Two Footnotes: On the Double Necessity of Girard and Gans

Thomas F. Bertonneau

Department of English
Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant MI 48859
3e4kkhr@cmuvm.csv.cmich.edu

> The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying, "this is mine" and found a people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders; how much misery and horror the human race would have been spared if someone had pulled up the stakes and cried out to his fellow men: "Beware of listening to this impostor. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to everyone and the earth itself belongs to no one." –Rousseau, *On the Origin of Inequality*, Part II

> Hence the rigid Socinians take our four gospels to be clandestine works, fabricated about a century after Jesus Christ, and carefully hidden from the gentiles for another century: works, they say, crudely written by coarse men, who for long addressed themselves only to the common people. […] This sect, though fairly widespread, is today as obscure as were the first gospels. It is more difficult to convert them in that they believe only in their reason. The other Christians fight them only with the sacred voice of the scriptures: so it is impossible for the two parties, being always enemies, ever to be reconciled. –Voltaire, "Gospel," *Philosophical Dictionary*

I

This essay arises from the call for a discussion of Girard vis-a-vis Generative Anthropology, from the chance encounter with Girard's name in some random reading, and from some comments about Girard recently registered in the electronic forum of the *Anthropoetics* circle.

Let me say right away that I cannot conceive of a useful Generative Anthropology that is not conjoined with Girard's discovery of the scapegoat mechanism, nor can I conceive of the scapegoat mechanism arising except out of the prior existence of Gans' abortive gesture of appropriation. Together, Fundamental Anthropology and Generative Anthropology tell the story of human consciousness. That consciousness begins in the abortive gesture of appropriation and it passes through the production of the scapegoat mechanism in the sacrificial crisis. Modern consciousness contains the traces of both of these events. Both Fundamental Anthropology and Generative Anthropology are therefore necessary for a complete understanding of modern consciousness. But the intuitions of the scapegoat mechanism and of the abortive gesture of appropriation belong together in yet another way: both lay claim to a positive cognition about human nature and both therefore breast the tide of post-Enlightenment thinking.

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The *philosophes* and their intellectual progeny, as I hope that the citations from Rousseau and Voltaire adequately suggest, tend to express themselves in remarkably sacrificial language. Rousseau, to take him first, cannot account for the origin of civil society without creating a paradigmatic victimary scenario: the malefactor duped his contemporaries, Rousseau claims, who failed to understand that he was making victims of them; meanwhile, Rousseau is making a victim of the malefactor and is urging what amounts to a retroactive immolation. He got it. It was called the French Revolution and it included Robespierre's Terror. Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764) strikes me as an excuse to attack Christianity with witty but pointless satire. The other subjects serve the function of making it appear as though Christianity is not the only subject. Thus Voltaire, like Rousseau, finds it difficult to philosophize without victims. *Polemos* cunningly displaces *Logos*. No one, I think, who has read *The Scapegoat* (1981) with an open mind, can read the *Dictionary* without feeling a bit embarrassed by Voltaire's certainty that the Gospels are merely another form of superstition. Reason and superstition can never be reconciled, says Voltaire. But "reconciliation" remains an ironic lexeme in Voltaire's account of the Evangelists; not, however, in the way that Voltaire himself intended. One might ask, is Voltaire's cult of an unassailable reason itself reasonable? Or is it simply dogmatic anti-dogma with little real philosophical content? I suspect that Voltaire has been drawn into a stichomythia with the institution of religion in which, absorbed by the confrontation, he has forgotten to philosophize.

On the other hand, Voltaire's usage of the label "Socinian," insofar as it means people who are all at once gnostics and skeptics, covers the contemporary academic mindset rather well, and thus has a value for other discourses than his own. Rousseau is a "Socinian" in Voltaire's sense and so is Voltaire himself. I might

say then that the Enlightenment “Socinians” got what they wanted, the Revolution and the Terror.

Two other thinkers central to the Enlightenment also begin with what amounts to a sacrificial gesture, although they seem not to rely on it quite so much as Rousseau or Voltaire. I am thinking of René Descartes’ evil spirit, who performs the same function in Cartesian epistemology as the malefactor does in Rousseauvian sociology. The Cartesian Ego finds certainty and stability by locking horns with the evil spirit and expelling it. I am also thinking of Immanuel Kant’s Transcendental Ego, “Das Ich-Denke,” from which every genuinely *human* characteristic has been carefully expelled, making of the Kantian critique a bizarre attempt to solve the problem of human specificity by the reduction of the human to the non-human, to a thing without appetite, without desire. Rousseau’s naive spectators likewise seem bereft of appetite and desire and in this sense resemble the sessile-vegetable “Ich-Denke” of Kant, since they never imitate but simply submit to the consummated gesture of appropriation. Rousseau wants his readers to imitate him in liquidating the malefactor, a program which implies that he thinks of his readers the same way he thinks of the spectators in his primordial tableau, namely, as lacking appetite or desire until he himself endows them with these. (Rousseau thus sees himself as uniquely human.)

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Descartes, on the other hand, confirmed Scripture as a value, practiced thinking as a kind of desire, and invited others to verify his conclusions by applying his method. There is something chatty, gossipy, and positively human about Descartes’ books, so that the philosophy, however abstract it becomes, always remains in continuity with ordinary life. Descartes’ books exhibit passion (does this seem a strange thing to say?) and show a pronounced reluctance to jettison tradition without first examining it. Stephen Toulmin says, in his *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*(1990) that Descartes had been deeply shocked, while still a student, by the assassination of Henry IV in 1610. The assassination, coming in the context of the fierce religious wars of seventeenth century Europe, motivated the philosopher to seek non-dogmatic foundations for knowledge. We can understand Descartes as seeking a type of certitude that would not issue in the politics of murder. Voltaire, in this context, resembles Descartes without any residual respect for religion and with the thirst for certitude converted into a manic penchant to negate.

All of which tempts me to quote Blake, and so I shall:

> Mock on, Mock on Voltaire, Rousseau:
> Mock on, Mock on, ’tis all in vain!

You throw the sand against the wind,
And the wind blows it back again.

