

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI[®]

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

**A Hermeneutic of Deep-Rooted Conflict:
An Exploration of René Girard's Theory
of Mimetic Desire and Scapegoating
and Its Applicability to the Oka/Kanehsatà:ke Crisis of 1990**

by

© Vernon Neufeld Redekop

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Theology

Faculty of Theology

Saint Paul University

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada 1998



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-38795-X

Canada

**A Hermeneutic of Deep-Rooted Conflict:
An Exploration of René Girard's Theory of Mimetic Desire and Scapegoating
And Its Applicability to the Oka/Kanehsata:ke Crisis of 1990**

By Vern Neufeld Redekop

Abstract

War, inter-ethnic conflict, genocide, mass murder, rape, torture, food deprivation – these are the extreme manifestations of deep-rooted conflict between identity groups. The same patterns of identity based conflict are evident in situations where the expressions of violence are less flagrant but still severely injurious to the parties involved. A conceptual base that will help to understand the dynamics of these conflicts is presented in the hope of eventually generating processes of reconciliation and healing.

John Burton's definition of deep-rooted conflict is a conceptual starting point. He shows that, in a wide diversity of situations, if non-material non negotiable human identity need satisfiers are threatened, people *will* fight. The work of French literary critic René Girard on the origins of violence is used to explore the dynamics whereby human need satisfiers are defined for the individual or group and how violence becomes part of a relational system.

Girard's first primary insight was that most human desire is mimetic – an imitation of the desires of others. He also discerned another pattern, which he described as the scapegoating mechanism, a catharsis of community violence onto a scapegoat victim. Mimetic desire and scapegoating can ultimately take people down a path of violence, a violence which begins to resemble the phenomena defined as deep-rooted conflict.

The challenge has been to read Girard in the light of a theoretical understanding of deep-rooted conflict illuminated by needs theory. This is at the heart of the present endeavour – to explore the contribution that Girard makes to an understanding of identity-based conflict. The hypothesis being tested has been that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is*

a highly appropriate schema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups.

Chapter one explores a number of approaches to deep-rooted conflict. A variety of approaches to human identity needs are presented in order to flesh out the basic notion of identity-based conflict as a function of a threat to needs satisfiers. Other theoretical approaches are synthesized: *political realism* has dominated the thinking of the international relations community for the Cold War era; theories of *ethnonationalism* suggest that perceived kinship groups are the primary actors in identity-based conflicts; *hegemonic structural analysis* is important in situations of oppression of one group by a more powerful group; theories about the *psychodynamics of victimisation* identify factors which intensify deep-rooted conflict; as well, philosophical development of the concepts of *ontological rift* and the *Self-Other relationship* play a foundational role in coming to terms with identity based conflict. Despite the heuristic potential of these different approaches, they do not adequately describe the dynamics by which these conflict are generated and violence is introduced.

Chapter two presents René Girard's definitions of mimetic phenomena and many examples of mimetic desire, mimetic rivalry and mimetic doubling as Girard develops them within the domains of literature, anthropology and psychology. These examples draw out the inner dynamics of each type of violence. In some cases, Girard makes these dynamics clear; however, some of the understandings come about, only through a combination of painstaking analysis, synthesis and inference. The elucidation of some of these dynamics is a unique contribution of the dissertation.

Chapter three is about the phenomenon of scapegoating, examining the classical structure of scapegoating with the stereotypic patterns Girard has synthesized. Examples are used to

develop the characteristics of scapegoats and those who scapegoat. Another contribution of this chapter is to bring clarity around Girard's use of the word "structure." Through an extensive study of the use of this word, it becomes possible to define Girard's own sense of structure. This introduces a new level of discourse around diachronic mimetic structures of violence which is foundational for a new hermeneutic of deep-rooted conflict.

An interpretative narrative of the Oka/*Kanehsata:ke* crisis is presented chapter four as a test case for the usefulness of the new hermeneutic. This presentation recognizes the existence of a pre-contact aboriginal settlement of *Kanehsata:ke* and traces the development of Oka and historical relationships between Mohawks and Eurocanadians from the arrival of the Sulpicians in the 1720s until the crisis. Beginning with the decision in 1989 to expand an existing golf course, events leading up to and during the crisis are described in detail. Of critical importance is the raid on the Pines on July 11, 1990, the event that sparked the crisis itself. The numerous ways in which the conflict escalated are analysed and presented. This crisis, as a crisis, came to an end on September 23 when the last holdouts in the armed standoff walked away from the Treatment Centre where they had been surrounded.

Chapter five presents an interpretation of the crisis in terms of mimetic structures of violence. A large number of mimetic rivalries are presented along with examples of scapegoating. It is shown how structures change in kaleidoscopic ways. The crisis is again put into narrative form this time using the language of Girardian theory.

The power of mimetic structures of violence becomes particularly apparent as one enters into a very real deep-rooted conflict, raising two theological problems as the basis for a theological reflection in chapter six. First, how are these structures to be stood theologically – is it possible to develop an interface between this discourse and the discourse of theology? The

second has to do with deliverance *from* these structures *to* something else. Regarding the first, insights of a number of theologians help to make the connections between mimetic structures of violence and discourse around victimization, sin, and Satan. The second issue introduces the concept of reconciliation. The reconciliation of deep-rooted conflicts is presented as the process of moving from mimetic structures of violence to mimetic structures of blessing. The conceptualisation of what might be entailed in reconciliation, from a theological perspective, is rooted in Christology. Where structures of violence are most entrenched, the very identity of people indwelling these structures is framed around violence; in other words the satisfiers to their identities' needs are defined in terms of violence. To move out of these structures in the direction of structures of blessing may mean a change in identity.

*Dedicated
to the children and youth
of Kanehsatà:ke and of Oka,
of Kahnawà:ke and of Châteauguay,
who, with children around the world,
have witnessed first-hand
the violence of deep-rooted conflict;
in the hope
that together we can shape our world
so mimetic structures of blessing
displace the mimetic structures of violence
surrounding us now.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1. Deep-Rooted Conflict Between Identity Groups.....	11
Deep-Rooted Conflict Defined	
Human Needs Theory	
The Importance of Theoretical Approaches to Deep-Rooted Conflict	
Various Theoretical Approaches to Looking at Deep-rooted Conflict	
The Challenge	
Chapter 2. René Girard and Mimetic Desire.....	73
The Evolution of Girard's Thought	
Mimetic Desire, Rivalry and Doubles	
Examples of Mimetic Desire	
Conclusion: Mimetic Phenomena and Deep-Rooted Conflict	
Chapter 3. Scapegoat Victimisation and the Origins of Culture.....	134
The Scapegoat Mechanism and the Origin of Culture	
Sacrificial Systems	
Characteristics of the Scapegoat	
Characteristics of those who Scapegoat	
Scapegoat Victimization as a Response to Sacrificial Crisis	
Dynamics of the Scapegoat Mechanism	
Permutations of the Scapegoat Mechanism	
Scapegoating as Structural Transformation	
Chapter 4. The Oka/Kanehsatà:ke Crisis of 1990.....	202
Early History	
A Backdrop of Mohawk and Québécois Ethnonationalism	
Developments in Oka/Kanehsatà:ke from 1959 to 1990	
Events Leading up to the Crisis	
The SQ Raid	
The crisis Intensifies	
A Mixture of Passions	
The Canadian Army	
Confinement to the Treatment Centre	
The End of the Crisis	
Aftermath	
Chapter 5. Mimetic Hermeneutics of Deep-Rooted Conflict.....	265
Hermeneutical Methodology	
Mimetic Phenomena in Relational Systems	
An Interpretative Narrative of the Crisis	
Holding Back the Violence	
Mimetic Theory and Deep-Rooted Conflict	
Chapter 6. Theological Reflection.....	317
Personal Reflection	
Mimetic structures of Blessing	
The Story of Joseph	
Two Prostitutes and Solomon	
Mimetic Structures of violence and Symbols of Evil	
Christological Reflection	
Practical Theological Reflection	
Conclusion.....	355
Bibliography.....	364

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the opportunity to have written this dissertation.

Financial support was critical at certain points. Scholarships from Saint Paul University helped sustain me during course work and comprehensives, and the Barton Award, given by the International Institute for Canadian Studies, made possible my first year of writing. The resource centre of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provided generous access to its collection of press clippings and media transcripts of the Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke* crisis.

The intellectual and spiritual base was broadened through courses with André Beaugregard, Hubert Doucet, Leo Laberge, Jean-Marc Larouche, Kenneth Melchin, and Achiel Peelman. Each holds a special place in my heart for the insights they inspired.

John Van Den Hengel was an amazing advisor. He always asked for a text, and when he responded to each text he asked questions which penetrated to the heart of the matter. Though his questions prompted me to dig deeper, his wisdom directed me where to dig. His comments were always offered gently and respectfully; not once did I feel an encroachment on my dignity through all our interactions. I felt he truly entered into the spirit of what I was trying to accomplish and he offered tremendous support and encouragement to bring it to this level of fruition.

The Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution has played some significant roles to help bring this dissertation to its completion. It was open to a flexible work arrangement which has allowed periods of time to write. My colleagues over the years have been extremely supportive. Bob Birt provided keen insights. Bicki Haack took the time to read early drafts of chapters. Roman Didenko is cheering back in Ukraine.

Christine Dyck and Dave Farthing took positive and encouraging interest in the project. Julie Lalonde, Brian McQuinn, and Esther vanGennip offered tremendous support and encouragement, at times putting forth an extra personal effort in order to guard my writing time. Richard Batsinduka grounded the effort in reality as he shared with me the dynamics of what happened in his native Rwanda and applied the insights which I generated to his own situation.

My children Quinn, Natasha and Lisa have taken an active interest in my progress over a long period of time. They have digested key concepts—any one of them could explain the dynamics of mimetic desire.

Gloria, my life long partner, has walked the dissertation path with me in many respects. Many evening strolls were devoted to talking through the ideas. Together we have learned to live many of the insights that follow. She spent many hours lending her keen and critical eye to a text which is clearer and more concise thanks to her editing. Her work outside the home helped sustain us; her work inside the home created a place conducive to the generation of ideas. Finally, her love and caring over the long haul have contributed to the joy accompanying this work.

Introduction

War, inter-ethnic conflict, genocide, mass murder, rape, torture, food deprivation—these are the extreme manifestations of deep-rooted conflict between identity groups. The same patterns of identity based conflict are evident in situations where the expressions of violence are less flagrant but still severely injurious to the parties involved. This dissertation is an attempt to develop a conceptual base that will help to understand the dynamics of these conflicts in the hope of eventually generating processes of reconciliation and healing.

Deep-rooted conflicts are extremely complex, touching on issues of theology, ethics, political science, international relations, anthropology, political and social psychology, history, philosophy, biology, and many sub-disciplines within these. Their complexity becomes evident through a conversation with just one person who has been severely victimized in one of these conflicts or through descriptions of wide-scale inter-group unrest. The reality is evident in every part of the world.

In the early 1980s the world was captivated by a famine in Ethiopia which was devastating in its consequences. Deprivation of food was used as a weapon in a conflict between identity groups. Thousands of children died and many were left orphans. Henry Rempel of the University of Manitoba, speaking at a special event in Thompson, Manitoba, where I was living at the time, pointed out that a close look at mass starvation generally reveals a significant conflict between identity groups. That was the beginning of a keen desire to address the conflicts underlying the worst of human atrocities.

Later in the 1980s I had the good fortune to be introduced to the work of René Girard. Starting with *Violence and the Sacred*, I did a preliminary study of his work with the intent of

making it accessible to people working with victims and perpetrators of crime. That opportunity gave me enough of an understanding of Girard's work that I could see the potential of his theories for understanding more deeply the dynamics of conflict.

The Summer of 1990 gripped my attention as none before. There was a crisis in Canada which started with a police raid on some Mohawks who were occupying land they believed was theirs but was going to be turned into a golf course. A major bridge going to Montreal was blocked in solidarity, and soon other barricades were put up by aboriginal people across the country. Every night I followed with keen interest the crisis occurring in Oka and at the Mercier Bridge barricade. Near the end of the summer, I received a call from someone who was in contact with those at the centre of the crisis. There was a firm conviction that within days there would be an attack on the Treatment Centre where the last holdouts were confined. It was anticipated that two hundred people would be removed in body bags. The blood bath never occurred, but the crisis showed that Canada itself was embroiled in a violent manifestation of deep-rooted conflict.

In the Summer of 1991, I started a graduate program at Saint Paul University with the intent of better understanding the dynamics of deep-rooted conflict. Major research projects on deep-rooted conflict as a factor in regional economic development and ethics of international affairs provided an opportunity to survey literature on both deep-rooted conflict and approaches to such conflicts in an international context. I became increasingly aware of both the complexity and ubiquity of such conflicts.

Given the challenge raised by both the complexity and the ubiquitous nature of deep-rooted conflicts, as well as the sheer impossibility of addressing all of the problems associated

with them, there was a need to define limits to a serious study of the issue. It was also important to build on theoretical work that clarifies various aspects of the phenomena described as deep-rooted conflict. Both of these challenges were met through bringing together two circumscribed bodies of literature—John W. Burton and human needs theorists and the primary works of René Girard.

John Burton shows that in a wide diversity of situations, if non-material non-negotiable human identity need satisfiers are threatened, people *will* fight. In coming to this conclusion, Burton drew on a body of literature concerning itself with human needs. Burton's contribution was to make the links between needs theory and conflict analysis. For him, deep-rooted conflict came to be defined essentially in terms of identity needs. Various formulations of what these needs might be are analysed and described by a number of theorists who build on foundational ideas put forward by Abraham Maslow. Included in these needs are meaning, connectedness, security, recognition and an ability to take action. The needs are universal but the satisfiers of these needs are relative to the culture, values and historical situation. The relative importance of need satisfiers is always in flux and the dynamics by which particular satisfiers both rise to prominence and are sufficiently threatened to prompt deep-rooted conflict are not evident from a taxonomy of needs and satisfiers. It is in the kaleidoscopic nature of mimetic phenomena as put forward by René Girard that we find key insights to help unlock the dynamic nature of these conflicts.

René Girard is a French literary critique who has been working on the question of the origins of violence since the mid 1950s. His work has centred on mimetic phenomena, particularly mimetic desire as originally revealed to him through an analysis of masterpiece

literature. Scapegoating is also highly mimetic. His understanding of the phenomenon has been shaped by his study of the Bible and a wide range of anthropological and historical literature. He sees both mimetic desire and scapegoating as pivotal in the evolution of human religion and culture.

Girard's first primary insight was that most human desire is mimetic—an imitation of the desires of others. He also discerned another pattern, which he described as the scapegoat mechanism, a catharsis of community violence onto a scapegoat victim. Mimetic desire and scapegoating can ultimately take people down a path of violence, a violence which begins to resemble the phenomena defined as deep-rooted conflict.

The challenge has been to read Girard in the light of a theoretical understanding of deep-rooted conflict illuminated by needs theory. This is at the heart of the present endeavour—to explore the contribution that Girard makes to an understanding of identity-based conflict. The hypothesis being tested has been that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate schema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups.*

In chapter one, I start by developing Burton's idea of deep-rooted conflict. The theories of a number of needs theorists are presented in order to flesh out the basic notion of identity-based conflict as a function of a threat to needs satisfiers. Since there are other ways of analyzing deep-rooted conflict, I have synthesized a number of other theoretical approaches in order to provide a broader context for the present endeavour. I start with political realism which has dominated the thinking of the international relations community for the Cold War era. Realism has been called into question from a number of quarters particularly from those who recognize the

significance of ethnonationalism in generating identity-based conflicts. Since many coming to terms with their identity within a conflictual situation are motivated by an awareness of being oppressed by a powerful group, it has been deemed necessary to examine some of the literature which highlights hegemonic structures in the analysis. Political and social psychologists have also turned their attention to violent conflicts between identity groups with good heuristic result; hence, I deal with some of the psychodynamics of victimisation and theories which describe factors which intensify deep-rooted conflict. Finally, it has become clear that the reflections of a number of philosophers on violence, subjectivity and ontological rift can play a foundational role in coming to terms with identity based conflict. I conclude by pointing out that despite the heuristic potential of these different approaches, they do not adequately describe the dynamics by which these conflicts are generated and violence is introduced. For that we turn to René Girard.

In chapter two, I begin a presentation of Girard's thought. I provide a chronological overview of how his key ideas have evolved and then present many examples of mimetic desire, mimetic rivalry and mimetic doubling as Girard develops them within the domains of literature, anthropology and psychology. The objective is not only to get definitions of mimetic phenomena, but also to understand the inner dynamics of each type of violence. In some cases, Girard makes these dynamics clear; however, some of the understandings come about only through a combination of painstaking analysis, synthesis and inference. The elucidation of some of these dynamics is a unique contribution of the dissertation.

In chapter three we look closely at the phenomenon of scapegoating, examining the classical structure of scapegoating with the stereotypic patterns Girard has synthesized. Using many examples we develop the characteristics of scapegoats and those who scapegoat. We also

note the dynamics of failed scapegoating. Another contribution of this chapter is to bring clarity around Girard's use of the word "structure." Through an extensive study of the use of this word, it becomes possible to define Girard's own sense of structure. This expedites a new level of discourse around diachronic mimetic structures of violence.

Girard's hypothesis about the origins of violence was initially derived from a study of literature. While there have been a number of instances in which Girard's hermeneutic has been used to look at particular aspects of identity based conflict, the challenge for this dissertation has been to first place Girard's work into a broader theoretical context and synthesize more fully developed heuristic tools which might not only illustrate the applicability of his approach but also to anticipate circumstances where these conflicts would be present. In order to test the understandings generated in chapters two and three, it was important to apply them to a concrete case. Since the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis of 1990 was a clear case of deep-rooted conflict it was chosen as the test case.

In chapter four, an interpretative narrative of the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis is presented. This presentation recognizes the existence of a pre-contact aboriginal settlement of *Kanehsatà:ke* and traces the development of Oka and historical relationships between Mohawks and Eurocanadians from the arrival of the Sulpicians in the 1720s until the crisis. Beginning with the decision in 1989 to expand an existing golf course, events leading up to and during the crisis are described in detail. Of critical importance is the raid on the Pines on July 11, 1990, the event that sparked the crisis itself. The numerous ways in which the conflict escalated are analysed and presented. The crisis, as a crisis, came to an end on September 23 when the last holdouts in the armed stand-off walked away from the Treatment Centre where they had been surrounded.

Chapter five presents an interpretation of the crisis in terms of mimetic structures of violence. A large number of mimetic rivalries are presented along with examples of scapegoating. It is shown how structures change in kaleidoscopic ways. The crisis is again put into narrative form this time using the language of Girardian theory.

The power of mimetic structures of violence becomes particularly apparent as one enters into a very real deep-rooted conflict, raising two theological problems as the basis for a theological reflection in chapter six. First, how are these structures to be understood theologically—is it possible to develop an interface between this discourse and the discourse of theology? The second has to do with deliverance *from* these structures *to* something else. This raises the issue of reconciliation. The reconciliation of deep-rooted conflicts is presented as the process of moving from mimetic structures of violence to mimetic structures of blessing. The conceptualisation of what might be entailed in reconciliation, from a theological perspective, is rooted in Christology. Where structures of violence are most entrenched, the very identity of people indwelling these structures is framed around violence; in other words the satisfiers to their identity needs are defined in terms of violence. To move out of these structures in the direction of structures of blessing may mean a change in identity.

The dissertation traces the dynamics of deep-rooted conflict as it relates to identity. This focus limits the bodies of material considered. The present study does not deal with the literature around conflict generally nor does it cover the growing body of literature in the field of conflict resolution. Its unique contribution results from drawing on distinct bodies of literature which address identity-based conflict and have not previously been considered together. On a primary level, Burton and the needs theorists are brought into an analysis of Girard's work. Secondly,

this reading is put into the context of other bodies of literature which delve into phenomena of identity-based conflict, specifically ethnonationalism, hegemonic structures, victimisation and ontological rift.

Theorists emphasizing ethnonationalism suggest that perceived common ancestry is central to identity. Hegemonic structural analysis suggests that identity formation revolves around structures of dominance. Studies of victimisation show how profound suffering and loss can make a virtually indelible impression on one's identity. Philosophical notions of Self and Other exemplify study of identity as rooted in ontology. It is not the purpose of the dissertation to integrate all of these different approaches; rather the brief synthesis of these approaches provides both a context to the study and a richer vocabulary. Alluding to these other methodological perspectives underlines the complexity of the phenomenon of deep-rooted conflict.

The thesis is meant to test out the potential contribution of the mimetic hypothesis as developed by Girard; hence, I concentrate on his key works. By this time there is a vast amount of material dealing with his theories. This secondary literature is referred to only if it is necessary to clarify or corroborate a given aspect of Girard's thought.

The sources for the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis are limited to material in the public domain. In particular, media reports during the crisis and books written after the crisis are the key sources cited. The purpose of using the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis is to test the hermeneutical framework in a real historical conflict situation; it is not to offer a definitive history of the crisis. What is included in the narrative of what happened is that information which illuminates the dynamics of the conflict. As will become clear during the thesis, a key feature of mimetic theory is that it is based on imitation of the interiority of the people involved. This assumes that it is possible, fair

and reasonable to address matters pertaining to the interiority of people. Discourse about interiority is a function of hermeneutical structures or patterns of how people interact and external clues that give evidence that a given pattern is present. (How Girard discovered the presence of these structural patterns will be discussed in Chapter 2.) The point regarding sources is that it is the public record of what was said and done that provides the clues needed for the interpretation.

Essentially, this dissertation exemplifies a practical hermeneutical theology with two significant interpretative dimensions. First, hermeneutical analysis of deep-rooted conflict develops a framework with the use of the *oeuvre* of an accomplished scholar and then tests the framework by applying it to a particular case. The second is to reflect theologically on the significance of what happened in the first action. The process of hermeneutical action and theological reflection was itself a heuristic process in that it brought to light a number of new insights and stimulated the discovery of some new concepts. Among them are the following: relational systems, relational structures, mimetic structures of violence, mimetic structures of blessing, and a new way of conceptualising reconciliation. A new hypothesis was developed; namely, that a blessing of differentiation can be an antidote to a violence of undifferentiation and a blessing of undifferentiation to a violence of differentiation. As well, many dynamic principles that help to predict the probability of mimetic doubling were discerned. Primary among these was that mimetic doubling is more likely within a closed relational system.

There are several thinkers who must be acknowledged for the core understandings they have contributed at a meta-level. The dissertation was not about them or their work but the understandings they provided were essential for the working out of the ideas. First, Paul Ricoeur's argument concerning the dialectical nature of the human Self was invaluable and

reference to his work pops out here and there as an accent colour in a rich tapestry. Michael Polanyi's understanding of knowledge as having both a tacit and explicit dimension, similarly undergirds some of the conceptual dimensions. Third, Bob Birt contributed a basic schema of levels of conflict in which there are disputes which can be settled, underlying conflicts which can be resolved and deep-rooted conflicts which need to be reconciled. It is this latter concept which formed the primary structure undergirding the enterprise, a structure clearly evident in the theological reflection in which the first part centres on deep-rooted conflict and the second on reconciliation. Finally, I am indebted to Rebecca Adams for her very creative work on the positive dimensions of mimetic desire. Her concept of love defined in mimetic terms is described in chapter six. It was the launch point for my own conceptualisation of mimetic structures of blessing. These thinkers all play an invaluable role, complementing the ideas of the human needs theorists and the profound observations of Rene Girard, which are the obvious foci of the dissertation.

Chapter 1

Deep-Rooted Conflict between Identity Groups

Deep-rooted conflicts tend to be ubiquitous, complex, and intractable. They plumb the depths of human emotion and result in the most inhumane action imaginable, causing immense human misery. Since the end of the Cold War, the attention of the world community has been drawn to conflicts between peoples who, having lived side by side with one another for generations, are participating in unbounded violence—violence which burns houses, rapes women, destroys historic cities, uses food deprivation as a weapon, and kills people by the hundreds and thousands in a frenzy of mass murder. Helpful intervention is difficult, in part because their complexity makes them heuristically impenetrable. This dissertation represents a search to understand the dynamics of such conflicts. Specifically it will test the hypothesis that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate schema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups*. We will establish a sense of what deep-rooted conflicts are all about by first examining characteristics which they have in common and then by working from a formal definition and the human needs theory on which it is based. Then we will probe the question of the need for theory before surveying a number of theoretical perspectives.

Common to these conflicts are the distinctive identities of the antagonistic groups based on kinship, language, race, religion, ethnicity, aboriginal nationality, political affiliation, or class.¹ Usually

¹ Pierre L. van den BERGHE, in "The Biology of Nepotism," *Bigotry, Prejudice and Hatred—Definitions, Causes & Solutions*, ed. Robert M. BAIRD and Stuart E. ROSENBAUM (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1992), 133-134, asks the question, "How, then, can one establish ethnicity quickly and reliably and also keep cheats under control? What features will be chosen as *ethnic markers*?" His answer illustrates the way groups distinguish between one another: "First, one can pick a genetically transmitted phenotype, such as skin pigmentation, stature (as with the Tuzi of Rwanda and Burundi), hair texture, facial feature, or some such 'racial' characteristic. . . . Second, one can rely on a man-made ethnic uniform. Members of one's group are identified by bodily mutilations and/or adornments carried as visible badges of group belonging. Third, the test can be behavioral. Ethnicity is determined by speech, demeanour, manners, esoteric lore, or some other proof of competence in a behavioral repertoire characteristic of the group."

there is an overlapping of factors, as in Northern Ireland where religiously defined antagonists, “Catholics” and “Protestants,” have historical affiliations with Ireland and Great Britain respectively, and are separated by class and local geography. They also perceive their kinship differently; various family names are associated with each group.² These differences all reinforce one another. In times of stress, as Vamik Volkan points out, minor differences become extremely important.³ The sense of difference is, among other things, a function of history.

Also, temporality plays a significant role in these conflicts, both in relation to the past and ahead to the future. Each group tends to perceive the past in terms of injustice and victimisation. In most instances, victims of past violence never hear an apology or see a sign of remorse. Stories told to children, about what the other group has done, keep alive a collective memory of victimisation. In the case of the Serbs and Croats, it is a memory of the role each group played during World War II, which is most acute; for Armenians, it is the genocide of 1915-16. Besides the stories of hurt and humiliation, there are stories about the origins of the identity group. These stories provide a sense of destiny and help to legitimate its cause. Religious Israelis, for example, derive a sense of legitimacy from a promise to Abraham and Sarah four millennia ago.

The imagined future “utopias” are stimulated by memories of the past.⁴ Israelis dream of a capacity to absorb any Jews from around the world who wish to immigrate to Israel; this is fuelled by

² Walker CONNOR, in *Ethnonationalism—The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 44, observes that “[d]espite some intermarriage, the family name remains a relatively reliable index to Irish heritage, as compared to English or Scottish. . . . One tragic manifestation of this phenomenon has been the tendency of militant Irishmen (described as Catholic) to be particularly aggressive toward Scottish units of the British forces. . . because of the preponderance of Scottish names among Northern Ireland’s non-Irish population.”

³ Vamik D. VOLKAN, “An Overview of Psychological Concepts Pertinent to Interethnic and/or International Relationships,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, ed. Vamik D. VOLKAN, Demetrios A JULIUS, and Joseph V. MONTVILLE (Lexington & Toronto: Lexington Books, 1990), 38.

⁴ See Paul RICOEUR, “L’idéologie et l’utopie: deux expressions de l’imaginaire sociale,” *Autres Temps*, No. 2, (Été 1984): 53-64, for a definition of utopia as the imagined future of a group, in contrast to the pejorative connotation of utopia as something unrealistic and unattainable.

the bitter memory of Holocaust persecution with no country willing to accept Jews with their backs to the fire. Palestinians dream of a Palestinian State; deeds to confiscated property, passed on as family heirlooms, keep alive a memory of land they once owned and a hope that someday they might be able to recover lost real estate.⁵ The Irish Republican Army has fostered dreams of a unified greater Ireland and the Ulster Defence League cannot imagine a future in which Northern Ireland is not both distinct from Ireland and closely allied with the United Kingdom.

Conflicts are associated with the question of who controls which territory. Disputes about land and political control take the form of separatist movements in which identity groups wish to have political control over territory where they are the majority. In other cases, identity groups like the Kurds, who populate sections of Iran, Iraq and Turkey, wish to be consolidated into a single state, in this case, Kurdistan. Sometimes a relatively small group feels overpowered by a major power and wishes to be independent; examples are the peoples of Chechnya and East Timor trying to stand up to Russia and Indonesia respectively. In Columbia, one of the many disputes about land use regards the growth and production of cocaine. Underlying many disputes are internalised beliefs and values, which are linked to the group identity. Often they are tacitly accepted prejudices,⁶ sometimes they are clearly articulated. They are passed on to children through countless stories, insinuations and innuendos.⁷ Many symbols are used to distinguish between In-group and Out-group. Some of these beliefs and

⁵ See Peter A. OLSSON, "The Terrorist and the Terrorised: Some Psychoanalytic Considerations," *Psychodynamics of International Relations*, 185, for a description of a particular case of this happening among Palestinians.

⁶ Brice R. WACHTERHAUSER, "Prejudice and Reason," *Bigotry, Prejudice and Hatred*, 143, points out that the "dialectic of shifting prejudices, some concealed and some revealed, is . . . a potentially infinite dialectic between prejudice and critical reflection. . . . The human mind never quite, as it were, catches up with itself. Our roots in history go deeper than the eye of reflective consciousness can see. This is why we can criticise and reject some of our prejudices without approaching a prejudice-free or presuppositionless state. As our historical experience expands we are constantly forming new prejudices and transforming old ones." For a description of the tacit dimension in which the unarticulated prejudices reside see Michael POLANYI, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958; Harper Torchbook edition, 1964), 69-245.

⁷ Rita R. ROGERS, "Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Enmity," *Psychodynamics of International Conflict*, 91-96.

values are about Self and Other specifically, (“We are like this . . . They are like that . . .”) and some are expressed with universal intent (“All people should . . .”).

Also common to these conflicts is the raw emotion associated with them. A visitor to the former Yugoslavia captures it well:

What strikes one immediately in the Balkan war is the naked hate, a hate without enough decency—or shall we say hypocrisy?—to cover itself up. Not that hate is unique to this conflict. Most wars feed on hate, and the masters of war know how to manufacture it well. It is the proportions of the Balkan hate, and its rawness right there on the fringes of what some thought to be civilised Europe, that stagger us. Think of the stories of soldiers making necklaces out of the fingers of little children! Never mind whether they are true or not—that they are being told and believed suffices. The hate that gives rise to such stories and wants to believe them is the driving force behind the ruthless and relentless pursuit of exclusion known as “ethnic cleansing.” This is precisely what hate is: an unflinching will to exclude, a revulsion for the other.⁸

This observation raises the questions: Where do these feelings come from? and How is it possible that people can hate one another with such intensity? It is this strong feeling of revulsion which makes possible the inhuman actions, which often characterise these conflicts.

Deep-rooted conflicts have the potential for violence. There is a propensity on the part of antagonists to make their adversaries suffer and die. However, in the words of Emmanuel Levinas,

violence does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognise themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance, making them carry out actions that will destroy every possibility for action.⁹

Whether deep-rooted conflicts result in the destruction of people, places or the possibility of action, the effect on humanity is terrifying.

Finally, these conflicts are frequently accompanied by rape of women. Ethnic rape may even be an official policy of identity groups in armed conflict. It is rape under orders: not out of control, under

⁸ Miroslav VOLF, “Exclusion and Embrace—Theological Reflections in the Wake of ‘Ethnic Cleansing’,” presented at a joint conference of the Gesellschaft für evangelische Theologie and Arbeitskreis für Evangelische theologie in Potsdam, Germany, February 15-17, 1993, 10.

control. It is rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape to kill or make the victims wish they were dead. It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, to make you leave your home and never come back. It is rape to be seen and heard by others, rape as spectacle. It is rape to shatter a people, to drive a wedge through a community. It is the rape of misogyny liberated by xenophobia and unleashed by official command.¹⁰ Besides officially sanctioned rape, in which some women are victimised hundreds of times, there is sacrifice, torture, mutilation, and sexual slavery carried on unofficially.¹¹

Since deep-rooted conflicts between identity groups exemplify complex characteristics of temporality, geography, beliefs, values, history, dreams, power relationships, deep feelings, violence, and rape, they can be both protracted and intractable. There is a need for a theoretical base to understand them in a way which will guide effective action to prevent¹² and resolve these conflicts. The initial definition of deep-rooted conflict was derived from human needs theory; namely, when the non-material, non-negotiable human identity need satisfiers are threatened, people will fight. For this reason we will begin by spelling out the links between human needs and conflict theories, paying attention to the relationship between needs and satisfiers. This raises the question of what are the particular needs implicated in these conflicts. We will look at a wide range of need theorists in this regard; this will flesh out the definition of deep-rooted conflict. Before proceeding we will address the question of what is at stake in theoretical work on the subject—Why is it so important? It will become clear that theory

⁹ Emmanuel LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity—An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso LINGIS (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 21.

¹⁰ Catharine MacKINNON, "Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace," *On Human Rights - The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, ed. Stephen SHUTE and Susan HURLEY (New York: Harper Collins Basic Books, 1993), 89.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 90. As well, even U.N. peacekeeping troops have been reported to engage in rape. (91)

¹² John W. BURTON coined the term "provention" with the following explanation. "The term *prevention* has the connotation of containment. The term *provention* has been introduced to signify taking steps to remove sources of conflict, and more positively to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control behaviour." See his *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), v.

guides responses to these conflicts. That being the case, one further question begs to be addressed: What are the theoretical options? In response, we will survey a number of approaches, all of which impinge in some way on the issue of identity and conflict. As we address these questions, it will become clear that the dynamics of violence in the context of deep-rooted conflict is still underdeveloped; hence the need to probe the thought of René Girard for additional insights.

Deep-Rooted Conflict Defined

The first attempt to reflect systematically on deep-rooted conflict resulted from John Burton's encounter with human needs theory. It happened in the 1970s when Burton, who had been a prolific writer in the field of conflict resolution, read Paul Sites' *Control: The Basis of Social Order*.¹³ Sites argued that effective power could be attributed to "individuals and groups of individuals pursuing their ontological needs. These individuals would use all means at their disposal to pursue certain human needs."¹⁴ Though Sites did not apply his theory to international relations, Burton made the connections.¹⁵ Human needs, according to Burton, "reflect universal motivations" and "are an integral part of the human being."¹⁶ Besides biological needs, there are other "basic human needs that relate to growth and development."¹⁷ These are based on an infant developing a separate identity and this identity is developed through language and behaviour, which is the basis of culture.¹⁸

Deep-rooted conflict is about identity. It is about the beliefs, values, culture, spirituality,

¹³ Paul SITES, *Control: The Basis of Social Order* (New York: Dunellen, 1973).

¹⁴ John W. BURTON, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 15. Note that Sites, himself was heavily influence by Maslow.

¹⁵ John W. BURTON, *Deviance, Terrorism and War* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

meaning systems, relationships, history, imagination, and capacity to act that are at the core of the being of an individual or group. Identity can be framed in terms of needs, which are variously described as human identity needs, ontological needs or simply human needs. The unique and particular satisfiers of human needs make up the unique and particular identity of a given individual or group. Deep-rooted conflict occurs when the most significant human need satisfiers of a group are taken away or threatened.

Human needs theory argues . . . that there are certain ontological and genetic needs that *will* be pursued, and that socialization processes, if not compatible with such human needs, far from socializing, will lead to frustrations, and to disturbed and anti-social personal and group behaviors. Individuals cannot be socialized into behaviors that destroy their identity and other need goals and, therefore, must react against social environments that do this.¹⁹

Joseph Montville gives poignant expression to the effect of these needs not being met:

To measure the importance of these characteristics [needs], one need only consider their opposite - that is, lack of recognition, no status, indifference, degradation. These are attitudes within in-groups that anticipate potential increased dehumanization of, and aggression against, out-groups. In more familiar psychological terms, negative self-esteem results in a growing sense of despair in everyday life. One feels debased, abandoned, denied any supporting love, basically unwanted. The socially dangerous aspect of this state is the potential rage it generates in the individual. Sometimes, the resulting aggression is directed inward, in the form of substance abuse or other self-destructive behaviors. Often, the aggression is directed at an external object.²⁰

Needs, then, are inextricably bound to identity and identity formation; a threat to meeting these needs leads to frustration and, potentially, to violence. There is a relationship between human needs and cultural values: "While needs are universal, values form the culturally specific array of needs satisfiers for particular individuals, groups and communities. In other words, they help to give specific definition to identity."²¹ Deep-rooted conflict, then, is the result of a violation of those values which are linked to

¹⁹ BURTON, *Deviance, Terrorism and War*, 33.

²⁰ Joseph V. MONTVILLE, "Epilogue: The Human Factor Revisited," *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, ed. Joseph V. MONTVILLE (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), 536-37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 537.

the specific identity needs of an identity group.²²

A number of distinctions need to be made. The first is among levels of conflict: disputes, underlying conflict and deep-rooted conflict.²³ To begin with, Burton distinguishes between disputes and conflicts. Disputes are “those situations in which the issues are negotiable, in which there can be compromise, and which, therefore, do not involve consideration of altered institutions and structure.”²⁴ Conflict “is the kind of behavior on the part of persons, groups or nations that goes beyond the normal disagreements and confrontations that characterize much of the usual social, economic and competitive life of societies. Overtly it is behavior that is, or has the potential of being, destructive of persons, properties and systems.”²⁵ Conflicts involve “deep-rooted human needs.”²⁶ Robert Birt further distinguishes between underlying conflicts which are about interests and deep-rooted conflicts which are about identity.

Another distinction to be made is that between deep-rooted conflict and violence. The symptoms of deep-rooted conflict include “hostage taking, illegal strikes, public protest movements, ethnic violence, terrorism, gang warfare, and many other forms of intractable opposition to authorities at one social level or another.”²⁷ Though many of the symptoms could involve violence, Burton is careful not to equate deep-rooted conflict with violence. While “deep-rooted conflict is apt to result in violence . . . violence can also result from disputes that are over negotiable interests, and from psychological

²² BURTON states in *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts* that an assumption of his approach is that “the identity group, not the state and its institutions, is both the appropriate unit of analysis and the explanation of conflict. In other words, the assertion is that effective political power rests finally with identity groups (ethnic, cultural, language, class and other) and not with authorities.” (23)

²³ I am indebted to Robert BIRT, former president of the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution, for these distinctions.

²⁴ BURTON, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts*, 2.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.,

²⁷ Ibid., 15.

problems.”²⁸ On the other hand, it is possible to have deep-rooted conflict in which there is not overt evidence of violence.

A key feature of deep-rooted conflict is the willingness of people to put at risk both the sense of order that follows from compliance with authorities and the sense of security and physical well-being associated with the status quo. In other words, from the perspective of a utilitarian pleasure/pain calculus, the symptoms of deep-rooted conflict appear to be irrational. If, however, there are dimensions of the human person, which are more significant than material well-being, the motivation for deep-rooted conflict appears to be quite rational. In the next section we will look more closely at what these needs might be.

Human Needs Theory

The human needs associated with the Burton school are the following: security, safety, connectedness, belongingness, love, self-identity, self-esteem, self-actualization, response, recognition, stimulation, distributive justice, meaning in life, rationality, control of environment, growth, transcendence, welfare, freedom, respect, autonomy, and participation.²⁹ Different needs theorists either define, emphasise, or organise needs differently but there is general consensus on what they are and how they function in relation to conflict. After presenting some of the background of needs theory and how it came to be associated with conflict analysis, we will examine an array of needs theorists from the perspectives of the primary needs they advocate. We will then look at the role of needs in creating and resolving conflict.

²⁸ BURTON, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts*, 15.

²⁹ Vern Neufeld REDEKOP, “The Role of Deep-rooted Conflict and Its Resolution in Regional Economic Development,” Unpublished, 1991.

Background of Human Needs Theory

Foundational work on the range of human needs was done by Abraham Maslow who inspired a whole generation of needs theorists who have expanded on many of the needs he identified but have called into question his “hierarchy of needs.”³⁰ In the 1970s, John Burton started making the connections between needs theory and conflict resolution. In 1978 a group of needs theorists met at a conference in Germany resulting in the 1980 publication of *Human Needs*, an anthology edited by Katrin Lederer. In 1988 a conference brought together sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists who had been working on human needs with scholars from the field of conflict. This resulted in a book edited by Burton called *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*.³¹

In terms of where these needs are situated epistemologically, Dennis Sandole follows Lederer in describing them as theoretical constructions. These lie somewhere between “constructs, where the reality of a concept can be observed in terms of bits and pieces of conceptually ‘distant’ but otherwise relevant empirical sightings and theoretical terms, where reality can be observed only within the context of some theoretical framework.”³² These “conceptually distant sightings” include satisfiers of needs, which take on meaning and coherence within a needs framework.

Katrin Gillwald (formerly Lederer) makes a clear distinction between needs and their satisfiers. Gillwald distinguishes among personal (intrahuman); psychosocial (interhuman); and psychoecological

³⁰ These include Dennis SANDOLE, “The Biological Basis of Needs in World Society,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 61 and Ronald FISHER, “Needs Theory, Social Identity and Eclectic Model of Conflict,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 91-93, who, besides giving his own critique of Maslow’s hierarchy, summarizes criticisms Lederer and Galtung make of the concept of a needs hierarchy and provides alternate formulations developed by Klenberg, McClelland and Cantril. Herbert KELMAN also takes a position that needs are not hierarchically arranged in “Applying a Human Needs Perspective to the Practice of Conflict Resolution: The Israeli Palestinian Case,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 283. Also, Johan GALTUNG, in “International Development in Human Perspective,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 332, n.7, suggests that “any vertical ordering of needs is likely to be reflected in social stratification one way or the other, and a theory of needs hierarchy may therefore easily become a justification of social hierarchy.”

³¹ John W. BURTON, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990).

³² SANDOLE, “Biological Basis of Needs,” 61.

(extrahuman) groups of satisfiers.³³ She argues that there is really no need for conflict over needs understood as heuristic concepts; rather, she argues that conflicts arise out of satisfiers. Interests and values, like satisfiers, are temporal and historically determined. She joins Burton in arguing that since many material satisfiers are exhaustible in principle and “non-material satisfiers are based on human resources that are inexhaustible in principle,” therefore, occasions for conflicts could be reduced “by seeking ways to substitute non-material satisfiers for material ones.”³⁴ William R. Potapchuk distinguishes between substantive needs, which can be met in the absence of another human (like physical sustenance), and instrumental needs, which can be met only through interaction. The latter include control, identity, recognition, power and security.³⁵ It is as we look at the development of particular need categories by various theorists that the significance of deep-rooted conflict as a function of needs comes into relief.

Particular Human Needs Theories

The discussion of the various theorists will be organised around what they see as being the most basic aspect of needs theory: biological and physiological bases of needs and cognitive bases of needs. As well, some theorists emphasise the importance of context in determining needs, and others show how conflict develops as a function of needs.

Biological and Physiological Bases of Needs

We will examine the work of biologist Mary Clark who develops the human need of connectedness, Paul Sites who connects the research of physiologists with needs theory as he shows the links among emotions, physiology and needs, and Dennis Sandole who postulates that the various

³³ Katrin GILLWALD, “Conflict and Needs Research,” 118.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

³⁵ William R. POTAPCHUK, “Processes of Governance: Can Governments Truly Respond to Human Needs?” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 265.

components of the human brain are implicated in various needs .

Mary Clark has emphasised that human bondedness and connectedness are primary human needs. She observes that the larger size of the human brain has necessitated a relatively small body at birth, resulting in a physical dependence on the mother for a longer period of time. This means that a community is needed for the child-rearing and that culture becomes so much greater than can be passed on genetically, hence the community is needed to pass on to children the knowledge needed to function fully in human cultures.³⁶ She also notes that the larger size of a woman's breast as compared to primates, makes it possible for a mother to look into the eyes of an infant when nursing so that early on a young child is exposed to facial expressions and non-verbal communication. The combination of historically transmitted culture and community connectedness have made possible the significant and unique contributions of humankind. The tendency for social and biological scientists to focus their studies on aggression have eclipsed the significance of the human needs of belonging and connectedness.

From concentrating on control over one's environment as being the most basic of needs,³⁷ Paul Sites turned his attention to identifying different human needs with emotions and their physiological functions.³⁸ The primary analogues are the following: the emotion of *fear* produces a need for *security*; *anger* produces a need for *meaning* (including justice); *depression* is the root of a need for *self-esteem*;

³⁶ Mary CLARK, "Meaningful Social Bonding as a Universal Human Need," *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 34-59.

³⁷ SITES, *Control: The Basis of Social Order*. An interesting detail corroborating the importance of control over one's environment is the observation by William Whyte that people in public places prefer moveable chairs as opposed to those which are fixed. Frequently they will move these a few inches before sitting down indicating a sense of control over their environment.

³⁸ "[F]ear is associated with the autonomic processes indicating the action of pinephrine(E) and anger with the action of norepinephrene (NE). Both of these neurochemicals activate the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), although in different ways. Satisfaction and depression, which appear to depend on variable activation of the parasympatheic nervous system (PNS) have been associated with the action of acetylcholine (ACh) which is the neurotransmitter of the PNS." SITES, "Needs as Analogues of Emotions," *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 8, quoting David FUNKENSTEIN, "The Physiology of Fear and Anger," *Scientific American*, 192 (1955), p 78-80.

satisfaction is derived from the need for *latency*, and possibly, *boredom* results from a need for *stimulation*. These primary emotion/need dyads interact with one another to produce a long list of secondary emotions with corresponding needs. Emotions do not function independently; Sites points out that they are triggered by how we interpret what goes on around us:

Indeed, aside from sudden occurrences which may produce such emotions as fear and anger, cognitive appraisal and interpretation are, without doubt, heavily involved in triggering emotional states in humans. How an event is *appraised and interpreted*, correctly or incorrectly, has a great deal to do with emotional states and thus whether or not a person feels a sense of need gratification. . . the paranoid may *misinterpret* the behavior of others and feel fear when this has no grounds in anyone's reality but her/his own. Or, all of us may, at times, gratify our self-esteem by "kidding ourselves" that others approve of our behavior when this is not called for in more objective terms. In short there is little doubt that *misappraisals and misinterpretations* gratify needs as well as triggering negative emotional states that are not called for from others' points of view. (Italics mine.)³⁹

What this suggests is that generally interpretation plays a significant role in emotional reactions, and hence, action responses to a given situation. These needs/emotions show that the impulse toward violence is indeed linked to deep feelings and that these deep feelings are influenced by how people interpret what is happening to them.

Dennis Sandole approaches an analysis of needs from the perspective of Paul MacLean's concept of a triune brain comprised of (1) reptilian (central core), (2) paleomammalian (limbic system), and (3) neomammalian (cerebral cortex).⁴⁰ The first of these includes the hypothalamus and the second is associated with emotions. The interaction among these different parts of the brain has a great deal to do with conflict. For instance, threats may activate the first two levels which will prompt the physiological reactions which Sites describes above. It is the cortex which tends to think in terms of cooperation and problem solving. Sandole uses this analysis of the brain to theorise about needs as follows:

³⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁰ SANDOLE, "Biological Basis of Needs in World Society," 62 ff.

Let us hypothesize that the reptilian brain (specifically the hypothalamus, which controls homeostasis) plays the dominant role in fulfilling the physiological needs; that the reptilian and limbic brains combine in various ways to fulfil the safety and security, love and belongingness, identity, and self-esteem needs; and that the cerebral cortex plays the dominant role in fulfilling the self-actualization needs. Let us also hypothesize that the competitive power bargaining processes of conflict resolution are related primarily to the reptilian and limbic brains, and that the cooperative problem-solving processes relate primarily to the cerebral cortex. Finally, let us hypothesize that, with regard to both or all parties to any conflict situation, competitive power bargaining is related primarily to dysfunctional conflict and disintegrative processes, while cooperative problem-solving relates primarily to functional conflict and integrative processes.⁴¹

He goes on to make the links to conflict:

As the actors in the society either compare themselves to others or actually begin to move down the needs ladder, from self-esteem to somewhere below a comfortable position on the safety and security level, they might begin to experience *rank disequilibrium*, the *J-curve* of rising expectations followed by an acute reversal in gratification, *relative deprivation* and, lest we forget, *frustration*.⁴²

As this frustration produces fear or anger, “actors in society, including the decision makers, may ignore cautions associated with the cerebral cortex and give in to the demand of the limbic system:

‘Violence...is produced when certain innate needs or demands are deeply frustrated’.”⁴³ From a look at needs as derived from biology and physiology, we turn our attention to the role of mind and meaning in determining the need satisfiers which could drive a deep-rooted conflict if threatened.

Cognitive Basis of Needs

Oscar Nudler has developed the concept of a “World” of meaning and Yona Friedman emphasizes the need for insights and ideas. Together they stress meaning as a powerful need category.

For Oscar Nudler, *meaning* is the most significant among human needs. Rooted in this need are the “worlds” we develop. Drawing on William James, he states that “it is our selective attention that

⁴¹ SANDOLE, “Biological Basis of Needs in World Society,” 76.

⁴² Ibid., 77.

⁴³ Ibid.

makes different 'worlds,' or 'subworlds,' real for us."⁴⁴ We can switch from the world of science to the world of myths, but "one of these worlds is stronger, 'realer' than the other because it provides the foundation or substratum of them. . . . in the phenomenological/hermeneutical tradition it has been variously referred to as the life world, the world of everyday life or just World with a capital W."⁴⁵ In the words of A. Heelan, a "World then fulfils the most general set of preunderstandings one has about reality."⁴⁶ Though person worlds "are to some extent unique. . . language and culture provide a common framework to which most of the people within its range share a great deal of their worlds."⁴⁷ Nudler sees the need for meaning as being fundamental, along with needs for subsistence, growth and transcendence; he describes it as the "need which every human being has for building—and living in—a world (in the subjective sense introduced above). As with all living beings, the human being requires an environment but with the help of symbolic devices [s]he transforms such an environment into a world."⁴⁸ It is the meaning we get in life that answer the questions "why we want to get out of bed in the morning" and "why we want to continue to live."⁴⁹

Now we can see why conflicts between worlds may be so hard to handle: they may imply alternative, competing ways of meeting the need for meaning and, therefore, they may be perceived as putting in danger our own way, a way on which all the rest of what we are depends. Positions in the contest of conflicts implying such a threat may be more emotional and less open to rational bargaining and compromise than in conflicts over scarce material goods. Of course, conflicts which combine both components—as, for example, when class and ethnic cleavages coincide—are among the most difficult to face, particularly when they are approached

⁴⁴ Oscar NUDLER. "On Conflicts and Metaphors: Toward an Extended Rationality," *Conflict: Human Need Theory*, 177.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 177-178, quoting A. HEELAN, *Space Perception and the Philosophy of Sciences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

by ignoring or reducing their complexity.⁵⁰

Nudler points out that different worlds may be founded on root metaphors which “can lead to conflicting interpretations of the same facts and to quite diverse kinds of planning and action courses.”⁵¹

To deal with conflicts between different worlds, to find a transcendent frame of reference, it is important to engage in what he calls “metaphor dialogue.”⁵² He illustrates what this might be like by exploring how three spatial metaphors can be put together: up-down, left-right and central-peripheral. Freud’s up-down metaphor (upper conscious versus lower, unconscious), Milton Rekach’s central-peripheral root metaphor (the more connected a belief the more central it is), and Roger Sperry and Joseph Bogen’s left-right metaphor (functional differences between two brain hemispheres) are combined into a circle of the person system which has a centre of connectedness and is divided vertically by a horizontal line between the up (conscious) and down (unconscious) and is divided into left (analytic) and right (intuitive). The kind of integrative framing of root metaphors is made possible through true dialogue with a third party in which parties to a conflict learn to represent the other’s root metaphor.

Yona Friedman gives special emphasis to the need to know as a key to satisfying other needs. He defines knowledge as the result of a process called “insight” which works with the raw material of information. Knowledge “cannot be manipulated from the outside; it cannot be imposed upon or withheld from the one who looks for it (unlike information). As insight is the key to knowledge and as insight is strictly personal, people try to develop it through training and through persuasion.”⁵³ Characteristics of justice, logic and transparency, not implicit in information, are important in our image

⁵⁰ Oscar NUDLER. “On Conflicts and Metaphors,” p 187-188.

⁵¹ Ibid., 190.

⁵² Ibid., 191.

⁵³ Yona FRIEDMAN. “The Role of Knowledge in Conflict Resolution.” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 259.

of the universe. They are “our poetic emotional invention, and they are tightly linked with the process of insight. It is through insight that these justifications of the information received as fundamental facts become our knowledge.”⁵⁴ This relates to conflict for Friedman as follows:

Ideological (religious, scientific or other) conflict is thus the only kind we cannot resolve, and the need of recognition of our insight is a need without any known or acceptable satisfier (as I consider brainwashing or “ideacide” unacceptable). Ideological struggle does not benefit those who participate in it, but they feel that they cannot avoid it: it is part of their very existence. The image of the universe one builds up of oneself (an ideology or a cosmology) is thus a source of intolerance and conflict. . . . What is nearly impossible to communicate is the personal interpretation that led one to that image and that determines this intellectual adventure: the process of insight.⁵⁵

The process of insight alluded to by Friedman takes place within a particular context.

To illustrate the difference context can make, we draw on Victoria Rader’s observations coming out of her experience with the poor in Mexico:

Mexican Indian peoples who continue to live outside the industrial economy, on the other hand, are more materially impoverished than the US homeless; yet their subsistence communities continue to provide some forms of physical security and a strong sense of group identity and autonomy. Indians say that they learn from their elders how to make do with very little without feeling “poor.” Communal harmony, economic self-sufficiency, a focus on the spiritual, and local control are values that traditional Mexican communities have not willingly surrendered, even for the promise of advance levels of material consumption.⁵⁶

Within this context satisfiers to human needs tend to be derived more from community and connectedness than through acquisition of material goods which in a consumer society are the means of satisfying needs for recognition, security and perhaps meaning.

Stephen Box speaks of thwarted ambition and wide disparity in living standards between people as contributing factors to crime and, as such, constituting situations in which needs are not being met.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Yona FRIEDMAN, “The Role of Knowledge in Conflict Resolution,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 260.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 261.

⁵⁶ Victoria RADER, “Human Needs and the Modernization of Poverty,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 228.

⁵⁷ Steven BOX, *Deviance, Reality and Society* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), *Power, Crime and Mystification* (London: Tavistock, 1983), and *Recession, Crime and Punishment* (London: MacMillan Education, 1987).

Disparity in some circumstances manifests itself as relative deprivation; this resonates with Ervin Staub's concept of difficult life situation described below.⁵⁸

Satisfying the need for meaning is complex, involving interaction with those living in a number of worlds and within a context which allows for varying degrees of comparison. We are beginning to see conflict arising from the juxtaposition of one's own needs and the satisfiers available with those of another. This leads us to consider more pointedly the relationship between conflict and human needs.

Conflict Creation and Resolution

Theorists William Potapchuk, Ronald Fisher and Johan Galtung show how the desire to satisfy human needs for such things as self-esteem or the defining of satisfiers which are destructive to others may cause conflict. To begin with, William Potapchuk observes that "one's sources of power will determine how ambitiously one will set the desired level of satisfier. Class, culture and contextual power issues, among other factors, are likely to have substantial impact on satisfier formation."⁵⁹ Thus, for instance, the "satisfiers to instrumental needs in western culture lead the world toward Western-style representative democracies while the satisfiers to substantive needs lead to increased materialism that surpasses the ability of the earth to meet the demand."⁶⁰ He identifies some "potentially fatal obstacles" to people expressing their needs and searching for satisfiers:

First, some groups may pursue satisfiers that will expressly prevent other groups from satisfying their needs. Second, some groups may pursue false satisfiers - changes in the political, social, or

⁵⁸ Former Chief Alice Cook tells of how relative harmony in her community nestled in the Inter-Lakes region of Manitoba was disturbed when Manitoba hydro developed its Northern hydro electric dams and a wealthy Caucasian was installed next door. Where it was noteworthy for a Cree family to have one ski-doo these new families each had several, not to mention the other affectations of wealth. After the new community was built the crime rate in her community went up drastically. In this case, the key point of identification was geographical proximity in what was a relatively closed social system because of the isolation of the communities.

⁵⁹ POTAPCHUK, "Processes of Governance," *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 270.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 271.

economic order that do not truly satisfy the need. Third, and perhaps most damaging, the desire for some satisfiers may never be expressed because the powerful have manipulated the powerless into accepting the status quo.⁶¹

The latter observation shows a potential interface between needs theory and hegemonic structural analysis.

Ronald Fisher looks at the implications of the need for self-esteem in the creation of conflict.

Observing that “self-esteem is positively related to group identity and cohesion, and negatively related to a perceived threat,” he shows how this need can lead to ethnocentric attitudes.

These considerations lead to a perplexing possibility for Needs Theory in relation to conflict resolution: the need for identity may have a “dark side” which in seeking satisfaction escalates and perpetuates conflict rather than helping to resolve it. According to social identity theory, individuals will strive to enhance their self-esteem and enhance their social identity through invidious comparisons with other groups, and create negative ethnocentric attitudes. . . . Through a variety of mechanisms, self-esteem and the need for a positive social identity can result in perceptual distortions, emotional hostility and negative comments directed toward outgroups.⁶²

One manifestation of this hostility toward outgroups comes from what Johann Galtung has described as the “chosen people phenomenon” in which case groups “pursue strategies that they believe will cause others to recognize them as superior to all others.”⁶³ Galtung also makes the point that satisfying the need to belong to a country or group of which one is proud could mean to outdo “others in wars or economic competition is a satisfier of such needs.”⁶⁴ These observations suggest that there may be “unjust, illegitimate, or dysfunctional satisfiers of legitimate needs,”⁶⁵ or, as Potapchuk argues,

⁶¹ Ibid., 271.

⁶² FISHER, “Needs Theory, Social Identity and Conflict,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 104-105.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ GALTUNG, “International Development,” p318-19.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 267. Richard RUBENSTEIN, “Basic Human Needs Theory: Beyond Natural Law,” also refers to false and partial satisfiers. His examples are the Ku Klux Klan ‘Klaverns’ which are close in a subjective terms. “Just as tribal identity, say, satisfies a genuine identity need partially (and, to the extent that it represents a stopping point, creates a ‘false need’), jobs satisfy a genuine need for creative associated work partially. The latter creates a false need for what bourgeois and state managed

that satisfiers may be false.⁶⁶

Richard E. Rubenstein offers several reasons why human needs theory is useful for conflict analysis. Various types of “apparently disparate forms” of conflict can be analysed using the same analytic tools, especially that of “group identity.”⁶⁷ Within identity groups, the power and durability of certain needs is evident, since

in many cases of ethnic, religious, and national violence, needs for security, welfare, and freedom are systematically subordinated to the imperatives of identity, recognition, and belongingness. The peculiar power of this needs cluster in modern world society enables one to predict that, under certain conditions (for example, an attempt by the state to integrate an incompletely developed identity group into the general population), violent conflict will erupt.⁶⁸

The concept of a needs cluster helps to make a connection between individual psychology and group behavior.⁶⁹ When trying to find solutions to problems which contribute to violence, the structural changes needed to meet identity needs depend on finding ways for each member of the identity group to satisfy needs for security, agency, connectedness, meaning and recognition. The process of satisfying some needs often leads to the satisfaction of others through the same action.⁷⁰ Rubenstein also observes that the need for identity is a need for “multiple identities.”⁷¹ This means that for any given situation, it is not *prima facie* apparent what the identity needs of an individual or group might be.

The most ringing endorsement of needs theory comes from Joseph Scimecca. While questioning

societies define as “work” (i.e. toil). The ‘ethic of work,’ which vainly attempts to make a virtue of necessity, and unmistakable signs of disintegration in the workplace - for example, massive use of narcotic drugs by workers attempting to make intolerable jobs tolerable - reveal how false this need is.” 351.

⁶⁶ Ibid., KELMAN also makes a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate satisfiers of needs in “The Israeli-Palestinian Case” 291.

⁶⁷ Richard E. RUBENSTEIN, “*Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (336-355). 345.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 346.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 347.

⁷¹ Ibid., 349.

how needs are derived goes on to state that “I still believe that this human needs theory represents the most sophisticated and fully developed theory of conflict resolution available today.”⁷² With human needs theory used to provide a basic definition of deep-rooted conflict, we now turn our attention to the question of the role of theory in dealing with such conflicts and within the world of theory, what some of the options might be.

The Importance of Theoretical Approaches to Deep-Rooted Conflict

The phenomenon of deep-rooted conflict between identity groups opens up a field of study which is itself within a number of fields. Insofar as such conflicts resemble *war* and are a subset of war they are implicated in studies of war and peace, which draw on international law, just war theories of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, international relations, political philosophy, the emerging field of ethics of international relations, and peace studies. Insofar as they are *conflicts*, they are part of the field of conflict resolution. The links to themes of *identity* and *violence* raise questions under the purview of cultural anthropology, political psychology and religious studies. Insofar as they are about *inter-group dynamics*, *relative power* and *oppression*, they invoke sociology and liberation theology. *Atrocities* associated with such conflicts raise questions of ethics, the structure of human action and ultimately what it means to be human—questions addressed by theology and philosophy. This range of overlapping fields draws on a variety of disciplines: political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, religion, philosophy, and theology. Hence, the body of related material is considerable. This calls for a balance between being so inclusive as to be ponderous, on the one hand, and being so well focused that significant insights from other disciplines and studies are overlooked, on the other.

There are several reasons why it is important to develop clearer theoretical understandings of

⁷² Joseph A SCIMECCA, “Self-reflexivity and Freedom: Toward a Prescriptive Theory of Conflict Resolution” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 207.

deep-rooted conflict between identity groups. They have been neglected in the development of theories of international relations throughout the modern period. There is now more than ever a greater awareness of their ubiquity and complexity. Since any kind of action intervention is based on theory, false theoretical frameworks can lead to disastrous actions. Many of the new initiatives to resolve these conflicts have been largely experimental. Considering the consequences of such conflicts, there is a need to predict what might happen in various types of conflicts. Finally, and most important, many countries, including Canada, are vulnerable to these types of conflicts and will remain vulnerable over the coming years. We will examine each of these reasons in turn.

A Neglected Field

The need for theoretical work is underscored by the “neglect of ethnic conflict in mainstream international relations.”⁷³ Stephen Ryan gives four reasons for this neglect:

Firstly, the post-war world has been dominated by the ideological battle between western liberalism and Soviet style Marxism. Neither of these systems of belief have shown much concern for ethnicity. Indeed, both have tended to be dismissive of ethnic sentiment. The liberal has been wary of viewing the world in terms of cultural groups because it seems to contradict his emphasis on the individual. Nationalism has been viewed as an irrational and possibly dangerous sentiment. Group rights seem to be at odds with the idea of individual human rights. The Marxist has tended to see nationalism as nothing more than an unfortunate diversion on the road to a communist society.⁷⁴

He argues, second, that in the various parts of the world it was assumed that the significance of ethnic differences would diminish. Western social science, particularly from the 1960s onward, has assumed that modernization and industrialization would lead to assimilation. Traditional Marxists also had a modernization theory “based on the creation of a class consciousness.”⁷⁵ Likewise, “third world

⁷³ Stephen RYAN, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations* (Aldershot UK and Brookfield US: Dartmouth, 1990), xix.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., xx.

president Sekou Touré of Guinea . . . could claim in the early 1960s that 'in Africa it is the state which constructs the nation'.⁷⁶ Third, optimists in international relations devoted energy to "analyzing integration between states" while the realists "were in turn wedded to a belief in the strength of the sovereign state and its durability as a form of political organization."⁷⁷ Fourth, a distinction was made between international relations and domestic political science with the claim that inter-ethnic conflict was to be handled by government departments. Ryan points out, however,

that many ethnic conflicts do not fit easily into either category and so defy neat systems of classification. Inter-ethnic relations are clearly not the same as interstate conflicts because they are not between sovereign states and therefore do not involve access by all parties to international 'institutions'. However, in severe and protracted ethnic conflict the legitimacy of a state is clearly being called into question by at least one distinct cultural group, and therefore such conflicts are not like normal intra-state politics . . . an ethnic group may consider itself entitled to its own state and will have under its command its own armies, own system of enforcement and even its own 'government'.⁷⁸

Ryan's observations show how difficult it has been to find a way of integrating the phenomenon of inter-ethnic conflict within traditional theoretical distinctions between international and domestic politics.

By 1985, Donald Horowitz could claim that "ethnicity has fought and bled and burned its way into public and scholarly consciousness."⁷⁹ By the late 1980s, the reality of conflict between identity groups had become more firmly established in the world consciousness than ever. Stephen Ryan, publishing in 1990, could observe that "ethnic rivalry" even called the US melting pot hypothesis into question.⁸⁰ The awareness of the significance of conflicts between identity groups has been the result of the outbreak of an increasing number of conflicts as well as a greater awareness that these types of

⁷⁶ RYAN, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*, xx.

⁷⁷ Ibid., xxi.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p xxi-xxii.

⁷⁹ Donald L. HOROWITZ, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) quoted in *ibid.*, 8.

⁸⁰ RYAN, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*, xxii.

conflicts have been present all along.⁸¹

The area of relationships between humans as individuals and groups has been described by Burton as “the most complex field of study” that could be undertaken.⁸² Evidence for the complexity comes both from the range of academic disciplines devoted to it (social sciences and humanities, theology and religious studies) but also from an informed look at any one of the conflicts portrayed on the nightly news. In response to an awareness of this complexity, Johan Galtung has argued for the generation of a number of theories.⁸³

Burton, describing the evolution of the notion of deep-rooted conflict speaks of the early stages of the development of his theory when

the concern was primarily with specific identity-driven conflicts, such as those in multi-ethnic and underdeveloped countries where there was a denial of both identity-related needs and distributive justice. However, *what at first appeared to be unique post-colonial situations of ethnic or cultural conflict, were, in fact, special instances of conditions which are universal, even in small group and face-to-face relationships.* (Italics mine.)⁸⁴

Burton's observation increases the stakes for our theoretical understandings. Not only are deep-rooted conflicts evident in the high profile, visible, genocidal conflicts, they are present among us in many situations which appear on the surface to be benign. Whatever the level of intensity, the theoretical challenge is to find ways of understanding their dynamics so as to be able to deal effectively with them.

⁸¹ Note the following examples: “In his analysis of ethnic and religious conflict in 25 countries during 1987, Don Podestra tells us that ‘These simmering conflicts [are] rooted in the most basic forms of human identity,’ reflecting ‘the need to assert group identity’, and originating in one particular emotion: a fear of group extinction. . . . Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr [1988] have examined instances of massive state repression leading precisely to group extinction: forty four episodes of genocide and pocide that have occurred in all world regions since 1945, with estimated casualties ranging from seven to sixteen million people: ‘at least as many who died in all international and civil wars in the period.’ . . . Gurr and James Scarritt [1989] have estimated that there are 246 minority groups at risk in ninety-five countries.” (SANDOLE, “Biological Basis of Needs,” 62-63.) Besides these examples, the amount of published material on various “ethnic conflicts” has been growing rapidly in the 1990s.

⁸² Ibid., 17.

⁸³ Johan GALTUNG, “International Development in Human Perspective,” *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* Ed. John BURTON, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) p 301-335.

⁸⁴ BURTON, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts*, 16.

Need for Effective Action

Both the suffering of victims and the relative impotence of the international community to intervene effectively, underscore the urgent need for new theories which will be able to guide future strategies and actions. However, many interventions continue to be counterproductive. This could well be because the theoretical underpinnings have been wrong. Burton observes that

an incorrect definition of the cause of a serious conflict leads to the adoption of procedures of management that are inconsistent with the realities of that conflict. The procedures are, therefore, likely to be unsuccessful. If a conflict is caused by an unsuppressible need for identity and cultural security, but is defined and treated as one stemming from aggressiveness, the likely outcome will be protracted and escalating conflict. Equally, if a conflict stems from blatant attempts to pursue ideological or leadership interests, but has been defined and treated as one based on legitimate aspirations, there could be outcomes that would threaten the societies involved as well as the global society. Indeed . . . all levels of conflict may be protracted, not necessarily or merely because of their inherent complexities, but *because of the ways in which they have been initially defined*, and because of the means employed to manage them. (Italics mine.)⁸⁵

As deep-rooted conflicts have been defined in new ways, new types of intervention have been developed.

Various practitioners have developed programs to address many of the contributing factors to, and results of, deep-rooted conflicts. Problem solving workshops,⁸⁶ track two diplomacy,⁸⁷ intervention with victims,⁸⁸ and Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-reduction (GRIT)⁸⁹ have

⁸⁵ BURTON, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict*, 21.

⁸⁶ Stephen COHEN and Herbert KELMAN, "The Problem-Solving Workshop: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Resolution of International Conflicts," *Journal of Peace Research* XIII-2 (1976): 79-90.

⁸⁷ Joseph V. MONTVILLE, "Transnationalism and the Role of Track-Two Diplomacy," *Approaches to Peace—An Intellectual Map*, ed. W. Scott THOMPSON and Kenneth M. JENSEN (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991).

⁸⁸ See Joseph V. MONTVILLE, "The Psychological Roots of Ethnic and Sectarian Terrorism," *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*, 172-173, for a description of the activities of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry involving three hundred American psychiatrists who pioneered an "application of self-psychology theory to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

⁸⁹ For a description see Charles W. KEGLEY, "Neo-Idealism: A Practical Matter," *Ethics and International Affairs* 2, (1988): 183.

produced good results. Even so, there is more work to be done in terms of theory development. As Ronald Fisher points out,

[d]estructive intergroup and international conflict is the most serious and difficult problem facing humankind. Traditional approaches to conflict management seem to have a limited capacity to deal with protracted conflict, and it is therefore appropriate to search for new analyses and approaches. . . . The innovative approach of problem-solving workshops is a potentially useful prenegotiation strategy. . . . Initial theories on its practice are disproportionately based on experimental and pilot work and *there is need for much more research and theory development.* (Italics mine)⁹⁰

As new theoretical work is used in constructive interventions such as those mentioned, the feedback will serve to enhance theory through action research.⁹¹ Furthermore, new initiatives will evolve from new and compelling theories. The converse has also been suggested; namely, new approaches had to wait for theory development.⁹² Insights generated through the interplay of theory and action will result in making the outbreak of violence resulting from deep-rooted conflict more predictable.

Given the tendency of deep-rooted conflicts to escalate, if one can predict the likelihood of a conflict, it is possible to take preventative action and prepare for contingencies. Burton links predictive capacity to theory:

[P]rediction has two requirements. First it is necessary to have an adequate *explanatory framework in which to predict the probability of a conflict occurring.* Second, it is necessary to have knowledge in advance of the existence of conditions that are likely to lead to a serious conflict. . . . Prediction as a means of prevention will not be possible until there is a widespread *knowledge of the nature of serious conflict* so that it can be predicted by officials, friends, professional associations, police and decision makers at all social levels. (Italics mine.)⁹³

⁹⁰ Ronald FISHER, "Prenegotiation Problem-Solving Discussions: Enhancing the Potential for Successful Negotiation," *International Journal* XLIV (1989): 467.

⁹¹ For a definition of action research, see Frank DUKES, "Action Research," *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution* ed. John W. BURTON and Frank DUKES, (New York: St. Martin Press, 1990), 288-298.

⁹² BURTON, in *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts*, 15, observes that "[s]ome explanation was still required as to why parties were unwilling to meet within existing institutions, and what kind of institutions would be acceptable and helpful. This proved not to be possible until there had been further developments by sociologists and other theorists in the general field of conflict and behavior." (Italics mine.)

⁹³ BURTON, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict*, 25.

The need to be able to predict, prepare for, and hopefully, prevent violent expression of conflict is more acute with a heightened sense of vulnerability.

Vulnerability

In the 1990s, the sense of vulnerability to deep-rooted conflict has been on the increase. Even Canada has shown itself to be vulnerable. In the post-Cold War period, the closest Canada came to an outbreak of armed conflict between identity groups, was the *Oka/Kanesatà:ke* crisis of 1990. For 72 days, the focus of Canadian attention was on a conflict that first pitted the Mohawks of Kanesatà:ke against the town of Oka, with the backing of the *Sûreté du Québec*; then the Mohawks versus the Government of Canada, with First Nations people across the country prepared to mount aggressive support campaigns in the event of loss of blood on the Mohawk side. Like all deep-rooted conflicts, this crisis has its own unique story. Like other such conflicts though, it shows that a group of people was prepared to fight to the death over something closely linked to its own identity. This conflict will become the focus of analysis in Part III.

Up until the 1980s, the Soviet Union presented itself as a monolith; its break-up has revealed the intensity of deep-rooted conflict involving the many ethnonational groups within its borders. Bloody warfare between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, and between Russians and Chechnyans exemplifies conflicts which were there all along. Within country after country are either historical identity groups longing to establish a country of their own or immigrant groups that threaten mainstream populations.

Ted Robert Gurr observes that

Since the end of the cold war, conflicts between communal groups and states have been recognized as the major challenges to domestic and international security in most parts of the world. Minority peoples also are now the principal victims of gross human rights violations. In 1993 more than 25 million refugees were fleeing from communal conflicts, including 3 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa. . . . This century's longest conflicts are still being fought over ethnonational issues in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Communal conflict is also ascendant in the West: ethnic tensions and inequalities drive the most divisive conflicts in the United States in the 1990s, and Quebec is edging toward secession from Canada. Virtually every

country in western Europe is beset by growing public antagonism toward immigrant groups of third world origin.⁹⁴

With global networks of expatriates from many countries, there are networks of identity groups willing to fund and fuel conflicts that implicate their people. The vulnerability of nation-states, regions and ultimately the global community demand that every effort be put forward to understanding the genesis and dynamics of such conflicts. This understanding could support processes of reconciliation to be initiated before unfettered violence takes a toll similar to what has been exacted in Rwanda, Bosnia and Sri Lanka.

Various Theoretical Approaches to Looking at Deep-Rooted Conflict

So far we have looked at the characteristics of what has been termed deep-rooted conflict and we have shown how the vocabulary of deep-rooted or identity-based conflict has been derived from human needs theory. There are other bodies of knowledge which bring together understandings of both the type of violence associated with these conflicts as well as insights around identity and identity formation. I will examine five of these theoretical approaches, most of which are multi-disciplinary. These are political realism, ethnonationalism, hegemonic structural analysis, psychological theories of victimization and violence, and philosophies concerned with the Self-Other relationship.

Each of these five theories explain some aspects of the phenomenon of deep-rooted conflict; each introduces various terms which are important in an analysis; and each identifies some problems that need attention. They function as different frames on the same picture—each highlighting a different aspect of the same reality. These approaches will form a context within which the significance of Girard's theories becomes apparent. We now turn our attention to political realism, the first of five approaches to be considered.

⁹⁴ Ted Robert GURR, "Communal Conflicts and Global Security," *Current History* Vol. 94 (May 1995): 212.

Political Realism as a Theoretical Framework

The concept of deep-rooted conflict as defined in terms of human needs runs contrary to the realist way of accounting for violent conflict:

It is still widely asserted that “man is aggressive.” Dealing mainly with the world society, Morgenthau, one of the most widely read of writers in the field of politics, argued in 1948 that “political realists” see that the world “is the result of forces which are inherent in human nature.” These inherent forces were, in his view, essentially malign, being characterized by “selfishness, pride and corruption in human nature.” . . . Their case was made by arguing that competition to acquire scarce resources necessarily led to aggressive behaviors.⁹⁵

Burton’s description of deep-rooted conflict, on the other hand, suggests that the realist assumptions are too narrowly defined. The debate between realists and other theorists indicates that an understanding of these conflicts involves a discussion about basic assumptions and values, about the nature of human beings, and about the origins of emotions and drives which ultimately lead to violence.

