



PROJECT MUSE®

Love vs. Resentment: The Absence of Positive Mimesis in
Generative Anthropology

Pablo Bandera

Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture, Issue 14, 2007,
pp. 13-26 (Article)

Published by Michigan State University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/ctn.2008.0006>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/235220>

Love vs. Resentment

The Absence of Positive Mimesis in Generative Anthropology

Pablo Bandera

Independent Scholar

By now, most Girardian scholars are at least somewhat familiar with Eric Gans's theory of generative anthropology (GA). Originally inspired by Girard's ideas on mimetic desire and the scapegoat mechanism, Gans has created a parallel theory in an effort to account more directly for the origin of human language. Over the last 20-some years, through several books and countless articles and essays, Gans has contributed valuable insights into some of the more interesting and important issues in mimetic theory: the ostensive vs. declarative as the first form of language, the validity of "originary thinking" in the context of a scientific theory, and so forth. This close relationship with mimetic theory has resulted in a growing school of thought arguing that GA and Girardian theory should be understood together—that they complement each other, and together yield a more complete and correct mimetic theory. More and more frequently one hears the claim that "both Girard and Gans are right," and "you can't have one without the other."

While it is true that both theories offer some complementary insights and should be taken seriously, it is a mistake to ignore the differences between them or treat these as merely incidental. The differences between GA and mimetic theory are significant, not just because they propose different sets

of conditions for the origin of human culture, but because these conditions ultimately lead to very different understandings of humanity itself. While GA contributes much to mimetic theory in general, I intend to show that the logic of the “originary scene” and its implications are in fact fundamentally incompatible with the Girardian understanding of mimetic desire.

There is nothing particularly scandalous in the statement that generative anthropology and mimetic theory (as conceived by Girard) are incompatible in the sense that they propose fundamentally different ideas and ultimately cannot both be correct, at least not in their present forms. In fact, I doubt if either Eric Gans or René Girard would disagree with the statement in itself. Gans did not merely make certain modifications to mimetic theory or apply it in a different way; he developed an entirely new theory (with its own name and independent website).

What may be less obvious is that GA, in the process of altering the structural details of the originary scene, has altered the nature of mimetic desire itself. As far as I know, this was not Gans’s intention. When we consider the fact that Girard’s understanding of human desire, derived from the intuitive insights of great novelists, is precisely what gives mimetic theory its convincing power, anything that changes that understanding should give us pause. At the very least, it suggests that combining Girard’s and Gans’s ideas into a sort of unified mimetic theory is not quite so straightforward.

THE LOGIC OF THE ORIGINARY SCENE

The originary scene is the hypothesized set of conditions resulting in hominization—a description of the moment (and the events leading up to it) in which hominids first crossed the threshold into humanity. For Girard, of course, this is the scapegoat mechanism, the culmination of which is the expulsion of the victim. In GA, the crucial moment is the “aborted gesture of appropriation,” which does not necessarily involve a victim at all. Right away this has obvious theological implications, and much discussion has been devoted to this. But all that is outside the scope of this essay, which is more concerned with the *logical* implications of replacing the victim with the aborted gesture.

For Gans, the defining characteristic of humanity is the capacity for language. Consequently, GA is first and foremost a theory of the origin of language. Because human language is a form of conscious representation, the first moment of language, and therefore the crucial moment of hominization, must have been a conscious one. This contrasts with Girard’s process of

victimization, which involves a kind of subconscious mechanism. Hence the need for a different originary scene.

The aborted gesture of appropriation is basically a different ending to the mimetic crisis, one involving conscious attention rather than a subconscious mechanism. But according to the logic of Girard's mimetic crisis there can only be *one* outcome: the expulsion of a victim. Therefore, a change in the ending implies a change in the process itself—a different understanding of mimesis itself.