The contemporary scene, against the nescient dogmatism of which Girard and Gans stand conjoined, accommodates so many Voltaires and Rousseaus that hardly any room remains for anyone else. Postmodernism, as the academic avant-garde currently names itself, far from being the cutting edge of anything, only amounts, as I see it, to so much Voltaire and Rousseau redux. Let me offer a case in point, that of William Irwin Thompson, whose *At the Edge of History* (1972) and *Passages about Earth* (1973) were among the earliest accounts, by an American writer, of what would soon take the name of postmodernism. My discussion of Thompson will lead to my discussion of Girard. Ihab Hassan and various North American clones of Jean-François Lyotard have gotten the credit for inaugurating the discourse of postmodernism in the United States, but Thompson came first and deserves the honor. Indeed, Thompson's themes have long since become clichés, if, that is, they were not already clichés – of neo-Marxism and Theosophy – when he first deployed them; thus even when they achieve the perception and eloquent expression of a Thompson, the postmodernists strike me as a bit seedy and outworn. For Thompson, in any case, Tradition is breaking up; knowledge is not what it used to be back when Newton monopolized the description of the universe. Authentic wisdom is no longer to be sought in the West, which long ago forfeited its legitimacy; it is to be sought in the East, and particularly in the East, whether of the mind or of the world, as communicated to us by R. D. Laing and Joseph Campbell. Ignoring the fact that, at the end of her quest Thomas Pynchon's protagonist Oedipa Maas finds a paradigmatic sacrificial scene, Thompson recommends *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) as a just representation of the post-historical predicament in which, as in Heisenberg, the obtrusion of the self alters everything and, as in Heraclitus, no river is ever for two moments the same. *Ipso eo*, everything today constitutes a crisis to which no real solution exists; the only certitude is that there is no certitude, and nothing remains stable except the appropriation of the earth by the industrialist scions of the malefactor. More recently, looking for a means of resolving the crisis, Thompson (who thus resembles half of the faculty in any English department) has embraced the Gaia hypothesis and has flirted with a burgeoning goddess worship.

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In *Imaginary Landscape: Making Worlds of Myth and Science* (1989), as he did in *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light* (1981), Thompson once again discovers a great store of Theosophical wisdom in myths and fairy tales. Such narratives give us a history of consciousness in which the present, by reimmersing itself in the ritual forms of the past, redeems itself from an epoch of violence and repression, redeems itself from alienation. The widespread popular interest in myth,

exemplified by Joseph Campbell's success on PBS in the 1980s, indicates a massive dissatisfaction with existing explanations of life and the world. That many people today are turning to ancient sacred narrative to find their way out of the labyrinthine impasse of civilization constitutes, from Thompson's viewpoint, an entirely healthy sign. Why then, given the market-success of its topoi, does the New Age Neo-Marxist utopia not appear? It does not appear because vested interests (Rousseau's malefactor again) want the wisdom of ancient sacred culture to remain inaccessible to the contemporary consciousness; worse yet, these repressive voices want modern people to think that the origin, which Thompson would recover, was not idyllic, as Rousseau said that it was before evil appeared, but replete with its own special violence. "And so," Thompson writes, "literary anthropologists like Robert Ardrey or René Girard like to see the act of killing as the essential culture-creating act" (145). These apologists for the old regime *like* to see things this way.

The linkage of murder and culture strikes Thompson not only as erroneous, but as downright conspiratorial and evil. Any anthropology that challenges the orthodox "emergence" theory of culture, to which Thompson in his own theosophical way subscribes, strongly scandalizes him. The idea that culture begins with murder thus constitutes, from this perspective, the illegitimate projection of twentieth century violence, by apologists of a corrupt regime, backward into a past that, somehow, escaped violence.

At last, then, a solution to the contemporary crisis of an inherently violent order does suggest itself, namely, a revisitation of originary pacificity. And the way forward turns out to be the way backward. Thompson's argument goes something like this: While innovation is unavoidable, it fosters crisis. Industrialism and now cybernetics acquire a momentum of their own and deliver a modicum of good to the societies in which they occur, but they also circumscribe life in drastic ways which, however, remain unknown to those who are dazzled and lulled by novelty and material abundance. Industrialism and cybernetics thus make people unhappy but leave them in ignorance about the source of their unhappiness. Crisis thus provokes consciousness by making people dimly aware of their secret unhappiness, but also deforms it, restricting it in a concentrated dogmatic vision which fails to grasp the linkage between material satisfaction and spiritual depletion. Of course, this is simply Marx's idea of false consciousness given a New Age twist. Humanity has, in effect, yielded itself, its autonomy and its creativity, to its machines. What will ultimately bring the machines back under the control of their creators, Thompson argues, is a revival of the primitive mentality that predates mechanistic and cybernetic civilization. Indeed, the *real* future entails a deemphasis of the technical and a revival of the spiritual. We must stop thinking in Newtonian, linear terms, such as those which still dominate modern thought even in cybernetics, the most advanced science of our age: We must "back into […] innovation," Thompson says,

and we will do this by “work[ing] to reachieve consciousness in the context of unconsciousness by going into trance” (146).

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The artist especially is an adept of trance-like states of consciousness, and in his role as shaman, the artist has really only one message for the present: *“We slay with technology and save the victim with art”* (146). And myth is art *par excellence*. Thompson places his faith in Campbell at his most theosophical, in Carlos Castaneda and the Yaqui way of knowledge, in the Doris Lessing of *Shikasta*, in Marija Gimbutas’ theory of a pre-Indo European matriarchy, and in the “Deep Ecology” movement. Ardrey and Girard upset the idyll by daring to put art in complicity with slaying; Girard in particular proclaims “a linguistic and technological emergence in which unconscious and instinctive killing, the chemical cannibalism of one microbe by another or the eating of one animal by another, becomes conscious and articulated in image and sound, art and ritual” (146). And this, for Thompson, my living representative of contemporary attitudes, is intolerable.

Thompson interprets Girard, on the basis of his cursory and dogmatic understanding, as an apologist for, even an advocate of, the originary murder. In a footnote, Thompson does to Girard what Rousseau does to the malefactor in *The Origin of Inequality*, Part II. In 1987, writes Thompson, he visited a conference on “Origins” at Stanford, where “Professor Girard talked about ‘the lie that is mythology'” (145). This would have been the conference that gave rise to Robert G. Hamerton-Kelley’s *Violent Origins* (1987), where Girard confronts several severe critics of scapegoat hermeneutics. Girard, Thompson claims, “is quite literal, fundamentalist, and inflated in his presentation of the self, for he sees symbolism as a code that only he has cracked. Like many literary code-crackers, Freudian or otherwise, he tends to see the same story in all stories. […] His is a very Catholic philosophy in which all pre-Christian mythologies are inadequate and murderous. It is a philosophy that describes itself, for mythology is the victim, and in killing it, he gives birth to the culture of his school” (145). Thompson adds irately that “the hidden agenda of the conference was to contribute to the apotheosis of Girard” (145). The claim of knowledge – this is the instinctive and stereotyped response of the contemporary mentality to any positive assertion not clothed in the rhetoric of one of the fashionable isms – is tantamount to a plan for self-apotheosis. All claimants to knowledge are Oedipus, and like good Thebans, contemporary orthodox Socinians are duty-bound to expel them, to take down all the parvenus. (I recall that Jonathan Culler uses similar vituperative language in his passing accounts of Girard in *On Deconstruction* [1981] and *Framing the Sign* [1987?]: for Culler, Girard is pestiferously a “priest.” But what then is Jonathan Culler?)