Political realism has dominated the approach to international relations during the modern period and particularly in the post World War II era. Its assumptions have been woven into the structure of the United Nations and have been foundational for international law. It is described succinctly as follows:

The theory propounded by Morgenthau and the “realist” school of political scientists in North America and Western Europe was simple. States are essentially regional actors that can use whatever military, political, and economic power they can generate to advance and defend their interests however they may be defined. War and the threat of war are essential tools of statecraft in the realist school.⁹⁶

The essence of *classical realism*, according to Steven Forde, is a “belief in the primacy of self-interest over moral principle, of necessity and therefore, *as of right*, in international politics,” meaning “either that self-interest confers a positive right of some kind, as when the ‘national interest’ is seen as a moral

⁹⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁹⁶ Vamik D. VOLKAN, Demetrios A JULIUS, Joseph V. MONTVILLE, ed. “Introduction,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*. ix.

principle, or that morality is wholly inapplicable to international politics.”⁹⁷ Hobbes and Rousseau viewed states as being “in a chronic state of opposition or conflict that may break out into battle at any time. . . . States are left to fend for themselves in an environment that places them all at risk, and that especially jeopardizes those states that allow moral inhibitions to block the pursuit of their own interests.”⁹⁸ Hobbes’ view of a state of nature was that it was essentially competitive, motivating people to enter into contracts with sovereign powers to look after their interests; hence, the centrality of the nation-state concept for international affairs. For Hobbes, no nation-state is morally bound to follow the universal code of ethics which he espouses.⁹⁹ Spinoza adds the notion of “might is right.” Though Rousseau had a more optimistic view of human nature, “he has at least as pessimistic a view of the prospects of justice in the relations of states, once states are formed” since “the well-being of each [is] incompatible with that of the rest.”¹⁰⁰

Twentieth century realist, Hans Morgenthau,¹⁰¹ developed a framework of power politics defending national interests. National power, however, is not unbridled, rather it is subject to limitations of international morality, world public opinion and international law.¹⁰² Central to Morgenthau's theory is the sovereignty of nation-states involving supreme judicial, territorial, and

⁹⁷ Steven FORDE, “Classical Realism,” *Traditions of International Ethics*, ed. Terry NARDIN and David R. MAPEL, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 62.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 63. See also Janine CHANTEUR, *From War to Peace* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992) in which she analyses the Western philosophical tradition, which accepts that the normative state of being between nation-states is that of war and that peace is defined as a temporary break in hostilities.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

¹⁰¹ By way of a mapping of individuals around Morgenthau, he was influence by E.H. Carr and Christian realist Reinhold Niebuhr and succeeded by his student Kenneth Thompson who was given the mantle to revise Morgenthau's influential *Politics Among Nations - The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Other outstanding individuals in the realist school include Dean Acheson, George F. Kennan, Walter Lippman and Henry Kissinger.

¹⁰² Hans MORGENTHAU and Kenneth W. THOMPSON, *Politics Among Nations - The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), parts five and six.

legislative authority:

[T]he sovereignty of the nation as the intended object of a law-enforcing action manifests itself in what is called the impenetrability of the nation. This is another way of saying that on a given territory only one nation can have sovereignty—supreme authority—and that no other state has the right to perform governmental acts on its territory without its consent. . . . War as the extreme form of law enforcement under international law is the only exception to that rule; for it is of the very essence of war to penetrate the territory of the enemy while safeguarding the “impenetrability” of one’s own, and international law allows the occupying nation to exercise sovereign rights in the foreign territory occupied by its military force.¹⁰³

The realist emphasis on power and security arises from “an account of human nature that emphasizes self-interest and the egoistic passions and an account of international relations that emphasizes the constraints imposed by international anarchy.”¹⁰⁴ Realist Henry Kissinger argued that “a nation’s survival is its first and ultimate responsibility; it cannot be put to risk.”¹⁰⁵ Given the value system of a realist position, the fact that most deep-rooted conflicts could be construed as threats to the state makes them an “ultimate responsibility” and hence, demanding of armed intervention. In the event that such conflicts are between relatively small minorities within a “sovereign state,” it would be a matter of internal politics and no concern of the international community. If this conflict challenged the authority of state authorities, it would be legitimate for the state to use all available resources to subdue the internal threat. If deep-rooted conflicts coincide with state boundaries, then the conflicts are thought of as war and states can do anything they wish to protect their interests.

While realists tend to see the world divided into nation-states, with citizens giving their primary loyalty to the state, in recent years there has been greater awareness of the power of identity groups to hold the allegiance of those who belong to them. In fact, there are persuasive arguments that the

¹⁰³ Ibid., 330.

¹⁰⁴ Jack DONNELLY, “Twentieth-Century Realism,” *Traditions of International Ethics*, 85.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 99. Note that Kissinger is using the word “nation” synonymously with “state.”

nation-state in actuality has existed in only a handful of cases.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the roles of culture and religion have been shown to exercise a greater impact on international relations than realism would account for. This is given eloquent expression by R.B.J. Walker:

The conventional categories of international relations theory seem particularly inappropriate in a world in which the claims of sovereignty co-exist with both complex interpenetrations of cultural identity and plausible scenarios about “interdependence” or an emerging “global civilization.” Resolutions of the relationship between universality and particularity at the level of the state alone cannot provide a serious analysis of the patterns of contemporary political community, or claims to authority and legitimacy, or emerging conceptions of human identity or the configurations of economic and military power in the modern world.

Thus the significance of the concept of culture . . . hints at all the uncertainties of modernity, and at a multitude of struggles—on the grounds of tradition or postmodernity, of gender, race religion and ethnicity, or socialism or capitalism, of the Other, of the future, of the local community, of the state and of the planet—to reconstitute the conditions of human existence in the face of tremendous structural transformations.¹⁰⁷

These realizations and others to be developed at greater length below, indicate that realism is not an adequate theoretical framework to deal with deep-rooted conflicts.

Realism leaves us with some unanswered questions. First, regarding presumption of the competitive self, where do the competitive and aggressive urges come from? Second, regarding the preoccupation with power and interests, Burton's notion of identity based needs calls into question the supremacy of power as a motivating factor. Third, the premise of the sovereign state as actor is called into question by the observation of ethnonationalist theorists and by the strength of multinational

¹⁰⁶ Walker CONNOR in *Ethnonationalism - The Quest for Understanding* observes that “[i]f we exclude both the multinational states and those states which, although themselves homogeneous, are characterized by that so-called irredentist situation in which the dominating group extends beyond the state's borders, our only illustrations would be Denmark, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. These states account for less than 4% of the world's population.” 155. See also Gurutz Jauregui BERECIARTA, *Decline of the Nation-State*, tr. William A. DOUGLAS (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994), 123ff. for a description of the identity crisis facing European states. Also Clifford YOUNG, “The Dialectics of Cultural Pluralism: Concept and Reality,” *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism*, ed. Crawford YOUNG (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 4-19.

¹⁰⁷ R.B.J. WALKER, “The Concept of Culture in the Theory of International Relations,” *Culture and International Relations* ed. Jongsuk CHAY, (1990), 12-13.

corporations, many of which are more powerful than most states.¹⁰⁸

What happens when the primary unit of analysis is shifted from the nation-state to the ethnonational identity group? This question introduces the section to follow.

Theories of Ethnonationalism

The awareness that most conflicts (and wars) since World War II are between identity groups has prompted both political scientists and anthropologists to reflect on the nature of these groups. One of the most influential theorists has been Walker Connor who first introduced the concept of ethnonationalism.¹⁰⁹ Drawing first on Connor and then on other theorists, we will define ethnonationalism and the related concepts of aboriginality and consociation, and then identify the major issues raised by an approach to conflict which is centred on peoples rather than states or individuals.

Walker Connor sees ethnonationalism synonymous with nationalism: "Nation connotes a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related. Nationalism connotes identification with and loyalty to one's nation as just defined. It does *not* refer to loyalty to one's country."¹¹⁰ Connor stresses that the essence of ethnonationalism is the intangible attitude of a "self-differentiating ethnic group."¹¹¹ However, a "prerequisite of nationhood is a popularly held awareness or belief that *one's own group is unique in a most vital sense*. In the absence of such a popularly held conviction, there is only an ethnic group." (Italics mine.)¹¹² The strong sense of uniqueness comes about through an awareness of others: "The optimistic position fails to consider that, while the idea of being friends presupposes knowledge of

¹⁰⁸ BEREICIARTU, *Decline of the Nation-State*, 150, stresses the power of transnational enterprises.

¹⁰⁹ Walker CONNOR'S, *Ethnonationalism - The Quest for Understanding* includes a collection of his writings from the late 1960s to 1994.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

each other, so does the idea of being rivals. Indeed, the self-awareness which is the sine qua non of the nation requires knowledge of non members."¹¹³ He draws on Max Weber for the idea that the consciousness of being a separate group is "derived from a *myth* of common descent. Members of the nation feel or intuitively sense that they are related to one another."¹¹⁴ Similar to the idea of the myth of descent is what Michael Levin calls an "ethnodrama, a history of denial and victimization . . . which justifies nationalism and a state as the only means of survival."¹¹⁵

Though ethnonational groups may have a number of tangible characteristics, for Connor, "such characteristics are relevant to the notion of the nation only to the degree to which they contribute to the intuitive sense of kinship as well as to the sense of vital uniqueness from non members."¹¹⁶ This vital sense of belonging is summed up in Rupert Emerson's disarmingly simple definition of a nation as "the largest community, which when the chips are down, effectively commands men's loyalty, overriding the claims both of lesser communities within it and those which cut across it or potentially enfold it within a still greater society."¹¹⁷ In terms of passion, few expressions come closer than Bismark's terse call to

¹¹³ Ibid., 48. cf. Patrick MACKLEM, "Ethnonationalism, Aboriginal Issues, and the Law," *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 9, where he points out that the "sense of being different requires a referent, a "them", being different, in other words requires the construction of an other."

¹¹⁴ CONNOR, *Ethnonationalism*, 81-82.

¹¹⁵ Michael D. LEVIN ed., *Ethnicity and Aboriginality: Case studies in Ethnonationalism*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 5. The idea of ethnodrama links the theory of ethnonationalism to the work done of victimization described below.

¹¹⁶ CONNOR, *Ethnonationalism*, 145. This is corroborated by Manning NASH, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 10-11, in which he states, "the most common ethnic boundary markers, in the ethnographic record and the most pervasive in any system of ethnic differentiation are *kinship*, that is, the presumed biological descent unity of the group implying a stuff or substance continuity each group member has and outsiders do not; *commensality*, the propriety of eating together indicating a kind of equality, peership and the promise of further kinship links . . . only one step removed from the intimacy of bedding together; and a *common cult*, implicating a value system beyond time. [They are expressed through a] *single recursive metaphor*—blood, substance and deity." cf. John E. MACK, "The Enemy System," *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*, 62: "Each nation, no matter how bloody and cruel its beginnings, depicts to itself its origins as a glorious time of splendid heroes who vanquished less worthy foes or enemies. Although the idea of the *chosen* people is classically associated with Israel, each nation connects its mission with a sacred purpose, sanctified by its version of God."

¹¹⁷ CONNOR, *Ethnonationalism*, 156.

Germans he was trying to unite: "Think with your blood!"¹¹⁸

Some scholars offer other defining characteristics. Gurutz Bereciartu distinguishes among *ethnic group*: human collectivity established on a determined territory with a community of consent and culture; *nation*: ethnic group endowed with its own political consciousness; and *nation-state*: a concrete form through which the modern nations have been structured juridico-politically.¹¹⁹ Ted Gurr provides the following definitions:

Ethnonationalists: Large, regionally concentrated peoples with a history of organized political autonomy. . . . *Indigenous peoples*: Conquered descendants of the original inhabitants of a region who typically live in peripheral regions. . . . *Ethnoclasses*: Ethnically or culturally distinct peoples, usually descended from slaves or immigrants, with special economic roles, usually of low status; *Militant sects*: Communal groups whose political status and activities are centered on the defense of their religious beliefs; *Communal contenders*: Culturally distinct peoples, tribes or clans in heterogeneous societies who hold or seek a share in state power.¹²⁰

Michael Levin provides definitions of a strong and weak sense of ethnonationalism: "The demand of a state for every people is the strong sense of ethnonationalism, the extreme political expression of cultural identity."¹²¹ The weak sense of ethnonationalism is the right to self-determination. This however, "leaves unanswered the question of what forms of institutional recognition can meet the aspirations of a "people" for autonomy. . . . New political forms which offer autonomy but do not offer sovereignty are difficult to imagine."¹²² Regarding the connection between the two, he points out that "some claims to nationhood are expressed in terms of the strong sense of ethnonationalism, but recognize alternative possibilities in their demands for new institutional arrangements. Examples in Canada are the concepts of 'sovereignty-association' for Quebec and 'self-

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 198.

¹¹⁹ Gurutz Jáuresgui BERECIARTU, *Decline of the Nation-State*, 144.

¹²⁰ GURR, "Communal Conflicts," 213.

¹²¹ LEVIN, *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 3.

¹²² Ibid., 4.

government' for Canadian First Nations peoples."¹²³ He points out the "practical impossibility" of a "state for every people" makes "the sense of deprivation in its frustration all the more poignant "¹²⁴ However, the "politics of ethnonationalism worldwide draws its importance not from this disproportion of numbers, but from the facts that most states are culturally pluralistic and that more than half the governments of these independent states must deal with political claims made on an ethnic basis where there are few if any workable solutions."¹²⁵

Levin goes on to define aboriginality, which is a distinct type of ethnonationalism "based on historical experience" emphasizing "status as the original occupants of a place, adding depth to the idea of cultural differences. . . . As well as a basis for ethnonational claims, it is also a claim against immigrant ethnic groups."¹²⁶

Michael Asch describes consociation as "one of the fundamental ways in which state ideology identifies citizens with respect to ethnonational identity."¹²⁷ States with a universalistic ideology such as the United States "identify citizens solely as individuals" recognizing "no ethnonational minority communities."¹²⁸ States which follow a consociational ideology may do so directly, in which case they refer to ethnonational collectivities in their constitution or they may do so indirectly as a consequence of other principles, such as forming provinces such that a given ethnonational group is a majority within a

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 3. Thomas Hylland ERIKSEN, in "Ethnicity and Nationalism: Definitions and Critical Reflections," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* Vol. 23-2 (1992): 222, points out that ours is a world in which the present number of states could easily double and could conceivably grow to 10,000 if every ethnic group got its own territory

¹²⁵ LEVIN, *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 3.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

¹²⁷ Michael ASCH, "Aboriginal Self-Government and Canadian Constitutional Identity: Building Reconciliation," *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 29-30.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

given jurisdiction.¹²⁹ Stephen Ryan points out some of the difficulties with consociation theory; namely, “it places too much emphasis on the permanence of ethnic boundaries, exaggerates ethnic cleavages and also undervalues the existence of cross-cutting cleavages.”¹³⁰

The concepts of ethnonationalism, aboriginality and consociation serve to highlight a number of dynamics of deep-rooted conflict. These are the us-them syndrome, the interplay of similarity and difference, stereotypes, ethnic fusion and fission, the tension between self-determination and sovereignty, and the rights of ethnic groups. Each of these will be examined in turn.

Walker Connor argues that what is “fundamentally involved” in conflicts between ethnonational groups is “that divergence of basic identity which manifests itself in the ‘us - them’ syndrome.” (Italics mine.)¹³¹ Though “ethnic strife is too often superficially discerned as principally predicated upon language, religion, customs, economic inequity, or some other tangible element,”¹³² it is generally about whether people belong to one group or the other. Often tangible characteristics overlap in distinguishing groups, but it is the psychological, intangible sense of kinship which divides groups.¹³³

In his analysis of aboriginality in Canada, Patrick Macklen has analysed how the use of similarity and difference have been used in subtle ways to the benefit of the dominant ethnocultural group.

The incontestability of the integrity of Canadian sovereign authority is established and maintained in legal discourse by a rhetoric of similarity and difference. The law has constructed Native people as *different* when to acknowledge their similarities would threaten basic organizing categories of the Anglo-Canadian legal imagination, but it simultaneously has viewed Native people as *similar* to non-Native people when to acknowledge difference would threaten basic legal categories of the Anglo-Canadian legal imagination.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ ASCH, “Aboriginal Self-Government and Canadian Constitutional Identity: Building Reconciliation.” 30.

¹³⁰ RYAN, *Ethnic Conflict and International Affairs*. 18.

¹³¹ CONNOR, *Ethnonationalism*. 46.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.* 145.

¹³⁴ MACKLEN, “Ethnonationalism, Aboriginal Identities, and the Law.” *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 11.

It is this dynamic which is the context for the “drive for self-government, the Native equivalent of an ethnonationalist impulse, [which] is an attempt to seize control from non-Native authorities over the process by which aboriginal identities are constructed.”¹³⁵

In his oft quoted *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Donald Horowitz deals with numerous dynamics of conflict between ethnonational groups. A key notion he develops is the matter of stereotypes.¹³⁶ As the “us-them” syndrome develops, the number of stereotypes increases. These may have to do with work habits, quality traits having to do with an ability to succeed or not succeed, patterns of virtue or lack thereof, mental abilities, abilities to have fun. Each stereotype involves a sense of what the other is like as well as what characterizes one's own group. These stereotypes are often used to explain disparity in wealth, employment and opportunity.

Closely related to stereotypes are feelings of jealousy associated with the perceived well being of another group. As Horowitz observes, “I shall simply state my view that this envy, resentment, and fear is to be found, not in the ethnic distribution of opportunities and benefits *per se*, but in what this indicates about relative group capacities and what it portends for group relations across the board.”¹³⁷

Horowitz also traces the dynamics of “ethnic fusion and fission.”¹³⁸ There are occasions when previously well defined ethnic groups assimilate and take on a common identity; at other times there is a process of differentiation whereby a group with a common identity fractures.

Bereciartu argues that the “objective of national claims” should be to gain enough power to

¹³⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹³⁶ See HOROWITZ, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 169, for a table of stereotypes.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 102.

¹³⁸ Ibid. 65.

realize what Breton has qualified as the “decalog of the rights of ethnic groups.” These are summarized as the right to life, a collective existence, and an identity; territory; self-determination; language; ethnic culture; natural resources; the benefits of production; work and life in the country; market protection, and a self-centered administrative organization.¹³⁹

Foremost among rights demanded by ethnonational groups is the right of self-determination. This however is not at all straightforward in its application.¹⁴⁰

When it comes to the exercise of the right of self-determination, an ethnonational group is faced with the rights associated with a sovereign state as described by the dominant theory of political realism.

Where the state is controlled by one particular ethnonational group, the demand for a right to self-determination by another group invites hostility and inter group rivalry. As Levin observes, “ethnic identity is the most widely used basis for legitimacy not only for minorities, but also for majority groups sharing a common culture. An ethnic group that is a majority may attempt to imprint its culture on the state.”¹⁴¹

Some of the more concrete factors involved in the escalation of hostilities have been identified by Stephen Ryan. These include militarization, physical separation, psychological distancing, entrapment (leaders and followers become committed to a course of action which doesn't work but they can't get out of it), and sanctification and demonization. The latter “are terms introduced by Kuper (1989) to describe what happens when a strong religious element is added to inter-group tensions. He argues that religion can do more than just add another layer of differentiation. It can also result in fantasies of ‘unspeakable horror or ineffable bliss’ . . . They draw on deep levels of the unconscious and

¹³⁹ BERECIARTU, *Decline of the Nation-State*, 159 referring to Roland BRETON, *Les Ethnies*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981). John RAWLS, “The Law of Peoples,” *On Human Rights*, 55, lists seven principles reflecting the rights and duties of peoples including freedom and independence, equality, self-defense but not a right to war, nonintervention, observation of treaties, observation of restrictions in wars of self-defense, and honoring human rights.

¹⁴⁰ For an assessment of issues pertaining to self-determination see Nihal JAYAWICKRAMA, *The Right of Self-Determination*, The Report of the Martin Ennals Symposium of Self-Determination, a Satellite Conference for the 1992 World Conference on Human Rights, co-sponsored by the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan and International Alert.

¹⁴¹ LEVIN, *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 4.

can result in an interpretation of the conflict in terms of a Holy War between good and bad, God and Satan.”¹⁴²

The theory of ethnonationalism concentrates on what constitutes the basis for an ethnonational group and what motivates people to give such a group their primary loyalty. We have emphasized Connor’s observation that it is a perceived common ancestry that makes people feel that they belong in the group. Conflict between groups is described primarily in terms of intergroup distinctions through such things as stereotypes which intensify rivalries. What happens when there is a power imbalance which makes it virtually impossible for one group to close the gap in relative well-being? One example is that of Canada’s First Nations:

The law’s logic of justification, however, identifies and uses similarities and differences between Native and non-Native people to perpetuate hierarchical relationships between First Nations and the Canadian state. *Relations of power are constructed and maintained by the identification of racial and or cultural difference.* The use to which similarity and difference are put can be said to be racist to the extent that it legitimates racial or cultural inequalities between Native and non-Native people. (Italics mine.)¹⁴³

Concretely, the “assertion of territorial sovereignty was supported or legitimated by an emphasis on Native difference, whereas the assertion of crown title was legitimated by an emphasis on Native similarity.”¹⁴⁴ It is this entrenched hierarchy of power relationships which is the focus of hegemonic structural analysis.

Hegemonic Structural Analysis as a Theoretical Base

Having examined the phenomenon of deep-rooted conflict from the perspectives of realism and ethnonationalism which focus respectively on power in the hands of political authorities in a sovereign

¹⁴² RYAN, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*, citing L. KUPER, “The Prevention of Genocide: Cultural and Structural Indicators of Genocidal Threat,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 12-2 (1989).

¹⁴³ Patrick MACKLEN, “Ethnonationalism, Aboriginal Identities, and the Law,” *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*, 12.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

state and the strength of kinship identity bonds, we now turn our attention to hegemonic structural analysis. This theoretical approach acknowledges both group identity (similar to ethnonationalism but not limited to kinship) and the importance of power, defined in a more subtle manner than is the case among realists. It insists that power and control, when unbalanced, are oppressive, and that in many ways dominating power becomes entrenched through various structures. We will both define hegemonic structure and examine how it relates to conflict between identity groups.

The concept of hegemonic structure was developed by Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci, and has been used by both anthropologists and liberation theologians to analyse how both discursive structures¹⁴⁵ and non-discursive structures (economic and political) allow one group to dominate and control another. This control is so much woven into culture that it seems in Gramsci's terms, "commonsensical." As Linger defines it,

Hegemony is the maintenance of a political structure through the cultural shaping of experience, obviating or lessening reliance on illegitimate force. Although worked-out, explicit symbolic formulations constitute one aspect of hegemony, hegemony is not just ideology. Indeed, ideology is hegemony's weak point. Ideology is vulnerable because it is visible; public statements of belief and justifications of oppression invite contestation. Gramsci's originality lies in his emphasis on hegemony's invisible, insidious, more potent underside: the "practical consciousness" that saturates "the whole process of living...to such a depth that the pressures and limits of . . . a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense."¹⁴⁶

What is significant about hegemonic structures is that they are well hidden. They manifest themselves in many subtle ways. Uncovering the presence of hegemonic structures is one of the tasks of

¹⁴⁵ George C.L. CUMMINGS, "Black Theology and Latin American Theology," *New Visions for the Americas - Religious Engagement and Social Transformation*, ed. David BATSTONE (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993: 215-229) 217 & 218, provides the following quotes from Cornel WEST, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 49-50, who defines "structures of modern discourse" as "the controlling metaphors, notions, categories, and norms that shape the predominant conceptions of truth and knowledge in the modern West . . . are circumscribed and determined by three major historical processes: the scientific revolution, the Cartesian transformation of philosophy, and the classical revival. . . [T]he idea of white supremacy emerges partly because of the powers within the structure of modern discourse - powers to produce and prohibit, develop and delimit, forms of rationality, scientificity, and objectivity which set perimeters and draw boundaries for the intelligibility, availability and legitimacy of certain ideas."

¹⁴⁶ Daniel T. LINGER, "The Hegemony of Discontent," *American Ethnologist* 20(1):3-24, 4.

hermeneutics. George Cummings emphasizes ways in which these structures are particularly evident in discourse, something which is the focus of hermeneutics.¹⁴⁷ Hermann Rebel articulates the hermeneutical task in more explicit terms:

The hermeneutical approach calls into question and undermines our confidence in commonsensical interpretative approaches to our own and others' presentations—in speech, texts, rituals, and so on—of living experiences. Secure in the knowledge that no one is able to return to an original "text" of reality, the hermeneuticists' enterprise is essentially subversive, pointing out the self-contradiction and incompleteness of ostensibly integrated and authoritative histories of literature, of history or of the self.¹⁴⁸

Besides helping to analyse several dimensions of the conflict (threat to the need for distributive justice, need for autonomy), this mode of analysis brings in a strong ethical dimension through its acknowledgement that domination and control are oppressive, hence, morally wrong. This understanding was developed by liberation theologian George Cummings in order to find a transcendent category which could be used to show similarities of oppression based on class (as in classical Latin American liberation theology), race (as has been developed by black liberation theologians) gender (feminist and womanist analysis), sexual orientation and age. The emphasis on discursive structures of domination is useful as a heuristic tool to examine the subtle and powerful ways that various identity groups are kept in a subordinate position.

Hegemonic structural analysis, in its relation to deep-rooted conflict, brings to consciousness hidden patterns, which have a strong psychological impact on individuals and groups. They reinforce feelings of shame and entitlement in the "oppressed" and "oppressors" respectively.¹⁴⁹ As these

¹⁴⁷ George C. L. CUMMINGS, "Black Theology and Latin American Theology," 220-225. Note as well the formation of pre-hegemonic, neo-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic structures.

¹⁴⁸ Hermann REBEL, "Cultural Hegemony and class experience: A Critical reading of Recent Ethnological-Historical Approaches," *American Ethnologist* 16-1, (Feb. 1989), 122.

¹⁴⁹ Rafael MOSES, "Shame and Entitlement: Their Relation to Political Process," *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*, 131, expresses the relationship this way: "I choose to put shame and entitlement together because I believe that there is a connection between the two. They are connected in that each of them is closely related to the self and to narcissistic proclivities. Even more than that, it seems to me that shame and entitlement are in some ways opposite sides of the same coin.

structures are made apparent by analysts, they provide a rationale for significant social change. If the structures are based on ethnonationalist groupings, the resulting call for change may lead to open conflict. Where violence is legitimated through the language of liberation, deep-rooted conflicts which break out may exhibit all of the violent symptoms described by Burton above. This type of analysis contributes the realization that similar patterns of entrenched power relationships can be experienced by many different groups.

Hegemonic structural analysis, however, begs the question, how do hegemonic structures originate and what might be an ethical foundation in a society without such structures? It also does not account for the significant amount of violence within sub-cultures which are themselves dominated by others nor does it provide an ethical program to be in effect when the "oppressed" come to power.¹⁵⁰ Cummings, citing West, makes the point that "the idea of supremacy in the modern West [cannot] . . . be fully accounted for in terms of the psychological needs of white individuals and groups."¹⁵¹ We now turn our attention to theoreticians who argue for the centrality of the psychological to account for why people engage in deep-rooted conflicts.

Psychological Theories of Victimization and Violence

So far we have looked at deep-rooted conflict as a function of power in the context of sovereign states, as kinship based ethnonational groups struggling for self-determination (with culture, religion and economics playing a role) and as oppressive hegemonic structures (discursive and non-discursive).

A person who is full of conscious shame will usually not really feel a conscious sense of entitlement. The converse is also true: a person brimming with a conscious sense of entitlement mostly does not consciously feel shame. Nor do shame and a sense of entitlement consciously coexist, either. However, repressed shame, particularly of past suffering perceived as shameful, at times serves as the basis for a sense of excessive entitlement that may be or become conscious." This latter dynamic of repressed shame leading to a strong sense of entitlement helps to explain the powerful emotions behind liberation movements.

¹⁵⁰ Vern Neufeld REDEKOP, "The Centrality of Torah as Ethical Projection for the Exodus," *Contagion* 2, (Spring, 1995).

¹⁵¹ CUMMINGS, "Black Theology and Latin American Theology," 218.

The distinctive role of psychological methodologies in comparison, has been summed up by Demetrios Julius as follows:

In example after example history has shown us that man has formulated rational agenda after rational agenda only to have them change, go astray or be subverted by unseen, unexpected, and often seemingly illogical forces. It is with this irrational aspect of the human condition that psychiatry and psychological theory has always concerned itself.¹⁵²

The “illogical forces” which prompt atrocities such as genocide, mass murder and terrorism are the focus of much psychological work. Within the psychological literature pertaining to violence, there is considerable evidence to show that opposite sides of the same phenomena are intertwined: perpetrators of violence were often victims; self identity develops with enmity; leaders and followers are caught up with one another; and demonization and dehumanization are complementary and reflexive. We will first examine those theorists who have put together frameworks of complex interacting psychological phenomena, which contribute to genocide and mass murder. Second, we will look at the effects of atrocities on victims, tracing the process by which victims become terrorists. Third, we will examine those theorists who look at the symptoms of violent conflict between identity groups from the perspective of development, noting that parallel mechanisms function for both individuals and groups, as they define their own identities and determine their enemies. Finally, we will examine theories of dehumanization and demonization.

Genocide and Mass Violence

In looking at the roots of genocide and mass violence, a number of theorists have drawn up a variety of other theoretical schemes. First, Demetrios A. Julius, discussing what motivates conflict, draws attention to “feelings of anger, rage, hurt, guilt, shame, and mistrust” and the “wish to control and to dominate, the obsession to own, the desire to vanquish, and often the drive to sacrifice the

¹⁵² Demetrios A. JULIUS. “The Genesis and Perpetuation of Aggression in International Conflicts,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*. 97.

other.”¹⁵³ After a conflict starts, “the most powerful catalyst for renewed aggression is the overwhelming passion for revenge.”¹⁵⁴ Julius provides a framework with three key “intrapsychic processes” which interact to produce the feelings which fuel conflict: *historical enmity*, *dehumanization*, and *victimization*.¹⁵⁵ Memories and feelings of *historical enmity* stimulate the urge to victimize others and *dehumanization* alters perceptions to make it possible. “Victimization is the embodiment of the drive to sacrifice. . . . [It] represents that tribal ritual that brings about collective cohesion through a sense of collective guilt . . . [becoming] a defensive process against feelings of overwhelming guilt.”¹⁵⁶ These three processes feed each other in cyclical patterns on both sides of a conflict.

A second theorist, John Mack highlights “psycho-political mechanisms” which make members of ethnonational groups sustain “the image of an enemy as an individual or group whom it might be necessary to kill.”¹⁵⁷ These include 1) the surrender of responsibility to governing authority; 2) dehumanization and demonization of the other people and its leaders;¹⁵⁸ 3) the externalization of responsibility or blaming the other;¹⁵⁹ 4) ideology, mythology, and religion. He stresses that the “*ideologies of enmity* are psychopolitical thought systems that sustain a nation in its conviction of the worthiness of its purpose and political system when compared to an adversary’s. . . . Ideologies of

¹⁵³ JULIUS, “The Genesis and Perpetuation of Aggression in International Conflicts,” 99.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 101-102.

¹⁵⁷ John E. MACK, “The Enemy System,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, 57-69.

¹⁵⁸ Note the sub-section on dehumanization and demonization below.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 61. This is the “tendency to hold an outside people or another country responsible for one’s own misfortunes is, in this sense built into the psychology of national history. National leaders, knowing this, may become adept at maintaining power through keeping their people’s attention focused on the threat of an outside enemy.”

enmity, which seem to flow like a kind of collective toxin through the bloodstream of a political culture, are the supreme instruments through which a political leader sustains his people's hostile attitudes toward another nation without which a unified war or defence effort is not possible."¹⁶⁰

Thirdly, Ervin Staub, turning his attention to understanding the "roots of evil" after a career of research into altruism, images a continuum of evil; peoples are not naturally ready to commit atrocities, rather various factors contribute to their movement towards evil.¹⁶¹ Incrementally people are conditioned to tolerate perpetrating torture and mass murder. Staub has identified the following five contributing factors to the most horrendous aspects of deep-rooted conflict between identity groups: 1) difficult life circumstances; 2) a threat to human needs; 3) an ideology of we-they; 4) compliance of bystanders,¹⁶² and 5) a tendency to scapegoat.¹⁶³ He demonstrates, through four case studies, how the presence of each of these contributes to a movement along the continuum of evil resulting a capacity to perpetrate genocide.

Victims and Terrorists

Both John Mack and Joseph Montville recognize the devastating effects of victimization. Mack points out that if victims are left unattended they can lose their ability to feel for others. Montville makes the link between victimhood and ethnic based terrorism.

John Mack observes that "national groups have often *formed* out of mythic-historical events of group victimization" creating "victims and deeply hated enemies."¹⁶⁴ These experiences, repeated over

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 62.

¹⁶¹ Ervin STAUB, *Roots of Evil—The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1989], 1992).

¹⁶² Bystanders are those close enough to a situation either in proximity or influence to have an impact on the dynamics of a conflict even though they are not a party to it.

¹⁶³ See part I for a development of the framework and parts II and III for an application of the framework to the Nazi Holocaust, the Turkish genocide of the Armenians, Cambodian genocide and mass killing in Argentina.

¹⁶⁴ John E. MACK, "The Psychodynamics of Victimization among National Groups in Conflict," *The Psychodynamics of*

the centuries, get passed on to children as they learn to identify “my people.”¹⁶⁵ Cultural symbols such as food, geography, and flag, become “all powerful emotional amplifiers. They link affiliation and differentiation at the level of the ethnonationalist group with a reservoir of intense feeling, to which each childhood period of development has made its particular contribution.”¹⁶⁶ What may result is *the egoism of victimization* which is

the incapacity of an ethno-national group, as a direct result of its own historical traumas, to empathize with the suffering of another group. It is analogous to the narcissism or self-centeredness of some individuals who see themselves as having been so hurt or deprived in the past that they can attend only to their own needs, feeling little or no empathy for the hurt they inflict upon others. Similarly, ethno-national groups that have been traumatized by repeated suffering at the hands of other groups seem to have little capacity to grieve for the hurts of other peoples, or to take responsibility for the new victims created by their own warlike actions.¹⁶⁷

In an examination of the dynamics of terrorism, Montville distinguishes between that which is motivated by ideology and that which is rooted in the victimage experience of identity groups.¹⁶⁸ He shows that victims of violence have very specific needs which are almost never attended to. They have a need for mourning, a need for their loss to be acknowledged and a need for there to be an expression of remorse on behalf of perpetrators.¹⁶⁹ Those who experience profound loss such as having a home burned or a family member tortured and killed lose a capacity for trust. When the loss occurs at a formative stage (childhood or youth) and where it is followed up by persecution, harsh treatment or other injustice (e.g. witnessing great loss of life because of an unjust policy), a young man or woman

International Relationships, 119-129.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 123.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 125.

¹⁶⁸ Joseph V. MONTVILLE, “The Psychological Roots of Ethnic and Sectarian Terrorism,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, 163-180.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 163. He points out that “the ethnic group continues to feel threatened because the authors of the historic hurt” an ethnically different tribe or nation “have neither accepted responsibility for their acts nor apologized for them. The victim group, therefore, feels a conscious or unconscious threat to its present and future well-being or even to its very survival.”

may become desperate to take some corrective action. If they begin to associate with terrorist organizations, they are prime candidates to become terrorists. Those who do not become terrorists go through life with very deep fears. According to Montville, terrorists fight because

as individuals they believe their lives and their identity as a people are mortally threatened not just on one or two occasions, but continuously and into the future. This belief persists not because of anything they have done or might do, but because they were “unfortunate” to be born into a particular ethnic or sectarian group; this group gave them an identity and seems to be or have been the only qualification necessary for them to be assured of a life or, equally important, an unacknowledged history of insult, degradation, violence and danger.¹⁷⁰

Furthermore, “in the case of many, if not most, perpetrators of ethnic violence or terrorism, the sense of group victimhood has been transferred powerfully to the individual by some personal victimizing experience, primarily because of ethnic identity.”¹⁷¹

Montville has been influenced by victimologist, Jeanne Knutson, who believed “that what drives the rage of the victimized is the fact that no psychic mechanism or external events can repair the destruction of their central, primitive belief in the safety and meaning of life.”¹⁷² Political violence comes out of the conviction that further threats can only be reduced by defensive activity. When an act of affirmative violence first takes place, Knutson wrote, “there simultaneously emerges a full, direct emotional awareness of intense rage, as well as unbearable anxiety stemming from the possibility of the loss of even life itself for having dared to defy the aggressor. It is the point of no return for those who engage in continuing campaigns of political violence.”¹⁷³ She noted, through many interviews, that most “ethnic terrorists had undergone a personal trauma or “conversion experience,” which had brought

¹⁷⁰ MONTVILLE, “The Psychological Roots of Ethnic and Sectarian Terrorism,” 165.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 169.

¹⁷² Ibid., drawing on Jean KNUTSON, “Victimization and Political Violence: The Spectre of Our Times,” uncompleted book mss. 1981.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 169-70.

home to them in a powerful, individual way the victimhood of their ethnic group.”¹⁷⁴ The observations about victimization and victimhood associated with both individuals and groups raise the issue of identity formation, the next focus of attention.

Identity and Enmity

Both Vamik Volkan and Rita Rogers explore ways in which childhood and adolescent experiences contribute to a sense of self and of the enemy which lay the psychological foundation for deep-rooted conflicts. First, Volkan traces the way in which a sense of identity and enmity are developed through similar mechanisms.¹⁷⁵ Early on, as a child starts to differentiate between I and not-I, cultural reservoirs are developed for good and bad. Good reservoirs are externalized cultural symbols associated with well-being and bad reservoirs symbolize the causes for ill.¹⁷⁶ The good reservoirs are

the building blocks for the children's subsequent structuring of ethnic, cultural, and national identity. . . . [C]hildren learn to take satisfaction in the properties, both real and intangible, that they share with their own group, and regard what is shared by members of another group as far less desirable—even “bad”—especially if the other ethnic or national group is seen as hostile or is rejected by the adults in their own group.¹⁷⁷

As children grow up, some of these “bad” symbolic reservoirs become targets of enmity. Shared targets unite a group. The “primitive and unconscious impulses” associated with identity, become, in the context of large group interaction, involuntary.¹⁷⁸

Enemies, then, become a significant part of our own identities, since they “serve as a reservoir for our unwanted selves.” Unconsciously they are somewhat like us, “although on a conscious level

¹⁷⁴ MONTVILLE, “The Psychological Roots of Ethnic and Sectarian Terrorism,” 174.

¹⁷⁵ Vamik D. VOLKAN, “An Overview of Psychological Concepts Pertinent to Interethnic and/or International Relationships,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, 31–46.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

they should not seem to be the same as us since they contain our unwanted aspects—those characteristics we vigorously reject.”¹⁷⁹

Second, Rogers gives examples of specific ways in which children are given a sense that enemies are dangerous; they may be told that if they are naughty, a ---- (insert name of enemy group) will get them.¹⁸⁰ In adolescence, a young person senses the discrepancy between “the tone of fury when his parents present the fierceness of a perceived enemy . . . [and] his parents’ inner shame and feelings of failure.”¹⁸¹ The parents’ excuses fail to justify for the youth, “their own impotence in the face of the cruel oppressor.”¹⁸² The youth takes action in order to “vindicate his elders and gratify their need for revenge, but he also wishes to prove himself stronger than his parents. . . . Indeed, his perception of them as weak inflames his need for action and revenge all the more.”¹⁸³ The passion and will to violence is expedited by the dehumanization and demonization of the enemy.

Dehumanization and Demonization

Rafael Moses develops the theme of dehumanization and demonization first from the perspective of narcissism. Moses shows that narcissistic needs and tendencies of leaders and followers can reinforce one another. He also develops the idea that dehumanization functions reciprocally between groups.

Moses holds that groups have narcissistic sensitivities which are their Achilles heels.¹⁸⁴ There is a constant lookout for “narcissistic satisfactions—as when people like and appreciate us—or narcissistic

¹⁷⁹ VOLKAN, “An Overview of Psychological Concepts Pertinent to Interethnic and/or International Relationships,” 38.

¹⁸⁰ Rita R. ROGERS, “Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Enmity,” 91-96.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

¹⁸⁴ Rafael MOSES, “Self, Self-view, and Identity,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, 50.

hurts” as when people dislike and insult us.”¹⁸⁵ Conflict between identity groups can be the result of pathological narcissism.¹⁸⁶ In particular, during times of hostilities they may contribute to *dehumanization* and *demonization*. “The demonization of the enemy—an extreme form of stereotyping—is functional from the point of view of a society that wants to teach its members to maintain the enemy in his enemy role.”¹⁸⁷ These phenomena justify the infliction of evil on others in two ways. “First, we are dealing with a demon and with someone less than human. Secondly, this subhuman demon threatens us in such a mortally dangerous way that we must perforce defend ourselves.”¹⁸⁸

Moses also explores the symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers.¹⁸⁹ He points out that leaders need their followers as much as followers need their leaders. Narcissistic charismatic leaders have special needs which can only be met through the adulation of their followers. They have a tendency to see themselves as protectors of their groups and as such may be prone to engage in violence. On the other hand, followers who have had the experience of victimage and have ill-defined personal identities find many of their identity needs met through their identification with a strong leader. Rita Rogers shows how skilled Hitler was at “exploiting adolescent cravings for herd relationships and

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ The distinction is explained as follows: “There is an analogy between normal, i.e., necessary, and pathological narcissism in the individual and a healthy nationalism as opposed to chauvinism for a national group. In both cases, it is not always easy to define the border between the two. Yet, equally, we have absolutely no doubt when we encounter the phenomenon of pathological narcissism—of the individual or the group. Furthermore, there is no doubt about the fact that for the individual, pathological narcissism—i.e., a grandiose self-view accompanied by severe vulnerability to hurts in the areas of the self—is accompanied by and related to its opposite, which is a very low self-esteem. In our psychological processes we often find that two extremes, the opposite sides of a coin, go together: one side may appear in our consciousness; the other, the unconscious, may influence our behavior more markedly.” Ibid., 51

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 52.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 53.

¹⁸⁹ Rafael MOSES, “The Leader and the Led: A Dyadic Relationship,” *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*, 205-217.

leadership (security)” to cement a highly cohesive and dedicated following .¹⁹⁰

Moses comments that there is a temptation to “talk about the dehumanizing behavior of the other side—of anybody but myself and mine” since both sides to a conflict are “convinced that the adversary is by far the more grievous offender. Each side has far-ranging fantasies about the other, which are often based on a mixture of reality, projection of one's own evils onto the other, scapegoating and a bland denial that “our side” could be so terrible or do such terrible things.”¹⁹¹ He describes the relationship between dehumanization and war as follows:

I believe that in the individual there must be intrapsychic readiness to be dehumanized in order to dehumanize another; this cannot happen, however, unless certain processes in the large group (often a nation) pave the way for it. By and large, these processes are the same ones that help prepare a nation to wage war. The aggressor initiated use of the following collective psychic mechanisms: the demonization of the enemy; projection that ascribes to the antagonist all our evils so that we can view ourselves as good and pure; scapegoating; and polarization that blames the enemy for faults that are our own and paints the world in black and white, with no grey allowed.¹⁹²

Victims of dehumanization become humiliated and degraded. Their helplessness can turn to rage and vengeance, however. “[s]ometimes—in circumstances we do not yet adequately understand—a strange identification between the victim and his dehumanizer occurs. This has been reported in some hijacking as well as brainwashing experiences, and even in an occasional victim of the Holocaust.”¹⁹³

The result of dehumanization is that one feels entirely like an “other.” Willard Gaylin captured the feeling well:

when we are made to feel like the “other”—then we will surely see those privileged and secure representatives of the society and the society itself alien and other to us. . . . To be totally unaccepted, to be totally unloved, indeed to be almost totally disapproved, either requires the rejection of one’s self—an intolerable situation—or a total dissociation with the judging

¹⁹⁰ ROGERS, “Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Enmity,” 93.

¹⁹¹ Rafael MOSES, “On Dehumanizing the Enemy,” 111.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 115.

individual . . . or society . . . and allegiance to its moral codes.¹⁹⁴

In the next section we will examine philosophical approaches to the Self-Other relationships including the theme of totality which is associated with war.

Theories about the Self-Other Relationship

The phenomenon of deep-rooted conflicts between identity groups can also be described in philosophical terms using the language of the Self and the Other, understood as both individual and collective agents of action. I will describe how, using the language of Emmanuel Levinas, Janine Chanteur, and Paul Ricoeur, one could describe deep-rooted conflicts. The term “ontological rift” was coined by Chanteur to describe the radical sense of difference at the heart of warfare. Her insights are in some ways similar to those of Levinas.

Emmanuel Levinas contrasts totality and infinity as follows. Totality is based on the primacy of an ontology which posits a reality which can be grasped and controlled. Human beings are considered to be part of this totality. Infinity on the other hand recognizes in each human being something beyond totality. The human face is the exterior manifestation of a vast *interiority*, but it is the *exteriority* of the face of the Other through which the fullness of humanity is encountered. The bridge between Self and Other is achieved through communication, through the use of language in a context of face to face interaction. The rift between Self and Other comes through totalizing systems which deny the infinity of each Self, the epitome of a totalizing system is war:

Does not lucidity, the mind's openness upon the true, consist in catching sight of the permanent possibility of war? The state of war suspends morality . . . in advance its shadow falls over the actions of men. We do not need obscure fragments of Heraclitus to prove that being reveals itself as war to philosophical thought, that war does not only affect it as the most patent fact, but as the very patency, or truth, of the real. . . . The ontological event that takes form in this black light is a casting into movement of beings hitherto anchored in their identity, a mobilization of

¹⁹⁴ Willard GAYLIN, *Caring* (New York: Knopf), 162-163, quoted in MONTVILLE, “Psychological Roots of Terrorism,” 168-169.

absolutes, by an objective order from which there is no escape. The trial by force is the test of the real. But violence does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance, making them carry out actions that will destroy every possibility for action. Not only modern war but every war employs arms that turn against those who wield them. It establishes an order from which no one can keep his distance; nothing henceforth is exterior. War does not manifest exteriority and the other as other; it destroys the identity of the same. The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy.¹⁹⁵

Totality is all about controlling, grasping, buying into the fiction that all there is to know about the other can be known. Levinas introduces the concept of eschatology to capture the notion that there is something beyond history which is present at every instant. This something “surplus always exterior to the totality” is linked to identity of beings which “exist in relationship, to be sure, but on the basis of themselves and not on the basis of the totality.”¹⁹⁶ Totality is an approach to ontology which is power oriented:

Ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power. . . which appears in the tyranny of the State . . . [and is] a philosophy of injustice. Heideggerian ontology, which subordinates the relationship with the Other to the relation with Being in general, remains under obedience to the anonymous, and leads inevitably to another power, to imperialist domination, to tyranny.¹⁹⁷

Totality as a mindset can be linked conceptually to much of Western thought through the analysis of Janine Chanteur.

Janine Chanteur analyses the thought of key political thinkers in the Western tradition and concludes that among all of them, war is seen to be the normative state of humanity—a position akin to that of the realists.¹⁹⁸ Even those philosophers who have advocated peace have defined peace in terms of absence of war. Peace is seen as a break between wars, a time to prepare for the next war which is

¹⁹⁵ Emmanuel LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso LINGIS (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 21.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 22-23.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 46-47.

¹⁹⁸ Janine CHANTEUR, *From War to Peace*, trans. Shirley Ann WEISZ (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

the normative state.¹⁹⁹ Chanteur sees this predilection toward armed conflict to be the result of an ontological rift, a rift which is grounded in the rift between the sexes.

First, is man the other who is the most “other” to man? Is it not woman, just as for her it is man who is the most Other? Must we not once again return to their dialogue, the one that did not take place, to all those that lie and insult, that wound, that reject, than can go so far as to kill, and finally, to the person who perhaps is just visible, despite the unhappy failures of the past?²⁰⁰

The pervasiveness of the war mentality corresponds to Levinas’s perception of totality as a way of being—a sense that the relationship to impersonal being is more important than a relationship with the Other. And the sense of ontological rift between the genders corresponds to Levinas’ sense that there is a failure to appreciate the infinity in the other. He also brings in the idea of gender but writing out of a male perspective:

The Other who welcomes in intimacy is not the *you* [*vous*] of the face that reveals itself in a dimension of height, but precisely the *thou* [*tu*] of familiarity: a language without teaching, a silent language, an understanding without words, an expression in secret. The I-Thou in which Buber sees the category of interhuman relationship is the relation not with the interlocutor but with feminine alterity . . . the discretion of this presence includes all the possibilities of the transcendent relationship with the Other.²⁰¹

Chanteur identifies the totalizing tendency of men as being part of the fundamental problem of ontological rift. Men have thought that they could represent all that it means to be human.²⁰² This sense is similar to what Levinas describes as the primacy of ontology—relationships with others are not necessary to come to terms with the essence of human life. Chanteur points out that neither man nor woman alone can represent humanity. It is in the relationship between the two, in which neither has control or completeness alone, that the fullness of humanity is to be found. Her conclusion is that there will be no world peace until there is peace between the sexes.

¹⁹⁹ This acceptance of war as normative is consistent with the perspective of political realism discussed above.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 235.

²⁰¹ LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity*, 155.

²⁰² CHANTEUR, *From War to Peace*, 204.

What Levinas describes as totality and what Chanteur describes as the presumed self-sufficiency of men, Paul Ricoeur describes as the concept of the autonomous Self as derived from the Cartesian Cogito.²⁰³ Consistent with both Chanteur and Levinas he sees the primacy of the Self-Other relationship. Unlike Levinas he does not posit the primacy of the Other and unlike Chanteur he does not see the Self-Other relationship primarily in terms of gender. Rather Ricoeur develops a threefold ontological dialectic of the Self-Other relationship. There is the relationship of the Self to the body (Levinas would say particularly to the face) the relationship of the Self to the Other and the relationship of the Self to the conscience. Furthermore, this Self has two dimensions which must both be considered together. The *idem* dimension has to do with comparison, sameness, ascribing predicates to the Self. It is atemporal and unchanging. The *ipse* dimension is rooted in temporality combining both the historical narrative of the Self and the future promissary dimension. The *ipse* dimension is always changing. In Levinas's terms, inclusion of these two dimensions makes up an infinity for each person. To concentrate on only one to the exclusion of the other dimension would be tantamount to Levinas's sense of totality. It would restrict what there was to the Self to make it graspable and controllable.

For Ricoeur, the violence which Levinas associates with totality and Chanteur associates with ontological rift, is seen in an analysis of action. Any action, involves an acting and a receiver of the action, or sufferer. In a relationship of mutuality there is a balance of acting and suffering between Self and Other. Violence is characterised by an imbalance in which one party does all the acting and the other does all the suffering.

These ideas can be related to deep-rooted conflict as follows. In an identity-based conflict there is a failure on the part of each group as a Self to see the infinite humanity of the Other. Rather there is a desire to "interrupt the continuity of the Other's existence" through actions designed not to lead to

²⁰³ Paul RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen BLAMEY (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 4-11.

understanding but to control. Picking up on the metaphor of the face, there is a tendency not to look into the face of the Other, to not ponder what the Other has experienced and is experiencing and to not use the tools of language to understand the Other. In Chanteur's terms there is an ontological rift that holds that the Other is so Other as to not constitute a full representation of humanity. Furthermore, it is predominantly men who war with one another, each group of men fighting for control of the Other. Finally in these conflicts is seen an attempt by each group to maximize to the point of monopoly the acting function and to minimize the suffering function rather than to seek some kind of mutuality and balance.

In contrast to this is the concept of infinity. This sense of infinity is expressed in the face of the Other. Infinity describes the vast world of interiority of the Other which for the Self is expressed through exteriority. The Self can only perceive its own sense of infinity by looking into the face of the Other with the awareness of the vast infinity of the other. This infinity of the Other which takes moral priority over the Self, reflects back to the Self a sense of the infinity of the Self which is revealed through the face of the Self. The bridge between the Self and Other is speech.

Peace is produced as this aptitude for speech. The eschatological vision breaks with the totality of wars and empires in which one does not speak. It does not envisage the end of history within being understood as a totality but institutes a relation with the infinity of being which exceeds the totality.²⁰⁴

For Levinas, allowing the presence of the face of the Other to enter one's consciousness elicits a moral impulse which gives priority to the Other. Ricoeur's vision of peace (though he does not use the word) is likewise a moral vision expressed in the goal "to aim to live a good life with and for others in just institutions."²⁰⁵

In an attempt to understand deep-rooted conflict, we have surveyed five theoretical approaches,

²⁰⁴ LEVINAS. *Totality and Infinity*, 23

²⁰⁵ RICOEUR. *Oneself as Another*, the concept is developed on pages 169-202.

drawing attention to a few key concepts. In brief, deep-rooted conflict is for the realist either war or an internal violent disturbance which threatens the sovereignty and legitimate authority of a state. For the ethnonationalist it is the clash between ethnonational groups each of which commands the primary loyalty of the members because of a perception that they share a similar ancestry. For the hegemonic structuralist, it is a struggle for freedom from structures of domination. For political psychologists it is the result of psychological processes around the establishment of identity and the result of a build-up of enmity through historic victimization which produces the dehumanization and demonization of the enemy group. For philosophers of the Self-Other relationship it is the result of a foundational belief in the autonomous Self (usually manly) which totalises experience in a way which negates an awareness of the infinity of the Other, making the Other into a sufferer.

The Challenge

The urgency of potential conflicts and the endless suffering caused by violence between ethnonational groups cry for the best heuristic tools possible. As Horowitz observes, “[t]he sheer passion expended in pursuing ethnic conflict calls out for an explanation that does justice to the realm of the feelings. It is necessary to account, not merely for ambition, but for antipathy. A bloody phenomenon cannot be explained by a bloodless theory.”²⁰⁶ Each of the theoretical perspectives plays a constructive heuristic role in unlocking some of the significant aspects of deep-rooted conflict between identity groups, but each leaves some unanswered questions, particularly when it comes to accounting for both ambition and antipathy.

Political realism takes a dim view of human nature, accepting as an assumption that people are basically self-interested and acquisitive, trying to maximize their power. They organize themselves into nation-states to both bridle human nature within such states and provide the means for this self-interest

²⁰⁶ HOROWITZ, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 140.

to find expression through inter-national competition, which may involve warfare. For the realist, the best we can do is come up with international laws, treaties and structures that put limits on the destructive potential of such conflicts. The realist position has been widely called into question by theorists stressing the power of human needs, ethnonationalism, hegemonic structures, and psychological phenomena. What political realism does not provide is prior theory to its own assumption; namely, how can we account for the acquisitive and competitive tendencies among people. It does not account for the violence associated with the drive for power. If we could account for these violent tendencies in a more sophisticated way, we might discover that there are other equally powerful if more hidden tendencies. We might also see that if these tendencies are but symptoms of a more fundamental problem, we could do much better in policy development and political action if we understood the foundational problem much better.

Human needs theory takes us a big step in the right direction, pointing out that competitive, acquisitive and aggressive tendencies among people in deep-rooted conflict are not just about raw power but they revolve around basic human identity needs and their satisfiers. Power as conceived by the realists is but one of many potential satisfiers for these needs. Needs theory is clear that at particular times and places, particular need satisfiers become sufficiently significant that people will fight for them. However, the dynamics by which particular needs satisfiers reach a level of significance such that they will command an ultimate violent sacrifice are not at all clear from needs theory.

Theorists looking at ethnonationalism suggest that what does command an ultimate sacrifice is a sense of identification with perceived kinship groups. While it is important to bring to light the power of ethnonationalism to motivate people, it is also important to be able to account for the intense rivalries which take place within ethnocultural groups, some of which might even jeopardise the on-going survival of such groups. That is, deep-rooted conflicts often occur between people who are closely related and these conflicts are often subject to violence.

Hegemonic structuralists provide tools to describe realities, which are often present in deep-rooted conflicts. Frequently one group dominates another. However, in situations of oppression frequently the most intense rivalries and the most overt violence are between oppressed groups or between oppressor groups; simply being aware of the hegemonic structures does not account for this.

Philosophers of human subjectivity provide a vocabulary and set of heuristic tools to describe at a more abstract level some of the inter-subjective relationships present in deep-rooted conflict. Levinas sense of totalizing relationships, Ricoeur's ideas of the actor-sufferer relationship to action and Chanteur's notion of ontological rift describe various phenomena associated with deep-rooted conflict. They do not describe the process by which relationships become totalising, leading to ontological rift, suffering, and violence.

Those looking at deep-rooted conflict from the perspective of social or political psychology describe the kinds of events and phenomena which intensify deep-rooted conflict at both the individual and group levels. It is very important to note the impact on youth if they and their groups are victimised. Likewise, difficult life experience and complicity of bystanders play important roles as these conflicts escalate. Psychological methodologies are very useful at documenting the effects of these conflicts. However, these observations do not reveal the genesis of such conflicts nor how violence is introduced to them.

In much of the literature from a number of these perspectives, there is reference to scapegoating without any analysis of the dynamics by which scapegoats are selected and the scapegoat action takes

effect.²⁰⁷ It would be useful to have the dynamics of scapegoating both explained and integrated within a broader theoretical perspective.

René Girard's theoretical work on mimetic desire and scapegoating has the potential to address many of the basic questions and deficiencies of the theoretical perspectives presented above. Hence, the thesis of this dissertation is that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate shema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups.*

It is not being argued that Girard's hypothesis explains every phenomenon related to deep-rooted conflict nor is it argued that his hypothesis invalidates the observations of the social scientists and philosophers. Rather it is argued that his hypothesis offers a new paradigm whereby the material can be interpreted in a new and helpful way.

Ultimately, the problem of deep-rooted conflict is a theological problem. It calls for theological discourse which can help those affected by such conflicts place their participation into perspective and insights about what might constitute the reconciliation of such conflicts. Central to the discourse and insights is a new Christology.

²⁰⁷ Note these examples. MOSES, "On Dehumanizing the Enemy," 111: "The urge toward victimization may crystallize itself at any point along the continuum from scapegoating to extreme acts of physical brutality." Ibid. 115: "Let us consider the dehumanizer for a moment, some of whose psychological characteristics I have already mentioned, such as: acceptance of an ideology; identification with a leader, preferably a charismatic one; identification with a cause; and demonization of the enemy, to include the conviction that this enemy is to be feared, that he would do as bad things—or worse—than one is prepared to do oneself. The atmosphere must be one that permits the discharge of forbidden impulses. Ruth Eissler tells how the presence of homosexual desire in a home for delinquent girls engenders unconscious guilt; as *tensions mount in this setting, rejected impulses are projected on a common scapegoat.* The outbreak of riot defends against the acute danger of panic and thus serves as a release. Similar circumstances, I believe, occur to allow acts of dehumanization. This *phenomenon is also akin to that of contagion*, which has been described by Redl as the acting out of one youngster 'infecting' a whole group and leading to an outbreak of anti-social behavior." Elliot ARONSON, "Causes of Prejudice," *Bigotry, Prejudice and Hatred*, 111: "As we have seen, one determinant of prejudice in a person is a need for self-justification . . . we have seen that, if we have done something cruel to a person or a group of people, we derogate that person or group in order to justify our cruelty. If we can convince ourselves that a group is unworthy, sub human, stupid, or immoral, it helps us to keep from feeling immoral if we enslave members of that group, deprive them of a decent education, or murder them. We can then continue to go to church and to feel like good Christians, because it isn't a fellow human we've hurt." See also 115-118 for the "Scapegoat" Theory of Prejudice. VOLKAN, "An Overview of Psychological Concepts Pertinent to Interethnic and/or International Relationships," 41: observes the following: "When rituals are taken into account, it is not surprising that wars are often seen as ego-syntonic; they trigger a gratifying discharge of aggressive drives without evoking feelings of guilt or fear of punishment from the individual or collective

In chapter 2, I will analyse and describe the dynamics of mimetic phenomena within Girard's hypothesis drawing on his writings for examples. In chapter 3, I will examine scapegoating within the Girardian corpus; as well, the concepts of structure and structural transformation will be presented. The insights from these two chapters will be applied to the Oka/Kanehsatà:ke crisis of 1990. This will entail telling the story of the crisis in chapter 4 and interpreting the crisis in chapter 5. The understandings from this interpretation will be the foundation for a theological reflection in chapter 6; this reflection will include a theology of deep-rooted conflict and of reconciliation of deep-rooted conflict.

superego." Scapegoating is a major factor for STAUB, *The Roots of Evil*.

Chapter 2

René Girard and Mimetic Desire

René Girard has developed an hypothesis which states that violence is generated through mimetic desire and scapegoating, both of which are diachronic structures which are hidden to those who are caught up in them.¹ Over the past three decades Girard has undertaken to show that similar polythetic patterns are discernable in literature, mythology, ritual, and in diverse contexts ranging from indigenous cultures around the world to historical instances in the Western tradition. At a certain point, he came to the conclusion that the Bible, and in a particular way for him, the teachings and Passion of Jesus reveal the dynamics of mimetic desire and scapegoating.

This chapter will concentrate on mimetic desire. First, however, we will trace the evolution of Girard's thought from the 1950s to the present. The detailed presentation of mimetic desire, which follows, will be done in two parts. The first will explain the various associated concepts; the second will present examples from Girard's analysis of literature, anthropology, and psychology. From these examples we will extrapolate a number of principles concerning the dynamics of mimetic phenomena. These principles will be used to establish an initial link between mimetic phenomena and deep-rooted conflict. Chapter 3 will present a detailed analysis of scapegoating and show how Girard has integrated the components of his theory into one hypothesis. The analysis and exposition of Girard's thought will provide a basis for an interpretation of the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis in chapter 5.

¹ We will examine Girard's concept of structure in greater detail in chapter 3.

The Evolution of Girard's Thought

René Girard's thought has evolved through several stages since his reconversion to Christianity, coinciding with his "discovery" of mimetic desire in the mid-1950s. Mimetic theory remained his primary focus into the 1960s when he started work on scapegoat theory. In the 1970s he developed an hypothesis about the origins of culture, an hypothesis integrating mimetic desire and scapegoat theory. Since the 1970s he has been trying to find corroborating evidence for his hypothesis in other cultures, genres and historical periods within a variety of disciplines. We will present an overview of the development of his thought, paying particular attention to his key works.

In an interview with Richard Golson, published in 1993, Girard provides a hermeneutical key to understanding what he went through in his analysis of key novelists:

GOLSAN: [Tell] how in fact [you] reconverted to Christianity while developing and elaborating your theories

GIRARD: I certainly did. I can remember exactly when I began to change. It was in 1955 which was also the year, if my recollections are correct, when the idea of mimetic rivalry began to crystallize. It was a most absorbing experience, but not a religious one. I was still an agnostic; I did not realize how far this process would take me.

The last chapter of *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, which was written a little later, develops the idea that the death and resurrection symbolism at the conclusion of certain novels reflects a personal experience of "conversion," one that retrospectively transfigures the past of the author, finally enabling him to write the work he had always wanted but never managed to write until then.

When I wrote this chapter, I was in the process of giving up the rationalistic illusion that confines religion to religious belief *stricto sensu*. I still did not quite understand that, knowingly or not, we all exist inside some kind of religion.²

Given this admission, there is a certain reflexive irony in Girard's observation in "The Conclusion" of his own *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, that truth "is active through the great novel but its primary location is *in the conclusion*. The conclusion is the temple of that truth. The *conclusion* is the *site of the*

² GOLSAN. *René Girard and Myth*, 129.

presence of truth, and therefore a place avoided by error.” (Italics mine)³ What Girard had realized is that for the five authors of great literary works he had been studying (Cervantes, Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust, and Dostoyevsky), their own recognition of something akin to what he was to call mimetic desire was the result of a long struggle and their own personal “conversions.” Each had come to realize that they themselves were subject to the “envy, jealousy, and impotent hatred,” a threesome identified by Stendhal in *The Memoirs of a Tourist*,⁴ which accompany this phenomenon. Each was able to identify and renounce this in their own lives and reveal it through their literature. The irony is that Girard came to see this in each of their works at the same time as he was going through his own conversion. Hence, his allusion to the truth of conclusions underscores the veiled description of his own conversion in his own conclusion as he writes about the conversion revelations in the conclusions of the novelists.

Girard acknowledges the debt he owes to the five great authors, who took a decidedly different approach to the subject of desire than most novelists. Instead of the romantic notion that desire proceeds spontaneously from the autonomous subject, each of these recognized that desire is mediated through a Model, an Other to whom the Self is sufficiently drawn to imitate the perceived desire of the Model. The literature which acknowledges this, referred to as “novelistic” by Girard, is to be distinguished from “romantic” literature.⁵ It was through his analysis of these authors that Girard started developing his theory of mimetic desire. He noted that it could be of two sorts: external

³ René GIRARD. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel -- Self and Other in Literary Structure* [original: *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, 1961], trans. Yvonne FRECCERO (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, paperback edition, 1976), 307. Note that I am working from the English translations throughout. Girard has developed his hypothesis while in the United States; though most of his books were originally written in French the English vocabulary for his key concepts has been well developed through numerous interactions with Girard himself.

⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁵ In the French original the distinction is between *romantique* and *romanesque*.

mediation occurred when the Model was distant and internal mediation when the Model was a potential rival. The primary result of his efforts was *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, published in 1961.⁶ At the same time he edited a volume on Proust⁷ and published a monograph on Dostoevsky.⁸ It was through his meticulous piecing together of Dostoevsky's life with his work that Girard filled out his understanding of mimetic doubling.

After the publication of *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* in 1961, Girard turned his attention to anthropology, mythology, psychology and the Bible. As he searched for corroborating evidence for his mimetic theory, he discovered complementary scapegoat phenomena. These he referred to as the scapegoat mechanism. He recognized that violence in a community is directed to a scapegoat through a unanimous mob action; and moreover, he realized how the sacrificial mechanism of scapegoating is achieved ritually through sacrifice. His second major work, *La Violence et le sacré*,⁹ concentrated on various aspects of scapegoating. When Girard started to examine mimetic desire in the light of the scapegoat mechanism, he saw the power of the phenomenon and the heuristic potential of the concept in a new way. The mimetic violence of undifferentiation he started to understand as a complement to the scapegoat violence of differentiation. An emphasis on the undifferentiation/differentiation dialectic replaced the contrast between internal and external mediation and the dichotomy between romantic and romanesque as the focus of analysis.

With the discovery of the scapegoat mechanism came a hunch which turned into another

⁶GIRARD. *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*.

⁷René GIRARD (ed.), *Proust—A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

⁸René GIRARD, *Dostoievski: du double à l'unité* (Paris: Plon, 1963). In 1997 an expanded version appeared in English as *Feodor Dostoevsky—Resurrection from the Underground*, ed. and trans. James WILLIAMS (New York: Crossroad).

⁹René GIRARD, *Violence and the Sacred* [original: *La Violence et le sacré*, 1972] translated by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

essential part of Girard's hypothesis. Not only did mimetic rivalry transform itself into scapegoating in various times and places, but, thought Girard, just maybe, these phenomena were generative of all human religion and culture. In other words, at the beginning of human culture was a generative murder which took on the character of the Sacred. Significantly, this hypothesis resonated with the Genesis account of the murder of Abel at the beginning of the story of humanity. With this much more complex hypothesis to consider, Girard painstakingly examined material which looked at the foundations of human existence, particularly anthropology, ethnology, mythology, psychology and the Bible. Questions about hominization drew him into the literature of ethology. He wished to develop an hypothesis which would explain the emergence of humanity and the origins of culture.

Girard was convinced that he had discovered a universal phenomenon and wished to present in parallel fashion an exposé of how mimetic desire and scapegoating functioned in a broad range of cultural settings as well as in the Christian context. After eleven years of research, he realized that he "had bit off more than he could chew."¹⁰ In order to have something to show for his efforts he published *La Violence et le sacré*, which represented the first part of his project. In it, he attempted to show how the scapegoat or victimization mechanism becomes the means of purging violence which is brought about through mimetic desire within a community. Subsequently, sacrificial mechanisms are established in order to systematically purge violence from the community.

After the publication of *La Violence et le Sacré* in 1972, it took six years for Girard to publish the second part of his project, an analysis of how his hypothesis explicated what he was convinced was revealed in the biblical tradition. *Des chose cachées depuis la fondation du monde*¹¹ was made

¹⁰ GOLSAN, *René Girard and Myth*. 130.

¹¹ René GIRARD, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* [original: *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*. 1978] translated by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

possible through the collaboration of psychiatrists Jean-Michel Oughourlian and Guy Lefort, who worked with Girard on matters pertaining to foundational anthropology, biblical studies and psychology. The results were published as a dialogue among them.

Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde was meant to provide an application of Girard's thought to an interpretation of Scripture generally and the teachings and Passion of Christ in particular. It did much more. That central focus was sandwiched between a section on anthropology and a concluding section on psychology. In the first, he went further than in *La violence et le sacré* to flesh out the implications of his thought for a foundational understanding of the origins of human culture. In the third section, he dealt with themes like masochism and sadism, which had been introduced in *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, and Freudian psychology which had been analyzed in initially in *La violence et le sacré*.

Girard has continued to apply his hypothesis to additional situations, always searching for corroborating evidence. In 1978, the same year as *Les Choses cachées depuis la Fondation de la Monde* first appeared, he published "*To double business bound . . .*"¹² which extended his analysis of literature to include the works of Dante, Camus, and more of Dostoevsky. It also dealt with rivalry between the historical figures of Nietzsche and Wagner and ventured into anthropology. In 1982, *Le Bouc émissaire* was published; it provided many examples of scapegoating, ranging from the persecution of the Jews to additional analyses of biblical themes. Just as "*To double business bound . . .*" was an extension of *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, *Le bouc émissaire*¹³ was an extension of *La violence et le sacré* and Part 2 of *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*.

¹²René GIRARD, "*To double business bound . . .*" (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, paperback edition, [1978]1988).

¹³René GIRARD, *The Scapegoat* [original: *Le bouc émissaire*, 1982] trans. Yvonne FRECCERO (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

In 1985, Girard published *La route antique des hommes pervers*,¹⁴ in which his hypothesis was used to interpret the book of Job in a new way. Girard's next book, *A Theater of Envy*,¹⁵ focused on Shakespeare.¹⁶ Besides amassing numerous examples of mimetic desire and the victimage mechanism, Girard has been seeking evidence for that aspect of his theory which holds that behind the myths of death, banishment or exclusion there was a referential act, an historical instance which inspired myth.

In his 1994, *Quand ces choses commenceront. . .*¹⁷, Girard converses with Michel Treguer about the broad application of his theory to the contemporary world, paying attention to globalization, the role of science, the phenomenon of democracy and the significance of Christ.

Until now we have been using the terms mimetic desire and scapegoating as though they were simple straightforward concepts. On one level they are, but the ways in which they work themselves out in life experience are extremely complex. Included within them is a particular vocabulary, highlighting fine nuances of meaning. For instance, mimetic desire can be rendered "acquisitive desire," "ontological sickness," "metaphysical desire," or "envy." Each of these has a different connotation and the range of appropriate circumstances to use each term varies considerably. Besides the many nuances of each concept as expressed in the cognate vocabulary, there are complex dynamics such as feedback loops and mimetic chains. In the next section, we will examine how Girard defines the terms he uses for mimetic phenomena.

¹⁴ René GIRARD, *Job—the Victim of his People* [original: *La Route antique des hommes pervers*, 1985] trans. Yvonne FRECCERO (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ René GIRARD, *A Theater of Envy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁶ In an interview published in 1978, Girard commented that his "only vital literary interests, now, concern those writers who do reach that [victimage] mechanism and, above all, William Shakespeare." See "*To double business bound . . .*", 200. From that time it took thirteen years until his book on Shakespeare appeared.

¹⁷ René GIRARD, *Quand ces choses commenceront . . . Entretiens avec Michel Treguer* (Paris: arléa, 1994). Note that the title is taken from Luke 21:28.

Mimetic Desire, Rivalry and Doubles

This section will provide a definition and description of mimetic desire, objects of desire, mimetic rivalry, mimetic doubles, and mimetic violence.

According to Girard, all of culture is passed on through mimesis. We learn language, values and patterns of behaviour by imitating our parents, members of the community and peers. Girard's choice of the word "mimesis" over "imitation" is deliberate for mimesis has the added quality of copying interiority. The connotation of imitation is that it is the copying of what is clearly observable, whereas mimesis copies what is interior and observable only through its effects.¹⁸ Mimesis is the broader term, while imitation denotes a subset category of mimetic phenomena. Mimetic desire, then, is the imitation of a desire perceived or presumed to be present in another.

One distinguishing characteristic of humans over animals is their greater capacity for mimesis. Though mimetic phenomena are evident in animals,¹⁹ the complexity and breadth of culture that must be acquired mimetically to live in a human society takes a substantially greater intellectual capacity.²⁰ Girard sees the evolution of mimesis as a significant accompaniment to the process of hominization. As early humans were developing their mimetic capacity, the time came when they began to imitate the

¹⁸ There are a number of biblical allusions to the connection between heart (interiority) and action or fruit. For example, "What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander." Matthew 15:18,19, NRSV.

¹⁹ Girard points out in "*To double business bound . . .*", 201, that a pre-mimetic desire stage is identified as mimetic interference: "When any gesture of appropriation is imitated, it simply means that two hands will reach for the same object simultaneously: conflict cannot fail to result. . . . There must be a mimetic element in the intraspecific fighting of many animals, since the absence of an object—the flight of the disputed female, for instance—does not always put an immediate end to the fighting. Eventually, however the fighting comes to an end with a kind of submission of the vanquished to the victor. The dominated animal always yields to the dominant animal, who then turns into a model and guide of all behavior, *except appropriation*. Unlike animals, men engaged in rivalry may go on fighting *to the finish*." (Italics mine.)

²⁰ This is consistent with Mary Clark's observations in "Meaningful Social Bonding as a Universal Human Need," *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, 34-59, about the development of a larger brain as necessary for the evolution of culture. She emphasizes the role of community in passing on the culture a child needs to survive; Girard's work emphasizes that much of what is passed on is passed on mimetically.

desires of others. This phenomenon is close to, but distinct from, two parties desiring the same thing spontaneously, as when food is tossed to birds or animals.²¹ With mimetic desire, the value of the object of desire is based primarily on the perceived value that the Other has for the object.

Girard emphasizes that all people everywhere get caught up with mimetic desire.²² From the perspective of the Self, the Model is the Other who inspires a desire for something or other. The object may be a physical object, a relationship, prestige, honour, a skill, recognition, status, life conditions, or sex. Who is it that desires or appears to desire something in such a way that the Self would want to imitate this desire? This “who” is first of all perceived as a desiring person or group. The manifestation of the desire may be either that the Model has and values the object of desire or that the Model is actively trying to acquire the object. What is more important than whether or not the Model actually desires the object is the fact that they are perceived to desire it. In Girard’s words, “the mediator’s prestige is imparted to the object of desire and confers upon it an illusory value.”²³

The primary characteristic of the Model is that they are the kind of person or group with whom the Self can identify. At the same time, the Model is someone whom the Self respects or looks up to. In fact, the greater the sense of identification, the more intense the mimetic desire.²⁴ There is an exponential increase in the potential for mimetic desire as the Self and the Model share the same

²¹ Girard, in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, 17, distinguishes between a “romantic” understanding of desire which holds that desire springs up spontaneously within people and a “romanesque” understanding which holds that desire is mediated through others. More precisely, he states that “we shall use the term *romantic* for the works which reflect the presence of a mediator without ever revealing it and the term *novelistic* [*romanesque*] for the works which reveal this presence.” Evidence of the latter in literary masterpieces led him to the initial insights of his theory. See *ibid.*, 38-39.

²² *Things Hidden*, 283-291; see also Roel KAPTEIN, *On the Way of Freedom* with the Cooperation of Duncan MORROW (Dublin: The Columbia Press, 1993), 14-21. Note also GIRARD, *A Theater of Envy*, 116: “Our perspicacity in such matters is always rooted in self-criticism: mimetic desire is the same in all human beings, regardless of such circumstances as age, gender, race, and culture.”

²³ *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41-44.

defining characteristics. These may be class, age, position, vocation, gender, career, origin, religion—whatever is most important in defining the identity of the Self at the particular time. Girard describes the distance between mediator and subject as “primarily spiritual,”²⁵ suggesting that the degree to which a given Self identifies with a Model may not be readily apparent to an external observer. As the Self identifies with the Model, the Self feels as though they have a right to have the object by virtue of the fact that they are as good as the Other, or, if not as good, by historical circumstance have every right to have or be that of the Other who becomes Model. The more intense the desire of the Model, the more intense is the mimetic desire.²⁶ If the object of desire is a zero-sum commodity, so that the more one has the less the other has, mimetic desire leads inevitably to frustration.

Girard distinguishes between external and internal mimesis.²⁷ External mimetic desire occurs when there is no thought of being or becoming like the Model in any exact sense. One example is when a great leader or hero is taken as a Model of virtues or personal characteristics worthy of emulation. It is also seen in the phenomenon of celebrity status in which sports heroes, fashion models, and actors are emulated in some way by fans who know that they will never achieve a similar status. In fact, a key distinguishing factor is that external or distant Models can never be rivals, since they are too far removed. When referring to mimetic desire as desire which is mediated through a Model, Girard often refers to the Model as a mediator.

Internal mediation is the focus of most Girard’s work. It is associated with envy, jealousy, and

²⁵ *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, 9.