In his book *Signs of Paradox*, Gans briefly (too briefly) explains the basic logic of the mimetic crisis leading up to the aborted gesture of appropriation. His casual description of this as “counterintuitive” betrays a perhaps uncomfortable recognition that he is already diverging from the intuitive logic of mimetic theory, from which GA was initially derived. Unlike Girardian theory, in which the increasing mimetic conflict corresponds to a decreasing focus on the object of desire, GA assumes the opposite:

As imitation [of the model's behavior] becomes more intense, [it focuses] less on the model's behavior and more on the object to which it is directed.¹

The reason for this is fairly simple: the more a hominid identifies with another hominid through imitation, the more it sees the other's object of desire as its own. Consequently, imitating the hominid's actions toward the object leads the subject toward that same object, strengthening it as the center of attention. This is certainly easy to imagine in the case of a single maneuver toward the object: hominid A goes after an apple; hominid B sees this and goes after the same apple, perhaps giving hominid A a shove in the process. But this does not do much to explain why the level of violence should *escalate*. That is, how does mimesis become mimetic crisis? Assuming hominid B does not get the apple (which would eliminate any chance for an aborted gesture of appropriation), then hominid A must shove back, followed by another shove from hominid B, and so on. Now the hominids are fighting each other and precisely not going after the apple, but this is Girard's mimetic crisis, not Gans's. If the hominids' attention is increasingly focused on the object, then we are tempted to imagine each hominid essentially reaching harder and harder for the object with one hand while pushing harder and harder at the other hominid with the other hand. It is this “harder and harder” that is difficult to imagine. The problem is one of divided focus. Intuitively, one would expect an increasingly intense relationship to be accompanied (if not driven) by an increase in focus on that

relationship. But what are hominids A and B focused on; the object or each other?

But perhaps all this is moot, for in fact, according to GA, the function of the aborted gesture is to *defer* violence in the first place. In Gans's words,

The aborted gesture of appropriation occurs as the solution to an originary mimetic crisis in which the group's existence is menaced by the potential violence of mimetic rivalry over the object.²

Therefore, by "mimetic crisis," Gans means a kind of increasing tension over "potential violence," rather than violence itself. But what does "tension" mean in a group of prehuman animals, and again why should this tension mimetically escalate in the absence of any violence? Adam Katz has noticed this problem as well, in a discussion of the "fearful symmetry" of the originary scene. He has noted that the tension cannot be due to each hominid in the group essentially worrying about what the hominid next to him might do if he reaches for the object of desire:

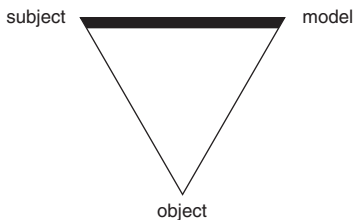
We can't assign such foresight to the members of the group—obviously the representational capacities for imagining such a scenario don't exist yet. But then what makes the symmetry fearful, if not that somewhere in the group the violence has already begun, that is, that the ostensive sign wards off a mimetic contagion in process? In this case the aborted gesture becomes a sign *in distinction from* this contagion.³

Katz rightly points out that a mimetic crisis in the prehuman community, if it is going to be a crisis at all, must involve the existence of actual violence, so that the aborted gesture does not so much defer violence as stand out from it. This is an intriguing attempt to resolve the issue by distinguishing between the aborted gesture and the mimetic crisis leading up to it. In this context, the presumption is that the mimetic contagion itself must be more "Girardian" in nature and the aborted gesture occurs in the midst of this. But unfortunately this doesn't quite work, for the hominids involved in a Girardian crisis will be more and more focused on each other in an increasingly undifferentiated mob, making any gesture toward the object unlikely to be noticed or even attempted.