Girard himself, who emphasizes not his own originality but rather his immense debt to the Bible, can defend himself against such charges. “Human culture,” he writes in *The Scapegoat*, “is predisposed to the permanent concealment of its origins in collective violence. Such a definition of culture enables us to understand the successive stages of an entire culture as well as the transition from one stage to the next by means of a crisis similar to those we have traced in myths and to those we have traced in history during periods of frequent persecutions” (100). Girard notes that knowledge of scapegoating itself becomes the target of expulsion during periods of crisis, such as the one that Thompson and other articulators of the postmodern sensibility claim prevails today. The present, for Thompson, is a reenactment of the mythic battle between Tiamat and Marduk, with Gaia-worshippers and Campbellian revealers of ancient wisdom filling the role of Tiamat and all of the usual suspects – patriarchy and the military industrial complex – filling the role of Marduk. Only this time, the outcome will be reversed, Tiamat-Gaia will win, and the whole vile world of the Marduk-oppressors, as it now appears, will abruptly vanish. Vilifying Girard is one of Thompson’s rhetorical contributions to the victory.

6

I find this a pity for a personal reason. Despite my criticisms of him, which are real enough, I have nevertheless been an admirer of Thompson since I read *At the Edge of History* shortly after it appeared. I read him long before I ever read Girard or Gans or had even heard of them. Indeed, I still recommend him as the best of the theoreticians of postmodernism, more informed about history and anthropology than any other. My purpose has not been to cut down Thompson, although I fear I have done so, but only to show that the most respectable of avant-garde thinkers, and one who consistently deplores violence, can still succumb to the ancient pattern of the stichomythia, and that the chosen partner in that polemic is, strange to say, the author of *Violence and the Sacred*, *The Scapegoat*, and so forth. I find that Thompson’s thinking, like Rousseau’s and Voltaire’s, requires a victim.

I came across Girard’s name in another venue, but coincidentally once again in a footnote, at about the same time that I encountered it in Thompson. We all know Milan Kundera as the author of *The Joke* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. I note that *The Joke* especially has the form of a persecution narrative; or rather, it is a Passion-narrative that reveals how persecution operates, how a joke can become, in the eyes of the persecutors, a criminal offense. But in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, virtue also becomes outcast, and the protagonist, the doctor, again reenacts the Passion. Kundera’s “Essay in Nine Parts” called *Testaments Betrayed* appeared in English earlier this year (1995) and consists of a sequence of critical meditations on modern literature and music. Franz Kafka, Igor Stravinsky, and Leos

Janacek figure prominently in these meditations, and Kundera focuses on the ways in which these three arch-modernists have been misunderstood and frequently slandered by contemporary exegetes. In a manner of speaking, Kundera even links artistic insight to persecution and shows how this is especially the case in the twentieth century.

Let us take Kafka first. Beginning with Max Brod, Kundera argues, Kafka's critics explicated his work by applying to it various crude allegories that had the effect of assimilating Kafka's achievement to the exegete. Brod, for example, in effect makes the entirety of Kafka a roman-à-clef in which, of course, Brod himself figures prominently. Highly formalized, almost ritualistic commentaries on Kafka ("Kafkology") led to the disappearance of Kafka as himself, as a writer whose work has a specific content which constitutes a commentary on the real world, and to his replacement by various simulacra whose purpose was to make their original understandable to an audience fully determined not to understand him. Freudians and Marxians have dominated those regions of Kafkology left open by the roman-à-clef followers of Brod. (I can remember, from graduate school, a long lecture about "The Metamorphosis" which turned – no pun intended – on the appearance of the word *Verkehr* in the denouement of the story, from which the interpreter spun out the usual theory of Kafka as the recorder of "our" sexual repression. I wonder, what do readers of *Anthropoetics* make, casually, of Gregor Samsa surrounded by his irate and hostile family? What do they make of the apple-missile hurled at Gregor by his sister?)

7

All of the misunderstanding of Kafka – the sacrifice of Kafka to "Kafka" -has a bearing on the shape of history over the last, let us say, three or four hundred years. In order to understand how Kundera's argument comes around finally to a meeting-of-minds with scapegoat hermeneutics it will be necessary to summarize this history. According to Kundera, the modern period has two halves, the first going back to the early eighteenth century, the second having its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. The aesthetic of the modern period also has two halves and the first half was eclipsed by the second half.

But commencing with Marcel Proust, certain dissentient writers of the second half rediscovered the first half, thereby inaugurating a third phase, or an ironic epilogue to the second of the two halves. "The great novelists of the post-Proust period […] were highly sensitive to the nearly forgotten aesthetic of the novel previous to the nineteenth century: they incorporated essayistic reflection into the art of the novel; made composition freer; reclaimed the right to digression; breathed the spirit of the nonserious and of play into the novel; repudiated the dogmas of psychological

realism in creating characters without trying to compete (like Balzac) with *l'état civil*–with the state registry of citizens; and above all: they refused any obligation to give the reader the illusion of reality" (75). The dissentient moderns, the post-Proustians, Kundera is saying, characteristically dispensed with illusions and sought a bedrock of human truths by reviving old techniques which seemed to them freer than the accepted modern techniques. These writers were programmatically opposed to dissimulation and they disobeyed the ritual formulas for novel-writing, which they consciously deritualized.

Kundera identifies the penchant for illusioneering with Romanticism. In addition, he sees the social realism of Balzac and the naturalism of Zola as direct outgrowths of Romanticism. This is highly arguable, of course, but it is subservient to what, as it appears to me, is Kundera's real point: that an aesthetic orthodoxy appeared which sought to preserve itself and to repress praxeological divergence.

