

**Online Appendix A, Supplement 9:
Durkheim, Bataille, and Girard on Sacrifice and the Sacred**

We can perhaps clarify some of what is at stake in these varying depictions of what if anything goes beyond the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and how this is related to experiences of the sacred, by considering Bataille's work as an extension and correction of the classic Durkheimian theory of religion. Durkheim defines a religion thus: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things—that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community, called a Church, all those who adhere to them."¹ For Durkheim, "things set apart and forbidden" are what is sacred, and it is a shared orientation toward these that constitute an identifiable religious community. This "sacredness" is normally thought of as something like an ideal, something holy and precious, something that all the members of the community regard as non-negotiably Good, as valuable, something which they strive together to honor or emulate. Yet also noted already in this conception, crucially, is what Durkheim calls, following William Robertson Smith, "the ambiguity of the idea of the sacred," for these set-apart things also possess a holy inviolability that can make them an object of awe and dread. As Bataille will come to stress, what is set apart from and opposed to the profane world of everyday life has two opposite implications, divine and diabolical, both of which come to be loci of a power that transcends the ordinary transactions of business as usual, and from both of which one must keep one's distance—they are both "set apart and forbidden." But Bataille has given us a new angle from which to probe what it means for the sacred to be what is "set apart and forbidden." "Set apart" from what? "Forbidden" from what? Bataille's answer would be: apart from the realm of utility, apart from the purposive, apart from the tool-using, apart from the world of work, apart from the *human*, from the *personal* as such. What cannot be fitted into the system of exchanges and equivalences that comprise the

¹ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Macmillan, 1915), p. 47.

world of useful work, proving unassimilable to any definite purpose intelligible to the community, is divided off from it. This will then include on the one hand things considered inviolable and non-negotiable because too holy to be used for any concrete profane purpose, and on the other hand, things inviolably tabooed, too filthy or excessive to be used—thus including both the supreme representatives of holiness and purity and the excesses of wasteful luxury and the superfluities of filth and excreted waste. What they have in common is that they have no value to the world of tools and projects and work, they serve no purpose; they are literally not valuable, in the sense of being both valueless and invaluable. They are what does not fit into the tool-making economy of exchange and evaluation, of utility. A rotting corpse, a stinking cesspool, a spurt of bodily fluids, as well as a pure sacrificial animal, or a clean white piece of sanctified paper, the wounds of a self-mortifying saint, a pure deed of self-torturing renunciation of self-interest—all of these fit the bill. Durkheim singles out the “inviolable,” but the more inclusive term for totality of the set-apart, in our Bataillean revision, more precisely “non-negotiable”: there is no possible way to relate them to other values, to justify them, to ground them, for by definition they are what have nothing in common with the accepted tool-using world of utility. They are incongruous with the entire realm of the useful, the humanly integrable, the personal, the purposive.

Now for Durkheim, this will be simply something beyond the uses and purposes of *any particular person*, but not beyond the humanly useful as such. It will be something which is not non-personal but superpersonal, i.e., something *social, interpersonal*, and hence *intrinsically ethical*. In a pattern we have seen already in our discussion of Aristotle, what is itself beyond ordinary definable purpose here becomes a kind of hyperpurpose for everything besides itself, the goal toward which all other things must strive, the ground of all definite purposes: the Good. In Durkheim’s case, when the individual comes into contact with the social group under certain special circumstances, in ritual or festival or more subtly in ethical interactions, it activates a new configuration of forces in him, an effervescence beyond his personal purposes in which he feels himself at once dependent on a force beyond himself and also greatly enlivened, an effect which he attributes to his totemic god but which really comes from *the group*. It is the group that he is really dependent on; it is the group that really enlivens him and creates him. And what he

experiences in this frenzied enlivening is thus intrinsically ethical, as the impact of the superpersonal norms of the group as a whole—the group consciousness, as Durkheim puts it—on the individual consciousness.

But from the broadened Bataillean point of view, we can raise huge questions about the specific modality of “non-negotiability as inviolability” Durkheim chooses to focus on: i.e., the non-negotiable in the sense of inviolable pre-contractual solidarity, prior to every evaluation, called into service as the precondition of all evaluations. For this interpretation is, in our present view, very much a continuation of certain monotheist entailments. Durkheim sees even this energizing effervescence that comes over the individual without his own conscious control still only in terms of *some* form of control, albeit *someone else’s* control—and hence it remains a social and ethical relation through and through, a relationship between responsible agents. For Durkheim it is the group consciousness concretized into the agency of the totemic animal (conceived of as a personal agent, who acts purposively and can be bargained and cooperated and struggled with), or the God (ditto): selves bearing on selves represented as another self. It thus all remains within the realm of negotiation of purposes between persons.

In contrast, Bataille thinks all such things are a secondary compromise formation, a utility given to what has its sole force only because it is essentially anti-utilitarian, whereas Durkheim sees them as crucial to the concept of the sacred as such. For Bataille as much as for Zhuangzi, sociality as such, our spitting fish, is a pale secondary replacement for a lost intimacy which is at the opposite extreme from the interpersonal, the antithesis of the world of social standards and norms, norms which are the PSR written large in its modality as teleology and responsibility. As a source of values, the PSR-free realm, whittled down to merely the personal and the interpersonal, loses its incommensurability as total otherness that encompasses both the pure and the impure, the good and the bad; it becomes instead merely the non-negotiable as *standard-setter*. That is, it becomes a *source of authority*.

It is by agreeing to regard something as non-negotiable and beyond discussion, as thus beyond the give and take of exchange of commensurable values, hence beyond the PSR, that the community constitutes itself as a community. In this perspective, the question about monotheism becomes the following: what happens when the community places in this position, in the place of

what is by definition the antithesis of the calculating volitions of the individual person, simply another *personal being*, when what it chooses to cohere around is a *personal being*—i.e., something which is, according to our reappropriation of Schopenhauer, intrinsically still subordinated to the PSR? The magic of the transcendence of the PSR, the sacred as such, the non-purposive, is now the purposive in itself, the ultimacy of purposivity: what lies beyond purpose is made into just *more purpose, higher purpose*. What lies beyond the individual person is just *more personhood, personhood all the way up and all the way down*. If we grant that human beings need to somehow join these two sides of their being, that human identity and human solidarity are formed by the specific relation between the purposive and the purposeless, the finite and the infinite, the personal and the oceanic, the prosaic and the sacred, the useful and the useless, work and play, by the reverence the purposeful has for the purposeless, or by utility's participation in the useless, or by its surrender to the useless, or by its saturation with the useless, or by its tolerance of the purposeless, or by awe of the useless—well, we ask, what then might be the consequence of placing the purposive even in the last available position for the purposeless, of making even more work take the place of the play that used to be the one exception to work, placing more personhood and utility where there was formerly an interface with the anti-personal and the useless? All that is left of the non-purposive, the sacred, has been fully usurped in the interest of creating *absolute authority*—non-negotiability in the very narrow form of the given and inviolable, that which cannot be argued with, that which *must be accepted*. The only remaining form of non-negotiability (originally, purposelessness) is the inviolable, i.e., *the demand for submission*. The realm of the personal is the realm of the intersubjective, of the purposive, of the social, of narrative, of accountability, of negotiation, of exchange, of covenant and reward, of give-and-take, of alternate positions, of cooperation and compromise, of means and ends. The realm of the personal is the realm of the negotiable. What lies *beyond* the personal, the realm of “intimacy,” free of the PSR, is what cannot be reasoned with, cannot be persuaded, is no respecter of persons, refuses to completely surrender to any single personal agenda, escapes every grasp, cannot be overstepped or wished away. In their basic significance, the personal is the negotiable, the impersonal is the non-negotiable. When we instead make the non-negotiable into the personal, we create a special kind of monster. Morality, purposive action, responsibility

in an intersubjective context, judgment, expectations and disappointments of decorporealized interpersonal love—these lineaments of interpersonal legal existence, of projection into time of a dramatic character as an accountable controller, become themselves precisely the non-negotiable, become inescapable. All other possible sources of transcendence of the PSR are then subordinated to this personalized version of the impersonal, if they are not entirely forbidden. When we put this incomplete form of PSR-transcendence (purposive personality) in the role of the non-negotiable sacred realm, when we worship a personal living creator God, we set up a *one-way street* of partial PSR transcendence: He is uncaused, but He is a cause. He is a Person (or Three), but like the law He is no respecter of persons. He is absolute, but whereas absoluteness as the freedom from PSR originally signifies the abolition of the very concept of authority, the very concept of control of one thing over another, He is instead the Absolute authority, the Absolute controller. In effect, PSR is suspended in one direction, but by that very gesture absolutized in the other direction. We create forms of life that no longer have any access to anything beyond the PSR at all.²

Such is Bataille's account of the degeneration of religion into monotheism. But this can be read in at least two ways. The first is what we may call the reductive reading: all societies are inseparable from some kind of excess and mania, some form of potlatch, the real point of which is just to *excrete* and *overflow* and *burst*, to break free for a moment of the oppressive subordination to tool-life, to break free of purpose, of work, of ends-means subordination of the present to the future—or to vicariously experience it, get immunized with it, get a taste of it and yet survive it, make use of the useless for the sake of utility. On such a reading this analysis is a way of dismissing the difference among these specific forms, which all amount to the same thing in spite of their varied expressions, with the implication that their own explanations of the meaning of their activities are of no significance. They were all doing one and the same thing, and the real reason for it was something radically different from what they thought and claimed it

² For Durkheim the animality of the totem animal is more or less irrelevant: it is just a certain kind of intentional agent, concretized. For Bataille it is important because it is not just a human: it is an animal, water in water, life as continuity and intimacy, beyond the personal. It is only when the animality of the gods, as well as their multiplicity (which at least provides cross-purpose in a realm of purpose-only), as well as their materiality, is completely effaced—that is, when all sense of the sacredness of whatever undermines of the One Big Purpose is exterminated—that we have monotheism. We can perhaps see then why monotheism is such an outlier, why it is not like other superstitions, and why in a certain sense Nancy is quite right to say it is deeply anti-religious.

was. Aztec society did it by massive actual human sacrifice (primary goal of waste) and obsession with its magical efficacy (secondary rationalization of gain). Early Islam did it through ceaseless military conquest and martyrdom (primary waste) in submission to the command of Allah leading to eternal life (secondary rationalization). “Lamaism” (i.e., Tibetan Buddhism) does it through the wasteful proliferation of non-productive monkdom and contemplation (primary waste), believing this generates merit and leads to enlightenment (secondary rationalization). Christianity does it through the ritual incorporation of human sacrifice (primary waste) made into universal symbol (secondary rationalization) and the contemplation of the suffering of Christ, the purely good God as still inseparable from violence but now on the receiving end (primary waste), believing this redeems the sins of the world (secondary rationalization), and also the self-torture of conscience modeled on this human self-sacrifice of God (primary waste), believing this purifies the soul (secondary rationalization), in various permutations of faith and works.

We might add a few more examples that Bataille would presumably view in the same way, and approve of for the same reason. In rabbinical Judaism, the obsessive meaning-scrambling work of textual exegesis, linguistic microanalysis and compulsive specifications of the minutiae of long-defunct rituals, straight into the meaninglessness and infinite meaning locked into the very nature of words, is a form of excess and non-productive luxury, of uselessness. The Law itself, the Word itself, the very heart of the world of utility, of means-end, of the personal, *meaningfulness and sense* itself, is exploded from within in the numerological decoding and rereading practices of the rabbis, making judgments about a Law that have no practical application at all, for sacrifices conducted in a non-existent Temple of the ruined past and the messianic future. The Law is here subordinated to Lawlessness, Utility to Uselessness, in this case resubordinated to Law and Utility in the prospective form of messianic expectation.

In the early Confucian case too, we have a senseless defense of an obsolete system of social practices—“ritual”—marked very distinctly by waste and excess and luxury (as we see from the pragmatic critiques directed at these practices by the Mohists). These are intimately connected with sacrifices to dead ancestors as an expression of filial piety, which is in turn identified as the source of all social fellow-feeling and indeed all social order. Continuation into

the future of an intelligible coherent meaning, the very kernel of purpose and utility and work, is the family system. The family system, though, is rooted in sex and sex-like spontaneity of affection: in purposelessness, in the complete neglect of means and ends, of any future reward. For in Mencius fellow-feeling is assimilated not to the realm of work and utility (as in Mozi) but to involuntary bodily pleasure (particularly of the gustatory kind), to non-deliberate can't-help-myself unmotivated behavior: it is emphatically characterized as *spontaneous* (1A7, 2A6 *et alia*), i.e., as something that is non-purposive, something I can't help doing even if I try, something not directed toward an end, something that involves no deliberation. Through the Bataille lens, this is very interesting: the social order, the order of work and subordination and purpose, is linked to intimacy, to spontaneity, to purposelessness, with the latter made into the ground and indeed the goal (as in *Analecets* 2:4) of that social order, of all human discipline and hierarchy, of all human subordination. We have a fascinating sandwich of purpose and purposelessness here. The question for Confucianism will henceforth always be: is this spontaneous "human nature" manifest in nondeliberative exuberances subordinated to morality and social order, i.e., to utility and work, or is the structure to be reversed, so the moral and social are outcroppings of the spontaneous sexings of the yin and yang. But because this is an *atheist* system, purposelessness must come out on top, even when partisans of the moral-political world dominate and usurp the entire ideological apparatus: yin-yang, Mencian spontaneity and various reworked Daoist inheritances of effortless action keep pushing their way through, and in the end will always win—*because there is no God*. The source and the goal is spontaneity, the oceanic. Purpose, the narrowly personal, is a necessary evil, a middle term always floating in an ocean of spontaneity; means-and-ends is itself merely a means to be transcended. We explore this in more detail in online appendix B.

