustvarjanje posnetkov – vodi v slepilo in nepristnost. Kot »zgolj posnetek« je mimesis brez vrednosti. Bistvo, na katerega se mimesis nanaša, je na strani modela; posnetek ni pristen. Platonsko izročilo je mimesis preusmerilo s področja kulture na področje umetnosti. To je bila posledica propada in rastoče nestabilnosti Aten, ki je bila pred tem vodeča sila v mediteranskem okolju. Kakor njegov učitelj Platon je tudi Aristotel mimesis obravnaval v okviru umetnosti,

zlasti pesništva. V nasprotju s Platonom pa je poudaril ustvarjalnost mimesis. Raje kakor da bi se osredotočil na ustreznost predstavljanja, se je preusmeril na ustvarjalnost mimetičnega dejanja. Aristotelovo obravnavo mimesis najdemo v *Poetiki*. Mimesis je utemeljil na ontologiji, ki je različna in neodvisna od modela, ki ga mimesis posnema. Njegovo zanimanje je veljalo vtisu, ki ga umetnost naredi na poslušalstvo; v svojem jedru pa mimesis ostaja predstavljanje, posnemanje. Ustvarjalnost mimesis kot predstave je očitna; ustvarjalnost v predstavljanju tragedije je le njena mila oblika. Umetnost lahko posnema le umetnostno, ne dovršeno. Pri Aristotelu torej najdemo estetsko utemeljitev mimesis.

V 18. stol. mimesis niso več razumeli z estetskega vidika, ampak z vidika predstavljanja narave. To dobo so obvladovali spisi Lessinga, Rousseauja, Goetheja, Schillerja in Moritza, ki so poudarili razmerje mimesis do umetniškega izražanja in začeli vključevati notranje, čustvene in subjektivne podobe ter predstave. Girardova mimetična teorija je sledila duhu raziskovanja, ki je bil lasten temu zgodovinskemu obdobju. Girard je naredil razliko med »posnemanjem« (angl. *imitation*) in »mimesis«. Prvi izraz običajno razumemo kot pozitivni vidik v posnemanju obnašanja nekoga drugega, drugi pa običajno vključuje negativni vidik rivalstva. Glede na to, da je prvi izraz običajno povezan z mimikrijo, Girard predlaga, da slednjega povežemo z globljim, instinktivnim odzivanjem, ki ga imajo ljudje drug na drugega.

Mimetično teorijo je Girard razvil na temelju opazovanja razmerja med nasiljem in religijo. Religija ima vedno na prefinjen način opraviti z nasiljem. Porast nasilja, ki je posledica skupnega imenovalca, to je mimetične želje, obvladuje religija z žrtvenim mehanizmom, ki zahteva izgon ali izločitev nadomestne žrtve. Razumevanje žrtvenega sistema je Girarda privedlo do obsedenosti s kristološkim odgovorom na krizo, ki pa je sama izvorno antropološka. Naša raziskava pokaže na neskladnosti v kristološki etiki

križa. Čeprav etika križa ne vsebuje žrtvovanja in je zmožna dati trajen odgovor na človeško krizo, se v njej jasno kažejo krščanska pristranskost in nekatere neskladnosti z glavnimi vidiki mimetične teorije. Ta kristološki odgovor (= posnemanje Kristusa) na antropološko krizo, kakor ga predlaga Girard, ne omogoča, da bi delovanje križa razumeli kot nekaj racionalnega. Resnica pa je, da reflektivna mimesis, ki jo dejanje križa sugerira, govori v prid tega, da bi »križ« razumeli kot nekaj racionalnega, ne da bi se pri tem sklicevali na religiozno verovanje. Naša teza utemeljuje reflektivno mimesis kot etično razpoloženje, kot paradigmo in referenčno točko družbene integracije. Namen raziskave je kritično ovrednotenje mimetične teorije. Reflektivna mimesis ima za cilj ozavestiti nezavedno, ki v mimetičnem procesu usmerja subjekt k nezmožnosti, da bi prepoznal model kot model. Ključni koncept, ki ima za posledico nezmožnost odgovora na mimetično željo, je *méconnaissance* – »zmotno prepoznanje« (angl. *misrecognition*), »zmotna prisvojitve« (angl. *misappropriation*) –, ki opredeljuje celoten mimetični proces. To je ključni koncept, na katerem temelji delovanje mimetične želje.

Odgovor na zaplet, ki se kaže kot mimetična kriza, je treba iskati med dvema koncepcijama želje: med koncepcijo želje-predmeta, po kateri je želja subjekta prvotno usmerjena na želeni predmet, in koncepcijo modela-ovire, po kateri je želja subjekta prvotno usmerjena na model model/vzor, ki pa je obenem tudi ovira za željo). Koncepcija želje-predmeta je utvara, iluzija. V resnici je mimetična želja interdividualna; najprej je usmerjena na model, ki ga posnema; želimo v skladu z željo drugih, ki nas obdajajo. Željo subjekta posreduje/modelira želja drugega. Želja-predmet služi le kot vez med subjektom in željo modela. Mimetična želja je želja po želji drugega. Želimo v skladu z željo drugega, ki je vedno tu (najboljši prijatelj, sosed in podobno). Ta trikotna želja tvori naravo mimesis v mimetični teoriji Renéja Girarda.