Dissentient twentieth century composers also rediscovered the aesthetic past, Kundera goes on to say. Contemporary critics consistently misunderstood and frequently attacked these composers, often under the rubric of their supposed formalism. The charge of formalism is paradoxical, of course, since in practice it always refers to the violation of a certain form considered by its partisans to be *de rigueur*. As examples of how the violation of form can provoke ire out of all proportion, Kundera gives the cases of Stravinsky and Janacek. At one point, Kundera summarizes a lengthy diatribe by Theodor Adorno against the musical malefactor Stravinsky. Stravinsky's music was full of violence, Adorno argued; it violated the older music that it appropriated, in scores like *Pulcinella* and *The Fairy's Kiss*, for no other reason than to abuse it. Inhuman would be the term for describing Stravinsky's compositions, inhuman and inexcusably recalcitrant in declaring its sins, in Adorno's vehement opinion. Kundera writes that "Adorno depicts the situation in music as if it were a political battlefield: Schoenberg the positive hero, the representative of progress […] and Stravinsky the negative hero, the representative of restoration" (65). Kundera records that "the Stravinskian refusal to see subjective confession as music's raison d'être becomes one target of Adorno's critique. […] Stravinsky's desire to objectivize music is a kind of tacit accord with the capitalist society that crushes human subjectivity" (65). Later Kundera gives a direct quotation from Adorno: Stravinsky's works *"in their own way trained men to something that was soon methodically inflicted on them at the political level"* (79). In other words, Stravinsky's music led to fascism, for which the dissonant harmonization of Pergolesi's tunes can therefore be blamed. Worse than this, Stravinsky never poured forth the contrition which every bourgeois owes to the representatives of the progressive cause. The Petersburg aristocrat will not comply with the wishes of his detractors; he will not admit the existence of just criticism. Adorno's ponderous musicology turns out to be the Oedipus myth, with Stravinsky

as the cause of the plague.

8

Janacek also suffered misunderstanding and vilification. Like Stravinsky, in Kundera's reading, Janacek undertook a critique of Romanticism as the cult of false expression, of sentimentality. But Janacek "did not reproach the Romantics for having talked about feelings; he reproached them for having falsified them" (184). One of the supreme of achievements of Janacek, in works like *Katya Kabanova* (1921) or *The Makropoulos Affair* (1925), is that he shows the *confusion of emotions* that *in life* accompanies tragic events; Janacek is, in other words, an accurate recorder of the dissolution of structure that accompanies a crisis. His operas have a kind of anthropological precision. It is here that Kundera appends a footnote: "At last," he writes, "an occasion to cite René Girard; his *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* is the best book I have ever read on the art of the novel" (184). I am exaggerating the case, of course, but I do find the occurrence of this footnote extraordinary and I am sorely, very sorely, tempted to argue that this fleeting reference to Girard provides the fulcrum of Kundera's delightfully meandering argument. That would dangerously resemble a deconstruction of Kundera performed by some graduate student from, say, Irvine, but here is my case anyway. The twentieth century has been the century of rigid orthodoxy in all spheres of life, from the political to the aesthetic, and this orthodoxy maintained itself, not only in the totalitarian states but elsewhere too, by various strategic redeployments of the scapegoat mechanism. Hence the spectacle of Adorno lashing out against Stravinsky, a tableau recreated with bloody consequences by the Zhdanovite persecutions of the late 1940s. (Thus while Stravinsky's neo-classicism can hardly be said to have "led to fascism," Adorno's pseudo-moralistic criticism does have a undeniable affiliation to the "anti-formalist" pogroms of Soviet cultural policy.)

Although he uses little or no Girardian terminology, Kundera's thinking is nevertheless quite close to Girard's. Kundera even makes use of his own version of scapegoat hermeneutics. Kundera's name for the twentieth century scapegoat mechanism is "the tribunal," a term he takes from Kafka's *The Trial*. "Tribunal: this does not signify the juridical institution for punishing people who have violated the laws of the state; the tribunal (or court) in Kafka's sense is a power that judges, that judges because it is a power; its power and nothing but its power is what confers legitimacy on the tribunal. […] The trial brought by the tribunal is always *absolute*; meaning that it does not concern an isolated act, a specific crime (theft, fraud, rape), but rather concerns the character of the accused in its entirety" (227). One might easily apply this analysis to Thompson's footnote about Girard: Thompson will not be satisfied to say that he finds the scapegoat hermeneutic unconvincing for this or that epistemological or sociological reason; he bypasses any particular

criticism of the approach and launches, instead, into a condemnation of the interpreter. Girard, with whose character “in its entirety” Thompson appears to be concerned, is guilty of attempted self-apotheosis and of trying “to make up for the injustice of the fact that Derrida has wrongly taken the fame that Girard feels properly belongs to him” (Thompson 146). Perhaps Thompson, who at least recognizes that resentment can motivate behavior, is scandalized by Girard for the very same reason that Janacek’s contemporaries once let themselves be scandalized by him. According to Kundera: “From the early years of this century, official Czech musicology disdained [Janacek]. Knowing no other musical gods but Smetana, nor other laws than the Smetanesque, the national ideologues were irritated by his otherness. The pope of Prague musicology, Professor Nejedly, who late in his life, in 1948, became minister and omnipotent ruler of culture in Stalinized Czechoslovakia, took with him into his bellicose senility only two great passions: Smetana worship and Janacek vilification” (195). Girard, like Janacek, is certainly guilty of otherness. I would like to say of Girard what Bill Moyers once said of Thompson during a television interview some twenty years ago, that he is a silver-throated lark among the keening pterodactyls.

