

ABSTRACT OF PHD THESIS

HOMO MIMETICUS ET RELIGIOSUS

**René Girard's generative theory of religion - an attempt to understand humanity
through religious studies**

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René Girard's conceptual structure, which is called mimetic theory, seeks to understand human nature through the phenomenon of religion. In his approach, the issues of hominization and the problem of the origin of religion are inextricably intertwined.

The thesis consists of three key chapters centring on philosophical, ethological and religious studies approaches as the most related fields. These are followed by a shorter part in which I discuss critiques of mimetic theory, and lastly a concluding chapter.

This dissertation is actually a prestudy consisting of a systematic analysis of Girard's mimetic theory. With a certain irony, it might be added that the essay on imitation has no originality, it merely imitates. This might be true, but a comprehensive work on Girard's mimetic theory has not yet been published in Hungarian, even though it is highly relevant in terms of its subject matter, and its already not insignificant popularity (whether positive or negative) is growing dynamically at the international level.

However, this is not the only peculiarity, but the striking statements articulated in the discussion of mimetic theory, mainly concerning the religious studies, which constitute the main theses of the dissertation: 1) human being is homo mimeticus, i.e. human is not an autonomous subject, but is fundamentally open to external influences, thus dissolving the boundaries of the „self”, and thus human is not an individual, but an interindividual being; 2) religion is a selection mechanism, thus playing a generative role in the evolutionary process of becoming human, and thus human is also *homo religiosus*; 3) study of religion is therefore not only a descriptive science of cultural and social phenomena, but also a foundational science for understanding the nature of human, and the evolution of our race cannot be understood without studying religion.