Trikotna želja je fenomenologija želje: vključuje model, subjekt in predmet želje. Ta trikotnik ni *Gestalt*; resnične strukture so intersubjektivne in jih zato ni mogoče nikamor umestiti; trikotnik ni kakorkoli realen; je sistematična metafora, ki ji sistematično sledimo. Trikotnik želje je enakokraki trikotnik. V trikotni želji se najprej kaže predmet – nato sledijo človeške želje, neodvisno usmerjene k predmetu. Trikotna želja uničuje argument koncepcije želje-predmeta in podpira koncepcijo modela-ovire. Predmet želje je na vrhu trikotnika; subjekt in model-srednik sta vsak na svojem spodnjem delu. Predmet je sam v sebi brez vrednosti – njegova vrednost je odvisna od srednika. Vrednost predmeta ni intrinzična in statična; upravlja jo mimetična želja. Po Girardu so predmeti odvisni od obilice vedênj, drž, naučenih stvari, predsodkov, prednostnih izbir in podobno. Pomembna je želenost modela. To, kar subjekt išče, je ta vidik – status modela, za katerega je prepričan, da je lastnost predmeta. Želeči subjekt ne ve, kaj želeči. Odvisen je od modela, da ve, kaj želeči. Pozitivno razumevanje »želečega subjekta v skladu z drugim« odseva družbeni vidik človeškega življenja. Po Girardu mimesis kaže človeško bivanje kot »skrajno odprto«, moderni individualizem pa je utvara/iluzija o lastni izvornosti. Utvara modernega individualizma je posledica sramu, ki ga ima subjekt, ker ne ve, kaj želeči. Izvirni lastnik želje, ki jo drugi posnemajo, je model. Subjekt posnema želje modela. Želenost predmeta nezavedno spodbuja model. Model spodbuja želenost pri subjektu – od subjekta pa se pričakuje odziv v obliki posnemanja. Spodbujevalne geste subjekta so vedno nezavedne. Izmenjava želja je vedno nezavedno dogajanje, to je: dogaja se, ne da bi se model in subjekt tega zavedala. Po Girardu rivalstvo ni posledica naključnega sovpadanja dveh želja v istem predmetu; prejkone subjekt želi predmet zato, ker si ga pred tem želi rival, tekmeč. Z željo po predmetu tekmeč alarmira subjekt o želenosti predmeta. To je realnost interne, notranje mimesis, v kateri je razdalja med modelom in subjektom

zmanjšana ali celo ne obstaja. V eksterni, zunanji mimesis se razdalja ohranja, zato ta ne povzroča krize. Kolikor obstaja družbena razlika ali kakršnakoli oblika diferenciacije, ta usmerja mimetično željo in zadržuje njeno konfliktnost. Notranja mimesis pa te družbene razdalje ne ohranja.

Notranja mimesis se sprevača v krizo indifferenciacije. V krizi indifferenciacije subjekt posnema model, ki se spreminja v rivala, model pa začneja v svojem posnemovalcu videti model, ki se prav tako začneja spreminjati v njegovega rivala. Nova situacija, v kateri oba – subjekt in srednik želje – posnemata želje drug drugega, imenujemo dvojno sredništvo (angl. *double mediation*). Vzajemnost med modelom in subjektom znova in znova spreminja smer z neznansko hitrostjo, ki ji um ne more slediti – od tu izvira »zmotno prepoznavanje« in posledično »zmotno prisvajanje«, rivalstvo. Mimetična rivalstva lahko postanejo tako močna, da začnejo rivali črniti drug drugega, krasti to, kar pripada drugemu, speljevati drug drugega žene – končno lahko privedejo do umorov. Arhaična družba je krize indifferenciacije razreševala z žrtvovanjskim sistemom mehanizma grešnega kozla. Indifferenciacija, ki je v temelju krize, vodi k imploziji kulture. René Girard opisuje naraščajoče nasilje in mehanizem grešnega kozla kot valjenje snežne kepe, ki postaja vedno večja: v skupnosti se kot posledica mimetične želje širi vedno večja vojna vseh-proti-vsem, ki pa jo zaustavi mehanizem grešnega kozla tako, da v žrtvovanjskem nasilju to vojno spremeni v vojno vseh-proti-enemu. Žrtvovanje nedolžne žrtve razreši mimetično krizo. V tem se kaže železna resnica, da nasilja ni mogoče nikoli znikati – mogoče ga je le preusmeriti. Kar nasilje želi, to dobi! Ni ga mogoče znikati – mogoče ga je le preusmeriti k drugemu predmetu ali osebi.

V svojih delih Girard ugotavlja, da je arhaična družba temeljila na mehanizmu grešnega kozla. Umor grešnega kozla je sredstvo za oblikovanje nove družbene enodušnosti in

kohezije; pridobitvena mimesis (angl. *acquisitive mimesis*) se spremeni v konfliktno mimesis, ki se razreši z uničenjem poljubno izbranega posameznika, kateremu pripišejo, da je vzrok krize. Teža katerekoli krize je v načinu njenega vplivanja na medčloveške odnose. Nasilje ni nekaj izvirnega – je stranski proizvod mimetičnega rivalstva. Vzrok je vedno znotraj skupnosti in ga ni nikoli težko identificirati – tisto, kar je težko, je sprejeti odgovornost zanj. Dejstvo je, da obredno žrtvovanje grešnega kozla deluje; delovalo je, ko so bili upi, da bo skupnost preživela, izgubljeni. Učinkovitost mehanizma dokazuje enodušnost, ki jo ta ustvari med člani skupnosti. Obredno žrtvovanje zahteva določeno obliko nejasnosti, da lahko deluje. Obredna zamenjava (angl. *substitution*) predpostavlja določeno stopnjo zmotnega prepoznavanja. Moč žrtvovanja kot obredne ustanove je odvisna od njegove zmožnosti, da prikrije prenos krivde z resničnega krivca na nedolžno žrtev, na katerem obred temelji. Miti o tem obrednem umoru govorijo z vidika preganjalcev, da bi to kriminalno dejanje prikrili. Tako mit razkriva natančno to, za kar upa, da prikriva – umor.