9

Once again, Fundamental Anthropology – that is to say, scapegoat hermeneutics – explains all of this, Thompson’s blindness and Kundera’s insight, the need of Stalinist regimes and campus administrators for emissary victims, even for absurd ones like the music of Janacek. The point that I wish to make before addressing the question of Generative Anthropology is that Fundamental Anthropology *alone* is sufficient for charting the ethical tumult of the twentieth century, just as, *alone*, it can account for the current (recurrent?) scapegoat regime on campus. The fact is that we do not witness any instances of a collapse from civil society into pacific contemplation of non-human appetitive objects, as must have occurred on the originary scene (if only!); what we witness repeatedly – every day – in our beleaguered century and on our besieged campuses are recrudescences of persecution. (Is there any campus today that does not have its Zhdanov?) Nor am I convinced, despite Richard van Oort’s persuasive analysis, that Girard’s victimary scene denies humanity to the founders of culture and is therefore an inadequate account of the beginning of human self-consciousness. The victimary scene does produce, by the same mental bootstrapping as the originary scene, the figure-against-ground of a primordial sign. Taking the position of an open-minded outsider coming to Girard and Gans for the first time, I could understand a preference for Girard as offering the most immediately appealing explanation of the genesis and character of culture. (Richard himself once said as much to me in one of his valuable and erudite letters.) Gans undoubtedly has his own, peculiarly Gansian, reading of Rousseau and Voltaire, but I think that the Girardian reading (which any

of us can imagine, whether Girard actually has one or not) is stronger and prior. The Gansian reading, of course, is “weaker” than the Girardian *precisely in the scientific sense implied by the comparative*.

That is why I write, in my title, of the *double necessity* of Girard and Gans. We no more have to chose – to decide – between Girard and Gans than we have to chose – to decide – between the Old and New Testaments. We need them both. Let me therefore speak of Gans.

II

By way of offering a moral example, let me note that Girard writes positively of Gans in *Job* (1987), a text written sufficiently long after Gans’ work began to appear for any resentment to have surfaced. None is evident. Assessing the dialogues of Job and his neighbors, Girard says that, in them, “mimetic desire is revealed in a great metaphor that expresses equally both the diachronic complexity of the relationships created and their synchronic uniformity and essential impoverishment. A more simple and luminous equivalent of what Eric Gans would call the ‘paradox’ of these relationships cannot be imagined” (60). A cynic would say that while Job is a late work by Girard, *Pour une esthétique paradoxale* (1978) is an early work by Gans, and indeed a very Girardian work. There are, naturally, more references to Girard in Gans than the other way around, but this in itself is significant. Even when he diverged from Girard by stipulating the priority of the originary scene to the sacrificial crisis, Gans remained indebted, if not dependent, on the vision of his teacher. As a student of Gans, I wish to say that there is no shame in being indebted to one’s teacher. Rather than stressing what Girard and Gans keep peculiarly to themselves, I would like, then, in the following paragraphs, to emphasize what they hold in common. I will subsequently try to say what is uniquely valuable in Generative Anthropology as compared to Fundamental Anthropology.

10

Girard and Gans approach closest to one another in *The Scapegoat* and *Science & Faith* (1990). Girard’s book could, with equal justice, bear the subtitle of Gans’ book, “The Anthropology of Revelation.” Both delve into the cognitive content of Revelation and amount to rational defenses of what the modern temperament dogmatically declares – as it has since Voltaire – to be irrational. Both books engage in a deliberate critique of postmodern Socinianism, where that creed takes the specific form of a denial of mimesis.

I would like to dwell on that last point for a moment. If Girard is a scandal to the contemporary mentality, Gans is no less so. I have found no immolatory footnotes

centered on the name of Gans, but I have been witness to the outrage that his – completely genteel, warmly affable, and deliberately unstrident – presentations of Generative Anthropology inspire. At the Symposium on Generative Anthropology at UCLA in 1990, most of the second day was wrecked, for the participants, by a cantankerous, literally hours-long monologue by a member of the audience who engaged in a futile stichomythia with Gans over the question of the origin of language and culture. The originary scene could not possibly be postulated as real, the fellow endlessly argued, since there was no way of confirming, in absolute and positive terms, that it took place. Gans had already carefully stipulated that the originary scene was a hypothesis for explaining how humanity achieved sufficient consciousness to imitate a gesture and thereby inaugurate language; the originary scene accounted hypothetically, he had said, for the fact that culture is diachronically continuous through conscious mimesis of a primordial event, and that, paradoxically, mimesis, of the acquisitive type, was precisely what that event had confronted and overcome. The originary scene, or its equivalent, must have happened for Gans and his opponent to be together in a cultural context engaging in what, for lack of a better term, could be called a conversation. If a better hypothesis existed, let the objector produce it. Gans' challenger did not see that his own confrontation with Gans over the object of language reproduced the very scene that he denied, thereby making it plausible. At another presentation by Gans, yet another challenger, this time a Marxist, rose to his feet immediately after Gans had concluded his lecture to accuse Gans of "Romanticism." This meant, for the challenger, that *any* argument about "origin" constituted an attempt to dominate humanity by the prescriptive fiat of defining it in terms of its generation. Romanticism equals totalitarianism. In effect, the challenger accused Gans of the same crime alleged against Stravinsky by Adorno, namely, that Generative Anthropology leads to fascism. *Ipso eo*, Gans bore his guilt before the fact and, like Rousseau's malefactor, needed to be taken down preventively. (This is exactly how Brutus justifies the assassination in *Julius Caesar*, Act II, Scene I.)

Matthew Schneider encountered the same phenomenon head-on at one of the regional MLAs when he gave a mixed Girardian and Gansian reading of Wordsworth. A liberator of the people sitting in the back of the room interrupted Matt ten seconds after he had begun to denounce Matt's claim, that there was a definable human nature, as "the ultimate violence." Occurring, as it did, in early spring, this little scene, deeply embarrassing to everyone except its perpetrator, was a veritable *Sacre du printemps*, or at least an attempt at one. I am sure that Girard could tell many similar stories. Girard and Gans incite the same ire because, broadly speaking, they reveal the same mechanism, mimesis, to a class of people, the humanities professors, who, because originality obsesses them, constantly sense the terror of imitation and therefore instantaneously imitate anyone who seems original by vehemently denying that originality. They repress the revelation of their

deepest motive. As far as the mob is concerned, Girard and Gans are indistinguishable.

11

In *The Scapegoat*, Girard makes these remarks, which seem to explain the rigid resistance to scapegoat hermeneutics: “We now know how to recognize in religious forms, ideas, and institutions in general the warped reflection of violent events that have been exceptionally ‘successful’ in their collective repercussions. We can identify the commemoration in mythology of these same violent acts that are so successful that they force their perpetrators to reenact them. This memory inevitably develops as it is transmitted from generation to generation, but instead of rediscovering the secret of its original distortion it loses it over and over again, each time burying it a little deeper” (95). The very science made possible by the Gospel’s deflation of magic shrinks down to a scientism that spurns Christianity. And yet, some consciousness of the scapegoat mechanism has emerged over the long centuries, spurred by the Gospel’s discovery of persecution in the Passion. The Holocaust, for example, has made it difficult to deny the role of victims in radical politics. Girard believes that this Revelation will continue, for “there is always an outcry […] against powerful evidence, but such quibbling is not in the least important intellectually” (95). The silence in regard to the Gulag, the dismissal of Solzhenitsyn as a religious crank, the blind eye turned toward Asian and African massacres: all of this, as Girard argues of any similar repression of the facts, is intellectually *nil*. The knowledge of these events disappears only in a restricted political context, and under a kind of bad faith, neither of which can be eternal. The knowledge circulates elsewhere so that I am able to invoke it here.