In Buddhism generally, we have at first a highly disciplined system conceived of as a *raft*: purpose and the instrumentalization of life made especially intense as monastic discipline, but always explicitly in the service of a goal which completely transcends and negates it: the other shore, Nirvana, which is the destruction of all specific forms, of all karma as causal continuity into the future, of all desire for advantage, and above all of personal selves. Key to this process is the contemplation of the personal as always already simultaneously non-personal:

the body presently as meat and bones infested with wriggling maggots and worms, and in the future as suppurating flesh and decaying bones turning to sand. The Non-Self (*anātman*) contemplation is above all a perception of the non-personal at the root and the end of the personal, and a way of establishing direct contact with this fact even in the midst of life, in the midst of personality. This is the atheist structure: the Two Truths structure, where the divisiveness of the personal is a self-cancelling means to reach the oceanic. We will see in online appendix B that this basic structure has huge implications and leads to enormously varied developments in Buddhism, sometimes radically reversing its original judgments and contents, intensifying the eternal copresence of the personal and the impersonal, but maintaining and more completely expressing the basic atheist structure.

And then we have the early Daoist vision of the oceanic, the formless, at the beginning and end of every form, a formlessness manifest also as the course of reversal and yielding which advances that form through its life among other forms, and keeps it alive—again a way of bringing the two together, the ecstatic demise of form as the very nature of form. Here too we have the oceanic and the purposelessness as the beginning and end, saturating the personal and the purposive, which are always only the epiphenomenon of the oceanic purposelessness, and derive their vitality entirely from them. Again, we will have more to say about this deeply atheist structure in online appendix B.

So much for the first reading of Bataille. The second reading of Bataille is non-reductive: the specificities produced in the necessary pursuit of excess and overflow vary greatly, and these differences matter profoundly. Nor do they contradict the beliefs of their practitioners necessarily, though they do require a metaphorical reinterpretation. We suspend judgment on the magical efficacy claimed for these deeds, suspecting strongly that there is none at all; but we see actual efficacy in the work of these religious deeds and symbols in re-establishing contact with the lost intimacy, or creating a kind of synthesis or compromise between intimacy and utility, different in each case. Moreover, these various versions succeed in this in varying *degrees*, with varying side-effects, depending on their symbolic representations of it. These differences matter: they change the actual efficacy, psychological and social, of these varying ways of doing the same thing. In other words, it is not enough, and not very interesting, to simply note the

surprising point that Aztec human sacrifice, Muslim expansionism, Christian sacraments, Kabbalistic numerology, Confucian ritual and Tibetan monasticism are really just various ways of doing the same thing, that their real aim is not at all what any of them proclaim their aim to be—their diverse religious aims—but are all one and the same, the basic religious aim of finding a compromise between the oceanic and the personal, where the opportunity for wasteful expenditure is the real motivation and the claimed supernatural efficacy is merely a secondary cover story to appease the demands of utility. What really matters is seeing the ways in which these various ways of responding to this shared problem differ, and what the consequences of these differences are.

This question can be pursued in terms of, first, which of the two sides is means and which is ends: is the oceanic a means toward the personal or the personal a “means” toward the oceanic? Focus on this question helps us see how hugely different the religions are, even though all of them are a mixture of the oceanic and the personal, the formless and the formed, the purposeless and the purposeful. For in each of these subcategories, the possible combinations are hugely diverse. So there really are various *different* kinds of Intimacy with the oceanic created, respectively, by obsessive text analysis, or by acceptance and participation in the idea of expiation via self-execution of absolute power making itself vulnerable to pain, or by communal commanded holy war, or by repetition of mantras non-productive of meaning and sitting still in postures non-productive of utility, or constant attention to and self-ornamentation via interpersonal ritual in all actions and words as a way of contacting the continuity of the dead ancestors and the present community and at the same time expressing the spontaneous affect coursing through those bonds, and this Intimacy should be understood as the (or at least a) real meaning of piety toward the Most High through study of Torah, or forming part of the Body of Christ, or submission to the will of Allah, or generating merit and moving toward enlightenment, or practicing the Way of Benevolence. What matters, though, is how the two sides are structured, which serves which, and how this affects the very idea of “serving.” In other words, granted that we always have some interface between purposelessness and purpose, between intimacy and utility, between the oceanic and the personal, what are the effects of how they are put together? What I want to put my finger on here is the importance of the specifically atheist structure: that

is, the avowed denial of the *ultimacy* of purpose and personality and utility. What I'd like to bring to light here is how, even if everything else stays the same, this *changes everything*. For this is where we begin to glimpse Bataille's vision of sacrifice and self-torture, sex and death, as privileged modes of religious ecstasy, and his own way of trying to find a way to experience and participate in it maximally, his own *religion*. In other words, the question before us is why Bataille, while judging all of these various forms of religion to be attempted solutions to a single problem, can also judge some of them to do so more effectively than others, why some religions do the work of religion better than others—particularly, in line with the theme of this book, why monotheistic religions obstruct beatitude in the sense we're trying to pinpoint here.

It is here that I want to bring Bataille and Durkheim into dialogue with the work of René Girard, for Girard also “gives marks” on the value of diverse religious expressions, even while, like Bataille, seeing them all as responses to a single problem.³ In Girard's view, though, the real efficacy involved is here not contact with the lost intimacy of purpose in purposelessness, not at all; it is a very concrete social function that makes society as such possible. Both Bataille and Girard dismiss the claimed magical effects, while both acknowledge a real effect of religious ritual—all regarded as in some way variations on *sacrificial* ritual—along Durkheimian lines: as having a key role in maintaining the solidarity of society. Bataille views this as a tenuous but clever way to harness the needed dose of anti-social Intimacy into a form that can serve sociality, where the real motive power lies in the subjective attraction derived from the anti-social or erotic dimension of the ceremony. For Girard too, the ritual re-enactment of murder serves as an indispensable mechanism which alone can unify a society, and as such is the indispensable condition of any society's existing at all. No further subjective motivations are needed, though there is a subjective reward: the cathartic peace that comes from the murder, now in the prosocial form of unanimous scapegoating rather than anti-social reciprocal revenge killings. But Girard's judgments when giving marks on various religious forms are diametrically opposed to Bataille's, though equally complex: contrasting pagan and Biblical religions, he resoundingly endorses the

³For an illuminating and nuanced overview that sheds helpful light on the convergences and divergences of these three thinkers—Durkheim, Girard and Bataille—in more general terms, though taking up many of the same issues addressed here, see Tiina Arppe, “Sacred Violence: Girard, Bataille, and the Vicissitudes of Human Desire,” *Distinktion* No. 19, 2009, 31-58.

latter, while also acknowledging that they have lost the efficacy of the pagan forms in the crucial area of social function. Nor does his endorsement of the Biblical over the pagan religious formats have anything to do with the satisfaction of any sort of mystical communion or approach to beatitude; what little subjective satisfaction the pagan religions provided for the individual was, on his view, no greater than that of the pre-religious mob violence, except that it allowed one to live longer in the bosom of a society rather than being quickly slain in a vendetta, and it is not clear that even this degree of subjective satisfaction is part of his picture of the superiority of Biblical religion, which rests wholly on moral grounds, even if at the expense of social and personal gains. In that sense, Girard stands very far from our concerns in this book. And yet the nuts and bolts of his theory are extremely illuminating when applied to the problems we are considering here.

To make sense of this conflict of interpretations, and weigh in on it, I will focus in particular on Girard's most fundamental thesis about the role of mimesis in human desire. I use this Girardian term here, although the structure I have in mind is rooted more squarely in Spinoza's "Imitation of Affects" (E3p27) than in Girard's own work—for as we shall see in Part 2, Spinoza gives us a way to understand the absolute primacy of mimesis not only for all social relations, but also as the basic structure of all continued existence of any finite entity without exception, internally and externally: a particular body, for example, *just is* a ratio of motion and rest which *just is* the endeavor to continue that ratio in other contexts. To be an entity at all just is to be self-mimetic, self-duplicating, always however self-duplicating into a field of otherness. In the absence of finite substances, the relation between one's own present and future activities are in the same boat as the relation between self and other, and both are whirlwinds of mimesis pitted against counter-mimesis. This has enormous consequences for Spinoza's ethics, since the default imitation of affects (E3p27) is what tips the balance of pleasure and pain ever so slightly toward compassion and love, all other things being equal, which alone makes possible Spinoza's immanent (atheist) ethics: here the very *thoroughgoingness* of Spinoza's concept of mimesis is what allows him to avoid the dark consequences of Girard's account—dark in that Girard sees escalating deadly conflict as the inevitable consequence of mimesis—focusing on mimetic *desire* as opposed to what is equally crucial for Spinoza, mimetic *pleasure*, i.e., vicarious enjoyment,

which for Spinoza is the real source of the new form of sociality that is made possible when the mutual exclusivity of selves (a concomitant, as we've argued, of precisely the monotheist privileging of purposivity that Spinoza rejects) is overcome. Ironically, though Girard is often criticized for his monomaniacal focus on mimesis as the root of almost every social phenomenon, we would here criticize him rather for having *too limited* a notion of mimesis, for not applying it widely *enough*—and we will find this to be the case also in our comparison with Bataille, for different reasons to be elaborated in a moment.

For Girard is unquestionably highly relevant for our discussion here, and very worthy of comment. As can be guessed, while seeing Spinozistic reasons to accept the vast importance of Girard's basic notions of mimesis, mimetic desire and mimetic rivalry, I am far from convinced by either his logic or his evidence concerning the origins of violence, the functions of sacrifice and scapegoating, and the meaning of the Gospels, drawing quite different, and sometimes diametrically opposed, conclusions on these topics, on the basis of the ideas developed in the pages of this book. Though perhaps a full discussion of Girard's work is better left to another time, we can outline the well-known main pillars of his thesis here, insofar as they concern us, relatively straightforwardly. Girard sees human desire (as opposed to purely animal desire) as primarily rooted in mimesis, which is itself the source of all human learning and socialization. Without having to provide a robust account of its ontological necessity, ala Spinoza, Girard can present this in purely Darwinian terms: those societies where a mimetic function was strong, for whatever reason, are the only ones with the robust continuity and unity that would allow them to survive through time.

Among the things we inclined to copy from each other are desires. For Girard, this has huge consequences. The structure of human desire is primordially *triangular*: it requires the mediation of an emulated *model*. A desire is not a direct relation between the person and the desired object, but a three-way relation between the desiring person, a second person who is perceived to already be valuing the object (the role model), and the object. It is in order to be like the model that one mimetically values what he values. Like our atheist mystics, Girard assumes that the object of our human desires are not desirable in their own right but are fungible avatars of another project, which he sometimes calls "metaphysical desire"—the desire to be, and to be

more abundantly, having more effects, more perdurance, more self-sufficiency. Rather than positing this as some kind of fundamental metaphysical drive, however, we can view even this metaphysical desire as fundamentally mimetic, as simply an effect of the intersubjective process of learning and socialization itself, where I am always in the presence of members of the community whom I must aspire to be like, and whom initially I am bound to feel myself not *yet* being like: since I admire the model, since he is having strong persistent consistent effects on me and doesn't need me to be as he already is, I want to have those traits too: to affect others, to not need them, to endure consistently, to be admired. In not pressing this point, Girard himself again unduly *limits* the scope of his application of mimesis.

Now, when two people desire the same object, they necessarily become *rivals*. My model becomes my competitor. Assuming that the object is something only one of us can have (we will return to this assumption below), we must now be in conflict. In this, we enter an ambivalent symmetrical relationship where the rival also becomes our *double*. The object of desire is for Girard an *empty category*: it has no value in itself, and anything at all can play that role. What is decisive is that the model, the rival, the double desires it. (We will return to this assumption below as well.) The object then soon drops from sight, and we become focused obsessively instead on defeating our rival: that becomes the main focus of our desires. This relation is constitutively ambivalent: I admire the rival, I want to be him, and for that very reason I hate him, because he is getting in the way of my being him—for our relation is premised on the mutual exclusivity of the proxy object of desire; although this has now moved to the periphery of consciousness, which is focused instead on the rival to be defeated, it continues to structure the struggle as a zero-sum exclusionary battle for a thing that cannot be in two places at once—even though, in the very process of doubling, each of us, me and my rival, are now in two places at once! This is a problem for us only because of the structure of mutual exclusion that we inherit from the object of desire. (This will be among the cruxes of my critique of Girard below, if you haven't already guessed: with other ontological premises in place (e.g., the critique of the finite "Thing" as developed in various ways among our atheist mystics, as opposed to the intensifying of this mutual exclusivity on the basis of monotheist premises), the doubling itself is *its own solution*.)