3. poglavje: Etika križa

Girard obsedeno zagovarja učinkovitost žrtvovanjskega sistema, katerega podobnost vidi v dogodku križa. Antropološki vidik križa opredeli kot moment, ko se množica mimetičnih konfliktov, množica pohujšanj (angl. *scandal*), ki v krizi bijejo eno ob drugega, preusmeri na Jezusa Kristusa samega. Edinstveni žrtvovanjski mehanizem se jasno izrazi v križanju. Križ pa je trenutek, ko žrtvovanjskemu mehanizmu ni več uspelo družbe zediniti in jo narediti enodušne. Križ je mehanizem izpostavil, ga naredil vidnega in mu odvzel moč. Križanje nosi v sebi podobno znamenje nadomestitve, ki je značilna za obredno žrtvovanje, vendar z eno razliko: križ predstavlja moralno

razpoloženje Jezusa Kristusa, ki se kaže v njegovem »samo-darovanju ali »samo-žrtvovanju« na križu, da bi naredil žrtvovanjski mehanizem viden in bi ga onemogočil. Kristusovo trpljenje moramo gledati z mimetičnega vidika, da bi lahko doumeli Girardov odgovor. Mimetična antropologija evangelijev razkriva tančico, ki zakriva pravo razumevanje tega, kar evangeliji razodevajo. Jezus Kristus je od samega začetka vedel, da je predmet mimetične želje iluzoren, zato se je nenehno skliceval na posnemanje Očeta; vedel je, da upiranje krepi in spodbuja bes tožnikov. Nepričakovano ne-upiranje Jezusa na križu pa je tožnike zmedlo in razkrilo njihove načrte. Etika križa je samo-darovanje; to je po svojem značaju žrtvovanjsko, ker ni brez nasilja, je pa to nasilje, lastno žrtvovanju, hoteno in sprejeto s strani enega iz solidarnosti z nedolžnimi. Temeljna razlika, ki se kaže v samo-darovanju, je razlikovanje med »žrtvovanjem kot umorom« in »žrtvovanjem kot odpovedjo«. Žal pa se v posnemanju Kristusa ne pokaže temeljni vidik mimetične teorije: interdividualnost želje. Tu je vodilni princip želja, česar pa ne najdemo v posnemanju Jezusa Kristusa. Posnemanje, v katerem se interdividualnost želje ne izrazi, je mogoče le v kristološkem kontekstu, v krščanstvu. Naš zaključek je, da je posnemanje Kristusa pri Renéju Girardu kristološka dogma.

Naša raziskava je privedla do nujnosti izdelave koncepta racionalne mimesis. Refleksivno mimesis predlagamo v smislu racionalne razpoložljivosti, ki so ji lastni vsi izrazi mimetične teorije, sama pa je zmožna nekonfliktnosti. Vzrok konfliktnosti pripisujemo zmotnemu prisvajanju oziroma zmotnemu prepoznanju, ki je lastno mimetični želji. Ta vključuje model in subjekt. Rešitev je v razpoloženju, ki mu je lastno mimetično prepoznanje modela kot takšnega. Zanima nas, kako v mimetičnem procesu obnoviti pravo prepoznanje, zmožno, da zadrži konflikt. Takšno mimetično prepoznanje implicira inkluzivni humanizem. Zmotno prepoznanje je posledica

konflikta med dvema koncepcijama mimetične želje, to je med koncepcijo želje-predmeta in koncepcijo modela-ovire.

Najpomembnejši razlog, zaradi katerega Sigmundu Freudu ni uspelo odkriti mimetične teorije, je bil v tem, da je željo utemeljeval na koncepciji želje-predmeta. Njegovo razumevanje oblikovanja osebne identitete je podobno Girardovi mimetični želji. Ojdipov kompleks prikazuje majhnega dečka, ki ima direkten spolno-predmetno-prilaščajoči se odnos do svoje matere, podobno kot to prikazuje Girardov model želje-predmeta. Do kompleksa pride, ker oče nastopi kot ovira za dečkovo nezavedno željo po materi. Freudova identifikacijska teorija se je osredotočala bolj na reševanju Ojdipove krize. Njegova odvrnitev od »ovire« v Ojdipovem kompleksu mu je onemogočila odkritje modela-ovire mimetične želje. René Girard je prepričan, da se je Freud približal odkritju mimetične teorije, a tega ni spoznal. Obstaja jasna podobnost med identifikacijo z očetom in mimetično željo; za oba je značilna izbira modela.