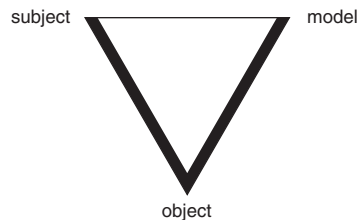
There is a process of undifferentiation in GA, but unlike Girard's mimetic scene, which erases and ultimately forgets the central object of desire, this undifferentiation is in direct opposition to the central object. In fact, what

grows in GA's mimetic crisis is not just the degree of undifferentiation but a differentiation between the undifferentiated mob and the increasingly central object of desire. Girard's mimetic crisis ends in a similar all-against-one scenario between the mob and the victim, but only as the sudden and unavoidable last resort of an increasingly undifferentiated mob. In the end, everyone is united against the center (that is, the victim). Gans's process of undifferentiation is the correlative of the gradual separation between mob and object. Everyone is *fighting against* each other *around* the center.

We can express this difference still more concretely on the minimal level of the mimetic triangle between subject, object, and model, shown graphically below. In mimetic theory, as the mimetic crisis progresses, the relation between subject and model gets stronger (the line between them gets bolder), while the relation of each to the object gets weaker (the lines get thinner). In GA, the triangular relationship is in a sense reversed. As the mimetic crisis progresses, the relationship between subject and model gets weaker, while the relationship of each to the object gets stronger. This graphical representation makes the problem of mimetic escalation in GA particularly clear. Despite the fading connection between subject and model, somehow their violent imitation of each other becomes more intense.



Girard's Mimetic Triangle



Gans's Mimetic Triangle

And yet this counterintuitive logic cannot be avoided in GA. It is necessary to set up the center/periphery structure of the originary scene, in which the focus is maintained on the central object, and there is a kind of balance between the attractive power of the center and the mutually repelling forces of the periphery. All gestures toward the central object must be competing gestures of appropriation (rather than unified gestures of expulsion), otherwise there would be no reason to abort any gesture. This is what allows the crisis to culminate in a conscious event—the conscious representation of the central object that is the birth of language and the human. This is clearly not a mere

adjustment or reapplication of mimetic theory. It hinges on an originary scene that essentially turns Girardian mimesis inside out.

LOVE VS. RESENTMENT

The requirement in generative anthropology that the crucial originary event be a conscious one stems from the claim that language is the defining characteristic of the human. For Girard, however, the origin of the human is more properly the origin of *transcendent thought*, from which all strictly human characteristics, including language, are derived. If we think of transcendent thought as a truth that, like the truth of the Gospel message, affects us subversively, despite ourselves, independently of our own wills, then intuitively it makes some sense that this should have come about via some nonconscious mechanism. It must take something outside of consciousness to raise consciousness above itself. In that crucial moment when the undifferentiated mob first looked at the victim and saw it as something *other* than the mob, teetering on the edge between destruction and salvation, transcendent thought was first experienced as a sense of *awe*. This originary experience of awe is what has survived in the human soul as Kierkegaard's "angst" or Rahner's "transcendental existentiell."

In GA, transcendent thought is not a prerequisite for language; it is defined by language. "The generation of (vertical) transcendence from (horizontal) immanence" is precisely the same thing as (or at least occurs simultaneously with) "the generation of linguistic signification from appetitive relations."⁴ The crucial moment occurs when acquisitive mimesis is suddenly blocked, when the object of desire is recognized as something that cannot be physically had. Therefore, in GA, the first experience of transcendent thought is *resentment*.

Moreover, this experience is not confined to that first moment. It is a basic tenet of GA's "originary thinking" that all strictly human actions—language, art, love, free market consumerism—are ultimately a referral back to the originary scene. They are maintained by the memory of what Gans calls the "esthetic paradox," which can be described as follows: by definition, the sign signifies the object. But by nature it can do this as a sign only, and therefore not as the object itself. In the act of pointing to the object, the sign necessarily points away from itself, thereby betraying itself as something other than the object. This is paradoxical, because the sign simultaneously deceives ("I am the true object of desire, the true center") and tells the truth ("It is all right to desire me because I am not the actual

central object”). Gans describes this as a “thematic imitation of the central object.” That is, the nature of the “deferral” of violence resulting from the first linguistic sign is such that the original mimetic crisis is translated from the realm of immanent appetitive desires (imitating each other toward the center) to the realm of the transcendent (imitating the center toward the sign). This effectively extends the mimetic crisis in time indefinitely, thematically embedded in the human soul, so that all human experience is a reflection of the first experience of resentment.⁵