So far we have, I think, some very valuable insights into human society and behavior. At this point, for me, things get a lot shakier. Girard thinks that we now have an enmity, which is bound to snowball and spread as the mimetic process continues: my desire intensifies the desire of the rival and vice versa, my hatred for him intensifies his hatred for me. Others seeing us hating each other so much also learn to hate. Everyone soon becomes everyone else's rival. Tensions mount. A crisis of universal mob violence, all against all, threatens. Some societies, in the long prehistory of man, stumbled upon a mechanism that averted the brewing chaos—and thereby survived. This is the scapegoat mechanism: also due to mimesis, among all these mounting hostilities gradually one meme of hatred starts to dominate, focusing more and more on one particular enemy. Having a *shared* enmity, however, turns out to be the only way the other enmities are calmed: my enemy's enemy is my friend, and now suddenly the social unrest is replaced by unity: unanimous hatred for the scapegoat is the only thing that unites the society, brings peace. Mimesis caused this problem, but it also provides an immanent solution: the mimesis of hatred eventually makes everyone hate the same thing, and this puts an end to the rivalrous hatred of all against all. The mob then falls upon this scapegoat and kills him. Suddenly the violent impulse is appeased, and everyone finds themselves in a state of peace and harmony. This is the origin of human civilization, and of all human institutions—of the very possibility of a continuing human community that doesn't destroy itself through mimetic desire. All pagan religions repeat this gesture in ritual acts of destruction of a sacrificial victim, recreating the transformative moment. This also comes to involve worshipping the victim as divine, for his sacrifice has brought universal peace, demonstrating his superhuman power. This is the real source of the ambivalence of the sacred, as both evil outcast and holy of holies. The ritual re-enactments reinforce the peace-giving effects theatrically at regular intervals, attributing the effect to the power of the god. Not only religious ritual, but also kingship and animal husbandry are rooted in the recreation of the miracle of the primal sacrifice (the details on these points are fascinating and ingenious, but I won't reproduce them here).

It is here that, by my lights, things get shakier still. First, Girard insists again and again that the victim is chosen *arbitrarily*, that the whole mechanism works only because of a *false* attribution of causality, a misrecognition of the causal process, a disavowal of the crowd's own

agency. The crowd experiences strife and hatred instantly transformed into peace and love at the moment the violent impulse is directed at and discharged against the scapegoat. Girard thinks that the crowd then credits the victim with having accomplished this transformation. This is Girard's account of the ambivalence of the sacred, the dual status of the divine figure of the sacrificed and glorified pagan gods. He claims that we start with an unrealistic attribution of guilt (the scapegoat is the cause of everyone's troubles, and of the brewing violence and disharmony of the whole society) followed, in the miraculous murderous moment of transformation, with an unrealistic attribution of credit (the victim's death is what caused peace and harmony: by sacrificing himself, he brought world peace). The scapegoat must be painted, therefore, as enormously, liminally powerful: capable of bringing plague and war to all the world, and equally capable, through his own sacrificial death, of curing the plague and bringing peace to all the world. The two phases of the transformation are thus joined in the god, and also in the ritual sacrificial victim: something exceptionally dangerous and exceptionally beneficent, because exceptionally powerful. The two sides are joined by the sacrificial death itself, which must be retrospectively viewed as a voluntary divine plan of salvation: the god takes on the sins of the community, and then, by dying, dissolves them. All gratitude now goes to the worship of the dead and resurrected god.

Predictably, the least convincing step in the argument is the next one—a glaring reverse-engineering consequence of the “Jesus must at all costs turn out to have been right” premise if ever there was one. All of this, of course, sounds exactly like what happens in Pauline Christianity, and the similarity with pagan dying-and-resurrected gods has thus been something Christians are eager to downplay, ever since such resemblances were harped on by Fraser in *The Golden Bough*. Girard takes exactly the opposite approach, doubling down instead on what he sees as the crucial *difference*: the Christian story does indeed duplicate the pagan sacrificial structure of scapegoating down to the last detail, but with one huge change: it *acknowledges* the arbitrariness of the choice of victim (Jesus), emphasizes his innocence, and thus lays bare the deceitfulness of the mechanism, its foundation on a lie, for all to see. The same story is told, but now not from the point of view of the grateful community, but from the point of view of the arbitrarily chosen, innocent victim. Girard thinks that knowing this disables the mechanism

itself—and the world has been changed. Christ has conquered deceit and the persecution of the innocent, and replaced them with real self-sacrificing love that renounces mimesis and the concomitant endless cycle of rivalry and proliferating violence. If only corruptly mimetic mankind would see this and—follow his example?! But they don't, due to recalcitrant human nature, and the proffered solution is shunned, even turned into a further object of conflict—and now that it has disabled the previously effective means for diffusing the conflict, the scapegoating of the innocent, there is no more safety valve. Thus the test has been failed, the true religion has only made things worse, and we are headed for inevitable apocalypse—just as the Bible predicted.

I can here sum up the position I take on these basic Girardian theses. Is mimesis primary to human psychology? Yes. Are the most significant desires most often mediated by a relation to a model? Yes. Do metaphysical desires for selfhood motivate most human behavior? Yes. Is the ostensible value of an object of desire an empty smokescreen obscurely embodying rather a struggle for identity fueled by the interface between self and other? Yes. Does the model very commonly become a double, a splintering of our own identity, and henceforth an object of both fascination and rivalry? Yes. Is this a hugely important feature of much human culture? Yes. (Does this apply especially to any form of personal God? Yes.) Is human desire wholly reducible to mimesis? No. Is mimesis the only or most important thing reproduced in the self from contact with others? No. Is desire the only thing emulated in this pervasive human mutual mimesis? No. Does mimesis inevitably lead to a conflictual crisis? No. Is that consequence rather a result of the assumption of certain ontological premises about the dichotomous nature of entities, premises buttressed especially by monotheism? Yes. Is pagan sacrifice basically the same as, or rooted in, scapegoating? No. Does the evidence support the idea that pagan sacrifice regards the victim as guilty, responsible for social chaos? No. Does it involve both the holiness and the evil of the victim? Yes. Does knowing that the scapegoat is innocent deprive it of its efficacy? No. Is having a shared enemy often a powerful way to create unity among antagonists? Yes. Do the Gospels disable scapegoating because Jesus emphasizes that he is uniquely innocent, unlike what is believed of other sacrificial victims, and thus unveils the secret? No. Is the Gospel account of the sacrificed victim special in that it emphasizes the guilt of the executioners to an

unprecedented degree, rather than highlighting the solidarity of killer and victim and the ambiguous status of both? Yes. Is the transformation from moral ambiguity of the sacred to universal moral dualism a consequence of monotheistic religion? Yes. Is this a good thing? No. Does making the object of emulation a guiltless and loving God-man undermine the potentials for mimetic violence based on one-upmanship and competition? No (just the opposite). Is the reason scapegoating hasn't ceased since the Christian revelation because it takes a long time for the good to wear away entrenched evil, the recalcitrance of corrupt mimetic human nature? No (it specifically made it worse). If potentially dangerous mimesis is inextricable, would an object of emulation that was a) intrinsically multifarious and b) not exclusively personal and purposive help undermine the danger more than the elevation of a single, personal, purposive, good deity? Yes.

The small portion of this I wish to unpack here picks up on the comparison of Durkheim and Bataille already given above.⁴ The root of the problem, where both Bataille and Spinoza can help us, is as I noted above, in Girard's *limiting* of the scope of mimesis. This, I think, is where the final steps of his story go amiss, leading us down the garden path back into the Bible. Both Bataille and Girard recognize the same main difference between the pagan sacrifices and the Christian iteration of the same structure: in the latter, the victim is purely innocent, and the perpetrators are purely guilty. This antagonistic relationship between killer and killed reproduces the pre-religious crazed mob scapegoating situation, simply reversing the valences: the mob thought the scapegoat was guilty and the mob innocent, while the Christian thinks the mob is guilty and the victim innocent. But the pagan ritual sacrifice actually does not reproduce this relationship at all. Rather, the whole point is to the religious consciousness here is to reconceive this relationship as a bilateral cooperative venture of some kind. The victim may be convinced that this is an honor, or that he will become a god, or that he is saving the cosmos by making this offering--all of which may strike us as horrible ideological trickery and oppression, and it is. But subverting the entire structure, returning it to the pre-religious lynching relationship (only with reversed valences), in the process eliminating its classical religious efficacy, as the Christian

⁴ I am preceded and assisted in this threefold comparison here by Elisa Heinämäki, "Durkheim, Bataille, and Girard on the Ambiguity of the Sacred: Reconsidering Saints and Demoniacs," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (June 2015), pp. 513-536.

solution favored by Girard does, is not the only way to overcome these crude forms of violence. All the non-violent versions of religious activity we touched on in discussing Bataille above—Confucian ritual extravagance, Kabbalistic and Talmudic sense-twisting, Buddhist monasticism, not to mention Bataille’s favored religious activities of sex and drunkenness—are non-violent ways to enact the pagan sacrificial relationship, symbolically transformed sublimations of the act of destructive squandering of a tool previously belonging to the world of utility, and ones that preserve the efficacious structural features of that form and their profound religious powers rather than tossing them out the window. What is this religiously efficacious structure, which evaporates when it is replaced by a reversed version of the pre-religious lynching scenario and its dichotomizing of guilt and innocence? It is the cooperation and mutual mimesis of the priest, the community, and the victim, and the equal distribution of virtue and guilt distributed among them. All of those who participate in the sacrifice are doing a good deed—participating in the action that accomplishes the salvation of the community via an event that contravenes the norms of the everyday life of the community, an exceptional space and time where ritualized crime becomes the shared norm. As we saw in in Chapter 4, Bataille sees the loss of this dimension of sacrifice as a tragic development: the collusion between priest and victim was not merely a matter of serving the social utility by averting an imminent explosion of violence due to uniting around a common enemy. On the contrary, the victim is not an enemy, but a partner. Above all, the priest and the community experience the death of the victim vicariously, join in the transformation, *and this is the real motivation of the sacrifice*. Here is where Girard has unduly limited the mimetic effect: in reality, according to Bataille, mimesis is operative also in the relation between the murderous mob and the scapegoat, between the priest and the victim as well, and between the mob and the priest. But this changes everything. The victim is then not arbitrary at all. Even Girard acknowledges certain conditions that guide the choice for the allegedly “arbitrary” victim: it must be someone or something both inside and outside the community, in proximity but not fully assimilated, marginal but eye-catching, alien but prominently present, connected to the community through close ties of dependence but unignorably unlike others. Strange customs and preferences or exceptional talents and powers, something daily in our midst but which is oddly incongruous, whether of an immigrant group or of a uselessly exceptional physical specimen

among common beasts of burden, make an ideal choice for a sacrificial victim. It is this one-foot-in/one-foot-out character that is decisive here. For Bataille, the victim is chosen because we want to be it, and to die with it—while also remaining *not* it, enough to continue living. Mimesis applies also to the scapegoat: the scapegoat is originally something we want to be, someone who is both inside and outside the world of utility, both actual and seemingly free from all the constraints of our experienced actuality, who dwells on that threshold, for we feel ourselves as the very tension of that threshold, of purpose and purposelessness, of utility and the oceanic. The love-hate we have for the victim is an externalized version of the love-hate we have for our own lives on the tightrope interface of purposeful identity and purposeless intimacy. It is a living symbol of our conflicted condition, present and individuated enough to be available to our imaginative consciousness, indeed unignorable, but alien enough to concretize to us the presence of the intimacy lurking in us and longing to break through into the loss of individuation and the return to water in water. The victim is like a swollen pimple on the body of society, attention-grabbing and protrudingly prominent, somehow tantalizingly above us but also disturbingly incongruous, about to burst and irresistibly luring our itchy fingers toward it. The victim is chosen because it is manifestly liminal, on the threshold, externalizing the tension we all feel between the two realms of useless intimacy and thingified utility. But we also identify with the process of the victim's death. The murder dramatizes the longed-for actual crossing of the threshold, bringing the useless intimacy forth in full flower, dramatizing the immanence proximity of the intimacy beneath our enforced life as tools in the world of tools, a fantasized enactment of its always-imminent orgasmic breakthrough into death, drawing even us less-exceptional, less-liminal beings with it over the threshold.

In the ritual, we live in intimacy with this transition to intimacy which dramatizes our condition. The victim under the knife and the priest wielding the knife *both* serve as our proxies here. For the priest is the servant of utility who nonetheless finds a way to partner with this liminal being and is able to find a deed, in spite of his being totally trapped in the world of utility, which participates in its liminality and its transition while also surviving it. It is a dramatized intimacy with the intimacy, an accomplished union of the two realms, a way for all of us even in our continued action within the world of utility to live the dual status we had seen and

envied in the exceptional victim. When the priest ushers the victim from one realm to the other, he partakes of the dual citizenship in the two realms that had originally singled out for us the exceptional victim, as both criminal subverting the order of utility and the divinity who both enlivens and transcends it. The religious power of the ritual lies in the fact that this mimesis applies between the priest and the victim, who mirror one another, such that each is now explicitly useful and useless at once. The tormenting fantasy of a pure realm of uselessness over against the useful, and equally of a realm of utility existing in isolation from the useless, is traversed and exploded. With that, the emulative rivalry with the exceptional other whom we imagined to be living purely above or below the law evaporates, while at the same time our constraint within the law is revealed to be in constant proximity to its own transcendence of that law, the living breath of useless intimacy that pulses within all utility, enabling it but also defiling and exceeding it. Only in this way, with the tension between the two sides resolved by importing the tension into both sides of the tension, Zhuangzi-style, is a fully integrated picture of both our dilemma and its resolution presented at once, which is then an object of participatory emulation among the onlooking congregants at the festival, thereby indeed satisfying their murderous, rivalrous and suicidal drives without while also surviving them: we die in the ritual, we kill in the ritual, but we also become our hated and beloved rival and role model, enabling a full-blooded love, unpurged of its enlivening ambivalence, both of the rival and of ourselves—a mimesis of love/hate that is finally unrestricted in all directions, a way to be and love and hate every other being as much as we are and love and hate ourselves, reciprocally--the only possible way the deadlock between self and other, rival and role model, love and hate can be consummated and resolved.

