



# René Girard, Unlikely Apologist: Mimetic Theory and Fundamental Theology

*Grant Kaplan*

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Since the late 1970s, theologians have been attempting to integrate mimetic theory into different fields of theology, yet a distrust of mimetic theory persists in some theological camps. In *René Girard, Unlikely Apologist: Mimetic Theory and Fundamental Theology*, Grant Kaplan brings mimetic theory into conversation with theology both to elucidate the relevance of mimetic theory for the discipline of fundamental theology and to understand the work of René Girard within a theological framework. Rather than focus on Christology or atonement theory as the locus of interaction between Girard and theology, Kaplan centers his discussion on the apologetic quality of mimetic theory and the impact of mimetic theory on fundamental theology, the subdiscipline that grew to replace apologetics. His book explores the relation between Girard and fundamental theology in several keys. In one, it understands mimetic theory as a heuristic device that allows theological narratives and positions to become more intelligible and, by so doing, makes theology more persuasive. In another key, Kaplan shows how mimetic theory, when placed in dialogue with particular theologians, can advance theological discussion in areas where mimetic theory has seldom been invoked. On this level the book performs a dialogue with theology that both revisits earlier theological efforts and also demonstrates how mimetic theory brings valuable dimensions to questions of fundamental theology.

"Grant Kaplan's *René Girard, Unlikely Apologist: Mimetic Theory and Fundamental Theology* is an accessible and original work advancing the discussion of Girard and theology. Kaplan claims mimetic theory for Catholic theology and shows how it can strengthen Catholic theology by providing a powerful apologetic. Immensely helpful, too, is his situating of Girard's work alongside formative theologians and other thinkers." —Scott Cowdell, author of *René Girard and Secular Modernity: Christ, Culture, and Crisis*

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