If it is not yet obvious that the basic nature of mimetic desire is different in GA than it is in mimetic theory, a last comparison should make it clear. As the theme of the 2006 Colloquium on Violence and Religion conference testifies, mimetic theory maintains that there is a positive dimension to mimetic desire. In fact, while mimetic relations usually become rivalistic, especially on a social or cultural scale, there is nothing inherently negative about mimetic desire itself. There is a difference between mimetic desire, which is a fundamental characteristic of humanity, and mimetic rivalry, which is the unfortunate usual outcome of most human relationships. To put it in more concrete terms, positive mimetic desire is more properly called love. While the possibility of degenerating into jealousy or possessiveness always exists, there is nothing inherently negative about love itself. But if the fundamental characteristic of human desire is grounded in resentment, a resentment that is essentially the extension to the transcendent realm of the originary mimetic crisis, how can we speak of positive desire? How are we to understand the basic human capacity for love?

Gans certainly has a lot to say about love and resentment, as evidenced by his online series, begun in July 1995, entitled *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*. Almost as if in anticipation of this essay, in the second paragraph of the very first chronicle, Gans makes the following statement:

Perhaps the most useful way to describe the difference between GA and Girard’s system is that the latter begins with resentment whereas GA begins with love.⁶

Before the reader throws this essay away in frustration, it is important to understand what Gans means by “love.” He does *not* define love, as Girard does, as mimetic desire without rivalry (that is, positive mimetic desire). In GA, love is “minimally defined as the deferral of violence.” Gans’s claim, then, is that GA begins with love because, rather than grounding the origin of humanity in violence, it grounds the origin of humanity in the *deferral* of

violence. But the originary moment is not understood as merely a sudden lack of violence. The mimetic crisis does not simply stop on its own, thereby allowing the hominids to experience their first sense of love. This cessation (or deferral) of violence is simultaneous and synonymous with the production of the first sign, and this is directed toward the central object of desire, which cannot be physically had, and which Gans himself has called “the object of originary resentment.”

As early as the ninth chronicle, things start to get confusing. In that essay, Gans compares the “man of resentment” to a man of love:

The man of resentment is in contradiction with himself. He is dependent on the object of his hostility; he lives in secret fear that his desire will be granted and the scene of his resentment will be abolished.⁷

This is in perfect agreement with Girard’s description of the self-destructive “scandal” that defines every relation of mimetic rivalry. Gans then goes on to describe the man of love:

Thus even as I work for my beloved’s infinite happiness, I cannot wish that this happiness not continue to require my care. Were my love’s aim fulfilled and my beloved rendered invulnerable to death, the scene of my love would vanish.

Thus, love and resentment have the same basic structure—the structure of all desire.⁸

Notice that love and resentment do not have the same structure in some neutral sense. Love has the structure precisely of resentment, which has the structure of mimetic rivalry. In this case, what difference does it make which came first? Either way, the structure of the originary moment—the first experience of humanity—is defined by mimetic *rivalry*. This is indeed more consistent with the understanding of the originary moment as essentially a continuation or translation of the mimetic crisis, as described above.

For Gans, mimetic desire is mimetic rivalry. Any positive dimension is basically utilitarian in nature: if physical violence is avoided, that’s good. This is the same sort of “peace” maintained between Russia and the United States in the 1970s under the threat of Mutual Assured Destruction. It is hard to argue that a lack of violence is not good, but this is certainly not what is understood by mimetic theory as positive mimesis.