It is this dual participatory intimacy that is destroyed by the fatal move of the Christian tweak. For here, as both Girard and Bataille note, though we can and should still identify with the victim, Christ, we renounce the identification with the sacrificial priest, the persecutor: he now becomes *pure evil*, murdering a *purely innocent victim*. While before we had both purity and defilement on both sides (for that is the basic structure of our existence, and the liminal dimension of our life as the interface of the two), here the two have polarized: we have moral dualism instead of universal communion of both utility and purposelessness on every side. The

victim embodies the moment of the uselessness overturning the useful; the sacrifice embodies the persistent containment of the uselessness by the useful. The ceremony is the communion of these two, locked in a Möbius-like embrace, a double ouroboros each eating the tail of the other, a bloody but contained and redemptive yin-yang 69.

There seems to be no place for this particular mimetic structure in Girard, strangely enough. Girard will explain the dual status of divine figure here as a collapsing of the two phases of the sacrificial transformation; this is his way of integrating the unignorable fact that the sacrificial victim is most often *not* treated as a guilty enemy, but as a pampered unblemished sanctified double of the priest and the community, with whom there is a deep and intimate bond, who is willingly offering himself and joining the realm of the divine by so doing. This is of course what Girard regards as the hideous lie of pagan religion: like traditional enlightenment critics of religion (of whom he is of course also intensely critical), he sees here only a violent exploitation of an innocent victim, duped by the smokescreen of a religious lie of otherworldly glory. This is why Bataille for him can only be an odious romanticizer of torture, suffering, religious obfuscation and injustice. This is also why Girard's Christianity is in a sense *anti-religious*, while Bataille's atheism is *intensely religious*. Real religion *is* paganism, on both of their accounts. And this helps explain some of the glaring peculiarities of Girard's treatment of the Gospels. As outsider readers of the New Testament, we are perhaps astonished to find this text put forward as a beacon of non-vengeance, given the prominence of the themes of retribution, very harsh retribution, that we've noted there. This is true not only of the notoriously graphic depictions of imminent wrath and destruction in the Book of Revelation, but very much also in the preaching of Jesus in the canonical gospels. Girard, like many well-meaning Christians, sees Jesus saying "Resist not evil, bless those that curse you, turn the other cheek, forgive seventy times seventy," and so on, and conclude straightaway that the text is advocating an end to retribution. For Girard this is especially important, since he sees all of history as a story of escalating retributive feuding. We have briefly addressed this tension in the text of the Gospels in online appendix A, supplement 7, "Why So Hard on Love Incarnate"; it will be recalled that, via the interpretive key provided by the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, we saw a means-ends structure clearly laid out there, where tolerance and non-retribution were advocated

as a temporary measure, in preparation for violent wrath to come from the hand of God—not from the hand of man. “Vengeance is mine,” saith the Lord. It is not vengeance itself that is objected to, but just a question of who is executing it. This is, of course, the typical Compensatory Theistic move: we renounce it, but at the same time we elevate it to the highest principle of all existence. And here is the point, revealed by Girard from before the foundation of the world: this means that to see the New Testament as anti-vengeance is only possible to whatever extent one takes the existence of God, and thus the real promise of literal violence from Him in the future, to be unreal. To whatever degree you believe in a *literally* existent God, you will see the New Testament as violent: God really exists and He will really repay, bloodily, in due time. If one sees the supernatural level as mere metaphor, or as nonsense, or as a bit of rhetorical hand-waving, and therefore keeps one’s gaze limited to only the human level, then one might conclude there is to be no more violence and no more retribution. If you define “reality” only as what is happening in the physical and human world, it will seem to you that the New Testament is trying to eliminate violence and retribution from reality. In the real world, the effect is to end violence—if you define “real” in this way (which is emphatically *not* how that text itself defines “real”). And this is indeed the impression we get from Girard: he doesn’t take the other world seriously, and therefore Christianity looks like a religion of peace. We may now think back to Nancy’s claims about Christianity, discussed in the Introduction: Christianity is a kind of proto-atheism. One entertains the idea that Christianity may indeed have led to atheism *as the only way to save face for Jesus*: it is only by not taking the supernatural contents seriously, if one regards the fable of heaven and apocalypse as unreal rhetoric viewed only in terms of its effects on earth, that this preaching can seem morally acceptable. It brings peace on earth by filling the heavens with violent retribution. Only if this heavenly is regarded as unreal can this seem to be a religion of peace.

There is a moral argument peculiar to the Compensatory Theist that emerges here, and perhaps this is what underlies Girard’s seeming disinterest in the supernatural aspects of his religion. Again it is similar to a line of thought we already saw in Nancy, and thus suggests a larger European trend. If one believes that the need to place blame on others, the need to regard others as guilty and to regard guilt as deserving of punishment, the need to single out what is evil

and wish for its destruction, are all literally ineradicable human dispositions, then one may well feel that the best that can be done is to remove all of these ugly emotions safely to the realm of God, which is any case not real, so as to remove them in the human world, by replacing them with imaginary and anticipatory satisfactions. If indeed mankind cannot live without placing blame and destructive fury at evil, better to make these the prerogative of the (nonexistent) God, since that will mean that in reality they may become nonexistent. This might be the best we can do—as Nancy thinks the big G God was the only way to rid the world of all those gods. But this is a risky gamble, since here we really do have a situation of the kind Girard instead perversely attributes to pagan scapegoating mechanisms: in the case of this Compensatory relegation of violence and blame to an imaginary divine realm, the draining of these qualities from the unimagined real realm can only work as long as one doesn't realize the imaginary is imaginary, as long as one doesn't know it's a lie. And if one doesn't realize it's a lie, placing of blame and wishing harm to those one regards as evil must be regarded as not only real but the highest virtues possible, entailments of actual divinity. And what's wrong with that, you may ask, as long as in real earthbound existence literal violence can be reduced? This is where Girard's own most perspicacious hypothesis comes back to haunt him: what's wrong with that is *mimesis*. For what is really ineradicable is mimesis, not specific concepts of justice, hatred of evil, blame and so on. All of the latter, as we have argued at length in Part One, are entailments of personality, of the singling out of the executive purposive function as the first cause of action. And this is of course exactly what monotheism does, at the cosmic level. Here we add the mimetic twist: to whatever extent God is personlike, to whatever degree we regard him as similar to ourselves, he will automatically serve as our model, he will be an object of mimesis. If God is vengeful, we will be vengeful. If God is judgmental, we will be judgmental. The sting of conscience teaches one to sting, as Nietzsche said. If God is a trinity one third of which is temporarily non-judgmental but two-thirds of which are violently judgmental, so will we strive to be. More on the implications of the Incarnation in this context in a moment. But what we can expect to see here is not the end of scapegoating but the elevation of scapegoating to the level of divinity. Is that not what we have seen in the past 2000 years? Even Girard acknowledges that it is. We will discuss his response in a moment.

But first we can perhaps drive home the alternate solution: the Emulative Atheist solution. The only way, we claim, to end scapegoating is to end the idea of the ultimacy of guilt and responsibility and accountability altogether. If we must emulate, we will emulate a first principle that itself is not accountable, is not purposive, is never quite one way or another, does not insist on or intend or exclude any particular outcome, does not reinforce the structure of mutual exclusivity that would allow blame to be in one place and not in another. I agree with Girard that Original Sin is a great doctrine, not a gloomy slander of humanity as humanists think. The problem with scapegoating is that the community doesn't own up to the fact that they are all guilty, and instead project their guilt onto the scapegoat. The problem is that neither he nor any Christian takes it far enough: God and Jesus are exempted from Original Sin. Jesus is innocent. Do we not then have the exact same structure, reversed? Sin is located in some limited sphere, and excluded from elsewhere. This is the single-cause, the responsibility, the blame structure all over again. To say the victim is innocent is to say the others are guilty; this simply repeats the gesture of the crowd in saying it was innocent and the scapegoat was guilty. We need a truly thoroughgoing notion of original sin and original virtue: Tiantai. Everyone and everything, from Buddhas to demons, is thoroughly saturated with both sin and virtue, delusion and enlightenment. There is no hiding from responsibility and no displacing it onto elsewhere, but neither is there any locating of it in any one place. We are all responsible for everything, good and bad, and no one is responsible for anything. Is that so hard to understand? Only this can eliminate the belief in guilt, in responsibility, in just punishment—and as long as these remain, attached to any determinate locus or agent, no matter how just or abstract, scapegoating will continue and will get worse and worse.

The minimal conditions Girard outlines for the arbitrarily chosen victim, as we've seen, are that it must be both proximate to the community and somehow outside the usual lines of kinship within the community, and marked by some distinction that can identify it easily. It must be different enough from the community to catch the attention of all, close enough to instigate the false causal attribution of the community's fate to it, and disconnected enough not to draw any reprisals from close associates. For Bataille, these are just what make the victim *attractive*, the object of our own *mimesis* as we die with it: it embodies the excessiveness and proximity at

once of an incommensurable, indigestible presence, a bodying forth of the haunting presence of the oceanic purposeless pressing at the edges of all utility. For Girard, as for Durkheim, the sacred is an “empty category”: like all objects of desire, it is chosen arbitrarily, so anything at all can fill the slot. For Bataille, this is not the case: the sacred object, like the sacrificial victim, is my true *double*: an objectification of the doubleness inherent to me, but redoubled as an external proxy. Each of the two is itself internally split, and this internal split is what is manifested as the external split between the two, and their antagonism. It is when this internal split is accepted and owned up to that the external enemy is seen as a brother in splitness: not reducing us both to a third undifferentiated medium without any division, but seeing the division everywhere, and thus seeing myself in the other: this is intimacy of the shared omnipotent wound, the Tiantai dimension of the doubling. Exactly because we have become indistinguishable, and the antagonism between us is revealed to be an antagonism within us, the antagonism is resolved—even if and when and in and as the continued antagonism. This is precisely the dimension of the religious that Girard forecloses. This double split is exactly what Girard could have explored as an *intrinsic* solution to the problem of rivalry, already present in his own delineation of the uncanny double. Both sides are stained and both sides are pure, and there is simply no way to avoid this. Its divinization lies instead in more fully realizing it. Instead, Girard doubles-down (no pun intended) on dualism. He cannot help but admit that the solution he proposes, the Gospel solution of polarizing the two sides, with innocence and guilt each purely on one side, implacably pitted against one another, the exposure of the lie of guilt of the victim, has failed to do the work that he thinks it should do. It has rather not only simply transferred the guilt to the side of the killer, it has removed the ambiguity that previously prevailed on both sides, creating the category of the purely guilty which can no longer ever be divinized or redeemed: eternal damnation of the guilty. Far from ending the scapegoating, only now can the real scapegoating begin, the no-hold-barred genocidal scapegoating. He cannot deny that this doubling-down on purity versus guilt has failed to disable the scapegoating mechanism, in fact he is honest enough to admit that it has actually made things worse for the time being. But he has no choice but then to further double-down and blame this, purely, on man’s incalcitrance, adding a further antagonistic dualism to the picture. This is really adding oil to the fire. The escalation is typical

of exactly the shift he has described with the monotheistic appropriation of pagan ritual, Christianity, and exactly what Bataille is aiming to dismantle. The way forward is not in the radicalizing of the dualism, nor a return to any kind of pure oceanic oneness, but the omnipresence of disunity that undermines the oneness-difference dichotomy itself, a dichotomy which is itself, as we've argued, the product of the monotheist intervention.

In fact, Girard's core theory concerning mimesis is, most likely against his own intentions, very useful for our case against monotheism. For one thing, mimetic theory helps pinpoint exactly what a personal God is so much more problematic than an impersonal Absolute: it stirs up our rivalry with a "monstrous double," whom we are both compelled and prohibited to resemble. This insoluble double-bind now creates much more serious problems even than those of the cycles of pagan mimetic crisis, reciprocal violence and unanimous scapegoating: these all now become *permanent and ineradicable features* of human experience, rather than cyclical ritual rhythms of tension and release. To be a person is now to be in constant double-bind struggle with the monstrous double, engaging with and against Him in an escalating tension of back and forth bargainings, and on the hunt for the outlet of a unanimous scapegoat whom the two of you can persecute collectively to relieve the antagonism. This is even more pronounced in the concretized humanity of the Incarnated God. We may thus now add another example to the list of backfiring detheologies we outlined in online appendix A, supplement 2. The more palpably concrete is the human form of the Incarnation—beset by quarreling family, inconvenient location, troubled historical context, just like you and me--as opposed to the humanoid but still ghostly existence of the old God in the sky who rarely or never showed himself—the more it will tend to trigger direct comparison, and even the automatic process of mimetic rivalry. Precisely in God's increased humanization, the rivalry with God, the "mimetic desire" to *be* the incarnate God, is intensified. This mimetic desire is necessarily *conflictual* to exactly the extent that we are dealing specifically with the mutual exclusivity of entities which, we argue, is concomitant to the ultimacy of personhood. The dichotomization of sameness and difference entailed in the monotheistic ultimacy of personhood, when applied to the object of desire, means that only one of us can get it; as applied to ourselves, it means that only one of us can be the One. But the desire to be him includes not only the desire to have his virtues and

dramatic victimhood, but also his power and prestige—which, if he is God at all in any sense, still unquestionably remain his prerogative; for the single incarnation of the only-begotten at the same time comes with an intensification of the prohibition against claiming to be the One, elevating the threats to include eternal postmortem punishment instead of just Old Testament worldly smiting. The more vividly personal the God becomes, the more sharply this exclusion is felt, since, for reasons we explore in Chapter 3, “personhood” is precisely the fountainhead of the entire exclusionary either/or structure, the structure of control. But this very shared character of humanity also incites increased competitive rivalry. The double-bind is made all the more unignorable due to the raised stakes of the astronomically expanded threats of punishment. The attempt to decrease the abrasiveness of God’s relation to man, the shadow of His unilateral control, has only increased it.