4. poglavje: Mimetična želja in zavest

Nezavedno mimetično željo, zaradi katere subjekt ne prepozna drugosti in predhodnosti želje modela, razvozlava interdividualna psihologija. Interdividualna psihologija je utemeljena na družbeni razsežnosti mimetične želje; napaja se iz razmerja med željo in mimesis v konstituiranju sebstva. Uteleša vse vidike mimetične teorije, zlasti interdividualno naravo želje in trikotno žejo. Poudarek interdividualne psihologije je razmerje med mimesis in željo. Zagovorniki interdividualne psihologije – René Girard, Jean-Michel Oughourlian in Guy Lefort v delu *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* – so razumeli družbeno razsežnost mimetične želje, namreč to, kako je posameznik v univerzalni mimesis povezan z drugimi. Jean-Michel

Oughourlian je v svojih delih *The Mimetic Brain in The Genesis of Desire* koherentno razložil nastanek sebstva želje ali sebstva-med kot realni proizvod mimetične želje ob pomoči uporabe hipnoze. Relativni uspeh hipnoze pri ustvarjanju »sebstva« temelji prav na tem, da metoda sledi mimetični ustvarjalnosti želje: »sebstvo« je v bivanje priklicano na pobudo »drugega« na ravni želje. Pravi predmet spora je sebstvo želje, ki si jo rivala prilaščata, ne da bi se zavedala, da je ta njuna skupna stvaritev, ki ima svojo pobudo v razpoloženju modela. Izmenjava želja med modelom in subjektom nenehno preobrača smer z neizmerno hitrostjo v okviru razmerja, ki je trajno in mu um težko sledi. Konflikt je rezultat zmotnega prepoznanja oziroma neprepoznavanja drugosti in predhodnosti sebstva želje. Zmotno prepoznanje je razlog za nastanek sebstva in za zanikanje drugosti, ki ga je ustvarila. Hipnoza je zmožna razvozlati čas spomina, da bi prišli do realnega predmeta mimesis, to je do sebstva želje.

Zmotno prepoznanje je značilno za interdividualno razmerje; sebstvo je namreč rezultat zmotnega prepoznanja o svojem izvoru v želji. Zmotno prepoznanje ni negativno – prejkone je to lastnost mimetičnega procesa, ki svoj cilj dosega prek nejasnosti (angl. *ambiguity*). Nejasnost pa je »normalna« in funkcionalna, kolikor je v njej drugi prepoznan kot model; kolikor interdividualno razmerje ostane miroljubno, kakor je to v zunanji mimesis. Prostor med modelom in subjektom je dovolj širok, da se je mogoče izogniti konfliktom. Notranja mimesis pa omogoča rivalstvo, ker sta v njej model in subjekt tekmeča. Ko se rivalstvo začne, postane zmotno prepoznanje patogeno, ker odgovarja na dvojni zahtevek: na zahtevek s strani sebstva po tem, da je lastnik svoje želje, in na zahtevek s strani želje, da je predhodna želji drugega in ima torej prvenstvo nad željo drugega. Po Girardu je razrešitev konflikta v osredotočenju na predmet. Refleksivna mimesis se osredotoča na predmet z namenom, da bi obnovila prepoznanje,

in ne zato, da bi s tem spremenila mimetični proces. Takšno prepoznanje zagotavlja nekonfliktno mimesis.

5. poglavje: Sebstvo želje in pristnost

Pristnost (angl. *authenticity*) sebstva želje ali sebstva-med (angl. *self-between*) je izjemnega pomena. Pristnost sebstva želje pa je mogoče doseči, če upoštevamo dva momenta. Najprej, sebstvo želje je v svojem jedru proizvod mimetičnega razmerja; subjekt išče želenost, ki jo model izkazuje predmetu, to je subjekt si želi predmet, ki si ga želi model. Drugič, subjekt mora biti priznan kot takšen; edini način vzpostavljanja nekonfliktne mimesis je vzpostavitev zunanje mimesis; v njej je razdalja med modelom in subjektom, ki onemogoča konflikt.

Kar zadeva notranjo mimesis, je treba v njej ustvariti potrebno razdaljo ali prostor. Cilj refleksivne mimesis je vzpostavitev tega prostora, ki omogoča nekonfliktno razmerje. Tekmeča ali rivala se ne zavedata dejstva, da je ta prostor potreben – od tu se rojevajo krize. V rivalskem razmerju sebstvo z vidika vprašanja predhodnosti (angl. *anteriority*), to je z vidika vprašanja, kdo je prej, v resnici pripada modelu; subjekt mora tudi priznati drugost/drugačnost (angl. *alterity*) modela. Do konflikta pride, ker rivala izgubita stik z realnostjo »modela-ovire«; ne upoštevata dejstva, da v očeh subjekta model postane ovira. Upornost, ki jo model kot drugost izkazuje subjektu, subjektu zagotavlja identiteto.