This rivalistic structure of love is found in Gans's later work as well. In *Signs of Paradox*, chapter 9 includes a discussion on love and eroticism, with a very blurry distinction between the two:

in the sphere of intimate relations . . . the members of the couple ironically exploit erotic figurality in acts of mutual seduction. In love relationships, as with a lesser intensity in all relationships, ironic self-consciousness guarantees against the instrumental domination of one person by another.⁹

Gans correctly understands a love relationship as mimetic, of course, but he clearly describes it in rivalistic terms, in the same context as any erotic or sexually manipulative relationship. Irony here is a reflection of the aesthetic paradox—a conscious expression of the contradiction surrounding the originary sign. In other words, the paradoxical contradiction of irony—implying one thing by referring to its opposite—is derived from the internal contradiction of the aesthetic paradox. “Ironic self-consciousness” refers to an awareness that one is both subject and model in this precarious relationship with the Other. Every love relationship, then, involves a degree of mutual manipulation and resistance, seduction and resentment, each feeding off the other in a rivalistic tug of war. According to Gans, “A satisfactory love relationship . . . must cultivate and generate difference rather than identity.” This is the only way to stabilize a mimetic crisis driven by undifferentiated rivalry.

This contrasts sharply with the picture of mutual self-giving and nonrivalistic love postulated by Girard's positive mimetic desire. In chapter 5 of *The Girard Reader*, Girard comments:

I hear this question all the time: “Is all desire mimetic?” Not in the bad, conflictual sense. Nothing is more mimetic than the desire of a child, and yet it is good. Jesus himself says it is good. Mimetic desire is also the desire for God.¹⁰

Gans, however, criticizes Girard for following the naïve utopian vision of early Christianity:

[According to Girard], we must abolish sacrificial violence or perish; utopia now or annihilation. But were this the case, we would indeed be doomed. In the nonviolent utopia of universal love, there would be no means available to carry out the essential cultural operation of *difference*: deferral through differentiation.¹¹

This is true only if love is fundamentally rivalistic in nature, like any mimetic crisis. Girard would acknowledge that a utopia of nonrivalistic relationships is not feasible in reality on any large social or cultural scale, but this is due ultimately to our own weakness and not to the inherent logic of mimetic desire itself. Nonrivalistic relationships are possible in principle, and in fact are demanded of each individual Christian. Gans does not allow for this possibility even in principle. There is simply no room for positive mimesis in generative anthropology.

Going back to the originary scene, we can see this difference in what a physicist might call the “state” of the community at the crucial moment of hominization. Consider a stable physical system, such as a rod hanging from one end like a pendulum. When the rod hangs motionless it is said to be in a state of stable equilibrium. In order to displace the rod from this state, a certain amount of energy must be introduced—that is, it takes some effort to push the rod off its equilibrium position and start it swinging. Normally, some physical mechanism (friction at the pivot point or air resistance) prevents the rod from swinging too high. But if the effect of this mechanism is reduced, and if too much energy is applied, the system can swing uncontrollably, and the only way to stop it is to discharge that energy.

When Girard says that the expulsion of the victim “stabilizes” the community, he means precisely that. The mimetically unstable community actually becomes stable through the discharge of violent energy. The community will not become unstable again until there is another increase in rivalistic mimetic energy. The members of this community do not suddenly stop desiring during this period of stability—they do not revert to prehuman animality for lack of rivalistic desires—they simply experience desires that are not *necessarily* rivalistic. It is this period of stability (however short it may be) that opens up the possibility of positive mimetic desire. This understanding of the originary scene resists any interpretation of mimetic theory as a theory obsessed with violence, including interpretations that criticize Girard for reducing human culture to violence and murder. Strictly speaking, humanity is not born out of violence but out of the *transition* from violence to peace. It is precisely because humanity exists at this crossroad that our desires can be directed toward the good *or* toward the bad.