In *Science & Faith*, Gans notes that “the strength of ideas is always put to the test in […] dialogue” and he has this to say about the success of Judaism and Christianity: “The superior religion at a given point possesses a superior truth that manifests itself in practice in the form of a superior *rhetoric*. Nietzsche and his deconstructive followers are correct to assert that, within the dialectic of human relations, the rhetorical is in the final analysis insurmountable. Where they go wrong is in drawing from this truth the unwarranted conclusion that because rhetorical dialogue is not wholly determinable by logical principles it is simply undecidable” (67-68). The four-thousand year success of the Mosaic and Gospel Revelations testify to an anthropology that has been tried in the most rigorous of laboratories, humanity at large, and that has, by naked duration, demonstrated the sufficiency of its “intuition of rightness” (68). Both Girard and Gans have found a clearer, simpler, and therefore more powerful way of saying what Hegel so ponderously said in his *Phenomenology*, that self-consciousness arises from the abjection of the victim. Here again they diverge, on parallel paths, from the occluded mainstream of

twentieth century thinking, whose rhetoric, far from embracing clarification, has remained locked in a stichomythia with Hegel and has tried to wrest authority from him by exaggerating the style of obscurity to a new and unprecedented degree.

12

The first to do this, of course, was Marx, who thought that he could turn Hegel on his head by picking up where Rousseau left off in *The Origin of Inequality*, Part II. In Rousseau, the malefactor's appropriation of the earth made him uniquely and intolerably individual, putting him in competition with Rousseau and necessitating his immolation. Both Marx and Engels at various times set out programs for genocide. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter II, for example, Marx explicitly says that the bourgeois individual, whose existence represents the chief scandal for Communism, "must, indeed, be swept out of the way" (99). The infamous essay on "The Jewish Question" identifies capitalism with the Jews and again suggests liquidation as the first step toward a classless utopia purged of the idea of property. Marx says the same thing once again, in heavily jargonized language, in the unreadable *Capital*, in which every sentence functions more or less as a kind of veiled threat. Postmodern rhetoric has never ceased to repeat this thoroughly sacrificial formula (some must die for the good of all), but, following the Marx of *Capital*, has repeated it in ever more arcane and baroque ways. Girard and Gans practice by contrast a non-sacrificial discourse which understands that, once the slave has achieved independence, the master can be rehabilitated and does not have to be "swept out of the way."

Girard writes about the scapegoat mechanism and emissary victims. Gans writes, in more generalized terms, about ethical systems. Both, however, are addressing the anthropological problem of justice and what interests them equally in the Old or New Testament, for example, is the superior justice of Judaism or Christianity in relation to the pagan cults. Superior justice always stems from a clearer perception of the human reality, or from a higher degree of consciousness. Both Girard and Gans emphasize the epistemological difficulty of attaining such clear perceptions and, through them, of consolidating such a higher degree of consciousness. In both *The Scapegoat* and *Science & Faith*, the failure of the apostles fully to assimilate the meaning of the Passion becomes a central topic.

In his chapter on "Peter's Denial," Girard notes how, when Peter follows Jesus to the residence of the high priest, he relapses "into the mimetic behavior of all mankind" (148). This relapse might strike us as somewhat puzzling given that Peter has previously (Matt.16:13-18) demonstrated that he can distinguish the quality that differentiates Jesus from other sacred persons. Everyone else, in Matthew's account, believes Jesus to be the resurrection – the crudely magical metempsychotic

repetition – of some earlier prophet, but Peter alone discerns in him the theologically unique "Son of the Living God." Jesus acknowledges Peter's discernment when he says that he will found his church on "this rock," namely, on Peter himself. But, in the garden at Gethsemane, Jesus predicts that Peter will "disown" him three times before the cock crows. Now, in the priestly courtyard, the enlightened apostle is suddenly and grossly "doing what the others are doing" (148). He is warming himself by the fire in company with those who have arrested Jesus and who are abetting his interrogation, his torture, within the priestly domicile. "All Peter wants is to warm himself with the others but, deprived of his *being with* by the collapse of his universe, he cannot warm himself without wanting obscurely the being that is shining there, in this fire, and the being that is indicated silently by all the eyes staring at him, by all the hands stretched toward the fire" (149). (I will return to those "hands stretched toward the fire.") When asked pointedly whether he really belongs where he is, whether he is not in fact one of the followers of Jesus, Peter loudly denies it, and he denies it twice more. The full force of Jesus' teaching has not yet penetrated into Peter's comprehension. He has not exorcised himself of the epochal mimesis that leads to sacrifice. He has not achieved the new level of anthropological self-consciousness which Girard identifies with the Paraclete. The enactment of the Passion will be necessary to insure the thorough assimilation of Jesus revelatory message.

13

In his chapter on "The Christian Revelation," Gans too writes of Peter's incomplete assimilation of Jesus' word, but emphasizes that this incompleteness extends beyond the Passion. Citing the account of Pentecost in Acts, where Peter accuses the people of Jerusalem of direct complicity in the murder of Jesus, Gans notes that, in Peter's speech, the universality of the persecution remains unreconciled with the uniqueness of the resurrection: "In Peter's discourse, these two key elements […] remain entirely separate. It is the crowd who is accused of the murder; the revelations of the apostles as described in the scene of the Ascension at the beginning of Acts (1.6-11) contain no trace of any such accusation. Yet all four versions of the Gospel narrative emphasize Jesus' solitude in his last moments, as well as his denial by the same Peter who is now so willing to cast the blame on others" (87). In the Gansian reading, which therefore shows some slight contrast with its Girardian counterpart, the apostles never quite succeed in putting the behavioral two and two together to make the ethical four. It would require the conversion of a later persecutor, Saul/Paul, to make this crucial synthesis. We know the story: Saul, on his way to Damascus to harry Christians, sees a light and hears a voice and falls blinded by the wayside while Jesus asks, from out of the light, "Why are you persecuting me?" "The truth that Saul understands, the power of which is figured in the text by his blinding, is that it is the persecution of the person of Jesus

that guarantees his presence beyond death and thus demonstrates his divinity. Saul intuits a fundamental connection between persecution and divination" (89). Gans emphasizes that "Jesus had appeared to many others before Saul" so that "it was Saul who finally understood the point of these appearances where the others had failed to do so. […] [Saul] alone was able to understand the sense of the resurrection" (91).