²⁶ See *ibid.*, 6: “everything about the desire which is copied, including its intensity, depends upon the desire which serves as the model.”

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

fascination which hold in tension erotic love and visceral hatred.²⁸ Internal mimetic desire can develop into mimetic rivalry, mimetic doubling, and mimetic violence. These permutations can be understood as a function of the intensity and duration of the mimetic desire. They are distinguished in that the nature of the relationship between Self and Other undergoes a qualitative change from one level of intensity to the other. They are not, however, mutually exclusive. Mimetic phenomena may overlap with one another or there may be a rapid oscillation among them. Mimetic desire can progress diachronically from mimetic modeling to mimetic rivalry to mimetic doubling to the Other becoming a mimetic obstacle. In some cases, a Self finds a mimetic Obstacle who becomes a rival and then a double. Throughout the process, the role of the object of desire changes.

What are these objects of mimetic desire? In many cases the object of desire is a woman or man who is an object of sexual desire. In the case of Nietzsche and his rivalry with Wagner, the object of desire was “becoming the cultural hero of the German people.”²⁹ For academics it may be a publication, a prestigious appointment, or some form of recognition. The possibilities for objects of desire can range from the material to the ideal, from things to ideas, and from externals to presumed interiority. In some cases the object is simple, in other cases it may be a whole constellation of things. In the case of wealth, it is not so much a desiring of money itself, but the affectations that result from money.³⁰ It could be a whole life situation; it is the build up of success, or perceived success over time.³¹

²⁸ Note that mimetic desire is portrayed negatively in its association with these passions. Girard has stated that mimetic desire may also be very positive but that he has spent his writing career looking at its dark side. In chapter six we will use a conceptualization developed by Rebecca Adams to look at the positive side of mimetic desire.

²⁹ “*To double business bound . . .*”, 62.

³⁰ An observation made by Jean-Pierre Dupuy at the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, June, 1994.

³¹ In this regard, a comparison can be made to MacIntyre’s concepts of basic actions many of which are action chains which in turn can be joined to constitute practices. In the same way, there can be basic objects, chains of objects, and the ongoing generation of objects such that anything the Model has or does can be the object of desire. See Alasdair MACINTYRE, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

From Girard's perspective, the role of the object of desire varies greatly as a function of time. At the beginning the object is very important. As mimetic rivalry develops it becomes less and less important to the point that if it is acquired by the desiring subject, it loses its value completely and a new object takes its place. The object of desire plays the greatest role when it seems the most inaccessible and before an obsession with the object changes into hatred of or fascination with the Model. This movement can be expressed in Polanyian terms of tacit and explicit knowledge.³² At the beginning, the object is the focus of desire but the desire is tacitly based on the Model. As the Model becomes the focus of attention, the object is in the tacit dimension of human consciousness. The preoccupation with the desires of a given Model can lead to rivalry.

Mimetic rivalry begins with a mimetic desire with a Self imitating the desire of a Model. As the Model becomes aware of the Self desiring the object, the roles can switch. The initial Self becomes a Model for the initial Model. The switching back and forth can continue, developing into a continuously amplifying feedback loop,³³ intensifying or even initiating a desire that was only perceived before.³⁴ That is, the Model, realizing that what they desire is an object of desire for another, will desire it that much more. This, in turn, will prompt more mimetic desire in the Self, which can lead to reciprocal and mutually intensifying mimetic desire. The Self and the Other become rivals for the object of desire. The intensity of this reciprocal feedback of mimetic desire is described by Girard as follows:

Once he has entered upon this vicious circle, the subject rapidly begins to credit himself with a radical inadequacy that the model has brought to light, which justifies the model's attitude toward him. The model, being closely identified with the object he jealously keeps for himself, possesses—so it would seem—a self-sufficiency and omniscience that the subject can only dream of acquiring. The object is now more desired than ever. Since the model obstinately bars

³² Michael POLANYI, *Personal Knowledge* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964).

³³ For a description of feedback as resulting in a runaway chain of events see *Things Hidden*, 292.

³⁴ "To double business bound . . .", 48.

access to it, the possession of this object must make all the difference between the self-sufficiency of the model and the imitator's lack of sufficiency, the model's fullness of being and the imitator's nothingness.³⁵

Subsequently, the initial Self may become a Model for the initial Model for other objects of mimetic desire. The Self may be perceived by the initial Model as greater than the Self perceives themselves to be. This is illustrated by Girard in the case of a master-disciple, mentor-student relationship, in which initially the master-mentor is the model for the disciple-student.³⁶ If the disciple begins to excel, it may well be that the master will begin to perceive the disciple as a rival Model and put obstacles in the way of further development. This putting up of obstacles is a symptom of a preoccupation with the rival.

As the rivalry progresses, two things happen. First, the subject "reverses the logical and chronological order of desires in order to hide his imitation."³⁷ Second, whatever originates with the rival will be belittled while secretly desired.³⁸ As this preoccupation with the rival intensifies it can evolve to mimetic doubling.

As rivals become closer to one another, the intensity of mimetic desire increases dramatically. The Model is turned into a "loathed rival."³⁹ As the rivalry approaches that of mimetic doubles, the object in itself is no longer the issue; that is, the removal or addition of the object would not alter the pattern of the rivalry. In particular, if the rivalry escalates to the point of mimetic violence, the violence itself displaces any objects as the fuel for ever increasing violence. The fascination with the Other loses

³⁵ *Things Hidden*, 296.

³⁶ Interestingly enough, the same illustration is used in both *Violence and the Sacred*, 146-147, and *Things Hidden*, 290.

³⁷ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

any sense of care for the Other; rather it turns into an obsession with overcoming the Obstacle, whether that means destroying the Other, vanquishing the Other or superseding the Other. The double bind of course is that as soon as one succeeds in overcoming the Obstacle, and achieving the object of desire, the focus of one's identity is gone, since one has become accustomed to defining oneself almost exclusively in relation to the Other. As Girard points out, "the best method of chastising mankind is to give people all that they want on all occasions."⁴⁰

This escalation of rivalry can develop to the point of erasing all distinctions between the Self and the Model. When this happens, the two become doubles of one another. Before looking more closely at the dynamics of doubles we will examine the other side of the Model; namely, that of the Obstacle.

Girard observes that the potential of the Model becoming an Obstacle is built into the structure of mimetic desire. As soon as one has a mimetic desire, it is the Model who stands in the way of acquiring the object, which the Self now desires. Frequently Girard combines these two aspects of the mimetic phenomenon and refers to the Model/Obstacle. At times, Girard focuses on the Model as Obstacle.⁴¹ Various psychological pathologies are analyzed from the point of view of a Self being fascinated by Obstacles.⁴² What is more important to the goal of the thesis, is to identify ways in which people are drawn to Models who are such a challenge as to be Obstacles so challenging as to be never

⁴⁰ *Things Hidden*, 286.

⁴¹ For a distinction between external obstacles to achieving desire (taboos) and internal obstacles formed by the mimetic partner see *Things Hidden*, 286.

⁴² For examples, see "To double business bound . . .", 96: "Delirium is nothing but the obligatory outcome of a desire that imbeds itself in the impasse of the obstacle model. . . . When effects of the universal double bind become too extreme to stay hidden, we speak of psychosis." *Things Hidden*, 332: "'primary masochism' is in fact none other than conflictual mimesis. . . . The subject has repeatedly observed the disillusionment that he experiences when he defeats his own rival and remains the unchallenged and secure possessor of the object. To counteract such disillusionment, this subject will henceforth place all his faith in an impenetrable obstacle. The only type of model that can still generate excitement is the one who cannot be defeated, the one who will always defeat his disciple. . . . In sadism, he plays the role of the model and persecutor. Here, the subject imitates not the desire of the model, but the model himself, in what now forms the major criterion for selecting this model: his violent opposition to all conceivable aspirations of a normal human being."

overcome.

If a desiring subject has acquired the object of mimetic desire, that is, if it has overcome the Model/Obstacle, it will find new models with whom to rival until a rival is found to become an insurmountable obstacle. This raises the issue of multiple and successive Model/Obstacles, particularly evident in Girard's analysis of Shakespeare, to which we will return later.

The notion of Model/Obstacle has within it the structure of a double bind for both the desiring Subject and the Model. The Subject is attracted (eros) to the Model since the Model is the one significant enough to prompt a mimetic desire. The Model as Obstacle can become the object of hatred. From the Model, the message is "Imitate me, but don't imitate me." That is, "I am flattered by the attention, but if you become as good as me, or perhaps better than me, I will feel threatened." This sense of double bind then becomes a contributing factor to the outbreak of violence. Along the way Self and Model become doubles of one another.

As mimetic rivalry escalates with ever more feedback loops to intensify the reciprocal desires, Self and Other become fascinated with each other to the point of obsession. The focus of their attention is becoming like the Other or becoming the Other. The distinction between their identities blurs. What happens is that the desires related to one's own identity no longer come out of one's own Self but are entirely based on the perceived desires of the Other. The identity of the Self, then, is not based within the Self, or even in a relationship with the Other; it is based on a fascination with the Other. This preoccupation with the Other is nothing more than a "furious longing to center everything around the self."⁴³ When the Other has a similar fascination with the Self, both of the doubles "become entangled in the obligatory reciprocity of one and the very same game."⁴⁴

⁴³ "To double business bound . . .", 39.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

The situation of doubles is hidden to the protagonists:

This disconcerting return of the identical exactly where each believes he is generating difference defines this relationship of the doubles, and it has nothing to do with the imaginaire. Doubles are the final result and truth of mimetic desire, a truth seeking acknowledgment but repressed by the principal characters because of their mutual antagonism. The doubles themselves interpret the emergence of the doubles as “hallucinatory.”⁴⁵

In the instance of doubles, the feelings of hatred are so strong that people would never admit to being “like” their adversary. They long to cling to their differences, their distinct identity when all along they are becoming mirror images of the Other. As they proceed along this path, the “the wish to be absorbed into the substance of the Other implies an insuperable revulsion for one’s own substance.”⁴⁶ This cannot help but diminish self-respect since as Ricoeur observes, to diminish respect for one self diminishes respect for another.⁴⁷

It is through an examination of those works that reveal the depth of mimetic desire at its extreme that we understand the power of the effect of doubles. It is this most intense development which is associated with the violence of undifferentiation and it is this particular sub-structure of mimetic desire that gives evidence of implicating the very identity of the Self.⁴⁸

Mimetic Violence

When mimetic desire intensifies through feedback loops, greater perceptions of desire, rivalry and doubling, the tensions between and within individuals or groups may become explosive. The circumstances are ripe for the outbreak of violence. Mimetic desire can evolve into violence that can escalate from one violent act to widespread violence. First, the attempt to acquire some object of

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 54.

⁴⁷ RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, see page 180-194 for a discussion around the dialogical and dialectical nature of self-esteem.

desire, or imitate the Model, or the frustration over the lack of fulfillment, or the clash resulting from a rush for the same object, can lead to one small violent act; that is, the mimetic rivalry could lead directly to violence. Second, given the mimetic intensity, the initial violence becomes the focus of mimesis and the violence is imitated and returned “with interest.”⁴⁹ This in turn starts a feedback loop of ever increasing mimetic violence, leading, thirdly, to reciprocal violence, which can become an escalating spiral with a capacity to destroy a community. Fourth, as the interindividual⁵⁰ distinctions begin to blur and people lose a sense of their own identities, they experience what Girard refers to as undifferentiated violence.⁵¹ It is the violence of sameness, of identity surrender. In Ricoeur’s terms, it is the suffering attributed to the person who is always being acted upon and cannot take action independently.⁵² Fifth, during times of crisis there is a general and widespread violence of undifferentiation, a “reciprocity of insults, blows, revenge and neurotic symptoms,”⁵³ in which all taboos and moral structures are dissolved. At this point violent contagion can spread almost instantaneously throughout a group.

In summary, Girard’s understanding of the structure of mimetic desire includes an initial mimesis of the perceived interior desire of another person or group who becomes a Model, mediating the desire of the Self. This mimetic desire can develop into mimetic rivalry in which the Model becomes an Obstacle to the Self. The initial Self, in turn, becomes a Model to the initial Model. As each party becomes a Model/Obstacle to the Other, a relationship of Doubles ensues. Each party is fascinated with

⁴⁸ This attention to identity becomes a bridge to the concept of deep-rooted conflict in chapters three and five.

⁴⁹ *Things Hidden*, 300.

⁵⁰ “Interindividual” is a word coined by Girard to describe the blurring of distinctions between Self and Other.

⁵¹ *Things Hidden*, 314. This is the same as “violence of indifferention.” cf. Robert NORTH, “Violence and the Bible: The Girard Connection,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 47-1 (1985), 7.

⁵² RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, 190ff.

⁵³ *The Scapegoat*, 13.

the Other. The intensity of this fascination can become a violence of undifferentiation in which the identity boundaries of each Self begin to blur. Besides this type of violence, mimetic desire may trigger an act of violence, the imitation of which is known as mimetic violence. Unless the sequence is halted, escalating reciprocal violence can destroy a community. This is the point at which scapegoat theory becomes important, but before exploring this other dimension of Girard's thought, we will look to the body of his work for examples of mimetic phenomena.

Examples of Mimetic Phenomena

Girard's understanding of mimetic phenomena has been honed by decades of analysis of particular cases. Since mimetic desire does its work within the complex world of individuals and groups, an examination of these examples drawn from many diverse times, places and circumstances, will provide a feel for the subject area and at the same time provide a basis for making general observations about the dynamics of mimetic phenomena. In turn we will examine Girard's analysis of literature, anthropology, psychology, and the Bible.

Literature

Thirty years after the publication of *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, Girard published *A Theater of Envy*, his analysis of the works of Shakespeare. In it, he reflects on his initial work as follows:

My work on Shakespeare is inextricably linked to everything I ever wrote, beginning with an essay on five European novelists. I loved these so equally and impartially that, in my blissful ignorance of literary fashion. . . . I gambled on the possibility that my five novelists might have something in common. A shocking thought, to be sure, but in my eyes at least, the gamble paid off; I discovered something and called it "mimetic desire."⁵⁴

As Girard analyzed the works of Cervantes, Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust and Dostoyevsky, he did so with the realization that their work reflected both what they had struggled with as individuals and what they

⁵⁴ *A Theater of Envy*. .

had observed in society around them. Stendhal, for instance, lived through the French Revolution and fought in the Napoleonic Wars; his character, Julien Sorel, bears similarities to Napoleon. Proust lived through World War I and Girard extrapolates insights from his work to analyze aspects of the rivalry between France and Germany. Seventeen years after *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* first appeared, Girard observed that

the writers of these works are “more mimetic” or more “realistic” than other writers: human desire really *is* mimetic, and the texts that portray it as such cannot fail to be more “true-to-life” than other texts; the superiority of these texts is undeniable, but our reluctance to acknowledge its sources . . . cannot be unrelated to the dearest of all our illusions, the intimate conviction that our desires are really our own, that they are truly original and spontaneous.⁵⁵

In the syntheses below, we will both elaborate on the fine points of Girard’s mimetic theory as well as provide examples of situations which Girard has analyzed with the help of these literary figures.

Girard finds in these writers examples to illustrate the difference between external and internal mediation and the corollary that the intensity of mimetic desire is a function of the distance between subject and mediator (Model).⁵⁶ Girard sees a progression in intensity of mimetic desire from Cervantes to Dostoyevsky. Cervantes makes clear external mediation; the key example being Cervantes’ Don Quixote, who takes the knight Amadis as a model of chivalry. Quixote lives his life trying to live up to the standard set by Amadis who lived well before him. As the distance between subject and mediator grows closer, there is the opportunity for internal mediation, in which case it is conceivable that the Subject might actually get the object desired by the Model or might become a rival for love, position or recognition. For Stendhal there is already sufficient internal mediation to lead to “envy, jealousy, and impotent hatred.” Proust exposes snobbism as a function of mimetic desire, demonstrating three stages of mimetic desire: first, the appearance of permanence and togetherness, second, diversity, intermittence

⁵⁵ “*To double business bound . . .*”, ix.

⁵⁶ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*. 9.

and disloyalty, and finally, ontological sickness which is a permanence of nothingness, leading to feelings of failure and death.⁵⁷ Finally, for Dostoyevsky, the intensity of love/hate relationships results in paroxysms of violent emotion.

Not only is there a function of intensity based on spiritual distance between mediator and subject, there is also the interplay of multiple schemes of mimetic desire. One variation is when the initial subject becomes the mediator for the mediator, causing double mediation. In this case, the two become doubles of one another and their every move intensifies the desire of the other. In fact, when “the two rivals are very close to each other, double mediation ends in double fascination.”⁵⁸ In Dostoevsky’s *The Possessed*, Varvara Ptrovna and Stepan Tofimovitch are equally fascinated by each other. In this double mediation, “desire circulates in it and feeds on its own substance. Thus, double mediation constitutes a veritable ‘generator’ of desire, the simplest possible.”⁵⁹ One of the parties may experience a sense of enslavement to one’s double.⁶⁰ In more complex situations there can be what Girard describes as a chain of triangles:

[I]t is easy to imagine more complex figures, equally autonomous, which give birth to ever more vast *novelistic worlds*. Frequently, concrete situations correspond to these more complex figures. Instead of selecting his own slave for his mediator, the subject may choose a third *individual*, and the latter a fourth—Saint-Loup is the slave of Rachel, who in turn is the slave of the polo player, who in turn is André’s slave—thus we have a “chain” of triangles. The character who plays the part of mediator in a first triangle may play the part of slave in a second triangle.⁶¹

Thus we see a progression in mimetic desire from an initial Self who patterns desire after the Model, to

⁵⁷ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 237-245.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 96-112.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

a situation in which the initial Model makes a Model of the initial Self in double mimesis, to a situation in which there is a chain of Selves and Models in a situation of multiple mimesis.

Another dimension of the mimetic desire is the dynamics between collective entities. Stendhal exposes the rivalry between the nobility and the bourgeois classes in nineteenth century France:

The transition from external to internal mediation constitutes the supreme phase in the decline of the nobility. . . . Stendhal clearly understood that the revolution could not destroy the nobility by taking away its privileges. But the nobility could destroy itself by desiring that of which it had been deprived by the bourgeoisie, and by devoting itself to the ignoble sentiments of internal mediation. To realize that the privilege is arbitrary and to still desire it is obviously the height of vanity. The noble thinks he is defending his nobility by fighting for its privileges against the other classes of a nation but he only succeeds in ruining it. He desires to recuperate his wealth as a bourgeois might and the envy of the bourgeoisie stimulates his desire and endows the pettiest of honorary trifles with immense value. Mediated by each other, henceforth the two classes will desire the same thing in the same way. . . . The nobleman constantly grows nearer the bourgeois, even in the hatred he feels for him. They are all ignoble, Stendhal writes somewhat strongly in his letter to Balzac, *because they prize nobility*.⁶²

He points out that aristocrats adopt the same bourgeois values of hard work, going to bed early and economizing to prove to "Others" that they have earned their privileges. On the other hand, in a symmetrical and inverse move, the bourgeois "play at being great lords to impress the aristocrats."⁶³

Proust examines two different instances of collective mimesis. The first is the regime of Combray, a town in France which is very much a community unto itself. It is, with regard to the outside world, in a mode of external mediation. It would not think of becoming like any other part of the outside world, all relationships to the outside "must of necessity be superficial."⁶⁴ Patriotism is the word Girard uses for this state of affairs.

The second instance is the rivalry between two different salons and their clientele in Paris. Its

⁶² *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 121-122.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

chauvinism is the fruit of rivalry. Chauvinism, based on internal mediation, “is a negative sentiment based on hatred, that is to say, on the secret adoration of the Other.”⁶⁵

Proust’s remarks on the First World War, despite their extreme caution, betray a profound disgust. Rose colored chauvinism is the product of a mediation similar to that of snobbism. The chauvinist has a powerful, belligerent, and well-disciplined Germany because he himself is dreaming of war, power, and discipline.⁶⁶

He makes the following analogy: “France is to Germany what the Verdurin salon is to the Guermantes salon.”⁶⁷ The significance of Mme *Verdurin*’s marriage to the Prince of *Guermantes* has its analogies in war. She typifies the French who collaborated with Germany during World War I:

The rigorous parallelism between social and national chauvinism suggests that we should seek in the order of the macrocosm a parallel to the dramatic reversal in the microcosm, a reversal which can without exaggeration be considered to touch on “treachery.”⁶⁸

The action of Mme Verdurin, just as that of the collaborators, must be seen in the context of mimetic rivalry:

If Mme Verdurin is ‘spontaneous’ then the enthusiastic ‘collaborators’ are also, since they were fanatical nationalists only a short time before. In reality no one is spontaneous; the laws of double mediation are at work in both cases.⁶⁹

The comparison is sustained, in another example, with the two salons representing the two countries.

Carlus, a *Guermantes* is drawn to the *Verdurin* salon where he is falsely labeled a spy by Mme Verdurin. Rather, he has a masochistic tendency to identify with a crushed Germany because he himself is crushed and defeated. An obsessive rivalry develops between Carlus and Mme Verdurin, pitting her chauvinism against his antichauvinism. Their two obsessions bring them together in a “communion of

⁶⁵ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 205.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 206.

hatred.”

More generally, Girard points out that collectivities cease to be absolute reference points, rather they “can now be understood only by contrasting them with rival salons, by fitting them into the totality of which each of them is no more than an element.”⁷⁰ Applying his analysis to the “concert of Europe” he remarks that

[n]ations are obsessed with each other. Every day their relationships become closer but they often assume a negative aspect. Just as individual fascination gives birth to individualism, so collective fascination spawns a “collective individualism” which is called nationalism and chauvinism. Individualist and collectivist myths are brothers for they always mask the opposition of the same to the same. The desire to be “among one’s friends” just as much as the desire to be oneself hides a desire to be the Other.⁷¹

Collectivities, then, as collectivities, exhibit the same mimetic structures as individuals. Within these collectivities there are similar patterns of double mediation.

Even though as a collectivity, Combray is a “small closed world,” looking more closely into this world of Proust reveals that among its residents is the same kind of internal mediation which characterized the Paris salons.⁷² This internal mediation develops into a mediation of doubles:

Double mediation is a melting-pot in which differences among classes and individuals gradually dissolve. It functions all the more efficiently because it does not even appear to affect diversity. In fact, the latter is even given a fresh though deceptive brilliance: the opposition of the Same to the Same, which flourishes everywhere, will hide itself for a long time to come behind traditional diversity, sheltering new conflicts behind the shadow of old ones and nourishing belief in the integral survival of the past.⁷³

Girard points out that Flaubert makes a similar observation. The nature of the oppositions is that they

⁶⁹ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 206.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 212-13.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 214.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 122.

are empty whether

between aristocrats and bourgeois, between the devout and the atheists, reactionaries and republicans, lovers and mistresses, parents and children, rich and poor. The noveletic universe is a palace full of absurd ornaments and false windows which are there 'for symmetry.'⁷⁴

These observations show that similar patterns can be found everywhere and sometimes the groups or individuals in mimetic competition appear at the outset very different.

A key feature of the dynamics of double mediation is the role of hypocrisy or deceit. In the game of mimetic desire, as in business, which is largely based on mimetic desire, it is important to conceal one's desires so that they are not taken over by the Other. Stendhal demonstrates this within two worlds: the world of the red, which is that of the soldier, and the world of the black, which is that of the priest. Within the world of the black it becomes much easier to conceal desire, given the discipline of self-control. However, the self-control of Stendhal's priest "is as deadly in evil as it can be supreme in good."⁷⁵ In particular, Stendhal identified the underground action of the *Congrégation* as a result of internal mediation. For him, "religious hypocrisy conceals double mediation." However,

[i]n Dostoyevsky's universe deviated transcendence is no longer hidden behind religion. But we must not think that the characters in *The Possessed* are showing us their real faces in becoming atheists. The possessed are no more atheists than Stendhal's devout are believers. The victims of metaphysical desire always choose their political, philosophical, and religious ideas to fit their hatred; thought is no more than a weapon for an affronted consciousness. Never has it seemed so important, yet in actual fact it no longer has any importance at all. It is completely dominated by metaphysical rivalry.⁷⁶

What Girard is pointing out is that when mimetic desire takes over one's identity, when it reaches the level of metaphysical desire turned to hatred, anything can be used to both legitimate and camouflage

⁷⁴ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 151.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 158; cf. the observation of former hostage Terry Waite on CBC's *Morningside* (April 24, 1995) that every group which is open to violence for political ends attracts psychopaths who are only interested in violence and who do not wish to stop being violent when there is a peace accord.

this desire.

Hatred based on desire is given eloquent expression by Proust:

Of such a nature is hatred which compounds from the lives of our enemies a fiction which is wholly false. Instead of thinking of them as ordinary human beings knowing ordinary human happiness and occasionally exposed to the sorrows which afflict all mankind and ought to arouse in us a feeling of kindly sympathy, we attribute to them an attitude of arrogant self-satisfaction which pours oil upon the flames of our anger. For hatred transfigures individuals no less than does desire and like desire sets us thirsting for human blood.⁷⁷

The same phenomenon is observed by Dostoevsky for whom “there is no longer any love without jealousy, any friendship without envy, any attraction without repulsion.”⁷⁸ He brings together a fascination coupled with hatred. The “admiration that insults and even kills its object, are the paroxysms of the conflict caused by internal mediation.”⁷⁹ The intensity of these feelings which “gradually infect the most intimate parts of being” grow “more complete as the distance between model and disciple diminishes.”⁸⁰ For this reason, family relationships are particularly susceptible to violence. It is not only the family that is vulnerable; Girard finds all areas susceptible which “we call ‘private’, ranging from eroticism to professional or intellectual ambition.”⁸¹ It is in this private realm that issues of identity come into play.

In “*To double business bound . . .*”, Girard continues his literary analyses, paying attention to Dante, Camus and again to Dostoyevsky. He paints a picture of a “descending spiral” of secondhand desire moving toward “nothingness and death.”⁸² It is the awareness of and escape from this conflictual

⁷⁷ PROUST, *Jean Santeuil* quoted in *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 40–41.

⁷⁸ *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 41.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸¹ *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, 288.

⁸² “*To double business bound . . .*”, 4.

structure of doubles that allows for the conversion of the novelist:

The final conversion of the hero is a transposition of the novelist's fundamental experience, of his renunciation of his own idols, of his own spiritual metamorphosis.⁸³

According to Girard, it is Marcel Proust who makes most explicit this transformation in *Le Temps retrouvé*: "The work is itself retrospective; it is at the same time narrative of and the recompense for spiritual metamorphosis." The descent for the hero/author "appears as a descent into Hell, that is, as a necessary ordeal on the way to final revelation."⁸⁴ This is then transformed into an ascending movement. Girard believes that *The Divine Comedy* is structured along these lines; the form itself, he observes, can be traced back to the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine.⁸⁵

Girard suggests that Camus, too, was personally embroiled in the types of struggles which were portrayed in his work. The early Camus of *L'Étranger* was not yet a famous writer and "had no assurance that he would ever become one. He lived in troubled times with scarce opportunity and poor health."⁸⁶ The key character, Meurseault, lives an empty life with a sullen mood, in an upside down world committing a "half-hearted and secretly provocative crime" typical of juvenile delinquency.⁸⁷ This kind of anomie pictured by the early Camus and analyzed by Girard revolves around a perceived mutual indifference between the individual who feels doomed to anonymity and an indifferent society which is repaid with indifference. The Romanistic solipsist wants to be him or herself all the while desiring to be recognized. Camus "realizes that his own involvement in the tragic conflicts represented in his work was rooted in his own ambitions and in that stubborn need for self-justification to which we

⁸³ "To double business bound . . .", 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 4-5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 26.

all succumb.”⁸⁸

Girard draws on Camus to show that mimetic desire can be for recognition. He describes the “generous lawyer” who goes around helping innocent victims but who is, as well really wanting to “be a terrific lawyer, with everybody slapping you on the back and congratulating you in court” after the trial.⁸⁹ Camus’ lawyer Clamence observes that criminals “wanted to be tried and sentenced . . . their motives were really the same as his: like so many of our contemporaries, in this anonymous world, they wanted a little publicity.”⁹⁰ Girard goes on to point out that

Clamence really suggests that the author of *L’Etranger* was not really conscious of his own motivation until he experienced his own chute. His purpose, which disguised itself as “generosity,” was really identical with egotistical passion.⁹¹

Camus and his characters craved recognition; Dostoevsky’s characters, on the other hand, were motivated primarily by the reactions of their doubles.

Girard turns to Dostoevsky to expose “how truly infernal desire can be.” Passions are fueled by “the constant attachment to this double, a slavish imitation growing all the more invincible as escape is attempted. Even where all the positive data seem to preclude it, the relationship of rivalry moves irresistibly toward reciprocity and identity.”⁹² The final result is mimetic doubling, but the truth is “repressed by the principal characters because of their mutual antagonism.”⁹³ In Dostoevsky’s early

⁸⁷ “*To double business bound . . .*”, 31.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 10, quoting Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*.

⁹⁰ “*To double business bound . . .*”, 19.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 40-41.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 41.

works,

furious obsession is outlined. Everywhere the same scheme reappears, the same triangular relationship of desired woman and two rivals. We cannot simply say that these rivals struggle with each other for the woman. The principal hero conducts himself in an obscure and complex fashion. He flutters about the desired woman, but this only contributes to the rival's success and union with the loved one. The dénouement makes the protagonist desperate, of course, but not completely: he dreams of building himself a little place as third party in the couple's future existence. Regarding the rival, tokens of hostility alternate with gestures of servility, with the signs of a fascinating attraction.⁹⁴

Again, there is resonance with the author's own life; Dostoevsky's Siberia correspondence reveals a triangular relationship with his rival Vergougnon over his future wife.⁹⁵ The same kind of author-novel resonance is reinforced in Dostoevsky's, *Brothers Karamazov* in that he "wrote a novel about a patricide" and we know he "hated his own father, a man of rare violence, many think, who was assassinated by his serfs."⁹⁶

As Girard looks at mimetic desire through the eyes of Shakespeare in *A Theater of Envy*, the intensity, dynamics and complexity of the phenomenon come into clearer focus. The *intensity* is illustrated by the types of actions which are prompted by mediated desire. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus and Valentine are childhood friends, who in Shakespeare are more prone than any to have intense mimetic desire modeled on each other. Valentine goes off to university and when Proteus visits him, Valentine praises his lover, Silvia, so lavishly, that Proteus has such intense desire for her, sight unseen, that he determines to rape her.

Girard uses the term "hypermimetic" to describe Shakespearian characters who are particularly caught up in mimetic phenomena. One such person is Claudio in *Much Ado about Nothing*. He is in

⁹⁴ "To double business bound . . .", 37.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 49-50.

love with a woman named Hero; his feelings for her rise and fall as a function of how he perceives Don Pedro's interests in her. He is convinced that if given the choice, she would always choose the other. "Like all hypermimetic people, when Claudio hesitates between several possible interpretations of an event, in the end he always selects the one with the worst implications for himself."⁹⁷ Another such person is Achilles, of *Troilus and Cressida*, who

is in a position to admire himself enormously not because he is objectively stronger, greater, and so on—objective values have become irrelevant in this hypermimetic world—but because mimetic desire keeps flowing his way in huge quantities, providing his own self-love with powerful models. Achilles reveres himself through the same circular and self-feeding process as our previous examples of pseudonarcissism.⁹⁸

His pride grows through a feedback process in which "all the fools in his army worship him more and more."⁹⁹ Girard compares his pride to a black hole that will absorb "instantly everything that gravitates toward it."¹⁰⁰ It is an unstable black hole that can be destabilized by the studied indifference of those around him. This hypermimetic world of Achilles is similar to "our own media-crazy world, [where] the value of human beings is measured by something we call their 'visibility'."¹⁰¹ Hypermimetic Leontes "puts his wife in a classical double bind. Whatever she does, she can only do wrong in his eyes: if she remains prudently aloof, she seems insensitive; if she displays her sympathy for Polixenes, she is accused of adultery."¹⁰² The behaviours of hypermimetic characters are rooted in a "manic-depressive

⁹⁷ *A Theater of Envy*, 86.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 311. As well, 318: Leontes is further described as "the most intelligent, the most depressive, the most destructive of all Shakespearean hypermimetic characters."

oscillation.”¹⁰³

It is Leontes and *The Tempest*'s Prospero, who for Girard reveal the conversion which Shakespeare has undergone: “Hysterical as he may be, the hypermimetic author sees something that is really there, something that more seasoned observers never perceive.”¹⁰⁴

Shakespeare is used by Girard to illustrate many of the more intricate *dynamics* of mimetic desire. One of these is that indifference increases desire. In a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Helena asks for advice on how to woo Demetrius who loves Hermia. Hermia observes, “I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.”¹⁰⁵ Later, the dialogue continues as follows:

Hermia: I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Helena: Oh, that my prayers would such affection move!(196-97)¹⁰⁶

and again

Hermia: The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Helena: The more I love, the more he hateth me. (198-99)¹⁰⁷

Girard observes

Every pleasant and willing object is spurned, and every desire that spurns our own desire is passionately embraced; only disdain, hostility, and rejection appear desirable. Mimetic desire efficiently programs its victims for maximum frustration.¹⁰⁸

These dynamics show that where one really wishes to be the object of desire, perceiving disdain will make them try that much harder to make themselves appreciated.

¹⁰³ *A Theater of Envy*, 330.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 351.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *A Theater of Envy*, 47.

Girard notes that characters are always changing in relation to one another. The changes may be the result of a shift in models.¹⁰⁹ When the Trojan Troilus appears to be losing interest in Cressida, who is to be sent to the Greeks, she muses, “A woeful Cressid ‘mongst the merry Greeks.”¹¹⁰ Troilus immediately starts to see things differently:

The mere possibility of losing Cressida to the Greeks makes her valuable again in the eyes of Troilus. If we do not attribute this wonderful metamorphosis of Troilus to *mimetic desire*, what shall it be? This incident is the turning point of the whole episode, the rebirth of Troilus’s desire; it is supremely relevant to the theme of the present study. Let us be pedantically precise: Troilus’s second desire cannot be rooted in Troilus, the subject, since, one minute before, no such desire existed. It cannot be rooted in the object either; his mistress has not changed in any way and, one second before, she did not seem desirable at all. She made herself desirable again by reminding Troilus of the Greeks’ erotic reputation. Is it possible to make the secondhand nature of Troilus’s desire more explicit than it is here?¹¹¹

Just as Cressida succeeded in deliberately arousing mimetic desire in Troilus by construing herself as the object of Greek desire, in the same play we note that mimetic desire can be deliberately inspired in two people for each other by a character like Pandarus who started the affair between Troilus and Cressida in the first place.¹¹²

The changes in dynamics are so frequent that Girard uses the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to refer to the varying patterns of mimetic relationships.¹¹³ Sometimes the change is across polarities: “Throughout his entire career, Shakespeare will portray friends and brothers who turn enemies for no reason visible to a non-mimetic observer. The reverse is also true: deadly enemies become intimate

¹⁰⁹ *A Theater of Envy*, 109.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 121-128.

¹¹³ For examples see *A Theater of Envy*, 35, 48, 62.

friends for no visible reason either.”¹¹⁴ The change may also be one of roles. “For Orsino [in *The Twelfth Night*] Olivia is simultaneously object, model, obstacle, and rival.”¹¹⁵ Seeming contradictions make sense when one takes into account the different roles.¹¹⁶ Girard contrasts the dynamics as follows:

The whole triangular relation of Silvius, Phebe, and Rosalind is not too different from the relationships between the four lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*— in particular, the enslavement of Helena by Demetrius—but the genders are reversed. It is Silvius in this case who plays the role of the spaniel. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, however, the mimetic games include such rapid reversals and substitutions that no single moment becomes the same focus of sustained attention as the Phebe-Silvius episode in *As you Like It*. All configurations retrospectively look like fleeting moments in a process that remains dynamic and fluid at all times.¹¹⁷

Even though mimetic desire can be aroused in an instant, and can change frequently, in some cases it takes time to develop.

If anything, the work of Shakespeare reveals the *complexity* of mimetic desire. The complexity involves both the phenomenon and the words that are used to express or reveal the phenomenon.¹¹⁸ There are complex dynamics at the level of the individual as well as interdividual. On the individual level, there can be a need to have one's own possessions desired by others as well as a desire for the possessions of others.¹¹⁹ There is a point at which a desire to have what the other has is transformed into a desire to be the other.¹²⁰ This introduces the language of ontology, ontological desire and

¹¹⁴ *A Theater of Envy*, 19.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 104-105.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 42, 43.

ontological disease.¹²¹ Within Shakespeare the word used to express the desire to be another is “translated.”¹²² For example Helena says to Hermia

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I’d give to be to you translated. (I,i, 190-91)¹²³

One way of expressing ontological disease is with the language of jealousy¹²⁴ and envy. Girard makes a distinction between mimetic desire and envy. All envy is a form of mimetic desire but not all mimetic desire leads to envy. The ontological dimension of the intervidual level is expressed first through the concept of doubles¹²⁵ and in its extreme form, monsters or monstrous doubles:¹²⁶

A mythical monster is a conjunction of elements normally specific to different creatures; it will automatically result from the process suggested by Shakespeare, if the substitutions are numerous and rapid enough to become imperceptible as such.”¹²⁷

Monsters symbolize a “principle of disorder, bitterness, violence, and moral confusion.”¹²⁸ They show the total loss of personal differentiation at the level of identity. Akin to the monstrous is “an entangled web of mimetic interaction, a long escalation or rivalry so fierce at the climax that it turns to violent chaos.”¹²⁹

Girard makes the link between Shakespeare’s writings and real life situations in several ways.

¹²¹ *A Theater of Envy*, 45, 47, 53, 59, 63, 278.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 59.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 301,302,306.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 41, 42, 56, 305.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 53-55, 301, 345-46.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 344.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

First he argues that the struggles which Shakespeare describes in his plays resemble the personal struggles of the great poet. Second he asserts that Shakespeare is a keen observer of events going on around him. Third, Girard extrapolates the insights of Shakespeare to the contemporary world, including the world of economics¹³⁰ and advertising,¹³¹ a total system,¹³² and the phenomenon of war.¹³³

We note Girard sees novelistic literature as being a revelation of what authors experienced within themselves. Since mimetic desire is about imitating interiority it makes sense that the first intuition of this phenomenon would come from sensitive individuals who, in a sense, used their own inner being as a laboratory. The disciplines of anthropology and psychology to which we turn next, use a methodology based on observation. Out of the keen observations of anthropologists and psychologists, Girard has been able to find corroborating examples of mimetic desire by interpreting the observations in the light of his hypothesis.

Anthropology

Girard's analysis takes place in the context of a debate within the field of anthropology between ethologists and ethnologists who argue that the starting point for an understanding of humanity is with animals or human culture respectively.¹³⁴ He argues that the concept of mimetic desire is applicable to both and that the scapegoat mechanism is a dividing line between animals and humanized anthropoids. We will begin with Girard's understanding of mimesis among animals and proceed to how it finds

¹³⁰ *A Theater of Envy*, 102.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 30-31.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 286, 288.

¹³⁴ *Things Hidden*, 90-92.

expression through the process of hominization. Next we will discuss religion, ritual and prohibition as they pertain to mimetic desire. This will lead to an examination of Girard's comparisons of "primitive," traditional and contemporary societies.

Girard points out that mimesis is present in all forms of life. Young birds, for instance, would not be able to reproduce the song of the species without hearing it first.¹³⁵ In anthropoid apes there are clear signs of acquisitive desire. This desire results in a periodic rivalry in which males vie for prestige and status. This results in patterns of dominance such that the dominant individual or group of individuals become the objects of imitation for those males of the periphery:

The notion of prestige, at this point, needs to be examined closely. It refers simply to the mimetic content of the rivalry, to the fact that the object cannot suffice to explain the intensity of the conflict. One can remove the object and the rivalry will continue. What interests us directly is the role of mimetic conflict in the establishment of animal societies. The individual that cedes first will always cede thereafter; it will yield the first place, the best food, and the females of choice to the victor without dispute. The relationship can be called into question again but generally it maintains a certain stability.¹³⁶

This imitation, however, does not apply to acquisitive behaviors. The effect is that

[o]nce banned from an area in which it provokes rivalry, imitation increases in all other areas and becomes fixed on the most powerful animal, the one most capable of assuring the protection of the group, and who can act in the capacity of leader and model for the others; he will determine the group's character, give a signal for attack or flight, etc. Many researchers think that this kind of arrangement guarantees that a group, for example of baboons, will have a cohesion and efficacy within the group and *vis-à-vis* any external enemy that it would lack in the absence of dominance patterns.¹³⁷

The relative positions are linked to the individuals who hold them. In human society, positions can go on for generations, the incumbents can change, selection procedures for positions can be ritualized and so on.

¹³⁵ *Things Hidden*, 90.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

Girard attributes the initiation of the process of hominization to the increased power of imitation. This power together with the growth of the human brain mutually reinforced one another.¹³⁸

The process Girard describes as follows:

We can conceive of hominization as a series of steps that allow for the domestication of progressively increasing and intense mimetic effects, separated from one another by crises that would be catastrophic but also generative in that they would trigger the founding mechanism and at each step provide for more rigorous prohibitions within the group, and for a more effective ritual canalization toward the outside. In this sense it becomes conceivable that human infancy could become more and more vulnerable and prolong itself for a period corresponding to the growth of the brain without bringing about the simple annihilation of the species in the course of the latter's development. One can also see that at each step more and more elaborate institutions would favour a new mimetic level, which would bring about a new crisis and thus continue on in a spiral movement that would progressively humanize the anthropoid.¹³⁹

Girard's paradigm of hominization describes the emergence of ever new cultural institutions deriving from crises. Each institution has within it taboos meant to prevent crises like the one previous. With these new institutions new forms of mimesis and mimetic desire become possible and other forms become circumscribed. The vulnerability of the group to a crisis characterized by runaway violence prompts certain prohibitions which put limits on acquisitive mimesis. We note as well the increased vulnerability of the infant because of the increased size of the brain.¹⁴⁰ The evolution of culture is accompanied by an increased capacity through mimesis to imitate the behaviors associated with the culture and at the same time the increased mimetic capacity enables more intense mimetic desires and rivalries to come about generating increasingly complex conflicts and cultures.

Girard attributes the categorical change from animal to human to the surrogate victim of the first "crisis." The essential change from the dominance patterns of primates to humanized forms of culture,

¹³⁸ *Things Hidden*, 94-95.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁴⁰ cf. Mary Clark's observation above about the significance of the relatively larger head, increased vulnerability, the subsequent need for community both for protection and to pass on the culture. Culture includes within it taboos, rituals and

from the direct solutions of animal rivalry to the indirect solutions of culture came about when mimetic activity developed into corporate murder.¹⁴¹ The victimage mechanism produced “the differentiated, symbolic and human forms of culture.”¹⁴² The general allusions to “culture” raise questions about what constitutes culture and what are the links between culture and mimetic theory.

One of the key insights of Girard regarding mimetic desire in the context of cultural evolution is that there is a profound fear, understood as awe and phobia, surrounding mimetic phenomena in many aboriginal cultures. This fear is associated with the sacred and finds expression in prohibitions, taboos and rituals. In fact, Girard maintains that his hypothesis

explains not only why prohibitions and rituals exist everywhere, but also why all cultures attribute their foundation to supernatural powers which are also believed to demand respect for *the rules that they transgress*, and to sanction their transgression with the most terrible punishments.¹⁴³

The movement from mimesis and mimetic desire to the formation of culture takes a route that leads from the association of mimetic desire with violence, to a fear of mimetic phenomena, to prohibitions and punishments. Complementing this is an association of these phenomena with religion and the re-enacting of mimetic doubling, crisis and reconciliation in ritual.

First, regarding the link between mimetic desire and violence, Girard makes the connection that those who start imitating one another, continue “each one transforming himself into a simulacrum of the

prohibitions.

¹⁴¹ In *Things Hidden*, 97. Girard puts it categorically as follows, “Between what can be strictly termed animal nature on the one hand and developing humanity on the other there is a true rupture, which is collective murder, and it alone is capable of providing for kinds of organization, no matter how embryonic, based on prohibition and ritual.”

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁴³ *Things Hidden*, 41.

other.”¹⁴⁴ When there is violence, the mutual imitation is evident to observers. In the case of blood feuds, vengeance turns the antagonists into doubles.¹⁴⁵ As the rivalry becomes more intense the rivals forget about the objects of desire and become “fascinated with one another.”¹⁴⁶ The escalation of mimetic violence continues until the collective murder takes place; this “constitutes at once its paroxysm and its conclusion.”¹⁴⁷ This murder is based on conflictual mimesis whereby an initial conflict between individuals is subject to contagious imitation such that an entire community turns against one individual.¹⁴⁸

With an initial awareness of how mimetic desire has led to violence, comes a fear of violent culture within a community. Girard asserts that there is “no culture that does not prohibit violence among those who live together. All occasions or events that might give rise to real violence, even intense rivalries or forms of competition that are often tolerated or even encouraged elsewhere in society are prohibited.”¹⁴⁹ In some cultures it is prohibited to copy a gesture or repeat the words of another. In others, the use of proper names is forbidden or restricted. The strictures in some cultures against both twins, who are non-violently eliminated, and their parents, points to a profound fear of the potential of doubling. They believe it should not be allowed to spread “like a contagious disease, resembling mimetic propagation.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ *Things Hidden*, 11.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

The organization of human society does not occur directly through rivalries as with animals for whom competition provides an immediate spot in the hierarchy.¹⁵¹ Rather, according to Girard, there are limits placed on mimetic rivalry through prohibitions which are meant to reduce the probability of another mimetic crisis. All of this happens without a conscious awareness that it is mimetic rivalry which is being controlled. There is, rather, a sense of what constitutes a point of vulnerability to a community. Girard puts it this way:

When all antimimetic prohibitions are considered as a whole, from those bearing on the most harmless act to the most terrible (the blood feud), it becomes apparent that they correspond roughly to the steps of an *escalation* of mimetic contagion that threatens more and more members of the community and tends towards progressively more aggravated forms of rivalry over objects which is incapable of dividing peacefully: women, food, weapons, the best dwelling-sites, etc.¹⁵²

The prohibitions derived from the fear of a mimetic rivalry induced crisis include first, objects of rivalry, second, behavioural characteristics of the violent phase of a crisis, and “finally individuals who appear to have ‘symptoms’ thought to be inevitably contagious, such as twins, adolescents at the stage of initiation, women during their menstrual period, or the sick and the dead, those excluded temporarily from the community.”¹⁵³

Because of the fear of mimetic crisis and the awe associated with its resolution through the victimage mechanism, the containment of violence becomes associated with religion. This means that the prohibition of things, behaviors and people with “symptoms,” is put into a religious context; the punishment system takes on a religious significance to prevent any of these from prompting a crisis:

These punishments are quite real. The transgression of religious prohibitions does in fact increase the risk of renewing the circle of mimetic rivalry and vengeance. Religious systems

¹⁵¹ *Things Hidden*, 93.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

form a whole in this sense, such that the infraction of any particular rule, no matter how absurd it may seem objectively, constitutes a challenge to the entire community. It becomes an act of hubris capable of provoking violence, for others will be tempted to accuse the wrongdoer or to imitate and surpass the transgression. In either case mimetic rivalry is reintroduced into the community. In societies that do not have penal systems capable of halting the spread of mimetic rivalry and its escalation into a vicious circle of violence, the religious system performs this very real function.¹⁵⁴

Girard maintains that mimetic violence is the “motor of the religious system.”¹⁵⁵

For Girard, prohibitions and rituals are complementary aspects of religion: “Prohibitions attempt to avert the crisis by prohibiting those behaviors that provoke it, and if the crisis recurs nonetheless, or threatens to do so, ritual then attempts to channel it in a direction that would lead to resolution.” This resolution may come at the expense of an arbitrary victim since “no individual victim can ever be responsible for the mimetic crisis.”¹⁵⁶ Girard considers the scapegoat ritual in both a religious sense “but also in the sense of a spontaneous psychological mechanism.”¹⁵⁷

In some cultures, there is a ritual enactment of a crisis in which masks and dances are used to portray mimetic rivalries: “Masks juxtapose beings and objects separated by differences. They are beyond differences; they do not merely deny differences or efface them, but they incorporate and rearrange them in original fashion. In short, they are another aspect of the monstrous double.”¹⁵⁸ As they don masks, participants reenact the original crisis involving mimetic desire and a violence of undifferentiation:

They are enemies first, engaging in mock combats and symmetrical dances; then they put on their masks and change into monstrous doubles. The mask is no apparition drawn from the thin

¹⁵⁴ *Things Hidden*, 41.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁵⁸ *Violence and the Sacred*, 167.

air; it is a transformation of the antagonists' normal features. . . . If the mask is intended to conceal human faces at a fixed point in the ritual, that is because this what happened to human faces *the first time*. Masks, then, serve as an interpretation and concrete representation of phenomena that we described previously in purely theoretical terms.¹⁵⁹

The veiled description of a mimetic crisis and its resolution through a scapegoat mechanism occurs within the mythology of the culture.

As Girard analyzes modern culture in relation to primitive and traditional societies, he discusses a number of factors that complexify mimetic rivalries. These include cultural cover-ups of mimetic desire, inversions of rivalry, positions within society, diversity of rivalries, and an ability to articulate differences.

First, adults in modern society "have learned to fear and repress rivalry, at least in its crudest, most obvious and most immediately recognizable forms."¹⁶⁰ This does not mean that rivalry is diminished; rather, it is disguised in contrast to the behaviour of children, who in a room of toys will quarrel over certain toys that appear to be objects of desire.

Second, this tendency to avoid the manifestation of mimetic desire is apparent in mimetic inversions. Examples are the self effacement of politeness, shown in comic proportions by comedians, and a "mimesis of renunciation," as is evident in potlatches which can become the focus of competition.¹⁶¹ Girard also refers to a spirit of renouncing what is fashionable with the new fashion being whatever is unfashionable.¹⁶²

Third, mimetic rivalry has become more diffuse within society both because the number of

¹⁵⁹ *Things Hidden*. 167-68.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 300. Note also that in some Christian circles there can be competition over who is living the more simple life, etc.

human endeavours has been on the rise and because of the increased capacity to enter into rivalry for symbolized objects “made possible by symbolic institutions.”¹⁶³ The areas of competition “extend from artistic creation , to scientific research, to economic enterprise.”¹⁶⁴ The symbolic institutions make it possible for there to be non-lethal rivalries. In earlier societies, prohibitions were aimed at reducing rivalry but in modern societies rivalries are permitted and encouraged.¹⁶⁵

Fourth, the multitude of rivalries has decreased the possibility of one’s lot in life being determined at birth as was the case “in primitive and traditional societies.” Rather, the “unstable hierarchies of ‘merit’ and ‘success’ are established through intermediary antagonisms that are not carried through to death, at least as rule.”¹⁶⁶ In this regard, modern societies are closer to animals than primitive societies. “Primitive” societies tend to have “rigid and highly developed positional systems” whereas in contemporary society as in animal societies there is competition for the different positions, the difference being that competition is now more subtle, abstract and symbolized.¹⁶⁷

Not only does an awareness of mimetic phenomena shed light on human organization and interaction, Girard also shows how it illuminates many aspects of psychology.

Psychology

There are four areas in which Girard looks for corroboration for his hypothesis in the field of psychology; namely, psychological foundations, psychodynamics of mimetic doubling, psychodynamics

¹⁶³ *Things Hidden*, 93.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

of contemporary life, and psychopathology. In the first, Girard interacts with Freud, indicating that, like Freud, he sees the structure of desire as triangular but, unlike Freud, offers no pride of place to early childhood rivalries with parents. In the second, Girard exposes the powerful passions which can be inspired by mimetic desire as rivals become doubles of one another. In the third, Girard discusses the complexities of mimetic desire in various practical situations, particularly within an academic milieu and fields of psychology such as cybernetics. In the fourth, psychopathology, Girard shows how possession, hysteria, psychosis, sadism and masochism can be understood in terms of mimetic desire.

Girard speaks to the issue of multiple and successive Obstacles in relation to Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex which Girard sees as being solipsistic and incapable of explaining repetition of the phenomenon of mimetic desire:

The Oedipal relationships are inert. Neither Freud nor anyone else will ever be able to think them through in such a way that they react on one another to provide a positive feedback and inveigle the subject into the ever more disastrous impasse of an increasing obsessional rivalry. For this impasse to develop, the rivals must be carefully chosen precisely as a function of their invincibility—which is to say, their capacity for preventing us from reaching the objects they designate to us.¹⁶⁸

This tendency to gravitate toward a Model who will inevitably become a greater Obstacle helps to explain the phenomenon of a person moving into another class. As someone moves to a new class the rivalry with previous peers is no longer interesting. They are “above that.”

Girard points out that Freud's sense of what narcissism is all about is derived primarily from his understanding of women; Freud was inclined to see narcissism as a female problem. Girard unmasks the Freudian misconception in several ways. First, he introduces the coquette.

The coquette knows a lot more about desire than Freud does. She knows very well that desire attracts desire. So, in order to be desired, one must convince others that one desires oneself. That is how Freud defines narcissistic desire, as a desire of the self for the self.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *Things Hidden*, 358.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 370.

The coquette is playing a mimetic game and Girard uses the coquette as an example of one who is both the Model and object of desire at the same time. This, however, is not the same as a desire of the self for the self. In fact, the appearance of desiring oneself on the part of the coquette is but a lure to attract the attention of men. Freud himself was susceptible to such attraction:

What Freud gives away here, on the sexual level, is the fact that his erotically charged rivalry is directed toward the other sex. Women appear both as obstacles and as rivals. As result, the text takes on an anti-feminine character despite Freud's explicit denials. . . . At the time when he was writing on narcissism, Freud had a number of vivacious female disciples, like Hélène Deutsch and Lou Andreas-Salomé. When they failed to turn up at his seminar, he would write them letters that were ambiguous, to say the least. They, in turn, were attracted by the genius in him, the founder psychoanalysis.¹⁷⁰

Freud, by Girard's account, wishing to camouflage his own vulnerability, associated attraction with previous relationships with one's mother:

For Freud the 'true' object choice always involves some 'maternal' aspect, since the object preceding all others is the mother—or, what comes to the same thing, the *pflegend Weib*, the woman who first attends to the child. What could be less maternal, less *pflegend* than the woman with intact narcissism? The coquette is as little *pflegend* as she can possibly be. She makes fun of everyone, particularly of the man who behaves towards her like a slave and pays her the undeserved homage of his desire.¹⁷¹

Girard makes it very clear that Freud's linkage of the dynamics of narcissism to the Oedipus complex is ill founded.

There is another aspect of Freudian narcissism that Girard feels can be better explained through mimetic theory; namely, the artist's personality.

[Freud] is inclined to take too seriously what he might call the narcissistic self-advertisement of these 'artistic temperaments'. Freud legitimates this stand; he gives it a negative connotation only in his high-minded renunciation of intact narcissism. At no point does he suspect that the narcissistic stand might be an aspect of the strategies with whose aid mimetic desire contrives to conceal the fascination exerted upon artists by their potential public. To lay claim, as the artistic

¹⁷⁰ *Things Hidden*, 377.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 380.

temperament does, to an ego of inexhaustible richness is to invite others to make it the object of their desire; by implication, the ego is too self-sufficient to desire them itself, too confident of incarnating the 'beautiful totality' that has no need of anything else, the *Selbstgenügsamkeit* of Freudian narcissism.¹⁷²

This is but one instance in which Girard looks at the relationship between those whose very career and identity depend on public approval and their publics. The artist who desperately seeks public approval is like the coquette who desperately needs the approval of men. The appearance of self-sufficiency, or having a strong ego becomes an object in the mimetic game. Girard draws on Proust's Jean Santeuil to illustrate the point.

In Jean Santeuil, the hero himself occupies a place in the box; he is the sole focus of everyone's attention, the object of flattery and even adulation by all the most highly placed characters. An ex-King of Portugal is so friendly that he even rearranges Jean's tie for him. The vulgarity of the episode makes you think of present-day advertising. Use such and such a beauty product, and you will stimulate irresistible passion on all sides; crowds of admirers of both sexes will find it impossible to stay away from you.¹⁷³

The situation of Jean Santeuil is used by Girard to further illustrate the susceptibility to obsession with an obstacle on the part of those who appear to have everything going for them and encounter those not willing to show them the admiration to which they have become accustomed:

Even though desire desperately seeks to see itself in the glorious situation of Jean Santeuil, it basically occupies the depressive position, not because it is persecuted by others or by society, but because it works all that up for itself, by projecting upon the most resistant of obstacles, such as contempt or mere indifference, the mirage of the self-sufficiency that it will devote all its efforts to overcoming.¹⁷⁴

The phrase "not because it is persecuted by others" calls for a highly nuanced level of discernment. At what point does perceived persecution reveal a scapegoat victimization and at what point is it merely a victimization by one's own desire?

¹⁷² *Things Hidden*, 394.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 397.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Perhaps it is the argument for the diachronic, for the dynamic nature of desire, that Girard puts the greatest distance between himself and Freud. He sees Freud as a structuralist, accepting various structures as givens. In contrast, Girard sees desire always in flux; people are constantly reacting to one another as models, rivals and obstacles through many different feedback mechanisms. It is this mutual responsiveness that leads Girard to use the term interindividual to describe the blurring of distinctions between Self and Other. This blur becomes most complete when there is mimetic doubling.

Girard's analysis of the psychological world of doubles is distinguished by its emphasis on illusion and delusion. These come into play in the prestige attached to the double, the inveigling dynamics of mimetic rivalry, the demystification of the self sufficiency of the Other, and finally the intellectual awareness of being a victim of illusion. Besides the theme of desire as trickster, Girard describes the effects of mimetic doubling.

The intense desire which leads to doubling is preoccupied with difference. It "never aims at anything but difference and that difference always fascinates it."¹⁷⁵ This preoccupation with difference leads to the "disintegration of all differences that mimesis brings about."¹⁷⁶ The game of trying to be different, while admiring, imitating, and losing difference, creates all the conditions for illusion and delusion.

In the context of a mimetic rivalry, an object grows in value "in proportion to the resistance met with in acquiring it."¹⁷⁷ Similarly, the model becomes more prestigious as the value of the object possessed goes up: "Even if the model has no particular prestige at the outset, even if all that 'prestige' implies *praestigia*, spells and phantasmagoria—is quite unknown to the subject, the very rivalry will be

¹⁷⁵ *Things Hidden*, 391.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 295.

quite enough to bring prestige into being.”¹⁷⁸ As the prestige of the Other increases three things happen: resentment grows, illusions become more pronounced, and the presumed self-sufficiency of the double comes under attack through demystification.

Girard graphically portrays the growing intensity of mimetic doubling:

There is no way of branding this activity of demystification as intrinsically ‘good’ or ‘bad’. What we have is mimetic desire itself, gnawing away at the last vestiges of the sacrificial system inveigling everything outside its grasp into the mad whirl of doubles. The more aggravated mimetic desire becomes, the more it allows itself to be fascinated by ontological illusions, from which it has ceased to draw any benefit. That is why anything that seems to be endowed with the least stability, everything that escapes or appears to escape the structure of doubles, stirs up resentment and gives our intellectuals the demystificatory itch on which their analyses of desire are inevitably dependent.¹⁷⁹

The task of the desiring subject caught in a doubling relationship is to “convince itself that the other’s self sufficiency is just a superficial deception, something that has no right to exist.”¹⁸⁰ This need to elevate oneself by depreciating the other demands that the Other be convinced that their sense of well being is unfounded. This task of disenchanting and demystifying the Other amounts to “persuading him that he has no reason to believe in his own happiness.”¹⁸¹ Or, in other words, the “other is a victim of mystification and he must be demystified at all costs.”¹⁸² The demystificatory desire associated with doubling may give rise to revolutionary movements which may become “uniformly oppressive.”¹⁸³

As the object becomes more inaccessible, the negative feelings on the part of the subject caught up in metaphysical desire become more intense. Girard describes the experience as a “violent rancour”

¹⁷⁸ *Things Hidden*, 295.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 379.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 379.

directed towards the object. With time, “this most advanced mimetic desire realizes that it is the victim of an illusion. But this will be no more than an intellectual awareness, an abstract form of disillusionment that will not liberate its victims from the traps still being laid by desire the strategist, who exploits every appearance of indifference, whether real or imaginary.”¹⁸⁴ What this suggests is that at an illogical level people can become trapped by their mimetic doubles even if they know at a conscious level that what has drawn them to their object of desire is nothing but vanity.

The sense of internal struggle caused by awareness and desire being at odds may be at the heart of a primary evolutionary leap in human consciousness. Girard puts it this way:

Our hypothesis makes it logical to imagine that the rigorous symmetry between the mimetic partners (which results in the paroxysm of rivalry that is in itself sterile and destructive but becomes fruitful to the extent that ritual retraces it in a spirit of fear and solidarity) must bring about two things among man’s ancestors, little by little: the ability to look at the other person, the mimetic *double*, as an *alter ego* and the matching capacity to establish a *double* inside oneself, through processes like reflection and consciousness.¹⁸⁵

Thus, from a psychological perspective, mimetic doubling can lead to frustration, violence and some form of “putting down” one’s double; an awareness of the negative side effects and a personal sense of dis-illusionment can lead to a more profound sense of Self.

Within the modern world Girard notes that there are two opposing groups of people around the issue of desire. The distinction between the two is derived from the attitude toward those aspects of culture which have tended to limit the spread of desire: laws, customs and prohibitions. Those who fear the spread of desire are the reactionaries who wish to see traditional values reinforced: they wish to see the containment of desire. The revolutionaries who see traditional laws and prohibitions as unnecessary limits on human freedom wish to see desire given freer rein. They

¹⁸⁴ *Things Hidden*, 378.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 284. This resonates with Ricoeur’s concept of an ontological dialectic between Self and conscience in *Oneself as Another*, 341-355.

still fondly imagine that their discomfort and unease is a product of the strait-jacket that religious taboos, cultural prohibitions and, in our day, even the legal forms of protection guaranteed by the judiciary system place upon desire. They think that once this confinement is over, desire will be able to blossom forth; its wonderful innocence will finally be able to bear fruit.¹⁸⁶

Girard sees problems with both positions. Modern society seems capable of absorbing increasingly high levels of desire without that desire prompting a crisis; hence, the fears of the reactionaries are exaggerated. On the other hand, the wanton pursuit of desire can be “ultimately disappointing” or may end in “sterile conflict and anarchic confusion, with a corresponding increase in the sense of anguish.”¹⁸⁷

What Girard finds missing in current thought is a satisfactory perspective regarding the role of any variety of prohibitions. What drives desire is not the “mystique of transgression,” as Lacan and others have suggested. Rather, it is mimetic rivalry that drives desire with prohibitions being developed to contain or limit mimetic contagion. In more traditional eras, prohibitions were developed in conjunction with the resolution of mimetic crises. On the macro level the modern world can absorb a tremendous amount of desire, on the individual micro level there is “acute mimetic rivalry with the other that occurs in all the circumstances we call ‘private’, ranging from eroticism to professional or intellectual ambition.”¹⁸⁸ While on the individual level these may be stabilized, there is not the community wide catharsis that comes with some form of scapegoating. Hence, Girard implies, there is not a context for the generation of community wide prohibitions which are seen to solve a widely shared sense of mimetic crisis.

One of the factors in this tendency of modernity to absorb desire or undifferentiation is the fact that individuals “are no longer defined by the place they occupy by virtue of their birth or some other

¹⁸⁶ *Things Hidden*, 285.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 288.

stable and arbitrary factor.”¹⁸⁹ Competition is, like desire, unbounded, since “everything rests upon comparisons that are necessarily unstable and insecure, since there are no longer any fixed points of reference.”¹⁹⁰ In this context people have a radical dependence on others and passionately desire the admiration of others. This is exemplified by the how to manuals of “success in love and business, etc.” which have the same recipe; namely “all you require for success is to give the impression that you have it already.”¹⁹¹ A second related point is that desire tends to cluster “around intact narcissism and gets poorer and poorer in the process . . . money is only let to the wealthy, and desire always pursues desire, just as money pursues money.”¹⁹²

There are particular groups of people for whom desire functions in particular ways in this modern culture: intellectuals, artists, leaders and children. Among intellectuals, there are three significant trends. The first is the fear of being regarded as naive or submissive. The mimetic game is to become the “freest thinker” or the most radical.¹⁹³ The second is that it becomes fashionable to be out of fashion which becomes a new fashion. Intellectual life seems endangered as “gurus follow one another more and more rapidly” fashion accelerates and “fashion itself goes out of fashion.”¹⁹⁴ A third phenomenon is that as an intellectual leader, a teacher is delighted in being a model, if the “imitation is too perfect, and the imitator threatens to surpass the model, the master will completely change his

¹⁸⁹ *Things Hidden*, 307.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Observation of Jean-Michel Oughourlian, *ibid.*, 309.

¹⁹² Observation of Guy Lefort, *ibid.*, 376.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹⁹⁴ Observation of Jean-Michel Oughourlian, *ibid.*, 300.

attitude and begin to display jealousy, mistrust and hostility.”¹⁹⁵

For performing, literary and visual artists, and others who “depend most directly on the judgements of others in their most brutal and arbitrary and least subtle forms” there is an increased susceptibility to psychopathological states.¹⁹⁶ Among these are manic-depression, which involves a “passionate desire for the admiration of others.”¹⁹⁷ Political leaders share in this susceptibility; they also experience the psychoanalytic phenomenon of ambivalence:

This so-called ambivalence consists first of all in attributing excessive responsibility for currents of public opinion and sentiment to figures who have been artificially isolated or placed in the spotlight. Without such symbolic individuality it would be impossible for collective movements to crystallize or achieve any self-awareness, a process that never occurs without a certain inversion of roles in the relation between the collectivity and the individual, between the active element and the passive subject.¹⁹⁸

This tendency for group identity to be wrapped up in that of a particular individual parallels the literary capacity to communicate ideas through the tropes of metonymy and synecdoche.

Within this modern context in which prohibitions have lost their power to function in the same way they functioned in traditional society and in which rivalries are not arbitrarily confined to groupings based on birth or arbitrary distinctions, children are confused. Indeed,

[t]he child is in no position to distinguish between non-acquisitive forms of behaviour—those that are good to imitate—and acquisitive forms, which give rise to rivalry. In fact 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.¹⁹⁹

This lack of clarity about mimesis leaves children and youth open to the contagion of trends emanating

¹⁹⁵ *Things Hidden*, 290.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 37. This point will resonate with the analyses of the relationship between leader and community made by social psychologists. .

from mass media and, in particular, a tendency to identify with the icons of popular culture.

If the modern world is generating an ever greater capacity for *diffuse* undifferentiation, the specific cases of psychopathology can be characterized as extreme cases of undifferentiation which are highly *focused* in an individual. This means that for Girard, psychopathology takes place primarily in the world of doubles.

Girard gives the relationship of mimetic doubles its clearest description in the context of talking about psychopathology:

Everything that one of the partners to violence experiences, thinks about, or carries into action at a given moment, will sooner or later become observable in the other partner. In the last analysis, there is nothing that can be said of any one partner that must not be said about all partners without exception. There is no longer any way of differentiating the partners from one another. This is what I call the relationship of *doubles*.²⁰⁰

This relationship of doubles ends up generating “deep-rooted rivalries” in which neutrality is impossible:

There are only those who dominate and those who are dominated. Since the meaning of the relationship rests neither on brute force nor on any form of external constraint, it can never achieve stability; it is played and replayed in terms of relationships that the onlooker could well believe to be without any significance. Each time he dominates or thinks he is dominating his rival, the subject believes himself to be at the centre of a perceptual field; when his rival has the upper hand, the situation reverses. More and more often, and for longer and longer, this rival does or seems to carry the day. So there is an inbuilt tendency for depression increasingly to overtake the initial mimetic euphoria.²⁰¹

Girard also sees an element of the Sacred in the violence which separates and unites the doubles. There is an oscillation between seeing oneself as “the one and only god, who sees everything converge on him and kneel before him, and the puny, speechless, trembling creature at the feet of this god, who has

¹⁹⁹ *Things Hidden*, 290.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 299.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 305.

mysteriously taken up residence with the other person, the rival and model for desire.”²⁰²

One of the more famous instances of doubles which Girard analyzes is the relationship between Nietzsche and Wagner:

If we read chronologically, we can see the moment when the “ambivalent” but still “rational” response to the model as obstacle and the obstacle as model gives way to the nightmarish “identity crisis” and “megalomania” that characterize the last stages. . . . He is dispossessed of his own self and he tries more and more desperately to fill the vacuum not only with the elusive Richard Wagner but with whatever historical or mythological models happen to strike his fancy. . . . In Nietzsche’s last notes, the name of Richard Wagner appears once more in a [triangular] configuration. The other two names are those of Wagner’s wife, Cosima, and of Nietzsche himself. . . . The possession of divinity and the possession of the woman go together.²⁰³

This reference to divinity coincides with the language of idolatry, which Girard also uses in connection with the relationship of doubles.²⁰⁴

Within this context of extreme preoccupation with one’s double a subject can feel a “radical inadequacy.” The model with a jealously guarded object seems self-sufficient and omniscient. The object becomes more desired than ever. It “appears super abundantly real.”²⁰⁵ To describe this sense of something unreal taking on great significance, Girard uses the philosophical term “metaphysical.”

The generation of metaphysical desire in the context of doubles is itself a function of interpretation. The specific interpretations, which lead ultimately to psychopathology, begin with “forms of misapprehension generated by mimetic interferences with human needs and appetites.”²⁰⁶ This skewing of perceived needs is then subject to a “process of aggravation and escalation” which leads

²⁰² *Things Hidden*. 305.

²⁰³ “To double business bound . . .”, 63-64.

²⁰⁴ e.g. Ibid. 48 - “Everywhere we repeatedly uncover the delirious exchange with the same monstrous idol...”

²⁰⁵ *Things Hidden*. 296.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 289.

“toward ever more pathological forms of desire; these forms constitute new interpretations.”²⁰⁷

What can be seen in extreme forms in psychopathology is evident in more subtle and moderate forms within capitalist society where

[e]verything that brings me up brings down my competitors; everything that brings them up brings me down. In a society where the place of individuals is not determined in advance and hierarchies have been obliterated, people are endlessly preoccupied with making a destiny for themselves, with ‘imposing’ themselves on others, ‘distinguishing’ themselves from the common herd—in a word, with ‘making a career’.²⁰⁸

This can have the effect of democratizing and vulgarizing “what we call neuroses, which are always linked, in [Girard’s] view, to the reinforcement of mimetic competition and the ‘metaphysical’ aspect of the related tensions.”²⁰⁹

The upward spiral of mimetic desires moves inexorably to violence. As a model desire is turned into one that frustrates that of the subject, “[b]ecause he does not understand the automatic character of the rivalry, the imitator soon converts the very fact of being opposed, frustrated and rejected into the major stimulant of his desire. In one way or another, he proceeds to inject more and more violence into his desire.”²¹⁰ Girard concludes that, “in the last resort, desire tends towards death, both the death of the model and obstacle (murder) and the death of the subject himself (self-destruction and suicide). This dynamic of mimetic desire does not operate only in those who are ‘sick’, in those who push the mimetic process too far to be able to function normally; it is also, as Freud acknowledged, a feature of the people we call ‘normal’.”²¹¹ We turn our attention now to a few examples from the Bible.

²⁰⁷ *Things Hidden*, 289.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Things Hidden*, 413.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

The Bible

We will limit our examples at this point to Job and the Psalmist of Psalm 23. Other biblical material will be included in chapter 6. Girard sees Job as first a mimetic rival to his peers and second as the victim of attempted scapegoating. In the following description of the original relationship, Girard makes clear the principle that mimetic desire increases with the degree to which people identify with one another:

*The absence of social distance encourages reciprocal imitation among equals. Job becomes identified with his success, so that to desire the same success is to desire Job himself, the incomparable being of Job. This identification is eminently competitive, and therefore ambivalent from the outset. "Among his own class, Job has only rivals who are trying to outstrip him. They all want to become the same sort of uncrowned king that he was. (Italics mine.)"*²¹²

But this informal "royalty" provoked jealousy and "Nietzschean resentment" which in turn led to a fascination which turned into "implacable hatred, a hatred that it already contains within itself. The type of fascination, full of hatred, that is apparent in almost all the speeches of the 'friends' thrives among men who are social equals."²¹³ In this case, the mimetic model becomes the potential scapegoat. The feedback loop which increases the intensity of the passion takes place, not only between subject and model but also on the group level between the elite (represented by the "friends") and the crowd—"there is no fundamental difference between the mimesis of sacrificial substitution and the mimesis of the friends' envy. The crowd merely follows upon and amplifies the successive reactions of the elite, and to a certain degree, the reverse is true as well."²¹⁴ Girard posits that there was a "hidden growth of envy that waited for direct expression until his first mistake, some incident that could be cleverly

²¹² Job, 50.

²¹³ Job, 50.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 51.

exploited to ruin Job's popularity among the people."²¹⁵ Job's sudden losses of family and possessions indicated to his friends that he must have sinned; this presumed sin would legitimate a victimization process that started with the accusations and could well have led to his permanent expulsion from the community.

Girard uses the Job story to highlight several other dynamics of mimetic desire. The first is expressed in the metaphor of a mountain torrent which is never flowing at a satisfactory rate. At one moment there is too much water and for most of the year there is not enough. "The two unanimities that make of Job alternately an idol and a scapegoat correspond to the spring flood and the total drought."²¹⁶ There is in mimetism an absence of moderation. Furthermore, "what is diabolical about the torrent is its cyclical nature—the promise it keeps, but always too late, of providing men with what they are deprived of all year long. By periodically reversing its gifts and its refusals, it perpetually keeps alive unsatisfied desires."²¹⁷

Girard sees this mountain torrent aspect of mimetism within the contemporary world:

In a society ruled by mimetic desire, everyone shares in making existence as barren as the desert, but no one is aware of it. . . . Immense regions of the planet have been transformed into deserts by the uses desire-driven men have made of them. The more the desert stretches within us and beyond us, the more we are tempted to blame reality or God himself or, worse still, our neighbour, the first Job who comes along.²¹⁸

In this context of fair weather friends and general alienation both parented by mimetic desire, Girard associates true friendship with a spirit of independence and courage: "Only a very strong resistance to mimetic contagion can safeguard that independence. All mimetic sentiments are of a kind. Stupid fads

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 62.

²¹⁷ *Job*, 63.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 65.

of fashion result in the fierce exclusion of scapegoats. Immunity to mimesis is a very rare and precious quality.”²¹⁹ Admitting that his argument about envy directed toward Job as “somewhat conjectural,” Girard turns to Psalm 73 for an explicit presentation of mimetic envy.

Even though Girard views the bulk of biblical material reflecting the reality of victims, he finds in Psalm 73 the perspective of a persecutor totally caught up in mimetic desire for the benefits of the “Wicked:”

My feet were on the point of stumbling,
a little further and I should have slipped,
envying the arrogant as I did,
and watching the wicked get rich.

For them, no such thing as pain,
their bodies are healthy and strong,
they do not suffer as other men do,
no human afflictions for them!²²⁰

These “Wicked” eventually come to their end to the delight of the “Righteous” who “is very clear about the element of envy in his positive imitation, but when that envy becomes more intense as a result of the obstacle—the scandal—of the triumph of the ‘Wicked’, this imitation turns to hatred and is no longer recognized as such by the Righteous.”²²¹

We will now summarize the key insights drawn from this overview of examples from the Girardian corpus.

Conclusion: Mimetic Phenomena and Deep-Rooted Conflict

The starting point for understanding deep-rooted conflict is that it is about identity, specifically finding and maintaining satisfiers to identity needs. While human identity needs are universal categories,

²¹⁹ Ibid., 61.

²²⁰ *Job*, 55.

²²¹ Ibid., 57.

the satisfiers of these needs for any particular group are contingent on values, culture and the particular historical situation. Reflecting on the heuristic potential of mimetic theory, it becomes clear that the satisfiers to human needs are defined mimetically and are themselves objects of mimetic desire. This becomes clear as we look at specific need categories. For example, what is an adequate satisfier for the need for recognition is mimetically determined. Often people are only satisfied if they get more recognition than others with whom they identify, especially if they feel that their accomplishment is more significant. Conversely if someone gets recognition, another person or group will desire similar recognition. Satisfying the need for security is frequently a matter of mimetic rivalry; this is clear whenever there is an “arms race.” There is also the question of what might constitute a sufficient threat to need satisfiers such that people will fight. Mimetic theory suggests that if the threat comes from a mimetic rival or double, violence is much more likely. Since mimetic desire is a diachronic structure, it is only as we examine the build up of a conflict over time that the mimetic desire for need satisfiers and mimetic rivalries for such satisfiers will be more adequately illustrated. This will happen in chapter five.