Načeloma je prepoznanje drugosti želje – to je, da ima želja, ki formira »sebstvo«, svoj izvor v drugem – možno. Drugi ni nekaj, kar je nad menoj ali proti »meni«; moje poznavanje drugega je del konsustancialnosti z njim. Tako se to kaže z vidika univerzalne mimesis. Človeštvo je potopljeno v družbeno mrežo mimesis, v kateri vsak

igra dvojno vlogo subjekta in modela. V nekem trenutku ista oseba prejema, v drugem daje. To nas približuje ideji Jamesa Aliona o pristnosti sebstva, ki se kaže kot »zastonjski prejemnik tega, kar zastonjsko živi«. Sebstvo želje je vedno proces nenehnega dajanja. Prepoznanje zato vključuje oboje – drugost in predhodnost kot nekaj zastonjskega. Rivalska dihotomija med subjektom in modelom tako ugasne in zdrsne na stopnjo, na kateri začne sebstvo, ki se generira iz rivalskega »zmotnega prepoznanja« predhodnega drugega, miroljubno prepoznavanje. Ta ideja sebstva kot »zastonjskega prejemnika« se ujema s »sebstvom«, ki ga konstituira žeja. Univerzalna mimesis ustvarja mrežo prejetanja in dajanja. Kar je prejeto, je dano. To, na kar se želja realno nanaša, je zastonjsko sebstvo; to je tarča vsakega mimetičnega namigovanja. V njem se uteleša to, kar Girard opredeljuje kot »obilico vedênj, drž, naučenih stvari, predsodkov, prednostnih izbir«. Cilj reflektivne mimesis je ustvariti habitus, ki bo osnoval interdividualno mimesis in oblikoval zastonjskega prejemnika tega, kar je zastonjsko dano.

Zastonjsko sebstvo želje se prejema in istočasno deli v vsakem mimetičnem razmerju. Hitrost izmenjave ne dovoljuje, da bi jo dojemali v sedanjosti, zato jo je treba priklicati iz spomina. Duh mora »plezati nazaj v čas«, da bi dojel izmenjavo, ki rojeva zastonjsko sebstvo želje. To prinaša reflektivna mimesis in to je njen cilj.

Po Girardu se rivalstva, v katerem smo udeleženi, ne zavedamo; zaznamo lahko le rivalstvo, v katerem nismo udeleženi. Odkritje sebstva želje, do katerega je prišla interdividualna psihologija z uporabo hipnoze, razkriva razloge, zaradi katerih smo nezmožni zaznati rivalstvo, v katerem smo udeleženi. Interdividualna psihologija spominu ponuja reflektivno držo duha kot edini most v »plezanju nazaj v čas«, da bi se pri tem izrazila izmenjava želja. Refleksija pa mora voditi k dejanjem, da bi ta cilj dosegla.

Refleksivna mimesis je mimetični odgovor na antropološko krizo. Iz Girardovih del je jasno, da lahko samo mimesis ozdravlja mimetično krizo. Mimetična želja je nezavedna, nehotena, nenadzorovana in je gonilna sila dogodkov. Mimetične želje ni mogoče zanikati in se ji izmakniti. Glavna ovira, ki smo jo odkrili, je pomanjkanje duhovne dinamike, ki bi namesto »*méconnaissance*« (= zmotno prepoznanje) promoviralo prepoznanje. Naše prepričanje temelji na tem, da je racionalna razlaga mimetičnega procesa možna. Če ga je mogoče razložiti, ga je mogoče tudi nadzorovati. Odkritje mimetične teorije nima teološkega temelja v smislu Božjega navdiha. Znanstvena razlaga literarnih del romantike je razkrilo mehanizem, ki deluje v svetu. Nadaljnje raziskovanje žrtvovanjskih ustanov je razkrilo žrtvovanjski mehanizem, ki je pred dogodkom križa držal svet v svojem ujetništvu. Interdividualna psihologija je ponudila trden temelj, na katerem je mogoče utemeljiti racionalen mimetičen odgovor. Izziv pa je refleksivna drža, v kateri se bo pokazala predhodnost in drugost sebstva želje, kar odvrta konflikt. Po našem prepričanju smo v naši raziskavi prišli do znanstvenega odgovora, ki je v ustoličenju regulativne vloge mišljenja, ki ga predlagamo kot refleksivno mimesis. Na antropološko krizo odgovarjamo z antropološko rešitvijo, ki je refleksivna mimesis.

6. poglavje: Refleksivna mimesis in vključujoči humanizem

Refleksija *usposablja* duha, da sprejme realnost *drugosti*, ki je *predhodna* glede na nas, ki ji dolgujemo svoje bivanje in katere bivanje sami delimo z drugimi. Ta *usposobitev* izvira iz tihega védenja (angl. *tacit knowledge*), ki je izkušnja refleksije-v-dejanju. Beseda »*reflectere*« izvira iz besed »*re*« (= nazaj) in »*flectere*« (= ukriviti). Optično

razumevanje besede izvira iz odbijanja podobe predmeta na neki površini. To je značilno za površino ogledala in za druge površine, ki odbijajo podobe.

Refleksija implicira dejanja, ki imajo svoj izvor v odnosu med duhom in možgani. Možgane razumemo z biološke perspektive, medtem ko je duh utelešen v možganih in je v svojem delovanju z njimi povezan. Reči je mogoče, da je duh biološko del možganov; v povezavi z njimi uravnava tok energije in informacij v možganih. Reflektiranje kot dejanje je umski proces, v katerem se izražata reflektivnost duha in vsebina refleksije. Je enoten proces, ki vključuje celotno sestvo. To ima sugestivno moč za razmerje, ki vključuje duha in telo. S tem, da refleksija kot odboj razsvetli vse delovanje človeka, je duh zmožen izraziti samega sebe in svoje delovanje – tako ustvarja enotno védenje o samem sebi v razmerju do svojega delovanja.