Thus Gans, like Girard, understands that although Revelation occurs as an event, the universalization of that event may require decades, centuries, or even millennia. Girard formulates the insight in these words: "The Gospel text is somewhat like a password communicated by go-betweens who are not included in the secret. Those of us who receive the password are all the more grateful because the messenger's ignorance guarantees the authenticity of the message. We have the joyous certainty that nothing essential can have been falsified" (*The Scapegoat* 164). Gans employs more abstract, less ecclesiastically participatory language, whose essential meaning nevertheless remains the same: "Religious faith opposes the significance of particular events to any universal reasoning from empirical data. It links the atemporal truth of man to the temporal truth of revelation, holding structure and history together for so long as rational thought remains incapable of joining them" (*Science & Faith* 113). Faith functions impersonally as a Girardian "go-between" who carries a password without himself understanding it. If faith, like the mediated password, later on turns out to correspond with newly observed or rediscovered facts about humanity, this serves as a guarantee of faith's authenticity. If the discourse of postmodernism is governed by the technique of deferral (or by the technique of a *pretense* of deferral), then the discourse comprised by the texts of Girard and Gans could be said to be governed by the ethics of enduring patience. Despite his "atheology," Gans is a "Paracletic" thinker like Girard. Refusal to assent to the proclaimed doctrine scandalizes the followers of Rousseau and Marx. Girard and Gans, by contrast, do not quibble and furthermore pay no attention to quibbling. Quibbling might be defined as the sacrificial inflation of petty differences and thus as a form of collaboration with sacrifice. The fact that understanding is not immediate, as in Gnosis, but requires the long exercise of reason, does not generate a crisis for them and therefore does not necessitate some new victim; nor does it lead to the cultural relativism that declares understanding an impossibility because there is no truth to be understood. Both Fundamental Anthropology and Generative Anthropology understand human phenomena in the extremely long term.

14

The opposition to cultural relativism also assimilates Girard and Gans to one another. Both Fundamental Anthropology and Generative Anthropology include an

epistemology. In both cases, this epistemology defends an intelligence which is positive, as opposed to nescient, without being positivistic. In his chapter on “The Science of Myths,” in a continuation of a passage that I have already cited, Girard asserts that “as religions and cultures are formed and perpetuated, the violence [at their origin] is hidden,” and it follows from this that “the discovery of their secret would provide what must be called a *scientific* solution to man’s greatest enigma, the nature and origins of religion” (95). Knowing that the adjective will scandalize those who regard science as a form of ethnocentrism, Girard subsequently justifies his term: “Even today, many will say that only the scientific mind could have brought an end to witch-hunts. […] It is significant [however] that the first scientific revolution in the West coincides more or less with the definitive renunciation of witch-hunts. In the language of the ethnologists we would say a determined orientation toward natural causes gradually displaced man’s immemorial preference for *significant causes on the level of social relations* which are also *the causes that are susceptible to corrective intervention*, in other words *victims*” (96). The rise of science cannot be isolated from the decline of witch-hunts. Scapegoat-hermeneutics thus comes into conflict with the prevailing epistemology, what I would call *constructivism*, applying the label broadly to structuralism, Marxism, feminism, and multiculturalism, all of which, explicitly or implicitly, reject the supposedly naive idea that representation actually represents an existing, stable, and therefore characterizable world. Constructivism is invariably a form of relativism, but it also has Kantian overtones. Constructivism makes use of the Kantian idea of an inaccessible thing-in-itself when it claims that language does not reach the world. But it then violates this premise by arguing, in Marxist fashion, that the world that language cannot reach and about which we have no absolute assurances can be changed if we only *construct* it differently. Scapegoat hermeneutics reminds us that the victim is real and that, if language fails to reach him, it is through a malicious design. The deceased victim, moreover, does not spring magically back to life simply because one calls quick what in fact is dead. Scapegoat hermeneutics reveals, that is to say, that the prevailing worldview of contemporary intellectuals – those who live, self-proclaimedly, on the cutting edge of mental life – is still magic. This further explains why persons of the postmodern persuasion react so angrily to Girard: he demonstrates that they resemble the primitives whom they publicly celebrate but privately despise.

Gans also deploys a *reconstructive* epistemology. In *Science & Faith*, this takes the form of a critique of “positive anthropology,” which obsessively seeks the key to the human in material facts like skeletal remains that reveal the gradual, biological mutation of the species. But this method treats *Homo sapiens* no differently than zoology treats other, non-sapient species. “The genesis of the human species is not reducible to the general model of biological speciation,” Gans argues, because mutation cannot explain the trait that distinguishes humanity from all other

animals, “his possession of systems of representation that permit him to transmit to other members of his species large quantities of context-sensitive information that could not be borne by the slow and limited processes” (6-7) of animal communication. The new view that hominization consists of an event, writes Gans, opens the way for a rapprochement between science and religion; but, since positive science has defined itself, since the Enlightenment, in opposition to religion (see Voltaire), Generative Anthropology, with its hypothesis of an originary scene, can only represent a scandal to the ensconced institutional study of the human. Nevertheless, the scandal expressed by positive anthropology merely dodges the issue of the originary scene as a punctual inauguration of the human: “In reality, positivism only condemns certain uses of the scene as mythical in order better to be able to take refuge in others the scenic nature of which it refuses to acknowledge” (8). The stereotypical hominization scenario offered by positive anthropology consists of the faun-like proto-human suddenly standing upright to see farther across the savannah, or of the accidental discovery of fire, in the aftermath of a lightning storm, by the roving pack. Or else, *in re* language, animal signals mysteriously become human signs. Finally, positive anthropology boils down to a refusal to decide between the animal and the human, whereupon anthropologists begin to resemble the totemists whom they study, identifying so strongly with the animal-soul that they cannot unequivocally say what they are. Gans was probably not thinking of William Irwin Thompson when he wrote the following words, but he might have been: “The roots of contemporary anthropology do not lie in militant atheism […] These roots are rather to be found in that ‘religiosity’ so characteristic of thinkers of the nineteenth century who hoped to find in primitive societies the lost fullness of their experience of the sacred” (11). Generative Anthropology does not, like positive anthropology, avoid knowledge. It does not participate in the relativism of contemporary anti-epistemology. It stipulates a human nature more *positively* because more *specifically* than the most ardent formulation of skeletal comparison or mitochondrial DNA analysis. Like Fundamental Anthropology, Generative Anthropology reveals that the most characteristic types of postmodern thinking are *magical thinking*.