A further application of Girard against Girard goes perhaps even deeper into the heart of the matter. We have spoken of the “executive function” of *Noûs* as a unifier of the person’s action, under the auspices of a single notion of the Good, a single purpose: it is the projection of this controlling purposive action into the first principle that we identify as the core monotheistic idea. If we apply mimetic theory not interpersonally but intrapsychically, in each person’s own mind, we find that the “scapegoat mechanism” can serve quite powerfully as another name for *purposive action of the executive function* as such. Let us suppose that our minds begin as a chaotic society of competing drives and desires, each with its own purpose; impressionable on every side to mimesis, we are confronted with thousands of alternate objects of desire, each of which picks up the momentum of its model. Each of us is a cauldron of competing conceptions of the good, just as Girard’s pre-social horde is a mass of warring factions each with its own set of snowballing grudges and vendettas to pursue. Let us imagine that here too, within each of us as much as in the social realm as a whole, the mimetic function intensifies their competition: each drive imitates the other, each purpose sees other purposes trying to dominate and thus itself strives to dominate all the more. How does Girard tell us this conflict of each against each can finally be resolved? There is only one way: *having a common enemy*. This is the only way these hate-filled creatures, locked into the inevitable escalating structure of mimetic doubling of rivalry and revenge, can ever cohere around a common goal, a common good. By adopting an

arbitrary target of unanimous aggression, the group is able to act in concert and harmony toward a single end. Applying this to the intrapsychic scene, is this not perhaps what happens when all the drives and counterpurposes in a person suddenly align and constitute what we commonly call a “decision” to take an action? Does this perhaps give us an account of what “decision” and “agency” actually *mean*? The drives are suddenly united against their common enemy: the problem to be solved. We have defined *Noûs* as, among other things, essentially problem-solving consciousness. What is problem solving but scapegoating? Thus is the kind of unity created by personality, defined as decision-maker and problem-solver. To relieve the inner conflict, some object in the world is chosen and wrongly credited with being the source of our inner conflict. By blaming and fighting it in this way, we suddenly feel an inner harmony, just as Girard predicts. We then credit this fight, this confrontation with the world, this identification of blame, this elimination of the external problem, with what solves our problem of inner conflict. Only in conscious purposive action do we feel whole, harmonious, at ease, instead of torn asunder from inside by our intrapsychic conflicts. But we attach that feeling to the desirability of our goal, rather than to the unity obtained by pursuing a goal—an arbitrary goal, any goal. This misrecognition, just as in the scapegoating process, projects the Good onto the external state. The key monotheistic premise that we desire the good rather than calling good what we desire derives directly from this misrecognition. We think we’re actually doing some good in the world, or for ourselves, when we achieve our goals, when actually the good is just the felt unanimity of purpose itself, projected onto an object. Purposivity just *is* the scapegoating mechanism, on the micro-level, and the fetishized object of our desire, perpetuating the same process on the macro-level, is just like the sacrificial victim: credited erroneously with the power to cause us strife, and therefore numinously problematic, but also with the power to cause us bliss, and therefore numinously sacred to us. The fetishized goal, the object of our obsession, is our good and terrifying risen god—and here we return to the Durkheimian sacred, the untouchable thing set apart. As unattained but desirable goal, beyond our grasp, it is thought to be the cause of our grief. Once our action against this cause of grief is mobilized, unifying us, bringing us peace, it is thought to be the cause of our bliss. We call what we do in such a way our achievements, and we believe they make us happy. Decisiveness and agency and responsibility and personhood and

achievement now become our highest value: *Noûs* becomes *Arché*. Our problem in this book is to find other forms of unity, other than the intrinsically violent ones entailed in personality at both the macro and micro level, which necessarily thinks only in terms of judgment, blame, credit, accountability. For agency itself is, on this view, just one more way of inevitably continuing the cycle of violence and scapegoating. In other words, the macro-level crisis is produced only because this mechanism of “looking for a single source of the problem, so as to solve it, fight against it” is already in place in the very constitution of “personhood.” The spread of violence begins here, on the micro-level, within the person; the name of the habitual “solution” to this problem on the microlevel is “personhood.” But just like the habitual solution to it on the macrolevel—scapegoating—this only sets up the inevitable repetition of the problem. Indeed, we would propose that this microlevel form of violence is the ultimate source of the same problem even on the social and historical macrolevels. Our quest here has to been to find an alternative that begins there at the most basic level: the dislodging of the ultimacy of personhood itself—i.e., the dislodging of monotheism.

Extended Neo-Tiantai Postscript

It may be noticed by some astute readers familiar with Neo-Tiantai thinking that what we have in this analysis is an exemplary case of applied Neo-Tiantai ethics. The most distinctive principle of Tiantai ethics is that an evil is overcome by universalizing it to the point of its absolute omnipresence, which also entails its self-overcoming. This is premised on the broadly Buddhist view that the evil lies not in the content *per se*, but in the *conditionality* of the content, which necessarily entails suffering insofar as it is finite, limiting, definitionally aspiring to exclude otherness in spite of the constitutive impossibility of excluding the otherness upon which it depends. The ramifications of this futile quest to secure the exclusive identity of either ourselves or some object erroneously conceived as merely finite (i.e., as having a stably fixed and limited set of characteristics that can be maintained across time) is attachment, obsessive desire, greed and anger, incentives to maintain and consolidate the error of finiteness, and from there the rivalry and violence decried by Girard. The quest is futile and only exacerbated by snowballing efforts to satisfy it.

For X cannot exist or be experienced independently of something other than X. If we call “Y” the new combination of the original X and the specific non-X with which it must be experienced, the same applies to Y. Y cannot be experienced without non-Y. Extending this consideration, we can simply say that X, thought through, involves any and every non-X without exception: if X really= $X+1$, then $X+1 = (X+1)+1$, and $(X+1)+1 = ((X+1)+1)+1$, and so on ad infinitum. For this reason, explicitly experiencing X is always also implicitly experiencing non-X: the default condition of the presencing of any X, in the absence of any resistance to the bleed from the explicit to the implicit, is to expand to the point of reversing into non-X. In the most general sense, this is why there is impermanence: because of conditionality (the necessary copresence of non-X with every X) per se. At the minimal level, this is just a transition from being “like this” to at least minimally “otherwise” one instant later. But the structure involved already bears in it a more radical transformation, ensuring not just a subsequent general “otherwise” but a simultaneous inherence of otherness that undermines the bivalence of “like this” and “otherwise” themselves, resolving into the intersubsumptive omnipresence of both. This happens unnoticed in ordinary perception: I see a cup, but in seeing it *as* a cup, I am tacitly arranging all the necessary contextual conditions around it that make it appear to me as a cup. The disambiguation of foreground and background calibrate and happen simultaneously. The surroundings—including the remembered past and the anticipated future—must adjust precisely to those appearances that cohere with the cup as cup (rather than, say, a swirl of molecules or a divine revelation or a hologram or the tip of an alien mutant’s nose). This happens because of my prior *interest* in the cup qua cup, left over from the previous round of the same process (i.e., “karma”), typically because I want something from it, or plan to use it as a cup, or am in need of a cup. I check to make sure everything in the environment accords with my perception of a cup (e.g., there is no magical angel waving a wand nearby, or no crowd of floating cuplike aliens, for such things would force me to revise my initial judgment of this thing to be simply a cup). Once everything is seen as consistent, there is no more checking against an external context to be done. When this happens, the certainty of the entire configuration is again called into question—and the moment as a whole enters a new context: the sequence of time, one among a series of total configurations of all that exists, i.e., of moments. That generally unnoticed swell and crash of

disambiguation is what we experience as a moment, as a single mental experience. Reaching its full exceptionless extent of total consistency and then finding this entire consistent whole, lacking any further external support to confirm it, falling back into ambiguity, in need of new external support, is what we are here calling the “crash” of the coherence. It fulfils itself totally, confirmed by and in a mutually determinative relationship with every item in its entire environment, including a past and a future, and thus makes of this totality itself incapable of further confirmation and thus indeterminate, such that both the X (cup in this case) and the determinate non-X around it, by contrast with which it was determined as a X (cup), are both rendered again indeterminate.

When this process itself is brought to full consciousness, this is grasped as the intersubsumption or mutual asness of X and non-X. X is non-X *as* X. Non-X is X *as* non-X. Put another way, X is non-X *in the form of* X. Non-X is X *in the form of* X. How? We often use the Wittgensteinian duck-rabbit as a way to illustrate an irreducibly ambiguous figure, which in its entirety may be seen as either a duck or a rabbit. This is useful, in that it shows us what it would mean for X to be entirely readable as non-X and vice versa, although they are entirely coextensive. But this may mislead us into thinking of this ambiguity as a special condition, since I can also easily draw a duck that cannot be read as a rabbit, where this ambiguity, this split between alternate ways of viewing, is not so evident. What we are talking about here is a split that must occur for any entity. To illustrate this, we may use another rabbit-oriented example, to exploit but profoundly modify our common-sensical (and Aristotelean) intuition of a *necessary* split pertaining to any existent thing: the split between form and matter, or between form and content. These two are necessarily concretely coextensive but necessarily also conceptually mutually exclusive. The Tiantai interpretation of this Aristotelean observation will radically alter its implications. If I have a chocolate Easter bunny, I might say I have chocolate *in the form of* a bunny. That means that the bunny is made of chocolate, and in regarding this object I can switch between regarding it as a bunny (if I want to use it in to make a diorama of an Aesop’s fable with my plastic tortoise, for example) and regarding it as chocolate (if I want to eat it). Which aspect I will focus on depends on what I want to do with this thing. Both are there simultaneously, but whichever one I begin with, I have an option, a depth dimension of difference, that allows me to

switch to the alternate use and perception. Note that if I am initially urgently searching for a bunny to complete my diorama, I am liable to say, with relief, “Oh right! I do have a bunny—albeit in the form of chocolate.” But if I am first focusing on my urgent need for chocolate, I can just as well say, with relief, “Oh right! I do have some chocolate—albeit in the form of a bunny.” Form and content are thus (pace Aristotle, and all his philosophical and theological descendants) not fixed, but merely a schematic way of marking the ability to switch from one of these apprehensions to the other. Each one includes a reference to both the chocolate and the bunny, and also to both the difference between them and their always-available switchability. Only the focal point changes in the two descriptions. This is precisely the relation we have between X and non-X in the above scenario. Although initially it seems that the non-X lies *outside* X, as opposed the coextensive bunny and chocolate, where the chocolate lies *inside* the bunny, the realization of the necessary codetermination of the two, when brought to the point of exceptionlessness as described above, reveals that in looking at the unchangeable X-plus-non-X configuration of the entire moment, we are looking at a situation like that of the chocolate and the bunny. What we have before us in the former case is a totality of two opposed but inseparable determinations, X and non-X, just like the totality of the two opposed but inseparable determinations, “chocolate and bunny,” in the latter case. Neither one can be there without the other. According to our interest, we can describe this as X in the form non-X, or non-X in the form of X, just as we could say either chocolate in the form of a bunny or a bunny in the form of chocolate. In either case, what we are really referring to is 1) the entire combination of both, plus 2) their necessary difference, plus 3) their inseparability, plus 4) the switchability between them. We speak further of the *omnipresence* of both in just this specific sense. We can now say that the chocolate is omnipresent in the bunny, *not* merely in the sense that the whole bunny is made of chocolate and all the chocolate is in the shape of a bunny, but in the genuine Tiantai sense that “chocolate” is now seen to be one way of referring to the entire string of meanings just mentioned: chocolateness, bunnyness, the difference between them, the inseparability between them, and the switchability between them. “Bunny” means the same set of meanings, not merely that bunny as taken in its original meaning, without this string of implications, is physically coextensive with chocolate. (Tiantai readers will recognize that kind of coextensivity and

inseparability as merely the “Shared Teaching” version of identity of opposites.) It is in this sense that *X* is omnipresent, non-*X* is omnipresent, *X* is non-*X*, non-*X* is *X*, *X* and non-*X* are intersubsumptive.

But what are the practical implications of this? How can such a vision be *lived*? This is where the perspective provided by these conflicting Bataillean and Girardian conceptions of mimesis and sacrifice, applied at the microcosmic level of the individual, can help us. Our initial perception of a determinate disambiguated object is thus a result of having a particular interest, orientation, desire. When that desire changes, either because it is fulfilled as described above or because another desire displaces it, the entire configuration reverts to ambiguity, awaiting a new desire to reconfigure it. If I am merely surveying my surroundings, the desire is for clear perception, and once fulfilled, this too will revert to this ambiguity, awaiting the next moment of desire to configure a new totality around its concerns. Determinations about the objects in the world and desires about these objects are thus tightly interwoven, so much so that the rhythm of “ambiguation”/“disambiguation”/“ambiguation” cycles is generally experienced not as uncertainty about what things are but uncertainty about what to do, the general tenor of “What Should I Do Now?” that defines so much of human life, and which gives us the (easily misconstrued) sense of ourselves as autonomous agents making choices about actions rather than just passive effects of external causes; it is the constant interposition of these micro-phases of uncertainty that inject the (misleadingly absolutized) sense of “freedom.” In other words, this rhythm is usually translated into the experience of “uncertainty of what to do next”/“decision to do something”/“uncertainty of what to do next” as the general moment to moment experience of being a sentient being.