At a secondary level, the other theoretical frameworks for understanding some aspects of deep-rooted conflict can be better understood in the light of mimetic theory. The realist position that people are in competition for power can be understood as one aspect of mimetic rivalry, which is far more pervasive than even the realists could imagine. The tendency for people to turn to their ethnonational groups when the “chips are down,” takes place in the context of a rivalry over the identity needs of a group in rivalry with another. Very often these rivalries take place between ethnonational groups which are closely related: e.g., Arabs and Israelis are Semitic peoples; “Protestant” and “Catholic” groups in Northern Ireland are citizens of the same country; Serbians and Croats have similar languages and cultures; Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi have been closely related. This exemplifies Girard’s observation that rivalries intensify as people are able to identify with one another. This latter dimension

of mimetic theory helps to understand the dynamics of hegemonic structures. When the structures are intact, rivalries tend to take place between various oppressed groups and within the dominant groups. If the structures are called into question such that people from the oppressed groups can imagine themselves to be like the oppressors a competition between the oppressed and oppressors may ensue. It is clear from some of the interviews with terrorists who were victimized in their youth, that the violence they perpetrate is mimetic of the violence they suffered. The intensifiers of violence identified by Staub can be seen as intensifiers of the various types of mimetic violence. What is even more important than synchronic structural affinities between mimetic phenomena and the methodologies derived from these theories, is the insistence of Girard that mimetic structures are operative through time. In that regard they can only be understood within some kind of a narrative context. It is the understanding of how resentment and rivalries grow through time that Girardian theory helps to explain how the various dimensions of deep-rooted conflict brought to light by the above theories come to be.

Besides the basic scenario of mimetic desire, prompting mimetic rivalries and mimetic doubling, René Girard suggests a number of dynamics of mimetic phenomena which could also apply to deep-rooted conflict. Specifically, one can discern patterns of what intensifies mimetic phenomena, the relative roles of different individuals and groups within mimetic triangles, the role of the object of desire, the nature of hypermimetic individuals, and some of the dynamic changes that take place within mimetic relationships. We will summarize each of these.

There are a number of factors which contribute to the intensification of mimetic desire, and deep-rooted conflict. Mimetic desire increases with the perceived value of the object and the more people identify with one another, i.e., people of the same identity group, childhood friends, siblings. Where relationships are close, there is internal mediation; where distant, external mediation. Internal mediation may lead to deep-rooted conflict. Mimetic desire increases also through feedback loops.

Finally, mimetic desire and deep-rooted conflict are more intense within a closed system.

The relative roles of people may change from one situation to another. Mimetic desire and doubling may be asymmetrical, with one party more caught up in mimetic desire than the other. It may be balanced as is the case with double mediation where both parties feed off of the others desires. There may be mimetic chains where A desires what B has, B desires something of C, etc. Models may become Obstacles and Obstacles may become Models and Rivals. Mimetic desire can be artificially activated by a third party. People can play the roles of object, model, obstacle and rival at the same time. Leaders try to make themselves objects of mimetic desire. Within movements there is a tendency for group identity to crystallize around a leader who needs the adulation of the group just as the group needs somebody to embody their ideals. There is external mediation between leader and group who can develop internal mediation with a rival leader and group. Mimetic desire in its pathological expression results in a strict dichotomy between those who dominate and those who are dominated. In mimetic doubling, at the extreme end of the spectrum of intensity, there is oscillation between seeing oneself as a god or the puny, speechless, trembling creature at the feet of this god. In some situations, the people involved become hypermimetic. Hypermimetic people interpret situations in ways with the worst implications for themselves. Hypermimetic individuals absorb the mimetic desire of others developing a narcissistic pride. In a hypermimetic world, the value of people is measured by their visibility.

Regarding objects of desire, the initial object of desire decreases in importance as rivalry and doubling set in. People search for objects which are increasingly inaccessible—either objects are more valuable or Model/Obstacles have greater prestige.

The dynamics of mimetic phenomena are generally fluid and subject to kaleidoscopic changes. Through mimetic inversion people can compete for an inverse value system such as giving or letting the other go first. They look for increasingly challenging obstacles and try to emphasize difference while at

the same time losing difference. Mimetic doubling is associated with chaos. Mimetic desire can skew the interpretation of what might satisfy human needs. It can take over identity, turn to hatred and then use anything to legitimate and camouflage the desire.

We will now turn our attention to scapegoating and the violence of differentiation.

Chapter 3

Scapegoat Victimization and the Origins of Culture

"Camus's *Stranger* Retried," first published in 1964, comes at a turning point in Girard's career. While still concentrating on themes of desire, it introduces the theme of the innocent murderer (Meursault) who ends up being sentenced. Like Dostoevski's underground man, Meursault says: "I am alone and they are together."¹ This formulation anticipates, from the victim's perspective, the evolution of scapegoat theory, first presented in *La Violence et le sacré* published in 1972. The link between scapegoating and hominization was developed in *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*; the characteristics of scapegoat phenomena were further synthesized in *Le bouc émissaire*, and the theory became more finely nuanced in *La route antique des hommes pervers*.

The essence of scapegoat theory is that when mimetic rivalry and doubling embroil a community, pushing it to the brink of runaway reciprocal violence, a scapegoat is found. All of the violence of the community is poured onto the scapegoat, a surrogate victim for all the potential victims in the various rivalries. This projection of violence onto an alternate victim is hidden to those involved in it. After the scapegoating, which in its original classical form involved the murder of the victim by a mob, the community is united, reconciled and at peace. Eventually the victim becomes associated with this final peace and is deified. Taboos are put in place to avoid the crisis and sacrificial systems are developed to re-create the sense of unity, which existed after the founding murder of the culture.

It has already been noted that mimesis is an important part of animal and human life and that

¹ "To double business bound . . .", 22.

the emergence of mimetic desire is a distinguishing feature of humanity. It can, and does, but need not, result in envy, jealousy, hatred and violence. Given the human malaise around mimetic desire, for Girard, “the purpose of the scapegoat is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.”² The need for sacrifice comes from “all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies and quarrels within the community.”³ With his scapegoat hypothesis, Girard claims to have made a significant contribution to our understanding of hominization and the emergence of culture. While at one level, the structure⁴ of scapegoat victimization can be understood as a structure of contemporary human interaction, the depth and drama of the concept are enhanced if it is linked to the very beginnings of human culture. Viewed in this way, its structure is part of the essence of humanity in both its genesis and ubiquity.

After showing how Girard links this structure to the origin of culture, we will explore sacrificial myths and rituals as a means of preserving community unity. This will lead to discussions of the characteristics of the scapegoat as a polythetic class, and some Girardian observations on characteristics of those who scapegoat. We will then examine scapegoat victimization as a response to a sacrificial crisis followed by an explanation of the various dynamics of the scapegoat mechanism. This will lead to an analysis of permutations of the scapegoat mechanism. Taking the analysis to another level, I will present a synthesis of Girard’s concept of structure and look at mimetic and scapegoat phenomena as the interaction of structures.

² *Violence and the Sacred*, 8.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Within the Girardian corpus, “structure” has two very different connotations. When talking about structuralism, Girard is critical of the synchronic structures used to interpret reality; he has, however, his own sense of diachronic structures or patterns of human action and interaction.

The Scapegoat Mechanism and the Origin of Culture

As Girard developed his understanding of the scapegoat mechanism and sacrificial systems, he began to speculate that an initial scapegoat murder took place at the origin of culture, that scapegoating was an essential step in hominization. He developed a mimetic anthropology which concluded that a foundational murder is the “hypothetical resolution” of mimetic crises.⁵ The traces of these ancient murders can be found in myths and rituals; further evidence is adduced from the ubiquitous patterns of violence.

All over the world, when sacrificers are asked why they perform sacrifices, their justification is the same as that of Brutus: they must do again what their ancestors did when the community was founded; they must repeat some foundational violence with substitute victims. Just like Brutus, they invoke some ancient narrative that explicitly or implicitly culminates in a collective expulsion or murder. We call these *myths*, and most anthropologists regard them as fictional, but the sacrificers do not. They view them as real historical beginnings that must be piously reenacted.⁶

Girard’s hypothesis concerning the scapegoat murder which founded human culture is based on an examination of many myths and rituals. We will synthesize his reconstruction and then look at a number of examples which he has analysed.

A reconstruction of Girard’s hypothesis is as follows:

When mimetic rivalry, doubling and violence permeated a community, there was a sense of crisis in the air. There was also a fear that reciprocal lethal violence could destroy the community from within. At this time of crisis, someone within the community did something to raise the ire of the community. Violence directed toward this individual spread in a contagious instant to all the members of the community. As one, they acted to destroy this individual. All the latent violence, which had been directed toward rivals and doubles, was focused on one person who became the scapegoat victim who was killed by all. Such

⁵ *Theatre of Envy*, 203.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

was the first enactment of the structure of the scapegoat mechanism.

With the first lynching, the feeling in the crowd immediately after was one of complete peace and reconciliation. The violence had dissipated. A sense of bonding and connectedness returned. The culture of the community started to take shape. Given the tacit awareness that the violence resulted from mimetic desire, cultural structures were put in place to prevent another crisis. These structures took the form of myth, ritual, and taboo. Certain things which were likely to be objects of mimetic desire were placed out of bounds for community members.

The cadaver left at the end of this genetic murder became associated with the feeling of peace and reconciliation; the victim became reified, and, perhaps deified—so powerful was the effect of the death. A mythology was developed with a careful mix of disclosure and hiddenness. There was a certain ambivalence about the victim. On the one hand, the victim was a hero for having saved the community. On the other hand, the hero was a villain and was killed. The mythology alluded to the expulsion or death of a hero while making cryptic the original faults of the hero villain and the community's complicity in the murder. In order to continue to restore the feeling of peace within the community, sacrificial rituals were developed to complement the mythology.

Girard has detected this pattern of the scapegoat mechanism in many myths from around the world and argues that there was an original murder at the origin of human culture. For him it is important for there to have been a referent upon which each myth was based. For example, the story of Cain and Abel, while written in a mythic genre, must be rooted in an actual prehistoric killing.⁷ Furthermore, because of the positive effects of the victimization, the victim is rendered sacred (root meaning of "sacrifice" is to *make sacred*). There is a mystique associated with the sacrificed victim such that the origins of culture take on a religious character. The sense of crisis before the sacrificial

⁷ This was Girard's emphasis at the June, 1994 gathering of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion in which he argued by analogy that the court records of the Dreyfus Affair pointed to an actual incident.

act may well be interpreted as the anger of the god(s).⁸ The sacrifice and the sense of peace thereafter might be interpreted as an appeasement of the god(s). For Girard, the sense of awe associated with the feelings of peace in the wake of violence introduce a sense of the Sacred to humanity.

Because the scapegoat victimization and its specific expression through myth, ritual and prohibitions are sacred to a given community, these cultural structures become an important part of the identity of the people in a given tribal unit. After all, they are rooted in a crisis experience which called into question the very survival of the community. There is a sense that the violation of the prohibitions or the sacrilege of ritual will jeopardize their future survival. Both articulated and tacit prohibitions are woven into the culture in such a way that those living in the culture are unaware of the connection.

There are two distinct ways in which the victimage mechanism functions. First it functions through scapegoating to deal with a crisis of violence; the violence of all is poured onto the surrogate victim. Second, it functions through sacrificial rituals which are devised to maintain peace within the community through regular acts of sacred violence poured onto a sacrificial victim to purge the community of its violence. When the rituals are no longer effective, a community again gets itself into a sacrificial crisis in which the violence driven by mimetic desire can no longer be dissipated and a new form of scapegoating emerges. In any emergent community which experiences mimetic rivalries and the potential for reciprocal violence, a scapegoat mechanism is as likely as a nuclear chain reaction when a critical mass of plutonium is present.

⁸ For an examination of some of the issues related to this concept within the Christian tradition see Raymund SCHWAGER, "The Theology of the Wrath of God," *Violence and Truth*, ed. Paul DUMOUCHEL (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 44-52.

Girard abducts his proposition that a scapegoat murder stands at the beginning of culture from the observation that an “extraordinary number of commemorative rites . . . have to do with killing.”⁹ That sacrificial myths and rituals extant refer to an ancient reality becomes more credulous with the observation that “[p]rimitive people regard their cultural tradition as a fragile and precious inheritance to be carefully nurtured and protected from any change, for change could only serve to damage it, perhaps mortally.”¹⁰ We will examine some of the evidence Girard has analysed.

The first example is from Greece where

[a]t Troezen, in the peribolos of the temple of Hippolytos, the death of the foreign goddesses Damia and Auxesia was commemorated by an annual festival, the *lithobolia*. According to tradition, the two virgin goddesses from Crete were stoned to death in the course of an uprising. These foreigners represent *the* foreigner, the passerby who often plays a role in the harvest festivals; and the lapidation is a sacrificial rite.¹¹

Also from Greece are the rites involving the pharmakoi, “unfortunate souls,” maintained in Athens “at public expense, for appointed times as well as in certain emergencies.” At the threat of “plague, famine, foreign invasion, or internal dissension—there was always a pharmakos at the disposal of the community” for human sacrifice.¹²

Behind the Athenian pharmakos, behind the Oedipus myth, there is real violence at work, reciprocal violence brought to an end by the unanimous slaughter of the surrogate victim. In almost every case the enthronement or renewal rituals—and in some cases the actual, definitive death of the monarch—are accompanied by mock combats between two factions. These ritual confrontations, sometimes enlisting the participation of the whole community, recall the chaos and factionalism whose only cure lies in the surrogate victim.¹³

⁹ *Violence and the Sacred*, 92.

¹⁰ *Violence and the Sacred*, 120.

¹¹ Henri HUBERT and Marcel MAUSS, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, trans. W. D. HALLS (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 83 quoted in *Violence and the Sacred*, 94.

¹² *Violence and the Sacred*, 94.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 109.

For Girard, these rituals hark back to a distant past in which there was an original scapegoat murder which brought a community together.

Girard further refers to Greek legends which contain human sacrifices “offered by a community, city, or army to some god.” He suggests that an understanding of these references comes about by reversing the order:

First comes the violence, spontaneous and senseless; then comes the sacrificial explanation, genuinely sacrificial in that it conceals the senseless and basically intolerable aspect of the violence. The sacrificial explanation is rooted in an act of terminal violence, violence that can only be labelled sacrificial retrospectively, because it brought all hostilities to an end.¹⁴

As evidence that this original generative violence “constitutes at least the indirect origin of all those things that men hold most dear and that they strive most ardently to preserve,” Girard points to the “veiled and transfigured manner,” by which etiological myths “deal with the murder of one mythological character by other mythological characters.”¹⁵

Among the examples he cites are the founding of Rome through the murder of Remus and the ascendancy of his brother Romulus. Livy says of Remus that *In turba cecidit*—he fell into a mob.¹⁶ Cain, in the biblical account, was the first to build cities; he did this after killing Abel. The five Ojibway clans have totems coming from six “anthropomorphic supernatural beings” one of whom was “caused to return to the bosom of the great water” because his glance was powerful enough to kill people.¹⁷ The staple foods of the Tikopian people were dropped from the hands of a

¹⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 124.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁶ *Theater of Envy*, 203.

¹⁷ *Things Hidden*, 105-6.

foreign being who stole the foods from the table and then was chased away.¹⁸

Girard sees in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* one of the most poignant developments of the theme of the foundational murder. His argument is based on first, historical background; second, the placement of the murder within the play; third, the threefold scapegoating; and fourth, the illustration, within the play, of sacrificial cycles.

First, regarding the historical phenomenon, Girard observes that

[d]uring the Roman Empire, sacrifices were truly offered to each emperor in turn, but since all of them were named Caesar, they were really offered to the same eternal caesar, reborn in all his successors. Each new emperor reincarnated the initially sacrificed divinity. As in all sacred monarchies, the founding victim was always simultaneously dead and alive.¹⁹

Looking at the play in the light of this historical background, Girard posits that the killing of Julius Caesar goes to the "heart of tragedy" which he regards as the foundational murder; making it the "first and only tragedy that focuses on this murder itself and nothing else."²⁰

That this is the focus of the play can be seen, second, from the fact that the murder takes place right at the center of the play instead of at the end. The play, for Girard, is centered

neither on Caesar nor on his murderers; it is not a play about Roman history but about collective violence itself. In order to grasp its unity, we must realize that its real subject is the violent crowd. *Julius Caesar* is the play in which the violent essence of the theater and of human culture itself is revealed. Shakespeare is the first tragic poet and thinker who focuses relentlessly on the foundational murder.²¹

Third, the thematic nature of scapegoat violence is apparent, for Girard, in the multiplicity of scapegoats. When considering the "murder of Caesar, the lynching of the unfortunate Cinna, and the

¹⁸ *Things Hidden*, 106.

¹⁹ *Theater of Envy*, 221.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 223.

²¹ *Ibid.*

expulsion of Tarquin” there are three examples of collective violence within the play.²² Caesar’s murder is the most significant as it starts with disorder and becomes a “symbol of order, the original sacrifice from which real Rome shall suck reviving blood. There is not one thing in this play that does not lead to the murder or that does not proceed from it.”²³

Finally, Girard sees in the play the exemplification of sacrificial cycles, each of which starts with a sacrificial crisis and scapegoat murder. Each cycle “endures until the sacred power of the foundation has evaporated.”²⁴ These cycles mark distinctive historical periods within cultures. Julius Caesar shows the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Empire.

In the various cultures the form of death or expulsion marking the beginning of a sacrificial cycle changes.

If a human group has a cliff at its disposal, the cliff may be used. If it has a lake, you have the Ojibwa situation. If it has neither cliffs nor lakes, it probably has stones, and the victim will be stoned. If it does not have stones, it may have trees, and the victim will be hanged or crucified, etc.²⁵

This initial violence “might well be radically generative” in that, by ending a destructive cycle of violence, it begins a “constructive cycle, that of the sacrificial rite—which protects the community from that same violence and allows culture to flourish.”²⁶ Having described Girard’s hypothesis that the victimage mechanism is at the beginning of human culture, we will now turn our attention to the sacrificial systems at the heart of many cultures he has analysed.

²² *Theater of Envy*. 223.

²³ *Ibid.*, 224.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Things Hidden*. 108.

²⁶ *Violence and the Sacred*. 93.

Sacrificial Systems

According to Girard, after an incident of sacrificial victimization, there will be peace for a time, but later the community will have to confront a new round of mimetic rivalries with the concomitant potential of reciprocal violence. In order to prevent another mimetic crisis, violence within the community can be dealt with through rituals involving a sacrificial victim. There are two aspects to sacrificial victimage. The first is the act of sacred violence which becomes entrenched in culture in the form of ritual sacrifices. The second is the aspect of differentiation. Within culture the notion of sacred means that those associated with the power to achieve harmony through leadership or through victimage are associated with particular powers (the Sacred). They acquire a status such that they are in the community but yet somehow differentiated.

Remembering the efficacy of the sacrificial victimization, the community, in Girard's scheme develops a sacrificial ritual. The ritual is an attempt to "produce a replica, as faithful as possible in every detail of a previous crisis that was resolved by means of a spontaneously unanimous victimization."²⁷ This victimization was made possible through the elimination of differences in mimetic doubling; it is the interchangeability of doubles "that makes possible the act of sacrificial substitution."²⁸

Girard sees myth and ritual integrally related.²⁹ It is myth that grounds ritual in a meaning system without which it would be devoid of power and it is ritual that provides the means by which the positive effects of community reconciliation can be achieved. Myth and ritual both help to set

²⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 94.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

out the identity of individuals and groups. We will look first at the variety of sacrificial victims which Girard has analyzed and then examine their function. This will be followed by a synthesis of key features of myth, including Greek tragedy as a variation on the theme.

It is the capacity for interchangeable substitution that makes sacrificial rituals possible. There are a variety of substitutions evident in different cultures. They include the following:

1. A human sacrifice can be offered. The classic example of a human sacrifice imbedded in culture is that of the Greek *pharmakos* who was honoured for healing powers but was sacrificed or expelled at a time of crisis.³⁰ When not literally killed, he could be whipped on the genitals.³¹

2. A surrogate animal which resembles the community and is close to the community can be sacrificed. Quoting the work of Joseph de Maistre, Girard emphasizes that animal victims are the most *human* in nature.³² For example, among the Nuer and the Dinka of the Upper Nile, society was structured around, and in the same fashion as, cattle. "The cattle are thereby differentiated in such a way as to create a scale of values which approximates human distinctions and represents a virtual duplicate of human society. Among the names bestowed on each man is one that also belongs to the animal whose place in the herd is most similar to the place the man occupies in the tribe."³³ Given this phenomenon the designation of cattle and sheep as "clean," that is capable of being sacrificed, by the pastoral ancient Israelites takes on additional meaning.

3. The sacrificial ritual can be carried out symbolically on a real person. For example, in one

³⁰ *Violence and the Sacred*, 95.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 95, 288. Note that the related word *pharmakon* meant both poison and remedy.

³² *Violence and the Sacred*, 3. drawing on Joseph DE MAISTRE, "Eclaircissement sur les sacrifice," *Les Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* (Lyons, 1890), 2:341-42.

³³ *Violence and the Sacred*, 3.

African group between Egypt and Swaziland the “king is required to commit an act of incest, either real or symbolic on certain solemn occasions—notably, at his enthronement or in the course of the periodic rites of renewal.”³⁴ The king must also commit other transgressions and commit certain acts of violence associated with evil. He then incarnates impurity. Because of this, he is “subjected to the ritualistic insults and abuse of his people.” He is treated as a criminal and the royal army might even stage a mock attack on the king. Eventually he accedes to the throne.

In each of these types of sacrificial rituals, there is a relationship between the sacrificial victim and the original surrogate victim. The difference is that in “the original event, it is unleashed violence that is checked and at the same time partially appeased; in the ritual reenactment, it is the more or less latent aggressions that are dealt with.”³⁵ Like the original event there is a catharsis. The setting is “so strikingly similar to that of unanimous violence that one can only conclude that it is a deliberate, if not an entirely exact, imitation of unanimous violence.”³⁶ In the ritual, the sacrificial victim is substituted for the surrogate victim of the original event. This as opposed to some member of the community or the community as a whole. “As this [surrogate] victim itself serves as substitute for all the members of the community, the sacrificial substitution does indeed play the role that we have attributed to it, protecting all the members of the community from their respective violence—but always through the intermediary of the surrogate victim.” This involves a double substitution, one superimposed on the other: the surrogate victim for the community and the sacrificial victim for the surrogate.

³⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 104. The example is described in detail in pages 104-110.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Evidence for sacrifice which functions in this way comes from contemporary anthropologists who “portray sacrifice as practised among the Dinka and the Ndembu as a deliberate act of collective substitution performed at the expense of the victim and absorbing all the internal tensions, feuds and rivalries pent up within the community.”³⁷

Another point of comparison between the original scapegoat act and ritual sacrifices is that the “original act of violence is unique and spontaneous” whereas rituals are repeated in the same format again and again. “All those aspects of the original act that had escaped man’s control—the choice of time and place, the selection of the victim—are now premeditated and fixed by custom.”³⁸ Ritual processes remove much of the chance as they develop a technique for catharsis of violence.

Generative scapegoating and rituals tend to choose different victims. “The surrogate victim comes from inside the community, and the ritual victim must come from outside; otherwise the community might find it difficult to unite against it.”³⁹ Likewise there is a different function for the two acts. The original scapegoating was curative—it dealt with a crisis. Rituals, developed during relative calm, are meant to be preventative.⁴⁰ “The function of sacrifice is to quell violence within the community and to prevent conflicts from erupting.”⁴¹ Potential violence within the community is “drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice.”⁴²

³⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 7, citing Godfrey LIENHARDT, *Divinity and Experience*, and Victor TURNER, a number of works, especially *The Drums of Affliction*.

³⁸ *Violence and the Sacred*, 102.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

In the literature of China, sacrificial rites are said to “‘pacify the country and make the people settled. . . . It is through the sacrifices that the unity of the people is strengthened’ (CH’U YU II,2). The *Book of Rites* affirms that sacrificial ceremonies, music, punishments, and laws have one and the same end: to unite society and establish order.”⁴³

Religion for Girard is a term for the obscurity surrounding humanity’s efforts to deal with its own violence by curative or preventative means. “It is that enigmatic quality that pervades the judicial system when that system replaces sacrifice. This obscurity coincides with the transcendental effectiveness of a violence that is holy, legal, and legitimate successfully opposed to a violence that is unjust, illegal, and illegitimate.” Built into most sacrificial rituals is, according to Girard, a certain misunderstanding which comes about through its association with religion. It is a god who “supposedly demands the victims; he alone, in principle, who savours the smoke from the altars and requisitions the slaughtered flesh. It is to appease his anger that the killing goes on, that the victims multiply.”⁴⁴ There is something experienced as good and freeing about the violence that takes place in a ritual context. However, violence outside of that context results in ritual impurity.⁴⁵ Among the Greeks, for example, “when a man has hanged himself, his body becomes impure. So too does the rope from which he dangles, the tree to which the rope is attached, and the field where the tree stands.”⁴⁶ Similarly, emissaries from a town that has experienced bloodshed are considered ritually impure.⁴⁷ Ritual “purifies” violence, “tricking” violence to spend itself on a victim “whose death will

⁴³ *Violence and the Sacred*, 8. Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 29.

provoke no reprisals.”⁴⁸ The dual nature of blood is shown in this pure/impure distinction. The blood of bad violence, illness or death congeals and is a sign of impurity. Sacrificial blood, however, flows freely and “is never allowed to congeal but is removed without trace as soon as the rites have been concluded.”⁴⁹ Ritual violence is “good” violence.

There are in mythology and ritual, many examples of things which like violence have a “good” and “bad” nature. In Euripides’ *Ion*, one drop of blood from Gorgon is a deadly poison, another drop is a “miraculous healing agent.”⁵⁰ Girard observes that

[n]othing could seem more alike than two drops of blood, yet in this case nothing could be more different. It is only too easy to blend them together and produce a substance that would efface all distinction between the pure and the impure. Then the difference between “good” and “bad” violence would be eliminated as well. As long as purity and impurity remain distinct, even the worst pollution can be washed away; but once they are allowed to mingle, purification is no longer possible.⁵¹

The Hebrew prophets denounce a situation in which the “difference between blood spilt for ritual and for criminal purposes no longer holds.” They link the impotence of sacrifice with an outbreak of violence in the community. “Neighbors who had previously discharged their mutual aggressions on a third party, joining together in the sacrifice of an ‘outside’ victim, now turn to sacrificing one another.”⁵²

In the Dionysus myth and ritual a murder is both the outcome of a divine plan and “the result

⁴⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 37-38.

⁵¹ Ibid., 38.

⁵² Ibid., 43.

of a spontaneous outburst.”⁵³ The god both prepares and sacrifices the victim in a way that appeases his anger.

Under the pretext of arranging his costume and coiffure, Dionysus manages to touch Pentheus ritualistically on his head, waist, and feet. The murder itself is performed in accordance with Dionysian practice; it includes the distinctive *sparagmos*, or dismemberment which we have already encountered in other sacrificial contexts. In addition (1) all the bacchantes participate in the killing. This satisfies the requirements of unanimity, which figures in so many rituals. And (2) no weapon is used; the victim is torn apart by the women’s bare hands.⁵⁴

Evidence points to the conclusion that “Dionysus is the god of decisive mob action.”⁵⁵ He can both disturb the peace and bring it back. “Divine intervention is transformed into legitimate anger against a blasphemous hubris, which, until the crucial display of unanimity seemed to implicate the god himself.”⁵⁶

One of the key elements of scapegoating and sacrifice is a paroxysm whereby violence is released. This paroxysm may take place at different times. For the Dinka it is not at the death of the victim but in the ritual cursing. There is an impression that the words of the curses can kill the victim. Other signs of a paroxysm are an execution by stampede and the whipping of a victim’s genitals, where the crime is sexual, inevitably resulting in death.⁵⁷

Animal sacrifices may be shown “scorn, hostility, and cruelty” before slaughter. They take on the “very real (though often hidden) hostilities that *all the members of the community feel for one*

⁵³ *Violence and the Sacred*, 130.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 130-132.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 98.

another."⁵⁸ After death they are shown ritualistic veneration.⁵⁹

Common to sacrificial rituals and myths is the theme of unanimity—all against one.

The Dinka stampede involves all the young men. If they cannot crush the animal there is a simulated symbolic stamped performed before the slaughter. Similarly, in the Arabian camel sacrifice, all participants take part in the death.⁶⁰

It is a unanimous group that Odysseus and his companions plunge the red-hot stake into the Cyclops' eye. It is as a unanimous group that the gods of some of the generative myths conspire and bring about the death of one of their divine colleagues. In Hindu mythology the same motif recurs. The *Yadjour-Veda* speaks of a sacrificial ceremony in which a god, Soma, is to be put to death by the other gods. Mithra at first refuses to join his divine companions in the act, but he is finally persuaded to do so by the argument that the sacrifice will be totally ineffective if not performed by all. This myth offers a prescription for the correct performance of a sacrifice. Unanimity is a formal requirement; the abstention of a single participant renders the sacrifice even worse than useless—it makes it dangerous.⁶¹

Among the Ngadju-Dayaks of Borneo it is important that "all the participants in the sacrifice are required to strike the victim before its death. The ritualistic structure of the ceremony is strictly regulated and reflects the hierarchical distinctions that govern the cultural order."⁶²

At a certain point a sacrificial ritual can lose its effectiveness. This loss of effectiveness can come about through an exposure of the sacrificial ritual as scapegoating. A key point in Girard's theory is that in order for scapegoating to work it must remain hidden. In that way it retains a sense of mystery. It accomplishes a feeling of community unity, group identity and reconciliation, which is translated into a sense of reconciliation with God. If the sacrificial system is exposed for what it is, it

⁵⁸ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁶¹ Ibid.

loses both its hiddenness and its mystique. It becomes commonplace; that is, it loses its sense of being sacred and hence, its efficacy.

In a pluralistic society where the sense of in-group and community are more diffuse because people participate in many communities, the ritual patterns are more subtle but can be observed nonetheless. What figures more prominently in contemporary society is the aspect of social differentiation. As Girard points out,

[i]f the unanimous victim truly reconciles a community, he will be turned into a transcendental model of differentiation and the mimetic forces destructive or preventative of symbolicity during the mimetic crisis that triggered the victimage will be rechannelled in differentiated and nonconflictual directions.⁶³

The sense of differentiation, keeping people in their place, can become a violence of differentiation and can lead to the institutionalization of differentiation through what Gramsci calls hegemonic structures.⁶⁴ When the fundamental rationale for differentiation is discredited as unjust, the differentiation turns to mimetic rivalry and a violence of undifferentiation; there is once again a sense of crisis. This crisis is akin to that precipitated when a sacrificial ritual loses its effect. Before examining the kinds of crisis, which might be addressed by the scapegoat mechanism, we turn our attention to the characteristics of individual and group scapegoats.

⁶² *Violence and the Sacred*, 100-101.

⁶³ "To double business bound", 207.

⁶⁴ For a good summary of Gramsci's analysis and a contemporary application to a wide range of oppressive structures see George C.L. CUMMINGS, "Black Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology: " Framework for Race and Class Analysis," *New Visions for the Americas - Religious Engagement and Social Transformation* ed. David BATSTONE (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 215-229. cf. also *Things Hidden*, 305: "In the world of doubles, with its deep-rooted rivalries, there can be no neutral relationships. There are only those who dominate and those who are dominated. Since the meaning of the relationship rests neither on brute force nor on any form of external constraint, it can never achieve stability."

Characteristics of the Scapegoat

In *The Scapegoat*, Girard identified four “stereotypes” of the scapegoat victim and the context of victimization.⁶⁵ The scapegoat emerges at a time of crisis when the uniqueness and viability of the community is called into question. This stereotype will be dealt with in greater depth in the next section. The scapegoat commits a crime which threatens hierarchical distinctions within a community. As well, the identified authors of these crimes possess the marks that suggest a victim, the paradoxical marks of the absence of difference. Finally, there is the presence of violence itself.

In addition to these stereotypes, there are other qualities which distinguish potential scapegoats.⁶⁶ These are other ways of framing some of the same phenomena Girard has synthesized in his stereotypes; the qualities are based on examples drawn from other of writings of Girard. Scapegoats must have a capacity to be distinguished as “different” in order to be subject to a violence of differentiation. Moreover, they should be powerful enough to have an impact on the crisis. They must be illegitimate for some reason or other in order that the scapegoat action be justified, and, finally, they must be vulnerable otherwise they would counterattack with enough force to make the scapegoat action counterproductive.

We will examine the final three of these stereotypes first and then look more closely at the other qualities. Let us begin with the “crimes” which threaten the unique sense of difference of the scapegoating community. As Girard has pointed out, there are many cognates of the Greek word *krino* —judgement, crime, justice, etc.—which have to do with making some judgement about an action or a person. Judgement in turn has to do with making distinctions. Girard has also argued

⁶⁵ Summarized in *The Scapegoat*, 24.

⁶⁶ Vern REDEKOP, *Scapegoats, the Bible, and Criminal Justice: Interacting with Rene Girard* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1993), 12-13.

that the actions of scapegoating, vengeance and legal punishment have a certain commonality.

“Crimes” are actions which the community judges to be contrary to behaviour conducive to the preservation of its distinctives. In particular crimes that “eliminate differences” are of concern to the differentiated community. The actions which justify scapegoating are those which strike at the heart of the culture in question.

First, there are violent crimes which choose as object those people whom it is most criminal to attack, either in the absolute sense or in reference to the individual committing the act: a king, a father, the symbol of supreme authority, and in biblical modern societies the weakest and most defenceless, especially young children. Then there are sexual crimes: rape, incest, bestiality. The ones most frequently invoked transgress the taboos that are considered the strictest in the society in question. Finally there are religious crimes, such as profanation of the host. Here, too, it is the strictest taboos that are transgressed.⁶⁷

Attention to the taboos of a culture is important to understand the workings of a scapegoat mechanism, since it is the taboos that determine the gravity of what is interpreted as a “crime.”

Scapegoats bear the mark of the victim which is the “paradoxical sign of absence of difference.” In *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard gives examples of cases in which a scapegoat from inside the community goes through a process of being made sufficiently “other” so as to be a scapegoat. Potential scapegoats from outside the community, on the other hand, need to be made sufficiently a part of the community so that the violence can truly be transferred onto them. The “paradoxical signs” are about being different in some ways but not different in other ways. This balance of sameness and difference is akin to the careful balance of distance involved in training tigers and lions. At a certain distance the instincts of the animal are between fight and flight. If the trainer was closer, the animals would fight. If the trainer was more distant it would leave. It is the in between position that establishes a precarious structure of action. Similarly, it is this precarious

⁶⁷ *The Scapegoat*, 15.

balance of sameness and difference that heightens the potential for a person or group to become a scapegoat.

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.⁶⁸

The types of groups which tend to meet this criterion, according to Girard, are Jews, ethnic and religious minorities, poorly integrated groups, those with a physical or moral "abnormality," and the marginal insider (person of privilege), women, children and old people.⁶⁹

According to this stereotype, a minority group which was distant in culture or geography—sticking to a confined space and not interacting with a community in crisis would not be a strong candidate for scapegoat, even if a crime were committed. On the other hand, a minority group which spoke the same language, purchased houses in the same neighbourhood and engaged in commercial ventures which brought them into contact with the community in question would be a strong candidate for scapegoat victim—especially if they committed a "crime."

Another stereotype for Girard is the presence of some form of violence perpetrated against the scapegoat victim. Within *The Scapegoat*, Girard shows that the initial and prototypic violence perpetrated against a scapegoat is collective violence even though it often comes through in mythology as individual violence.

We will now turn our attention to evidence that suggests that scapegoats are different, vulnerable, illegitimate and powerful. There are many ways in which a potential scapegoat can be set apart as different from the community in crisis. They may not be socially integrated. They may be

⁶⁸ *The Scapegoat*, 17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 16-19

marginalised, “incapable of establishing or sharing the social bond that links the rest of the inhabitants.” This may be a result of ethnocultural grouping, class or age. Less obvious is the king. “Is he not at the very heart of the community? Undoubtedly—but it is precisely his position at the center that serves to isolate him from his fellow men, to render him casteless.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, difference may be the result of a physical or moral deformity or aberration. The range of factors setting people apart may be very wide indeed.

If we look at the extremely wide spectrum of human victims sacrificed by various societies, the list seems heterogeneous, to say the least. It includes prisoners of war, slaves, small children, unmarried adolescents, and the handicapped; it ranged from the very dregs of society, such as the Greek *pharmakos*, to the king himself.⁷¹

Finally, some scapegoats have many traits which set them aside. A prime example is Julius Caesar as portrayed by Shakespeare:

Everything that Caesar does, everything that we learn about him as a public or a private individual, including the sterility of his wife—which the popular mind readily attributes to a husband’s evil eye—makes him look like a man earmarked for victimization. At one point he offers his throat to the crowd in a gesture reminiscent of some sacred king volunteering for the role of sacrificial victim. It is also significant that Caesar would be associated with both the Lupercalia and the Ides of March, two Roman festivals rooted, as all such festivals are, in so-called scapegoat rituals.⁷²

Not only must a scapegoat be seen as different by the community in crisis, he or she must be vulnerable.

Girard expresses the vulnerability of the scapegoat in terms of an immunity from reprisal:

All our sacrificial victims, whether chosen from one of the human categories enumerated above or, a fortiori, from the animal realm, are invariably distinguishable from the nonsacrificial beings by one essential characteristic: between these victims and the

⁷⁰ *The Scapegoat*, 12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Theater of Envy*, 205.

community a crucial social link is missing, so they can be exposed to violence without fear of reprisal. Their death does not automatically entail an act of vengeance. . . . sacrifice is primarily an act of violence without risk of vengeance. . . . The desire to commit an act of violence on those near us cannot be suppressed without a conflict; we must divert that impulse, therefore, toward the sacrificial victim, the creature we can strike down without fear of reprisal, since he lacks a champion.⁷³

The freedom from risk of reprisal has a paradoxical side to it. The scapegoat action is itself of the same type as vengeance and often sacrificial rites include references to vengeance, but the capacity of the victim to get revenge is all but ruled out.⁷⁴ When the surrogate victim is depicted in a religious context they appear “as a being who submits to violence without provoking a reprisal; a supernatural being who sows violence to reap peace; a mysterious saviour who visits affliction on mankind in order subsequently to restore it to good health.”⁷⁵

Girard highlights a number of ways in which a scapegoat can be thought of as illegitimate so as to justify the scapegoat action. An individual may be thought of as polluted:

Like Oedipus, the victim is considered a polluted object, whose living presence contaminates everything that comes in contact with it and whose death purges the community of its ills—as the subsequent restoration of public tranquillity clearly testifies. That is why the *pharmakos* was paraded about the city. He was used as a kind of sponge to sop up impurities, and afterward he was expelled from the community or killed in a ceremony that involved the entire populace.⁷⁶

A sense of illegitimacy is acquired by attaching blame to the victim for the crisis.

As we have seen, the inquest on Laius’s death is in fact an investigation into the general subject of the sacrificial crisis; and it is clearly a matter of pinning the responsibility for the troubled state of the community on some individual, of framing a reply to the mythical question *par excellence*: “Who initiated the crisis?” Oedipus fails to fix the blame on Creon or Tiresias. Creon and Tiresias are successful in their efforts to fix the blame on him. The

⁷³ *The Scapegoat*, 13.

⁷⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

entire investigation is a feverish hunt for a scapegoat, which finally turns against the very man who first loosed the hounds.⁷⁷

Also, a scapegoat may be thought of as illegitimate because of having committed some crime. The criminal justice system may be used to exact vengeance even though it differs in that “it is not self-perpetuating and its decisions discourage reprisals.”⁷⁸ What sets the scapegoat apart from those who commit crime is the degree to which the prosecution of the crime is in reality a persecution for being different. Finally, closely related, is the sense of illegitimacy that comes with violating a taboo.

Girard cites several African examples in which kingship ceremonies resemble sacrificial rituals in which the king commits incest as the grounds for bringing about public humiliation to be followed by enthronement. In one case, the king’s potential partners for incest “are virtually all the women formally forbidden him by matrimonial regulations: mother, sisters, daughters, nieces, cousins, etc.”⁷⁹ In another instance “the king is required to commit all the forbidden acts that are imaginable and possible for him to commit.” The reason for this is to justify a “punishment of the severest sort” whereby “the needful insults and hostilities find their outlet in sacrificial ceremonies in which the king plays the chief role—the role of the original victim.”⁸⁰

Scapegoat⁸¹ victims are effective in reconciling a community if they are regarded as powerful individuals or groups. There are two aspects to this sense of power. First, a powerful individual

⁷⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 78.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁸¹ I will use “scapegoat” generically for surrogate victims of generative scapegoating as well as sacrificial victims who are part of an ongoing ritual.

could well be the object of mimetic phenomena. Job was first among equals.⁸² Caesar was the most powerful in Rome. Kings and the upper class have frequently been scapegoats.⁸³ Second, the scapegoat must be powerful enough to resolve the crisis. The blood of the victim understood literally or metaphorically has to have the power to effect some kind of community feeling of reconciliation. The power of the sacrificial victim could reside in the kind of evil the victim can perpetrate or in the kind of power or prestige associated with the victim. Both of these were evident in the Middle Ages persecution of the Jews who were the physicians and therefore had the power over disease and they had an “evil eye” which rendered them capable of bringing about the plague. There is the genuine belief on the part of those taking part in a sacrificial mechanism that the victimization will end up being beneficial to the group. “In the myth, the fearful transgression of a single individual is substituted for the universal onslaught of reciprocal violence. Oedipus is responsible for the ills that have befallen his people. He has become a prime example of the human scapegoat.”⁸⁴ Scapegoats have a unique combination of power and vulnerability which makes it possible for them to absorb the violence of a community or society.

What emerges is a picture of a scapegoat victim who takes on the hatreds and violence generated by all of the feelings of inadequacy which result from mimetic rivalries. The victim can in some way stand for the whole community. In order to achieve the appropriate results, the victim must be in some way identified with the community but in order to meet the criterion that there be no

⁸² cf. *Job*, 10-18, in which he observes that Job had formerly been the first among equals—commanding respect wherever he went.

⁸³ *The Scapegoat*, 18-19.

⁸⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 77.

reprisals, the victim must be sufficiently dissociated from the community.⁸⁵

There is another side to the scapegoat and that is veneration. Scapegoats may be turned into heroes or cult figures. As Girard points out,

the pharmakos, like Oedipus himself, has a dual connotation. On the one hand he is a woebegone figure, an object of scorn who is also weighed down with guilt; a butt for all sorts of gibes, insults, and of course, outbursts of violence. On the other hand, we find him surrounded by a quasi-religious aura of veneration; he has become a sort of cult object. This duality reflects the metamorphosis the ritual victim is designed to effect; the victim draws to itself all the violence infecting the original victim and through its own death transforms this baneful violence into beneficial violence, into harmony and abundance.⁸⁶

The dual nature of the scapegoat is expressed metaphorically through the Greek word *pharmakon* which “means both poison and the antidote for poison, both sickness and cure—in short, any substance capable of perpetrating a very good or very bad action, according to the circumstances and the dosage.”⁸⁷ Girard cites the investiture hymn of the Mossis (Ouagadoubour) as an example of a corroborating incantation:

You are a turd,
You are a heap of refuse,
You have come to kill us,
You have come to save us.⁸⁸

As he points out the king “is the catalyst who converts sterile, infectious violence into positive cultural values.”⁸⁹ Having looked at the scapegoat victims, we now turn our attention to those who turn violently on the scapegoats.

⁸⁵ See *Violence and the Sacred*, 8, for a development of this tension between being within yet outside the community and the types of difference which would set a victim apart from the community.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁹ *Violence and the Sacred*, 107.

Characteristics of Those who Scapegoat

The earlier works of Girard concentrate on the scapegoating of the mob. The scapegoaters are often anonymous people who have lost their sense of individual difference as their violence of undifferentiation has been turned onto the scapegoat in a paroxysm of differentiation. Against that backdrop of analysis it is striking that in his analysis of Shakespeare, Girard begins to identify characteristics of particular scapegoaters. They are subject to the influence of others; they have a great appetite for victims, and they follow the ways of their ancestors.

Through the character of Brutus we see a scapegoater who combines rationality expressed through a concern for the republic with an obsessive jealousy.⁹⁰ Brutus as a scapegoater is subject to the influence of others:

As far as Brutus is concerned, it is true that Caesar is no borrowed rival, but is borrowed as a target of assassination. This is what the scenes with Cassias make clear, and the point is confirmed by Brutus's soliloquy: he lost sleep only after Cassias "first did whet [him] against Caesar." Thoughts of murder did not enter his honest and virtuous soul spontaneously.⁹¹

Though "Brutus honestly acknowledges that Caesar has not yet abused his power; he does not deserve to die,"⁹² Brutus nonetheless participates in the conspiracy against him. Likewise, all that Ligarius "requires is the word of his trusted model, Brutus" to legitimate his scapegoat action.⁹³

Through these examples we see two ways in which scapegoaters are influenced. In the case of Brutus, the idea is planted by someone else. The mimetic rivalry Brutus has for Caesar is transformed over time into murderous action. In the case of Ligarius it is the legitimacy conveyed by

⁹⁰ *Theater of Envy*, 206.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, the reference in Julius Caesar is to II.i.

⁹³ *Theater of Envy*, 208.

a trusted role model that gets him into the conspiracy. In the first it is mimesis of interpretation and intent; in the second it is mimesis of action.

Girard introduces the phrase “would-be scapegoater” when talking about the desperate people who have a great appetite for victims.⁹⁴ When all other differences seem to be dissolving, only physical differences stand out and these are seized upon. The desperation of the scapegoater is to “achieve significance.”⁹⁵ Being different might involve some sense of being monstrous.

When they talk about Caesar, Cassias and Casca constantly resort to such words as “monster” and “monstrous” in such an ambiguous way that all distinction between the physical and moral is abolished. This practice encourages the victimization of physically abnormal people. When the world seems monstrous, such men as Casca seek some human embodiment of this monstrosity. They spurn rational explanations in favor of such magical formulas as “the man most like his dreadful night.” Had he lived during the great medieval plagues, Casca would have persecuted Jews, lepers, and physically handicapped people. There were still witch-hunters in Shakespeare’s world, and Casca and even Cassias are pattered after them.⁹⁶

We realize that the patterns of scapegoating for Girard cross over generations and cultures. Scapegoaters, beyond being influenced by their peers, continue doing what their ancestors have done.⁹⁷ Jesus accused his contemporaries of having the same tendencies as those who killed the prophets; *mutatis mutandis* those who claim to follow Jesus in the “Christian era” have shown that they too have a capacity to kill prophets and had they been present during the first Passion week they would have joined the crowd.

Finally, the ones who scapegoat are those who are caught up in their own mimetic rivalries; in this they are not alone. They with others in the same situation feel that things are getting out of

⁹⁴ *Theater of Envy*, 208.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

control; there is crisis in the air. We turn our attention now to Girard's analysis of sacrificial crises.

Scapegoat Victimization as a Response to Sacrificial Crisis

Girard's hypothesis argues that "any community that has fallen prey to violence or has been stricken by some overwhelming catastrophe hurls itself blindly into the search for a scapegoat."⁹⁸ This statement has three predicates associated with the community: 1) it falls prey to violence, 2) it is stricken by catastrophe, and 3) it searches for a scapegoat. The first predicate raises the question of the nature of violence, the second one begs to inquire about Girard's sense of the sacred and the third raises the question of what is at stake for the community such that it might be so impassioned to find a scapegoat. Girard finds an answer to all three in his first stereotype of scapegoating: a generalized loss of differences within the community. The starting point is that cultures like to see themselves as distinct and "different":

No culture exists within which everyone does not feel "different from others" and does not consider such "differences" legitimate and necessary. . . . 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. The signs that indicate a victim's selection result not from the difference within the system but from the difference outside the system. . . . Difference that exists outside the system is terrifying because it reveals the truth of the system, its relativity, its fragility, and its morality.⁹⁹

What emerges through Girard's analysis is an association of the community in crisis with a violence of undifferentiation.

We will examine Girard's understanding of a community in a sacrificial crisis. Then we will

⁹⁷ Ibid., 210.

⁹⁸ *Violence and the Sacred*, 79.

⁹⁹ *The Scapegoat*, 21.

look at his definition of violence and the sacred. Finally, we will then trace the link between violence, the sacred and the threat to community identity through the loss of differences within the community and the loss of distinctiveness of the community.

A sacrificial crisis is marked by all the symptoms of mimetic rivalry which led to the original sacrificial mechanism. What makes it into a sacrificial crisis is that the old ways of resolving the crisis no longer work. The sacrificial ritual system which was to maintain peace and order in the group breaks down. When this happens the group finds a new scapegoat and a new way of legitimating the scapegoat victimization and eventually a new scapegoat ritual which is established to maintain the peace.

The sense of crisis may extend beyond that of mimetic rivalry. It may be anything which jeopardizes the life of the community. In medieval times the plague instituted a sense of crisis and it was postulated that Jews or witches might have caused the crisis.¹⁰⁰ Both groups became scapegoats.

One way in which Girard describes the sacrificial crisis is in terms of the inability of the group to distinguish between impure violence and the purifying violence of sacrificial rites. The result is that "impure, contagious, reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community."¹⁰¹ The threat of violence is a threat to the cultural order. "This cultural order is nothing more than a regulated system of distinctions in which the differences among individuals are used to establish their 'identity' and their mutual relationships."¹⁰² At its final stages, "the very viability of human society is put in

¹⁰⁰ *The Scapegoat*, 1-17.

¹⁰¹ *Violence and the Sacred*, 49.

¹⁰² *Violence and the Sacred*, 49.

question.”¹⁰³ This vulnerability is not only because individual lives are put at risk; the religious framework totters and “the whole cultural foundation of the society is put in jeopardy. The institutions lose their vitality; the protective façade of the society gives way; social values are rapidly eroded, and the whole cultural structure seems on the verge of collapse.”¹⁰⁴ In Girard’s frame of reference, the cultural structure is based on a sense of the Sacred which is meant to help people come to terms with uncontrollable threatening forces.

In defining the sacred, Girard speaks of it as embracing

all those forces that threaten to harm man or trouble his peace. Natural forces and sickness are not distinguished from the threat of a violent disintegration of the community. Although man-made violence plays a dominant role in the dialectics of the sacred and is never completely omitted from the warning issued by religion, it tends to be relegated to the background and treated as if it emanated from outside man. One might say that it has been deliberately hidden away almost out of sight behind forces that are genuinely exterior to man.¹⁰⁵

What is striking about the forces of the sacred is that their dominance over humans seems to increase in proportion to humanity’s attempt to master them. Outflanking storms, forest fires and plagues is violence—“violence seen as something exterior to man and henceforth as a part of all the other outside forces that threaten mankind. Violence is the heart and secret soul of the sacred.”¹⁰⁶

Violence, for Girard, can be described both in terms of properties and root metaphors which are often combined. He points out that violence has considerable staying power but it can be diverted to another object.¹⁰⁷ The sense of movement and transfer of violence is developed through

¹⁰³ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 49.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁷ Such, perhaps, is one of the meanings of the story of Cain and Abel. *Violence and the Sacred*, 4.

the root metaphors of seminal fluid, electricity and microbes. For example, he states that violence has been “transformed into a sort of seminal fluid that impregnates objects on contact and whose diffusion, like electricity of Balzacian ‘magnetism,’ is determined by physical laws.”¹⁰⁸ We will look more closely at the relationship between violence and sexuality and the root metaphor of the microbe.

Regarding the root metaphor of sexuality, there are four very real associations between sexuality and violence. First, sexuality “leads to quarrels, jealous rages, mortal combats. It is a permanent source of disorder even within the most harmonious of communities.”¹⁰⁹ Second, sexual desire “tends to fasten upon surrogate objects if the object to which it was originally attached remains inaccessible; it willingly accepts substitutes.”¹¹⁰ Third, when repressed it “accumulates energy that sooner or later bursts forth, causing tremendous havoc.”¹¹¹ Fourth, sexual arousal and violence share a “majority of discernible bodily reactions.”¹¹²

Violence is compared to a microbe which is responsible “for the dread disease of violence.”¹¹³ This final root metaphor leads us to a discussion of Girard’s notion of contagion. Just as contact with the sick poses the risk of illness, so he suggests, “it is wise to steer clear of homicides if one is eager not to be killed.” In a society lacking legal sanctions, Girard suggests,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 35.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 35-36.

¹¹³ Ibid., 33.

violent contagion could be of greater importance than that of disease.¹¹⁴ The awesome power of violence to remain, to grow and move around creates a sense of awe, a fascination that is associated with the sacred. The potency of violence is seen in both reciprocal violence and the staying power of violence.

Reciprocal violence Girard describes as a vicious circle of vengeance and reprisals. “As long as a working capital of accumulated hatred and suspicion exists at the center of the community, it will continue to increase. . . . Each person prepares himself for the probable aggression of his neighbors and interprets his neighbor’s preparations as confirmation of the latter’s aggressiveness.” Mimetic reciprocal violence “is so intense that once violence is installed in a community, it cannot burn itself out.”¹¹⁵ The only way to escape is to remove self-generating forms of violence and create new forms.

Another quality of violence is that it appears to be “countered by more violence.” Regardless of what happens, violence is always the winner. “The mimetic attributes of violence are extraordinary—sometimes direct and positive, at other time indirect and negative.” So strong are its effects that the greater the effort to curb violent impulses, “the more these impulses seem to prosper.”¹¹⁶

Given this idea of violence which cannot easily be dissipated, there is a strong need for a sacrificial outlet. Girard suggests that Cain’s “jealousy” of Abel is another term for the absence of such an outlet. Where violence is on the increase and there is no such outlet, the result can be

¹¹⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 31.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

reciprocal violence. It is significant that Cain's mimetic desire was for a sacrificial ritual which proved effective to Abel; i.e. it received the approval of God which translated into well being for Abel.

The kind of self-generating violence described above has its roots in the destruction of differences. One example pertaining to hierarchical distance Girard has seen in Euripides' *Alcestris*. "Father and son are engaged in a tragic dialogue; each accuses the other of fleeing from death and leaving the heroine to die."¹¹⁷ The differences called into question may be cultural.

When cultural distinctions are called into question, "order, peace and fecundity" are at stake. Without proper distinctions there are "fierce rivalries" setting "members of the same family or social group at one another's throats."¹¹⁸ A key term used by Shakespeare for these key cultural distinctions is "Degree," or "gradus." "It permits individuals to find a place for themselves in society; it lends a meaning to things, arranging them in proper sequence within a hierarchy; it defines the objects and moral standards that men alter, manipulate and transform."¹¹⁹ The loss of differences strips people "of all their distinctive characteristics—in short, of their 'identities.'"¹²⁰ One of the reasons that incest is such a strong taboo is that it is all about breaking down important distinctions within families, including "that between the mother and her children."¹²¹

Sophocles attributes Oedipus's incest to the influence of the god Hymen, who after all is directly implicated in the affair as the god of matrimonial laws and the regulator of family distinctions. "Hymen, O hymen, to whom I owe my birth, and who, having engendered me,

¹¹⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 47.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹²¹ *Violence and the Sacred*, 74.

employed the same seed in the same place to cast upon the outraged world a monstrous commingling of fathers, brothers, sons; of brides, wives, and mothers!”¹²²

Ultimately contagious mimetic violence, the force of the sacred and the effacement of differences associated with a mimetic crisis can be traced to mimetic doubling—the violence of undifferentiation described in the previous chapter. In the next section we will examine how this plays a role in the dynamics of scapegoating.

Dynamics of the Scapegoat Mechanism

To develop an understanding of the fundamental dynamics of the scapegoat mechanism, Girard draws on understandings of primitive humanity, modern humanity and humanity expressed through tragedy. Primitive humanity, especially descriptions of myth and ritual, is accessible through the work of anthropologists. Modern humanity is accessible through a number of institutions and contemporary analyses. Tragedy as drama finds its most powerful expression through the Greeks and Shakespeare. Biblical writers are keen interpreters of tragic experience. By comparing and combining insights from these sources, Girard draws out a colourful and moving glimpse into the dynamics of scapegoating. As he tries to verify his hypothesis, it is important to apply it “to many different forms of ritual and myth, as far apart in content, history, and geography as possible.”¹²³ The range of situations which he has analysed provides a rich vein for understanding the subtle dynamics of his theory.

We will, with Girard, look into some of the intrapsychic phenomena involved before a scapegoat or sacrificial process, then scapegoating as it relates to intergroup conflict. This will be

¹²² Ibid., 75.

¹²³ Ibid., 104.

followed by an examination of some of various scapegoat rituals and the dynamics of tragic drama. Finally, we will look at the transformation from the chaos of mimetic doubling to order and community.

When we think of intrapsychic phenomena we refer to the feelings, characteristics, processes and tendencies that take place within groups and within the people that are part of those groups. Intrapsychic dysfunction manifests itself through many symptoms. There is a first of all a lack of internal peace and harmony. The violence could take the form of “dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels.” When there is lack of harmony “the fields are less well tended, the harvests less abundant”; in other words, productivity goes down and there is economic stagnation. In this context, sacrifices “restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.”¹²⁴ There is a sense that if left to its own “violence will accumulate until it overflows its confines and floods the surrounding area. The role of sacrifice is to stem this rising tide of indiscriminate substitutions and redirect violence into ‘proper’ channels.”¹²⁵

Vengeance is another distinguishing factor in the pre-scapegoat phase. Girard observes that “[v]engeance professes to be an act of reprisal, and every reprisal calls for another reprisal. The crime to which the act of vengeance addresses itself is almost never an unprecedented offense; in almost every case it has been committed in revenge for some prior crime.”¹²⁶ Furthermore, “in tragedy each character passionately embraces or rejects vengeance depending on the position he

¹²⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 8.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁶ *Violence and the Sacred*, 14.

occupies at any given moment in the scheme of the drama.”¹²⁷ Moving from tragedy to primitive and modern, Girard goes on to point out that “by definition, primitive societies have only private vengeance. Thus, public vengeance is the exclusive property of well-policed societies, and so our society calls it the judicial system.”¹²⁸ Looking closely at any situation one can see that the “‘reasons’ on both sides of a dispute are equally valid—which is to say that *violence operates without reason*.”¹²⁹ Girard perceives that the tragedians have caught onto this realization that characters are neither exclusively “good” or “bad.” By comparison, modern interpreters “have still not extricated [them]selves entirely from the ‘Manichean’ frame of reference that gained sway in the Romantic era and still exerts its influence.”¹³⁰

Girard asserts that the “process of finding a surrogate victim constitutes a major means, perhaps the sole means, by which men expel from their consciousness the truth about their violent nature—that knowledge of past violence which, if not shifted to a single ‘guilty’ figure, would poison both the present and the future.”¹³¹ In order for the surrogate victim to effectively distract individuals and groups from the violence within them, there has to be an “absolute faith in the guilt of the surrogate victim.” This belief is confirmed by the restoration of peace after the scapegoat event. “The crisis is seen as a mysterious illness introduced into the community by an outsider. The cure lies in ridding the community of the sole malignant element.”¹³²

¹²⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 46.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹³¹ Ibid., 83.

¹³² *Violence and the Sacred*, 83.

Girard notes that the “primitive mind” naturally sees the link between violence and non-differentiation. Natural differences and cultural differences are equated. “Where we would view the loss of a distinctive quality as a wholly natural phenomenon having no bearing on human relationships, the primitive man might well view this occurrence with deep dread.”¹³³ The lack of differences between twins makes them taboo and subject to death by neglect in some cultures.¹³⁴ “Twins are impure in the same way that a warrior steeped in carnage is impure, or an incestuous couple, or a menstruating woman. All forms of violence lead back to violence.”¹³⁵

Another ubiquitous quality associated with violence is anger. Looking at Oedipus’s tantrums, he muses whether or not they “can be said to perform the differential function upon which the whole concept of ‘character’ is based?” His answer is that “anger crops up everywhere.”¹³⁶ This association of anger with a threat to differentiation provides added insight to the previous association of anger with a threat to a meaning system, including a sense of justice. Within them, meaning systems have a well defined sense of differentiation.

The kind of intrapsychic phenomena described above, when not dissipated through sacrifice, manifest themselves in “interfamily vendettas or blood feuds.” Girard claims that these are “virtually nonexistent in our own culture,” suggesting a “fundamental difference between primitive societies and our own.”¹³⁷ This observation corroborates the principle, articulated in chapter two, that the intensity of these phenomena depends on whether we have an open or closed system. One of the

¹³³ Ibid., 56.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 57.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 58.

¹³⁶ *Violence and the Sacred*, 68.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 14.

examples Girard develops illustrates the point; he describes the experience of the Kaingang people as follows:

Within the group there is a spirit of conciliation. The most inflammatory challenges pass unacknowledged; adultery, which provokes an instant and bloody reprisal among members of rival groups, is openly tolerated. As long as violence does not cross a certain threshold of intensity, it remains sacrificial and defines an inner circle of nonviolence essential to the accomplishment of basic functions—that is, to the survival of the society. Nonetheless, the moment arrives when the inner group is contaminated. *As soon as they are installed on a reservation, members of a group tend to turn against one another. They can no longer polarize their aggressions against outside enemies, the “others,” the “different men.”* (The Kaingang use one and the same term to refer to (1) differences of all kinds; (2) men of rival groups, who are always close relatives; (3) Brazilians, the traditional enemy; and (4) the dead and all mythological figures, demonic and divine, generally spoken of as “different things.”)¹³⁸ (Italics added)

The blood feuds that Girard describes resemble interethnic conflicts of our time. These are most acute where the land base is limited and in dispute, having the effect of making the conflict situation closed. It may well be that one of the reasons for the high levels of conflict on the reserves of First Nations is a result of being artificially contained on limited tracts of earth. The following quote Girard has drawn from an observer of Africa could apply to North America:

These groups, excellently suited in their physical and psychological endowments to cope with the rigors of their natural environment, were yet unable to withstand the internal forces that were disrupting their society, and having no culturally standardized devices to deal with them, were committing social suicide.”¹³⁹

This “social suicide” appears to be the result of making the living system, the social environment more closed in on the people.

Where there is conflict involving an offense in a non-modern setting, reconciliation based on mutual compensation is preferred, with the emphasis on meeting the needs of the victim sufficiently

¹³⁸ Ibid., 53.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 54, quoting HENRY, *Jungle People*, 7.

that retaliation is precluded. Where that doesn't work, the conflict can be resolved in a manner in which "violence is wholly self-contained."¹⁴⁰ There are rules that limit the effects of violence in a similar way that the rules of chivalry limited the loss of life in the feudal system.

When it comes to war, Girard does not see the "multiplication of new weapons and techniques" constituting "a fundamental difference between primitive and modern warfare."¹⁴¹

Violent intergroup conflict, whether primitive or modern, has about it a dynamic of reciprocity.

Each sees in the other the usurper of a legitimacy that he thinks he is defending but that he is in fact undermining. Anything one may affirm or deny about either of the adversaries seems instantly applicable to the other. Reciprocity is busy aiding each party in his own destruction.¹⁴²

Tragic relationships exemplify the "violent elimination of differences between the antagonists" when "their total identity, suddenly illuminates" responses, such as, "You reproach me for my stubbornness, but refuse to see the stubbornness that dwells within you, and therefore out of stubbornness cast blame on me."¹⁴³ When it comes to intergroup conflict, insights from modern warfare, primitive experience and the tragedies can be brought together. Wherever there is a threat of violence, scapegoat rituals are developed to prevent the kind of violence, which might destroy the community.

Religion not only is the guardian of the mythology, which forms the identity of a people, it also develops rituals which help to distinguish between good and bad violence. The sole purpose of

¹⁴⁰ *Violence and the Sacred*, 21.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 72.

the rite “is to prevent the return of the sacrificial crisis.”¹⁴⁴ Girard observes that in primitive societies violence can be prevented through religious practices which allow violence to be practised in ritual. It is confined to a given space and time and circumscribed by rules.¹⁴⁵ In his later work he suggests that within modern society, rivalry takes place over increasingly symbolic objects.¹⁴⁶ It would seem that in sports fights take on the role of ritual violence.

Girard himself makes the link between religious thinking and technological research. The goal of each is practical action. He observes that when people are concerned with concrete results but “hard pressed by reality,” they become “increasingly cautious and conservative as the forces they wish to subdue come closer and are more immediate.”¹⁴⁷ One of the social forces which can be very immediate in all types of communities is laughter, which can often be a type of scapegoating. Since laughter is directed at the Other, the one who stands out as different, it reinforces what is conservative; that is, preserving traditional community distinctions. Girard observes that if you wish to join the crowd which is laughing, “you must associate with the violence contained in their laughter and not become the underdog. To make other people laugh, you must occupy—voluntarily or involuntarily—the position of the victim.”¹⁴⁸

Girard also sees the criminal justice system playing the same role as sacrificial ritual, making an essential link between penal justice and violent retribution. Because it is a public system “an act

¹⁴⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 115

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴⁶ *Things Hidden*, 93.

¹⁴⁷ *Violence and the Sacred*, 32.

¹⁴⁸ *Things Hidden*, 386.

of vengeance is no longer avenged; the process is terminated, the danger of escalation averted.”¹⁴⁹

Real life experience and tragedy are brought together in the following observation:

Tragic and prophetic inspiration do not draw strength from historical or philological sources but from a direct intuitive grasp of the role played by violence in the cultural order and in disorder as well, in mythology and in the sacrificial crisis. England, in the throes of religious upheaval, provided Shakespeare with such an inspiration for his *Troilus and Cressida*.¹⁵⁰

At the core of tragedy lies a realization that the illusion of impartiality and of adversaries collapses.

Tragedians, whatever their own preferences, constantly underline the “symmetrical relationship between the adversaries.”¹⁵¹ Girard observes that the modern mind has a problem conceiving of conflict in terms of loss of distinctions. The tragedian mind, like the primitive mind has no such problem.

Tragic drama addresses itself to a burning issue—in fact, to the burning issue. The issue is never directly alluded to in the plays, and for good reason, since it has to do with *the dissolution by reciprocal violence of those very values and distinctions around which the conflict of the plays supposedly revolves*. Because, this subject is taboo—and even more than taboo, almost unspeakable in the language devoted to distinctions—literary critics proceed to obscure with their own meticulously differentiated categories the relative lack of difference between antagonists that characterizes a tragic confrontation in classical drama.¹⁵² [Italics added]

A key example of scapegoating in Shakespeare is the murder of Caesar; it is both a collective phenomenon and it takes place at a time of crisis. It is modelled on a previous action which set a precedent, namely, the expulsion of Tarquin. Brutus makes it clear in a soliloquy quoted by Girard.

Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?
My ancestors did from the streets of Rome
The Tarquin drive when he was call'd a King. (II,i,52-54)

¹⁴⁹ *Violence and the Sacred*, 16.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

Initially the violence against Tarquin was an illegal act, one more violence in a violent escalation, just like Caesar's murder when it is committed. But Tarquin's expulsion met with the unanimous approval of the people and put an end to the crisis of Degree; instead of dividing the people along factional lines, it united them, and new institutions sprang from it. It is the real foundation of the Republic.¹⁵³

Just as tragedy is "a child of the sacrificial crisis" so too are the oracles of the biblical prophets.

The relationship between myth and tragedy is akin to the relationship between Torah and prophets for Girard. One example he cites is Jeremiah (9:3-5) in which Jacob is referred to in the same way as a Shakespearian tragedy might draw on a mythic theme:

Beware a brother,
for every brother plays the role of Jacob,
and every friend spreads scandal,
One deceives the other. . . .
Fraud upon fraud, deceit upon deceit.¹⁵⁴

He observes that "like tragedy, the prophetic act constitutes a return to violent reciprocity; so it, too, levels all mythological distinctions and does so even more effectively than tragedy."¹⁵⁵ Both the tragedian and the prophet seem to have an uncanny though inexplicit sense of how the scapegoat mechanism functioned as it generated the original myth or Torah. The same mechanism that produced the myth and Torah produced the tragedy and oracle.¹⁵⁶ Returning to the Jeremiah text, we see that this sense of ubiquitous fraud and deception, everyone becoming like Jacob in that regard, describes the kind of situation fully ripe for a scapegoat action.

We return to the subject of mimetic doubling discussed in the previous chapter. This

¹⁵³ *Theater of Envy*, 203.

¹⁵⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 65-66.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Violence and the Sacred*, 84-85.

phenomenon becomes associated with a crisis:

If violence is a great leveller of men and everybody becomes the double, or “twin,” of his antagonist, it seems to follow that all the doubles are identical and that any one can at any given moment become the double of all the others; that is, the sole object of universal obsession and hatred.¹⁵⁷

In this situation,

the slightest hint, the most groundless accusation, can circulate with vertiginous speed and is transformed into irrefutable proof. The corporate sense of conviction snowballs, each member taking confidence from his neighbor by a rapid process of mimesis. The firm conviction of the group is based on no other evidence than the unshakable unanimity of its own illogic.¹⁵⁸

Violent unanimity is based on a spread of doubles which effaces differences “heightening antagonism but also making them interchangeable. The rebirth of order demands the triumph of disorder.”¹⁵⁹

The transformation from disorder to order Girard sees as almost miraculous.

Here we are in the very midst of the crisis, when all the circumstances seem to militate against any unified course of action. It is impossible to find two men who agree on anything, and each member of the community seems intent on transferring the collective burden of responsibility to the shoulders of his enemy brother. Chaos reigns. No connecting thread, however tenuous, links the conflicts, antagonisms, and obsessions that beset each individual. . . . Yet it is at this very moment, when all seems lost, when the irrational runs amok amid an infinite diversity of opinions, the resolution of the dilemma is at hand. The whole community now hurls itself into the violent unanimity that is destined to liberate it.¹⁶⁰

The sense of conviction grows as each member takes “confidence from his neighbor by a rapid process of mimesis” needing “no other evidence than the unshakable unanimity of its own illogic.”¹⁶¹

Suddenly a true community emerges, “united in its hatred for one alone of its number. All the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 79.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ *Violence and the Sacred*, 78.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 79.

rancors scattered at random among the divergent individuals, all the differing antagonisms, now converge on an isolated and unique figure, the *surrogate victim*.¹⁶² What Girard reveals is that it is mimetic contagion that makes the scapegoat mechanism work. Everyone becomes united in desiring the same negative—the destruction of the scapegoat. Destruction is a non-zero sum commodity in that if it is destroyed for one it is destroyed for another.

While it is true that a crowd may need nothing more than the mutual reinforcement of its attitudes—because everyone is acting and thinking this way it must be right, it is also true that in many instances there is a justification process for the victimization. As the victim is perceived as illegitimate, a rationale is put in place which justifies the scapegoating. In cases of lynchings and pogroms in countries “convulsed by crisis,” Girard notes, “these forms of collective violence generally justify themselves by making accusations of an Oedipal variety: parricide, incest, infanticide.”¹⁶³

After the scapegoating there is what Girard refers to as a curative process. The unanimous action restores harmony to the community, and “the false premises that it maintains acquire, in consequence, an impregnable authority” which “hide[s] from sight the unanimous resolution as well as the sacrificial crisis.”¹⁶⁴ There are then two steps to justifying the action. The first is based on the illegitimacy of the victim who has “plunged the community into strife.” The second is retrojected back and is based on the curative function of the victim who has “banished all trace of violence.” This in contrast to the pre-victimhood state where every act of violence brought on more violence.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 80.

¹⁶⁴ *Violence and the Sacred*, 84.

The explanation for the power of the curative transformation naturally “falls to religion.”¹⁶⁵ One example is the murder of Pentheus brought on by a god to restore order to the Greek city of Thebes:

The murder of Pentheus serves as both culmination and resolution of a crisis provoked by the god himself in “revenge” for the Thebans’ failure to pay homage to him, and especially for the resistance of his own family. Having brought about Pentheus’ death, the god banishes the rest of the family from the city. Peace and harmony now returned to Thebes, which will henceforth honour the god in the manner ordained by him.¹⁶⁶

In the development of mythology, a plague motif can be used to conceal a sacrificial crisis. The salvation then comes through the death of a person appeasing the anger of some god. “A lone individual, who may or may not have been guilty of some past crime, is offered up to a ferocious monster or demon in order to appease him, and he ends up killing that monster as he is killed by him.”¹⁶⁷ Girard suggests that there may be a secondary displacement, namely, blaming rivalrous women for a conflict, thereby exonerating adult males “who have the greatest need to forget their role in the crisis because, in fact, they must have been largely responsible for it. They alone risk plunging the community into the chaos of reciprocal violence.”¹⁶⁸ Women are substituted for men with regard to violence. A key example of this occurs in *The Baccae*.¹⁶⁹ This points to a latent form of gender based scapegoating.

The dynamics of scapegoating and sacrifice have ranged from intrapsychic phenomena, to intergroup conflict, to ritual, to tragedy and transformation. There has been considerable variety of expression of the same structure. We will now turn our attention to Girard’s analysis of situations in

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 130.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 87.

¹⁶⁸ *Violence and the Sacred*, 139.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 141.

which key elements of the scapegoat structure are missing or drastically changed resulting in permutations of the scapegoat mechanism.

Permutations of the Scapegoat Mechanism

Until now we have been examining Girard's examples of scapegoating and sacrifice which help to define and exemplify violence that "works" at uniting a group as it clears away mimetic rivalries which could get out of hand. The pattern which has emerged can be designated classical scapegoating. The characteristics of classical scapegoating include 1) the hiddenness of the scapegoating; 2) the perception that the victim deserves the violence; with the corollary that 3) the scapegoat action is legitimate; 4) the transformation of "bad" violence which could continue escalating within the community into "good" violence which will not degenerate into reprisals; 5) the unanimity of the mob; 6) the spontaneous contagious action of everyone, and 7) a catharsis of violence ending with community peace. Already the structure of scapegoating has been shown to take different forms, such as all laughing at the one. There are, however, permutations of the scapegoat structure, where many of the conditions of scapegoating are present, but the lack of, or change to, some of the characteristics change the phenomenon significantly. First we will look at scapegoating gone wrong—when it degenerates into murder which generates additional violence. We will then look at contrived scapegoating, interiorized scapegoating, complex scapegoat phenomena, and perpetual scapegoating. Finally we will look at the revelation of the scapegoat structure through "failed scapegoating."

The sacrifice of Caesar does not work because Brutus is unable to unite the people around the action; there is not a "mimetic consensus of the entire people."¹⁷⁰ Girard uses the contrasting

¹⁷⁰ *Theater of Envy*, 211.

metaphors of hacking and carving to distinguish between two different types of action which have similar structures but different motivations. When envy and wrath enter in, there is a mangling of the victims. There is a false differentiation which ends up being a violent undifferentiation of the community. "In the carving metaphor all aspects of culture seem harmoniously blended, the differential and the spiritual, the spatial, the ethical, and the aesthetic. This metaphor illustrates what we may call the 'classical moment' of sacrifice."¹⁷¹

In the primitive ritual view, sacrifice fights violence not with ordinary violence, which would simply cause the crisis to escalate, but with a good violence that seems and therefore is mysteriously different from the bad violence of the crisis, because of its foundation in a unanimity that religion—that which binds men together—tends to perpetuate. If used wisely and piously, this good violence can stop the bad one from spreading whenever the latter reappears, as it necessarily must. Sacrifice is the violence that heals, unites, and reconciles, in opposition to the bad violence that corrupts, divides, disintegrates, undifferentiates.¹⁷²

The effect of classical scapegoating is a reconversion of confusion of the mimetic crisis into a "relatively peaceful exchange."¹⁷³ The difference between good and bad violence is, Girard's words, perishable and whenever it is lost an attempted sacrifice can make the crisis worse. This is what happened with the "sacrifice" of Caesar.¹⁷⁴ Classical scapegoating embodies a sense of solidarity with both ancestors and the whole community; failed scapegoating is contaminated by a mimetic rivalry.¹⁷⁵ In the case of Brutus and his co-conspirators, every attempt is made to appear "noble and disinterested. They must seem truly superhuman or they will not be seen as virtuous men

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 213

¹⁷² Ibid., 214.

¹⁷³ *Theater of Envy*, 214.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 214-15.

who did what they had to do solely for the love of the Republic.”¹⁷⁶

Brutus would like his “sacrifice” to be so beautiful that no confusion will be possible; it will be the absolute other of the crisis. The problem, however is that violence has only one absolute other and that is nonviolence, the abstention from all violence. Sacrifice cannot become the perfect other of envy and wrath without renouncing its specific means of action, without denying its own nature. Brutus cannot go the whole way: his real priority remains the murder; he simply wants to make it as effective as possible. He goes as far as he can in the direction of a nonviolence that he cannot embrace.¹⁷⁷

As sacrificial cultures become aware of what it is they are doing, Girard feels that the direction in which institutions must move is nonviolent mysticism and political manipulation.