15

Earlier I stated that both Girard and Gans concern themselves with the anthropological problem of justice. I would like to connect this with the political phenomenon identified by Milan Kundera under the name of the “tribunal.” Kundera claims that the “tribunal” is the characteristic manifestation of totalitarian politics in the twentieth century. A tribunal, we recall, “does not signify the juridical institution for punishing people who have violated the laws,” is not, that is, concerned with facts or with reality, no more so indeed than the witch-hunt with which it is homologically congruent. Wherever the tribunal appears, then, one must say that

the genuinely scientific demand that claims be linked with evidence has broken down. I would argue that the currently dominant epistemology, which I have already designated by the term constructivism, amounts to nothing less than the complete tribunalization of life. An empirical instance of what I mean can be found in multiculturalism, which has rapidly institutionalized itself on campus and in other areas of public life. Multiculturalism has a doctrine – the celebration of ethnicity – which is loosely but definitely bound up with constructivist epistemology. Multiculturalism announces itself in practice, however, as a witch-hunt in which facts, as educated people have previously defined this term, have absolutely no relevance. The entire range of politically incorrect offenses which multiculturalism holds ready to allege against its transgressors consists of petty and unintentional gestures attested by claim of the offended party many if not most of which are probably imaginary. The worst of these are well known, such as *not* looking at someone. But the poor people hauled before affirmative action courts are never accused of deeds which leave behind what is traditionally called evidence. The procedure therefore deprives the defendants of the opportunity of pointing to the absence of evidence in order to exonerate themselves. Rarely does the procedure grant anything like due process and never do plaintiffs need to produce positive corroboration of their claims. *Rien n'aura eu lieu que le lieu*. But that will be enough in the star chamber. The accusations that multiculturalism lodges against transgressors also occasion fits of mimeticism. On the campus of Central Michigan University, these occur three or four times a year, always with the same pattern: an offended party alleges an insult, a group of committed professors and activist students (who are always the same) spring into voluble action demanding punishment, letters of outrage fill the student newspaper, and the president of the university makes a speech and gives a monetary concession to this or that offended group. The accused is left to twist in the wind. It is a paroxysm and a catharsis. But it is not justice.

In *Originary Thinking* (1993), in a discussion of modernist aesthetics, Gans points out that "the obligation to enjoy an avant-garde artwork is not dissimilar to the obligation to maintain the proper 'consciousness' that the totalitarian regimes of the modern era were able to enforce, with surprising success, on their subjects" (194). When the approved "avant-garde" artwork is now the oral memoirs of Rigoberta Menchu, and when sneezing during a discussion of the aforesaid text can be construed as an act of malicious disrespect "to a whole people," then the relevance of Gans' remark to multiculturalism and its regime becomes clear. Insofar, then, as they are advocates of a reconstructive epistemology and apologists for justice as that is defined by the scientific traditions of Western jurisprudence, Girard and Gans once again find themselves occupying similar positions and once again at odds with the prevailing attitudes. Girard's discourse and Gans' too belong in the same category as Kundera's or Czeslaw Milosz's or Alexander Solzhenitsyn's. All of these

writers may be said to be devoted to the principle of de-tribunalizing a totalized regime and in reinstituting a type of justice based, not on denunciation, but on evidence.

16

I promised to state what is uniquely valuable in Generative Anthropology.

This consists, of course, of the intuition of the originary scene as the genetic locus of representation in general, from which, as Gans persuasively shows in *The End of Culture* (1985), Girard's sacrificial crisis at length derives. The argument is very simple. Designating a victim presupposes and therefore requires designation: humanity must have learned how to designate things generally before it could designate a victim specifically. By shifting his focus from the sacrificial crisis to the originary scene, Gans could begin to think in fine detail about the basic structure of language; he could, in other words, begin to discern what might be called the MS.DOS of culture, whereas Girard had concentrated on a specific program underneath which MS.DOS functioned unsuspected. In his account of Peter's treason in *The Scapegoat*, Girard emphasizes that, in the courtyard with the agents of the high priest, Peter joins a circle in which the hands of all, in the cold of the evening, reach out toward the fire. Here is a precise moment in Girard's text where Gans' notion of the originary scene can be grafted onto the Girardian insight. Some of those hands, sharing but not appropriating the warmth of the communal fire, quickly become pointing fingers of accusation. The Biblical text shows us, in that very transition, how the abortive gesture of appropriation becomes the designation of a victim. I might add that the abortive gesture of appropriation on Gans' originary scene contains an accusation, implicitly, just as it contains so much else (everything else, linguistically speaking): the abortive gesture is an accusation against the others for wanting to do what the gesticulator also wants to do, and the other equivalent gestures are accusations against him. As the specificity of Generative Anthropology is well known to readers of *Anthropoetics*, I do not need to go into further details here. Suffice it to say that the field of investigation opened up by the hypothesis of the originary scene is as important as that opened up by Girard's hypothesis of the sacrificial crisis.

Together, Fundamental Anthropology and Generative Anthropology comprise a history of consciousness. Neither discourse contradicts the other, as far as I can see, at any point. I therefore take them together. It seems to me that modern consciousness consists of the Gansian originary consciousness passed through the experience of the Girardian sacrificial crisis. This makes the explanation of modern consciousness more complicated than it is with Generative Anthropology alone, a fact which might be aesthetically disappointing to strong partisans of a purely

Gansian position. I would remind my friends that, from the Generative Anthropological viewpoint, ethics is ultimately more important for assessing the justice of ideas than aesthetics. Perhaps the definition of justice at the end of the twentieth century is that it consists of a return *at a higher level* to the intuition of rightness that accompanies the abortive gesture of appropriation on the originary scene; but this return occurs after the deformation of originary consciousness during the sacrificial crisis and must deal with that deformation. Once again, it appears that, in order to understand ourselves fully, we need both Girard and Gans. The two should not be put apart.

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