But some forms of desire, and their concomitant disambiguations, persist over time; certain objects remain stably present, some convictions produce relatively stable configurations. These are the mainstays of our ordinary sense of the world, even though in terms of the above analysis, they are rooted in a snag, an obsession, an obstruction to this default rhythm of disambiguation and reambiguation in which, at each moment, the entire configuration, foreground and background, reverts to ambiguity. This ambiguity applies to all its elements as described above, i.e., where *X* is ambiguously *X*, non-*X* is ambiguously non-*X*—which here

means, as we saw above, that X is ambiguously non-X and non-X is ambiguously X, such that each is (ambiguously) omnipresent. Our next questions is, why do certain objects resist this transformation? Why are we obsessed with certain things? In Buddhist terms, what is the root of our *attachment*, the source of all suffering?

And the standard Buddhist answer is well-known: we are attached to *self* (and quite understandably so: this is equivalent to saying we wish to continue to exist, and as we shall see, the analysis of the error involved here need not involve the absurd demand that we cease wanting to live rather than die). In terms of our current analysis, this can be described as follows. Among the things about which I am in some manner aware, in this totality of environment, is my own body and mind in a particular relation or attitude or state of engagement with that environment. These too are configured in a particular way, disambiguated so as to be endowed with a particular identity, in accordance with the configuration formed around the focal point of my interest. Again, this can involve massively complex spatial and temporal conditions, including my own past experiences and memories, and my desires for the long-term future. A particular object of desire becomes an obsessional attachment when it resists this default rhythm of expansion, crash and intersubsumption. This is either because there is something I don't want to be aware of, or something I don't want to *be*. In the latter case, this is a resistance to the natural reversal of position between subject and object that comes with including myself in the totality of conditions that allow this object to appear in a particular way. Because this entails the intersubsumption of subject and object, this requires a willingness to see the object as an instantiation of myself (an alternate form of my presence), and to see myself as an instantiation of the object (an alternate form of its presence), which is merely a special case of the overall willingness to see any X as an instantiation of non-X and non-X to be seen as an instantiation of X, like the chocolate and the bunny. This literally means I have to be willing to imagine myself in the position of the object over there relating to my body and mind and actions over here, even if only for a split-second. On this view, this momentary identification with the object, followed by immediate disidentification as my identificatory function continues its promiscuous rounds of all available objects, *just is* what it is to perceive the object as that object. Among these objects given in any moment's configuration is my body-mind, which is why the identification

with that object is most frequent and predominant among all the objects I identify with. But to get through each moment without residue, I will be experiencing this sense of being each and every particular quiddity within that moment; we actually have no other way of knowing what an object is, no way of identifying an object, besides *imitating it for a moment*. This can be observed in infant behavior and early-childhood learning, but it is baked into all our cognitive functions even when these are heavily overlaid with more complex and abstract structures that obscure it. In short, *all experience is mimesis*. We may consider this our first Tiantai “universalization to the point of omnipresence” of the underdeveloped Girardian principle, and we shall soon see how it is that fully taking in this fact also entails the overcoming of the worries he sees it as engendering. Under these conditions, whatever I’m unwilling to *be* will be a constant irritant to me. Just being able to see it is already a minimal emulation of it; but if I then have reason to reject following through on that identification, preventing myself from seeing even my own body-mind as an instantiation of the quality of that object, as part of its inseparable contextual framework, like chocolate and bunny, I will have a snag. If I am unwilling to *be* what I *see*, that object will become an object of fixation, clogging the flow of reversals and renewals. We may think of the oft-noted homophobia of some right-wing het-identifying males as the most easily observed version of this phenomenon, but the same mechanism is going on billions of times every second, built in to the structure of perception itself, and the blockage is similar whenever we are disproportionately obsessed with an object of both desire and hatred.

This “snagged” object is what defines for us our enduring *project*, singling out either the lack or presence of some particular thing as the source of suffering, the thing about which we are convinced we must do something, the thing in the world we believe we must take action to correct—and as in the scapegoating mechanism, this is really not due to anything about the object itself except its effect on the totality of our own unruly psychological drives, each structured as the impulsion to expansion and reversal described above, which make up our relation to it. The project is an object of built-in and necessary ambivalence: both a constant irritant that I seek to remove and a constant object of fascination and desire. A certain object causes such a disharmony in us only because of our unwillingness to *be* it—in other words, because we are actually always engaged in an intersubsumptive mimetic relations of *all* the

components of our experience and of ourselves at any moment, which will be experienced as disharmonious as long as we do not recognize it for what it is, i.e., an intrinsic and necessary aspect of what it is to have *any* identity at all, since all identity derives only from mimesis, by constantly identifying with whatever we encounter, and mimesis is inherently self-contradictory, because this identification is not only countermanded by alternate identifications, but is in each case inherently paradoxical. It is paradoxical precisely because mimesis is insatiable and indestructible, but for that very reason also self-undermining. It is incapable of stopping at any partial identification; one can always become *more similar* to the model than one already is, and one will always be motivated to do so, because the promised satisfaction has always failed to arrive, since it is entirely illusory. One never attains the sense of secure being that one imagines one sees in the admired other, who has such glamor only because one is not him, because he appears as a fully constituted independent object in the world, which oneself, precisely insofar as one is capable of even perceiving him or anything else, can never be. A minimal dissimilarity with the model must thus be maintained, because total identification would mean I would in fact have to *be* the model, to share every trait with him in every respect, to the point of our indiscernibility and thus identity--in which case mimesis would no longer be mimesis. Similarly, in my endeavor to obey, if my obedience is complete, I am no longer obeying, for the commander-obeyer relation is overcome in the total coincidence of my action with the command. If I obey completely, there is no one and nothing there to be doing the obeying, there is just the command itself. I am thus necessarily caught in a double-bind with respect to every model: I am driven both to be exactly like it and to be somehow different from it. In the total configuration of each mimesis, the emulator and the emulated are like the chocolate and the bunny: they must be the same and they must be different, and each of them is in this way actually both itself and the other, omnipresent precisely as this division that is present everywhere throughout the entire field.

For mimesis itself, just the structure of mimesis per se, confronts me with two contradictory demands—with or without the existence of a concrete rival competing with me for the desired object. In the model I see before me an other who is independent of me, who unlike me has the self-standing being of not needing to constantly depend on my floundering

improvised actions as a model to be what he is, and who for that very reason provides me with a standard of what being real and valuable is. I must be independent like him, but to do so I must also not be dependent on him. I must be what I am independently of a mimetic model, as my model is, so my mimesis involves me in a paradox. I may try to evade this problem by folding the structure of mimesis into my model itself: I might take for my role model someone who himself had a role model, and try to imitate his perfection in imitating his own master. I will be the perfect disciple in discipleship of my master, who was a perfect disciple of his master. But even here my imitation will be imitating his imitation, and will pale in comparison precisely insofar as he was imitating without a model of how to imitate. If I push this back again, to infinite regress, I will situation myself in an infinite chain of tradition: I imitate my father, as he did to his father did before him, as he did to his father before him. Only by embracing this infinite regress without succumbing to the temptation to imagine an originator of the tradition who was imitating no one and nothing (e.g., God, founder, etc.) can this universalization change the structure: I will have to see all my models as just as inauthentic, just as flailing, just as desperately hollow failed imitations as I am now, and make this my new standard of perfection to be imitated. But even then, the independence of simply being seen as an already-constituted object to be known, as encountered by a still-in-process subject trying to be them, gives me the same structure of necessary failure: there is nothing to do but try to be what I see, but I can never be what I see. I must be like the other and not be like the other. But also, I must be like the other in not being like any other, and I can never even do that right. It is only if I am able to see the model as imitating *me*, as in the reversal just described as the rhythm of perception itself in the Tiantai model, that this could be avoided. Wherever this fails to happen, we have a snag, embodying the above intrinsic paradox of mimesis.

We can see Freud's construction of the rivalry with the father as a narrow special case of this general principle (as Girard does), but one which is especially illuminating. I must be like my father, but I must also be unlike my father. I must yield to his demands, do what he desires, and yet, like him, I must yield to no demands, doing whatever I please, possessing whatever I desire—for if I simply obey his demands completely, I will fail to be an independent locus of being and authoritative source of values, like he is. I must obey and I must rebel. The same can

be said for whatever I hit upon as the source of my mimetic model: a hero, a brother, a successful elder, the abstract ideal citizen, the president, God. As long as we fail to see these two conflicting demands as structurally necessary to one another, as deriving from a single indivisible structure, we are caught in a conflict between them. If I can grasp the mimetic double-bind as the only source of values and also as absolutely necessary and ineluctable, I will see the two conflicting demands as reversed and mutually entailing sides of one another, like a Mobius strip, where each of the two sides includes the other; it is in this sense that each is the only side, each is omnipresent, as explained above.

And ironically, accepting just this is the only possible sense in which the mimesis actually succeeds: I really *am* exactly like the other, in that he is both myself and him *and* necessarily different from me *and* necessarily switchable with me—and I am just the same with respect to him: we are each individually omnipresent in the configuration as the divided totality of me and him. I must be as much an object to him as he is an object to me, realize that I am his unrealizable ideal just as he is mine. Indeed, this applies to every object of perception as well: I must not only realize that I am necessarily imitating it, and necessarily failing in my imitation of it, but also that it is necessarily imitating me and failing in its imitation of me. The chocolate is the bunny, the bunny is the chocolate, but they can never be the same, and they can never be different. The mimesis succeeds, and indeed can never be failing, only in the sense that chocolate is bunny as chocolate-which-is-not-bunny-but-is-switchable-with-bunny and the bunny is chocolate as bunny-which-is-not-chocolate-but-is-switchable-with-chocolate—i.e., in the sense that the chocolate is the whole chocolate bunny, and the bunny is also the whole chocolate bunny. But this means that the kind of unity we can achieve will always only be this necessary divided unity which is inclusive in the sense that it can never exclude its opposite, but also intrinsically divided in the sense that it can include it only as different from itself: the chocolate includes bunniness only because chocolate and bunny differ, and vice versa.

Failing to see this, imagining that we could either put a stop to mimesis somewhere or imitate any other kind of success—i.e., that we could ever simply be a non-paradoxical self, as we imagine the emulated model to be—we try to displace this intrinsic disharmony onto an element that must be expelled, a scapegoat that must *not* be identified with, endeavoring thereby

to acquire the imagined abstract consistency of an exclusive oneness. This is a result not of rivalry, then, but of a refusal to accept that whatever X we identify with *must* also entail an identification with the opposite, with non-X; in attempting to expel the contradictory element rather than identify with it, we are endeavoring precisely to *limit* mimesis between the two terms of any relation, as just described. Rivalry itself is a result of this, not the root cause. Failing to see this, I can only waver in the conflict between the two demands, unable to satisfy both at once. The object that we will then choose as our target, our scapegoat, our sacrificial victim, the goal of our activity, the unifier of our actions, will be some element the elimination (sacrifice) of which strikes us as satisfying the two opposite demands at once: a kind of overlapping point of intersection between the two contrary demands, which has the rare quality of seeming able, at least to some extent, to fit squarely into the two opposed schemas of thwarted omnipresent expansion. To play with an old metaphor, if I am a collection sequences of both numbers and letters, each demanding coherent continuation in its own idiom, I will be enamored to discover there is one symbol that can fit meaningfully and consistently into both sequences: the 0 that can be read either as a zero or the letter O. I will endeavor to place that at the nexus of the two systems; by focusing my attention on this figure, I can be engaged in both my demand to be a word and to be a number. The way in which any sentient being's desire posits the good, different for each one, that obsesses and orients its behaviors around a particular scapegoated evil to be redressed over and over again, is to search for some state that satisfies two opposite and contradictory demands at once. If the good is this privileged ambiguous double-status object, the evil is the privileged object the removal of which we believe will bring us to this state where the two opposite demands overlap, such that both are satisfied and the intolerable tension between them is relieved—in our example, constantly working to eliminate whatever is standing in the way of our access to engaging or incorporating the 0.