Človeški agens v mimetičnem procesu ni trpen in duh v njem ni zastrt, ampak je po vrsti dogodkov zmeden. Oboje – prepoznavanje in refleksija – je drža duha. Prepoznavanje se uresničuje po refleksiji. Refleksija je razmerje, ki ga ima duh s spominom; je most med preteklostjo in sedanostjo. Zmotno prepoznanje se kakor klopčič razreši na podlagi zmožnosti duha, da reflektira spomin. Predhodnost sestva-med (angl. *self-between*) se v refleksiji pokaže kot drugi, ki daje samega sebe, to je kot samega-sebe dajajoči drugi. Ta je lahko prejet samo kot nenehno, vedno samega-sebe-dajajoči in zastonski drugi. Zato ga ni mogoče nikoli zajeti in si ga prilastiti; lahko je le prejet in deljen. Prepoznanje s tem odvzema moč rivalstvu tako, da modela ne postavlja nad subjekt, ampak da se v njem izrazita realna situacija konsubstancialnosti in nenehnega samo-dajanja – to pa je cilj vsakega mimetičnega razmerja. Ko je drugost prepoznana kot takšna, postane model model in ni več rival.

Refleksija kot refleksija je drža duha, ki je samonikla, spontana. Kaže se kot prekinitev delovanja, ko se duh sooči z nekonsistentnostjo v nizu dogodkov. Kakor

Refleksivna mimesis pa se ne kaže kot prekinitev delovanja zato, da bi se v prekinitvi pokazalo to, kar se je v mimesis izmenjalo – prejkone, kakor je ugotavljal A. Schön, je refleksivna mimesis refleksija-v-dejanju. Zmožnost uporabe védenje, ki ga refleksivna mimesis prinaša, ustvarja »mojstra«, profesionalca (angl. *a professional*). Schön se je boril proti modernim zahtevam tehnične racionalnosti, ki so mojstrstvo skrčile na razreševanje problemov. Girard trdi, da zgolj poznavanje mimetične želje ne zadošča, da bi nasilje onesposobili in ga premagali – refleksija mora kot takšna implicirati tudi dejanje. Žal Girard ni predvidel psihološke razpoloženosti (angl. *psychological disposition*), ki bi omogočala dobro mimesis; na mimesis, ki je zanj nepremagljiva, gleda z vidika apokalipse, ki jo je omogočilo izginotje mehanizma grešnega kozla, kakršnega je poznalo arhaično obdobje.

Refleksija-v-dejanju je nekaj bistvenega za »umetnost« (angl. *art*): uporabniku (angl. *practitioner*), to je »mojstru« omogoči, da se spopade s situacijami negotovosti, nestalnosti, enkratnosti in konflikta vrednot. Refleksija je razpoloženost duha, ki je pomembna za katerokoli delo v življenju; je gibanje duha iz ene situacije v drugo. »Refleksija o dejanju« se razlikuje od »refleksije-v-dejanju«. Prva zahteva prekinitev delovanja ob neskladnostih, ki se pokažejo; v refleksiji-v-dejanju pa prekinitve v delovanju ni. Gibanje duha iz ene situacije v drugo je kombinacija dveh situacij, ki vodijo k dinamiki novih posledic. Refleksija-v-dejanju razume edinstveno, negotovo situacijo tako, da jo poskuša spremeniti; spremembe pa razume tako, da jih poskuša razumeti. Razumevanje, ki je značilno za refleksijo-v-dejanju, pridobi uporabnik spontano. Drugače od zavesti je to prejkone podobno »čuječnosti« (angl. *alertness*). Védenje, značilno za »refleksijo-v-dejanju«, je implicitno v smislu, da začetno

nekoherentno situacijo naredi koherentno. Schön je prepričan, da tudi takrat, ko neko dejanje premislimo še pred dejanjem, in ko gre v tem dejanju za spontano veččino, to védenje v resnici ne izhaja iz predhodnih umskih operacij. Refleksija, ki zadeva krizo mimetične želje, je spontana in brez prekinitve v delovanju – vključena je v sebstvo. Tu spoznavni proces implicira telesno razumevanje, ki ga ni mogoče zajeti v besedah. Ta »vemo več, kakor lahko povemo« se kaže v izražanju spretnosti oziroma veščin. »Vemo več, kakor lahko povemo« je pri izviru »tihega védenja«. »Refleksija-v-dejanju« je »tiho védenje«.

Tiho védenje opisuje refleksijo-v-dejanju, ki je refleksivna mimesis. Koncept tihega védenja je obravnaval Michael Polanyi v delu *The Tacit Dimension* (2009). Tiho védenje pomeni, da »vemo več, kakor lahko povemo«. Pomemben argument tihega védenja je vključenost telesa v spoznanje (angl. *cognition*). Jasno je, da telo sodeluje v čutnih zaznavah; tiho védenje pa pomeni, da telo proizvaja vrsto védenja, ki ga ni mogoče zajeti v jezik, zlasti ko gre za veččine. Tiho védenje je proizvod ponotranjanja ali utelešenja védenja. To, kar se izraža eksplicitno, je le fragment pomena, navzočega v utelešenem védenju. Močan argument za utelešeno védenje je, da »zavedanje telesa« ob stvareh, ki jih vemo in počnemo, pomeni »čutiti se živega«. Ta zavest je bistveni del naše eksistence kot čutno aktivne osebe. Telo je edina stvar, ki je ne zaznavamo kot predmeta – prejkone je naša izkušna izkušnja sveta, ki ga dosegame prek našega telesa. Izkušnja nam stvari ne dostavlja, kakor da *nanje gledamo*, ampak kakor da *v njih smo* – tako razumemo njihov skupni pomen.