As sacrifice loses its sacred power, a few holy men flee to the desert, leaving the sacrificial altar to many ambitious leaders who turn it into a political stage upon which the Caesars, Brutuses, and Mark Anthonies of this world play sacrificial politics, each one trying to sell his own brand of “good violence” to the mob.¹⁷⁸

Girard sees Brutus’s strategy as good from the perspective of scapegoat theory, but the implementation disastrous. Brutus and anyone trying to murder a political leader should take note of the do’s and don’ts of ritual sacrifice. First, sacrificers should avoid contact with blood. Brutus perpetrated a “bloody mess.” Failure to do the job calmly and neatly proclaims the message that violence is being unleashed; this has the effect of unleashing violence in a mimetic mob.¹⁷⁹ The political action of assassination of a leader suggests to Girard that there is a certain continuity between the “irrational” sacrifices studied by anthropologists and the supposed rationality of politics.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 216.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 217-18.

¹⁷⁹ *Theater of Envy*, 219.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

Scapegoating can be contrived through one person manipulating the scapegoat effect as opposed to it being generated spontaneously out of a crisis. For example, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck “mimics Lysander in front of Demetrius and Demetrius in front of Lysander, cleverly inciting each to chase *him* instead of the other.”¹⁸¹ He eludes them until they get tired and fall asleep. Leading up to this, the two antagonists have become perfect doubles of one another, each prepared to do the other in. “The goblin keeps deflecting toward himself a violence that the two boys aim at each other. Without this substitute target, blood would surely flow.” Girard is convinced that “Puck’s manoeuver is a *sacrificial substitution* if ever I saw one, just as effective as the sacrifice for which it stands.” Puck prevents them killing one another by “offering himself to their blows.”¹⁸²

Girard interprets this as a “decisively distorted representation” of the victimage mechanism. The violence is eradicated without a death. The sacrificial mechanism was not represented as an “automatic consequence of the mimetic crisis that it really is, but as the scapegoat’s own initiative” more precisely the initiative of the deity Oberon, Puck’s supervisor. The deviation in presentation is the contrast between the helpless victim as a real scapegoat and the clever hobgoblin. He credits Shakespeare with distorting reality in the same way as myths distort the reality of an initial scapegoating. Scapegoats seem worthy of worship for the same reasons that makes them worthy of hatred—by being a

single common target to the violence generated by human interaction , they save the communities from this violence. All over the world, in times past scapegoats were divinized for this very reason: their power to pacify antagonists was perceived as their own gracious deed. Myth is the false explanation of something quite real, retrospectively suggested to the victimizers by the beneficial consequences of their victimization.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 235.

¹⁸² Ibid., 235-36.

¹⁸³ *Theater of Envy*, 236.

A sense of being a scapegoat may be interiorized. For example, in *The Merchant of Venice*

Antonio speaks the following:

I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph. (IV,i,114-18)

This is at the beginning of Shylock's trial. Antonio speaks these words to Bassanio who has suggested that he die in place of his friend. Neither is really in danger with Shylock standing by as scapegoat.

Thus Shakespeare can have an explicit reference to scapegoating without pointing directly to Shylock. There is a great irony, of course, not only in the fact that the metaphor is displaced, the scapegoat being the essence of metaphoric displacement, but also in the most romantic complacency of Antonio, in his imitation of masochistic satisfaction. The quintessential Venetian, Antonio, the man who is sad without a cause, may be viewed as a figure of the modern subjectivity characterized by a strong propensity toward self-victimization or, more concretely, by a greater and greater interiorization of a scapegoat process that is too well understood to be reenacted as a real event in the real world. Mimetic entanglements cannot be projected with complete success onto all the Shylocks of this world, and the scapegoat process tends to turn back upon itself and become reflective. What we have, as a result, is a masochistic and theatrical self-pity that announces the romantic subjectivity. This is the reason why Antonio is eager to be "sacrificed" in the actual presence of Bassanio.¹⁸⁴

This self projection of the scapegoat reality, this interiorization of the scapegoat mechanism resonates with the interiorization of oppressive hegemonic structures by their victims.

Within a given situation, there may be complex scapegoating in which one person after another becomes a scapegoat. For example, *Richard III* was written by Shakespeare when his own king was considered oppressive. Within the play there are many cycles of murder and revenge. All the main characters have benefited from a political murder. But none of the victims were innocent.

¹⁸⁴ *Theater of Envy*, 252-53.

Richard is presented initially as a “monstrous villain” with a deformed body mirroring the “self-confessed ugliness of his soul.”¹⁸⁵ He is unanimously rejected as a scapegoat king in the last act. Throughout the middle of the play each character is villain or victim depending on the role being played within the War of Roses at any particular time. “Two images of the same character tend to alternate, one highly differentiated and one undifferentiated.”¹⁸⁶ Even the women, Anne and Elizabeth enter into a rivalry, contrived by Richard, for power. In structurally similar scenes they walk over the dead bodies of those close to them in order to achieve their ends.

These two women are even more vile than Richard, and the only character who is able to point out this vileness, thus becoming in a sense the only ethical voice in the whole play, is Richard himself, whose role, *mutatis mutandis*, is comparable to that of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*.¹⁸⁷

According to Girard, Shakespeare makes his spectators uneasy because of the moral ambiguity around the characters. There is not a simple answer to the question who is to be the scapegoat. Yet the “demand for the expulsion of the scapegoat is paradoxically reinforced by the very factors that make this expulsion arbitrary.”¹⁸⁸ Revenge with conviction demands a belief

in the justice of your own cause. This is what we noted before, and the revenge seeker will not believe in his own cause unless he believes in the guilt of his intended victim. And the guilt of that intended victim entails in turn the innocence of that victim’s victim. If the victim’s victim is already a killer and if the revenge seeker reflects a little too much on the circularity of events, his faith in vengeance must collapse. . . . To seek singularity in revenge is a vain enterprise, but to shrink from revenge in a world that looks upon it as a “sacred duty” is to exclude oneself from society, to become a nonentity once more.¹⁸⁹

The legitimacy of the scapegoat may be called into question by the guilt of the scapegoaters because

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 253.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 255.

¹⁸⁸ *Theater of Envy*, 255.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 273.

they have gotten into a structure of mimetic violence. It may clear the air but it does not result in the same type of unity that classic scapegoating produces.

In the Gospel story of Jesus and the Gerasene demoniac we have a case of an entrenched scapegoat structure. The demonic is banished to quarters outside the town in tombs; he has not been killed but is with the dead. The whole town is united in its sense of being different from this terrifying being.

They cannot do without him or he without them. This conjunction of both ritual and cyclical pathology is not peculiar. As it degenerates ritual loses its precision. The expulsion is not permanent or absolute, and the scapegoat—the possessed—returns to the city between crises. Everything blends, nothing ever ends. The rite tends to relapse into its original state; the relationships of mimetic doubles provoke the crisis of indifferentiation. Physical violence gives way to the violence of psychopathological relationships that is not fatal but is never resolved or ended. The total lack of differentiation is never reached.¹⁹⁰

The permutations on scapegoating are that like the case of Brutus, the scapegoating is neither clean nor decisive. The crisis is not totally resolved. There is a pathological co-dependence operating between scapegoat and community. They each know their place and go about playing their roles.

The scapegoating is associated with the demonic.

The word *demon* can obviously be a synonym for Satan, but it is mostly applied to inferior forms of the “power of this world,” to the degraded manifestations that we would call psychopathological. By the very fact that transcendence appears in multiple and fragmented form, it loses its strength and dissolves into pure mimetic disorder. Thus, unlike Satan, who is seen as principle of both order and disorder, the demonic forces are invoked at times when disorder predominates.¹⁹¹

The demoniac embodies the crisis which never seems to go away. He has accepted an identity which mirrors a community not fatally in crisis and not well.

Jesus commands the demons to leave the man and they enter pigs who run en mass over a

¹⁹⁰ *The Scapegoat*, 175.

¹⁹¹ *The Scapegoat*, 166.

cliff into the sea. There is an allusion to pigs and lynchers in Jesus teaching as he warns his hearers not to throw pearls before pigs who would “trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces.”¹⁹² In the action of the pigs there is another permutation. One common way of scapegoating is for a crowd to force the victim to the edge of a cliff and force the victim to fall to a sure death. In this case it is the crowd of pigs which goes over the cliff.

What is the force that drives the pigs into the sea of Galilee if not our desire to see them fall or the violence of Jesus himself? What can motivate a whole herd of pigs to destroy themselves without being forced by someone? The answer is obvious. It is the crowd mentality, that which makes the herd precisely a herd—in other words, the irresistible tendency to mimetism. One pig accidentally falling into the sea, or the convulsions provoked by the demonic invasion, is enough to cause a stupid panic in which all the others follow. The frantic following fits well with the proverbial stubbornness of the species. Beyond a certain mimetic threshold, the same that defined possession earlier, the whole herd immediately repeats any conduct that seems out of the ordinary, like fashions in modern society.¹⁹³

At the moment this happens the victim is clothed and in his full senses. The people of the town have mixed feelings about the healing and they urge Jesus to leave.

Girard sees Jesus and Job as “failed scapegoats” who unmask the scapegoat mechanism.¹⁹⁴

They do not stand alone as scapegoats in the Bible. The story of Joseph is that of a rehabilitated scapegoat. Moses bears many of the stereotypes of scapegoating. Abel has already been alluded to. The prophets have pointed to the futility of the sacrificial system and a number of the Psalms can be read as the voice of the scapegoat victim. The stories of both Job and Jesus point out the innocence of the victim and reveal that the strong forces which attempt to scapegoat Job and succeed in scapegoating Jesus are, in fact, illegitimate even though the scapegoaters have their own rationale at

¹⁹² Matthew 7:6 quoted in *The Scapegoat*. 182.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁹⁴ See *Job and Things Hidden*, Part II.

the time. Unlike myths which camouflage the scapegoat experience, these stories bring the structure of scapegoating into the open.

For Girard, it is the story of Jesus which decisively unmasks the founding mechanism of culture which was *hidden since the foundation of the world*. This unmasking operates at two levels. First, it exemplifies “failed scapegoating” when the innocence of the victim is apparent. At a deeper level it changes the paradigm by which we view and interpret reality. As we crucify our victims we can no longer plead that “we know not what we do.”

Scapegoating as Structural Transformation

If one were to ask Girard, What are mimetic desire and scapegoating?, from his works we would conclude that he would say they are “structures”—or a number of cognates such as “patterns,” “schemas,” or “structural mechanisms.” But he would be quick to qualify his answer. Structures which qualify for Girard as being true to human experience must have the following characteristics. They must be relationship oriented. One way of expressing this is that they can illuminate the Self-Other relationship where the Self and Other may be individuals or groups. They must be diachronic.¹⁹⁵ They are not the result of *conscious* design, though it could be argued that they are part of a tacit design.¹⁹⁶ They are dependent on meaning. Girard is clear that how we

¹⁹⁵ The importance and distinctiveness of the diachronic dimension of structure is illustrated by the riddle of the sphinx which represented a person at the different stages of life and by the structures of the sabbath year and jubilee. These took into account the diachronic accumulation of injustices and proposed a periodic, systematic socio-economic levelling process. An analysis based on a synchronic understanding of structures would systematically lock people into hegemonic relationships.

¹⁹⁶ The connection can be seen in Michael Polanyi’s concepts of tacit knowledge and intellectual passion. The first refers to knowledge we rely on but are not explicitly conscious of having and using. The second refers to the passion which drives heuristic enterprises—the objects of inquiry are objects of passion as well as of an implied design in that they are pursued out of a conviction that they *can* be found and that they can be found by looking in a certain place in a certain way (cf. *methodology*). See chapter 6 of his *Personal Knowledge*. Similarly, the dynamic movement from mimetic desire to violence may involve a design, a plan to acquire something even though the operative structure which fuels the passion may be hidden.

interpret action makes all the difference to what constitutes the structure of the action.¹⁹⁷ The structures exist within the human consciousness. Included in the sense of consciousness are the following: in Polanyian terms it is the whole of tacit and explicit knowledge; in Hebrew terms it is the heart understood as the unified centre of thought, emotion, will and desire; and in Levinas' terms, the vast interiority of the Self and the Other expressed in the face. One might also include, in human consciousness, the capacity to become aware of the transcendence of the Creator and the powers.¹⁹⁸

In this latter sense, it is akin to the prophets' ability to "see" very real forces at work even though others did not see them. Whether or not they truly saw these things or made them up was to be determined by whether or not the insights "worked."¹⁹⁹ Knowledge of these structures "works" in that it helps to interpret and anticipate human action. Structures can exist even though they are not perceived as such. Structures are imbedded in culture within the human consciousness and, as such, are passed on from generation to generation through story, myth and language. The various structures can interact with one another.²⁰⁰

It is significant that Girard first had the structures of mimetic desire and scapegoating revealed to him through a study of literary masterpieces. Literary narratives logically contain and

¹⁹⁷ "To double business bound", 209-211.

¹⁹⁸ For a contemporary theological development of "powers" see Walter WINK, *Engaging the Powers—Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

¹⁹⁹ Within the Deuteronomic Code, the way of determining a true prophet has this practical side to it - all that is spoken in the name of YHWH must happen consistently. In other words the word "works." (Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

²⁰⁰ For example, see *Things Hidden*, 295. the "structure of rivalry is not a static configuration of elements. Instead, the elements of the system react upon one another: the prestige of the mode, the resistance, the value of the object and the strength of the desire it arouses all reinforce each other, setting up a process of positive feedback." The fluidity of structures is evident throughout, particularly in the concept of transformation of structures discussed below. The sense of interacting structures may be compared to waves in water. If there are two sources of waves (structures) they can neutralize each other, reinforce one another, or create complex patterns depending on where the sources are, relative to one another, the wave frequency, intensity, etc.

reveal these types of structures since they are diachronic, relational, provide a context in which actions take on meaning, accept the interiority of the human self, provide a medium in which structure is both present and hidden, and they are produced within a personal and cultural context. They “work” for people in as much as there is general agreement that, on a profound level, they mirror life.

Though Girard uses the language of structure extensively, he takes great pains to distance himself from both structuralists and structuralism. Specifically, he sees Levi-Straus as the chief exemplar of structuralism in the field of anthropology and Freud playing a similar role in psychology. A major distinction Girard makes is that structuralism has a synchronic understanding of structure, whereas his concept of structure is diachronic.

The ways in which Girard uses “structure” in various combinations with other words provides evidence for the definition above. Furthermore, they show that the various concepts he develops within his hypothesis can be understood as structures and that these structures can be located in human consciousness, culture and relationships. It also becomes evident that the concept of structure helps to explain how it is that meaningful comparisons can be made among phenomena occurring in vastly different eras, cultures and circumstances.

Girard uses a number of words in parallel or as synonyms of “structure.” Exploring this cognate field will enhance our sense of what he means by the term. These cognates are grouped together in the following table.

Table 1 - Cognate Field of Structure²⁰¹

SYNONYMS & SIMILARITIES	ADJECTIVES TO DO WITH CONSCIOUSNESS	ADJECTIVES TO DO WITH CULTURE	ADJECTIVAL/ ADVERBIAL FORMS	DYNAMICS
Scheme, 64,	mental structure, 160-1	Mythic Structure, 219	Structural Configuration, 75	process, 435
schema, 174	psychotic structure, 315	Cultural Structure, 219	Structurally Linked, 100	pattern of deferral, 251
Topological schema, 112	structure of hypnosis, 317	Mimetic Structure, 296-7	Structural Similarities, 217	zero degree of structure, 316
matrix of meaning, 111	structure of possession, 317	Mythological Structure, 248	Structural Features, 220	process of feedback, 426
symbolic matrix, 162	interdividual psychological mechanism, 320	Symbolic Structurations 402	Structural Notion, 251	process of a mimetic crisis, 426
structural matrix, 179, 194	hysterical structure, 319		Structurally Parallel, 225	hypothesis, 435
Original matrix, 267			Structuring Potential, 246	deconstruct, 440
analogies, 217			Structural Convergence, 254	structural change, 397
institution, 72			Structural Reading, 270	
Infrastructure, 177, 256			Structural Change, 397	
mechanism, 64			Structural Concept, 424-5	
structural analogy, 225			Structural Displacement, 397	
systematic, 443			Structural Obstacle, 285	

²⁰¹ This and the following tables are based on word usage in *Things Hidden* to which the page numbers refer. In addition, from his other works we have "genetic mechanism of structural forms," (DBB,xiv)

We will examine each column in turn. The synonyms function as metaphors; together they contribute to a polysemic understanding of structure. A scheme is “a system of connected things” and a schema in Kant’s sense has to do with applying categories “to sense perception in the process of realizing knowledge or experience.”²⁰² “Matrix” has a root meaning of “womb” and has come to mean that which gives form to something. This metaphor suggests both genesis and formation. In mathematics it is a construct whereby the relationship of numbers to one another is determined by their place in the rectangle relative to the other. Metaphorically this suggests that the relative position of people to their peers is highly significant.²⁰³ Structure as analogy suggests that in the comparison of phenomena that are structurally related there the various parts of each phenomena will have analogues within the other. The association of institution with structure resonates with Ricoeur:

By “institution” we are to understand here the structure of *living together* as this belongs to a historical community—people, nation, region and so forth—a structure irreducible to interpersonal relations and yet bound up with these in a remarkable sense. . . . What fundamentally characterizes the idea of institution is the bond of common mores and not that of constraining rules. In this, we are carried back to the *ethos* from which ethics takes its name.²⁰⁴

Ricoeur’s observations make the connection between “structure,” used with a similar understanding to that of Girard, and the realm of the “practical” with its ethical connotations.

The various adjectives for structure form two primary related areas in which structures are located: in the human mind (Hebrew “heart”) and in cultures or mythologies which express the

²⁰² *The World Book Dictionary*, 1971 ed., s.v. “schema.”

²⁰³ This is particularly apparent in *Job* in which Girard argues that it was Job’s position as first among equals that made him first the mimetic model for his peers and second a prime candidate for scapegoat.

²⁰⁴ RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, 194.

common mind, thinking, ethos, values and patterns of relationships within a community. The relational dimension of structure is highlighted by Girard's use of the term "interdividual." This word is derived from a substitution of the Latin prefix *inter* (between) for *in* (not) before *dividuus* (divisible); the focus is no longer on the indivisible autonomous individual but on the relationship between that which is divided. This hints at the dynamics of differentiation and undifferentiation which will be dealt with below. The adjectives used to describe structure point to its role in human culture.

Looking at the words for which "structural" functions as an adjective suggests that positive comparisons can be made between parallel phenomena in which there can be convergence, similar configurations, features and potential. Within any structure the various parts are "structurally linked." The use of a form of "structure" with verbs like "change," points to the dynamic and hence diachronic sense of structure. "Process" as a cognate emphasizes the temporal and sequential dimension of structure. The process of feedback indicates the action by which a structural pattern is reinforced through another structure which is operative concomitantly.²⁰⁵

The dynamic nature of structure is manifest in a set of cognates used in the same way as Girard uses "structure." One of these is "pattern." A telling description of what Girard has in mind with his analysis of patterns is the following in which the pattern is seen in an event:

Contrary to what some think, I am not interested in defining what is good and bad in the social and cultural order. My only concern is to show that the pattern of collective violence crosses cultures and that its broad contours are easily outlined. It is one thing to recognize the existence of this pattern, another to establish its relevance. In some cases this is difficult to determine, but the proof I am looking for is not affected by such difficulty. If a stereotype of persecution cannot be clearly recognized in a particular detail of a specific event, the solution does not rest only with this particular detail in an isolated context. We must

²⁰⁵ See also *Things Hidden*, 314. Also, earlier, he refers to the elements of a system reacting upon one another.
295.

determine whether or not the other stereotypes are present along with the detail in question.²⁰⁶

As Girard identifies the significant aspects of a structure, certain normative patterns emerge. In particular situations, not all of the aspects of the structure may be present. By analogy, just as we have a general understanding that people have two arms, the fact that some people have only one arm does not take away from the general pattern we perceive.

The use of “hypothesis” in connection with “structure” draws out the heuristic side of an understanding structures. That is, one posits a given understanding of what the structure might be in a given instance and compares this with a pattern which has been observed in numerous other cases. The comparison may lead to a refinement of the hypothesis which is itself an understanding of structure.

A brief analysis of the cognate field of structure within Girard’s work emphasizes both the polysemic sense of the word, the importance of inter-relationships among the elements within a structure as well as the parallel analogues between situations manifesting the same structure, the diachronic dimension of structure and the locus of structure within the mind and culture of people.

What are these structures which are operative in the intrapersonal or interdividual dynamics of humanity, both within cultures and between cultures? A list of the various objects which can be fitted into the phrase “structures of ...” is presented in Table 2 in order to provide an overview of the types of structures Girard has in mind. They are grouped according to culture, consciousness and relationships.

²⁰⁶ *The Scapegoat*, 19-20.

Table 2 - Objects of Structure²⁰⁷

Culture	Consciousness	Relationships
Institutions, 79, 210 cultural phenomena, 174 myths, 177 all religions, 179, 256 all cultures, 256 all the great myths of violence, 185 crisis in the Gospels, 186 birth of Gods, 220 cultural order, disorder of undifferentiated violence, 314 composition, 64 decomposition, 64 ritual, 72, 210 ritual transgression, 75 alimentary prohibitions, 75 collective violence, 112	the work of the human mind, 193, 267 concepts, 227 human thought, hypothesis, 129 confusion, 312 logic, 312 consciousness, 312-3 unconsciousness, 312-3 psychosis, 313 psychic apparatus, 318 psychosomatic apparatus, masochism, 334 sadism, 334 demystification, 177	Relationships, 303 desire, 301 rivalry, 295 mimetic desire, 328 mimetic rivalry, 330 mimetism, 331 mimetic relationships, 341 homosexuality, 347 heterosexuality, 347 doubles, 379, 382 transcendent violence and love, 217 evil reciprocity of violence and benevolent reciprocity of love, 217 collective violence, 112 scapegoat mechanism, 162, 267 violent transference on scapegoat, 174

These objects of structure confirm the general observations above, that for Girard, structures are imbedded in human consciousness and culture and that they are relationship oriented. The dynamic action oriented aspect of structure is illustrated by the use of structure in conjunction with such phrases as the “violent transference on the scapegoat.” These objects of structure establish that mimetic desire, mimetic rivalry, doubles and the various aspects of the scapegoat mechanism can all be thought of as Girardian structures.

The point of identifying structures for Girard is primarily for the sake of hermeneutics. For

²⁰⁷ Based on *Things Hidden*.

example, they “explain the function of mechanisms”²⁰⁸; “certain recurrent patterns demand an explanation”²⁰⁹; and “structures are used to interpret a situation.”²¹⁰ He maintains that structures are the same in circumstances which are historically and ideologically different.²¹¹ A further link to the hermeneutical enterprise is his observation that “consciousness and unconsciousness are structured like a language.”²¹²

In summary, Girard’s use of structure as a word and as a concept is polysemic with the following features. Girardian structures are relationship oriented, diachronic, and dependent on meaning. They can exist even though they are not perceived as such and are imbedded in both culture and the human consciousness. Various structures can interact with one another.

What is striking about the scapegoat mechanism is that there is an almost instantaneous transformation from one structure to another. At one moment people are caught in a structure of the violence of undifferentiation. They are involved antagonistically with their doubles. The next moment all of the violent inclinations become polarized and focused on the victim who is totally differentiated.

Unlike those who say that a violent society is in chaos, Girard would argue that it has a structure, namely that of undifferentiation. A society which appears to be peaceful and well organized likewise has a violent structure: one based on differentiation whereby the “differentiated” out-group becomes a permanent scapegoat for the more powerful. In the event that a dominated

²⁰⁸ *Things Hidden*, 312.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 397. See also 112.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 79, 174.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 312-13.

group starts to find its own sources of power the domination system can turn quickly into a structure of mimetic rivalry. Girard has developed at length the change of structure from a violence of undifferentiation to violence of differentiation—mimetic desire to scapegoating. However, his only analysis of the reverse is his observation that when a sacrificial system loses its effectiveness, mimetic violence will again slowly develop to crisis proportions.

As a society marked by either type of violence starts to experience crisis—that is a basic questioning or distrust in either the legitimating structures of a scapegoat society or the terrible consequences of mimetic rivalry—then there can be a very rapid shifting of the focus of violence. At the very moment of transformation there exists a zero point of structure where the old is falling apart and the new configuration has not yet fallen into place. The sense of awe, tension and heightened awareness at this moment of transformation is captured by Andrew McKenna:

Appropriation by any in one of the groups surrounding the victim now spells danger from each and every one of its members. All share in this apprehension: indeed, all mime it, all insinuate it to one another, so that there is a moment of noninstinctual attention bent on seizing the prey but refraining from it out of self-preservation (out of an originary tactic of deterrence). In one and the same movement and moment of aborted appropriation, all are rival, model and obstacle for one another. This is the contradictory structure of desire as informed by taboo, which informs desire in turn. This structure results, as well as emanates from the sacralization of the object, as that to which one defers infinitely rather than succumb to the mimetic violence that produced it.²¹³

At a certain moment, a contagious violent mimesis overtakes every member of the mob as it turns into a collective action against the scapegoat.

This sense of rapid change in structure occurred at the end of the Cold War. No one could have predicted that the rivalry could have come to an end so quickly. All parties were seemingly mesmerized at the momentous change of structure of world affairs, power blocs, etc. It seemed but

²¹³ Andrew McKENNA, *Violence and Difference* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 131.

a moment and inter-ethnic conflicts boiled up with incredible haste and intensity as the violence of undifferentiated rivalry turned into a vicious violence of differentiation in which scapegoats were found on which to vent pent-up violence held in check by the awesome stakes of nuclear destruction.

Though most of Girard's focus in structural change occurs from undifferentiation to differentiation, he does look at the mercurial shifts in structure which can take place within a rivalry:

In the world of doubles, with its deep-rooted rivalries, there can be no neutral relationships. There are only those who dominate and those who are dominated. . . . Each time he dominates or thinks he is dominating his rival, the subject believes himself to be at the centre of a perceptual field; when his rival has the upper hand, the situation reverses.²¹⁴

This change in structure involves both a substantial change in relative power and ability to dominate, and a change of perception. The change of perception can be thought of in terms of the centre of the action. If one perceives oneself at the centre, one is the Model/Obstacle. As the situation changes one is focused on the Other who is now the Model/Obstacle. In the first instance one feels strong, in the second one feels alienated.

The paradigm that emerges is one of constant changes from one type of violence to another. The structures are always hidden yet the violence is experienced as something very real. In the case of violence of undifferentiation to that of differentiation when all unite around a scapegoat, the change can be almost instantaneous. In the case of a movement from differentiation to violence of undifferentiation the change is generally slower. The question raised by this analysis is the following: Is humanity forever doomed to living only in structures of violence with occasional experiences of reconciliation only after scapegoat violence? As has been observed often enough to make its wisdom commonplace, identification of the problem is the first step to solving it. To begin talking about these structures means that the problem of violence has been formulated in a new way. This raises

²¹⁴ *Things Hidden*, 305.

the question of how knowledge of these structures can be used to interpret the dynamics of particular conflicts. In the next chapter, the events of the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis will be described in some detail. Then, in chapter 5 Girardian structures of mimetic desire and scapegoating will be used to interpret the crisis. Before travelling to *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke*, however, we will reflect critically on Girardian theory.

A Critical Reflection

For Girard, a key feature of mimetic desire is that it represents the imitation of the interiority of the Other. Girard has done very little work on how does one pick up clues about the interiority of the Other or the desires of the Other. His insight came from literary material in which the omniscient author tells us about interiority. It is clear in the case say of Shakespeare's Pandarus that desire can be feigned. Girard acknowledges that adults are constantly playing games which mask their desires and their insights. There is little in his work to suggest how it is that people interpret others as having particular desires. Girard makes a convincing case that they do in fact make such interpretations and he does allow that these interpretations may be highly skewed, but he does not really analyse how desires of the other are perceived in real life situations.

Rebecca Adams makes the case that Girard splits mimetic desire into positive and negative mimetic desire and through his lifelong emphasis on acquisitive conflictual mimetic desire he makes a scapegoat of positive mimetic desire. We will return in chapter 6 to her analysis of the positive side of mimetic desire which sees as making up the other half of the whole. This one sided view of violent mimetic desire can be seen in his hypothesis concerning hominization and the origins of culture. He suggests that culture is born of violent scapegoating and that taboos, prohibitions, myths and rituals come from attempts to contain or minimize the lethal and toxic effects of violence. This

concentration on violence leads William Schweiker to observe that “ much as Girard’s reading of desire despairs of human affections, his understanding of violence as the generative act of culture denies the centrality of creation and human sociality in Christianity and Judaism.”²¹⁵ Taking Mary Clark’s theory of the need for connectedness, one could argue for certain cultures having at their base a recognition of the positive benefits of people co-operating. Erich Fromm, in *An Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* points to various cultures which he sees rooted in positive human relationships.²¹⁶ The call for a more balanced approach is echoed by George Frear:

Everything Girard says about mimesis, scapegoating, religiousness founded on violence, and the voice of the victim and of nonviolence in the Bible is telling, provided that his ideas are taken as part of the total picture. I suggest that insistence on genuine needs and the social nature of humanity supplement what Girard says of mimesis and scapegoating; that what he states about violence and the sacred be enriched by noting other and wholesome epiphanies of the sacred, and that his position on the Bible and Christianity be modified by relating them more closely to the world, both positively and negatively.²¹⁷

Girard’s emphasis on a referential act behind myths which contain scapegoating may need to be nuanced. It could well be that these myths are based on patterns of human behaviour. Rather than being based on a single referential act, they could be based on a multitude of actions which conform to a certain pattern.

There certainly is a strong gender bias in Girard’s language and choice of examples. This has been pointed out by a number of feminist scholars. However, the more recent of these are reclaiming Girardian concepts and using them to redefine women’s identity and action.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ William SCHWEIKER, “Sacrifice, Interpretation, and the Sacred: The Import of Gadamer and Girard for Religious Studies,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LV/4:791-810, 802.

²¹⁶ Erich FROMM, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

²¹⁷ George L. FREAR, Jr., “Rene Girard on Mimesis, Scapegoats, and Ethics,” *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, ed. Thomas W. OGLETREE (Dallas: Society of Christian Ethics, 1990), 123.

²¹⁸ For an overview of the critique and positive feminist application see Susan NOWAK, “The Girardian Theory and Feminism: Critique and Appropriation,” *Contagion* 1:19-30 (Spring 1994) and Jennifer L. RIKE, “The Cycle of

One of the greatest limitations of Girard's work has been the fact that his analysis rests almost exclusively on texts. Even his work on anthropology is based on field notes and publications of anthropologists. This means that the primary enframing and emplotting have already been done by the authors of the texts. In a real life situation in which a host of dynamic relational systems are interacting with one another, it becomes more complicated to use mimetic theory to sort out what is happening. For this reason I have included a section on hermeneutic methodology at the beginning of chapter five.

None of the critiques of Girard impinge significantly on the central thesis. What we are examining is the effectiveness of Girard's schema to understand the violent dynamics of deep-rooted *conflict*. His theory of human origins is certainly not critical to this discussion. I have compensated for his inattention to gender by highlighting gender issues as they emerged during the crisis. The one-sidedness of his treatment of mimetic phenomena is addressed in chapter six with the introduction of the concept of mimetic structures of blessing.

Chapter 4

The Oka/Kanehsatà:ke Crisis of 1990

On July 11, 1990, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), raided the Pines, a disputed territory which, according to the Mohawk community of *Kanehsatà:ke*¹ belonged to them, and according to the Municipality of Oka, belonged to the municipality. Since 1989, developers, with the support of the Oka Municipal Council, had been planning to cut down the pine trees to expand a nine hole golf course to eighteen holes and build homes around the perimeter. As it became clear that protests would not deter developers, Mohawks began occupying the Pines in March 1990 and remained there into July, ignoring court orders to clear the property. In the course of the July 11 attack, Corporal Marcel Lemay of the SQ was shot to death. That day the Mercier Bridge, which runs through the Mohawk reserve of *Kahnawà:ke*, was blockaded by Mohawks, causing significant inconvenience to commuters from the South Shore of the St. Lawrence working in Montreal. Passions were ignited to the point of mob action against the Mohawks. Mohawk warriors were prepared to fight to the death to defend their land rights. The standoff in *Kanehsatà:ke* and *Kahnawà:ke* was to last for 78 days. Eventually the Canadian military would be involved. Repeatedly, Mohawks were convinced that there would be significant loss of life.

Present day Mohawks living near the Lake of Two Mountains think of themselves as *Kanehsata'keró:non* (people who belong to the land of *Kanehsatà:ke*). This sense of belonging to a particular parcel of land is part of their spiritual tradition. Although not all Mohawks living there can

¹ Since there are many spellings of names of Mohawk places, groups and concepts, for the sake of consistency I will be using the Mohawk spellings as found in Brenda Katlatont GABRIEL-DOXTATER and Arlette Kawanatatie VAN DEN HENDE, *At the Woods' Edge* (Kanesatake Education Center, 1995), an historical anthology written by the Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke*. Within quotes from other sources, I will use the spelling as found in those quotes.

trace their ancestry back to those who lived there hundreds of years ago, the people have a collective consciousness of being part of this land; those that join the people adopt that same consciousness just as those who convert to Judaism join in a collective sense of ownership of the land of Israel as a spiritual place.²

As the chapter unfolds we will look, first, at the early history of *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke*. Since the dispute boiled down to who really owned the Pines, we will trace the history of the land ownership issue. The conflict was also about the aspirations of different peoples; hence, we will examine, second, the growth of ethnonationalism among the *Québécois* and Mohawks with some reference to developments at *Kahnawà:ke*, the other key venue for the crisis. Third, we will trace the evolution of the crisis referring to the original development of the nine-hole golf course and actions taken to expand the golf course. Fourth will be key events leading up to the crisis: the occupation of the Pines by the Mohawks and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in June, 1990. This will take us to, fifth, the beginning of the crisis on July 11, 1990. Sixth will be an analysis of the dynamics of the crisis as it escalated and as new players were introduced. This will be followed by subsections dealing with passions and events of the crisis until it was diffused; and finally, we will note key developments in its aftermath. The information presented in this chapter will be used in the next chapter in which the events will be interpreted in the light of the mimetic and scapegoat theories presented in chapters two and three.

² Among the Mohawks there is frequent comparison made between themselves and the Jewish people: reclaiming the land of Israel has inspired the Mohawk imagination.

Early History

In the 1600s, the French took control of Montreal Island; many of the *Kanien'kehà:ka* (Mohawks, literally People of the Flint) from Hochelaga moved to a Sulpician mission at Sault-aux-Recollets and the old Iroquois settlement of *Kanehsatà:ke*, but the bulk of the *Kanien'kehà:ka* population established itself at *Kahnawà:ke* on the South Shore of the St. Lawrence. In 1717 the Sulpicians were allotted a tract of land at the present site of Oka by the French Crown to build a mission at the Mohawk outpost of *Kanehsatà:ke*.³ They were to hold the surrounding territory in trust for the Aboriginal people.

The Euro-centred history of *Kanehsatà:ke* begins with the 1721 move of a group of Mohawks with Sulpician leadership from the area of Montreal to the shores of the Lake of Two Mountains. *Kanehsata'kerò:non* affirm that this is one aspect of the reality:

There is no doubt that in or about 1721, a group of Onkwehón:we [original people], in the company of a priest of the Seminary of St-Sulpice, moved to Kanehsatà:ke. There is no doubt that the Sulpicians founded a mission and that the descendants of this group of Onkwehón:we now live in Kanehsatà:ke.⁴

There is evidence, however, that the history of the *Kanehsata'kerò:non* goes back further.

For centuries before contact with Europeans, *Kanehsatà:ke* was a small but significant village among the *Kanien'kehà:ka*. Part of the Turtle clan, it was among the first *Kanien'kehà:ka* settlements to embrace the teachings brought by the Peacemaker⁵; in that regard *Kanehsatà:ke* “is

³ GABRIEL-DOXTATER and VAN DEN HENDE, *At the Woods' Edge*, 33.

⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁵ The Peacemaker is associated with *Kaianere'kó:wa*—the Great Good, Great Peace, Great Law which is the foundational teaching expressing the values, organization and desired relationships among the *Rotinonhseshà:ka* (Longhouse People including all the peoples of the Iroquois Confederacy). He made his appearance after a long period of wars among these peoples. See *ibid.*, 9, n. 6 for a discussion of the possible dates ranging from 800 to 1500 C.E.

still mentioned in the ancient condolence ceremony of the *Rotinonhseshá:ka*.⁶ It was an important spot for *Kanien'kehà:ka* habitation in connection with hunting and fishing expeditions along the Ottawa River. At one point it was a safe haven for women and children during wars with other *Onkwehón:we*.

There is evidence that there was a permanent discreet community of *Kanien'kehà:ka* in *Kanehsatà:ke* before the 1721 arrival of Sulpicians and Mohawks from the Montreal area. There is reference to the presence of people from “Cahghneghsattakegy” at the creation of the Two Row Wampum by the *Rotinonhseshá:ka* and the Dutch in 1613.⁷ Several accounts of encounters between Iroquois and the French suggest the existence of a settlement at *Kanehsatà:ke*. The name appears in New York Colonial Documents with several spellings of a word with the same pronunciation. The earliest reference is in 1694 when the Governor of Canada delivered a message in which *Kanehsatà:ke* was called a fort. In the late 1600s the British referred to the “Canassadagas” as a distinct group, calling them “Praying Indians” because of the French influence.⁸ In correspondence written in *Kanien'kehà:ka*, people referred to their home as *Kanehsatà:ke*.⁹ Mohawks residents have continued to find pottery shards and arrowheads in the vicinity of Oka. By the year 1722 there was more land under cultivation than had been the case in the previous settlement at Sault-aux-

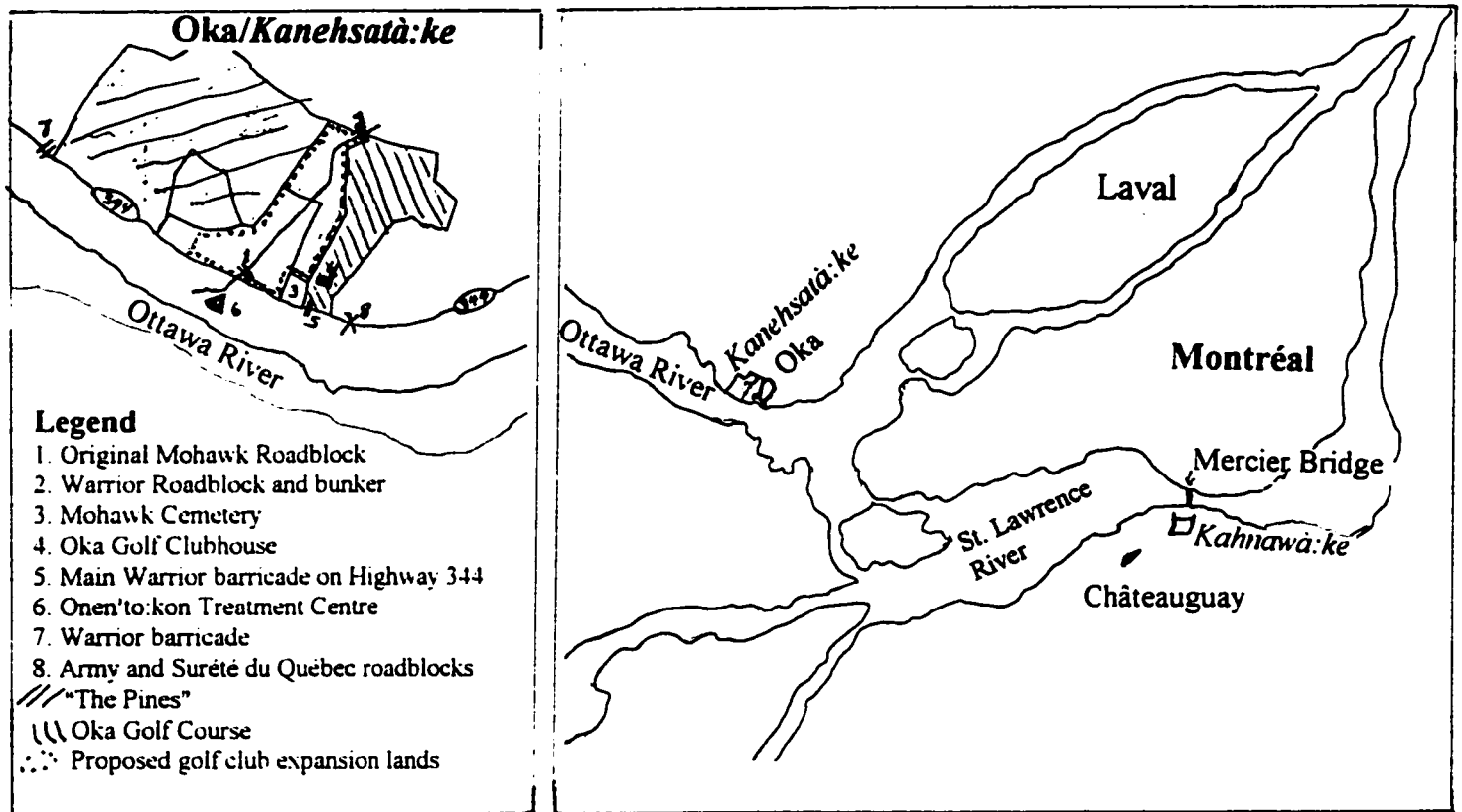
⁶ *At the Woods' Edge*, 16. Note, 6, that the *Rotinonhseshá:ka* formed a Great League of Peace, the *Kanienere'kò:wa*, which, in addition to the *Kanien'kehà:ka*, included the *O'niñtehá:ka* (People of the Standing Stone - Oneidas), *Onont'kehà:ka* (People of the Hill - Onondagas), *Kaionkehà:ka* (People of the Great Pipe - Cayugas) and the *Shenekehà:ka* (People of the Great Mountain - Senecas).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 26. The French preferred “Mission du Lac des Deux Montagnes” as a place name and in 1868 changed the name to Oka.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

Recollets, where after 20 years they had cleared 400 arpents of land. It is unlikely that they could have cleared more land than that in only one year.¹⁰ In any case, after the establishment of the Sulpicians in the area, control of the land was transferred to this French religious order by the King of France.



In spite of a moratorium on seigneurial concessions in Quebec between 1711 and 1732, on April 27, 1718, the French Crown ratified a seigneurial concession of land at Deux Montagnes to the Seminary of St. Sulpice.¹¹ The Sulpicians were a religious order founded in France with an interest in missionary activity in the new world. They were an elite order whose members tended to be sons

¹⁰ *At the Woods' Edge*, 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 33.

of judges, officers, surgeons and small landowners.¹² On September 26, 1733, Louis XIV signed a deed of concession for more land to the south which was once again expanded in 1735. Over time the Sulpicians took over complete ownership of this land, which previous to their arrival had been the territory of the Mohawks.

The question of rights to the land became ambiguous with the British conquest. In the early years of the Seven Years War, the *Rotisken 'raké:ta*¹³ of *Kanehsatà:ke* had held British prisoners of war in support of the French. In the course of one of their encounters with the French General Montcalm (the head of the French forces who lost the battle of the Plains of Abraham leading to British control of Canada), he dismissed them indignantly. With Montcalm's angry response they turned away from the French. On September 20, 1760 they turned the last remaining prisoners of war back to the British unharmed. There was an exchange of wampum ratifying an agreement between the British and the *Kanehsata 'kehró:non*. The people of *Kanehsatà:ke* agreed to be neutral throughout the remainder of the war. British leader Sir William Johnson committed himself to protect the lands, rights and freedom of the aboriginal people, a promise included as Article 49 of the French Capitulation.¹⁴ On June 28, 1761 the agreement with the British was renewed.¹⁵ Johnson

¹² *At the Woods' Edge*, 57, drawing on Brian YOUNG, *In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary Of Montreal as a Business Institution*, (Montreal: McGill - Queen's Press, 1816-17) 39.

¹³ *At the Woods' Edge*, 381. This word is generally translated as "warrior" but it refers to the men of the community: literally it means "carrier of the burden of peace." (Ronald CROSS and Hélène SÉVIGNY, *Lasagna - The Man Behind the Mask* [Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1994], 33.) The Mohawk concept of peace is more than the absence of war: rather it is the "active striving of humans for the purpose of establishing universal justice" and is "the product of a society which strives to establish concepts which correlate to the English words Power, Reason and Righteousness. . . . The Power to enact Peace (which required that people cease abusing one another) was conceived to be both spiritual and political. But it was power in all those senses of the word—the power of persuasion and reason, the power of the inherent good will of humans, the power of a dedicated and united people, and when all else failed, the power of force." (*Basic call to Consciousness*, [Mohawk Nation via Roosevelttown, NY: Akwesasne Notes, 1978], 8-9)

¹⁴ *At the Woods' Edge*, 51.

later sent word to them through Daniel Clause as follows:

Brethren, as you are now become one people with us, I chearfully [sic] Join in Strengthening and brightening the Covenant Chain of Peace and friendship, and you may depend upon it that no thing on Earth can break it, so long as you all strictly abide thereby, and as you have not the advantage of records like us, I recommend it to you, often to repeat the purport thereof & of all our mutual Engagements, to your young people so as they may never be forgotten.¹⁶

After the English won the war with France, the Mohawks experienced the British attitude as one of arrogance; the commitment to safeguard their rights and interests declined.

Meanwhile, the Sulpicians were determined to survive in Canada even though Article 35 of Capitulation demanded that they give up their Canadian holdings and leave the country. After the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Sulpicians swore allegiance to Britain and the land holdings were transferred from France to the Montreal seminary. There was a proviso that no new members from France would be admitted. Were it not for the French Revolution, the order would have died a natural death by 1796. At the time of the French Revolution, a number of French Sulpicians found their way to Canada and the British looked the other way as they became integrated into the Canadian Sulpician community.¹⁷

In order to establish hegemony over the land, the Sulpicians exercised *de facto* control while at the same reinforcing their ties to the British. This two-pronged strategy proved successful. Exemplifying their practical ownership of the land, they surveyed the land in the early 1780s and settled on a border with the neighbouring seigneury. As soon as the land was surveyed, they began

¹⁵ *At the Woods' Edge*, 53, n. 7, drawing on *Sir William Johnson Papers*, Volume X, Seven Years War, 302-305.

¹⁶ *At the Woods' Edge*, 54, quoting Speech delivered by Daniel CLAUSE, May 6 1762, *Sir William Johnson Papers*, Vol. X, the Seven Years War, 445-449.

¹⁷ *At the Woods' Edge*, 72.

to grant concessions to settlers. By 1801 a total of 732 settlers received lots and by 1835 the number reached 1,307.¹⁸ By 1847 over six hundred settler families had moved onto the land which had been subdivided into twelve parishes with all the land in eleven of them conceded.¹⁹ It should be noted that these settlers procured the land in good faith and passed on title through sale or inheritance to people who were oblivious to the fact that there might be any other claim to the land. The second prong was to ensure that the British did not take action against their claims over the land. In 1789 they swore fealty and homage to the British Crown; the acceptance of this oath they interpreted as recognition of their title to the land. Nearly half a century later during the 1837 rebellion, they strategically supported the British:

In 1838, at the height of the rebellion, the priests ingratiated themselves to the British by showing Sir John Colborne a map of the region. They "pointed out the road by which he could march to St-Eustache without impediment; and by doing which and not taking the direct road, which led thro' woods and other obstacles, as the rebels expected, all their plans were disconcerted." With the help of information supplied by the Seminary, the British successfully crushed the rebellion in St-Eustache and St-Benoit. "As they rained an artillery barrage on the church, the British forces set it on fire and mercilessly shot down the Patriots as they jumped out the windows to escape the flames."²⁰

The Sulpicians were rewarded in the Ordinance of 1840, which confirmed their title to the land. It was passed by a special appointed council that replaced the representative assembly after the rebellion. The Mohawks continued to live on land formally controlled by the priests. Over time, the amount of land open to them diminished as landholdings were sold off to settlers.

¹⁸ *At the Woods' Edge*, 62.

¹⁹ After 1847 a significant number of Mohawks joined the Methodists, but the Sulpicians accelerated the sale of land to Catholic colonists. See Pierre TRUDEL, "Le territoire d'Oka, une véritable pomme de discorde," *La Presse* (July 14, 1990), B3.

²⁰ *At the Woods' Edge*, 82-83 drawing on Crisis in the Canadas: 1838-1839, *The Grey Journals and Letters*, Edited by William ORMSBY. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1964) 20 and Herbert BAUCH, "Quebec's Memory," *Montreal Gazette*, March 25, 1995, B2.

As the Sulpicians consolidated their control over the land, relations with the people of *Kanehsatà:ke* progressively worsened. Some of the Mohawks converted to Methodism. Pressure was put on the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* to move to other lands. They were severely persecuted throughout the last half of the nineteenth century.²¹ In 1881 a number of families were relocated to Gibson; many of the terms of the resettlement agreement were never followed through. Meanwhile, there was a tree-planting initiative at Oka *Kanehsatà:ke*.

By the late 1800s much of the land atop the escarpment rising from the Lac des deux Montagnes had been cleared and was suffering severe erosion owing to its sandy soil. In 1885 there was a major landslide in the village. The following year, on the suggestion of the Sulpicians, the Mohawks planted thousands of pine trees, trees which today are majestic in their height, shading a luscious forest. The Pines is one of the oldest planted forests in Quebec.²²

In 1909 a trial over land rights began in Montreal with the government paying the legal expenses for both the *Kanehsata'keró:non* and the Sulpicians. Lawyers for the Mohawks discovered documents in the Paris archives which confirmed “that the lands were granted to the Seminary for the sake of convenience only, and that the grants were made for the benefit of the

²¹ Persecution involved not allowing them to engage in commercial activity (a canoe built by a Mohawk and sold was taken away from the new owner). They were imprisoned for cutting firewood. There were up to four trials for the same event in an attempt to convict them—all ended in acquittal. There were attempts to evict them from Oka “under the pretense of building or widening streets.” (*At the Woods' Edge*, 170), etc. In their own words they “have been oppressed, culturally suppressed, unjustly charged with crimes, jailed without reasons, relocated against their will, and have their children taken from them. They have been denied the necessities of life and basic human rights. They have suffered attacks on their language, culture and spirituality, and have been subjected to paternalistic assimilationist policies. The people of Kanehsatà:ke have never, not once, been served justice, and in spite of this have not been defeated.” (Ibid., 185)

²² Christina CORAGGIO, “Historian offers solution to Oka dispute,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 19, 1990, A4. She refers to the work of historian Michel Girard who researched the history of the Oka forest for his doctorate at University of Ottawa.

Kanehsata'kehró:non."²³ However, Judge Hutchinson ruled for the seminary and on appeal Justice Carrol noted that

[n]either the King of France, nor the King of England intended to confirm rights of property on the Indians. They treated them with tolerance and benevolence for political and humanitarian reasons, but nobody would have given rights of property to these children of the forests who are maintained in a state of tutelage.²⁴

The appellate decision was referred to the Privy Council in 1912; it categorically denied aboriginal title to the land. The Privy Council "reflected the attitude that aboriginal rights were granted by the Crown and were subject to change at the will of the Crown."²⁵ Thereafter, the Seminary continued to sell off lands.

In the 1930s, the Commons and other land used by the people of *Kanehsatà:ke*, was sold to a Belgian company. When this company found out that there might be an Indian claim to this land, they offered to be cooperative but the Federal Government only pointed them back to the Sulpicians to resolve any questions about legal title. In 1941, the Sulpicians were unable to pay off a million dollar loan from the Province of Quebec so they turned over one hundred lots to the government, many of these lots were later transferred to the Municipality of Oka for one dollar.²⁶ In 1945, all the remaining land held by the Sulpicians was turned over to the Crown on condition that the Fathers of St-Sulpice were released from any claims the Indians might have against them. Through these

²³ *At the Woods' Edge*, 228, drawing on In the Superior Court. Justice Hutchinson present, no. 2001, Judgement, N.A.C., RG13, Vol. 2432, File A 500.

²⁴ *At the Woods' Edge*, quoting Notes of Judge CARROL, December 29, 1911, N.A.C., RG13, Vol. 2432, File A500, Trans. B.G.

²⁵ *At the Woods' Edge*, 230.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 233, drawing on J.R. MILLAR, "Great White Father Knows Best: Oka and the Land Claims Process," *Native Studies Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 36.

transactions, any land to which the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* might have laid claim was transferred to a combination of European private interests and various levels of government. There was a *de facto* attempt to extinguish aboriginal land rights. These transfers provided a "legal" basis for the development of a golf course in the early 1960s and eventually the attempt to expand the golf course in 1990. The period from 1960 to 1990 was marked by the growth of ethnonationalism among both Quebecers and Mohawks. We will examine that phenomenon and then return to the story of the golf course.

A Backdrop of Mohawk and Québécois Ethnonationalism

The conflict over the Pines is also one about an expression of ethnonationalism. As André Picard noted, ten days into the crisis,

[i]ronically, the demands of Quebec nationalists are very similar to those of aboriginal nationalists: control over demography, education, the justice system, and freedom to pursue economic development. In fact, as nationhood has become a goal for Quebec and the First Nations, there is a realization that the seemingly incompatible quests are inextricably linked.²⁷

Visible manifestation of ethnonationalism grew among both the *Québécois* and Mohawks in the thirty years before the 1990 crisis. Each has roots in the group's respective history.

Québécois ethnonationalism goes back to the previous century. Negative feelings over English hegemony found expression among *Québécois* in the rebellion of the 1830s. In the 1850s, the seigneurial system was abolished, making it possible for thousands of farmers to own their own land. The Quebec church became more conservative, supporting an Ultra-Montanist position over the French Gallican movement. 1867 saw the birth of Canada, with a recognition that French Canadians were one of "two founding nations." The first half of the twentieth century was dominated

²⁷ André PICARD, "A question of nationhood," *The Globe and Mail*, July 21, 1990, D1.

by Maurice Duplessis who reinforced traditional hegemonic structures within Quebec as the people accepted direction from church and political leaders. In the 1960s, with the election of the Lesage government and the Catholic reforms of Vatican II came a blossoming of *québécois* culture with a concomitant evolution of a political vision summed up by the phrase, *Maitres chez nous* (Masters in our own house). The Quiet Revolution changed the landscape of Quebec and Canada forever. The FLQ Crisis of 1970 exposed a powerful ethnonationalism with territorial interests. This ethnonationalism gained political legitimacy through the election of *Parti Québécois* (PQ) premier René Lévesque in 1976. In 1980 a referendum was held on Quebec sovereignty—it was defeated. During their time in office the PQ established a pro-business environment which spawned a large number of French-speaking entrepreneurs who were Quebec nationalist in outlook.²⁸ When Liberal premier Robert Bourassa succeeded the *Parti Québécois*, he became a strong exponent of nationalist—but not sovereigntist—sentiments through the 1980s. Besides the political aspect of ethnonationalism, the cultural side saw the evolution of a large cast of distinctive artists among whom songwriter Gilles Vigneault became a key figure. Religiously there was a tremendous drop-off in church attendance.

Mohawk communities also experienced a growth in ethnonationalism in the thirty year period preceding the Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke* crisis. Gerald Alfred's concept of nesting helps conceptualize how developments in a broader aboriginal context had an impact on *Kanehsatà:ke*. Identities are nested within one another progressing from the local people (*Kahnawa' keró:non* or *Kanehsata'keró:non*) to the Mohawk nation (*Kanien'kehà:ka*) to the Iroquois (*Rotinonhseshá:ka*) to the pan-Native

²⁸ Matthew FRASER, *Quebec Inc.—French-Canadian Entrepreneurs and the New Business Elite* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1987), 4.

(*Onkwehón:we*).²⁹ As the Crisis of 1990 unfolded, the nested layers of identity came into play as solidarity was expressed for the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* from ever further distant parts of their identity groups. Most immediate however, was the involvement of people from *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne; given the close links among these three communities it is helpful to look at developments within and between each.

From the beginning of the post-contact *Kahnawà:ke* settlement, it had positioned itself as an independent linkage community, conducting trade among disparate groups. Many of its members had come from the Mohawk River valley of New York and carried with them a memory of close political ties with the Dutch. As British and French gained ascendancy, Mohawks became important traders with links to the French through their Jesuit inspired Catholicism and links to the British through a history of commerce. They maintained their neutrality through the American Revolution but played a key military role backing the British in the War of 1812. Throughout the colonial period, they maintained trading and cultural ties with the wider Iroquois population. By 1926, however, the “Mohawks of Kahnawake had been politically distinct from the Iroquois Confederacy for 250 years.”³⁰ That year Paul Diabo of *Kahnawà:ke* was charged with being an illegal alien in the United States. The show of solidarity by the entire Six-Nations Confederacy was a catalyst to the renewal of a traditional political order. Declined the use of the church hall for a meeting of the Grand Council, Mohawks constructed a Longhouse in *Kahnawà:ke*, re-creating both ties with the Confederacy as well as traditional political structures within the community.³¹

²⁹ Gerald R. ALFRED. *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1995), 18-19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

During the 1950s there was a traditionalist revival in *Kahnawà:ke*. One of the leaders in this revival was Louis Hall. Hall and his followers were the more militant among the traditionalists, in contrast to chiefs like Tom Porter who emphasized the peace teachings of the Great Law. Hall eventually became the guru for what came to be known as “Warrior Societies.” His manifesto advocates violence:

Now that the Indians have the ability, not only to make peace but also to destroy the white man's peace, it is time to require Canada and the U.S. to render real and true justice to the true owners of this land by restoring some of the stolen lands.³²

Hall reinterpreted traditional Iroquois teachings in his own way. He went so far as to advocate the execution of people who interpret the Great Law in more peaceful ways. He claimed that people like chiefs Tom Porter and Jake Swan should be executed for treason. Ironically, Hall received the primary inspiration for his conversion to Longhouse religion from a Jewish lawyer and the impetus for his Manifesto from a Nazi who had been a colonel in Hitler's army. Hall recalled the Jewish lawyer saying, “You know a lot of us Jews have no use for any kind of religion, but we are members of our own national religion. We support our religion with money and our presence when needed. It is a force for unity and national survival.”³³ His manifesto strongly influenced such people as Francis Boots, Akwesasne War Chief, and *Kahnawà:ke* warrior Paul Delaronde both of whom played key roles in the 1990 crisis.³⁴

A key event which brought the Mohawks together was the move of Francis Johnson of

³² “Warrior's Words Call For Execution,” *Indian Time Akwesasne*, July 6, 1990, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Richard WAGAMESE, “Oka leader ‘perverting’ Great Law—Warriors ideas blasted but barricade backed,” *Calgary Herald*, July 20, 1990, 1. It is noted that “in his visits with supporters of the Warriors Society, Porter says he has noticed a disturbing tendency for rhetoric and the absence of free thought. Any arguments supporters make is based on the same set of ideas and those ideas originate from Hall, he says.”

Akwesasne to repossess the site of an ancient Mohawk village in New York in response to an anticipated seizure of lands from *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne for the sake of the St. Lawrence Seaway. It encouraged militancy; it reframed the land issue, showing that land which was taken could be repossessed; and it stimulated in Mohawk imagination an even greater sense of being able to stand up to Euro-American government structures.

Gerald Alfred argues that at the heart of Mohawk ethnonationalism are identity, institutions and interactions with Euro-American society, particularly with the Government of Canada. The interactions with the most devastating effect on relationships with Canada have involved expropriations of land for the building of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the controversies over membership of the community. The expropriations were done without consultation; not only were many community members displaced, but the effect of the enterprise was to deny significant direct access to the river, thus impacting negatively the quality of life of the community. This was the most dramatic of a long series of land losses forced upon the community by the government. The resultant nationalism “at its very core contains an imperative to resist further erosions of the community’s national sovereignty”³⁵ and its ideology “at its core rejects Canada and turns inward toward the traditional ideal.”³⁶ The bitter feelings around the Seaway prompted a traditionalist revival which had the longer term effect of generating syncretic institutions: the Mohawk Council of *Kahnawà:ke* has tended to incorporate traditional Mohawk teachings into its structure. Out of the controversies over membership has come a complex approach to identity which lays out boundaries between its members and others based on a combination of “blood quantum,” permanency of being Mohawk if

³⁵ ALFRED, *Heeding the Voices*, 186.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

born Mohawk, participation in the life of the community and knowledge of language and culture.

The interpretation of identity, interactions, and the development of institutions has been shaped by a political ideology which draws upon the teachings of the Great Law. The Great Law system has been consolidated into three principles: “the achievement of sovereignty through the implementation of a traditional form of government; the strengthening of an identity of distinct peoplehood through a focus on ancestry; and the redress of historical injustices surrounding the dispossession of Mohawks from their traditional lands.”³⁷ This dispossession was part of the reality in *Kanehsatà:ke* over the thirty year period from 1959 to 1989.

Developments in Oka/Kanehsatà:ke from 1959 to 1990

The municipality of Oka and the Nation of *Kanehsatà:ke* reflected on a micro scale what was happening within the wider communities within which each was nested. The forces of nationalism with an impulse toward economic development evident in Quebec generally were part of the reality for *québécois* living at Oka; Mohawk nationalism, a resurgence of traditional teaching and an impulse to redress historic injustices took on more and more significance throughout this time.

The *Kanehsata'keró:non* thought of themselves as a separate nation; they were the distant people, separated from the larger Mohawk communities to the southeast and southwest. They had learned their own unique way of surviving without the benefit of a reserve with clear boundaries. In fact, the land of *Kanehsatà:ke* was a checkerboard of tracts of land within the municipality of Oka. The Commons, or Pines, became a centre for the spread-out community. It was there that people came together for special gatherings and sports events. A lacrosse playing field was established and

³⁷ Ibid., 76.

an open area was the scene for pow wows. Every year there was a Mohawk community picnic on July 1. The cemetery for the *Kanehsata'keró:non* was located in the Commons.

In 1945, the land known as the Commons was purchased by the Crown and in 1947 the land claimed by the Mohawks was sold to the town of Oka. In 1959, the Quebec legislature passed a private members' bill giving the municipality of Oka permission to build a golf course on land constituting a portion of the Commons. The bill was sponsored by then Premier Paul Sauvé, the Member of the National Assembly for Oka. The Federal Government had the right to disallow the bill within a one year period. The *Kanehsata'kehró:non* wrote to one government department after another asking them to disallow the bill but they were simply passed on from one to another until the year was up. In March 1961, James Montour and Samuel Nicholas appeared before the Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Indian Affairs with the following expression of their sentiments:

We the Six Nations Mohawk of Kanehsatà:ke, Lake of two Mountains, hold the Canadian Government responsible for our plight today. . . . By remaining criminally silent in the face of injustice, the Government is as legally and morally guilty, as the ones who committed the injustice, though they themselves did not take actual part in the proceedings. . . . For over a century, the controversy has been waged over this land to our detriment. We have opposed an organization far wealthier, far more influential. Our appeals have been strangled and thwarted in every instance, and our rights have been ignored. Let us this time, reverse the usual order and let Justice have its sway.³⁸

These pleas fell on deaf ears and the golf course was subsequently built in 1961 beside a Mohawk cemetery. As the trees were falling, "the impoverished Mohawks scraped together \$50 and sent [Emile] Colas to Ottawa in an unsuccessful attempt to halt the work."³⁹

³⁸ *At the Woods' Edge*, 239 quoting Joint Committee, Appendix XVI, 318.

³⁹ The Canadian Press, "Battle lines were drawn thirty years ago," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 13, 1990, A-3.

After the golf course was established, the municipality of Oka continued to grow and many fine homes were built in the vicinity of the golf course. On the part of the Mohawks, there was a resurgence of interest in Longhouse traditions and Mohawk language. During the 1970s, land claims were made to the Federal government. Mohawk pride was growing. A drug and alcohol treatment centre was built among the Pines between highway 344 and Lac des deux Montagnes.

Eurocanadians who owned houses in the vicinity had protested the building of the Treatment Centre because they thought it would devalue the price of their homes and create other potential problems.

By the late 1980s, golfers wished to expand the golf course to eighteen holes, making it a full course. Developers prepared plans for the extra nine holes and included in the design fifty to sixty new homes around the outside perimeter. The mayor was a member and shareholder in the club.

In the Spring of 1989, Mayor Ouellette had unveiled plans for the golf course expansion and housing development. The Golf Club was to front the \$70,000 to buy eighteen hectares of land for the city from Maurice Maxime and Jean Michel Rousseau of France; the city in turn would lease the land to the golf course. Over the 30 year term of the lease the city would take in a million dollars. Besides this, there would be tax income from the \$10 million dollar housing development planned by Maxime and Rousseau.⁴⁰ The plans were released before any consultations had taken place with the *Kanehsata'kehrò:non*. A local environmental group, *Regroupement de protection de l'environnement*, collected 1,276 names on a petition against the project.⁴¹

The *Kanehsata'kerò:non* were determined that the golf course not be expanded. Quebec Native affairs minister John Ciaccia had grave concerns about the expanded course. Besides the fact

⁴⁰ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 44-45.

⁴¹ Carrie BUCHANAN, "Residents oppose golf development," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 13, 1990, A-3.

that the Mohawks laid claim to the land, there was a concern for erosion if the trees were removed. There were calls for an environmental study. A number of non-Mohawk citizens of Oka were against the development.

The Department of Indian Affairs convened negotiations to try to settle the land claims issue. In September 1989, they made a proposal which would have created a reserve by consolidating some of the land; this would have resolved jurisdictional problems.⁴² It was agreed that the Mohawks present would consult with their people about this proposal; when it was presented to a gathering of their people, 201 out of 203 rejected it with the remaining two abstaining.⁴³ Nonetheless, as late as July 1990, it was referred to as an “agreement” by the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Despite a series of public meetings and negotiations, the basic issue was non-negotiable on both sides: the Mayor of Oka, Jean Ouellette and the developers were determined to build the golf course and the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* were determined that the pines not be cut down. Meanwhile, there was an internal dispute over leadership of the *Kanehsata'ke* Band. In January 1990, the clan mothers removed Grand Chief Clarence Simon and replaced him with George Martin; the resulting feud was only one of several internal conflicts. The nine chiefs on the Band Council were appointed by clan mothers from the Turtle, Bear and Wolf clans but the Council needed approval from the Department of Indian Affairs for any decisions. The *Kanehsata'kehró:non League for Democracy* and the *Group for Change* wanted a return to band elections as had been the case previously under the Indian Act. On the other end of the spectrum was the small but outspoken Longhouse which

⁴² YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 48.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 50.

refused any jurisdiction of the Indian Act.⁴⁴ Besides these rifts, there were cleavages based on religion.

Events Leading up to the Crisis

Despite a call by the Mohawks that the golf course not be built until land claims were settled, the town and golf club were determined that they would proceed. On March 9, 1990, there was a board meeting at the golf club. Allen Gabriel, who had consulted all the different Mohawk factions, read a petition to members of the board in the presence of a group that had gathered to protest. It seemed to no avail.

A group of Longhouse members met in the kitchen of the home of Walter David Jr. to plan a strategy. Convinced that the cutting of trees could happen at any time, they determined to set up an early warning system. The next day, they used John Cree's tractor to pull a fishing shack into the clearing at the Pines; the occupation had begun. When the people of *Kanehsatà:ke* heard that a camp was set up, many of them came to visit.⁴⁵

With the issue of the golf course not resolved, a number of Mohawks decided that they could not trust the Federal Government or the courts or any other Canadian institution to look after their interests and protect the Pines. They were afraid that at some point the developers would simply move in and start cutting down trees. The only way they could prevent this was to maintain a twenty-four hour a day presence in among the Pines.

The occupation surfaced a number of gender-based differences of roles and attitudes among

⁴⁴ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*. 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

the *Kanehsata'kehró:non*. During the early days, older women came daily with food and coffee.

Some teenage girls also tried to help:

Sixteen-year-old Myrna Gabriel and her two girlfriends became regulars, showing up at the fishing shack by five o'clock in the afternoon, and staying until after it got dark. . . . Myrna keeps a calendar marking all the important events in her day-to-day life, and March 31 is blocked off in bold red ink: the first time she slept overnight in the Pines. "It hit me, there were no other girls my age involved. We were there defending our land, while all these other teenagers were out partying it up. It made me proud."⁴⁶

Susan Oke went on night patrols with other women with "ugly sticks" for protection. For her, time spent around the sacred fire was part of rediscovering her Mohawk roots including the role of women in caring for the land. When the question of weapons came up,

[t]he armed men in the Pines asked the women to decide if the weapons should stay. As the traditional caretakers of the land, the women had the responsibility of dealing with this issue, but the decision was not one they wanted to make. . . . There were strong arguments for and against being armed.

Linda Cree had been an avowed anti-warrior, but the events which took place in the Pines changed her attitude. She was aware of the hazards but was equally afraid of the consequences of a police attack if the Mohawks were unarmed. Denise David-Tolley put it this way, "What choice did we have by then? We said, 'Bury them, hide them, keep them away. Only if they come in to harm us do you bring them out—only then'." After a pause she continued, "They came in to harm us."⁴⁷

During this time, three men had been asked by the chief to represent the Mohawks. In a letter dated June 14, several women, who had played key roles, severed ties with other Longhouse negotiators, feeling they had been left out. In their argument, they referred to the Great Law of Peace which states: "Women shall be considered the progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land and the soil." *Kanehsatà:ke* Longhouse women in the Pines held daily women's meetings to

⁴⁶ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 59.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

keep their spirits up and discuss strategy.⁴⁸ They determined to be the front line of defence and invited women from other reserves to join them in the protest camp.

An injunction against the barricade was granted by the Quebec Superior Court on April 26. On May 1, the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* gathered in the Pines, coming from the various factions, united in support of Allen Gabriel and the Longhouse group. They were joined by warriors from *Kahnawà:ke*.⁴⁹ Later in May Akwesasne war chief, Francis Boots made two visits to the Pines and the Warriors supplied a Chevy Blazer patrol truck, two-way radios, food tents and other supplies. Some of the men in the Pines acquired weapons, others disapproved of any presence of arms.

A meeting between Mohawks and Indian Affairs minister Tom Siddon was set for June 21. Preparations for that meeting brought out tensions within the Mohawk community. The Longhouse people were critical of the band council's lawyer, Jacques Lacaille. Within the Longhouse group there was resentment on the part of the women that only men had been asked to represent the Longhouse in land negotiations.⁵⁰ June of 1990 was also a tense time for Canadians generally and the *Québécois* in particular; it was the deadline for the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord.

Three years previous, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and ten premiers had made an agreement on constitutional changes which would have paved the way for the Province of Quebec to agree to the Canadian Constitution. Included in the agreement was that the Meech Lake Accord, as it was called, was to be approved by the ten legislatures and the Canadian parliament within three years. The deadline was June 23, 1990.

⁴⁸ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 75.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

As the deadline approached, neither Manitoba nor Newfoundland had passed the Accord. Premier Clyde Wells of Newfoundland raised many questions about it, prompting concerned Canadians across the country to write him. His position was that if every other province passed the Accord, he would support it as well.

One reality of the Accord was that both its process and content excluded First Nations peoples. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief George Erasmus spoke out publicly against it. Aboriginal people were convinced that if the Accord passed, they would be shut out of constitutional recognition for many years to come.

One of the rules of procedure in the Manitoba legislature was that there had to be unanimous consent in order to move the vote on the Accord ahead in time to pass it by the deadline. Cree member of the Legislative Assembly, Elijah Harper held an eagle feather as every day he refused to give consent to a motion which would have made it possible for the Meech Lake Accord to be passed. He was assisted in his strategy by Ovide Mercredi, a constitutional lawyer who was then Vice-Chief of the AFN. The Mulroney government was so intent on getting Harper's co-operation, they sent a high powered team led by Senator Lowell Murray and including Stanley Hartt, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff; Paul Tellier, clerk of the Privy Council; and Norman Spector, Secretary to the Cabinet for Federal-Provincial Relations to try to convince Harper to co-operate. He and his colleagues rejected the six point offer as "trinkets."⁵¹ When it became clear at the end that Manitoba would not pass the Accord, Newfoundland also refused to pass it and it died on June 23.

Throughout the time period leading up to the deadline, Prime Minister Mulroney told the people of Quebec and Canada that the failure of Meech would mean the rejection of Quebec and

⁵¹ Don McGILLIVRAY. "Natives want more than Ottawa's trinkets," *Montreal Gazette*, July 19, 1990, B-3.

could result in the tearing up of the country. Around that time there were some anti-French actions in Canada which were broadcast repeatedly on Quebec television. With the failure of Meech there was a sense of tremendous letdown within Quebec and within the Conservative Government of the time. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa had both staked their political futures and place in history on the passing of the Accord. It was to reconcile French and English. As soon as the Accord was defeated, Mulroney disappeared from the public stage for most of the Summer that followed and Bourassa and his PQ opponent Jacques Parizeau were united in their sentiments that Quebec would have to take charge of its own destiny.

On June 29, the lawyer for the Municipality of Oka sought a second injunction to have roadblocks removed from the Pines. Judge Anthime Bergeron granted the injunction and gave the Mohawks ten days to leave. Every day there were new ultimatums from the Oka municipal council as tensions increased. Sam Elkas, Quebec Public Security Minister, "announced that the Mohawks must clear the barricades within four days or else the government would take action. He did not specify what kind of action the Mohawks should expect, but the threat of police intervention was implicit."⁵² Allen Gabriel, who had played a key leadership role among the Mohawks to that point, urged that the barricades be dismantled and left the Pines with his two allies. Ellen Gabriel and John Cree became the key spokespersons for the Mohawks. The Quebec Human Rights Commission proposed an independent committee to sort out land rights. Their telegram to Tom Siddon was not responded to until four months later but Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia affirmed his support the same day.⁵³ Police increased their patrols and were put on standby.

⁵² YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 76.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 77.

On July 9, John Ciaccia wrote Mayor Ouellette urging him to not to call in the police or act quickly on the golf course expansion. He argued that the situation went beyond strict legality. The next day, Jean Ouellette accused Ciaccia of not understanding native issues and requested the *Sûreté du Québec* “to clear the barricades and stop the ‘criminal acts’ in the Pines. ‘We are counting on you to settle this problem without any further delays or requests on our part’, Ouellette told the police in a letter.”⁵⁴ John Cree, Mohawk spokesperson at *Kanehsatà:ke* voiced their determination to do “whatever is necessary to defend” the land. When asked about guns he said, “Whatever the police do, we will match. That’s up to them . . . but this is not a joking matter.”⁵⁵ Warriors continued to strengthen their positions by digging foxholes, stringing fish line with noise makers and hooks, and setting “booby traps.” Two days after the deadline expired, the morning of July 11, police cruisers raced through the town. Denise David-Tolley, asleep in the Pines, tossed restlessly dreaming about an attack. In her dream, someone died.⁵⁶

The SQ Raid

Early in the morning of July 11, 1990 a hundred members of the *Sûreté du Québec* drove west along highway 344 to the area where the barricade had been erected within the Pines. In the clearing around the barricade, a number of women were having their early morning ceremonies around the fire. The SQ officers came in along two lines, one along highway 344, along the southern edge of the land under dispute. The other was along a side road on the eastern edge of the Pines.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 79.

⁵⁵ John DAVIDSON, *Canadian Press Release*, July 9, 1990.

⁵⁶ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 81.

They had come prepared with body bags for resulting casualties. For over two hours they held their positions. They brought in a loader to clear away the barricade.

The warriors had positioned themselves in the Pines on the north and west sides of the clearing; the women were in the clearing just behind the barricade. The police shot canisters of gas toward the women but the winds came from the North and sent the gas toward the police. At about 9:00 a.m., one of the warriors began running into the Pines. Three officers ran after him in the direction of the lacrosse box. Shooting started and it came rapidly from both sides for twenty-three seconds. When it was over, Corporal Lemay had been shot. The SQ seemed unprepared for the strength of the armed resistance. They immediately got into their cars and left the area. Corporal Lemay was rushed to a hospital in an ambulance. He died in less than an hour.

Because of the hasty departure, keys were left in the cars as well as in the loader. As soon as the police left, the Mohawks moved some of the police cruisers across the road to block highway 344 and smashed them with the loader. In all six police vehicles were damaged.⁵⁷

Francis Boots looked on in horror as the vehicles were demolished. "No, no, don't destroy those damned things," he pleaded. "We can use them. We can use the radios." But it was too late. The Mohawks—including many people who had never set foot in the Pines to help the protesters during the early days of the roadblock—were united in an orgy of destruction, a collective venting of anger.⁵⁸

As soon as the SQ began moving in on the barricade in the Pines, the warriors of *Kahnawà:ke* were appraised of the situation by radio. Word spread quickly through the community. A dozen Warriors moved quickly to block the Mercier Bridge, a bridge joining the South Shore of the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. Having experience as steel builders it was easy for them to

⁵⁷ Mark Richardson and Francine Dubé, "Oka standoff continues," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 14, 1990, A-1.

