

# Benchmarks

Although it was not planned as a special number, it is not surprising that three of the four articles in our first issue put together after September 11 deal with different aspects of terrorism. To lead it off, we are very happy to publish an article by UCLA's **David Rapoport**, the West's pioneering scholar of terrorism, that puts contemporary terrorism in its historical context. Of our other two articles on the subject, **Andrew McKenna's** (his second in *Anthropoetics*) connects Islamic terrorism with the very Western resentment of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*, and **Nils Zurawski's**—our first article based directly on ethnographic research—demonstrates the applicability of the theory of mimetic desire to the language of the perpetrators and victims of terror in Northern Ireland. Rounding out the issue, **Herbert Plutschow**, in an article adapted from his talk at the March 2002 **GA-Postcolonial Studies** colloquium, analyzes the mimetic insights of an earlier era. This is Herbert's fourth *Anthropoetics* article.

## About our Contributors

[Andrew J. McKenna](#), Ph.D. Johns Hopkins, is professor of French at Loyola University Chicago and a member of the *Anthropoetics* editorial board. He is the author of *Violence and Difference: Girard, Derrida, and Deconstruction* (U of Illinois P, 1992), as well as of numerous articles on Moliere, Pascal, Racine, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and critical theory. Since 1996, he has been editor in chief of *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*.

[Herbert Plutschow](#), also a member of the *Anthropoetics* editorial board, was born in Zurich, Switzerland and was educated in Switzerland, England, Spain, France, and the U.S.A. He received his PhD in Japanese Literature from Columbia University and teaches in the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures at UCLA. His major publications are *Chaos and Cosmos - Ritual in Early and Medieval Japanese Literature* (1990); *Japan's Name Culture* (1995); *Matsuri - The Festivals of Japan* (1996); *Portraits of Japanologists* (2000, in Japanese). Another book, *The Tea Master*, appeared in 2001.

[David C. Rapoport](#), Professor Emeritus, UCLA. Ph.D., UC Berkeley, Political Theory. 1960; Editor, *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*. Author of some 50 articles. *Assassination and Terrorism* (1971) was his first book, followed by six other edited and co-edited volumes, the most recent being *Democratic Experience and Political Violence* (2001) with Leonard Weinberg. Created the first course on terrorism in the West, 1970. Founder and First Director, Center for the Study of Religion, UCLA. Professor Rapoport was recently commissioned to do a four-volume project putting together the *New York Times* terrorism coverage over the last 135 years

**[Dr. Nils Zurawski](#)** is a social anthropologist and part-time lecturer in sociology at the Universities of Hamburg and Münster in Germany. In 2000/2001 he spent a year in Derry, Northern Ireland where he conducted research on identity and violence in the context of the Northern Irish conflict. His research interests include ethnicity, violence, Girard, migration, Cyberspace and the Internet, and surveillance, as well as popular culture. At the moment he is preparing a project on surveillance and cognitive mapping. To make a living he currently works as a news editor for a public broadcasting company in Hamburg.