Tiho védenje je rezultat dveh krajnih vsebin (angl. *terms*), ki sta usmerjeni druga k drugi. Eno skupino vsebin pokriva beseda »oddaljeno« (angl. *distal*), drugo skupino vsebin pokriva beseda »bližnje« (angl. *proximal*). S tema dvema anatomskima gesloma je Polanyi uokviril druge izraze in vsebine, da je z njima opisal »tiho védenje«. Za

bližnje veljajo vsebine, ki označujejo posamezne lastnosti ali značilnosti stvari, kakor se te kažejo prek čutnih zaznav; za *oddaljene* veljajo vsebine, ki izražajo to, kako se nekaj kaže kot celota. Vzemimo za primer »igranje klavirja«: izvedba igranja klavirja (angl. *performance*) je *oddaljena* vsebina; »neproblematično ozadje«, ki omogoča tekočo izvedbo, pa predstavlja *bližnje* vsebine. Obvladovanje »neproblematičnega ozadja« je pogoj za brežhibno izvedbo »igranja klavirja«. Tu gremo od *bližnjega* k *oddaljenemu*. *Oddaljeno* lahko izrazimo, izrečemo; *bližnjega* ne moremo izreči. To, česar ne moremo izreči, potrebujemo, da lahko izrečemo to, kar lahko izrečemo. S tem Polanyi razloži pomen kot enotno sestavljenko *bližnjega* in *oddaljenega*.

Oddaljene in *bližnje* vsebine tihega védenja ustrezajo različnim konstitutivnim zakonitostim. Zakonitosti, ki določajo celotno izvedbo neke skladbe na klavirju, se razlikujejo od obvladovanja neproblematičnega ozadja. Stvari same v sebi ne razodevajo védenja razen, kolikor se jih zavedamo kot celote, na katero je usmerjena naša pozornost. Ti dve krajni stvarnosti – *oddaljeno* in *bližnje* – sta povezani v telesnih procesih, ki omogočajo čutno zaznavanje. Ponotranjeno védenje – tiho védenje – je sposobno razložiti ta logični absurd s pomočjo reflektivne drže duha. Refleksija-v-dejanju se odziva na kritično situacijo kakor na primer na mimetično krizo – ne odziva se na to, kakršna je ta sama po sebi dana, ampak z vidika tega, kako jo spoznana iz problematične situacije. Refleksija ne prekinja delovanja. Edinstveno in negotovo situacijo razume z vidika poskusa, da bi jo spremenila; spremembe pa razume z vidika poskusa, da bi to situacijo razumela. Tu duh uresničuje tri vidike: odkrivanje, razumevanje in spreminjanje problematične situacije. Védenje, uporabljeno v refleksiji-v-dejanju, je uporabniku dano spontano.

Zaključek romana (angl. *novelistic conclusion*) – to je: rezultat romana – je po-izkušnja mimetičnega rivalstva. Vsak roman se zaključi s ponovno osvojitvijo preteklosti (angl.

a past recaptured). Zaključek romana predstavlja spreobrnjenje od smrti, v katero vodi rivalska želja. To, čemur so se odpovedali romantični pisci, je po Girardu samo-osredotočenost, ki vodi k samo-uničenju. Pisec se prek protagonista v svojem delu odpoveduje samo-osredotočenosti – to moramo razumeti kot osredotočenost na drugega. Trikotna narava želje vodi subjekt v iluzijo o modelu. Zaključek romana je spoznanje o tej iluziji, o slepilu, ki ga rivalstvo ustvarja. Girard v svojih delih ne pojasni, kako avtor romana pride do spoznanja o tej rivalski iluziji. Po Girardu je zmaga nad samo-centričnostjo, ki je v bistvu drugo-centričnost, odpoved zaslepljenosti in sovraštvu; to je kronski trenutek ustvarjalnosti romana (angl. *novelistic creation*). Zato jo lahko najdemo pri vseh velikih romanopiscih. V glasu svojega protagonista prepozna romanopisec svojo podobnost z rivalom, ki ga slepi. Tega rivalstva, v katerem smo udeleženi, se seveda ne zavedamo; lahko pa prepoznamo rivalstvo, v katerem nismo navzoči. Spoznanje o iluziji, ki jo rivalstvo rojeva, pride obenem z odločitvijo o odpovedi nasilju. V iluziji rivali odsevajo drug drugega.