⁵⁸ YORK and PINDERA, *People of the Pines*, 37-38.

move on the girders of the bridge. They tied some flares resembling dynamite together and fastened them to some of the bridge supports. They threatened to blow up the bridge if they were attacked.

A second attack on the Pines was being planned by the SQ. Two parallel but uncoordinated efforts were made by the Mohawks to prevent it. In Montreal, *Kanehsatà:ke* lawyer Jacques Lacaille made 45 phone calls to Quebec government officials who did not take the situation seriously. After a warning of a second attack from the SQ, he got through to Premier Bourassa and told him that one officer was dead. Meanwhile Ellen Gabriel, spokesperson for the *Kanehsata'kehrò:non* announced that if any Mohawks were hurt, Mercier Bridge would fall. The second attack did not materialize.⁵⁹

Within hours after the initial raid, the police had set up their own barricades on highway 344 opposite the Mohawk barricades. They used these barricades to control access to the Pines, initially blocking all shipments of food.

The Mohawks made good use of the loader. Besides building up the barricades, they brought it into the Pines to dig bunkers at various strategic locations. These bunkers would become home for the warriors for the next two months. They commandeered golf carts and established positions through the Pines and the golf course. Additional aboriginal people found their way into the Pines to help.

With the events at *Kanehsatà:ke* and *Kahnawà:ke*, the entire Mohawk nation became implicated in the struggle which now involved the government of the Province of Quebec. Primary negotiations during this time period were with members of the provincial cabinet especially Ciaccia, Minister for Indian Affairs.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 192.

On July 16, a funeral was held for Corporal Lemay near Quebec City. Nearly a thousand attended to hear him eulogized by Robert Lavigne, director of the Quebec Police, the one who ordered the attack. At the Pines, the Mohawks flew their flag at half mast since they “consider all life as precious as the Earth itself.”⁶⁰

The Crisis Intensifies

Within days, the crisis intensified, igniting passions throughout Canada and turning world attention to Oka, *Québec*. At least a fourteen factors contributed to the escalation of the conflict. First, both police and warriors got reinforcements and there was a mutual perception of greater strength. By July 13, the police had brought in additional reinforcements bringing their number to one thousand.⁶¹ On Thursday, July 12, the SQ asked the military base at Valcartier for an inventory of soldiers and equipment. By July 16, soldiers and military equipment had been moved from Valcartier near Quebec City to Longue Pointe garrison in east end Montreal.⁶² One Warrior boasted that the Mohawks had mortars, land mines and grenades in addition to a wide assortment of guns.⁶³ There was a threat that if there was another attack on *Kanehsatà:ke*, the Mercier Bridge would be blown up.⁶⁴ In Montreal, the threat to blow up the bridge was given credibility by France Goupil, president of *Géophysique GPR International Incorporated*, a firm in the business of demolishing

⁶⁰ Patricia POIRIER. “Police jam church to mourn slain officer.” *Globe and Mail*, A-4.

⁶¹ John DAVIDSON. Canadian Press Release, July 13, 1990.

⁶² Elizabeth THOMPSON. “Army troops at the ready,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 17, 1990, A-6.

⁶³ “Mohawks boast they can match police firepower,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 13, 1990.

⁶⁴ Alexander NORRIS. “Can’t rule out police raid on Mohawks,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 13, 1990, A-1.

buildings who said it would take only two to three hours to install the explosives.⁶⁵

Second, the citizens of Oka and Châteauguay experienced hardship as a result of the blockades and called for strong action to rectify the situation. It took commuters to Montreal from Châteauguay at least an hour and half longer to go to work. The SQ sealed off the roads going into *Kahnawà:ke*.⁶⁶ Some businesses in Oka experienced a drop in business.⁶⁷ Residents had difficulty getting to their homes.

Third, the frustration in Châteauguay brought on mob action against anyone who looked like a Mohawk. Eventually mobs turned on the police as well. They burned Mohawks in effigy, sometimes yelling repeatedly, "Burn the bugger." By July 13, grandmother Betty Coles was angry at the Mohawks over the bridge closing. She watched a mob besieging a Mohawk woman in the grocery store. She was so disgusted with the mob action that she called the *Kahnawà:ke* radio station to ask how she could help supply food to them.⁶⁸ As she put her efforts into helping the Mohawks, the scene of the barricades turned into a daily "hatefest."⁶⁹

On July 15, the burning of the warrior in effigy was accompanied by one thousand people howling mocking war whoops.⁷⁰ They painted a red target on the effigy's chest, stuffed a cigarette pack in its pocket and placed a noose around its neck. The crowd chanted "F... the Warriors! the

⁶⁵ Mike KING, "Mercier Bridge destruction easy: explosives expert," *Montreal Gazette*, July 13, 1990. Also referred to in "La population blanche excedée s'en prend aux Mohawks de Kahnawake," *Le Devoir* (July 14, 1990).

⁶⁶ Pierre BELLEMARE, "La guerre des nerfs s'intensifie à Kahnawake," *La Presse* (July 13, 1990), A3.

⁶⁷ Francine DUBÉ, "Fallout from Oka: bitter residents, business losses," *Ottawa Citizen*, July, 15, 1990, A2.

⁶⁸ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 228.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁷⁰ Peter STOCKLAND, "Native effigy burned," *Ottawa Sun*, July 16, 4.

damned savages.”⁷¹ Sylvain Leblanc, of Châteauguay, who was responsible for one of the effigies stated, “I have nothing against the Indians. I am angry at the gun-toting Warriors who are the equivalent of the Indian Mafia.”⁷² Sharon Fournier found the burning “disgusting,” and pointed out that many “don’t understand the Indians’ plight.”⁷³

Bourassa was also burned in effigy because he did not act more quickly to call in the army. On July 18, three hundred RCMP came to the aid of the SQ in controlling the crowds in Châteauguay.⁷⁴ Local roads were clogged. It was reported that one man lost his job because of the bridge closing.⁷⁵

Fourth, within the Government of Quebec and SQ there was hurt and anger over the killing of Corporal Lemay and a concomitant desire to lay blame. Even Premier Bourassa was said to be very angry. Both government and SQ lost face over both their failure to achieve their goals and the ignominy with which the police left the scene. All government ministers who might have been responsible at the time (many were on vacation so there was a whole series of passing responsibility onto others) denied having given approval for the raid. Indian Affairs Minister John Ciacca even went on record saying that he had told Mayor Ouellette not to call in the SQ.⁷⁶

Fifth, there were numerous protests about the attack and government action. Much of the

⁷¹ Christina CORAGGIO, “Chanting mob curses Mohawks,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 16, 1990, A-1.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Jack BRANSWELL, *Canadian Press Release*, July 19, 1990.

⁷⁵ Carrie BUCHANAN, “Getting mad: Commuters want their bridge back,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 17, 1990, A4.

⁷⁶ The text of his letter was published under the headline “Oka: les enjeux vont au delà de la stricte légalité,” *Le Devoir*, July 12, 1990.

rhetoric of protest was very graphic, using metaphors which highly denounced both police and government. As tension mounted in *Kahnawà:ke* over the closing of Mercier bridge, Goldie Hershon of the Canadian Jewish Congress sent a letter to the Mayor of Châteauguay suggesting “that the daily burning of effigies and the expressions of racism have contributed to a deterioration of the climate for negotiation.”⁷⁷ Jean Dorion of the St. Jean Baptiste Society pointed out that native rights had been denied for hundreds of years and “their grievances must be considered in this context and not treated in narrow legalistic terms”.⁷⁸ Michelle Falardeau-Ramsay, deputy chief commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, criticized Indian Affairs Minister Toms Siddon for non-action on the crisis. She claimed that Canada’s international image was tarnished by the confrontation: “Imagine what would be our reaction if it was in another country,” she said. “We would say: Isn’t that awful that they use such tactics. They are not allowing the Red Cross vehicles to bring food. They don’t allow a supply of drugs to come in.”⁷⁹ The Human Rights Institute of Canada referred to the raid as “insane.”⁸⁰ Three Quebec bishops called of negotiations rather than using force.⁸¹

Sixth, local politicians spoke up against what the Mohawks were doing. The Mayor of Châteauguay, Jean-Bosco Bourcier, threatened to launch a class action suit against the Province for

⁷⁷ Patricia POIRIER, “Châteauguay mayor defends community,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 20, 1990, A-4.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Bob COX, *Canadian Press Release*, July 18, 1990.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Trois eveques pressent les gouvernements de negocier,” *La Presse*, July 13, 1990. Note also that Gilles LESAGE writing in *Le Devoir* concluded that “[o]utre la légalité, la justice et l’équité sont en cause,” under the headline “Des barricades sentenaire—les enjeux d’Oka dépassent la stricte l’égalité,” July 13, 1990, 12. See also Michel ROY, “Négocié avec les autochtones,” *Le Droit*, July 14, 1990, 19.

the loss incurred by those on the South Shore who had trouble getting to work. In defence of his community, he insisted that those making racist remarks were not from Châteauguay, "Rather," he said, "there is a small group of about 200 young people, mostly from Montreal, who try to provoke police because they have been beaten by other police forces in the past."⁸² He reportedly stated a preference that "residents vent their frustration by burning Mohawks in effigy" rather than "disrupt life in the community."⁸³ Furthermore he charged that his people are "innocent victims in a larger dispute over native land claims."⁸⁴ Both mayors and crowds blamed provincial and federal governments for not taking appropriate action. Châteauguay MP Ricardo Lopez asked Brian Mulroney to send in the army.⁸⁵

In Oka, Mayor Ouellette left for a few days because of reported death threats but continued to stand by his decision to call in the SQ. A group of mayors from the surrounding area met to declare their support for Ouellette. They began to point out that there was more at stake, since a huge portion of Quebec was subject to Indian land claims. Deputy Mayor Gilles Landreville applied in the affirmative when asked about taking the barricades by force.⁸⁶ Guy Dubé, from an Oka citizen's group favourable to the mayor, "blamed the dispute on a group of radical Mohawks, 'prone

⁸² Patricia POIRIER, "Châteauguay mayor defends community," *The Globe and Mail*, July 20, 1990, A-4.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 227. Lopez also suggested that Canadian Indians be shipped to Labrador if they wanted their own country.

⁸⁶ Francine DUBÉ, "Mayor's friends urge use of force," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 16, 1990, A-3.

to terrorism and blackmail’.”⁸⁷ And on July 15, Gilles Landreville, acting mayor of Oka, was critical of the government “for holding talks with ‘armed criminals’.”⁸⁸

On July 23, Harry Swain, deputy minister of Indian Affairs claimed that the Mohawk warriors were a “criminal organization” who had hijacked *Kahnawà:ke* and *Kanehsatà:ke*. Theirs was a “potent combination of cash, guns, and ideology,” he said, describing the crisis as an “insurrection” by an “armed gang.”⁸⁹

A seventh evidence of intensification of conflict was the blocking of food supplies to both *Kahnawà:ke* and *Kanehsatà:ke*, in effect using food as a weapon. In some cases, residents couldn’t get through to their homes and relatives. In one case a 69 year old woman was denied access to food. The police were afraid that some food would get to Mohawks behind the barricades.

Angry store owners in Châteauguay refused to sell food to Mohawks. Many Mohawks would not venture into the city anyway because they had been “yelled and jeered at and even pelted with stones.”⁹⁰ Jocelyne Desrosiers, a store owner in Châteauguay open to Mohawk business, was asked by vigilantes to close her store, threatening that the window might have an “accident” if she didn’t. Police told her they couldn’t guarantee a rapid response to a distress call.⁹¹ At the same time, thirty sympathetic whites formed a food pipeline to get food into *Kahnawà:ke*.⁹² The Federation of

⁸⁷ André PICARD and Patricia POIRIER, “Peaceful end to Oka standoff possible,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 16, 1990, A-1.

⁸⁸ Jane ARMSTRONG, “More talks needed in standoff,” *Toronto Star*, July 16, 1990, A-10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁹⁰ “Keep Security,” *Canadian Press Release*, July 16, 1990.

⁹¹ “Neighbors smuggle supplies to Mohawks,” *Toronto Star*, July 17, 1990, A-6.

⁹² *Ibid.*

Chinese Students and Visiting Scholars in Canada and Montreal's Chinese community donated food to Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke* and *Kahnawà:ke*.

On July 13, an SQ official told a member of the Quebec Human Rights Commission that "there was no question of 'individuals of native origin' to cross the police barricades with provisions."⁹³ Contrary to Quebec's Charter of Rights and Freedoms none of the Commission's representatives were allowed in to investigate.⁹⁴ On July 21, Quebec Cabinet minister Claude Ryan said that "the refusal to allow food into Mohawk communities was official government policy, not police vindictiveness." A few days later Ciaccia told reporters, "There was never any question of depriving them of food."⁹⁵

Commenting on the tactic of blocking food, Frank Chalk, a Concordia University historian and genocide expert commented that the "deprivation of food as a pressure tactic should not be permitted in a democratic society under any circumstances."⁹⁶ Red Cross doctors and nurses checked the situation and determined that there was not a food crisis. In response to the food restrictions, some native groups organized a food bank and delivered food by boat. Some Mohawks, though, smuggled food into the reserve and charged three times what perishables would normally cost.⁹⁷

An aboriginal woman named Commenda-Cote, put the food issue into historical perspective:

⁹³ YORK and PINDERA. *People of the Pines*. 198.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 211.

⁹⁶ Aaron DERFEL. Police trying to starve out Indians, critics charge," *Montreal Gazette*, July 17, 1990, A-6.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

“One hundred years ago the governments starved our people into signing treaties. It is 1990 and the methods are the same. We demand that the police action must be stopped.”⁹⁸

Eighth, within a day or two of the raid, other First Nations began to support the Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke*. Initially it was Matthew Coon Com of the Northern Cree and then Conrad Sioui Vice-Chief of the AFN for Quebec and head of the Quebec chiefs who supported the Mohawks. Ovide Mercredi, then AFN Vice-President for Manitoba started collecting food and financial support for the Mohawks. This was only weeks after he had strategized with Elijah Harper about scuttling the Meech Lake Accord. These leaders argued that the structure of the conflict and oppression resembled the situation faced by other First Nations, emphasizing that 85% of territory of Quebec was under dispute. They pointed out that Mohawks had endured some of the longest oppression (350 years) of any First Nations in Canada.

On July 17, there was a march on Parliament Hill at which “speaker after speaker condemned [Indian Affairs Minister Tom] Siddon and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney for not intervening in the dispute.”⁹⁹

More than one hundred chiefs from across the country went to *Kahnawà:ke* for an emergency meeting. They were challenged to form “a country wide network of warrior societies, likened to a standing army, to defend native lands” and to set up road barriers.¹⁰⁰ Within their nine-point resolution was a promise to take appropriate action in support of Mohawks. They also passed

⁹⁸ *Canadian Press Release*, July 17, 1990, 2.

⁹⁹ *Canadian Press Release*, July 17, 1990.

¹⁰⁰ Patrick DOYLE, “Make plans to defend native lands chiefs told,” *The Toronto Star*, July 21, 1990, A1.

a resolution which expressed condolences to the family and friends of Marcel Lemay.¹⁰¹

At their gathering, Conrad Sioui, Quebec chief of the Family of First Nations stated that “there is a direct link between (the current crisis) and Meech Lake.”¹⁰² He accused Mulroney and Bourassa of being in collusion and sharing the blame. Other chiefs joined in blaming Bourassa and the “Conservative government and its separatist buddies” for the crisis.

Gerard Guay, a lawyer for Algonquin Indians of Barrier Lake warned, on July 14, that this could spark “Indian warfare” across the county. Russell Diabo, a Mohawk working with the Algonquins called the crisis a tinder-box situation resulting from “centuries of frustration across the country.” He reported that “Indians in Quebec will be backing up the Mohawks—this isn’t just a Mohawk situation like the press have painted it.”¹⁰³

There were many other signs of support: Micmac children in Nova Scotia went on a hunger strike; Indians of Baie Comeau threatened to block the provincial highway; Lillooet and Chilcotin Indians blocked roads in British Columbia; and young Saulteaux Indians blocked a road in Manitoba against the wishes of their leaders.¹⁰⁴ In addition, residents of Roseau River reserve in Manitoba blocked a secondary highway.¹⁰⁵ Micmacs of Restigouche slowed traffic on an interprovincial bridge and Algonquins of Barrier Lake slowed campers in their area.¹⁰⁶ Residents of the Grand Rapids

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Patrick DOYLE, “Ottawa accused of retaliating for Meech defeat,” *The Toronto Star*, July 20, 1990, A10.

¹⁰³ Janis HASS, “Discontent will spread, Indians say,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 15, 1990, A2.

¹⁰⁴ Brian MARACLE, “Wake Up,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 20, 1990, A-14.

¹⁰⁵ “B.C., Manitoba roads blocked in sympathy,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 19, 1990, A5.

¹⁰⁶ PICARD and POIRIER, “Peaceful end.”

reserve closed one of the major highways to northern Manitoba; Ojibways blocked one lane of traffic on the Trans-Canada highway near Georgian Bay and distributed pamphlets to motorists. In Alberta, chiefs threatened blockades and power transmission line destruction. Enoch Cree Nation Chief Jerome Morin stated that the province could be shutdown.¹⁰⁷ Sixty natives marched on the Quebec legislature to support the Mohawks because "their action . . . affects all natives in Canada," according to Ghislain Picard, vice-president of the Attikamek-Montagnais council.¹⁰⁸

July 18, one week after the raid, Chief Billy Two Rivers of *Kahnawà:ke* said on CTV's Canada AM, "I'm sure that our people will defend to the end. But that is not the way. If they want to wipe out the Indian people and commit genocide, then call the army in because we will fight to the last man and woman and children."¹⁰⁹

Besides the actions of support, there was evidence of a new attitude among aboriginal peoples. Native leaders mentioned that aboriginal people no longer blame themselves for their problems. George Erasmus stated that Canada's political leaders "are the clearly defined enemy, not the Canadian people." Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs said, "For years, our suicide rate shows our frustrations have historically been turned inward. Now the frustration appears to be turned outward. Our people have been sensitized. We no longer blame ourselves."¹¹⁰

At a Manitoba conference of three hundred native leaders, Peguis Chief Louis Stevenson called for violence if the police or army attacked the Mohawks. Blackfoot Chief Strater Crowfoot

¹⁰⁷ Robert FIFE, "No fed deals during siege," *Ottawa Sun*, July 20, 1990, 4.

¹⁰⁸ John DAVIDSON, *Canadian Press Release*, July 18, 1990, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Canada AM Transcript, CTV, M.T.T. [Media Tapes and Transcripts] Ltd., July 18, 1990, 4.

¹¹⁰ Tim HARTER, "Days of Rage - The new face of the Indian movement," *Toronto Star*, July 14, 1990,

said, "Throughout history, whenever there were confrontations, it was always the Indians who laid down their arms first, and we know what happened to them. So this time, we are saying no." Saul Terry, president of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs said to the warriors, "You have successfully protected your territory and citizens. In doing this, you have forcefully asserted the Mohawk Nation's sovereign right of self defence in the face of government propaganda, deception , manipulation and military power. You have shown First Nation citizens throughout Canada that direct action can speak louder than words, and that sometimes this is the only way our peoples' voice can be heard."¹¹¹

Liberal MP Ethel Blondin said she could never denounce the warriors since they symbolized the struggle "to defend our land and our rights." Alanis Obomsawin, an Abenaki Indian film-maker who hated violence, pointed out that aboriginal people were ignored until they picked up weapons.¹¹²

Besides the high profile support, hundreds of Canadian aboriginal people came to help. For example, on July 15, nine Micmacs arrived at *Kahnawà:ke* and on July 16 four of them made it to *Kanehsatà:ke*. They were motivated in part by the wrongful imprisonment of cousin Donald Marshall for a murder he didn't commit.¹¹³ Others who came to help were a "hundred Oneidas from New York, Wisconsin, and south western Ontario, an Algonquin from northwestern Quebec and Indian women from several regions of British Columbia and the Yukon."¹¹⁴

Ninth, there was harassment of Mohawks by police, of residents by Mohawks and Mohawks

¹¹¹ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*. 278-279.

¹¹² Ibid., 274.

¹¹³ Ibid., 214-215.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 271.

by residents. The police harassed the Mohawks. One “warrior” who claimed to be unarmed during the police raid, was detained and roughed up after the police retreat. That convinced him to join in the fighting: “Now it doesn’t matter whether I stay at home or come out here with my gun. Any time I take a step off this territory, they’ll be all over me. They know who I am, and it’s not going to end. After all of this has blown over, the harassment is going to continue, and even worse.”¹¹⁵

In Oka, not only Mayor Jean Ouellette received death threats; members of a community association which supported the Mayor were threatened and feared reprisals if the police would leave.¹¹⁶ In Châteauguay, aboriginal people were threatened on the street; some were too afraid to take the bus to work.¹¹⁷

Tenth, Mohawks vandalized property in the vicinity of the Pines. One of the first was the clubhouse of the Oka Golf Club. When the Mohawks occupied it, it was reported that

smashed beer bottles and rotting food line the kitchen counter and bar. Club trophies, ripped from glass showcases, lie broken on the lounge floor. Files, papers, membership lists and club flyers litter the main office.¹¹⁸

In addition, the glass door was smashed, lockers were broken into and telephone lines were cut.

Eleventh, the international community started to pay attention to the conflict. Protests were made to the United Nations and there were calls for international observers. Kenneth Deer of the Longhouse faction went to Geneva on July 20 to visit embassies, a UN human rights organization

¹¹⁵ Alexander NORRIS, “Portrait of a Mohawk fighter,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 15, 1990, A-6.

¹¹⁶ Francine DUBÉ, “Oka residents divided on police presence,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 17, 1990, A-3.

¹¹⁷ Rob BULL, *Canadian Press Release*, July 17, 1990.

¹¹⁸ *Canadian Press Release*, July 16, 1990. Note that early on some of the Mohawks poured bottle after bottle of liquor down the drain to remove it from temptation’s reach (YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 193).

and subsequently reported to an aboriginal conference.¹¹⁹ At the *Kahnawà:ke* meeting of chiefs, Joe Norton suggested that there be economic sanctions against Canada similar to those invoked against South Africa for apartheid. He stated that the Canadian government treats natives in a similar manner to the way in which the South African government treats blacks. Leader of the Opposition, Jean Chrétien, at the same meeting said that the crisis has “escalated to the point that it is an issue in Europe today.”¹²⁰

On July 20, a *Kanehsatà:ke* negotiator pointed out that the barricades would be removed in short order if the matter would be referred to the World Court at the Hague.¹²¹ The group of chiefs advocated as well a United Nations commission to investigate the “abuses and violations of the civil, political, human and constitutional rights of the Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke Mohawks.”¹²²

Twelfth, over the first days and weeks of the crisis, negotiations were carried on in *Kanehsatà:ke* with Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia. These negotiations provided some hope to people but also occasioned criticism around who was at the negotiations and whether they were carried on in good faith or bad faith. Some Mohawks did not think it appropriate to negotiate with a province, they wanted to negotiate with Canada on a nation to nation basis. Within the Federal government, Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon believed that it was inappropriate to negotiate with a group that was armed:

. . . I think all Canadians will want to ask themselves the question should their government,

¹¹⁹ DOYLE, “Make plans.”

¹²⁰ Ingrid PERITZ, “Native chiefs call on PM to recall Parliament,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 21, 1990, A6.

¹²¹ Peggy CURRAN, “Siddon holds firm on federal course,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 21, 1990, A5.

¹²² Ray DI GREGORIO, “Chiefs seek international sanctions to settle native land disputes,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 21, 1990.

any government, be held hostage to the demands of the group which does not have an elected or democratic mandate to speak for the majority of the people of that community, to be held hostage in the face of armed intimidation in this way. And then to ask where these powerful automatic weapons are coming from, AK-47s, and even more powerful assault equipment, some of which was used against most of the folks of Akwesasne only two months ago. How is that kind of armament being used within this democratic county of ours to create a state of insurrection and place demands on governments in this way.¹²³

Though the negotiations and requests for negotiations were meant to move the conflict toward resolution they also introduced other secondary conflicts.

Thirteenth, a variety of symbols provoked strong feelings. On July 14, four Anglophones carried a Canadian flag into the crowd at Châteauguay. They were surrounded by Francophones, some carrying Quebec flags. Police escorted one to safety as two hundred people chanted, "*Québec, Québec*."¹²⁴ Later that night between six and seven hundred people led by youths carrying *fleur-de-lis* rushed the barricades. The crowd grew to a thousand and "roared its approval" as some tried to burn a Canadian flag. When it didn't burn it was ripped in shreds, people stomped on it and chanted, "*Le Québec aux Québécois*" and "*Vive le Québec libre*."¹²⁵ Teenagers on top of a Châteauguay bus stop displayed sheets reading "American Mohawks go home" and, in French, "Mohawks are filthy savages."¹²⁶ On the other side of the barricade, Mohawks were chanting and drumming. They taunted crowds, pointed weapons at the crowds and burned a Quebec *fleur-de-*

¹²³ Tom SIDDON in an interview on Canada AM, July 20, 1990. Transcript, 2.

¹²⁴ Charlie FIDELMAN and Aaron DERFEL, "Police hold back jeering mob at boundary of Kahnawà:ke," *Montreal Gazette*, July 15, 1990, A-6.

¹²⁵ Patrick DOYLE, "Blockade to be lifted at bridge to Montreal," *Toronto Star*, July 15, 1990, A-1 and *People of the Pines*, 227.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

On July 15, Irene O'Brien Neal, a Châteauguay woman wearing a Canadian flag on her sweatshirt was jumped from behind by two women who punched and gouged her face as they tried to tear off an Indian necklace. Police stood by and eventually intervened, asking the woman to leave, telling her she was a provocation with her sweater.¹²⁸ One of the women who attacked her called the maple leaf "an insult to all Quebecers."¹²⁹ Neal, for her part, didn't want to cause problems. "I just came here to support the natives," she said.¹³⁰

Fourteenth, entrenched positions generated their own dynamics. Two American lawyeres came to help the Mohawks present their case: Stanley Cohen, a New York lawyer passionately committed to their cause, followed by civil rights lawyer William Kunstler who had defended some of members of the American Indian Movement after the Wounded Knee stand-off. Eventually Cohen became the more dominant influence:

Around July 21, [Owen] Young arrived in Kanesatake by motorboat to meet Cohen, but he never made it off the beach. After a brief conversation with the New York lawyer, it was obvious to Young that Cohen's radical fervour would pose serious problems. In Young's view, Cohen was interested less in helping the Mohawks negotiate an end to the dispute than in encouraging them to take no-win positions. He jumped back in the motorboat and left in disgust.¹³¹

Within the Quebec government, a crisis committee was set up, led by Claude Ryan. This reduced the manoeuvrability of John Ciaccia who declared that the Mohawk demands were out of

¹²⁷ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 227.

¹²⁸ Peter STOCKLAND, "Native effigy burned," *Ottawa Sun*, July 16, 1990, 4.

¹²⁹ Patrick DOYLE, "Police ban Canadian flag at barricade," *Toronto Star*, July 16, 1990, A-1.

¹³⁰ Christina CORAGGIO, "Chanting mob curses Mohawks," *Montreal Gazette*, July 16, 1990, A-1.

¹³¹ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 218.

his jurisdiction. Premier Bourassa “was emphatic that there would be no negotiations on the question of possible criminal charges arising from the crisis.”¹³² On the Federal side, Tom Siddon kept repeating that there could be no negotiations with guns and barricades in the picture.

In a matter of just a couple of days, this local conflict had escalated to an event pitting First Nations of Quebec and other parts of Canada against the Government of Quebec and the SQ and Mohawks throughout Quebec against citizens, local government and Quebec. Social justice groups joined in solidarity with the Mohawk cause.

As the conflict escalated, the Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke*, *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne united as they had not done for a long time. The various factions of *Kanehsatà:ke* began working together.

In *Kahnawà:ke* where a small group had acted on its own, the entire Warrior Society supported their move and then reluctantly at first but with increasing resolve, the elected band council supported their action.

Over the next months, the escalation continued in the fourteen areas referred to above. As tension was increasing, residents from the O’Nentoikon Treatment Centre, across highway 344 from the disputed land, were sent elsewhere.¹³³ Eventually the Centre was to become the last holdout for the Mohawks. Meanwhile in Quebec City, after the first week of the crisis, Bourassa stated that he had no intention of requesting intervention from the Canadian Army. He also voiced regret that there had not been better coordination between the SQ and politicians before the raid.¹³⁴

¹³² *Ibid.*, 216-217.

¹³³ Jeff HEINRICH, Peter KUITENBROUWER and Charlie FIDELMAN, “Ciaccia: We can hope,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 13, 1990, A-1.

¹³⁴ *Canadian Press Release*, July 18, 1990.

A Mixture of Passions

Within the first ten days after the attack the crisis intensified significantly. A number of passions emerged within Canada. Over the next thirty days, many, deep, contradictory passions would churn; the whole nation would be affected. There were resolves to “not give in” on many sides of many issues. There were fears of violence and significant loss of life. There was also a passion to find a peaceful settlement, in part for reasons of Canadian identity and in the case of politicians, their place in history. There were intense negotiations on the one hand, and rioting on the other.

Within Châteauguay, the mob action became better organized. Yvon Poitra, a retired SQ officer and an aspirant to the Mayor’s office, organized *Solidarité C’hâteauguay* to demand military intervention. On August 1, they led a march of 10,000 people.¹³⁵ The group got its media support from Gilles Proulx of Montreal’s CJMS: “Proulx was loved by thousands of South Shore listeners because he professed to understand the frustrations of the Châteauguay mobs and was not afraid to verbally pummel and abuse the Mohawk warriors on the air.”¹³⁶ The protest also attracted fringe groups like white supremacist members of the Aryan Nation and Longitude 74, a branch of the Ku Klux Klan.¹³⁷

From the beginning, there were strong opposing factions within the Quebec government. On July 14, Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia had negotiated an agreement whereby Mercier Bridge would be re-opened; no one in *Kahnawà:ke* would be prosecuted over the blockade, *Kanehsatà:ke*

¹³⁵ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 249.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 250-51.

Mohawks would cooperate with a police investigation and a significant number of police would be withdrawn. Hawks in the cabinet balked at the agreement. One official stated that “you can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs.” Instead of withdrawing, the police dug in even more. The deal eventually fell through.¹³⁸

Within the town of Oka, passions were strong on both sides of the issue. One antique dealer who called for reconciliation with the Mohawks had a rock thrown through his window. Petitions were circulated on both sides of the issue: one side calling for the mayor’s resignation; the other supporting his stand.¹³⁹

When Ovide Mercredi and other representatives of the Assembly of First Nations arrived on August 4, there was a significant conflict between different factions within the *Kanehsatà:ke* group. Those who were with the Longhouse accused the AFN representatives of being government agents since they recognized the Indian Act. The split which broke out more openly on August 5 was based in part on a sense of cliquishness perceived on the part of the negotiating team.¹⁴⁰ On that day, Premier Bourassa gave a forty-eight hour ultimatum to the Mohawks about an agreement to take down the barricades. That ultimatum united the Mohawks and precipitated an exodus of non-natives and about a third of the Mohawk community from *Kanehsatà:ke*. It also united the sparring Mohawks who remained intransigent. As Peter Diome, a warrior spokesperson remarked, “We are one people, one nation, and we will not be brought to our knees before anyone.”¹⁴¹ When the

¹³⁸ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 203-205.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 222-23.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

deadline expired, in the afternoon of August 8, Bourassa invoked the National Defence Act and called on the Canadian military to replace the SQ.

Within the Oka council, there were strong feelings about whether or not to sell the disputed land to the Federal government. There was thunderous applause in the council chambers as an angry taxpayer said "I'm insulted, I tell you, I'm insulted to think that you would sell these lands to the federal government."¹⁴² On August 8, after a threat of expropriation, the council regretfully accepted a deal whereby they received \$3.84 million for the land which they had bought from the developer for \$70,000.¹⁴³

Some of the deepest passions were ignited by symbolic acts. On August 12 a deal was signed in the open space of the Pines with Tom Siddon representing Canada. At the last minute, a warrior with his face covered, codenamed "4-20," signed for the Mohawks of Akwesasne. After it was over, he presented mediator Alan Gold with a Warrior Society flag. The signing ceremony was met with fury among Quebeckers.¹⁴⁴

While the signing was taking place in the Pines, *Solidarité C'hâteauguay* turned up the heat on the St. Louis de Gonzague Bridge which crossed over the St. Lawrence Seaway. They planned to use their cars to thwart the revolving segment of the bridge, thus blocking the Seaway. Eighty officers tried to push back the crowd. One had his helmet torn off and was beaten. Seven people including Yvon Poitras were arrested. A crowd tried to free them, so the police locked themselves in the detachment. The crowd moved on to the Mercier barricades for the worst rioting since the crisis

¹⁴² YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 219.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 218-19.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 293.

began.¹⁴⁵

This time, the Mohawks were all but forgotten by the mob. After the confrontation on the St. Louis de Gonzague Bridge, the police were now the enemy, and the crowd's fury was directed at them. By 9:30 p.m. the mob had swelled to several thousand. Once again, it was a family affair. More than one man arrived with a baseball bat in one hand and a child gripping the other. Someone climbed onto a police cruiser and smashed its dome light and its windshield. With that act of vandalism, a collective roar went up in the crowd. Young men advanced menacingly towards the line of officers, waving baseball bats and tire-irons, rattling the metal gate that separated the police from the mob. . . . Protesters peeled chunks of pavement off the roadside curbs, heaving them and anything else they could lay their hands on—eggs, bricks, rocks—at the police. RCMP officers, called in to reinforce the Sûreté du Québec, stood shoulder to shoulder on the front line, protecting the SQ officers behind them. . . . One middle-aged policeman was struck in the chest with a flying brick and collapsed on the ground.¹⁴⁶

As the mob lit fires, opened a fire hydrant and smashed police vehicles, the police used tear gas and then charged:

Once again, journalists were a target for the mob's rage. About thirty angry men surrounded a radio reporter, wrestling with her, trying to tear away the purse where she had hidden her recording equipment. "If you stay here one more second you won't have a face!" one man screamed at her. Two or three men pursued her down the street until she got to her car and drove away.¹⁴⁷

When the riot was over, thirty-five people had been taken to the hospital. Ten of these were RCMP officers. A number of RCMP resented the fact that they had been placed between the SQ and the crowd thereby getting the worst of the mob's anger directed toward the SQ. In the following days, the SQ changed tactics and started to mingle with the crowds; this brought violence down significantly.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 294-95.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 295.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 295-96.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 296-97.

After the reactions to the signing ceremony and the Châteauguay riots, there was increased pressure on the Quebec government to bring in the army. The forty-eight hour deadline had expired. The crisis committee of cabinet was divided. John Ciacca was convinced that a military solution would sow the seeds of future violence with aboriginal people. Premier Bourassa and Claude Ryan were cautious and the rest of cabinet was hawkish. In the end it was Lieutenant-General Foster who convinced the provincial government that a military assault would not resolve the crisis. In this he had the support of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney who did not want to be remembered historically as “the butcher of Oka.”¹⁴⁹

Though he did not intend to invoke a military assault, on August 13 Premier Bourassa asked the troops to move in closer. By August 16, they were in place. On August 17, Bourassa asked the army to take over from the SQ and on August 20 they took over at the barricades on Mercier Bridge and in Oka. As the SQ left the barricades near *Kahnawà:ke* they exchanged taunts with the Mohawks.¹⁵⁰

The Canadian Army

When the army arrived at Mercier bridge, they started unravelling razor wire, but Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Gagnon walked into the no-man’s land separating the two barricades and met and shook hands with some warriors who walked in from the other side. This was the start of respectful relations between the two groups at *Kahnawà:ke*-Châteauguay. Many of the Mohawk warriors were veterans of the American military and the Canadian army treated them as adversarial colleagues. A

¹⁴⁹ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 298.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 304.

“hot-line” was established between the two groups and they kept each other apprised of activities so as not to spark an outbreak of violence. The Mohawks of *Kahnawà:ke* had a clear command structure and were prepared to “deal with the army on a ‘soldier to soldier’ basis.”¹⁵¹

In contrast, no warriors agreed to meet Colonel Pierre Daigle, commanding officer of the army contingent sent to *Kanehsatà:ke*. Instead, some community volunteers met with him. The army ended up rolling out its razor wire much closer to Mohawk positions than the Mohawks felt tolerable. The Mohawks sent off messages to Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Bourassa that there would be no more talks until they had assurances that the army would not advance any further. Part of the reason why they were so adamant was that they felt that if the army came too close they would realize that there were fewer warriors in the Pines than the army figured.¹⁵²

The *Kanehsatà:ke* group was a distillation of the most “fervent of the Mohawk idealists and militants.”¹⁵³ They were not going to give up until their sovereignty was recognized. They had no formal command structure and they were not inclined to cooperate with Lieutenant-Colonel Daigle.

On August 27, Bourassa asked the army to dismantle the barricades. This set in motion a whole new chain of events. In *Kanehsatà:ke* the warriors went on red alert. The next day civil protection authorities advised Oka residents to evacuate their homes while the Red Cross brought in stretchers and body bags.¹⁵⁴

In *Kahnawà:ke*, August 28 saw the evacuation of elderly people, women and children by a

¹⁵¹ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 307.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 306.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 316.

seventy-five car convoy. As they left, the cars were stoned by demonstrators. The police standing by made no attempt to restrain or arrest the stone throwers. The father of Joan Lacroix, a seventy-six year old French Canadian, was hit on the chest by a rock the size of a football. Seventy-one year old Joe Armstrong died a week later of a heart attack.¹⁵⁵

The mobs of Châteauguay and LaSalle also made life difficult for the international observers. On August 24, they attacked a car of international observers whom they saw as Mohawk sympathizers. They found other ways of blocking transportation and inspiring fear. Finn Lynghjem, a Norwegian judge remarked, "The only persons who have treated me in a civilized way in this matter here in Canada are the Mohawks. The army and the police do nothing. It's very degrading . . . to us, and perhaps more degrading to the government who can't give us access."¹⁵⁶ On August 27, Bourassa asked the observers to leave.

August 28 saw two intense sets of negotiations going on in the Dorval Hilton. In one room a group of Mohawks from *Kanehsatà:ke* and *Kahnawà:ke*, including Grand Chief Joe Norton, met with John Ciaccia for a last ditch negotiation to end the crisis. The other negotiation involved military leaders and *Kahnawà:ke* warriors. Proposals from the first negotiation were taken to a crisis cabinet committee meeting that night. Ciaccia had only one supporter in the room which had turned hawkish. The other set of negotiations ended up in an unwritten gentleman's agreement that warriors and soldiers would dismantle the Mercier barricades together. This was done on August 29.

The warriors at *Kanehsatà:ke* felt disheartened at the sight of the Mercier bridge barricades

¹⁵⁵ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 320.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 321.

being dismantled. Many did not find out about the deal until they saw it happening on television. Stonecarver, a pacifist until the July 11 raid, went to say his last good-bye to his mother. He was convinced he would die in the army raid.¹⁵⁷

During this time, there were reports of police detaining Mohawks from *Kanehsatà:ke* and beating them to get them in order to obtain information about who killed Corporal Lemay. On August 26, Angus Jacobs was taken to a barn, where he was choked and kicked by police. This is his account:

We stopped at a building in the woods that I think was their headquarters. They showed me a photo of a masked man in the pine woods holding a gun. I think it was taken on July 11th. They said they knew it was me. I denied it. They called me a dirty Indian bastard. They put a shotgun in my ear and made me crawl on the floor and called me a dog and said that they were going to kill me like a dog if I didn't make a confession. For the next two-and-a-half hours they took turns beating me. They split up in teams of two or three. They took off their heavy shoes and put on sneakers so the marks wouldn't show as bad. They punched and kicked every part of my body. . . . One of them grabbed me by the balls and twisted and then I almost passed out. . . . My kidneys and stomach hurt real bad and my private parts were painful too. They kept saying I had to sign this confession they put in front of me. Finally I signed it just so they would stop. I didn't even look at what I signed.¹⁵⁸

Daniel Nicholas was taken to the detachment at St. Eustache where he was kicked and burned with a cigarette on the stomach. He was detained for several days so the swelling would go down before he appeared in court.¹⁵⁹

In the coming days the locus of action was to narrow considerably.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 335.

¹⁵⁸ Craig MacLAINE and Michael S. BAXENDALE. *This Land is Our Land - The Mohawk Revolt at Oka* (Montreal: Optimum, 1990), 62.

¹⁵⁹ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 336.

Confinement to the Treatment Centre

After the Mercier Bridge was re-opened, military forces surrounding the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* began to tighten the boundaries. A group of women, warriors, children and journalists were confined to the treatment centre and the surrounding woods. Tensions increased. Two events stand out as symptoms and symbols of that tension: the face to face stare of Private Patrick Cloutier and Warrior Brad Larocque, codenamed Freddy Krueger, and the beating of Randy Horne codenamed Spudwrench. In the last days of August there was an action chain of violence which increased the internal tensions among the *Kanehsata'keró:non*.

Dr. Réjean and Andrea Mongeon, who had a farm and veterinary clinic near the Pines, had left their property in the hands of one of the Mohawks for a few days. They had, over the years, cultivated friendly relations with the *Kanehsata'keró:non*. When they returned on August 31, they found their house vandalized. They were furious. Mohawk ambulance driver Ronnie Bonspille offered to help them but they refused. It was believed that Lasagna, Noriega and friends had done the vandalizing. They were afraid that Bonspille would “rat” on them. Francis and Cory Jacobs (his son) were on security patrol when the Lasagna gang was looking for Bonspille. As the gang approached, Bonspille fled to the military position and Francis and Cory were badly beaten by Lasagna and company. Thereafter the gang went to Ronnie Bonspille’s house where they smashed two ambulances and the house windows. Thereafter the gang was disarmed by other warriors and held in a house. Lasagna got away and went to the community center where he shouted, yelled and pounded his baseball bat; the people listened, afraid he might pull out his pistol and start shooting.¹⁶⁰ From the perspective of Lasagna, Francis Jacobs and Ronnie Bonspille were two traitors “who gave

¹⁶⁰ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 344–46.

his name and picture to the Sûreté du Québec after having left the Oka area to collaborate with the police.”¹⁶¹

On September 1, as the *Kanehsata'kehro:non* were dealing with the aftermath of the Lasagna episode, the army mobilized its equipment and moved forward in the early afternoon. They took over all the Pines north of highway 344 and encircled the Mohawks on the grounds of the Treatment center. As the army advanced, the warriors offered resistance. One warrior screamed and lunged at the soldiers but was restrained by a Mohawk woman. Mad Jap kept telling the warriors to hold their fire. Micmac Tom Paul was angry and wanted to shoot; he was just waiting for the first shot. On the army side, Major Alain Tremblay, the officer in charge of the operation, yelled “*Restez calme.*” On both sides the adrenalin was flowing. Traditional native healers warned that their protective medicine would not work if the Mohawks fired a single shot. It was during this time of mounting tension that the famous staredown occurred between Brad Larocque and Patrick Cloutier.

The army had been moving its barbed wire closer to the treatment centre and mutual exchanges of insults were common. In the midst of this, a Warrior thrust his face inches away from the soldier and yelled “Boo!” then called him a “Motherf---er.” That image with those words was captured on film and videotape and was shown around the world. The soldier just stared impassively into the face of the warrior, showing no reaction. The soldier was Patrick Cloutier from Gaspé who had been called from vacation with his parents to join in the action at Oka. His previous experience included Red Guard sentry duty at the Citadel where he was accustomed to keeping a straight face when tourists (especially women) would try to disturb his stare. Before he left home, his mother pointed out that the Mohawks had a lot of good demands; she told him, “Patrick, you’re going to

¹⁶¹ CROSS and SEVIGNY. *Lasagna*. 96.

Oka, you're going to do a job, but do it with love in your heart, not hate."¹⁶² He later told his mother that at the time of the staring his heart was racing but he wasn't scared. The warrior was Brad Larocque from Saskatchewan. He was an Ojibway from Poor Man's reserve north of Regina. As a toddler he had been taken from his family and adopted by white parents in Weyburn. As he reached adulthood, he rediscovered his aboriginal past and met his biological siblings. He attended the Indian Federated College and became an activist working for aboriginal rights through non-violent protests. Until the crisis he had not approved of warrior activity. After the July 11, raid he was approached by the Canadian Federation of Students to travel to Ottawa to work with fifteen others on a position paper on the crisis. As part of the research they took a boat from Montreal to *Kahnawà:ke* where he witnessed the mob action of Chateauguay from the Mohawk side; all of a sudden the position paper seemed trivial. When the call for reinforcements came from *Kanehsatà:ke*, he signed up. Upon his arrival by boat, he was given "camouflage gear, an AK-47 rifle, and a codename—Freddy Krueger. He had become a warrior."¹⁶³ All of a sudden, the peaceful protests out west seemed futile: now he was with people who were taking action. The staredown ended when two Mohawk women arrived at the front lines with pizza. When the crisis was over, Cloutier was rewarded and Larocque quietly went back to university in Regina.

In the evening, the army captured the last bunker in the Pines. They allowed the warriors to remove their possessions, which they did in a wheelbarrow. By September 3, the Mohawks were limited to territory bounded by highway 344 to the North, the Lake of Two Mountains to the South

¹⁶² David JOHNSTON, "The stare: private becomes unofficial hero of Oka standoff," *Montreal Gazette*, September 15, 1990, A8.

¹⁶³ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 271. Additional information about Brad Larocque can be found on 269-271.

and gullies to the East and West of the Treatment Centre.¹⁶⁴

Meanwhile in *Kahnawà:ke*, on September 3, a number of warriors regained control of Mercier Bridge which was being repaired. The army moved in to recapture the bridge. The warriors went with their weapons to the Longhouse. Because an army helicopter had observed their route, a raid on the Longhouse resulted, with physical fighting between troops and Mohawk women who were protecting what to them was a sacred space.¹⁶⁵

At the Treatment Centre, psychological warfare became the order of the day. Bright lights were shone on the Mohawk position by the army. Mohawks answered with mirrors from the Treatment Centre, reflecting the glare to the soldiers. Flares and low-flying aircraft intensified the pressure. Faced with the pressure and with a determination to fire if there was an attack, over half the warriors made their wills and burial arrangements.¹⁶⁶ By September 6, verbal abuse between Mohawks and soldiers intensified and eventually they threw stones at one another. The next day, all younger warriors were ordered away from the front lines.

One result was that Randy Horne, one of the older warriors was posted for night in a fox hole near a gully angling toward the front line. At about 4:00 a.m. he woke up

to see a soldier stepping over him. When he brought his arms out of his sleeping bag to defend himself, he was immediately grabbed by two other soldiers on either side of the foxhole. He tried to call for help, but the soldier began beating him on the head with clubs. Spudwrench pulled out a small knife and slashed at the soldiers, injuring them slightly, but the soldiers kept clubbing him furiously. He put up his hand to protect himself, but they kept swinging away, inflicting deep gashes on his skull and face. He lost consciousness as the

¹⁶⁴ YORK and PINDER, *People of the Pines*, 358.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 364.

soldiers dragged him away.¹⁶⁷

Splinter, the warrior in the neighbouring bunker, heard the noise and shone a light on the soldiers who then ran away. He picked up Spudwrench and took him to the treatment centre. Because he was in critical condition he was moved to Montreal General Hospital and despite military promises that he would be returned to the Treatment Centre, he was arrested by the SQ on September 12.

By mid-September it started to get colder; pressure increased on those within the treatment centre as cellular phones of journalists were made non-functional through a court order initiated by the SQ. Wilfried Telkamper, vice-president of the European parliament wrote to Prime Minister Mulroney protesting the cut-off of the Treatment Centre phone line.¹⁶⁸ Joe Deom "said the army had refused to allow in blankets and heavy clothing, despite temperatures that were to dip to near zero overnight. . . . [He] said the army was using the cold as a weapon."¹⁶⁹

On September 17, Bear Island Chief was reported saying, "Many native groups across the country will be taking action as a result of the Oka situation,"¹⁷⁰ and Cree Chief Bill Diamond claimed that young people advocated taking arms but have been looking for leadership to take the initiative. He went on to say that the "Mohawk Warriors have proved that leadership and the young people are really looking up to them. It's like hero worship."

In *Kahnawà:ke* there was mob action against soldiers who were conducting raids to search for weapons. On September 18, the search was on Tekakwitha Island. One soldier was dragged

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 367-68.

¹⁶⁸ Ian MacLEOD, "Mohawks claim European support," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 17, 1990, A-3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ March HENTON, "We're sitting on a powder keg" - Chiefs fear increased violence by natives," *The Toronto Star*, September 17, 1990, A15.

into the crowd where he was punched, kicked and choked with a binocular strap. Another soldier almost had an ear ripped off.¹⁷¹ Twenty soldiers were injured (two with concussions) and seventy-five Mohawks needed medical attention. Among them was fifteen year old Kelly Ann Meloche who claimed that they would never forgive or forget; she thanked the army “for making us stronger, for making us unite stronger.”¹⁷²

On September 16, there were negotiations in Toronto between members of the Iroquois confederacy and John Ciaccia, who had done what he could to find a peaceful end. The government of Quebec refused to accept what Ciaccia had negotiated and the initiative only deepened a rift between the warriors and members of the Confederacy.

On September 19, the Canadian Police Association placed an ad in eighteen papers across the country in which they associated the actions of the warriors with terrorism. In it, they stated that during the July 11 raid, the “Sûreté never returned any gunfire!!!,”¹⁷³ a statement disputed by media reports.¹⁷⁴ *The Globe and Mail* refused to print the ad, calling it “indefensible” and “provocative.”¹⁷⁵ The tensions between the SQ and Mohawks continued to intensify as allegations of police torture began to come out. These tensions took on a French-English spin as the *Montreal Gazette* “ran a cartoon that portrayed a provincial police officer as a mutt in aviator glasses. On the mutt-officer’s

¹⁷¹ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*, 383.

¹⁷² Lynn MOORE. “We won’t ever forgive,” Mohawk teenagers warn—Army raid united community, they say.” *Montreal Gazette*, September 21, 1990, A-5.

¹⁷³ “We Oppose Terrorism,” *The Edmonton Journal*, September 19, 1990.

¹⁷⁴ Marina JIMENEZ. “Police call Mohawks “terrorists” in national ad,” *The Edmonton Journal*, September 19, 1990.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

cap, the force's crest was rendered with the words 'Chien Chaud' (Hot Dog) below."¹⁷⁶ SQ director-general Robert Lavigne accused the "the anglophone media of taking the natives' side in vengeance for the failure of the Meech Lake Accord."¹⁷⁷ This sense of a linguistic war echoed an editorial by Alain Dubuc of *La Presse*. This prompted a description in the English press:

"What is worrying is that the native issue is degenerating into a linguistic war," Dubuc said. "And that is not the fault of the Quebec media. Elsewhere in Canada, especially in Ontario, there is a widespread movement in support of the Mohawks, without a basic distinction between the demand of the Mohawks and the warrior guerrillas." . . . Dubuc said the movement had reached a climax with the publication in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of a full-page advertisement denouncing the government's use of force. It was signed by unions, Protestant churches, civil rights groups and many individuals. He mentioned writers Margaret Atwood and Pierre Berton.¹⁷⁸

Back at the Treatment Centre, there were accusations of provocation from both sides. Both the military and Mohawks cited instances in which someone from the other side fired an unloaded weapon at the other side.¹⁷⁹

On September 23, there was a wedding at the Treatment Centre. Warrior Dennis "Psycho" Nicholas married Cathy Sky in a traditional Mohawk ceremony led by faithkeepers Loran Thompson and Bruce Elijah. In the following days, tensions among the people at the Treatment Center intensified. The provincial government was not willing to consider appointing an independent prosecutor, so there seemed no hope of successful negotiations around disengagement. Most of the people agreed to disengage within forty-eight hours but a few like Lasagna and Noriega wanted to

¹⁷⁶ Eloise MORIN, "Surete's image takes beating - Force's chief issues apology for first time," *Toronto Star*, September 21, 1990, A23.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ John YORKTON, "Native issue is becoming a linguistic war," *Montreal Gazette*, September 11, 1990, B-3.

¹⁷⁹ Ian MacLEOD, "New Oka deal sought—Middle-ground solution possible, says negotiator," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 13, 1990, A-3.

hold out to the end. Stonecarver observed, “We’re beginning to eat ourselves. It seems like we’re turning against ourselves now. It’s like an animal that’s beginning to gnaw on its own stomach because it’s so hungry.”¹⁸⁰ The end of the crisis was approaching.

The End of the Crisis

September 26 was the day of decision. A message was sent through a secret communications system, using the local radio station, from the negotiating team in Pointe Claire congratulating the warriors for holding on and suggesting they had accomplished as much as could be expected. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Mulroney had made a speech in the House of Commons promising a new Aboriginal agenda. They had achieved the goal of hanging on until parliament resumed. There were separate clan meetings lasting until about 3:30 p.m. when consensus was achieved to leave the Treatment Centre.

A bonfire was set outside the Treatment Center where any incriminating evidence and weapons were burned. The *Kanehsata'kehró:non* had decided to walk home. They would not surrender or give up. By 5:52 p.m. everyone was in camouflage gear and they had a final tobacco-burning ceremony which included Lasagna, who was the last to decide to leave with the group.

At 6:50 p.m., they began marching toward the front line. Along the way they veered to the Northeast corner of the land to which they were confined. They put stretchers over the razor wire and scrambled across; then continued along highway 344 toward Oka. The soldiers were caught by surprise. They ordered the Mohawks to stop but the orders were ignored. The first five Mohawks (Loran Thompson, Vicky Diabo with her infant daughter, Noriega, and Cathy Sky) walked through

¹⁸⁰ YORK and PINDER. *People of the Pines*. 392.

the military lines into the town where they were surrounded by supporters.

At the top of the hill, soldiers struggled with the Mohawks, some wrestling and scrapping. Some of the Mohawks were clubbed with rifle butts. Fourteen year old Waneek Horn-Miller was stabbed in the chest by a bayonet. By 7:10 p.m., the soldiers had the group corralled into a small section and handcuffed the warriors. At 7:50 they were loaded into buses and driven away. Within two hours Lasagna was at SQ headquarters being interrogated and beaten by police.

Aftermath

Roughly a month after the crisis ended, there was a seminar to promote healing at Oka. Robert "Mad Jap" Skidder told the group that it was worth it because "it has led to new unity among natives. I am proud to be a part of this history."¹⁸¹ At the same meeting Tona Maon, of the national Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples said, "There needs to be a braiding of hair of the nations to bring them together in one spirit, one body, one mind."¹⁸² The issue of unity was also a theme as Ron "Lasagna" Cross reflected on events:

But when the people do come together, like in 1990 with all the trouble we had, no matter what you were—a Catholic or a Protestant or from one of the two Longhouses or a Band Councillor—everybody came together as one to defend the Territory and the people. I mean, I was right next to a guy who was Band Councillor and the guy on the other side of me was a priest and we all worked together to defend the Territory, thinking as one. That's why we were so strong in 1990. The governments made a mistake by doing what they did because when all the people come together as one, that's the strongest you can make the Indian people.¹⁸³

Cross attributed the feeling of unity to the religious ceremonies.

¹⁸¹ Karen O'BRIEN, "Outrage still simmers among Oka participants," *The Spectator*, October 29, 1990, C3.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ CROSS and SÉVIGNY, *Lasagna*, 50.

The ceremonies that our people did at that time to help us get out of that situation were very powerful. We were protected very well because everybody was together as one mind: There was no bickering amongst each other, there was no hatred, there was no anger—it was all together as one, as brother and sister. So it made us very strong in 1990. Spiritually, the odds were totally against Canada and any forces that came against us. It's like getting a religion you believe in a hundred percent: You have faith in it; it's there for you when you need it, as long as you don't abuse it. That was the spiritual situation in 1990.¹⁸⁴

The unity was a dynamic unity since, as has been noted, there were conflicts among the *Kanehsata'kehro:non* over strategy, tactics and feelings of betrayal. However, the traditional divisions were overcome, "but once 1990 was over and things started to get back to normal, the factions came back into place, and people started pointing fingers at each other and blaming each other, so it pulled our people apart again."¹⁸⁵

Well after the crisis was over, Hélène Sévigny, a Québécoise journalist, decided to write a book on Ronald Cross, codenamed Lasagna. In it she describes her initial fears at being in a room alone with this notorious “terrorist.” While the book is a story of his life, it is also a story of the change in consciousness and awareness that Sévigny underwent. There was another level of insight that came from *Lasagna*, the book. In the English language edition, Sévigny talks about the reaction to her original French language edition. On live radio, Gilles Proulx screamed that she went to bed with terrorists and read a letter saying she was a prostitute to Warriors. Though the author of several other books, she sensed a kind of ostracism by her peers with the publication of *Lasagna*:

Despite the strident opposition to the book from some sectors of the media, what surprised me most is the position of silent “neutrality” that many of my fellow journalists, colleagues and even my friends have adopted since I published this biography. I began to realize, over the past year, that the negative public reaction to this book in Quebec had to be based on something more than a simple attempt by the francophone media to cover up its

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

185 Ibid.

misrepresentation of the events at Oka in 1990. The larger dimension of my increasing alienation from my former colleagues in journalism, the legal community, the conference circuit and even my social circle, began to give me pause for considerable thought. I began to realize that the overwhelming majority of people who had criticized the book had not even bothered to read it. Indeed, the most common reaction from people I spoke to, both publicly and privately, as soon as they heard I had written a book like this, but before they had read it, was to accuse me of “being on the side of the Mohawks, of “justifying their violence” and of “having no sympathy for White Quebecers.” No statement brings this into sharper focus than the first question I was asked by the journalist covering my launch of the book in Trois-Rivières: “Do you know that Quebecers see you as a traitor to your own race?”¹⁸⁶

It was not only Hélène Sévigny who felt victimized in the wake of the 1990 crisis. Even before the crisis was over, André Picard quoted Alain Dubuc of *La Presse* as saying that anti-francophones were painting Quebec as “intolerant and repressive.”¹⁸⁷ This sense of anglophones picking on Quebec was developed in greater depth by Robin Philpot in *Oka: dernier alibi du Canada anglais* in which he comments on English press comparisons of Quebec to the Mississippi oppression of Afro-Americans as well as many other allusions to the racism of Quebecers.¹⁸⁸ He argues that what is overlooked is the anti-aboriginal racism throughout English Canada and the positive side of Quebec-Native relations.

Meanwhile, as of the Winter of 1998, land claims and other issues involving the peoples of Oka/Kanehsatà:ke were still unresolved.

This analytic narrative of the Crisis of 1990 forms a foundation for a Girardian interpretation of the major and some of the minor conflicts which took place throughout. By attending to the early history and the growth of ethnonationalism in this chapter, I laid a foundation for showing that

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 169-70.

¹⁸⁷ André PICARD, “Standoff at Oka increases tension over language,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 14, 1990.

¹⁸⁸ Robin PHILPOT, *Oka: dernier alibi du Canada anglais* (Montreal: VLB éditeur, 1991), 26-33.

mimetic phenomena may have a long and protracted development. Focussing on both the broad developments as well as some of the interpersonal dynamics of the key players provides opportunity to examine the interplay of mimetic and scapegoat phenomena on different scales. The allusion to what happened in newspapers articles and books published after the crisis shows the significance of interpretation of events and that even at that level of action there is opportunity for mimetic desire and scapegoating.

Chapter 5

Mimetic Hermeneutics of Deep-Rooted Conflict

In chapter 1, the argument was made that theoretical work is needed on deep-rooted conflict in order that we might better interpret specific conflicts; how we interpret conflict shapes our responses whether actions or policies to circumscribe potential actions. We also stressed that mimetic theory would be shown to be an essential aspect of a full and complete hermeneutic framework. We will carry the argument further as we develop a framework within which an understanding of mimetic phenomena can be used to interpret a deep-rooted conflict and then we will use mimetic hermeneutics to interpret the crisis in *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke*.

The chapter will proceed as follows. We will develop a methodological framework for the application of this theory to a particular case. This will include revisiting key elements of deep-rooted conflict presented in chapter 1, showing how mimetic theory might illuminate them. Then we will seek out a number of examples of mimetic phenomena within the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis. After this, we will retell the story of the crisis using mimetic hermeneutics, stressing the evolution of mimetic structures of violence, leading to an examination of the question of why it was that these mimetic structures of violence did not unleash themselves in an uncontrolled fashion. This will entail bringing in another aspect of the crisis—a number of the efforts made to limit violence within the context of the crisis. Finally we will return to the subject of deep-rooted conflict and address the central issue of the dissertation; namely, that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate schema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups.*

Hermeneutical Methodology

Deep-rooted conflicts take place within relational systems; they are fluid and have the effect of changing relational structures. Inevitably the change in relationships is in the direction of increased violence. Following Girard, we acknowledge that relationships are essentially mimetic and that conflictual relationships may take the form of a violence of differentiation or a violence of undifferentiation. A primary hermeneutical task is to emplot the relational structures, enframing the relational systems along the way. In the case of a mimetic interpretation, enframing and emplotting are done in the light of mimetic theory which allows the interpreter to see the mimetic interplay between Self and Other, and the manifestation and development of mimetic structures of violence. We will develop more fully the themes of relational systems and relational structures paying attention to the key questions raised and the hermeneutical tasks derived from each—enframing and emplotting—respectively. The vocabulary is developed deliberately and the words are used in a specific way so I will define them carefully. Before I do, allow me to explain why this is important.

Our goal is to make sense of a complex deep-rooted conflict. This is done through emplotment which is the development of a narrative which imitates the conflictual action. One of the first questions we must ask is Who is really involved in this conflict? As we begin to answer this question we find that there are many sub-conflicts. So we ask ourselves, Which of these conflicts are we really talking about? The answer changes through time as various sub-conflicts take on a greater or lesser role with regard to the actors involved in the conflict. To provide intelligibility to this exercise we need a methodology to help us proceed. Enframing is the working through of the question, Who is involved at any particular time? It involves setting out the relational systems.¹

¹ This corresponds to Paul RICOEUR'S concept of mimesis₁ described in *Time and Narrative Volume I* trans.

Later in this chapter, we will look at the crisis divided into different relational systems; for example one relational system involves the Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke* and the municipal council of Oka. Emplotment also involves looking at the interrelationships of events through time. These interrelationships include the parts to the whole; the beginning, the middle and the end, as well as “pitiable and fearful incidents, sudden reversals, recognitions, and violent effects.”² This aspect of emplotment is represented by chapter 4, which provided an interpretative narrative of the crisis. Another level of interpretation happens when the narrative is presented in terms of universal patterns or structures which resonate with the reader’s experience.³ This level is reflected in the narrative of the entire Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke* crisis later in this chapter, a narrative which uses the concepts of mimetic theory in the telling of the story. As a preparation for the analysis of the sub-conflicts and the conflict as a whole, allow me to explain enframing and emplotment as I understand them.

Deep-rooted conflicts occur in the context of relationships—sometimes between individuals and sometimes between groups. “Relationship” does not quite capture the sense of where the conflicts take place; they are not just between individuals and groups but between individuals or groups in a particular context, which brings them together. “System” comes from *syn* (together) and *histánai* (stand, place);⁴ hence it carries the sense of a context that brings people together or a context where they stand together or happen to be. “Relationship” generally has a positive

Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1983] 1984), 55.

² This second phase corresponds to RICOEUR’S *mimesis*₂, *ibid.*, 65-66.

³ Compare with RICOEUR’S *mimesis*₃, *ibid.*, 70-71. Note his reference to the spiral circle of hermeneutics. In the present situation, I had a sense that mimetic structures were being exhibited as the crisis was unfolding. I could not establish that until I went through the discipline of establishing who was involved and how the events fit together. In effect I went from *mimesis*₃ to *mimesis*₁ to *mimesis*₂ back to a much more profound understanding at the level of *mimesis*₃.

⁴ *The World Book Dictionary*, 1971 ed., s.v. “system.”

connotation along the lines of friendship; in this case it is used as an adjective to emphasize the inter-relating of people. Relational system means that for any of a variety of reasons people are brought into contact with one another, that they consider themselves in a similar place understood geographically or figuratively. Relational system is an abstract way of answering the questions where and between whom is a deep-rooted conflict taking place. The relational system is constituted by a context and people within that context.

Insofar as an individual human being is constituted by a number of ontological dialectics including that between self and conscience,⁵ a relational system could be thought of as internal to an individual. It could include two people who have ongoing contact with one another or it could include groups. One relational system might involve two large groups; each group could have within it a number of relational subsystems.

The task of enframing is the task of identifying the relational system of a particular conflict. A given conflict may be defined broadly, in which case it includes large groups with many sub-groups or it may be defined narrowly with a more circumscribed context and fewer groups. The task of enframing is to determine for a given moment in time, how large or how small the conflict is in terms of participation. Enframing may include primary, secondary and tertiary designations.

When enframing a given conflict, it is helpful to note whether the relational system is more or less open or closed. An open relational system is one in which the parties participate significantly in other relational systems with other parties. A closed relational system is one in which the parties interact almost exclusively with one another. Whether a given relational system is open or closed may depend on the significance of the action on which the conflict is based. Mimetic desire as a

⁵ RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, 341-355.

generator of violent conflict is intensified within a closed relational system.

The dynamic nature of deep-rooted conflict demands that we attend to the temporal dimension of such conflicts. Important in our analysis is a sense of relational structures. In talking about relational structures I am following René Girard's use of the word *structure*; namely that it is diachronic, relationship oriented, and hidden yet rooted in human consciousness. What is to be emphasized is the key relationship between deep-rooted conflicts and temporality.

Deep-rooted conflict as a function of time includes three significant factors. The first factor is historicity as exhibited in memory. Most deep-rooted conflicts are based in large measure on a memory of victimization. A second factor is change; the specific mimetic structures of violence as described in chapters two and three can change like a kaleidoscope as they interact with one another. A third factor is the promissory dimension of deep-rooted conflict. Most, if not all, deep-rooted conflicts are about imaginations of the future. Various parties either wish to cling to the status quo or radically change it for the future.

The hermeneutical task of establishing the relationships between a deep-rooted conflict and the temporal dimension is emplotment. Emplotment unlocks the narrative structure of the conflict; hence making it intelligible. In doing this, "emplotment brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, and unexpected results."⁶ The result of this second level of emplotment is that significant nodes of time emerge. These are instances in which a decision, event or action launch the relationship on a significant new trajectory. This may mean a significant intensification of a conflict or a qualitative change in the dynamics. We will now revisit the relationship between *deep-rooted conflict and mimetic theory*.

⁶ RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative, Volume I*, p. 65.

Deep-rooted conflicts are extremely complex. This complexity poses two aporias: the first is a temptation to make them manageable by overly simplifying them so as to lose significant aspects of the dynamics or to reduce the parties to mere stereotypes. The second is to make the analysis very complicated by either including too much detail or making the interaction with the theoretical too intricate and complicated so as to make them heuristically dense and unmanageable. I have attempted to strike a course which avoids both of these.

As was noted in chapter I, deep-rooted conflict is defined in terms of human needs theory; i.e., when the satisfiers of non-material, non-negotiable human identity needs of individuals or groups are threatened they will fight. What constitutes the satisfiers of these needs, Burton pointed out, are culturally and contextually determined. In the light of what Girard has brought to light, I would argue that these satisfiers are determined in relation to other people and they are determined mimetically. I would also allow for the fact that other theoretical approaches shed significant light on particular deep-rooted conflicts. What I am attempting to show in the dissertation as a whole and in this chapter in particular is the heuristic value of attending to the dynamics revealed by mimetic theory.

Girard's mimetic theory is based on the capacity of humans to imitate the interiority of others. This dimension of human existence was revealed to Girard through novelists who had become aware of mimetic desire within themselves; hence they created characters whose desires they developed in this way. Ascribing mimetic desire to these fictional characters did not imply a judgement of any real person and for novelists to describe the interiority of the characters was simply to do what novelists are supposed to do. To ascribe mimetic desire to parties in a deep-rooted conflict is a matter of interpretation; that is, mimetic theory is used heuristically to suggest an

hypothesis making the dynamics of the conflict intelligible. Such an interpretation is based on an assessment of all the clues which might point to that being the case. The clues are interpreted in the light of a knowledge of the patterns of mimetic desire such that if enough clues line up in a given pattern it becomes a reasonable and viable interpretation. To ascribe mimetic desire to a group or individuals does not imply a judgement of them since the starting point is the assumption that every human being is significantly implicated in mimetic desire all the time.

In the previous chapter, the story of the crisis was narrated in a way that organized events according to time frames set apart by nodes of significant actions or decisions. There was also a sense in which a large number of individual events and actions were linked together into one description of the crisis as a whole. In this chapter the interpretation will be taken to another level. The mimetic structures will be exposed within a wide variety of relational systems and through a narrative in which the interaction of relational mimetic structures is revealed.

Mimetic Phenomena in Relational Systems

This section will provide many examples of mimetic rivalries and scapegoating within a number of types of relational systems within the context of the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis. First, we will look at intergroup dynamics within seven pairs of groups; second will be an interpretation of intragroup rivalries within six different groups involved in the crisis.

Conflict between identity groups during the Crisis took place within frames which included increasing numbers of protagonists. Gerald Alfred's concept of nesting—*Kanehsatà'kehrò:non* within the Mohawks, the Mohawks within the Iroquois Confederacy, the Iroquois Confederacy within the *Onkwehón:we*—can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to *québécois* and Canadian societies as well. The original conflict implicates the (inner) nestings of two different groups - the

Kanehsata'kehró:non and the *québécois* of the Municipality of Oka. To be sure, not all members of these groups were involved, especially at the beginning. The members of the Golf Club, led by Mayor Jean Ouellette and aided in their interests by developers in France, took action on one side; on the other it was the Longhouse faction, led initially by Allen Gabriel and aided by *Rotisken'araké:ta* from *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne, which took counter actions. It is with these groups that the initial enframing takes place; eventually the conflict implicated increasingly wider layers of the respective nests while at the same time bringing in other groups. The following intergroup rivalries will be examined: 1) *Kanehsata'kehró:non* and the Oka Council; 2) Warriors and the SQ; 3) *Kahnawà:ke* and Châteauguay; 4) *Kanien'kehà:ka* and *Québécois*; 5) First Nations and Government of Canada; 6) Warriors and the Army; and 7) French and English.

Kanehsata'kehró:non and the Oka Council

In the pre-crisis stage, the land called the Pines was the object of mimetic desire. Legally the land belonged to developers in Europe who were to sell enough of it to the city to build a golf course. The Pines were *de facto* in the hands of the Mohawks who used the Commons for their public events and solitary retreats. Members of the golf course desired the Pines for their expansion, mimicking other golf courses with eighteen holes and other housing developments based on proximity to a golf course. As they showed their desire for the Pines there were a series of feedback loops which strengthened the desire of both groups for control over the Pines. With the golf course expansion plans, the Mohawks valued the Pines that much more. As they protested against the golf course expansion, the golfers, with the support of the Mayor, increased their resolve to acquire the Pines. This set of reciprocal actions to gain hegemony over the Pines developed into a mimetic rivalry and eventually into mimetic doubling: the Mohawks in the Pines were prepared to put their

lives on the line to protect the land and Mayor Ouellette was prepared to risk loss of life to acquire the Pines. He even took action against the wishes of Quebec Minister John Ciaccia. After the raid, he had to leave home because of a death threat; yet he still defended his action. When it became clear that the legal system would allow the development, the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* decided to physically occupy the Pines. They became an Obstacle to the golfers who enlisted the support of the courts through an injunction. When that did not secure the land the Mayor asked the police to forcibly take the land. In their decision to *physically* try to settle the issue, they became doubles of the Mohawks who had previously determined that they would *physically* stand in the way of development of the Pines. The golfers made use of the SQ to help them, just as the Mohawks had made use of additional warrior forces from outside their community. The Pines became a satisfier of a number of needs related to the identity of both groups; the needs for meaning and recognition included the rule of law, history, land rights, and values; needs for connectedness involved community viability; the need for agency included a vision for the future and an ability to act on, and in relation to the Pines; and finally control of the Pines had implications for the need for security.

First, regarding the rule of law, there was mimetic doubling involving foundational principles of law. Mohawks agreed that the government had done things “by the book” but immediately stated it was a bad book. James O'Reilly, a lawyer who had represented native people but was not a part of the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis, likewise commented that the law taken as a precedent was “bad law” (cf. John Ciaccia's letter referred to in chapter 4). For the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* to accept the legitimacy of the legal and justice framework within Canada meant to accept a system in which all the cards were stacked against them. There was a mimetic rivalry over the legitimacy of the whole legal framework for land ownership. The Mohawks went back to the Two-Row Wampum treaty

and the concept of inherent indigenous land rights; on the other side, the various levels of government respected a history of legal decisions, described in chapter 4, which granted the land to the Sulpicians who could then sell or transfer it to whom they wished. In the absence of agreement on a legal and justice framework within which disputes can be dealt with in a way that is perceived to be fair, parties resorted to a raw show of force.

Second was a rivalry over interpretations of history. From the Mohawk perspective, the land had belonged to their ancestors for hundreds of years; their ancestors were the first people to inhabit it. Later, from their perspective, it was allotted to the Sulpicians to hold in trust for them by the King of France. They did not respect the right of the King of France to allot the land since it was the locus for their activity already. They did not believe that land could be owned; rather, they were owned by the land. Through the years, as they tried to use the land for their own sustenance, they experienced severe limitations placed on them by the Sulpicians and later, by various forms of Government. They, in turn, tried to block encroachments on the land by such things as railroads. From the point of view of Eurocanadians, the history of Oka began with the movement of the Sulpicians and a group of aboriginal people, mainly Mohawks, from Sault-aux-Recollets to the Lake of Two Mountains in 1721. Their ancestors were allotted land by the Sulpicians, who were the seigneurial custodians of the land. When the seigneurial system was abolished in the 1850s their ancestors gained clear title to the land in accordance with the laws of the time. As far as they were concerned, the land was theirs to do with as they liked as long as it was within the law as set out by the different levels of government.

Third, and closely related, the dispute over the Pines came at the end of a struggle over control of the land. It was a struggle largely lost by the Mohawks as the Sulpicians gained the

support, first of the government of France and then of Britain. In the late 1800s there had been a campaign to get the Mohawks to relocate—that would have removed any future Indian claim to the land. For the Pines to be developed would have meant one more irreversible step in the direction of extinguishing Mohawk land claims in the area.

A fourth layer of meaning concerned a conflict of primary values. For the *Kanehsata'keró:non*, the land had value in its pristine condition. It offered peaceful solace to people who wandered among the trees. It meant that a portion of Mother Earth lay relatively unmolested; it provided a quiet resting place for ancestors buried there. In addition, their forebears had planted the trees to avoid erosion. For the Mayor and his community, the land had no value unless it was developed. It had the potential to generate significant revenue for the Municipal Council and it had the benefit of bringing in additional spin-off businesses as tourism increased. For them the value of the land lay in its capacity to generate economic activity. For both groups it was a venue for sports: lacrosse and golf respectively.

Fifth, the Pines had a role to play in the growth, sustenance and viability of each community. Since the *Kanehsata'kehró:non*, did not have a reserve *per se*, every bit of land was necessary to preserve a sense of place. The Pines was a central meeting place for special events. Their lacrosse box was there. The area was across the highway from the Treatment Centre. Since the community was spread out checkerboard style, a central common space was important for the preservation of a sense of peoplehood, a variety of institutions and generally the sustenance of the culture. Besides, it represented a primary value in and of itself—it was a sacred space in the same way as a church, synagogue or mosque would be for some. For the Golf Club members, the expansion into the Pines made their sport more viable. There were a number of people who had built homes near the Golf

Club. If the planned development went ahead they would have a number of new neighbours. The golfing community would be strengthened. These people had objected to the building of the Native Treatment Centre since they thought it would reduce property values and cause problems; if the golf course project went ahead, the Mohawk presence would be further removed from them. If anything, the expanded golf course would increase property values. The Pines represented for them the entrenchment and expansion of an institution which would be a focal point for a particular community.

Sixth, each group felt powerless to act in the face of the other. The Mohawks felt powerless to assert their land rights in the face of government and judicial institutions which were foreign to them. On the other hand, the municipality of Oka felt powerless to act on its own decisions on land which they believed to belong to them. They wished to start developing the land but the Mohawk occupation precluded them from going ahead.