In those early chronicles where Gans argues for the primacy of love before resentment, he criticizes Girard for reversing this order:

The love for the central victim that reveals it as sacred must precede the resentment aroused by its centrality. But then why did it become a victim, which is to say, a communal focus of resentment, in the first place?¹²

This might have been a valid point if the victim were in fact a “communal focus of resentment.” But it is not. Gans is confusing the victim in Girard’s scene with the central object of GA. Before the victim is actually killed, it is in fact not a victim but another rival. In principle, until the murder itself, while violence is rapidly getting more and more focused, this focus can always shift to some other arbitrary member of the group. That member becomes a victim in the Girardian sense only when the violence of the group is discharged through it. The victim, therefore, is not merely a focus of violent resentment but a conduit for the *release* of violence. This is precisely its function as a *victim*. There is no reason to think of this discharge of violence as any more resentful than GA’s deferral of violence, especially since only the former involves an actual transition to a stable peace.

In GA the mimetic crisis is effectively suspended in the new transcendent realm of the sign and maintained there indefinitely. Therefore, the fragile “stability” affected by the sign is more correctly understood as an *unstable equilibrium*. The rod is suddenly balancing on its end, like an *inverted* pendulum! In this precarious state, any introduction of energy at all will tip the rod and send it swinging. Gans acknowledges this inherent tendency of the community to collapse into violence. He calls it the “sparagmos,” and presents it as a reinterpretation of Girard’s victimage mechanism. Here is the violent discharge of mimetic tension that finally stabilizes the group (in the immanent physical realm only), but it occurs after the crucial moment has passed, after human culture has been born through the production of the sign. The originary experience itself, the defining experience of humanity and human desire, is resentment grounded in an unstable equilibrium that has no choice but to lean toward rivalry.

Whether it is expressed as a triangle or as a pendulum, the concepts of mimetic desire in GA and mimetic theory appear to be not only different but in inverse relation to each other. And yet GA as a theory of language does not directly oppose mimetic theory. Gans does not present GA as a rival theory to Girard’s, and it should not be thought of as such. Gans’s intention was primarily to account for certain aspects of human language within the originary scene of hominization, and not to redefine the basic concept of mimetic desire. Nonetheless, redefine it he did, and this should not be glossed over too lightly. The important question is not so much which theory is correct. The goal for scholars of mimetic theory should be to apply the truly valuable and important insights of GA within the context of current (that is, more strictly Girardian) mimetic theory. This may of course ultimately result in a modification to Girard’s original ideas,¹³ but probably not at the expense of his key insights into the nature of mimetic desire itself.

ONE POSSIBLE SCENARIO

As a first-ditch effort toward this goal, I propose going back, in a sense, to generative anthropology as described in Gans's book *The Origin of Language*. In this earlier development of GA, the aborted gesture of appropriation occurs *after* the expulsion of the victim, and explains how this first sign could have given the members of the community a means by which to divide or share the victim among each other in the absence of the usual animal pecking order. But, Gans asks, if this first sign occurs in a state of relative peace (that is, the peaceful aftermath of the mimetic crisis), then what does the mimetic crisis have to do with it at all? As he says in one of his more recent chronicles:

Neither evidence nor logic obliges us to derive the originary moment from aggression against a marginal member of the protohuman group itself, or against any protohuman at all.¹⁴

I hope the present essay has shown that this statement is not true. The nature of the originary moment (that is, whether it is rooted in awe or resentment) and its implications for human culture are direct functions of the logic of the mimetic crisis leading up to that moment. Given that mimetic theory has proven to be a powerful and convincing explanation of human culture, we must take seriously the logic of mimetic desire, which does indeed oblige us to postulate a protohuman victim. Removing the victim changes everything.