Zaključek v romanu je izhodiščna točka reflektivne mimesis. Tiho védenje se že izraža v spreobrnjenju, ki je rezultat romana. Prepoznanje drugosti »moje« želje lahko nastopi v kateremkoli trenutku in neposredno vpliva na druga zmotna prepoznanja. Spoznanje o udeležnosti v rivalstvu je začetek procesa spreobrnjenja, ki je vsebina romana. Spoznanje je rezultat refleksije. Refleksija, kakor smo jo prikazali zgoraj, je most med sedanjim in preteklim. Izraz »tiho védenje« je izraz, ki premišljeno nakazuje možnost nekonfliktne mimetične želje, ki jo iščemo. Izraz je skovan z didaktičnim namenom. Realno je samo tiho védenje v delovanju/dejanju. Nekonfliktna mimetična želja je prepoznanje modela kot modela in ne kot rivala. To dosegamo s prepoznavanjem modela kot takšnega. Prepoznanje je zmožnost, da znotraj mimetičnega razmerja izkusimo drugost sebstva in njegovo predhodnost. Zastonjsko sebstvo želje je

prepoznano kot sebstvo, ki se uresničuje v nenehnem samo-dajanju. Tiho prepoznanje je zmožnost, da v vsakem razmerju in prisvajanju prepoznamo mimetično gibanje in nujnost odmika, ki se nujen, če naj zaježimo konflikt. Tiho prepoznavanje je rezultat uravnoteženega razumevanja celotnega mimetičnega procesa. Utelešenje védenja o mimetični želji bo samo od sebe spodbudilo čuječnost in modrost izogibanja konfliktu. Tiho védenje se pridobiva implicitno kot vajeništvo, kot védenje o mimetični želji, ki se pred nekom razgrinja; tiho védenje pridobivamo implicitno, da bi se izognili konfliktom v odnosih. Védenja o mimetični želji ne bi smeli zavračati kot nezmožnega, da se upre konfliktu.

Refleksivna mimesis ni vrsta zavesti, ki bi se pozorno zavedala vsakega trenutka mimetičnega procesa – to niti ni mogoče. Prejkone je vrsta védenja, ki se kaže v dejanju. Refleksivno mimesis opredeljujemo kot tiho prepoznavanje modela kot takšnega v razmerju. Utelešeno védenje o mimetični želji nezavedno oblikuje nekatere neizražene posamične lastnosti (= *bližnje*), ki določajo naše odnose (= *oddaljeno*). Implicitno védenje o mimetičnem rivalstvu bo oblikovalo tiho védenje o tem, kako zaježiti konflikte. Ko refleksivna mimesis kot tiho prepoznavanje oblikuje del spoznavnega procesa, kakor se je to pokazalo v življenju Girarda samega, se v sebstvu ustvari čuječnost pred rivalstvom. V refleksiji Girard odkrije tiho védenje in si ga usvoji. Jasno je, da se Girard ne zaveda svojega tihega védenja, ima pa utelešeno védenje o mimetični želji. Utelešeno védenje o mimetični želji spreminja zaznavanje, zlasti to, ki zadeva čuječnost pred rivalstvom.

Refleksivna mimesis je alternativa etiki križa, ki je boljša v tem smislu, da v ozaveščenosti pred grozečim kaosom s temeljnim antropološkim razumevanjem človeškega mimetičnega ustroja prinaša spoštovanje do različnosti. Etika križa je kristološki odgovor, ki se na mimetično krizo odziva z nadomestno žrtvijo (angl.

substitution). Refleksivna mimesis pa je racionalni pristop, ki temelji na refleksiji celotnega mimetičnega procesa. Je korak naprej, ker prepoznava neizogibno mimesis in je refleksija o mimesis. Je visoka stopnja zavesti o sebi. Bolj kot strah jo spodbuja spoštovanje. Spoznanje o rivalski iluziji ima za posledico utelešenje spoštovanja.

Skrajna odprtost sebstva v mimetičnem procesu je del zastonjskega sebstva želje. Mimetična teorija prinaša pozitivno mimesis, ki gre v smeri vključujočega, in ne izključujočega humanizma. Vključujoči humanizem, ki ga predlaga naša teza, je v skladu z mimetično teorijo. Refleksivna mimesis je spoštovanje do različnosti. Indiferenciacija – izguba različnosti – odpira vrata socialni krizi in sesutju kulture. Ohranjanje različnosti pa razumemo kot nujni pogoj za preživetje katerekoli skupnosti.

Sklep

Raziskava je osredotočena na refleksivno mimesis, ki predstavlja bolj realistično alternativo etiki križa in ki tudi bolje odraža temeljne značilnosti Girardove interdividualne mimesis kot etika križa, ki temelji na posnemanju Kristusa. Kritika in prispevek naše raziskave temelji na dveh dejstvih: na interdividualni mimesis in na neizogibni mimesis. Refleksivna mimesis je refleksija, ki temelji na prepričanju, da lahko samo mimesis ozdravlja mimesis. Mimetična želja je izvor najboljšega in najslabšega v človeku. Posnemanje Kristusa – kolikor že to je sprejemljivo – ni zadosten odgovor na interdividualno mimesis; etika križa predlaga mimesis, ki jo vodi instinkt. Refleksivno mimesis pa motivira utelešeno ali ponotranjeno vedenja o mimetični želji. Prispevek naše raziskave k teološki vedi je obravnava refleksivne mimesis. Opredelili smo jo kot prepoznanje – natančneje: kot utelešeno prepoznanje – modela naše želje, ki konstituira človeško razmerje; je racionalni temelj, na katerem

gradi vključujoči humanizem. Refleksivna mimesis je racionalna rešitev, ki odgovarja na antropološko krizo, povzročeno s strani mimetične želje. Mimetična želja je nosilka človeških razmerij, refleksivna mimesis pa to razmerje po večini dela nenasilno.

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