Seventh, for both groups there was a concern for security. Those Mohawks within the Pines on a twenty-four hour basis were concerned about personal safety, particularly after the July 11 raid and subsequent apprehension of Mohawks by police. For those in the municipality there was a sense that the security of anyone who started cutting down trees for the golf course would be called into question. Within this context of intense rivalry, people on both sides were threatened with death or violence. Over the longer term, gaining control of the Pines could make the winning group feel more secure.

Each of these layers of meaning functioned as a feedback loop, reinforcing the desire on the part of each group for the Pines. In true mimetic fashion they became doubles of one another in their resolve to gain or keep control of the land. In the end, the rivalry for the land and what it

represented evolved to the point where the identity of both groups, their sense of being, was wrapped up in the rivalry over the Pines. In *Kanehsatà:ke* there was a nascent traditional longhouse community made up of a minority of the community. These people had begun to reclaim their language, culture and sense of being Mohawk in a long unbroken line of descent. For these people their very sense of being Mohawk was at stake in the preservation of the Pines. For the Mayor and the small number of investor-developers involved in the golf course endeavour, the situation revolved around what for them was a primary preoccupation and dream. The more the Mohawks became an obstacle for their plans, the more they wanted that golf course. It appears to have become an obsession, so much so that the Mayor made a request to the province to have the SQ enforce the court order.

It becomes clear that mimetic desire led to a mimetic rivalry and a mimetic doubling. Both sides became mirror images of one another in the intensity of feeling they had about one another. In this highly charged environment, when violence was introduced, the tensions reached a new level and the groups played a scapegoat role for one another. The *Kanehsata'kehró:non* who were previously divided became more united than ever in their support of the occupation of the Pines. Other mayors united in solidarity around the Mayor of Oka. That part of the Oka community which supported the expansion were united and eventually passionate about a position which precluded ever giving up the Pines. So strong was their feeling that it was only the threat of expropriation which convinced them to sell the land to the Federal Government. Some of the scapegoat effects within this frame were overshadowed by other powerful mimetic and scapegoat structures such as those evident between the Mohawks and SQ, the next enframing.

Warriors and the SQ

With the attack on the Pines, the mimetic rivalry between the Mohawk warriors and the SQ became more acute. There had been bad blood between the two through a series of events over the previous decades and after the attack, each group now hated the other with a greater passion. Mohawks hated the SQ for the harassment, the beatings, and the raid on the Pines. The SQ hated the Mohawks for showing them up and for, as the police believed, killing one of their own.

Just before the SQ raid, John Cree had pointed out the mimetic relationship when he said “Whatever the police do, we will match.” After the July 11 raid, when the Mohawks barricaded Highway 344, the police set up their own barricades opposite the Mohawk barricades.

Right after the SQ raid on July 11, six police vehicles left behind were destroyed as the people “were united in an orgy of destruction, a collective venting of anger.” There clearly was a scapegoat effect involving mob action, contagious collective violence. It came at a time of crisis. The SQ became symbolic victims; the police cruisers represented the police; damage to them was both symbolic and it materially hurt the SQ. It was one unique point of vulnerability on the part of the police since they had left some of the vehicles when they made their exit after corporal Lemay had been killed.

On July 11, not only was there an escalation of the perceived stakes of the conflict, there was also an escalation in the types of force and violence. The SQ started with a large show of force, hoping to intimidate the Mohawks into surrendering the land. The two sides were so much doubles of one another that they used the same ammunition making it impossible to determine whether Corporal Lemay was killed by a police or Mohawk bullet. Immediately after the shooting, the SQ moved a thousand officers to Oka; numerous aboriginal people from across the country came to help

the *Kanehsata'kehró:non*. The *Kahnawà:ke* blockage of the Mercier Bridge was a show of force meant to intimidate the government sponsored forces. Furthermore, the Mohawks tricked the outside world into thinking that they had more warriors in the Pines and more high powered weaponry than was in fact the case. The preoccupation of warriors and SQ with one another, even after the army had moved in, brought the rivalry to the point of mimetic doubling. Within this concept of inter-group mimetic doubling each group played a scapegoat role for the other. This was evident in the expressions of anger and hatred expressed one to the other, the relative unity within the groups and the examples of selective scapegoating when individual Mohawks fell into the hands of the police.

The scapegoats for the SQ turned out to be Angus Jacobs, Daniel Nicholas, and Ron Cross, codenamed Lasagna. The name-calling, the degrading behaviour and the beating resembled scapegoat actions. Jacobs bore all the marks of the scapegoat; as a Mohawk he was different and as a perceived warrior raising the paradox of difference. When apprehended he was vulnerable; as a warrior he was strong. There was a sense of crisis within the SQ over having lost a member as well as having lost face. His identification with the Mohawks clearly made him illegitimate in the eyes of the police. The scapegoat action was justified on the grounds that it was an interrogation meant to elicit a confession. The same points could be made regarding Daniel Nicholas and with even greater emphasis, Lasagna.

Lasagna epitomized for them what it meant to be a warrior and he had been particularly defiant. When he was captured at the end of the crisis, he bore all the marks of a scapegoat victim: he was powerful yet vulnerable, he was clearly illegitimate, by becoming a person of armed force like the police he called essential differences into question, and he appeared in the context of a crisis,

intensifying the feeling for the police that they had lost face through what had happened. Through both his notoriety, press exposure, taunts and threats he had become the number one prey for the SQ. When he walked out of the treatment centre he was turned over to the SQ immediately; unlike the others who were taken to a military base.

Kahnawá:ke and Chateauguay

Within hours after the raid on the Pines, Mercier Bridge was closed. The Bridge became the object of mimetic desire for Mohawks and citizens of Chateauguay. The mimetic dimension is not immediately apparent since it could be argued that the people of the South Shore simply desired the use of the bridge. Evidence of a strong mimetic desire comes from the rhetoric and action that took place. If the Bridge had been closed for renovation or because of a natural disaster, there would not have been mob action nor calls for the military. It was the fact that the *Mohawks* had control of the bridge that prompted such deep reactions. The Mohawks were a thorn in the side of the people living on the South Shore. Why did they have to be different (distinct)? Why couldn't they obey Quebec and Canadian laws like everyone else? Why couldn't they respect public ownership of something like the bridge which was built for the common good? Why did they have to be that way? The intense reaction to anyone looking native, the harassment of stores that did business with the Mohawks, the burning of Mohawks in effigy, the passion to stop food shipments—all showed almost an obsessive rage regarding the Mohawks. The politicians and spokespersons called for draconian measures to open the bridge. They wanted the army called in; they wanted governments to act; they wanted the Government to take control of the bridge. So strong was their passion that they burned the Premier in effigy for not taking action. Clearly the disruption to the traffic flow created a sense of crisis and intensified the feeling. That is the point of Girardian theory. It is when there is a crisis,

when things are not working well that contagious mimesis is exemplified in its full force. There was violence in the air among the mobs. So great was their impact on government consciousness that it took the military leaders to talk the politicians out of any forceful action.

Within this crisis context, there were many examples of scapegoating. It was almost like lightning looking for a lightning rod. The violence had to find a place to go. At one point it was the police who had to lock themselves inside the police station. At another point journalists were subject to a menacing mob. At yet another it was a woman wearing a Canadian flag. The burning of effigies were structured along scapegoat lines. When elderly Mohawks were driven out of *Kahnawà:ke* they were stoned. Within the mob at each point was a sense of unity which combined solidarity around concern for the bridge with Québécois nationalist expressions. At various points they shouted together “*Qué-hec, Qué-hec,*” etc. All of these exemplify the various stereotypes and characteristics of scapegoating.

The stereotypes of scapegoating are a social or cultural crisis, crimes that “eliminate difference,” paradox of difference, and violence; the characteristics of scapegoats are that they are different, powerful, vulnerable and illegitimate. All of the scapegoats listed above were subject to acts of violence. In addition, the police were available as scapegoats in that they were close at hand. They challenged the distinctions of being *québécois* and at the same time different because of their uniforms. They were illegitimate from the point of view of the mob because they were standing in the way of the mob action, were protecting the Mohawks, and thwarting the plan to block the St. Lawrence Seaway. Their action eliminated difference. The mob thought of itself as different from the “criminal” Mohawks; for the police to intervene against them made them “criminal” like the Mohawks who were supposed to be different. The police were vulnerable because of their smaller

numbers, and they had sufficient power to make them worthy scapegoats. The woman who wore a Canadian flag was likewise a stereotypic scapegoat. Her symbol was powerful—it was Canada which had just rejected Quebec through the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. She was obviously vulnerable. Even the police saw intuitively that she was a natural scapegoat and warned her to leave; they in effect blamed her for the problem. Her *(Canadian)* identification clearly made her illegitimate; the fact that she was a neighbour and was “like them” in one way but different in another way challenged distinctions. The Mohawks in the cars likewise bore the marks of the scapegoat. They were from the hated group, making them illegitimate. The fact that they were Mohawks made them powerful symbols. Being in cars at close range made them vulnerable. At the same time, driving cars and looking much like the mob called into question the sense of difference; one of the elderly people hurt by a rock was actually French Canadian. While much of the violence projected by the mobs onto the scapegoats was immediately inspired by frustration over the bridge, there was clearly more to it than that. Meech Lake had been defeated by Elijah Harper, a Native. The Natives were blockading the bridge. Canada had rejected Quebec, Quebec now had to take control of its own destiny. Now it seemed clear that Quebec could not even take control of its own bridge. The incident became a symbol of something bigger.

The Mohawks of *Kahnawà:ke* were similarly motivated through the whole crisis. One can perceive signs of mimetic desire and scapegoating on their parts. What helped to fuel their passion to take the bridge was the fact that so much of their meagre land holdings had been confiscated for the sake of Eurocanadians. Most prominent among the examples was shoreline land taken for the St. Lawrence Seaway. It did not end there. The land for Mercier Bridge to be built in the first place was taken from them. The bridge went right through their reserve. They had been so permanently

inconvenienced by control of their land for the benefit of the people on the South Shore that it did not seem so consequential to them that people on the South Shore were inconvenienced for a few months. The action of shutting down the bridge played a scapegoat role among the Mohawks. At first there was disagreement but eventually the whole community was united around the occupation of the bridge. All the forces wanting the bridge to be opened became the scapegoats. What generated the passion was a remembrance of past injustices. The Pines became for them another land grab by Eurocanadian governments and they were determined to stop it.

Mohawks and *Québécois*

During the three decades before the Crisis, there was an increase in ethnonationalism among the *Québécois* as well as the Mohawks, who led the way among aboriginal people proclaiming sovereignty. In both cases, there was a sense of racial distinctiveness. The *Québécois* had a concept of *pur laine* referring to those who were fully *Québécois* in an ethnocultural sense and the Mohawks paid keen attention to defining who was a member of their community, eventually including a criterion of blood quantum. Tensions between them occurred against a backdrop of both Quebec and aboriginal people seeking special status within the Canadian constitution. There had been a mimetic rivalry going on over ethnonational discourse since the 1960s. Both Quebec and aboriginal people wanted to be recognized as “founding nations.” Both used the language of sovereignty. Both wanted self government. Aboriginal leaders gained an increased profile through a series of First Ministers Conferences in the 1980s at which they had a voice. These conferences did not produce the anticipated results for aboriginal people and under the Meech Lake Accord they were left out of constitutional reform. The Meech Lake Accord, however, had been very promising for Quebec for included within it were the five key demands Bourassa had made, including recognition

as a distinct society.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord created a sense of crisis in Quebec. Quebec felt once again 'slapped in the face' and rejected. Conditions were perfect for scapegoating. With the beginning of the Crisis, there was every reason to make scapegoats of the Mohawks. They were different, yet they called into question the difference of the *Québécois* by arguing that they had the greater claim to sovereignty. They were perceived as powerful enough to arouse strong emotions, having been historic rivals since they had sided with the English in the 1700s. Now the mystique of heavily armed warriors made them seem more potent. They were illegitimate, defying Quebec law, keeping the SQ out of *Kahnawà:ke*. They were aboriginals, like Elijah Harper who had scuttled the accord. Given their small numbers, they seemed vulnerable. Furthermore, in *Kanehsatà:ke* they were not respecting the rule of law; they were accused of shooting a *québécois* police officer; they were branded terrorists; and they had shut down a major bridge across the St. Lawrence River.

When the SQ invaded the Pines, the rivalry between *Kanehsatà:ke* and Oka rapidly became a rivalry between the Government of Quebec and the Mohawks. The death of Corporal Lemay played a scapegoat function even though many of the classic signs of scapegoating were not present. An actual victim served to polarize the two armed groups and in the polarization, unify each group and strengthen their resolve. At the time of Lemay's funeral, Mohawks flew their flag at half mast; they wished to honour the life of the one who had fallen. The SQ was united at the funeral. While there was a common lament over this death, there were superimposed structures of differentiation and undifferentiation that followed. The funeral served to cement in the minds of the SQ and many *Québécois* that the Mohawks were the enemy; they were held responsible for Lemay death. Mohawks remained more determined than ever to protect their land rights and stand up for their

claims to sovereignty. The sense of us versus them—of putting people into categories—represented a post scapegoat differentiation. The violence of differentiation became manifest as they intensified their feelings of the other as Other. Throughout the crisis, it appears that the Mohawks were scapegoats for the *Québécois* who had experienced a sense of extreme letdown over the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. The scapegoating was legitimized through discursive structures which cast the Mohawks as criminals and terrorists. It was further legitimized by the frustration of commuters who could no longer cross the Mercier Bridge.

Superimposed on the structure of differentiation was a structure of undifferentiation as the Mohawks and *Québécois* became doubles of one another in their determination to have their claims to sovereignty recognized. The Mohawks played both the role of double and scapegoat, either oscillating between the two or playing both simultaneously. There were many expressions of mutual hate.

As soon as violence was introduced, the mimetic show of force took on a life of its own as the conflict escalated exponentially. It is interesting that right after raid of July 11, there was a contagious effect among First Nations and *Québécois*. The conflict was no longer just about the Pines; it was about First Nations' right to land everywhere in Canada evidenced by statements made by First Nations leaders. But it was also clear in what Quebec politicians said, most markedly the Mayors from the districts surrounding Oka. They recognized that 85 per cent of Quebec was under dispute. The double contagion so soon after the attack was striking.

As soon as the Mercier Bridge was blocked, the circumstances were ripe for the Mohawks to become a collective scapegoat for the more nationalistic Quebecers. They bore all the marks of the scapegoat. There was a sense of crisis generally after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. This

crisis was about difference, the distinctiveness of *Québécois* within Canada. Meech Lake's failure had prompted significant hatred toward Elijah Harper and ill will toward aboriginal people. More acutely there was a traffic crisis on the South Shore. The mobs of Châteauguay acted vicariously for many of the people of Quebec who were angry both at the English and Natives. So powerfully had the failure of Meech galvanized the *Québécois* that traditional rivals Bourassa and Parizeau were united in their resolve to strengthen the nationalist agenda in Quebec. There was a sense that the actions of the Mohawks were illegitimate. They were considered lawbreakers and accused of being terrorists. The sense of illegitimacy was heightened by allegations that many of the warriors were from the United States and that they had criminal records, both turning out to be for the most part untrue. They were powerful enough to be good scapegoat medicine to resolve a national crisis. The Mohawks were vulnerable. They were a tiny group. They were different. The Mohawks were aboriginal people, First Nations. Furthermore, they were distinguished from other Québec aboriginal groups by their strict sense of independence, by the fact that they preferred English, by their militancy, and tenacity. *Kahnawà:ke* was probably the only reserve in Canada into which Eurocanadian police would not enter. It was not hard for some to slip into the mindset that they were "lawless savages." Mohawks threatened the sense of difference by which the *Québécois* distinguished themselves from the rest of Canada. This sense of difference came from being one of two founding nations; that was called into question by aboriginal people generally and the Mohawks most forcefully. The territorial integrity of the Province of Quebec was called into question. The Mohawks also were a distinct society. Most important was the claim to peoplehood with a right to self-determination. Mohawks more than any other aboriginal group asserted their own sovereignty as a nation and even outdid the *Québécois* in nationalist aspirations and action by issuing their own

passports.

Throughout the crisis the scapegoat phenomenon intensified. Broadcaster Gilles Proulx used his radio station to whip up fury against the Mohawks. The symbolism of a warrior in battle regalia signing the August 12 agreement with Tom Siddon and presenting mediator Alan Gold with a Warrior Society flag intensified the anger within the *québécois* population. This contributed to the pressure on Bourassa to call in the army. The deployment of the army in turn made the situation more grave. On August 28, as elderly people, women and children were evacuated, the cars were stoned by demonstrators, demonstrating at a primal level what many thought ought to happen through a military assault on the barricades.

First Nations and the Government of Canada

As the Crisis of 1990 evolved, the primary relational system grew to include all of the First Nations of Canada, the Government of Canada and ultimately the whole of the country. Within days of the July 11 raid, other First Nations in Quebec and across Canada joined in acts of support and solidarity. This took place on an individual and on an official level—Chiefs and Vice-National Provincial Chiefs. The acts of solidarity included going to *Kanehsatà:ke* and *Kahnawà:ke* to help; raising money and food, and transporting these to the people behind barricades; making public statements of support and mimetically setting up barricades on roads and threatening to blow up the infrastructure. The acts of solidarity were enough to send a powerful message to the governments of Quebec and Canada that in the event of an all out attack involving bloodshed there would be enormous consequences.

The Federal government was at first very detached from the situation. It left all negotiations and strategizing to the government of Quebec. When it did get involved, it showed a determination

to close in on the Mohawks until they surrendered. Undoubtedly the Prime Minister and a number of cabinet members were still reeling over the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord. When in August the locus of attention shifted from Quebec to Ottawa on the government side, attitudes tended to be quite confrontational.

The people of Canada were horrified to have a military operation taking place on their own soil. Many were unaware of what aboriginal people had endured in Canada and as key First Nations spokespersons appeared on the nightly news there was considerable consciousness raising. This became evident in the Spicer Commission that was set up in January 1991. One of the overwhelming trends of the process of the Commission was the sense that aboriginal justice issues needed to be addressed.

Within this frame of reference, it is clear that there was mutual scapegoating and that the two sides became mimetic doubles of one another. I will show first, how the Government played a scapegoat role for the First Nations; and second, the way in which aboriginal people were the scapegoats of the government.

One of the key signs of a scapegoat effect is the sense of all united against one. In this case, all (or at least most) First Nations were united in their opposition to the government action against *Kanehsatà:ke*. This was due in large measure to a recognition that the structure of government action in the particular case of *Kanehsatà:ke* in many ways was quite similar to actions taken against First Nations historically and currently. The components of the structure of the action included land appropriation, breaches of treaty, the use of the law and legal systems to legitimate the taking of land, and the exercise of superior force. The end use of the appropriated land in *Kanehsatà:ke*, as in virtually every other case across the country, was for the benefit of Eurocanadians. It was this

structural resonance which called for support and suggested that mimetic responses were in order; that is, imitating the resistance of the Mohawks.

The solidarity came from a sense of kinship among the original inhabitants of North America. This feeling of kinship among peoples who often experience considerable internal conflict exemplified a scapegoat effect. The common enemy was the combined forces of the governments of Quebec and Canada incarnated by the SQ and the army. On July 17, at a Parliament Hill march, speaker after speaker condemned Tom Siddon and Brian Mulroney for not intervening. A few days later at a gathering of chiefs, a number of them blamed Bourassa and the Conservative government with its “separatist buddies” for the crisis. George Erasmus posited that Canada’s political leaders were the clearly defined enemy. There was a threat of violence from many First Nations if the Mohawks would be attacked.

The Governments of Canada bore many of the marks of a scapegoat. From the perspective of the First Nations, the Government was a scapegoat enemy that was powerful, yet vulnerable (to blowing up or blocking infrastructure) and totally illegitimate. As a scapegoat, the Government was potent medicine for unity. This unity occurred right up the nesting chain—from Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke* and *Kahnawà:ke* to the wider Mohawk community to the Iroquois Confederacy and Quebec Indians to First Peoples across Canada to American aboriginal people. There was a paradox of difference from the perspective of the aboriginal people. On the one hand they were to be considered citizens of Canada; this was their government that ran the Department of Indian Affairs which provided many social benefits. On the other hand, this was the government of the newcomers, the ones who had come and imposed their will on the aboriginal people. In the end, the paradox went in the direction of a heightened sense of alienation and differentiation from the Eurocanadian

dominated government. In some cases the rhetoric of aboriginal people made it clear that their struggle was not with the people of Canada but with the Government.

On the other side of the ledger, the Mohawks became the scapegoats for the Government of Canada following the demise of the Meech Lake Accord. In this context there was a crisis within the government. The accord, which was to have brought about national reconciliation, had blown up due to the stand taken by Elijah Harper. Rather than reconciliation, the rift between Quebec and the rest of Canada was greater then ever. The actions of the Mohawks were cast as being illegal, even terrorist, by both the Prime Minister and by the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs thus construing them as illegitimate. The Mohawks and aboriginal people were powerful in that they could attack the infrastructure of Canada. They were clearly different from other Canadians in terms of the demands they were making and the worldview which they espoused. Yet, there was a paradox in that they were also Canadian, in a sense, more Canadian than anyone else because of their historical ties to the land. They were vulnerable to military force. There was a sense that somehow or other the challenge to the authority of the government had to be suppressed. For a long time the Minister of Indian Affairs refused to negotiate with the Mohawks. The refusal to negotiate with people with arms and the characterization of the Mohawks as criminals played a role in the scapegoat process. Yet the aboriginal people were not entirely vulnerable; hence, the scapegoat process did not work its way out as it might have in another time. What made them less vulnerable was the concern expressed by the international community, the threat to infrastructure, media coverage and growing public opinion in support of aboriginal people. Even though there is evidence that the structure of scapegoating was present, it did not result in the kind of unity that might have occurred had there been an attack on “terrorist” Mohawks.

Reflecting on what happened, York and Pindera observed that the standard of Brian Mulroney on the right to self-determination was inconsistent when applied to the Mohawks:

While denying the Mohawks the right to self-determination, Mulroney has accepted the moral authority of other populations to chart their own destiny. For example, he has argued that the Baltic republics in the Soviet Union have the right to self-determination, and he has never questioned Quebec's right to choose its own future. Constitutional experts have called attention to the strong parallels between the sovereignty claims of Quebec and those of the Iroquois. It is ironic that Quebec should be free to determine its own destiny, while Quebec's aboriginal people—with a longer history of sovereignty—should be denied that same freedom.⁷

This observation would tend to corroborate the idea that the Mohawks functioned as a scapegoat for the federal government in general and the Prime Minister in particular. There had just been an offer of an aboriginal royal commission and a promise of a faster track on land claims made to Elijah Harper in June as a trade-off for his support of the Meech Lake Accord.

What upped the ante for the Government was the loss of face Canada suffered internationally. Canada, the country which spoke up for human rights and sent peacekeepers to hot spots around the world, was shown up to have the potential for both human rights abuses and lethal conflict. The Government wanted it settled desperately. There was a realization that if the Mohawks were killed, there would be massive uprisings on the part of First Nations people across the country. Significant amounts of money were spent in order to discredit the Mohawks.

In the final analysis, this was a failed scapegoating since the Mohawks were shown to have had a legitimate historic grievance and the background of those involved was significantly less “criminal” than had been presented. In the end, the criminal charges that stuck were minimal. After the crisis, in the eyes of the Canadian public there was general sympathy for aboriginal people and

⁷ YORK and PINDERA, *People of the Pines*, 410.

politicians were held in ill-repute.

Warriors and the Army

As soon as the Canadian military moved in, similar structures were established between the Government of Canada and the First Nations as had existed between the *québécois* and the Mohawks. There was again a violence of differentiation with union on the side of the First Nations across the country. Again, the Prime Minister accused the Mohawks of illegal action, casting them as criminals.

Mimetic rivalry took different forms in each of the two crisis locations. In *Kahnawà:ke*, there was mutual respect between warriors and soldiers. Some of the warriors had seen combat experience in Viet Nam; others were veterans of the Canadian army. They knew military protocol and culture. The Canadian Army respected them as peers. This sense of doubling found expression in the joint dismantling of the barriers: that allowed both sides to be actors making it possible for each group to save face. At *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* the mutual mimesis took a different form. The different sides engaged in harassment, threats, cat-calls, psychological warfare, and shining lights on one another; more precisely the Canadian army shone spotlights on the Mohawks who used *mirrors* to direct the light back at the soldiers.

Mimetic rivalry and doubling were exemplified by the famous staredown between a warrior and a soldier. Patrick Cloutier and Brad Laroque became synecdochic representatives of their respective groups. Both were both roughly the same age. Both stood out as mavericks in their communities of origin. Both of them were totally committed to their groups. Both had a natural personal tendency to deal with issues peacefully. During the staredown they both held their ground unflinchingly. The one difference in their actions was that Laroque was verbal whereas Cloutier just

stared ahead impassively. As they each held their ground, their faces inches apart, the tension rose replicating a mimetic crisis. What broke the tension was the announcement that pizza had arrived.

Mimetic doubling took place on a wider scale when tensions escalated to breaking point as the army tightened its noose around the treatment centre. Mohawk women and Mad Jap moved around warriors calming them down and telling them not to lock and load. On the army side, Major Trembley yelled “*Restez calme.*” On both sides there were some who were tempted to shoot and others who realized that the conflict would become more serious if there was gunfire, which would have been returned with interest. Mimetic violence would have claimed many casualties and inflicted deeper emotional wounds.

The beating of Randy Horne exemplified scapegoat action. He was beaten enough to call into question whether or not he would live. As in the case of SQ beating of Jacobs, Nicholas and Cross, the victim bore the marks of a scapegoat.

When the army arrived at *Kahnawà:ke* to check Tekawitha Island for weapons on September 18, a Mohawk mob attacked the soldiers in an action resembling scapegoating. The army was powerful, yet vulnerable because of smaller numbers and clearly illegitimate in the eyes of the Mohawks. At the end teenager Kelly Ann Meloche thanked the army for the sense of unity they had inspired. Her observation indicates that the mob action played a unifying role as scapegoating invariably does.

French and English

Near the end of the crisis, the *Québécois* became the scapegoats for the rest of Canada. Articles and columns appeared in the English press comparing Quebec to Mississippi of the 60s. The allegations of racism in Quebec and the groundswell of support for First Nations people across the

country helped to isolate Quebec even more from the rest of Canada. Anger and resentment felt toward Quebec hardened many Canadians against any irenic constitutional concessions.

This scapegoating stands at the end of a long history of rivalry between French and English in Canada: a rivalry thrown into relief through the prism of Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke*. As was pointed out, the Mohawks of *Kanehsatà:ke* played a role during the French-English war of the eighteenth century. The land claims of the Sulpicians came at the expense of the Quebec rebels of the 1830s in which the priests helped the English gain an upper hand. The rivalry between French and English was always a rivalry for control of the land and institutions of Quebec. The land within the borders of Quebec was, after confederation, both a part of Canada and the province of Quebec. Power in the hands of the Government of Quebec meant an informal consociation in that a majority of Quebecers were French; hence, the rivalry over relative powers of the Federal and Provincial governments was a rivalry between French and English hegemony in the province. The structures were such that if a given power pertained to provincial jurisdiction, decisions made about that power could be controlled by *québécois*; any powers exercised by the Federal Government could be controlled by the English majority. The rivalry also was translated into who controlled the different levels of government. A major phase in the taming of this rivalry was the Meech Lake accord; its demise brought the rivalry to a new intensity. There was a scapegoating of the Mohawks by each level of government. At the government level the crisis brought about collaboration; the RCMP worked with the SQ and the decision to bring in the military was jointly made by both levels of government. The reason for the failure of the scapegoating was that ultimately, because of the support of the rest of the First Nations, the Mohawks were not totally vulnerable. There also was a growing recognition that land claims had an historical basis, calling into question the sense of illegitimacy of First Nations

actions. There was further vindication of their position in the Federal Government buying their land. In their radical difference as First Nations and as an aboriginal group claiming sovereignty most vociferously, the Mohawks failed to introduce a paradox of difference sufficient to have Quebecers and other Canadians becoming united. In any case, it is clear that the Mohawks as scapegoats failed to unite Canada even though they served to unite Quebecers as a group and to an extent certain elements of other parts of Canada who tended to look disparagingly upon aboriginal peoples. Given the intensity of the crisis brought about both by the failure of Meech and the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* stand-off, the historical rivalry was only to be distracted temporarily—all the powers of crisis were looking for a scapegoat victim powerful enough to provide a unifying catharsis. Much of that energy within Quebec was driven into a fierce ethnonationalism which eventually saw the return of the Parti Québécois to power and the formation of the Bloc Québécois to bring an unambiguous pro-Quebec voice into the House of Commons. The *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis became a pretext for some Canadians to dump on Quebec—to make Quebec a scapegoat for the problems facing Canadians. *They* were the racists. Meanwhile, the rest of Canada became the scapegoat for Quebecers. It was the English who thwarted their plans. As the huge mimetic rivalry and scapegoat structures moved back into position after the 1990 crisis, the Mohawks with their claims and pains were forgotten.

Concomitant to these intergroup, diachronic structures of mimetic desire, rivalry and doubling as well as scapegoating, similar structures were evident within the groups referred to above. These intragroup dynamics will now be examined.

Throughout the crisis, there were rivalries *within* the protagonist groups. These rivalries were impacted by, and in turn had an impact on, the conflict as a whole. In many cases, these were hidden from members of other groups and from the public at large. The major protagonist group

was the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* since they were literally at the centre of the crisis and interacted directly with representatives of the other key groups. Other key groups included 2) the Municipality of Oka; 3) the Mohawks; 4) the First Nations; 5) the South Shore Residents; and 6) Quebec.

As we enframe each of these groups and take note of the intragroup dynamics, we note kaleidoscopic changes in structure, changes which occur more frequently than they might in other circumstances because of the crisis situation. The intensity magnifies the various phenomena. With the complexity of identity bases, communities do not act unanimously in a classical Girardian sense. At one point it was a sub-identity group that acted unanimously as was the case with the Longhouse traditionalists who initially led the occupation of the Pines. At other times the logical enframing of a community changed so that a new group emerged which acted with unanimity as was the case when the pro-golfing and pro-development groups joined a group of surrounding mayors in solidarity with the Mayor and Council of Oka. Another example of a dynamic shift in who constitutes a group took place when an individual who was part of one mimetic game in relation to one part of his or her identity, at another time, or simultaneously with regard to another set of circumstance impinging on their identity, felt a part of another group. Take the example of the South Shore *québécoise* who, after seeing how a Mohawk woman was denied food joined with those who were trying to get food to *Kahnawà:ke*. At the beginning, her identity was with her fellow *québécois(e)* frustrated commuters; later, perhaps because of her identity as a woman, it shifted to the food providers who showed solidarity with the Mohawks. All this is to say that the intra-group rivalries and scapegoating reveal that groups are constantly changing in terms of their relevant sub-groups and group identities. In terms of the overall schema, we will now look at intra-group dynamics as giving definition to the relational systems within which mimetic phenomena are evident.

Kanehsata'kehró:non

Among the people of *Kanehsata'ke* there were a series of rivalries before and during the crisis. These involved leadership, cliques, clans and actions groups.

Just before the occupation of the Pines there was a rivalry between Clarence Simon and George Martin. Simon had been Grand Chief until January 1990 when the Clan Mothers replaced him with Martin. Each of these had their own following within the community, resulting in a rivalry over the basic political organization. In addition there were rivalries not only over who was the leader but also how to organize themselves politically. The system of having clan mothers appoint the chief and band council was a syncretic arrangement combining the traditional role of clan mothers in selecting leaders with a set of powers defined by the Indian Act. The Longhouse wanted to ignore the Indian Act altogether, whereas the League for Democracy and the Group for Change argued for a return to band council elections.*

In early July, when Public security Minister Sam Elkas threatened government action against those at the barricade in the Pines, there was an intense debate between those who wanted to comply and those who wanted to stay. This revealed a rivalry within the Longhouse group of the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* over primary values and leadership: Was it more important to hold on to the land at all costs? or Was it more important to settle things non-violently and avoid loss of life at all cost? In the end Allen Gabriel and his friends left the Pines. Ellen Gabriel and John Cree then took on key leadership roles. The leadership question involved gender, action and "being spokesperson."

The gender based conflict was based in part on a desire to recover the traditional leadership

* Furthermore, these divisions were reinforced by religious divisions with Catholics and Anglicans supporting an open vote for the Band Council. See Pierre TRUDEL, "Les revendications des Mohawks de Kahnésatake," *Le Devoir*, July 14, 1990, A-5.

role of Mohawk women as guardians of the land. We note that on the morning of July 11, the women were at the front lines, resolute in their determination to stay in the Pines. After the police arrived, some of the men urged them to leave but they remained part of the occupation throughout the crisis. They had a voice both in the negotiations (after protesting a male slate of negotiators) as well as in interpreting the crisis to the outside world.

On August 4 there was again a factious conflict precipitated by the arrival of Ovide Mercredi of the AFN. Longhouse people looked upon the AFN as made up of government agents since it recognized the Indian Act. There was also an accusation of cliquishness since the negotiating team appeared to favour particular clans. All that changed rapidly the next day when Bourassa gave a 48 hour ultimatum which united Mohawks in the stand against the government. Once again it became a case of violence of undifferentiation as representatives of the different factions got into rivalry; they were brought together through a scapegoat effect with Bourassa and the government being the differentiated "Other."

Another intragroup rivalry within the *Kanehsatà:ke* camp involved the lawyers who desired to be the primary advisers to the *Kanehsata'kehró:non*. Cohen and Kunstler were both high profile lawyers from the United States. In the end Cohen's advice seemed to be taken more seriously and Kunstler left.

Finally, there was another rivalry between Ron Cross (Lasagna) and his cohorts versus Ronny Bonspille and Francis and Cory Jacobs. Cross was convinced that Bonspille and Jacobs had passed on information to the police about his identity. This made them illegitimate in the eyes of Cross and company who beat Francis and Cory Jacobs as Ronny Bonspille got away. They also smashed the ambulance of Bonspille. In addition to being illegitimate, the Bonspille group was powerful, yet

vulnerable. Being Mohawks they brought out the paradox of difference by allegedly working with the police. The scapegoating fury did not abate immediately, Cross went to the community center where he yelled and pounded his baseball bat. Later, he and his collaborator were confined and almost banished. Their own action made scapegoats out of them.

Municipality of Oka

Among the residents of Oka there were two clear camps. On the one side was the Mayor and Council and the pro-golf faction. These were opposed by a significant number of citizens who were against the golf course expansion. The second group was motivated by both a concern for the environment and a desire for peace with Mohawks. In some of the public meetings, strong feelings on both sides were expressed. Each faction circulated a petition, one supporting and one opposing the Mayor.

Mohawks

Among the Mohawks were a number of key rivalries. One of the most significant had to do with interpretations of the Law of Peace. One group, including elders Tom Porter and Jake Swamp, interpreted the Law of Peace as emphasizing a peaceful approach to life. The other perspective, represented by Louis Hall, called for violence to strengthen the Mohawk presence. (Hall had the Jewish people and Israel as mimetic models for his perspective.) Hall became the inspiration for the Warrior Societies. This foundational rivalry had an impact on internal conflicts in Akwesasne, *Kahnawà:ke* and *Kanehsatà:ke*. In Akwesasne, lines split between pro and anti gambling factions with the Warrior Society supporting the gambling effort. In Akwesasne and *Kahnawà:ke*, the issue

of cigarette smuggling was significant with divisions along the same lines. In the *Kanehsatà:ke* crisis, there was conflict over strategy and tactics. In all of these instances, one object of mimetic desire was to be the authoritative interpreter of the Great Law.

As the crisis escalated the various factions of *Kanehsatà:ke*, *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne united in a way they had not for a long time. While the dominant structure was akin to the unity accompanying a common threat, various rivalries did emerge from time to time. For example, when the warriors of *Kahnawà:ke* reached an agreement with the military and started dismantling the barricades on the Mercier bridge, the people at the treatment centre at *Kanehsatà:ke* felt betrayed. There were other times when they thought there was too much outside influence from the people of *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne.

First Nations

A number of mimetic phenomena were evident among the First Nations. The aboriginal victory in defeating the Meech Lake Accord through the efforts of Elijah Harper increased the First Nations' confidence to take action.⁹ The Mohawk Warriors became, in Girard's terms, external models for other aboriginal people, especially the youth. Across the country, roads were barricaded following the example of Mercier Bridge. Cree leaders of Northern Quebec have always maintained that they do not support violence, but they have also warned that they cannot control the younger, militant band members who are strongly opposed to the hydro project. These younger Crees were keeping a close watch on the tactics of the Mohawk warriors in the summer of 1990. "There is no doubt that what the warriors have done will inspire the youth to possibly resort to violence," said

⁹ Francois FOREST, "Il ya un temps pour la negociation et an temps pour réagir . . .," *La Presse*, July 13, 1990.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come.¹⁰ Cree Chief Bill Diamond claimed that young people were really looking up to the Mohawk warriors for their leadership. What becomes clear is that the Mohawk warriors became external mimetic Models for aboriginal youth across the country.

South Shore Residents

On the South Shore, there were numerous examples of scapegoat action taken by *québécois(e)* against other *québécois(e)*. There obviously was a sense of crisis for each example. The various cases exemplify other characteristics of the scapegoat. First, Jocelyne Desrosiers who opened her store to Mohawk business was threatened by vigilantes that there might be an “accident” if she didn’t close her store. She introduced the paradox of difference in that she was both *québécoise* and in solidarity with the Mohawks. As a store owner she was significantly visible (powerful) and very vulnerable.

When Solidarité Châteauguay tried to block the St. Lawrence Seaway, in mimesis of the Mohawks who had blocked Mercier bridge, the police arrested some of their leaders. A mob of several thousand turned on the police smashing a cruiser (just as the Mohawks had done), waving baseball bats and tire-irons and throwing eggs, bricks and rocks at the police emulating a stoning. The police locked themselves in the detachment, thwarting the scapegoat action. At that time the crowd also turned on journalists in classic scapegoat style, in one case forcing a woman to run away for her own safety. The police introduced a paradox of difference being both *québécois* and a force against the mob action. Their smaller numbers made them vulnerable even though individually they were powerful.

¹⁰ York and Pindera, *People of the Pines*, 286 see also 284.

On July 14 four anglophones carried a Canadian flag into the crowd and were surrounded by the crowd, needing police help to escape. The crowds tried to burn a Canadian flag. The next day a woman with a Canadian flag on her sweatshirt was jumped from behind by two women who punched and gouged her face. These examples introduced the paradox of difference: neighbours were the same in that they were neighbours, yet different in that they were Canadian, as opposed to Quebec, nationalists. Their symbols were powerful in the context since they went counter to the mainstream and stood for the Canada which was perceived to have rejected Quebec. As a minority in the crowd, they were vulnerable.

Throughout, the mob action united a number of Eurocanadian groups. Besides the angry commuters, fringe groups associated with white supremacist groups got involved.

Québec Government

Within the Quebec government there was a rivalry over which approach to take in dealing with the crisis. Throughout, John Ciaccia wished to play a conciliatory role. Public Security Minister Sam Elkas threatened that the barricades must be dismantled or the government would take action. At various points along the way, there was tension between Ciaccia and more hawkish cabinet ministers. In mid-July, as Ciaccia negotiated an agreement which would have seen a significant withdrawal of police, cabinet refused to back the agreement; hawks referred to the need to “break eggs to make an omelette” (quoting Lenin). Police ended up digging in more deeply. Regarding the issue of deprivation of food, there was a rivalry along the same lines. On July 21, Claude Ryan said that the refusal to allow food in was government policy but a few day later Ciaccia pointed out that there never was a question of depriving them of food. Finally, on September 16 the government refused to accept an agreement that Ciaccia had negotiated.

When the question of military intervention came up in the Quebec cabinet in early August, there were three positions. Ciacca argued against military action, the hawks called for a military solution and Bourassa and Ryan were cautious. It was a military officer who convinced the cabinet not to call for a military assault. In the end the military was called in but was not ordered to attack Mohawk positions. Later in August, Ciaccia tried to negotiate an end to the crisis but he had only one supporter in the crisis cabinet committee. It is interesting that Ciaccia the conciliator was himself an allophone; hence, his own identity would not have had as much at stake as that of the *pur laine Québécois* whose national honour was at stake and for whom there was an ethnonational mimetic rivalry with the *Onkwehón:we*.

It is clear that within the various protagonist groups there were examples of the whole range of mimetic and scapegoat phenomena. Various cases have exemplified a number of the key principles unearthed by Girard.

An Interpretative Narrative of the Crisis

I will now tell the story of the Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke* crisis of 1990 using the interpretative categories inherent in the various forms of mimetic structures of violence. The story begins with 1721 with the arrival of the Sulpicians to *Kanehsatà:ke* and concludes with the Mohawks leaving the Treatment Centre in September 1990 and the immediate aftermath. Of necessity the narration of the early periods will be telescoped; however, an overview of the structural developments before 1989 establishes the context—mimetic structures of violence are always rooted in previous structures.

The Colonial Period: 1721 to 1959

The arrival of the Sulpicians in 1721 marked the beginning of the objectification of the

Kanehsata'kehró:non. It was the King of France who granted the land to the Sulpicians. In the colonial rivalries of North America there was a relational system in which British and French were in rivalry, and, among the French, there was rivalry between Jesuits and Sulpicians over hegemony over First Nations. *Kanehsata:ke* was strategically placed near the junction of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers. It was far enough away from Montreal to shield the Mohawks from the influences of the secular colonizers so it was the choice location for a Sulpician aboriginal colony.

After the conquest of New France by the British, the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* and the land to which they belonged were the objects of mimetic desire for the Sulpicians and the British. A bigger prize for the British in the wake of the American Revolution was retention of "British North America" which was largely French. The Sulpicians swore allegiance to the British thus aiding the British in their rivalry with the United States. Similarly they helped the English in the 1830s and *Kanehsata:ke* remained in their hands. Thereafter there was common cause between the English and the Sulpicians, as though they were united, with the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* playing a perpetual scapegoat role. The structure of a violence of differentiation was entrenched with the Privy Council ruling of 1912 reaffirming the right of the Sulpicians to the land.

That this structure was still intact in 1959 is attested to by the fact that despite the protests of the Mohawks, nothing was done to stop the building of the original golf course.

Regaining a Capacity to Act: 1959 to 1989

As long as they were acted upon, aboriginal people were sufficiently removed from the dominant groups in society that no true mimetic rivalry was possible between First Nations and Eurocanadians. Between 1959 and 1989 aboriginal people developed a voice. Mimetically they were inspired by the events of Wounded Knee. It was also a time when the language of self-

determination and liberation from colonialism was in the air globally. Many new countries were formed out the ashes of the discredited British Empire. Strong aboriginal leaders began to emerge who felt no hesitancy in standing up to the “First Ministers” of Canada. Out of the Indian Brotherhood emerged the Assembly of First Nations. Other aboriginal peoples developed national organizations with leaders who could represent them at meetings of Prime Minister and Premiers. What was only external mediation at best now became internal mediation; aboriginal people began to develop rivalries with dominant societies over land and jurisdiction.

Meanwhile within the relational system of Canada as a political entity new dynamics were emerging. Before this period, all but the French elite were so spiritually distant (to use Girard’s phrase) from English Canada that they could not see themselves as political or economic rivals. With the Quiet Revolution all that changed. Quebecers began to frame the relationship with Canada as colonial and they wanted full equality as a people, which meant for many of them sovereignty. What was developing was a mimetic crisis over difference. When Canada was formed Quebec entered as one of two founding peoples. Canada was meant to be a French-English partnership. Through language laws outside of Quebec and many waves of English speaking immigrants the relative power of English Canada had increased considerably. Some voices within Canada, particularly the West, began to frame the situation of Quebec as one of ten provinces rather than one of two founding peoples. The French fought for and got some concessions, but sovereignty was the goal. The defeat of the 1980 referendum was a setback but many *québécois* were determined that they could get what the English had, control over their own country. This was a significant rivalry. The rivalry was over difference, while all the while the *québécois* were losing difference. The preoccupation with difference was manifest in the passion with which Premier Bourassa argued for recognition as a

distinct society. The loss of difference was evident in such changes as the shift to becoming secular entrepreneurs (like the English).

Within the relational system of aboriginal people and Quebecers there was a rivalry over who had the stronger claims to self-determination. Quebec could argue that they had a viable political territory—Quebec—and that as a nation they could determine for themselves to become a sovereign country. Premiers of Quebec were welcomed as heads of state in Paris. Aboriginal people generally and Mohawks in particular argued that they had never given up their sovereignty and asserted it through issuing their own passports and seeking recognition in Europe.

The Decision to Build a Golf Course

The most significant relational system for the *Kanehsata'keró:non* in 1989 was with the municipality of Oka. The decision to build a golf course and develop housing in the Pines made the Pines an object of mimetic desire as discussed above. The establishment of a Longhouse group at *Kanehsatà:ke* meant that Mohawks were rediscovering their language and ties to the land. With the recovery of their sense of identity, it meant that the new framing of the satisfiers for their identity needs switched. From being formed by a victim mentality they developed a sense of being an historical people with pre-contact ties to the land; hence the land became a non-negotiable satisfier of identity needs. As it became so significant to them, the municipality of Oka became more determined than ever to go ahead with plans to build the golf course. With the decision to build the golf course, a new relational trajectory was set in motion which eventually led to the crisis.

The Decision to Occupy the Pines

The decision by three Mohawks to occupy the pines likewise set in motion developments

which would lead to the crisis. Had there been no occupation there would have been no crisis. The decision to stand up to the hegemonic structures of Canadian and Quebec government, law and police was mimetically inspired by other Mohawk actions at *Kahnawà:ke* and Akwesasne. The decision to defend the Pines physically was later mimed by the Oka municipality through the SQ.

The Defeat of the Meech Lake Accord

The Meech Lake Accord was all about establishing difference at the same time as Quebec was losing difference. When the Accord failed there was a crisis of difference within Quebec. For example, the idea of special recognition as a distinct society prompted other provinces like Newfoundland and British Columbia to mimetically assert that they were distinct as well. In fact, one of the arguments against the Meech Lake Accord was that Quebec was not the only province to be distinct. The pressures from Western Canada for Senate reform—advocating that every province elect the same number of senators likewise tore at Quebec's sense of difference.

Within the relational system of Canada there was a sense of crisis with the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord. Quebecers became united in their hurt, anger and determination to take control of their own destiny. The government of Brian Mulroney was devastated; Mulroney had staked his place in history on a national reconciliation brought about by the Meech Lake Accord. The sense of crisis made Canada ripe for the scapegoat mechanism.

The SQ Attack

With the SQ attack on July 11, 1990 there was an almost instantaneous change in relational structures in Canada. The media focus shifted from post mortems on the demise of the Meech Lake Accord to what became known as the Oka crisis. With the closing of Mercier Bridge, the Mohawks

became scapegoats for many Quebeckers. Any sense of anger and frustration that they had toward Canada which was invulnerable they could take out on Mohawks who were much more vulnerable. In particular, Ron Cross, a.k.a. Lasagna became the warrior whom they loved to hate. Had many Quebeckers had their way, the army would have been sent in to forcibly bring the Mohawks to their knees.

The Escalation of Violence

With the build up of support for the Mohawks by aboriginal people the crisis quickly took on national proportions. Like never before, the aboriginal people had recovered a capacity to act and to act together in solidarity with one another. For them, Bourassa, Mulroney, Siddon, the SQ and the local politicians who were supporting the anti-Mohawk action played a scapegoat role. There was a nearly unanimous feeling among aboriginal people that this group who together controlled the forces oppressing the Mohawks were illegitimate, powerful, different (they were after all picking on fellow aboriginal people) and at least their interests were vulnerable.

Within the relational systems of Mohawks versus the SQ, the people of *Kahnawà:ke* versus Chateauguay, and the *Kanehsata'kehrò:non* versus Oka, violence and tensions were on the increase. Structures of mimetic doubling multiplied as Mohawk warriors and the SQ—Quebec warriors—squared off at one another. The burning of effigies in Chateauguay and the mob action against various individual scapegoats intensified the sense of urgency.

The Deployment of the Canadian Military

With the deployment of the Canadian military, the Mohawks became the scapegoats of the government of Canada. The resources used to surround, control and harass the

Kanehsata'kehrò:non were enormous. The rhetoric of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, referring to the warriors as terrorists, was meant to cast the Mohawk resistance as entirely lacking in legitimacy. Ultimately the scapegoating structures turned into failed scapegoating since the cause of the Mohawks gained legitimacy as the land was purchased for them by the Federal Government.

The End of the Crisis

As the people holed up in the Treatment Centre left, there was again a change of structure. In large measure, the Mohawks were vindicated for the stand they took; the Canadian consciousness had been raised concerning the injustice perpetrated against the aboriginal people and there was widespread support for initiatives which would contribute to a better sense of justice for aboriginal people. Insofar as there was scapegoat action *against* them by the government during the crisis, there was a positive building up aboriginal people in the minds of Canadians after the crisis.

Attitudes of many English Canadians turned against Quebec in a scapegoating backlash after the crisis. Whereas before the crisis many English Canadians thought in terms of keeping Quebec in Canada at all costs, many now wondered aloud if Quebec wasn't the cause of many of Canada's problems. A vindictive spirit has been kept alive since that time. Some articles in the Canadian press made Quebec out to be more racist than other parts of Canada, thus adding to the scapegoat echo.

By distracting Canada in a powerful way from the crisis caused by the defeat of the Meech Lake, and by uniting all Canadians in a common preoccupation with the crisis and the questions of Canadian identity that it raises, the crisis played a scapegoat function. It may have saved Canada a worse fate.

Holding Back the Violence

The description of the crisis in chapter 4 and its mimetic/scapegoat interpretation in the previous sections highlight the near tragic results. It was indeed a conflict that shook Canada to its core. Examining the story closely reveals that there were many redemptive elements—many mimetic structures that seemed to hold the beast of violence at bay. First, there was the peace camp set up at Oka, meant to be a non-violent support effort for the Mohawks. Thousands came from across North America to offer a positive, non-violent show of support.

Second, during the military occupation, no one got shot. Near the end of the crisis, when feelings were running deep and the atmosphere was tense, the Mohawks went through a spiritual ceremony meant to give them protection from potential danger. The Warriors were told by the spiritual leaders that as soon as one shot was fired, the positive protective medicine would be neutralized. They never fired a shot. Years later, a Canadian soldier, reflecting on the fact that no shot was fired by the military, attributed this in part to the fact that Canadians through their peacekeeping training and experience have learned that their role does not necessarily mean shooting and killing. They have become accustomed to playing this non combatative role. It may just have made the difference when the impulse was very overwhelming to fire a shot. These observations do not minimize the depth of the conflict nor the severity of the emotional scars still carried by participants. They are not meant to gloss over the very violent forms of harassment directed at the Mohawks collectively and the beating of individuals. They do point to the fact that the crisis was resolved without the kind of bloodbath which many were prepared for and which did not occur. A mimetic imagination of blessing played a role with both groups. Warriors were looking to their spiritual leaders whose imagination was that of peace. Soldiers were imitating patterns of non-

violence that they learned as peacekeepers.

Third, there were countless acts of support for those who were suffering. Many risked their own well-being to bring food to the Mohawks. Clergy volunteered as neutral observers. Many on both sides participated in long and arduous negotiations. Helpful by-standers put significant efforts into expediting peaceful initiatives.¹¹ All in all, within the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis, positive mimetic structures ultimately saved Canada from a contagion of blood-letting violence. In chapter 6, we will reflect further on the nature of these positive mimetic structures.

Mimetic Theory and Deep-rooted Conflict

Finally, to summarize the argument, we have established that the Crisis of 1990 was, in fact, a deep-rooted conflict. Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating was examined in detail yielding an analysis of only the fundamental qualities of mimetic desire and scapegoating highlighting their inner dynamics. We have shown that as the various inter-group conflicts are enframed, mimetic rivalries are present at every level. It has also become clear that through the emplotment of the crisis, mimetic rivalries and scapegoating kept on reappearing. From the perspective of each group, the actions were always legitimate—any scapegoating was hidden from those involved in it. The many examples of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating resonate with the general pattern which Girard has identified.

We are now in a position to examine the thesis statement set out in chapter 1; namely that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate schema for*

¹¹ See Robert HULL, "Kanienkehaka Chronology: The Mohawk Crisis in Quebec and its Aftermath, July to December 1990," *The Conrad Grebel Review*, 9- 2 (Spring 1991): 103-114 for a description of many such behind the scenes undertakings.

understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups.

We can make the argument that mimetic theory plays a significant role in the interpretation of deep-rooted conflict because of the heuristic role it plays regarding a number of interrelated themes which are necessary to address in order develop a significant understanding of deep-rooted conflict.

There were two limits to the present argument; namely, that mimetic theory does not explain everything that needs to be explained about deep-rooted conflict and second that the way in which mimetic and scapegoat phenomena play themselves out cannot be determined *a priori*. We have attempted to show that within the dynamics of the Oka/Kanehsatà:ke crisis these phenomena were present in abundance. A number of other analysts have shown that Girard's theories can help to explain particular aspects of a number of conflicts which could be thought of as being deep-rooted conflict. In the present study, we have gone a step further by examining a given crisis from its genesis to its endpoint. We have found that in virtually every major aspect of the crisis, mimetic phenomena were present. It has also become clear that the same patterns are evident on the micro and macro levels.

Seven thematic areas which need to be addressed to come to terms with deep-rooted conflict include identity, interiority, intensity of emotions, illogical forces, difference, dynamics and diachronic structures. Each will be dealt with in turn.

Deep-rooted conflicts are by definition about *identity*. Identity formation of groups and individuals is intertwined; it is complex in that the interplay of variables can produce an infinite variety of identities. It is the deep and penetrating threat to identity, expressed through the satisfiers of human needs, that deep-rooted conflict is all about. For that reason, these needs are sometimes described as ontological needs because they have to do with what is at the core of being. Human

needs theory does a fine job of creating a taxonomy of need categories, what it does not address is how the satisfiers of these needs come to be defined. Nor does it account for how it is determined which satisfiers are sufficiently close to the core of the being that a threat to these would cause one to put one's very life on the line. Girard's mimetic theory addresses the matter of identity, at various times introducing the language of ontology, e.g. ontological mimetic desire, to show that desire is both rooted in identity and that desires are inherently mimetic. At this level it posits that the ontological satisfiers to ontological needs are developed and defined mimetically.

Any attempt to address deep-rooted conflict must speak to the *interiority* of human subjects for it is within the human being that the motivation to engage in conflict arises. Deep-rooted conflict can be associated with a number of violent behaviours which are symptoms of its existence. However, deep-rooted conflict can be exhibited in such an infinite variety of ways that to focus only on the external manifestation misses the point; namely, that similar patterns of conflict are discernible in a wide variety of circumstances with evidence coming from not only many behaviours but also from the self-understandings of people in such conflicts. In this regard, to recognize the centrality of desire as a primary dimension of interiority, and then to recognize mimetic desire as the attempt to imitate the interiority of the Other, takes seriously the need to understand some of the workings of the interiority of the human subject, in this case the subject who is involved in a deep-rooted conflict.

Related to interiority are the *intense emotions* that become evident in these conflicts; particularly the kind of hatred described in chapter 1 so eloquently by Miroslav Volf. As Paul Sites points out, emotions have an physiological base but the release of the internal hormones associated with these emotions is linked to how human subjects interpret what is going on around them. Girard's mimetic theory looks at the build-up of passions as mimetic desire becomes more and more

a matter of internal mediation, and as an obsession with a double evolves. Since mimetic desire is an imitation of interiority and since interiority cannot be seen directly, it is always a matter of interpretation. The dynamics of how passions are excited involves comparisons between Self and Other. As well, feedback loops intensify emotions as one Self mirrors the emotions and presumed interiority of the Other with some exaggeration and then the Other mirrors the Self again with exaggeration until the passions reach incredible levels. Another side of the role of passions in mimetic theory is that often adults play many games and go through all sorts of contortions to disguise their mimetic desires and hide their emotions.

Related to emotions are the “*illogical forces*” which drive the actions of people in such conflicts.¹² To outside observers it often seems that people in deep-rooted conflicts are putting at risk so many of their short term and long term interests through their conflictual actions, that how they respond each to their Other seems completely illogical. When one begins to understand the power of mimetic desire and mimetic contagion at a time of crisis; the actions within a conflict start to take on their own logic. One can begin to see how individual or group identity could hinge on the violent creation or dissolution of difference, another significant theme.

Much of the discourse of protagonists involved with deep-rooted conflict centres on *difference*. At an extreme, groups closely associated with one another who are in conflict will draw attention to the most minute differences between their groups and point to these as making a world of difference. Similarly stereotypic language used in the context of such conflicts stresses and exaggerates presumed differences. It is significant that the preoccupation with difference resonates with the key themes of a violence of differentiation and a violence of undifferentiation as the two

¹² See the quote of Demetrios JULIUS on page 42 of chapter 1.

major types of mimetic phenomena. To the observer of a deep-rooted conflict it is often apparent how those in rivalry, claiming to be so different from one another, in fact are losing all sense of difference as they become mirror images of one another. Similarly, when there is unity within one group around a common enemy, one can see how at an ontological level the scapegoat enemy becomes radically different to the point of erasing all features of personhood. Difference disintegrates to depersonalization and demonization through the scapegoat mechanism.

This brings us to the *dynamic nature* of deep-rooted conflict. Very significant changes take place in the course of such conflicts. Those who were once enemies become strangely united and in an instant those who were friends become the fiercest of foes. This dynamic nature of deep-rooted conflict needs a theoretical base at home with flux and change. In this regard mimetic theory helps one to see how and why many of these changes take place. That there is change through time raises the issue of diachronic structures.

The need for *diachronic structures* comes from the recognition that individuals within a deep-rooted conflict often appear to get caught up in something bigger than themselves. They perpetuate and support violent actions which might go contrary to values they might support at the level of calm dispassionate discourse. They end up doing things in the context of a mob or collective action which on reflection they would never go along with. Girard's mimetic theory develops a sense of ubiquitous mimetic structures which, in turn, convey a sense of involvement in something stronger, bigger, and greater than any individual human subject. The fact that they are rooted in the mimetic means that with the mimesis necessary for human survival, culture and development, comes the susceptibility to pass on, exemplify and exaggerate mimetically every form of violence generated by human beings in the past or present. It also means that there can be a mimetic inspiration such

that these structures can take hold of the imagination of people prompting them to generate new forms of violence.

Within the crisis of Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke* of 1990 there was evidence of mimetic structures of violence within a host of relational systems. These structures of violence interacted with one another intensifying the whole sense of crisis. It appears that most of those directly involved along with most Canadians had a sense of awe that they could be swept along in a chain of events that brought “peaceful” Canada to the very edge of massacre, bloodbath and rampant violence across the country. This sense of awe at the power of structures of violence to overtake relational systems needs to be put into perspective. For that reason we turn now to the realm of theology as we reflect on the reality of deep-rooted conflict.

Chapter 6

Theological Reflection

It is a special gift to be liberated from the violent structures of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating, it happens by being truly open to a transcendent reality, it does not come about by way of accomplishment, otherwise it would prompt another round of rivalry.¹

I have made an argument that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate schema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups*. Some of the strengths and limitations of Girard's thought are thrown into relief as we enter into theological discourse around deep-rooted conflict. For me, the combination of working through the material presented in the five chapters above and reflecting on the theological significance of what I have discovered has played a heuristic role, helping to come up with new ways of conceptualising the reconciliation of deep-rooted conflict. This is of primary importance since what prompted the dissertation in the first place was a deep caring over the pain suffered by those caught up in such conflicts. I will begin by sharing where I am coming from theologically. Then I will explain the concept of mimetic structures of blessing and how this helps to understand reconciliation. This will be followed by two biblical narratives which show the interaction between mimetic structures of violence and of blessing. I will then present the theological interface between mimetic structures of violence and more traditional symbolizations of evil. This will set the stage for a retelling of the story of Jesus from the perspective of deep-rooted conflict. Finally I will look at some of the practical implications of this dissertation.

¹ Inspired by Ephesians 2:8.

Personal Reflection

This dissertation has had a tremendous impact on my life. As I read about mimetic desire and with Girard looked at example after example, I shone a flashlight into my own psyche and found acquisitive mimetic structures throughout my own personal history. As I digested the ideas of many theorists in the area of deep-rooted conflict I started to see complexity, ambiguity and interacting structures. When I visited Oka/*Kanehsatà:ke* physically and figuratively I became aware of how entrenched structures of violence can be.

Part of the reason I was drawn to study deep-rooted conflict is because of my Mennonite heritage of pacifism and nonresistance to violence. A deontology which renounced the use of military force, fostered peace activity, and stressed individual salvation along with community service left me mute in relation to those caught within terrifying structures of violence. My own world view was not sufficiently expansive to have a voice. That I should turn to René Girard for significant insight is not by accident, especially in the light of the following observation made by Girardian theologian Mark Wallace:

Girard's ethic of nonviolence is consistent with the social vision of the radical reformers and their Anabaptist heirs. But Girard's notion of cultural mimesis adds an important element to the consistent peace ethic of the free church tradition. Since violence is always held in place and legitimized by the mechanisms of mimetic desire, it can never completely be rooted out of a culture's common life unless (1) it is first exposed as a structural necessity of the culture (not simply a byproduct of unregenerate human will), and unless (2) it is firmly responded to by a complete renunciation of the practice of answering violence with more violence.²

But my Mennonite background was only a starting point.

I have had the privilege of having my worldview expanded through dialogues with people of

² Mark I. WALLACE, "Postmodern Biblicism: The Challenge of René Girard for Contemporary Theology," *Modern Theology*, 5:4, July 1989.

many faiths. Learning Hebrew and opening myself to the thought of Jewish thinkers had a profound impact on me. The most sustained influence, however, came in the context of Saint Paul University where I studied under professors who without exception were in the Roman Catholic tradition. These relational structures have been both open and creative for me.

In a world context dominated by a cynical political realism that is disdainful of anything smacking of spirituality, vulnerability and faith, it takes courage (for me, anyway) to bring Jesus Christ into a discussion of deep-rooted conflict. It is in the light of an awareness of the power of mimetic structures of violence that the awesome work of Jesus Christ falls into relief.

Mimetic Structures of Blessing

René Girard has made a phenomenal contribution in unmasking the power of mimetic structures of violence. In his analysis of the work of Dostoevsky, the personal struggle of individuals caught up in the clutches of obsessive mimetic doubling comes through with incredible poignancy. He expresses the hold that mimetic desire can have on an individual or group. With Dostoevsky he takes us along a path which leads to the unmasking of social messianism, doubt and pride—words associated with the temptations of Jesus. Of these pride is seen as particularly powerful:

At the heart of everything there is always human pride or God, that is, the two forms of freedom. It is pride that maintains troubling memories deeply concealed; it is pride that separates us from ourselves and others. Individual neuroses and oppressive social structures stem essentially from pride hardened and petrified.³

He sees the Russian novelist first regarding himself as a sinner and through a structure akin to Augustine's *Confessions* opening himself to spiritual healing. It is the theme of a death and

³ Feodor Dostoevsky—*Resurrection from the Underground*, 139-140.

resurrection.⁴ This definition of resurrection purely in terms of release from the forces of evil captures only half of what salvation is all about. The process of reconciliation includes both a deliverance *from* the structures of violence and a freedom *to* live a creative life of blessing.⁵

The image I would like to present is a spectrum. On one side, we have mimetic structures of violence. Deep-rooted conflict can be seen as pushing people further in that direction until the very identities of the people involved are caught up in violence. At the other end of the spectrum are mimetic structures of blessing. Reconciliation can be conceived as a movement from mimetic structures of violence to mimetic structures of blessing. Girard has played a tremendous role in identifying the dynamics of violence so that we can recognize them, name them and take the first steps toward being released from them. What is needed more than anything is further definition of mimetic structures of blessing.

I chose to designate this positive aspect of mimetic phenomena as blessing, based on the Hebrew בָּרַךְ which stands as an antithesis to curse. Like curses, mimetic structures of violence constrict the movement of people, limit life options and are directed toward death. Blessings in contrast are empowering, lead to creative, ever expanding options, and are oriented toward life.⁶ Blessings are associated with gift—in Deuteronomy the primary gift is the land—hence with grace and also love.

⁴ Ibid., 140–41.

⁵ These two dimensions of reconciliation correspond to what Elmer Martens describes as “two kinds of divine activity. Deliverance is that work of rescue from evil which God brings about through his intervention. Blessing is the continuous work of God by means of which he sustains life, empowers persons and ensures a state of well-being.” See his *God’s Design - A Focus on Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986 [1981]), 39.

⁶ See Francis BROWN et al., *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Lafayette: Associate Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1980), s.v. בָּרַךְ. See also Vern REDEKOP, “Moses Perspective on War and Peace Based on the Book of Deuteronomy,” unpublished Senior Seminar Paper, 1982, 22, n. 12: “The word *barak* (to bless) has the sense of “empower” . . . There is in the three verb sequence [of Deut. 8:10] a picture of eating, being satisfied, and strengthened in the presence of God.

The primary contributor to an understanding of love in mimetic terms is Rebecca Adams.⁷ Adams argument is set in the debate between Girard and his critics about good and bad mimetic desire. Adams claims that what makes mimetic desire violent and harmful is the focus on objects in general, and subjects as objects in particular. She picks up on Girard's observation that the coquette desires herself as an object; as men imitate this desire they desire her as an object. Adams probes deeper: how did the coquette come to think of herself as an object—was it not in the lustful objectifying gaze of men? The alternative is for a Model to desire the subjectivity of a Proto-Subject. As the Proto-Subject mimics this desire they desire their own subjectivity. If the Model imitates this desire through a feedback loop, there is only enhanced desire for the subjectivity of the Proto-Subject. At another level, the Proto-Subject may imitate the action of the Model in desiring the subjectivity of Others, including the Model. As this happens there is a sense of mutuality, and the result is a relationship between the two and potentially more relationships with others. The idea of gift (or grace) emerges as that which will enhance the subjectivity of the Other.⁸ Adams refers to this expression of love as the "intersubjective creative love of self and other."⁹ She makes the link to Jesus through I John:

The words of first John are the religious formulation of this same idea of the simple unity of familial, social and metaphysical realism, and our intimate, even commonsensical, human access to creative desire: "Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and he [or she] who loves is born of God, and knows God. He [or she] who does not love does not

⁷ Rebecca ADAMS, "Mothers, Metamorphs, Myth and Mimesis: A Creative Reassessment of Mimetic Desire," unpublished paper presented at the COV&R Conference on "Violence and the subject of Responsibility," Loyola University, June 2, 1995.

⁸ There is a fine line between truly giving something to enhance the subjectivity of the other or giving a gift in order to draw attention to oneself through what Girard observes to be a reverse mimetic desire: i.e. competition over who can give the biggest gift.

⁹ ADAMS, "Mothers, Metamorphs, Myth and Mimesis," 15.

know God for God is love.” (I John 4:7-8) From a reassessed Girardian point of view, the implication is that to imitate (follow in the way of love) in the way I have described is to “imitate Christ.” To participate in an intersubjective gaze of loving creativity with others through mimetic desire is to imitate, image or reflect God.¹⁰

This raises the question of how to make such love real. At a theoretical level, one could go back to human needs theory and argue that if subjectivity is about meeting human identity needs, then love is to enable the subject to find satisfiers to those needs. At a practical level, intersubjective love through mimetic structures of blessing becomes apparent in stories.

The Story of Joseph

In the story of Joseph, various components of reconciliation are exemplified. His reconciliation with his brothers takes place within a personal narrative which begins with young Joseph observing a reconciling meeting between his father Jacob and his uncle Esau. To get the significance of that reconciliation we start with the conflict between these two twin brothers.

Girard sees the rivalry between Jacob and Esau as paradigmatic of rivalry between brothers, the type of rivalry which has been evident in many times and places.¹¹ In this case, the rivalry is over the giving of the birthright, the privilege due the eldest son. Younger brother Jacob, whose name means “supplanter,” tricked his father into giving him the birthright and blessing. Esau was furious and intent on killing Jacob, who went off to live with his mother’s brother Laban. While working for his uncle, he acquired two wives, two concubines and had eleven sons and one daughter. After over two decades away he decided he must move back to the place where he came from. This meant confronting Esau.

¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹¹ GIRARD, *Things Hidden*, 142.

The night before the meeting, Jacob wrestled with a being. Because the two were perfectly matched, the struggle went on all night. At the beginning, the being was described as a man. At the end when Jacob was winning, in Girard's words,

he becomes a God from whom Jacob demands and obtains a blessing. In other words, the combat of *doubles* results in the expulsion of one of the pair, and this is identified directly with the return to peace and order.¹²

The pattern is a relationship of doubles, a period of undecidability and a resolution through violent expulsion.¹³ This interesting variation on the theme of doubles shows a conflation of scapegoating with a mimetic conflict. In other words, Girard establishes a category for one's double becoming an enemy and possibly a scapegoat. It is as though the scapegoat action of fighting with the being, demanding a blessing, and letting the being escape, cleared up something within Jacob that paved the way toward reconciliation. As far as he was concerned, he had encountered a divine Being face-to-face.¹⁴ When Jacob met Esau he said, "... for to see your face is like seeing the face of God, and you have received me favorably."¹⁵ In wrestling with the Being, Jacob could transfer all the violence he felt for Esau onto his Other.¹⁶ This wrestling typifies an inner spiritual struggle which resulted in a change of identity involving a new name that reflected a new way of being and acting. Israel means "God persisted"¹⁷ implying that Jacob was subject to the persistence of God.

¹² Ibid., 142.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ So Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning, "I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved." Genesis 32:31, *Tanakh*.

¹⁵ Genesis 33:10b, *Tanakh*.

¹⁶ James WILLIAMS, *The Bible, Violence and the Sacred - Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p.48.

¹⁷ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, s.v. ישראל, 975.

The way out of the struggle, that is, receiving a blessing while being marked physically, is interpreted by James Williams as being victorious without scapegoating or becoming a scapegoat.¹⁸

Both brothers underwent a change of name which implied a change of identity. Earlier Esau's name, which was derived from his hairy skin,¹⁹ had been changed to Edom, meaning "red" or "ruddy" referring to the red lentil soup for which he sold his birthright. This selling of the birthright initiated the deep-rooted conflict between the brothers, it was the beginning of a process of Jacob acquiring what was rightfully Esau's based on birth order. At the end of the night encounter with a divine being, Jacob's name was changed to Israel, the name given to a people and a country. It is ironic that *Edom* refers back to the genesis of the mimetic structure of violence and *Israel* harks back to the beginning of a reconciliation that would allow both brothers each to be a founder of a people. The reconciliation was not lasting. Israel, according to the biblical story, was a people with whom God persisted and the Edomites a people and country considered arch enemies of Israel and subject to genocide and subjugation by Israel during much of the monarchy.²⁰

The process of reconciliation between Jacob and Esau started with Jacob sending a large number of animals to Esau as a peace offering. The gift acknowledged that there was an on-going conflict and that Jacob had wronged Esau. It was a way of making things up to his brother. When they met in dramatic fashion, they embraced, and Esau offered to protect Jacob's family for the rest of their trip back to southern Israel. Young Joseph witnessed this coming together of brothers who

¹⁸ WILLIAMS, *The Bible, Violence and the Sacred*, 49.

¹⁹ *Tanakh*. Genesis 25:25, note "c."

²⁰ Frank CRÜSEMANN, "Dominion, Guilt, and Reconciliation: The Contribution of the Jacob Narrative in Genesis to Political Ethics," trans. Carl S. EHRLICH, *Semeia*, 66 (1994): 67-77. Note also that Israel had twelve landed tribes plus the Levites and Edom a similar number: cf. Genesis 36:15-19 in which thirteen grandsons of Esau are listed with one being differentiated and Genesis 36:40-43 in which eleven landed tribes are listed.

had had such a deep-rooted conflict that Esau had wanted to kill Jacob; after over twenty years, Jacob was still afraid that he might do it.

Joseph as the favoured son stood out among his brothers, who had mimetic desire for him. Eventually he became a scapegoat in classical fashion. He was sold into slavery and banished to Egypt. When he became powerful and prosperous in Egypt, his family was subject to famine and came to him for food. Joseph, the victim, was now in power, unbeknownst to his brothers. He tested them by giving them food, but demanded that his younger brother Benjamin return the next time. Benjamin was the favoured son of father Isaac, who could not trust his other sons with the only other son of his favourite wife, Rachel. The famine persisted and Judah promised his father that if Benjamin would get into trouble, he would put himself in Benjamin's place for the sake of preserving his younger brother. Isaac's sons returned to Joseph, who set up a situation where Benjamin was implicated in the "theft" of his goblet. As Judah promised, he offered to take Benjamin's place and all the brothers showed remorse for what they had done to Joseph. Joseph then disclosed his identity and embraced his brothers. He then reframed the situation, saying that God had directed events so that he could be in a position to look after them. He had the whole family moved to Egypt so that they could be cared for throughout the famine.

In this story, the young Joseph witnessed a process of reconciliation involving his father and brother. This allowed him to imagine that reconciliation between brothers in conflict was possible. He eventually imitated reconciliation, and started a process exemplifying a mimetic structure of blessing. It was mimetic in three senses: it was patterned after the previous reconciliation, it was triggered by Judah's offer to take Benjamin's place,²¹ and it was responded to mimetically on the

²¹ The structure was very similar to when Joseph was sold: it was an all against one situation. The story was changed from the first round of dealing with the Rachel son by Judah's offer.

part of Joseph's brothers who trusted him enough to actually move to Egypt. It was blessing in that it was life-giving and creative—introducing new options and a reframing of the situation so as to absolve the brothers of guilt. We note the passing of time from his victimization, during which Joseph moved from being a victim to becoming an actor. His identity changed from being acted upon to taking responsible action. Had he been totally caught up in a mimetic structure of violence he could not have moved the situation to one of blessing—looking out for the well-being of his brothers. We also note that his brothers expressed remorse to him and Judah especially showed that he had changed. Throughout the lifetime of the protagonists, the process of reconciliation appears to have continued.

Two Prostitutes and Solomon

The story of two women prostitutes fighting over a baby (1 Kings 3) exemplifies a conflict resolved with the help of a neutral third party, namely, Solomon. The key to the resolution is an act of self-giving love on the part of the real mother. Girard sees this as one of the closest actions to that of Christ.

In this story, two women, each with a baby, fall asleep together. In the morning one of the women realizes that her child has died during the night. Before the other woman awakes, she switches the babies. When the other mother awakens, she recognizes that the dead child beside her is not hers. The dispute over to whom the living child belongs is taken to Solomon, who decides that the living child should be cut in half with each mother getting one half. The real mother promptly states that the child should live and should be left with the mother of the dead child. Solomon recognizes the truth and returns the child to the right mother.

Girard suggests that the fact that both women were harlots is indicative of a “lack of

differentiation” with a symmetry representing “the very essence of human conflict.”²² Solomon, when asked to decide who should get the baby, asked that the child be cut in half. Girard observes that the “Latin word *decidere* means etymologically to divide by the sacrificial knife, to cut the throat of a victim.”²³ The dominance of mimesis over genuine love is revealed within the woman who switched the babies: the “only thing that counts for her is possessing what the other one possesses. In the last resort, she is ready to accept being deprived of the child as long as her opponent is deprived of it in the same way.”²⁴

Girard argues against the use of sacrificial language in describing the action of the real mother. He notes that it “plays down the difference” in action and attitude, relegating “to the secondary level what is most important for the real mother ‘that her child should live’.”²⁵ He goes on to stress that the “sacrificial definition always emphasizes renunciation, death and split subjectivity; that is to say, it emphasizes the values that belong to the bad mother, including the element of mimetic desire, which is identical with what Freud calls the death instinct.”²⁶ The real mother’s action speaks to an awful dilemma:

Like Judah at the end of the Joseph story, the good harlot agrees to substitute herself for the sacrificial victim, not because she feels a morbid attraction to the role but because she has an answer to the tragic alternative: kill or be killed. The answer is: be killed, not as a result of masochism, or the “death instinct,” but so that the child will live.²⁷

²² GIRARD, *Things Hidden*, 237-38.

²³ *Ibid.*, 238.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 238-39.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.