Therefore, let us not be too quick to separate the victimage mechanism from the first ostensive sign; let us see if these two events may in fact shed light on each other. Gans has noted that the earliest cave paintings depict animals in much clearer detail (that is, apparently with more care) than they do humans, suggesting that the originary sacred object was probably an animal rather than a human or protohuman victim. But if we consider the notion that the originary expulsion of the victim generated the capacity for transcendent thought via a nonconscious mechanism, and that transcendent thought is prerequisite and not equivalent to language, then it makes sense that the *earliest* forms of representation, specifically, would *not* be of the protohuman victim. Because the transformation wrought by the expulsion of the victim occurred on a nonconscious level, the *significance* of the victim itself would not have been understood by the community at the level of language, and therefore would not have been represented directly in something like a cave painting.

However, once the capacity for transcendent thought existed on some fundamental level (what Girard has called the “first non-instinctual attention”), a subsequent act of conscious representation was inevitable. This first act of representation may well have involved an aborted gesture of appropriation, along with many of the key features described by GA (for example, the aesthetic paradox). But because the members of the community were now predisposed to representation, so to speak, as a result of the originary victimage mechanism, a mimetic crisis of the Gansian type was not necessary. Any hint of mimetic violence initiated around a central object would stir up the memory (in whatever vague or even subconscious form) of the originary scene and give the budding young humans pause. This avoids the logical difficulties discussed earlier with respect to the escalation of mimetic “tension” within the prehuman group. Moreover, the sign can now truly be thought of as a *deferral* of violence before it escalates, as opposed to a translation of existing violence to the transcendental realm.

It seems to me that this scenario incorporates the key tenets of GA as a theory of language (although not a theory of culture) into a more Girardian framework. More importantly, it does this without affecting the fundamental understanding of mimetic desire, thereby conserving the intuitive power of mimetic theory in general.

NOTES

1. Eric Gans, *Signs of Paradox: Irony, Resentment, and Other Mimetic Structures* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 23.
2. Eric Gans, “A Brief Introduction to Generative Anthropology,” *Anthropoetics*, www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/gaintro.htm. This description of the aborted gesture as a conscious and nonviolent “solution” to the mimetic crisis has led Girard to criticize generative anthropology (GA) for replacing the scapegoat mechanism with a kind of Rousseauian social contract. But this is not quite fair. The entire process is indeed driven by mimesis. In fact, as we will see, even the production of the sign itself is a kind of mimetic crisis. The problem stems not from a lack of understanding of or respect for the mimetic contagion, but from the reversal of logic within the mechanism of mimesis itself.
3. Adam Katz, “Remembering Amalek: 9/11 and Generative Thinking,” *Anthropoetics* 10, no. 2 (2004), www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1002/amalek.htm.
4. Gans, “A Brief Introduction to Generative Anthropology.”
5. This renders invalid one possible argument for the compatibility of Gans’s originary scene with Girard’s, namely, the suggestion that mimetic desire could have been of the Gansian type before hominization and then changed to the Girardian type after hominization. This is tempting: since prehuman and human communities are clearly very different, why not

simply apply Gans's insights to one and Girard's insights to the other? But according to GA, humanity never leaves the Gansian originary scene behind but effectively relives it in every human act. Originary resentment defines all human experience, not just the first human experience.

6. Eric Gans, *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*, no. 1, 6 July 1995, www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/VIEW1.HTM.
7. Eric Gans, "Paradoxes of Love and Resentment," *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*, no. 9, 9 September 1995, www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/VIEW9.HTM.
8. Eric Gans, "Paradoxes of Love and Resentment."
9. Gans, "Paradoxes of Love and Resentment," 119.
10. René Girard, *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 64.
11. Gans, "Paradoxes of Love and Resentment," 166.
12. Eric Gans, *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*, no. 2, 15 July 1995, www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/VIEW2.HTM.
13. For example, Gans's view that mimetic theory does not do justice to the uniqueness of humanity by allowing for a gradualist or evolutionary understanding of human origins should be taken seriously.
14. "GA and Mimetic Theory I: Violence," *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*, no. 329, 18 February 2006, www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw329.htm.