If a more concrete example is wanted, we may consider the powerful and sustained fascination exerted by African-American and hillbilly-American musical culture (blues or Motown or folk or country) on suburban Jewish and working-class British youths (or otherwise excluded from the ruling-class, e.g., posh but queer, or otherwise marginalized) in the fifties and sixties of the last century, to the point where these Jews and Brit-yobs devoted their lives to

emulating these role models (I am thinking of Doc Pomus, Leiber and Stoller, Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Randy Newman, Paul Simon, Art Garfunkel, Michael Bloomfield, Paul Butterfield, Barry Goldberg, Al Kooper, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Kinky Friedman, et al. on the one hand, and Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Brian Jones, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Eric Burdon, Roger Daltrey, Keith Moon, John Entwistle, Ray and Dave Davies, Rod Stewart, Eric Clapton, David Bowie, Peter Green, et al. on the other). These demographic profiles were obviously neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for this obsession—many who shared this obsession and rose to prominence in these fields fit neither profile, and not everyone who fit the profile shared the obsession—but the unusually high statistical percentages of representatives from these groups is enough to make it a notable phenomenon worth pondering. From our present perspective, to illustrate the kind of mechanism we are trying to describe here, let us speculate that both of these groups, suburban Jews and British non-elite young men, felt like underclass outcasts in their own societies, which meant wanting to leave this identity behind, but also needing to embrace the opposition to the hated oppressor, which, under the pressure of that sustained ostracism, became for them the core meaning of that identity. To be a Jew is to want to oppose those who oppose being a Jew, the ostracizers, but it is also long to be free of everything about being a Jew, and in that sense to be like the ostracizers. Both what one is and the opposition to what one is are felt to be the causes of one's problem, and one wants to eliminate them both. The trauma of exclusion, perhaps, made it difficult to identify with one's own oppressor and the oppressed at once; failing to do that, there is seemingly irresolvable conflict, a drive on the one hand to be like the oppressor *or* on the other hand like the oppressed. (Indeed, as a short aside on a hugely important topic, just to give my two cents, this is what is *really* so objectionable about all forms of social oppression: being oppressed makes it so much more difficult for the victims to fully identify with their oppressors, which is, from a Neo-Tiantai perspective, where the only hope of resolution of the root causes of all oppression. Fighting oppression in a way that exacerbates the foreclosure of omniscient empathy and identification with every single object and subject in all directions, i.e., by vilifying the oppressor, is from this point of view a profoundly counterproductive measure that only exacerbates the situation, the source of the snowballing hot-potato game of oppression and victimhood that constitutes most of

human history.) The hatred of the ruling class that ostracized them equaled a demand to never join that class; but that same ostracism motivated a strong desire to escape one's own ostracized class. How to do both of these at once, to disidentify with one's own ostracized class without joining the opposite ostracizing class? How to satisfy these contrary demands at once? By embracing this ostracized status all the more, but in a new form. The identification with an *alternate* outcaste group was the solution they found, for it satisfied the demands to both be Jews (racial and social outcastes) and to be the antithesis of Jews, to be yobs (uncultured outcastes) and to be the antithesis of yobs. They confronted a perceived demand to be at once Jews and the opposite of Jews, or to be at once British yobs and the opposite of British yobs. They needed to find something that was opposed to both the ostracized and the ostracizing; by opposing the ostracized, they get a reverse form of identification with the ostracizing, but opposing the ostracizing, they also get a reverse form of identification with the ostracized, attaining both without the mutual exclusivity of the other identity that would come with the positive identification with either. Being a blues singer or a folksy hillbilly fit the bill perfectly. Indeed, it could be argued that this allowed them to feel like more Jews than Jews, more yobs than yobs, as Tiantai would lead us to expect. If "Jew" or "yob" meant to them to be the ostracized one, this new identification with American black and hillbilly outcastes allowed them to be ostracized even by their own Jewish and working class parents and class elders, identifying with something despised even by the despised—but thereby escaping their membership in the original despised class: more Jew than Jew, more yob than yob. Typically there is a primary demand of such intensity that it has expanded to reach its own impossible limit, where its satisfaction would directly entail its own violation, landing at an impasse that calls forth a contrary demand--a primary demand and its necessarily entailed counterdemand. This conflict may often be traced to the pre-existence of two incompatible demands of separate external origin, but we can likely always further trace the opportunistic taking up of precisely these two demands from the environment, as demands of unignorable relevance, as a way of playing out the immanent self-contradiction of a primary internal demand, initially of underdetermined generality, which in this manner finds a way to discover its intrinsic impasse. In these cases, this is present as the quite understandable inability of a traumatized ostracized class to identify also with its oppressor,

which requires a search for some item that can make one at once a member of the original ostracized class and a sharp antithesis and negation of this class, embodying the disdainful eschewal of this ostracized class as is demanded by the oppressor. This is the intrinsic contradiction of being fixed as *any* particular identity; the oppressive situation exacerbates a general condition of having to assume a specific identity at all, locking one in to “being just this and nothing besides,” something that the entire social fabric identifies you as at all time and in all situations. The British yob goes through life in Britain constantly being identified as a yob the moment he opens his mouth. He cannot escape. *Mutatis mutandis* goes for the Jew in Christian America, particularly exacerbated after the sudden cultural focus on Jewishness after WWII and the newly constant interactions between Jews and mainstream culture following upon deghettoization peculiar to the American immigrants of the second and third generation, the daily identifying interface of specifically “Jewish” and “non-Jewish” as a cultural theme, which is not operative when in a real or cultural/linguistic ghetto, as was previously the case, where is not incessantly interacting with a gaze that marks one as a this specific kind of other. A parallel situation for the British yob is the sudden availability of contact with American pop culture after WWII, a new contrast that elevated into consciousness a newly snagged identity as British, but also the alternative to the British class system, now made linguistically available in daily life. All this kind of thing raises the basic problem of *any* human identity to a breaking point: one is supposed to be *just this*, but being this is actually constantly manifesting all that surrounds it, all the otherness that goes into its being there, the viewpoint of every point in the environment that looks toward it. Identity is one’s place in the world of utility, the chains of causes and exchanges, definition forced upon one by the PSR. The drive to break out of it is intrinsic to it, as Bataille describes, but in Neo-Tiantai terms, this push toward self-overcoming of every identity is actually intrinsic to having any identity, as we’ve described above. Determinacy is originally also indeterminacy, and being forced into a one-sided suppression of the ambiguation of one’s identity by the above external conditions pushes this particular snagged identity to a point of crisis. The fundamental impasse that is forced upon us by having to assume any particular identity here is pushed to a breaking point: it urgently demands a solution—something that will at the same time satisfy the demand to oppose what one is and also to oppose what opposes what

one is. We are suggesting here that this is the mechanism that defines the search for an object upon which to direct our will, with the combination of love and hate that this requires: our fascination with this object is matched by our compulsion to get our hands on it, become it, defile it, change it, twist it, destroy it, deify it (as we see our Jewish and Brit-yobs artists doing to their beloved genres, mimetic role models and model roles). The same mechanism, we claim, is operative for the mob finding who or what to single out as its sacrificial victim.

We see this already in the choice of the sacrificial object in both Bataille and Girard. In the case of the fundamental impasse as conceived by Bataille, the two counterdemands are for something both pure and something filthy, something both useful and useless, something both continuous and something discontinuous, something both identical to the self and different from the self. In terms of the problem set by Girard, it is for a scapegoat both innocent and guilty, both proximate to the society and alien, both plague-causing and plague-curing, both anathematized and divine. Each of these is in its own right a coinciding of opposite demands. But these two accounts of coincidings of opposites, Bataille's and Girard's, are initially themselves opposites to one another. Girard wants an actually innocent scapegoat who is regarded as genuinely guilty by the mob, which regards itself as purely innocent and not guilty, so that no mimesis at all applies between the mob and the victim. After the sacrifice, he wants the mob to genuinely regard the risen victim as divine, and to regard itself as genuinely non-divine and dependent to this divine power. Bataille wants the priest and mob to already know that the scapegoat is not any more guilty or innocent than anyone else, to be a taut and conflicted hybrid of use and uselessness like everyone else, and to enact full mimesis between mob and victim: both are split between use and uselessness, and the return of the victim to uselessness is simultaneously the liberation of the mob from the unilateral dominance of usefulness. Each of these theorists sees that the object singled out for sacrifice must be a convergence of opposites. But there is still the opposition between these two conception of *which* opposites must coincide. We will see, in the Tiantai recalibration via extension of both to their full exceptionless universalization, that not only do these opposite demands now coincide in each case, but that the two opposite typologies of the opposed terms themselves also coincide.

For the solution to the offending presence of this scapegoat we've identified as the evil to be redressed through our action, the victim of the moment-by-moment sacrificial ritual known as "agency," lies not in the elimination of the evil X (i.e., replacing the conditioned state "X" with the equally conditioned state "non-X," which would also be evil, insofar as it has exactly the same aspirational but impossible exclusive structure, but in reverse: non-X as the impossible project of excluding X), but rather the extension of X to omnipresence. X reverses into non-X, or rather into both X and non-X, when it is extended to the extreme, i.e., perceived as omnipresent, subsuming the non-X that originally was contrasted to it, for it was this contrast that had given it its determinate (exclusive) character as X. In this case, we apply this principle at two levels. First, it is applied to the problem of mimesis. Girard sees the mechanism of mimesis as applying only to the positing of a role model, focusing therefore especially on desire, addressing the specific problem of man's "metaphysical desire," his "desire for being": as a solution to our felt lack of coherence, of any consistent desire, of any reliable knowledge of what is worth valuing, of any self-grounding existence of our own, we take on a role model who is seen to have these qualities. Having no idea what would be worth desiring ourselves, we take up the desire of the role model as our own desire, hoping that will make us more like him. For this reason, mimesis results in escalating rivalry which can only be resolved by separating out a scapegoat for universal hatred and finally destruction. What this misses is that mimesis also applies to the relation between the community and the victim: the community will mimetically feel what the victim feels, and vice versa. We can easily reach this from Girard's premise if we supplement it with Spinoza's analysis of all emotions, starting from pleasure and pain and love and hate, both considered as transformations of desire. The Imitation of Affects (E3p27) therefore applies not only to desire per se, but also to pleasure, to pain, to love, to hate. And it is because all of these are operative at once that ambivalence is the inescapable condition of man; we are always being influenced by, and emulating to greater or lesser extent depending on how we imagine our own identity and what is similar to it, the feelings and emotions and desires of everyone and everything we see. It is this that undergirds the Batailleian pinpointing of the meaning of sacrifice in the *vicarious* experience of death: the priest, and the community, in focusing on the victim, feel what is felt by the victim in succumbing to his fate *and* what is felt by one another in their

collective escape from the victim's fate. The victim's own feelings are already ambivalent, by Bataille's lights: the terror and pain of losing its separate existence are interfused with the release and joy of returning to the lost intimacy of water in water. The crowd feels both the terror and the joy. But it also feels the correlative joy at being (like the others in the crowd, as opposed to the victim) *not* having to undergo the victim's terror and pain, and also (like the others in the crowd) the pain of *not* surrendering to the victim's release and joy. The victim will also have to feel, however obscurely, somewhere underneath the intensities of joy and terror, the reversed terror and joy of the crowd who are reveling in his demise. Indeed, the victim's moment of release into intimacy is also the moment of dispelling its sense of definite positionality in the total scene, the sudden opening to interconnection with the roaring ocean of contradictory microemotions reverberating everywhere throughout the mass of contrary points of view.

But even more follows from this principle, as a truly unrestricted economy of affect. The double-status of the victim as both unifying hero and divisive plague also emanates through the members of the crowd; inasmuch as this double-valence is precisely the locus of its divine status, this divine status is also communicated to every point. Such is the participation in divinity of this "communion" with the sacrificial victim. But we have noted that this will only work if the guilt and the victimhood and the holy heroism are *all* on *each* side of the relation. The truly guiltless victim that Girard extols and Bataille laments replaces this bilateral relationship with a unidirectional one, putting all the guilt on one side and all the victimhood/holiness on the other—thereby *annulling* the genuine divinity of all concerned. What is lost here is the breadth and complexity of feeling reflected in Bogart's remark in *Casablanca*, "I understand the point of view of the hound, too." This feeling is what must be felt everywhere in the relationship, at every point of the field from victim to priest to howling mob of congregants, for the ritual to become a truly religious communion. For, in the Neo-Tiantai perspective, the "divinity" lies only in the full assumption of the ambivalence of existence and the ambiguity of identity, recognized to be absolutely ineluctable, permeating all times, places, emotions, desires, attitudes, identities, and thus embraced as one's own innermost core, which is also one's outermost rind, the innermost core and outermost rind of every other. Only when the victim feels himself also as perpetrator and the perpetrator feels himself also as victim are both transformed into the total plague which

is the total divinity and the total divinity that is the total plague. For here we have a way of transcending the impasse of the compromise between the world of inseparable water-in-water Intimacy and the stay-alive-as-separate world of Utility with which Bataille's vision of religion leaves us. True convergence of the two is found not in joining instances of each to one another, but in joining distinct existence and indistinct intimacy themselves. Here there is no distinctness that is not permeated with indistinction—not through its blurring into blankness but through its saturations with every other possible distinction. Equally, there is no indistinction that is not at the same time permeated with distinctness—not through its separation into an exclusive (n)oneness, but again through the inescapability of each and every distinction. Such is the Neo-Tiantai “opening of the provisional to reveal the real” of Bataille and Girard, intensifying the positions of both to the point of exceptionlessness, causing them to interpenetrate and resolve the impasses of both, and the impasse between these two conflicting constructions of the constitutive impasse—precisely by preserving those impasses and making them omnipresent. Each one's position, pushed to the ultimate, reveals itself to be the other's. (Note: a parallel Neo-Tiantai move is visited upon Hegel and Spinoza in online appendix A, supplement 12: Hegel or Spinoza?).