Girard goes on to point out that the role of Solomon is like that of God who wants neither child nor mother to die. Girard observes that God

is not on earth to put an end to the conflicts between doubles; on earth, there is no King Solomon who can bring about the rule of true justice. The human situation, at its most basic level, depends on there being no Fathers and all-wise kings to ensure the rule of justice for a humanity that continues in a state of eternal infancy . . . So the only way of doing the will of the Father, on earth as it is in heaven, is by behaving like the good harlot, by taking the same risks as she did, which should be done not in a spirit of sacrificial gloom or morbid preoccupation with death but in a spirit of love for true life, so that life may triumph.²⁸

Girard's observation that it is important to take risks for the sake of the life of the Other is well placed. However, in response to his observation about their being no wise kings, I would argue that there is a role for people who have the power to make a difference to introduce structures of blessing for those caught in mimetic structures of violence.²⁹

As a story of reconciliation, it exemplifies first the significance of love as the driving motivation to effect a change. It was the mother's desire for the wellbeing of the child, which determined the outcome. As well, Solomon desired the wellbeing of the biological mother and the child. The other key feature was the importance of truth. The articulation and discernment of the truth on the part of Solomon made it possible for the rightful mother and child to be reunited. There was a movement from a structure of violence in which a child was stolen from its mother to a structure of blessing. Furthermore, the reconciliation had within it a sense of justice—it would have been unjust for the wrong mother to get the baby or for the baby to be killed. That mother and child were reunited was the most just of all the options. Another key aspect of the reconciliation process was that it was directed by a wise person who was looked up to by both

²⁸ Ibid., 242–43.

²⁹ James WILLIAMS, *The Bible, Violence and the Sacred*, 142, uses Psalm 72, the Psalm about the righteous king, to make the point that it is incumbent on people in leadership to play such a role.

parties. Solomon took a creative and dramatic step to draw out the truth. He exposed the objectifying nature of the conflict by treating the child as a material object, an object which could have been cut in half. He exposed the objectifying nature of the mimetic rivalry. Killing the baby would have equalized the rivalry—both women would have been equally childless but it would have been a murder of the child. This was a mimetic structure of blessing in that it took place in a context of a violent structure of undifferentiation (doubling) and introduced a life-giving structure of differentiation in that the true mother determined to not imitate the action and attitude of her rival. It was also mimetic of Judah's willingness to give up his own personal interests for a younger brother who was in his charge like his own child.

Mimetic Structures of Violence and Symbols of Evil

The concept of *mimetic structures of violence* stands for mimetic desire and scapegoating which are oriented toward death, division and domination. This concept has, in effect, become a new way of conceptualising symbolic representations of evil. Deep-rooted conflict is seen as drawing people along a continuum (cf. Staub) of ever-greater violence and evil. Reconciliation moves people in the opposite direction toward *mimetic structures of blessing*, which are oriented toward life, connectedness and creativity. Mimetic structures of violence and of blessing are both diachronic, and hence, are accessible through narrative as was illustrated in the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis. I will make the links between mimetic structures of violence and theological symbolizations of evil, and between mimetic theory and love.

In Christian theology, there is a significant resonance between the concept of mimetic structures of violence and various representations of evil. The link can be seen in the relationship between Saul and David as described in I Samuel. Saul had just heard the people sing about how

he killed his thousands but David his ten thousand. A feeling of mimetic desire, rivalry and doubling overwhelmed him as he attempted to kill David, whom he had loved, and whose presence he had enjoyed. This happened several times until Saul became obsessed with murdering David. It is clear that Saul's needs for meaning, recognition and connectedness were not satisfied; they were not satisfied because of his mimetic comparison with David. Had David not been praised, Saul would have been content. Since Saul and David stood, synecdochically, for the tribes of Benjamin and Judah respectively which in turn represented the offspring of Rachel and Leah respectively, the social identity and ultimate preeminence of one of the two groups was at stake.³⁰

We know that deep rooted conflicts, based on a threat to identity needs defined mimetically, are very real. But where do they come from? In the stories of Saul and David, a name was given to the impulse at the root of the conflict. The biblical writer, aware of the power of this impetus, described it as "an evil spirit from God."³¹ Similarly, when David wanted to conduct a census, undoubtedly motivated by a mimetic rivalry with other kingdoms and a desire to prove his own power, he was said to be motivated by "the anger of YHWH."³² The impulse was seen as representing the awesome power of sacred violence. It is interesting that when the same story is told by the Chronicler, the spirit prompting the action which resulted in much suffering and death was attributed to a spirit from Satan.³³ In the New Testament, "Satan" is the name given to the tempter. In doing so the Gospel writers bring the Hebrew-Aramaic word for "adversary" into the

³⁰ Donald M. TAYLOR and Lise DUBÉ, "Two Faces of Identity: The 'I' and the 'We'," *Journal of Social Issues*, 42-2 (1986): 81-82, note that the personal and social identities are intertwined.

³¹ I Samuel 18:10; 19:9.

³² II Samuel 24:1.

³³ I Chronicles 21:1.

Greek lexicon. Satan as adversary can be seen as mimetic rival, the instigator of acquisitive mimetic desire, and as persecutor. In the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, the impulse toward destructive tendencies is further abstracted to the power of sin and death or the lust of the flesh. The pre-cursors and symptoms of deep-rooted conflict are frequently referred to as sin.

There are certain insights about mimetic structures of violence which come from the symbol systems of demons and the devil. In chapter three, the story of Jesus exorcism of demons from a person to pigs made the links between demons and mimetic violence. There is a clear association between the devil and deception. In the words of Jesus,

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.³⁴

This association of the devil with lies emphasizes for Girard and theologians in his wake the quality of mimetic desire to trick people into thinking that they will be satisfied when they acquire what the other has or wants. In fact, they will always be disappointed. "Father" is used in New Testament discourse to talk about the person who inspires or generates a general set of characteristics. Children of Abraham are thought to have the characteristics of Abraham whereas children of the devil pick up the murderous tendency reflected in the scapegoat phenomenon.

The power orientation of evil is developed in Ephesians, in the context of an injunction to put on the whole armour of God "to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the Sovereignities and the Powers who originate the

³⁴ John 8:44.

darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens.”³⁵ Walter Wink has elaborated on this understanding of the “Powers” in which they are equated with structures of domination.³⁶

Girard develops the notion of Satan being the accuser, the accuser who rallies elites and mobs alike to scapegoat a victim they deem to be illegitimate. The concept of accuser, when coupled with a passion for power provides the impetus and rationalisations for those who would dominate others. Within the context of a particular conflict, accusations play a significant role; antagonists become mini-satans as they embody the Accuser *par excellent*.

Etymologically, “devil” is a translation of διαβολισ from δια (*dia*) and βολισ (*bolis*). Βολισ is derived from the verb “to throw” and δια has a number of meanings including “between,” “across,” or “through.” Each adds a different connotation. If the etymology is to throw *about* or *across* as Gil Bailie prefers, the root metaphor suggest that a devil-like person “sows discord and division” and “breeds animosity.”³⁷ Taking “between” as the meaning for δια, the devil is one who throws something *between* two parties. This “throwing between” resembles an object of mimetic desire, which comes between two people or groups who become Model-Obstacles for one another.

The diabolos produces all the psychosocial complications for which Girard’s mimetic theory so ably accounts. The fundamental tool of the diabolos is what the author of the book of Wisdom called “the devil’s envy,” the mimetic incentives that generate the delusions and distractions of the social melodrama. At the critical moment, when these passions have sown enough frenzy and reduced a society to pandemonium, the *diabolos* changes its modus operandi. The *diabolos* becomes the *Satan*. Suddenly, the accusing finger points, and a violent avalanche is set in motion, the end result of which is a pile of stones, a glorious memory, and the rudiments of yet another of the kingdoms of “this world.” . . .

³⁵ Ephesians 6:11-12 (JB).

³⁶ Walter WINK, *Engaging the Powers - Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

³⁷ Gil BAILIE, *Violence Unveiled* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 204.

What the *diabolos* divides, *satan* unites, minus the victim that makes the union possible.³⁸

Bailie argues that the snares of *diabolos satan* were broken by Jesus, not through “superior understanding” but through “God-centeredness.”³⁹ Girard’s mimetic theory demonstrates the “anthropological validity” of sin as alienation from God.⁴⁰ “Sin” also needs to be considered when dealing with deep-rooted conflict as a movement into mimetic structures of violence.

Robert Hamerton-Kelly develops the concept of sin as an expression of mimetic desire.

Sin is an activity, an attitude and a state of affairs. As an activity it is mimetic rivalry with God (φθονος), as an attitude it is concupiscence (ἐπιθυμία), and as a state of affairs it is the system of sacred violence (ἁμαρτία). Sin begins in the mystery of free human desire, and takes shape in the deformation of that desire. . . . To sin is to deform desire to acquisitive and conflictual mimesis, to “procure” being through rivalry with God rather than to receive it as a gift from God, and thus to set desire on its way through the double transference to sacred violence.⁴¹

Hamerton-Kelly sees in Paul’s concept of the “failed mind” (ἄδοκιμος νοῦς) a corruption of desire from which

comes the deeply destructive forces of disorder, the vices that destroy human community: wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice . . . envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity . . . gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless” (Rom. 1:29-31). It is not difficult to see how all of these vices stem from mimetic rivalry.⁴²

By means of Adam, “Paul is able to communicate the nature of sin as something that is both an act of individual irresponsibility and an imprisonment within a system of irresponsibility, both the

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 207.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ HAMERTON-KELLY, *Sacred Violence*, 88-89.

⁴² Ibid., 99.

individuality and the universality of sin”;⁴³ hence, Hamerton-Kelly associates the deformation of desire through mimetic desire, with both original sin and a force or system outside oneself.

This same sense of being overwhelmed by a power beyond oneself is compared by Paul to the power of sin and death. It is a power that subverts the Torah, which is clearly right, good, and a gift of grace, by making adherence to the Torah a matter of mimetic rivalry, thus subverting the very purpose.⁴⁴ Paul equates the power of sin and death with being caught up with unbridled envy, greed, lust, etc.—all of which are manifestations of an out of control mimetic desire.

Girard, together with a number of theologians,⁴⁵ observes that when the Hebrew Bible records a sacrificial crisis with an impulse to scapegoat, the phenomenon was attributed early on to the wrath of God. Ancient Hebrews were so overwhelmed by the power associated with a mimetic crisis and the resolution through a contagious scapegoating that they saw in it a force, which could only be attributed to God (cf. the story of Saul and David). One example is the rebellion of Israel against Moses and Aaron in Numbers 14. The people were on the verge of entering the promised land, but ten of the twelve envoys reported that the odds of being able to take the land were insurmountable. The community talked of stoning Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua, the leaders who wanted to proceed into Canaan. There was clearly a crisis and a desire to invoke the scapegoat mechanism. This movement was interpreted as grumbling against God. However, an angry YHWH intervened and wanted to kill the whole community through pestilence. Moses interceded on their behalf; YHWH forgave the people. The ten spies who had incited the people

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁴ I am indebted to John E. Toews for this reading of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans.

⁴⁵ Including Raymund Schwager, James Alison, and Robert Hamerton-Kelly.

were all “struck down” before YHWH. This act resembles the pattern of scapegoating—a crisis resolved through mob killing of one or more victims. In the telling of the story, their victimization was associated with the divine presence.

In the New Testament, this sense of the “wrath of God” phenomena as a human phenomenon becomes more clear:

[T]he wrath of god is not understood as something which God does actively, but is rather the condition of human involvement in the murderous lie, which John also underlines. In case this is not grasped, it is worth remembering that Paul understands that to talk of the wrath of God in an active sense is merely a human way of speaking (cf Rom. 3:5), whose real content is purely human. On all the other occasions that the term “wrath” appears in his writings, it appears as the impersonal term “the wrath,” and not the wrath of God. . . . God is described as handing us over to ourselves: this is the content of the wrath. But this term *paredoken*—(he) handed over—is very important in early Christian discourse, since the only really important handing over which took place was God’s handing over of Jesus to us. In Romans 4:25 we are told that God handed over Jesus, and once again in Romans 8:32. That is to say it is God’s handing over of Jesus to us which defines what “the wrath” is: the wrath is the type of world in which Jesus was born to death by sinful humans could not receive the truth.⁴⁶

Robert Hamerton-Kelly takes the argument further when he points out that

the wrath revealed in the gospel is not the divine vengeance that should have fallen on us falling instead on Jesus, but rather the divine nonresistance to human evil (cf. Matt 5:39), God’s willingness to suffer violence rather than defend himself or retaliate. . . . The Cross reveals this paradoxical wrath as God’s acceptance of our free choice to destroy ourselves and each other, inasmuch as it is the supreme instance of this human rage against the good. Wrath, therefore, is primarily sacred violence in its aspect of human vengeance.⁴⁷

The net result of mimetic structures of violence is that they are oriented toward death, rigidity, legalism, rivalry, and a restriction of options. They may move alternately from the appearance of a strict order to a kind of chaos as when “all hell breaks loose.” As people get caught up in these

⁴⁶ James ALISON, *Raising Abel—The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 46–47.

⁴⁷ HAMERTON-KELLY, *Sacred Violence*, 101–102.

structures, their very identity is centred on violence either as victims or as perpetrators.

There are also mimetic structures of blessing discernible within the world, and most people participate in these to some extent. Blessing speaks of a life-orientation, creativity and the expanding of options. In terms of human needs theory, structures of violence move us in the direction of circumscribing well-defined satisfiers to our own human needs. Mimetic structures of blessing expand the number of satisfiers to our human needs and at the same time prompt us to attend to the human identity needs of the Other. The symbol systems which accompany these structures are love and grace.

Christological Reflection

As we draw on biblical and theological concepts to illuminate the process of reconciliation, we must acknowledge that for many who are caught up in deep-rooted conflicts the theological world lacks credibility.⁴⁸ This applies perhaps particularly to Christology, the study of the role and person of Jesus Christ. This is largely the result of violence perpetrated in the name of Christ, Christian triumphalism, Christian complicity in the development of colonial hegemonic structures, and a tendency among Christian theologians either to be preoccupied with other worldly concerns by spiritualizing the Christian message or to adopt a gospel which has lost its transcendence.⁴⁹ It is true that much violence has been perpetrated in the name of Christ. Christianity has not escaped being taken over by structures of mimetic violence and scapegoating.

Endless rivalries and deep-rooted conflicts within Christendom should not be given the

⁴⁸ See SCHWAGER et al., "Dramatic Theology as a Research Program," unpublished paper presented at the Colloquium on Violence and Religion at Stanford University, June, 1996, 1.

⁴⁹ James ALISON, in *Raising Abel*, 30-33, equates the first with many in the reformation tradition and the second with a Roman Catholic natural law tradition. Within the second, one finds many historical-critical biblical scholars and social gospel advocates.

power to distract us from the insights available from the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus. In fact, as the light of these insights shines into the inner reaches of our individual psyches, as well as the hidden recesses of ecclesiastical structures, we may find new ways of being and acting such that all those surrounding us will say, as the Canaanites were to have said of a Torah-living people: "Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people."⁵⁰ We will now turn to the story of Jesus which will be told with the question in mind, What did Jesus do and say to address deep-rooted conflict? A proper answer to this question demands another dissertation; all that can be done here is to offer a limited telling of the story in a way which will highlight key themes about the movement from mimetic structures of violence to mimetic structures of blessing.

Jesus entered a world rife with deep-rooted conflict. Judaism was divided between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism centred in Alexandria and Jerusalem respectively. Palestinian Judaism was deeply divided among the High Priest, Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots and Essenes. These each had rivalries within them; the more pronounced rivalry among the Pharisees was between the school of Hillel and the school of Shammai. These Jewish groups were all more or less pitted against the Roman authorities politically and Hellenism culturally. People had status based on citizenship and rank within hierarchies. Tribal differences were still kept alive with the tribe of Judah predominating. Antagonism between Jews and their Samaritan cousins was intense. Conflicts among all of these groups included stereotypes and ethnomylths of differentiation. Many issues, which Jesus addressed, centred on these conflicts.

Let us pick up the story as Jesus approaches the time to begin his public ministry. The first thing that happens is that he is tempted in the wilderness. The three temptations are all about

⁵⁰ Deuteronomy 4:6, *Tanakh—A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

mimetic desire: the Tempter consciously tries to raise within him a desire for the power to produce food (social messianism); the prestige attached to safely jumping from the temple; the power associated with hegemony over political kingdoms. The temptations themselves tell us a great deal about mimetic desire. That Jesus was tempted meant that he was not automatically immune from mimetic desire. In each case he places the mimetic temptation into a broader, transcendent frame of reference; in doing so he robbed it of its power to entice. This was only the beginning of Jesus standing up to the powers we have seen to be associated with mimetic structures of violence.

As Jesus started his ministry, one of his first actions was to gather a group of disciples around him. This gathering addressed identity based conflict in that he chose people who came from a variety of identity: Galilean fishers, an urban tax collector, a Zealot, and an Israelite “in whom there was no guile”—a pious upholder of the Torah. There were rivalries among the disciples, including who would be the greatest in the final kingdom.⁵¹ By announcing and demonstrating the primacy of servanthood, he showed the vanity of acquisitive mimetic rivalries and the desirability of working for the well-being of the Other. Their being together with him and becoming a group shows his power to set up structures which transcend identity-based rivalries.

As Jesus walked through the towns and villages of Judah, Samaria and Galilee he encountered many people who were possessed by an “evil spirit.” The most dramatic story was told in chapter 3; it involved the casting out of a legion of demons from a man who had become the perpetual scapegoat of his village. By releasing the demons, who legitimized the scapegoating, Jesus dismantled the mimetic structure of violence. The action of the herd of pigs running over a cliff illustrated the contagious nature of mimetic violence. Time after time he released people from

⁵¹ Matthew 20:20-28.

these forces of evil which constricted their life options, opening up many new possibilities for them.

Repeatedly, Jesus encountered situations where it was considered a matter of course that someone be excluded because of their identity. In some cases women who were “sinners” entered a Pharisaic dinner party and displayed their love for Jesus.⁵² He was criticized for accepting them in that situation, but he insisted on opening the community doors to them.⁵³ In other cases, he ate with “publicans and sinners” who were considered “unclean.”⁵⁴ One of these was Zacchaeus, who, after his encounter with Jesus ended up repaying those whom he had cheated.⁵⁵ When the daughter of the outsider Syrophenician woman was delivered of an “unclean spirit” by Jesus, he brought out her status but accepted her on the basis of her show of faith.⁵⁶ In the case of his encounter with the Samaritan woman, Jesus went over cultural boundaries by talking respectfully with her. The type of blessing exemplified in these cases of reaching out to the ones violently differentiated is a blessing of undifferentiation.

Jesus revealed a God who was totally loving and non-violent. There are many indications in the Hebrew Bible that God is essentially loving. Moses reminds God on two occasions that God’s character is slow to anger and great in mercy.⁵⁷ On both these occasions the people had violated the covenant, prompting a crisis in which Moses himself was the intended scapegoat. While there is much within the Hebrew Bible which reveals a God who stands with victims and one whose לֵב

⁵² Luke 7:36-50.

⁵³ I am indebted for this insight to Thomas WIESER, “Community — Its Unity, Diversity and Universality,” *Semeia*, 33 (1985) 88, where he argues that Jesus aims at abolishing the distinction between insiders and outsiders.

⁵⁴ Mark 2:15-17; Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:29-32.

⁵⁵ Luke 19:1-10.

⁵⁶ Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:21-28.

⁵⁷ Exodus 34:6-7 and Numbers 14:15; see Vernon REDEKOP, *A Life for a Life?—The Death Penalty on Trial* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1990), 38, for my translation and commentary.

(*hesed* - merciful love) endures for ever, there is something starkly unequivocal about the loving nature of God as revealed by Jesus. It can take the form of opening communities to outsiders.

The image of God which [Jesus] proposes to us in the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7) is exactly the inverse of the god we've seen. According to this parable the mercy of God is shown *not* to the group, but to the lost member, to the outsider. I ask you to consider quite how extraordinary this change of perception with respect to who God is turns out to be: mercy has been changed from something which covers up violence to something which unmasks it completely. For God there are no "outsiders," which means that any mechanism for the creation of "outsiders" is automatically and simply a mechanism of human violence, and that's that.⁵⁸

The very act of opening up communities and pointing out the violence in keeping them closed was very threatening to those intent on keeping things closed in upon themselves.

The challenging questions put to Jesus turned on identity distinctions. He was asked about paying taxes to Caesar, a question which was really about differentiation between Jews and Romans. He replied, "Render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."⁵⁹ When he was asked about who was the neighbour, his story featured the Other, the Samaritan, as the one who showed what it meant to be a good neighbour. Where Jesus was pushed towards a violence of differentiation, of making one group or another ontologically different and a potential scapegoat, he provided replies that transcended difference, reframing the discourse so as to include new reference points. He took people out of a closed system of discourse, a system which violently turned in on itself and the people represented within it,⁶⁰ and brought them to a new awareness with a new relative balance of differentiation and undifferentiation. Where the Samaritans and Romans were the scapegoat other, he developed a blessing of undifferentiation

⁵⁸ ALISON, *Raising Abel*, 35; cf.

⁵⁹ Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25.

⁶⁰ Munk, "The Design of Violence," 259-60.

showing how at a human level people could be connected to one another. Repeatedly he urged them to love one another as he had loved them, thus showing love to be a matter of mimesis.

Jesus' command that we love one another is deemed by Alison to be an "open definition" or "flexible paradigm." He paraphrases John 14:23 as follows:

It is allowing their imagination and practice to be expanded beyond the culture sunk in death in which they were born, by means of what I have taught and carried out, that people love me. Your loving me consists exactly in this. By doing this, the entirely living and creative self-giving of my Father will come to possess you, and the Father and I will make of you someone who is an active, visible, historical participant in our creation a story of a diversity which knows not death.⁶¹

He goes on to paraphrase the love commandment as follows:

I am going to my death to make possible for you a model of creative practice which is not governed by death. From now on this is the only commandment which counts: that you should live your lives as a creative overcoming of death, showing that you are prepared to die because you are not moved by death, and you are doing this to make possible a similar living out for your friends.⁶²

More concretely, an answer to the question can be found in the actions of Jesus as Raymund

Schwager suggests. He points out that Jesus' own behaviour gives definition to what it means to love another:

Jesus makes God's loving attitude towards sinners markedly visible in his own behavior. He visits God's enemies, the tax-gatherers and sinners, he eats with them, and provokes the objections of the teachers of the law (Scribes). He defends himself against these objections with parables which tell how God seeks out the lost and the sinner. In this way, by mirroring God's attitude to sinners in his own behavior towards objectionable people, he reveals how God loves his enemies, how in his goodness and in his concern for their salvation, he goes out of his way to meet them.⁶³

His proclamation to love enemies became "an historical act" through "his non-violent behavior in

⁶¹ ALISON, *Raising Abel*, 70-71.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁶³ Raymund SCHWAGER, "Christ's Death and the Prophetic Critique of Sacrifice," *Semeia*, 33, (1985): 111.

the face of hostile assault,” revealing that God does, indeed, love enemies.⁶⁴ It not only a non-violent response but an appeal to God to forgive his enemies.

Jesus encountered people who were both victims and perpetrators of violence. Jesus urged a movement towards the Other in a context that values the transcendence of differences. Where the Self was a victim, Jesus encouraged victims to continue to take initiative; even being slapped should not lead to inaction but to a turning of the other cheek. He cautioned the vulnerable to remove the grounds for antagonism on the part of potential perpetrators of violence. Where the Self is a potential perpetrator of violence, Jesus urged mercy.⁶⁵

Jesus not only did something about deep-rooted conflict in the broader world around him, he offered particular teachings to his disciples who were close at hand. When he told them he would be leaving they questioned him about where he was going and what was the way. His answer reveals something about mimetic structures of blessing. Please allow me the following original midrash. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.”⁶⁶ *Εγώ εἰμι* (I am) at the beginning, is an allusion to *אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה* (I am that I am, or better translated I would become who I would become) the Divine self identification given to Moses.⁶⁷ Severino Pancaro, in his comprehensive exegetical dissertation on John, argues persuasively that “way,” “truth,” and “life” are all code words for Torah.⁶⁸ Torah was, of course,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 117.

⁶⁵ REDEKOP, *A Life for a Life?*, 44-47.

⁶⁶ John 14:6.

⁶⁷ Exodus 3:14

⁶⁸ Severino PANCARO, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel* (Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1975).

identified with blessing.⁶⁹ The Deuteronomic theme was that land was a gift and that a sustained life on the land was possible only by incarnating the principle of Torah, key of which was to love YHWH with heart, soul strength and might. When Jesus used “way, truth and life” for himself, he was saying something about mimetic structures of blessing. The metaphor of *way* speaks of the diachronic dimension of the structure; it calls to mind the image of הלך, Hebrew for walking—one walks the way. A *way* comes from somewhere (historical) and leads somewhere (promissory). *Truth* is the opposite of deceit; it reveals what is hidden. Jesus as the truth revealed the lie of violent mimetic structures. Jesus identification with *life* is consistent with the life orientation of God.⁷⁰ Life and abundant life was the goal of what Jesus was all about.⁷¹ The theme of life is consistent with that of blessing. By saying that “I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me,” Jesus was saying in effect that connectedness with God involves participation in a way of living, being open to the truth and being life-oriented. εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ (except through me) is significant in that the genitive pronoun used with the preposition διὰ has the connotation of agency on the part of Jesus. It suggests that just as there was something compelling about structures of violence which were beyond oneself and led to violence, there is something compelling about the Christological structure which is beyond oneself and draws the Self into the orb of blessing. Participation in mimetic structures of blessing means being open to a positive mimesis of life-oriented action through Christ’s indwelling Spirit who makes it possible to produce

⁶⁹ See Psalm 1 and Psalm 119 for the associations between Torah and blessing. Also note that in Deuteronomy, a full life in the land is associated with living out the Torah which contained within it teachings related to the movement from mimetic structures of violence to those of blessing. See also Vern Neufeld REDEKOP, “The Centrality to the Exodus of Torah as Ethical Projection,” *Contagion* 2 (1995): 119-44.

⁷⁰ For a thorough presentation of how the Torah reveals the life orientation of God see Emmanuel FELDMAN, *Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement and Mourning* (New York: KTAV).

⁷¹ John 10:10.

the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control.⁷² Jesus' reference to way, truth and life was followed by a teaching about his complete solidarity with his eternal Parent.

The relationship with God is ultimately what saved Jesus from participating in structures of violence. Throughout his ministry he was tempted to assume the mantle of political Messiah; he resisted the temptation. The only context in which he urged the word to go out that he was a Messiah was in Samaria,⁷³ where the concept of Messiah was that of a teacher. Finally, he was tempted not to take his teaching to its logical conclusion. When Peter protested that he not follow the path to the cross. When Jesus said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" he was essentially saying, "Peter, you are getting sucked in by the mimetic structures of violence that surround you. You are operating on deceitful and murderous assumptions that a political Messiah put in place by force will bring life and goodness to your people." Later, when Jesus asked that his cup be taken from him, he concluded: "Not my will but yours be done."

Ultimately, what it took for Jesus to be the way, truth and life was to simply allow the force of mimetic structures of violence to expend itself on him without allowing himself to imitate the pattern. In this way, he exposed them for what they were. It was the overwhelming conviction that it was the will of God that he make himself vulnerable to the violent forces erupting around him which prompted him to take that path.

Here [in 1 John 4:8-10] we have the element of the discovery of the absolutely vivacious and effervescent nature of God leading to the realization that behind the death of Jesus there was no violent God, but a loving God who was planning a way to get us out of our violent and sinful life. Not a human sacrifice to God, but God's sacrifice to humans.⁷⁴

⁷² Galatians 5:22 (Jerusalem Bible).

⁷³ John 4:25-26.

⁷⁴ James ALISON, *Raising Abel*, 46.

This sense of the love of God being tied to God's revelation of what is dark and evil is presented by Schwager as follows:

Therefore let us now turn our attention once again to the figure of Jesus. The prophet from Nazareth announced a God of loving kindness and uncovered the evil which lurks as a dark volition and mysterious passion deep in the hearts of human beings. These inclinations—as the judgement discourses of the New Testament, in contrast to the Greek tragedies, show—lead one not simply to kill but even to Hell. Therefore murder is here no longer the last dark point of reference. Murder becomes itself a parable of an even darker world and of an even deeper suffering, and allows a world which is eternally closed-in-on-itself to show through.⁷⁵

Schwager's sense of a world closed in on itself draws out the tendency of mimetic structures of violence to become constrictive and restrictive.⁷⁶ Schwager's conjunction between the revelation of a God of love and the exposure of violent structures creates a radical disjunction between God and the force of violence. If a key function of violence is a "closing in on itself," it means that the force of love is always opening up the system in creative ways.

Jesus himself was a victim of violence; Schwager shows how Jesus identifies with victims:

It is precisely as victim that he intercedes for his enemies, and he identifies himself with them insofar as they are harmed by evil. As a result, people find themselves simultaneously in two camps. As *sinners* they turn against the crucified one, as *victims* of their own and others' misdeeds, they are accepted into a new community of prayer and hope before God, by him whom they have hurt. The cross effects a division within persons.⁷⁷

Schwager argues that Jesus' identification on the cross is with people as victims, not sinners.

Theologically, then, as we view any deep-rooted conflict, we can see people as both perpetrators and victims of violence. In some specific instances some people are clearly only victims. In other

⁷⁵ SCHWAGER, "Suffering, Victims, and Poetic Inspiration," 66.

⁷⁶ For a discussion on both violent mimetic structures and the sense of a closed system see Linda MUNK, "The Design of Violence," *Journal of Literature & Theology*, 4-3 (November 1990): esp. 259-260.

⁷⁷ Raymond SCHWAGER, S.J., "Christ's Death and the Prophetic Critique of Sacrifice," *Semeia*, 33, (1985): 118.

cases the roles swing back and forth or form mimetic chains. This sense of people potentially playing two different roles is illustrated in the parable of the victim who was deeply in debt. After he was forgiven the debt, he proceeded to oppress the person who owed him a much smaller amount.⁷⁸ It is in the acknowledgement of being both victim and perpetrator that one can concentrate on healing the victimization; this healing should prevent the victim from becoming a perpetrator of violence.

Jesus as a victim of violence shows by example both how such violence can be interpreted and what actions might lead to life-giving options. Schwager, in reflecting on the significance of Jesus death as victimization, has this to say:

It follows that Christ's death can be correctly called a sacrifice, if this is understood to mean an offering which includes the following elements: 1) obedience to the Father as willingness to be persecuted even to the point of death; 2) the identification with all persons who find themselves in similar situations and who are victims of evil; 3) intercession for his brothers and sisters before God, an intercession which is essentially linked to that obedience which led to being rejected and being killed. This free offering (sacrifice) calls to conversion, and within the history of salvation, the Holy Spirit who makes the conversion possible, flows from their self-offering.⁷⁹

Jesus made himself voluntarily vulnerable⁸⁰ to victimization:

Jesus did not react with violence in turn against the violence which threatened him. He in fact commanded a disciple, who wanted to defend him with a sword, to desist from doing so. Jesus also did not—in contrast to the prophet Jeremiah—curse his enemies before God, but instead prayed for them. Consequently, he remained absolutely true to his message about the God of enemy-love and of nonviolence even in extreme mortal anguish.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Matthew 18:28-35.

⁷⁹ SCHWAGER, "Christ's Death," 121.

⁸⁰ For a development of the concept of vulnerability in the context of violent conflict see my "Response to *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and our Response*," an unpublished paper prepared for Mr. Geoffrey Pearson, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, August 20, 1985, 8-10.

⁸¹ Raymund, SCHWAGER, "Suffering, Victims, and Poetic Inspiration," *Contagion*, Volume 1, 1994, 67.

Jesus never suggested that he was acting on his own; instead, he constantly pointed toward the one whom he called Father. He envisaged that his sojourn on earth made it possible for everyone to have a relationship with God which was similar to his own.

His resurrection, as James Alison poignantly asserts, meant that the forces of violence had no power in the ultimate scheme of things.⁸² According to Alison, Jesus kindled an eschatological imagination within his followers. It involved a new non-sacrificial way of being. We will look at the significance and characteristics of this imagination. Alison points out that Jesus himself had a new imagination:

We have seen that Jesus knew from the beginning what he was doing, completely possessed as he was by his quickened imagination of the ever-living God. It was this which enabled him to stage a solemn mime in the midst of this death-based culture, so that he might be killed as a way of leading people out of that culture based on death, allowing us to come to be what God always wanted us to be, that is, utterly and absolutely alive with him.⁸³

Jesus' own actions were in accord with his imagination. As such, he becomes a Model whose imagination and the actions associated with it can be subject to mimesis.

Alison gives us an idea of what it means to have a new imagination. He tells the story of a motorcycle instructor who demonstrated a jump through a ring of fire over fifteen cars, landing on a ramp on the other side:

His novice bikers had previously considered this impossible: fear of gravity and of fire had definitively held them back from trying it. Their instructor has produced in them a belief in him, in a way that they can imitate, and then they do the same as he.⁸⁴

Alison argues that Jesus likewise, "was producing in his disciples a belief in the non-importance of

⁸² ALISON, *Raising Abel*, 25-30.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

death by passing through it himself in the first place to show that it is possible.”⁸⁵ In Jesus’ case, he told them in advance what was going to happen (John 14:29) so that they would believe that it was possible to die and yet live.

This new imagination, kindled by Jesus, was *eschatological*. It was an imagination fixed on a living God: eschatological in that it offered an understanding of “a mode of time which has no end,”⁸⁶ not meant for some time in the future, but rooted in the present. Alison argues that when Jesus says, “I go to prepare a place for you,” he was not referring to the afterlife, but a place to begin living in the present time. The implication of the eschatological imagination is that the Heideggerian ontology of humankind as “beings toward death” is transposed into “beings toward life.”

What is the meaning of this eschatological imagination? It is an imagination based on transcendence, relationship and love. The living out of the eschatological imagination involved God and Jesus as actors, Models to follow. Alison describes the work of God at the crucifixion as follows:

When we speak, then, of God as love, it is not as if God loved us by throwing Jesus to us as if we were a pack of hungry crocodiles. No, God’s love for us is the love by which Jesus was empowered as a human being to create for us—which means to understand and *imagine and invent for us—a way out of our violence and death*. . . . The Father was present at the cross not as a spectator, but as the source of the loving self-giving which was bringing into existence the possibility that we humans might overcome death and its domination in our lives: God was not attending our show, but was busy in making of a typical show of ours a revelation of himself to us.⁸⁷ (Italics mine.)

Jesus in turn had his “extraordinary imagination, utterly fixed on God, in such a way that as a

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 110.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 60.

human being he could produce the final touch of divine creation, which consists in creatively imagining a way in which we—the rest of the human race—might be set free from what seems to be our very nature: mortality, and the way in which death runs our lives.”⁸⁸ The eschatological imagination is based on an understanding that a transcendent God has been actively working with us at inventing a way out of violence and death.

This way out of violence and death is founded on the possibility of relationships. As David Burrell points out, this means imitating the relationship between Jesus and God:

What proves remarkable, for Schwager, is the way in which Jesus’ call to erstwhile disciples to follow him is carefully crafted to circumvent the conflict potential to all *mimesis*. As the gospel of John articulates so clearly, the call to follow him is in fact an invitation to enter into the same relationship which obtains between Jesus and the Father. And since the object is not to gain the Father’s approval, but rather to receive Jesus’ own gift of friendship, and thereby enjoy intimacy with God, desire is transformed from striving to an “active receptivity.” Discipleship, then, is a far cry from “imitating Jesus,” but rather an invitation to enter into something entirely gratuitous and hence quite unanticipatable: friendship with God. This new mode of life expresses itself in service: “anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave” (Mt 20:26-27).⁸⁹

Burrell’s comments highlight two important components: active receptivity and a willingness to serve. He also makes it clear that the first relationship is with God but the expression is in the actions taken with regard to others. The words of Jesus about servanthood are striking in the context of coming to terms with conflictual mimetic desire—it is the one who wants to be first who is to become the servant. It is the one engaged in mimetic rivalry who can look to humble service as the way out of the structure. In fact, the simple acknowledgement of the desire to be first already

⁸⁸ Ibid., 74.

⁸⁹ David B. BURRELL, “René Girard: Violence and Sacrifice,” *Cross Currents*, 28 (Winter 1988-89): 447. Note that there is an apparent contradiction between Alison’s point that Jesus’ imagination is to be subject to mimesis and Burrell’s observation that we must go beyond “imitating Jesus” to a relationship with God. Burrell’s use of quotation marks signals a reference to the traditional notions of imitation of Christ; however, his point anticipates a formulation of love defined in terms of mimetic desire by Rebecca Adams as developed above.

begins to dissipate the power of the structure.

Eschatological imagination must also be rooted in love. As Jesus pointed out, the priority expressed in the Torah is to love God with all one's heart, soul, strength and mind. The second commandment is to love one's neighbour as oneself. Jesus took the love commandments one step further, when he prayed that the relationship between God and those who came after him would be like the relationship he had with his eternal Parent and when he commanded his followers to love one another as he had loved them. This brings us back to the challenge to love, which is a challenge to participate in mimetic structures of blessing.

This sense of love for enemies prompts three particular challenges: work toward the transformation of those who are angry and violent;⁹⁰ create a world without scapegoats;⁹¹ and do so without self destructing.⁹² With this threefold challenge from Schwager and associates, I will turn my attention to my own personal theological reflection.

Jesus exposed the scapegoat mechanism and the emptiness of acquisitive mimetic desires. Jesus exemplified love as the caring of the Self for the well-being and full subjectivity of the Proto-Subject; he even extended it to those so obsessed with his popularity through mimetic doubling that they made a scapegoat of him, asking for their forgiveness, thus breaking the cycle of violence and vengeance. Jesus also identified with all victims of deep-rooted conflict; his suffering included the

⁹⁰ Raymond SCHWAGER, *Jesus im Heilsdrama*, 220-42: note that Schwager emphasizes Jesus role as an actor through the crucifixion. Even his last word—"Father into your hands I commend my Spirit"—was an action on his part. In this respect he did not have a victim mentality, even though he was identifying with all who had been victimized.

⁹¹ SCHWAGER, et al. "Dramatic Theology," 11-12, provides the following hypothesis: "A deep, true and lasting peace among people which is not based on sacrificing third persons and can exist without polarization onto enemies is very difficult or even exceeds human strength. If it nevertheless becomes reality, this is a clear sign that God Himself (the Holy Spirit) is acting in the people. The logic of incarnation is shown in the biblical message as well as numerous "signs of the times" in human history."

⁹² SCHWAGER, *Jesus im Heilsdrama*, 243, talks about how love can be perverted into a kind of masochism: this is to be avoided.

kind of torture, the sense of betrayal by friends and a slow, painful death that befalls innumerable victims of deep-rooted conflict. Picking up on Moltmann's formulation, as "the crucified God," Jesus shows that God is present in a special way with victims of violence. Jesus extends to us a revelation of a totally loving God who is not controlling, hence we are free as human beings to embrace mimetic structures of violence prompted by domination systems, persecuting Powers, and violent impulses. But Jesus also offers us a new eschatological imagination which can be used for reconciliation seen as a movement from structures of violence to structures of blessing. And through his resurrection, Jesus offers us the possibility of framing our existence as beings toward life. We will now reflect on what this means practically.

Practical Theological Reflection

In chapter 1, I described the hurt and hatred associated with deep-rooted conflict between identity groups. In chapter 2 and 3 I developed an understanding of mimetic structures of violence. An image was developed of continuous cycles of violence going from mimetic doubling—violence of undifferentiation—to crisis and scapegoating—violence of differentiation. In this chapter I have tried to open up a new possibility outside of this cycle, that is, a violence of blessing.

Essential to getting out of a vicious circle which holds us captive is to stop and identify what is really happening. As far as Girard is concerned, Jesus has exposed the scapegoat mechanism most decisively. The challenge is to find a way of living without making scapegoats.

We are prevented from doing this when we are preoccupied with violence, when it becomes woven into our identity. This can be the case for victims as well as perpetrators. Those who define themselves in terms of their own victimization continuously look for the kind of justice to be done which will in some way "get even" with their perpetrators. Perpetrators of violence invariably

justify their violence by their own past victimization.

Returning to *Kanehsatà:ke*, let me say that through entering into the crisis and reading the history of what lead up to it, I became deeply moved by the tremendous damage done through persecution, land grabbing, and deprivation of economic life. I am aware that healing still is needed over what happened in 1990. I am also aware that the *Kanehsata 'kehro:non* are deeply divided, largely on religious lines.

I have been arguing for the possibility of structures of blessing that can empower people. It is not for me to say or anticipate what exactly these might be for *Kanehsatà:ke* but I would suggest that where people can imagine a life of making connections across divisions and creating new life options, there is no telling what is possible.

Many within the municipality of Oka still feel pain, as well, over what happened. I understand that for some there is still ill-will toward the Mohawks. If this can be acknowledged as a problem, and there is a desire to do something about it, there are processes available to start the reconciliation process.

Some of these processes have been developed at the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution. I have seen again and again where diverse people are gathered around a positive-centred process which is non-issue-based that they can establish mutual understanding and trust. Where trust is present, the truth can come out and where the truth is spoken, new creative options can be generated.⁹³

I do know that when it comes to the initiation of reconciliation processes, it is important to read the signs of the times; to start something when the time is right. One sign that the time is right is a passion within the heart of one individual implicated in a deep-rooted conflict that they wish to

do something about it. At the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution we have valued and supported such individuals by trying to make it possible for them to initiate processes whether in Canada, Rwanda, Burundi or Somaliland.

Much more work needs to be done to develop appropriate processes to expedite the movement from mimetic structures of violence to those of blessing. I have seen and heard enough from Canada's First Nations to realize that within their many traditions are rituals and processes which can be tremendously effective in this regard. I also feel that the Christian tradition has teachings and rituals which could be reframed, reinvigorated or rediscovered. Christians have over the years become adept at killing one another; they have also been good at overcoming differences and establishing connection in the face of enmity. The positive stories of reconciliation need to be told and retold. The theme of death and resurrection can be seen not only from the point of view of celebrating something which happened two millenia ago, but as the celebration of reconciliation that can and should be happening now. The resurrection theme stimulates the conviction that in the ultimate scheme of things, any mimetic structure of violence can be overcome and displaced by a mimetic structure of blessing. Concepts of grace and love can be reframed in terms of a caring for the well-being of the Other, even attending to the human identity needs of the Other. We can incorporate the language of grace and giftedness into our everyday vocabulary. As we acknowledge our blessings as gifts, we are better able to share them. We can also start to identify many of the teachings of Jesus, Paul and other New Testament figures as contributing to our understanding of reconciliation. There is also a good deal in the Hebrew Bible that can be helpful in this regard, especially the Sabbath teaching to remember—remember your own oppression so that you can be sure to not oppress people in the same way.

⁹³ Thanks to Brian Strom for this insight.

The first steps toward reconciliation are to be open to it, to desire it, to imagine it, to pray for it, and to then take another step. As this happens, always be open to the surprises of the Spirit.

Conclusion

This dissertation was inspired by a burning desire to come to terms with the kind of intractable inter-ethnic conflict which would use deprivation of food as a weapon to kill innocent people by starvation, leaving behind thousands of orphans, widows and childless fathers. These conflicts are a subset of deep-rooted conflicts based on identity; they are the result of a threat to the satisfiers of non-material, non-negotiable human identity needs. While these could be analysed in several ways, out of a recognition that the participation of the parties to such conflicts as well as would-be interventionists is based on the *interpretation* of actions of both Self and Other, I decided to put my energy into a hermeneutic framework. Specifically, I decided to test the hypothesis that *René Girard's theory of mimetic desire and scapegoating is a highly appropriate schema for understanding the dynamics of violence in deep-rooted conflict between identity groups.*

In order to test the hypothesis, I began by exploring the basic definition of deep-rooted conflict. I did this by first examining a number of needs theorists who shed light on the type of need satisfiers which, if threatened, might lead to a deep-rooted conflict. I then drew on other theorists whose work could play a hermeneutical role. Specifically, I showed that deep-rooted, identity based conflict could be understood with the political realists as a natural tendency of humans to advance self-interest through any means available. It could be seen, with the ethnonationalism scholars, as the result of the human tendency to give primary loyalty to an identity group made up of those with a perceived common ancestry. From the social psychologists it became apparent that victimization, demonization, dehumanisation and historic enmity are significant factors in deep-rooted conflict. Those using hegemonic structures as a heuristic key observe that often those in deep-rooted conflict are trying to reinforce structures of

dominance or break free from them. And from philosophers we get the notion of ontological rift. These various ways of approaching deep-rooted conflict introduced a fuller vocabulary and provided a broader ideational context for the study. It was not the intention to integrate all of these methodological approaches into a unitary approach; rather, the point was to look at Girard's theory from the perspective of deep-rooted conflict defined in terms of identity needs.

Several observations about human identity needs were deemed particularly significant. It was noted that the need categories are universal but the satisfiers are dependent on the particular life circumstances and culture of the people involved. There were several categories of needs, which emerged as being particularly important—specifically the needs for meaning, connectedness, security, recognition and agency. The major questions not answered by needs theory are “What is the dynamic by which particular need satisfiers become of central importance to the Self?” and “How is it that these satisfiers are threatened in a way that prompts the conflict?” It is in unlocking these dynamics that the concepts of mimetic desire and scapegoating as developed by René Girard play a key role.

At its core, mimetic theory hypothesizes that just as behaviour patterns and culture are a function of mimesis, so desire, as representing that part of our interiority that prompts our passion and inspires our intention, is mimetic. The phenomena associated with mimetic desire are as broad, complex and diverse in their manifestation as the diversity of people; yet various patterns and sub-patterns can be discerned as diachronic structures.

These mimetic structures very often lead to violence, in which case they are mimetic structures of violence. Violence is generated as mimetic Models become Obstacles, standing in the way of the Self acquiring an object of desire. The potential for violence increases where there is mimetic rivalry, doubling and frustration, not only over the failure to achieve objects of desire,

but also over the realisation that others appear to have their desires met. Where the frustration becomes intense, there is a crisis in which the violence potential is extreme. The crisis may be resolved through an outpouring of violence on a scapegoat victim.

Mimetic structures of violence based on rivalry and doubling become a violence of undifferentiation as doubles become mirror images of one another. Mimetic structures of violence based on scapegoating become a violence of differentiation as the scapegoat become a highly differentiated Other. Undifferentiation is linked to chaos and differentiation results in order.

In the process of examining mimetic theory in the light of deep-rooted conflict, it became clear that the satisfiers of human identity needs are determined mimetically and that they become objects of mimetic desire. This realisation augments both human needs theory as well as mimetic theory. The hermeneutic potential in interpreting the dynamics of deep-rooted conflict is enhanced with an understanding of the factors that tend to intensify mimetic desire.

Mimetic structures of undifferentiated violence increase as parties in the relational system identify more closely with one another, as the relational system becomes relatively more closed and as the prestige of the object goes up. When these conditions are present, mimetic feedback loops intensify the mimetic desire. Eventually, the being, the ontological centre of each, becomes objectified and becomes the object of desire, leaving all other objects in its wake. This objectification is itself a form of violence. This objectification includes within it the constellation of satisfiers to the identity needs of the Other. Objectification is itself a form of violence which limits the options for life-giving, creative relationships.

What emerges from the interaction between mimetic and needs theories is that the satisfiers of human identity needs are defined unconsciously through mimesis. The axis around

which these needs turn is differentiation and undifferentiation. People long for a sense of uniqueness and difference in meaning systems; they need to be recognised as distinct; they wish that their actions would be distinguished from those of the others. They desire to be uniquely connected to particular groups. Security comes from having what sets them apart respected. There is a need for undifferentiation as they feel the need to be associated with significant others, as they find ratifiers for their meaning system, as they join security alliances, as they are recognised by others or included within the recognition given to others, and as they take meaningful action in solidarity with one another. This differentiation/undifferentiation heuristic category is derived from Girard's theory; it tends to resonate with a general preoccupation with difference in much of the literature around deep-rooted conflict.

Two concepts were developed to locate deep-rooted conflict in the abstract. First, it was determined that they take place within *relational systems* where two or more parties are brought into contact with one another within a given context. Second, the deep-rooted conflicts involve *relational structures*, which are understood as diachronic relational patterns which are constantly in flux. A given relational system, such as a country with two dominant ethnocultural groups, might have within it a variety of relational subsystems, or a given relational system which is the object of study may itself be a subsystem of a larger relational system. The process of determining which relational system is to be the focus of analysis is thought of as *enframing*.

Relational structures can be *emplotted* with several layers of meaning to the *emplotment*. The first layer of meaning involves putting the events into their natural order. The second involves plotting the determinative nodes at which time decisions are taken or circumstances change so as to set off a trajectory of events that are logically tied to the determinative nodes.

The third level of emplotment is to note the pattern of mimetic phenomena associated with the various nodes associated with the second level of emplotment.

In the analysis of the *Oka/Kanehsatà:ke* crisis, it became clear that a number of enframings were readily apparent at the different temporal nodes. In the prehistory, going back to the arrival of the Sulpicians the primary relational structures involved Sulpicians, Jesuits and traders. The Sulpicians were in rivalry with other groups over control of aboriginal people and the land on which they lived. They succeeded in getting the king of France to give them control of the land surrounding the *Kanehsatà:ke* settlement. Thereafter, control of the land and aboriginal people became a matter of desire; so much so that the Sulpicians were willing to swear fealty to Britain and place the interests of the British ahead of their fellow French compatriots in order that they might retain control of the land. The desire was mimetic in that others contending for control of the land were the Mohawks, for whom the land was central to meeting their identity needs, and potentially the British. Eventually, the land interests were sold or turned over to a combination of speculators and various levels of government. In the meantime, the Mohawks tried their best, through every means open to them within the Canadian legal framework, to have their traditional land rights recognized. Eventually the dominant relational system regarding the land involved the *Kanehsata'kehró:non* and the Municipal Council of Oka. Within this relational system the land called the Pines took on several layers of meaning with regard to the human needs satisfiers of each group. The intensity with which it played a role as object of desire increased through feedback loops consistent with the pattern of mimetic rivalry.

A key node in the emplotment was the decision of the Oka Council to approve the development of a golf course on the Pines. With that decision, the desire to retain the Pines as a

forest increased dramatically on the part of the Mohawks. The history of land loss increased the value of the Pines as a real and symbolic satisfier of identity needs. The decision to occupy the Pines on March 11, 1990 was another significant node in the emplotment. The conflict intensified as it became clear that without a negotiated settlement it would be decided through physical force. Another significant mode was the July 11 attack on the Pines by the SQ. At this point the enframing changed immediately to implicate the province of Quebec and all the Mohawks. Almost immediately, the Mercier Bridge was blockaded, bringing open conflict to a relational subsystem involving the Mohawks of Kahnawake and the people of Chateauguay. The Mercier Bridge became the object of mimetic desire.

Using a Girardian hermeneutic coupled with identity needs, one can see how relational structures can be infused with violence. This is so much the case that these structures have the effect of drawing people into violent behaviour, which in other circumstances, they would be loath to get involved in. Violence can infuse the mentality of people so that their identity need satisfiers start to become defined in terms of violence; this became most evident in the mob action at Chateauguay and the public pressure to have the army called in to resolve the problem with force.

This power of structures of violence, heuristically uncovered by this mimetic hermeneutic, became the starting point for a theological reflection. Mimetic structures of violence represent a power outside the self in a dialectical relationship with the Self. Theologically this power is akin to Satan/*diabolis*. Just as deep-rooted conflicts move people ever more deeply into mimetic structures of violence, reconciliation could be understood as the movement toward mimetic structures of blessing. This is evident in the biblical stories of Joseph, Solomon and the two prostitutes, and the life of Jesus.

Jesus lived in a world riddled with identity based conflict. Where there was entrenched violence of differentiation, he tended to open things up by including the outsider. Where there was a violence of undifferentiation he developed a transcendent way of looking at things whereby difference could be created without rivalry. He kindled an imagination for a new way of being. He revealed a God who is wholly loving and he gave definition to love. This definition of love becomes clearer in mimetic terms with the insight of Rebecca Adams that love is about desiring the subjectivity, or, using the concepts of human needs theory, desiring for the Other satisfiers to their human identity needs. Ultimately Jesus' own example of desiring the well-being of those who were violent toward him demonstrated the kind of love that blesses those who curse you.

Out of this dissertation come a number of questions, which point to further work to be done. Much more could be done in terms of the relationship between needs theory and mimetic theory. One could do a reading of Girard in which the particular need satisfiers implicated in the examples he analyses could be identified. In addition, it would be worthwhile to integrate insights from the various methodological approaches. By integrating the analysis of discursive and non-discursive hegemonic structures we could see that the dominators within these structures tend to have rivalries with other dominators and that the oppressed tend to have rivalries with others who are oppressed. Hegemonic structures entrench and sustain a violence of differentiation and to call into question these structures creates a true mimetic crisis. The fascination of those on both sides of the hegemonic structure creates another type of inverse doubling in which both define their identities in terms of the Other. Introducing the observations made about the power of ethnonationalism likewise could be enlightening.

Ethnonationalism raises questions about how identity based relational systems are enframed. If the primary way of establishing difference is on the basis of ethnonationalism, there could be a tendency for identity based conflict to be on that basis. In cases where there is ethnonationalism based conflict, there usually is territory involved, so land is extremely important as a need satisfier. There are also territories that are controlled more by one group than another. Looking at the mimetic structures of violence where ethnonationalism is strongly evident could illuminate the nature of needs satisfiers which seem to predominate.

The work of social and political psychologists could likewise add to a more comprehensive hermeneutic framework. The tendency of adolescents to imitate their own victimization raises questions about the power of mimesis and how violence itself can be construed as a satisfier of human identity needs. The factors leading toward the continuum of evil identified by Erwin Staub could also be seen as intensifiers of mimetic structures of violence; for example, mimetic desire increases and becomes more focussed under difficult life circumstances.

Another area for further work could be to bring the theoretical work on the relationship between Self and Other into the analysis of deep-rooted conflict. The matter of gender difference as a basis for ontological rift likewise offers heuristic potential.

However, the most urgent need for additional research, reflection and action is in developing and promoting concepts of *mimetic structures of blessing*, and *reconciliation* as the process by which these structures are introduced and fostered. We need to bring to light the reality of these positive structures and processes, which remain hidden but yet have ultimately prevented us from being wholly given to violence. We need to study how these have been introduced and how mimetically they have built on one another. It would be important to bring to

light both the dramatic potential of the stories of blessing and find ways to make them mimetically compelling without subverting them at the same time to another level of violent competition over who can introduce more structures of blessing.

Ultimately the biggest challenge is to start with oneself and to introduce mimetic structures of blessing into one's life situation. If we are responsible for what we know and what we have been given, the responsibility is awesome— matched only by the potential for joy.

Bibliography

1. Methodology

- GUSTAFSON, James. *Can Ethics Be Christian?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1975.
- MACINTYRE, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 1981.
- POLANYI, Michael. *Personal Knowledge*. New York: Harper Torchbooks. 1964.
- RICOEUR, Paul. "L'idéologie et l'utopie: deux expressions de l'imaginaire sociale." *Autres Temps* 2 (Été 1984): 53-64.
- . *Oneself as Another*. Translated by Kathleen BLAMEY Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1992.
- . *Time and Narrative—Volume I*. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [1983] 1984.

2. Deep-Rooted Conflict

- ARONSON, Elliot. "Causes of Prejudice." *Bigotry, Prejudice and Hatred -Definitions, Causes & Solutions*. Edited by Robert M BAIRD and Stuart E. ROSENBAUM. Buffalo: Prometheus Books. 1992.
- ASCH Michael. "Aboriginal Self-Government and Canadian Constitutional Identity: Building Reconciliation." *Ethnicity and Aboriginality*. pp.29-30.
- BERECIARTU, Gurutz Jáuregui. *Decline of the Nation-State*. Translated by William A. DOUGLAS. Reno: University of Nevada Press. 1994.
- BRETON, Roland. *Les Ethnies*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. 1981. Referred to in Gurutz Jáuregui BEREIARTU. *Decline of the Nation-State*.
- BOX, Steven. *Deviance. Reality and Society* Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1981.
- . *Power. Crime and Mystification*. London: Tavistock. 1983.
- . *Recession. Crime and Punishment*. London: MacMillan Education. 1987.
- BURTON, John W. *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990.
- . *Deviance, Terrorism and War*. Oxford: Martin Robertson. 1979.
- . *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts*. Lanham: University Press of America. 1987
- CHANTEUR, Janine. *From War to Peace*. Translated by Shirley Ann WEISZ. Boulder: Westview Press. 1992.

- CLARK, Mary. "Meaningful Social Bonding as a Universal Human Need." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990: 34-59.
- COHEN, Stephen and Herbert KELMAN. "The Problem-Solving Workshop: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Resolution of International Conflicts." *Journal of Peace Research* XIII 2 (1976): 79-90.
- CONNOR, Walker. *Ethnonationalism—The Quest for Understanding*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1994.
- CUMMINGS, George C.L. "Black Theology and Latin American Theology." *New Visions for the Americas—Religious Engagement and Social Transformation*. Edited by David BATSTONE. Minneapolis: Fortress. 1993: 215-229
- DONNELLY, Jack. "Twentieth-Century Realism." *Traditions of International Ethics*. Edited by Terry NARDIN and David R. MAPEL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1992.
- DUKES, Frank. "Action Research." *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*. Edited by John W. BURTON and Frank DUKES. New York: St. Martin Press. 1990: 288-298.
- ERIKSEN, Thomas Hylland. "Ethnicity and Nationalism: Definitions and Critical Reflections." *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 23-2 (1992).
- FISHER, Ronald. "Prenegotiation Problem-Solving Discussions: Enhancing the Potential for Successful Negotiation." *International Journal* XLIV. (1989): 467.
- FISHER, Ronald. "Needs Theory: Social Identity and Eclectic Model of Conflict." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990.
- FORDE, Steven. "Classical Realism." *Traditions of International Ethics*. Edited by Terry NARDIN and David R. MAPEL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1992. p.62.
- FROMM, Erich. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1973.
- FRIEDMAN, Yona. "The Role of Knowledge in Conflict Resolution." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990.
- FUNKENSTEIN, David. "The Physiology of Fear and Anger." *Scientific American*. 192 1955. pp.78-80. Quoted in Paul SITES. "Needs as Analogues of Emotions." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990.
- GALTUNG, Johan. "International Development in Human Perspective." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990.
- GAYLIN, Willard. *Caring* New York: Knopf. pp. 162-163. Quoted in Demetrios A. JULIUS, Joseph V. MONTVILLE and Vamik D.VOLKAN. "The Psychological Roots of Terrorism." 168-169, in *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*.
- GILLWALD, Katrin. "Conflict and Needs Research." p.118. *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990
- HEELAN, P.A. *Space Perception and the Philosophy of Sciences*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983 .

- HOROWITZ, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- JAYAWICKRAMA, Nihal. *The Right of Self-Determination*. The Report of the Martin Ennals Symposium of Self-Determination. A Satellite Conference for the 1992 World Conference on Human Rights. Co-sponsored by the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan and International Alert.
- JULIUS, Demetrios A. "The Genesis and Perpetuation of Aggression in International Conflicts." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*: 97-109.
- KEGLEY, Charles W. "Neo-Idealism: A Practical Matter." *Ethics and International Affairs*. 2 (1988): 183.
- KELMAN, Herbert. "Applying a Human Needs Perspective to the Practice of Conflict resolution: The Israeli Palestinian Case." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- KNUTSON, Jean. "Victimization and Political Violence: The Spectre of Our Times." uncompleted book mss. 1981. Quoted in Joseph V. MONTVILLE. "The Psychological Roots of Ethnic and Sectarian Terrorism." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*.
- LEVIN, Michael D. ed. *Ethnicity and Aboriginity: Case studies in Ethnonationalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- LEVINAS, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity - An Essay on Exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso LINGIS. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969.
- LINGER, Daniel T. "The Hegemony of Discontent." *American Ethnologist* (20-1):3-24.
- MACK, John E. "The Enemy System." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*: 57-69.
- . "The Psychodynamics of Victimization among National Groups in Conflict." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*: 119-129.
- MacKINNON, Catharine. "Crimes of War. Crimes of Peace." *On Human Rights - The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*. Edited by Stephen SHUTE and Susan HURLEY. New York: Harper Collins Basic Books, 1993.
- MACKLEN, Patrick. "Ethnonationalism, Aboriginal Identities, and the Law." *Ethnicity and Aboriginity* (9-28): 12.
- MONTVILLE, Joseph V. "Epilogue: The Human Factor Revisited" in Demetrios A. JULIUS, Joseph V. MONTVILLE and Vamik D. VOLKAN. *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990 pp. 536-37.
- . "The Psychological Roots of Ethnic and Sectarian Terrorism." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*. 163-180.
- . "Transnationalism and the Role of Track-Two Diplomacy." *Approaches to Peace - An Intellectual Map*. Edited by W. Scott THOMPSON and Kenneth M. JENSEN Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991.
- MORGENTHAU, Hans and Kenneth W. THOMPSON. *Politics Among Nations - The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. Parts five and six.

- MOSES, Rafael. "On Dehumanizing the Enemy." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*.
 _____. "Self, Self-view, and Identity." *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*: 47-55.
 _____. "Shame and Entitlement: Their Relation to Political Process." *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*: 131-141
 _____. "The Leader and the Led: A Dyadic Relationship." *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*: 205-217.
- MUNK, Linda. "The Design of Violence." *Journal of Literature & Theology* 4-3 (November 1990): 259-260.
- NASH, Manning. *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988
- NUDLER, Oscar. "On Conflicts and Metaphors: Toward an Extended Rationality." in *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990: 177-201.
- OLSSON, Peter A.. "The Terrorist and the Terrorized: Some Psychoanalytic Considerations." *The Psychodynamics of International Relations*.
- POTAPCHUK, William R.. "Processes of Governance: Can Governments Truly Respond to Human Needs?" CHNT: 265-282.
- RADER, Victoria. Human Needs and the Modernization of Poverty." in *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990
- REBEL, Hermann. "Cultural Hegemony and class experience: A Critical reading of Recent Ethnological-Historical Approaches." *American Ethnologist*. 16-1. (Feb. 1989): 117-136.
- REDEKOP, Vern Neufeld. "The Centrality of Torah as Ethical Projection for the Exodus." *Contagion*. 2 (Spring 1995): 119-144.
- _____. "The Role of Deep-rooted Conflict and Its Resolution in Regional Economic Development." Unpublished. 1991.
- ROGERS, Rita R.. "Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Enmity." *The Psychodynamics of International Conflict*: 91-96.
- RUBENSTEIN, Richard E. "Basic Human Needs Theory: Beyond Natural Law." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- RYAN, Stephen. *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*. Brookfield: Dartmouth, 1990.
- SANDOLE, Dennis J.D.. "The Biological Basis of Needs." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- SCIMECCA, Joseph A. "Self-reflexivity and Freedom: Toward a Prescriptive Theory of Conflict Resolution." *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Edited by John W. BURTON. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- SITES, Paul. *Control: The Basis of Social Order*. New York: Dunellen, 1973.

- STAUB, Ervin. *Roots of Evil - The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989.
- TAYLOR, Donald M. and DUBÉ, Lise. "Two Faces of Identity: The 'I' and the 'We'." *Journal of Social Issues* 42-2 (1986): 81-98.
- VAN DEN BERGHE, Pierre L. "The Biology of Nepotism." In *Bigotry. Prejudice and Hatred—Definitions, Causes & Solutions*. Edited by Robert M BAIRD and Stuart E. ROSENBAUM. Buffalo: Prometheus Books. 1992.
- VOLF, Miroslav. "Exclusion and Embrace - Theological Reflections in the Wake of 'Ethnic Cleansing'." Presented at a joint conference of the Gesellschaft für evangelische Theologie and Arbeitskreis für Evangelische theologie in Potsdam, Germany. February 15-17, 1993.
- WACHTERHAUSER, Brice R.. "Prejudice and Reason." *Bigotry. Prejudice and Hatred -Definitions, Causes & Solutions*. Edited by Robert M BAIRD and Stuart E. ROSENBAUM. Buffalo: Prometheus Books. 1992.
- WALKER, R.B.J. "The Concept of Culture in the Theory of International Relations." *Culture and International Relations*. Edited by Jongsuk CHAY. New York: Praeger. 1990.
- YOUNG, Clifford. "The Dialectics of Cultural Pluralism: Concept and Reality." *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism*. Edited by Crawford YOUNG Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.

3. René Girard's Mimetic Theory and Theology

- ADAMS, Rebecca. "Mothers. Metamorphs. Myth and Mimesis: A Creative Reassessment of Mimetic Desire." Unpublished paper presented at the Colloquium On Violence & Religion on "Violence and the Subject of Responsibility." Loyola University. June 2, 1995.
- ALISON, James. *Raising Abel - The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination* New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company. 1996.
- BAILIE, Gil. *Violence Unveiled - Humanity at the Crossroads*. New York: Crossroad. 1995.
- BURRELL, David B. "René Girard: Violence and Sacrifice." *Cross Currents*. 28(Winter 1988-89): 447.
- CRÜSEMANN, Frank. "Dominion, Guilt, and Reconciliation: The Contribution of the Jacob Narrative in Genesis to Political Ethics." Translated by Carl S. Ehrlich. *Semeia*. 66(1994): 67-77.
- CUMMINGS, George C.L.. "Black Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology: A Framework for Race and Class Analysis." *New Visions for the Americas - Religious Engagement and Social Transformation*. Edited by David BATSTONE. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1993.
- FREAR, George L. Jr. "René Girard on Mimesis, Scapegoats, and Ethics." *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*. Edited by Thomas W. OGLETREE. Dallas: Society of Christian Ethics, 1990.
- GIRARD, René. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel -- Self and Other in Literary Structure* [original: *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*. 1961) Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Paperback edition, 1976.
- _____. "Eating Disorders and Mimetic Desire." *Contagion*. 3(1996): 7.

- _____. ed. *Proust - A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962.
- _____. *Feodor Dostoevsky: Resurrection From the Underground*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1997.
- _____. *Joh - the Victim of his People* [original: *La Route antique des hommes pervers*. 1985.] Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- _____. *Quand ces chose commenceront . . . Entretien avec Michel Treguer*. Paris: Arléa, 1994.
- _____. *The Scapegoat* [original: *Le bouc émissaire*. 1982. Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- _____. *A Theater of Envy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- _____. *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* [original: *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*. 1978]. Translated by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- _____. *"To double business bound."* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, paperback edition, [1978] 1988.
- _____. *Violence and the Sacred* [original: *La Violence et le sacré*. 1972]. Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- GOLSON, Richard Joseph. *René Girard and Myth*. New York: Garland, 1993.
- HAMERTON-KELLY, Robert G. *Sacred Violence. Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- KAPTEIN, Roel. *On the Way of Freedom with the Cooperation of Duncan MORROW* Dublin: The Columbia Press, 1993.
- MCKENNA, Andrew J. *Violence and Difference—Derrida and Deconstruction*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- NOWAK, Susan. "The Girardian Theory and Feminism: Critique and Appropriation." *Contagion* 1:19-30, Spring 1994.
- PALAUER, Wolfgang. "Hobbes and the *Katéchon*: The Secularization of Sacrificial Christianity." *Contagion*. 2(1995): 61.
- PANCARO, Severino. *The Law in the Fourth Gospel*. Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1975.
- REDEKOP, Vernon W.. *A Life for a Life? - The Death Penalty on Trial*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1990.
- _____. "Response to *"The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and our Response."* Unpublished paper presented to Mr. Geoffrey Pearson, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. August 20, 1985.
- _____. *Scapegoats, the Bible, and Criminal Justice: Interacting with Rene Girard* Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1993.

RIKE, Jennifer L. "The Cycle of Violence and Feminist Constructions of Selfhood." *Contagion* 3:21-42 Spring, 1996.

SCHWAGER et al. "Dramatic Theology as a Research Program." Unpublished paper presented at the Colloquium on Violence and Religion at Stanford University. June, 1996.

SCHWAGER, Raymond. S.J.. "Christ's Death and the Prophetic Critique of Sacrifice." *Semeia*. 33. (1985).

_____. *Jesus im Heilsdrama*. Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag. 1990.

_____. "Suffering, *Victims*, and Poetic Inspiration." *Contagion*. 1(1994).

_____. "The Theology of the Wrath of God." *Violence and Truth*. Edited by Paul DUMOUCHEL. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

SCHWEIKER, William. "Sacrifice, Interpretation, and the Sacred: The Import of Gadamer and Girard for Religious Studies." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LV/4:791-810, 802.

WIESER, Thomas. in "Community -Its Unity, Diversity and Universality." *Semeia*. 33 (1985).

WILLIAMS, James. *The Bible, Violence and the Sacred - Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence*. New York. HarperCollins, 1991.

WINK, Walter. *Engaging the Powers - Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

4. The Oka/Kanehsata:ke Crisis

ALFRED, Gerald R.. *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1995.

ARMSTRONG, Jane. "More talks needed in standoff." *Toronto Star*. (July 16, 1990): A-10.

Basic call to Consciousness. Mohawk Nation via Roosevelttown. NY: Akwesasne Notes, 1978.

BAUCH, Herbert. "Quebec's Memory." *Montreal Gazette*. (March 25, 1995): B2.

"B.C.. Manitoba roads blocked in sympathy." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 19, 1990): A5.

BELLEMARE, Pierre. "La guerre des nerfs s'intensifie à Kahnawake." *La Presse*. July 13, 1990, A3.

BRANSWELL, Jack. *Canadian Press Release*. (July 19, 1990).

BUCHANAN, Carrie. "Getting mad: Commuters want their bridge back." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 17, 1990): A4.

_____. "Residents oppose golf development." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 13, 1990): A-3.

BULL, Rob. *Canadian Press Release*. (July 17, 1990).

Canada AM Transcript. CTV. M.T.T. [Media Tapes and Transcripts] Ltd. (July 18, 1990): 4.

Canadian Press Release. July 16, 17, 18, 1990.

- CIACCIA, John. "Oka: les enjeux vont au delà de la stricte légalité." *Le Devoir*. July 12, 1990.
- CORAGGIO, Christina. "Chanting mob curses Mohawks." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 16, 1990): A-1.
- _____. "Historian offers solution to Oka dispute." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 19, 1990): A4.
- CROSS, Ronald and Hélène SÉVIGNY. *Lasagna - The Man Behind the Mask*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1994.
- CURRAN, Peggy. "Siddon holds firm on federal course." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 21, 1990): A5.
- DAVIDSON, John. *Canadian Press Release*. July 9, 13, 18.
- DERFEL, Aaron. "Police trying to starve out Indians. Critics charge." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 17, 1990): A-6.
- DI GREGORIO, Ray. "Chiefs seek international sanctions to settle native land disputes." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 21, 1990).
- DOYLE, Patrick. "Blockade to be lifted at bridge to Montreal." *Toronto Star*. (July 15, 1990): A-1.
- _____. "Make plans to defend native lands chiefs told." *The Toronto Star*. (July 21, 1990): A1.
- _____. "Ottawa accused of retaliating for Meech defeat." *The Toronto Star*. (July 20, 1990): A10.
- _____. "Police ban Canadian flag at barricade." *Toronto Star*. (July 16, 1990): A-1.
- DUBÉ, Francine. "Mayor's friends urge use of force." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 16, 1990): A-3.
- _____. "Fallout from Oka: bitter residents, business losses." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 15, 1990): A2.
- _____. "Oka residents divided on police presence." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 17, 1990): A-3.
- FIDELMAN, Charlie and Aaron DERFEL. "Police hold back jeering mob at boundary of Kahnawà:ke." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 15, 1990): A-6.
- FIFE, Robert. "No fed deals during siege." *Ottawa Sun*. (July 20, 1990): 4.
- FOREST, Francois "Il ya un temps pour la negociation et an temps pour réagir . . ." *La Presse*. July 13, 1990.
- GABRIEL-DOXTATER, Brenda Katlatont and Arlette Kawanatatie VAN DEN HENDE. *At the Woods' Edge*. Kanasatake Education Center, 1995.
- HARPER, Tim. "Days of Rage - The new face of the Indian movement." *Toronto Star*. (July 14, 1990).
- HASS, Janis. "Discontent will spread, Indians say." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 15, 1990): A2.
- HEINRICH, Jeff. Peter KUITENBROUWER and Charlie FIDELMAN. "Ciaccia: We can hope." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 13, 1990): A-1.
- HENTON, March. "'We're sitting on a powder keg' - Chiefs fear increased violence by natives." *The Toronto Star*. (September 17, 1990): A15.

- HULL, Robert. "Kanienkehaka Chronology: The Mohawk Crisis in Quebec and its Aftermath. July to December 1990." *The Conrad Grebel Review*. 9-2(Spring 1991): 103-114.
- JIMENEZ, Marina. "Police call Mohawks 'terrorists' in national ad." *The Edmonton Journal*. (September 19, 1990).
- JOHNSTON, David. "The star: private becomes unofficial hero of Oka standoff." *Montreal Gazette*. (September 15, 1990): A8.
- "Keep Security." *Canadian Press Release*. (July 16, 1990).
- KING, Mike. "Mercier Bridge destruction easy: explosives expert." *Montreal Gazette*. July 13, 1990.
- "La population blanche excédée s'en prend aux Mohawks de Kahnawake." *Le Devoir*. July 14, 1990.
- LESAGE, Gilles. "Des barricades sentenaire—les enjeux d'Oka dépassent la stricte l'égalité." *Le Devoir*. July 13, 1990, 12.
- MacLAINE, Craig and Michael S. BAXENDALE. *This Land is Our Land - The Mohawk Revolt at Oka*. Montreal: Optimum, 1990.
- MacLEOD, Ian. "New Oka deal sought - Middle-ground solution possible, says negotiator." *Ottawa Citizen*. (September 13, 1990): A-3.
- . "Mohawks claim European support." *Ottawa Citizen*. (September 17, 1990): A-3.
- MARACLE, Brian. "Wake Up." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 20, 1990): A-14.
- McGILLIVRAY, Don. "Natives want more than Ottawa's trinkets." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 19, 1990): B-3.
- "Mohawks boast they can match police firepower." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 13, 1990).
- MOORE, Lynn. "'We won't ever forgive.' Mohawk teenagers warn - Amy raid united community, they say." *Montreal Gazette*. (September 21, 1990): A-5.
- MORIN, Eloise. "Surete's image takes beating - Force's chief issues apology for first time." *Toronto Star*. (September 21, 1990): A-23.
- "Neighbors smuggle supplies to Mohawks." *Toronto Star*. (July 17, 1990): A-6.
- NORRIS, Alexander. "Can't rule out police raid on Mohawks." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 13, 1990): A-1.
- . "Portrait of a Mohawk fighter." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 15, 1990): A-6.
- O'BRIEN, Karen. "Outrage still simmers among Oka participants." *The Spectator*. (October 29, 1990): C3.
- PERITZ, Ingrid. "Native chiefs call on PM to recall Parliament." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 21, 1990): A6.
- PHILPOT, Robin. *Oka: dernier alibi du Canada anglais*. Montreal: VLB éditeur, 1991.
- PICARD, André and Patricia POIRIER. "Peaceful end to Oka standoff possible." *The Globe and Mail*. (July 16, 1990): A-1.

- PICARD, Andre. "A question of nationhood." *The Globe and Mail*. (July 21, 1990): D-1.
- . "Standoff at Oka increases tension over language." *The Globe and Mail*. (September 14, 1990).
- POIRIER, Patricia. "Châteauguay mayor defends community." *The Globe and Mail*. (July 20, 1990): A-4.
- . "Police jam church to mourn slain officer." *Globe and Mail*. (July 20, 1990): A-4.
- RICHARDSON, Mark and Francine DUBÉ. "Oka standoff continues." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 14, 1990): A-1.
- ROY, Michel. "Négocié avec les autochtones." *Le Droit*. July 14, 1990, 19.
- SIDDON, Tom. Interview on Canada AM. (July 20, 1990).
- STOCKLAND, Peter. "Native effigy burned." *Ottawa Sun*. (July 16, 1990): p.4.
- The Canadian Press. "Battle lines were drawn thirty years ago." *Ottawa Citizen*. (July 13, 1990): A-3.
- THOMPSON, Elizabeth. "Army troops at the ready." *Montreal Gazette*. (July 17, 1990): A-6.
- "Trois évêques pressent les gouvernements de négocier." *La Presse*. July 13, 1990.
- WAGAMESE, Richard. "Oka leader 'perverting' Great Law—Warriors ideas blasted but barricade backed." *Calgary Herald*. (July 20, 1990): 1.
- "Warrior's Words Call For Execution." *Indian Time Akwesasne*. (July 6, 1990): 1.
- "We Oppose Terrorism." *The Edmonton Journal*. (September 19, 1990).
- YORK, Geoffrey and Lorcen PINDER. *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1991.
- YORKTON, John. "Native issue is becoming a linguistic war." *Montreal Gazette*. (September 11, 1990): B-3.