But there is a second dimension to which this method must be applied: sacrifice as not only the key to understanding group unification, but also the unification of the self, extending the scapegoat mechanism also to the intrapsychic microlevel, as sketched above. This too is simply the Neo-Tiantai move of extending the field of operation of the problematic structure, making it exceptionless and thereby reversing it. All exclusive unity is scapegoating, and all of it is bogus. Its name in the case of the bogus unity of the individual self is “agency.” It has the same real efficacy in this case as it does in the case of the murderous mob at the macrolevel of society, and with the same costs. The problem really *is* solved by murdering the innocent victim! But not because he was really the problem: the problem was the murderous rivalry and conflict and disunity of the crowd, the victim was a random stooge serving as a much-needed shared enemy. Similarly, my discontent really *is* resolved when I go out and take action, controlling or modifying or acquiring or destroying some object or situation in the world! But not because that thing or situation was really in need of fixing, or the cause of my discontent; it was just a much-

needed *something to do* to get my internally conflictive drives to stop tearing into each other. But here too we must extend the mimetic principle to apply at all levels. Let us consider every single moment of sentient experience as a “sentient being” in its own right. Indeed, this is just what is done in Tiantai (and later, in the words attributed to Huineng in the *Platform Sutra*). As Zhiyi himself puts it, “‘Sentient beings’ refers to the mental events of greed, anger and delusion, each of which clings to the notion of self. Whatever so posits a self is what is meant by ‘a sentient being.’ When mental states that chase after the notion of self arise, giving rise to the three poisons [of greed, anger and delusion], these are what are called ‘sentient beings.’”

(*Mohezhi guan*, T45.85a).⁵ So let us follow this lead and try to think through how mimesis and scapegoating might work among the community of *these* “sentient beings.” On this picture, every single moment of experience is intrinsically unstable, impermanent, dependent on conditions that lie beyond its control. Each one finds itself dying away as soon as it is born, with no way to sustain itself. It must look outward for support. Further, it must look outward for recognition. Since each is a flash of an instant of experience, it has no power to turn around and look at itself, find out about itself, adjudicate its identity. It must look outward, to another moment of thought to look back on itself. Indeed, each arises precisely as a process of taking up this quest from the failed search of the previous moment. The content of its desire can only come from the past, which now appears to it as something recognized, something solid and determinate, an identity that, as past, has a definite nature. These are the first objects of its mimesis, as it finds itself arising as a gust of radical uncertainty. *Each* of these moments considered separately, has Girard’s “desire for being”: each one is seeking “selfhood,” trying to persist through time for more than the flash of an instant, to find a solid foundation, to control its environment, to gain recognition from other “sentient beings,” to have its value affirmed, to satisfying its hungers. The very presence of experience requires desire: it comes to be as a raging flame of conatus. It doesn’t know what it is wanting, but it seeks some clue from what was wanted by the previous moment, which in become past has become a monument with an identity that can only be recognized now, viewed by a present moment that stands outside of that previous moment as its successor. The present moment views the past moment as a compass that

⁵ 言眾生者。貪恚癡心皆計有我我即眾生。我逐心起。心起三毒即名眾生。

can serve as a basis for its desire. Its existential position as radically impermanent entails that it must desire being, and it gets the content of that desire from the now recognizable contents of previous moments of desire, which, precisely because they are now seen from outside as fully finished events, seem to have acquired the solid being the present moment of process lacks. This desire also entails anger and hate at what is not desired, and delusion about how to satisfy either that greed or that aversion, about its own status. For as a momentary event, it is never in the position to attain any satisfaction through any action. Whatever action it may take, the results will take at least a moment to arrive, and by that time, this instant of experience will be gone; it cannot be there to enjoy whatever enjoyments it endeavors to secure for itself. Its status as a moment of experience precludes it ever attaining anything that requires a process, requires waiting. But its very impermanence, its insubstantiality, its panicking desire to establish itself, is precisely what motivates its connection with previous and subsequent moments, the endeavor for continuity across time. Its attempted alliance with the desideratum posited just as arbitrarily and desperately by a past moment, finding some clue there for what might be worth desiring, i.e., what might have a chance of succeeding in this (futile) endeavor, sets the agenda for its projection toward a future moment of fulfilment. That imagined future moment provides a model by which it currently structures its own activity and direction. Here we find *mimesis between moments* as the very glue that structures the continuity of experienced time.

But these “sentient beings” (momentary mental events) are of course exposed not only to other internal mental states, past and prospective, but also to the external things that are the objects of their attention: situations, events, objects in the perceived world, as well as other bodies and their presumed mental states. There too, mimesis is unavoidable. What anyone or anything wants also becomes an attractive candidate for prospective being, since all these objects, qua objects, seem to be firmly established in being what they are and wanting what they want. These moments of experience are in the midst of a swarm of disparate “sentient beings,” exposed to the winds of a million different directions of desire, and unable to completely exclude the lure of any of them from imprinting itself on their hungry empty core. This produces an intolerable tension and inner conflict. Negations and exclusions are needed; the next moment must throw in its lot with some recognized prior stream of internal desiring moments, or let itself

be swayed by external exemplars and change track. Whichever it chooses will gain momentum, as the escalating murderous rivalries do at the macro-level in Girard's scenario. This will compound the conflict, as each moment of thought learns to negate others, imitating the way it or its avatars are negated, to kill as it sees previous exemplars killed, taking on the killers also as exemplars.

Though we have been speaking as if the mental life of a person is a single stream of mental events, in fact we have a coexistent community of disparate trends and cliques working together in groups, forming factions, taking different desires as their guiding flag; this messy and unstable political structure of drives that make up the global terrain of the mind is what has been called "the unconscious." As in Girard's macro-level communities, the solution to this murderous competition and conflict among these groups must be found in some kind of unification of desire, and the very problem that caused it is also what can provide this solution: mimesis. Here is where the scapegoating kicks in: if only all the thoughts can find some particular object or state of affairs to negate, change, control, destroy, all acting in tandem, the tension of the continual internal warfare will be relieved. As noted above, this is just what we call "taking action," or "a deed," or "agency." In this book, we have used the blanket Chinese term *youwei* for this relationship with the world. *Youwei* is scapegoating. And it does seem to solve the problem; this noxious object being fallen upon by the entire community of thoughts and desires within the person, the inner conflict lifts and it feels that this is due to having identified and eliminated the problem that caused this state of turmoil. But as in the macro-level case, this is completely an illusion. The real cause was simply the existential condition of radically impermanent moments of experience craving being and emulating models of putative being.

Shall we then eliminate this scapegoating mechanism, do away with agency, as Girard seems to recommend? Can this be done by simply recognizing that the scapegoat—the object to be altered in deliberate activity—is really "an innocent victim," not the real cause of the problem? This aligns with what Tiantai Buddhists would critique as a "śrāvaka" or "Hināyāna" approach to the problem: Nirvana as the end of karma, of deeds, of desire. Tiantai, on the other hand, sees no possible end to action and desire, and does not think that seeing the mechanism by

which desire works makes it actually cease, as the “śrāvaka” Nirvana-Buddhist do. But like Bataille, they do think there is immense value in seeing this structure for what it is; just as Bataille calls not for the end of the various forms of religious sacrifice (which covers almost all culture) but rather for an enthusiastic embrace of it *combined with the new knowledge of its true nature*, Tiantai will call for the combination of consciousness of the mechanism of desire--where no desired object or outcome really does any good, and yet each one *must* feel like it is doing immense good—with the continued commission of all kinds of acts.

For following the rubric of the Ten Realms in Tiantai, we find that there are three further approaches that build upon, expand and (thereby) reverse the śrāvaka attitude of simply ending desire, suffering, karma, action, guilt, punishment: the realms of pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas. The first means the clear consciousness of the causal process itself: the understanding of how the mechanism of impermanence, desire for being, misattribution of causal efficacy to end suffering to willful karmic deeds. This is the clear consciousness of the futility of these deeds of mimesis and scapegoating (i.e., all volitional action), and yet also its mechanism of inevitable repetition and the reasons it will always temporarily appear to actually succeed. The fact that the object of volitional action is not the real problem, but that acting upon always does seem to solve the problem of non-self suffering temporarily (by unifying the conflictual intrapsychic society against a common enemy) is now present in clear consciousness.

This leads to the next dimension: bodhisattvahood. For what is most glaringly ignored in Girard’s account is the point that is so crucial to Spinoza’s account of imitation of affects: the role of mimesis of love and pleasure tipping the balance toward benevolence. For Spinoza, even to perceive the emotion of another as such is to be affected by that emotion ourselves, to the degree that we imagine the other similar to ourselves: both the other’s emotion and are own are the ideas of modifications of the body, and our perception of any external thing is also the idea of such a modification; hence our perception of an emotion in another is the actual feeling of that emotion. Generally, this is massively overridden by other emotional investments, for example, a prior associative love or hate of that other. But all other things being equal, we will thus feel the other’s pleasure as pleasure, and the other’s pain as pain. This is the mechanism that can tip the emotional balance toward compassion, love and benevolence. The bodhisattva, open to this

mimesis on all sides, feels empathy with every single sentient being, with each of their diverse desires and pleasures and sufferings, and seamlessly emulates each one, appearing in every possible form. Mimesis gone wild, promiscuously feeling its way into the subjective plight of every being no matter how perverse and idiosyncratic, blossoms into unrestricted fellow-feeling, such that the pleasures and pains of each being are now felt as one's own pleasures and pains, but also their delusional scapegoating victimizing innocent others and their innocent victimhood at the hands of the blind scapegoating committed by others. This goes hand in hand with the motivation to alleviate all sufferings, just as one is always already endeavoring to alleviate one's own. And this mimetic mania further blossoms into the signature bodhisattva activity of assuming the forms of every possible sentient being, in response to the needs of every possible sentient being. The bodhisattva is a shape-shifting actor assuming every necessary role to alleviate suffering, as a straightforward extension of the prior process of changing constantly (mimetically) to alleviate one's own suffering at the intrapsychic microlevel. The difference is that initially one did this restrictedly, but now unrestrictedly. Unrestricted mimesis of the suffering *and* enjoyment of every being, predator and prey alike, deluded scapegoater and innocent victim alike, is the formula that turns mimetic rivalry and violence into mimetic love and compassion.

What happens here is not the reduction of mimesis and agency and scapegoating, but their expansion to exceptionlessness. Just as the Tiantai bodhisattva takes up all the desires and all the karma and action of every kind of sentient being into himself, making them his own and finding their unity not in stripping them down to none (as is done by the śrāvaka) or to a particular object or direction of desire (as is done in ordinary deluded willful sentient life) but in the intersubsumption of all desires, we will now see scapegoating going on everywhere, in every apprehension of an object, in every deed, in every desire—but we will also see each of these desires as thoroughly permeated with mimesis of every other desire, indeed as constructed of the multifarious desires that are constantly assaulting them from all sides, including the negations and rivalries that grow from this mimesis of desire. Our range of “action” now expands without limit, even though—or because—we know that all action is entirely futile, for we also know that every action brings with it the necessary illusion of success—not because the sought-for change

needed to be changed, but because the falsely imagined deed itself unified all available contents under some completely arbitrary banner of unity: the present moment. It is here that the object allegedly changed in this initially limited way, as a willed solution to a specific problem, also transforms completely precisely by becoming all the more what it always already was, not merely in the change that the willed act applied to it (negating it), but in its deification: it is glorified, just as the sacrificial victim becomes a god after being put to death. This is the next phase: Buddhahood. A buddha builds on the śrāvaka (ending desire, karma and suffering), the pratyekabuddha (understanding them), the bodhisattva (loving and emulating them)—extending each one to the point of its exceptionlessness and thus negation—with the result that each sentient being is seen to be doing all of these things as well: a buddha is one who makes buddhas of all sentient beings (as in the *Lotus Sutra*: see online appendix B). The mimesis of the bodhisattva is still limited in that he is regarded as definitely the one doing the emulating and loving, while the other sentient beings are definitely the ones being emulated and loved. But now, just as the sacrificed innocent victim becomes a god, the mimesis extends even to the point where these two sides emulate one another, still driven by their insatiable desire for being, their permeability to every external model. At our micro-level of analysis, this means every single object (every single innocent victim of our deluded scapegoating volition) becomes not only the holy being that ends suffering, but also becomes the comprehender of the falsehood of this attribution of efficacy to dispel the plague to the victim, and also becomes the further unrestricted mimesis that continues this action in all directions after this modified understanding, which transforms it into compassionate activity. All sufferings, all the desires for being rooted in these sufferings, all objects delusively acted upon and all delusory (scapegoating, karmic, victimizing, intentional) deeds acting upon things are, mimetically, engaged in Buddhahood. For all objects become the center of the universe, the unifier of all others, the meeting place for every form of desire and action, once this altered view of action is applied to inevitably continuing action. Instead of fetishizing one of them as the negated and thus glorified plague/god, we do so to all objects without exception. And so we find 1) mimesis, 2) rivalry, 3) scapegoating, 4) sacrifice and 5) deification going on everywhere, at every locus, in every direction. Every entity, every single moment of experience, is now simultaneously a tortured being in hell, a hungry ghost

futilely seeking its desideratum, a floundering blind animal, an angry rivalrous titan, a responsible team member, a temporary victor, a renunciant of all action, a contemplator of all action, an embracer of all action, and intersubsumptive identity with and deifier of all action (these are the so-called “Ten Realms”: hell, hungry ghost, animal, titan, human, god, sravaka, pratyekabuddha, bodhisattva, buddha). The entire Tiantai program is fulfilled simply by letting each of these mechanisms play out unrestrictedly. The same could be said for any mechanism (i.e., any upāya): given full play, it reveals itself to be *more* of itself than it was when restricted and not given full play, but precisely as such to have always been Buddhahood.