RENÉ GIRARD AND AKSEL SANDEMOSE: THE QUESTION OF SALVATION FROM MIMETIC DOUBLE-BINDS

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I. THE LITERARY EXPERIENCE OF MIMETIC DESIRE IN GIRARD

THE CENTRAL position in Girard's dialectics is the ambiguous figure of the Mediator in the mimetic triangle of desire: the hero and idol who is in danger of becoming an obstacle and enemy. The ambivalent roles of the Mediator can make him appear as a 'monster', a double-sided figure who is both good and bad, the one to admire and the one to fight. The subject's double relationship towards his Mediator can make the subject equally ambiguous: his admiration and his hate makes him a double of himself, double in his mind and perhaps even in certain respects in his body.¹

The central constellation of Girard's anthropological studies is the circle around a centre; it repeats the relationship between a subject and his Mediator with the difference that this time the role of the Subject is occupied not with one single actor but with a number of actors, i.e., a group. The Mediator stands in the same relationship to the group as he does to the subject in the case of the mimetic triangle. Therefore he can assume the function as a common idol as well as a common enemy. In both of his roles in reality this Mediator is a common scapegoat, equally responsible for all the goods and all the evils that befall the group.

As to the basic phenomenon of 'mediated' or 'mimetic' desire, according to Girard this reality is noticed not by philosophy or academic psychology (especially psychoanalysis), but by a series of novels from the Western literary tradition, very limited in number but of an indisputable literary quality (from Shakespeare and Cervantes to Dostoevsky and Proust). In this 'corpus' mimetic desire is demonstrated 'in action', but it is not systematized and transformed into a coherent theory of desire.²

The task of turning concrete instances into a conceptual form in order to construct a psychology or psycho-pathology capable of competing with (especially) the classical Freudian psychoanalysis was left to Girard himself. The many pertinent psychological observations in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* and in the Dostoevski monograph *Dostoevsky, Du double à l'unité*

were systematized in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* under the heading of 'interdividual psychology'.

Accordingly mimetic desire as such was known intuitively 'before' Girard, even if the formulated knowledge of it was restricted to a handful of writers. On the other hand, Girard's general theory of culture based on mimetic desire and its ambivalences, and shaped upon the mimetic triangle with a new and more encompassing distribution of actors in the triangle's positions seems to have been anticipated only by Shakespeare (compare *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with *Julius Caesar*). There might be a slight hint of a similar construction in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*;³ but otherwise the combination of the mimetic triangle of individual actors with the circle and the centre of the human group seems to be Girard's original construction. And even in the instances mentioned here there is no indication of any 'prehistorical' dimension or any speculations about scapegoating as a possible basis for the emergence of human culture as such.

Not the least merit of Girard's work is its inspirational power. Probably, whole continents of literature can be investigated from the perspectives of mimetic desire and generalized scapegoating. Do we elsewhere in literature or in other sorts of writing find analogies and similarities to the project of Girard?

For reasons easy to understand all of Girard's own writing about literature has centred around accepted masterpieces of world literature. But this, of course, does not mean that in other literatures of a more restricted extension some hidden treasures could not be found. As far as Scandinavian literature is concerned it can now be demonstrated that at least one writer belongs to the same group as Girard's own witnesses, and —as if Girard's intuition were to be verified—this writer is a writer of novels. The name of this writer is the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose. But the interest in Sandemose's works extends beyond the limits of merely another novelistic writer with the same insight as Girard's own canon. Not only is this writer at approximately the same level of insight into mimetic desire that can be found in Girard's canon, but he transgresses the limits of it in two significant respects. Firstly, more than anyone else Sandemose is explicit with regards to a principal and systematic knowledge of the phenomenon of mimetic desire as well as all its derivations in the directions of double transference, monsters, split personalities, mimetic rivalry etc; and secondly, more than any one else Sandemose sees the anthropological dimensions in the investigation of the mimetic triangle. Sandemose's work builds a veritable missing link between on the one hand the literary canon and on the other hand Girard's one work, because it is a novelistic work but with a strong tendency to transgressing the limits of narrative fiction and stepping into the area of formalized psycho-pathology.

2. THE WORK OF AKSEL SANDEMOSE

2.1. Sandemose

This paper in no way intends to offer a full presentation of Sandemose's work. It restricts itself to brief indications in order to substantiate what so far has been only postulated about Sandemose's relevance for the mimetic theory.⁴ Sandemose (1899–1965) was borne a Dane; his breakthrough as a novelist followed after his emigration to Norway (1930) and he is now regarded as belonging to the Norwegian literary history. Three of Sandemose's main novels have been translated into English: *A Fugitive Crosses his Tracks* (A. A. Knopf: New York, 1936); *Horns for Our Adornments* (A. A. Knopf: New York, 1938); *The Werewolf* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin, 1966). Among other important books, the following should be mentioned: *En sømand går i land*, 1931 ('A Sailor Disembarks'); *September* (1939); *Det svundne er en drøm* ('The Past is a Dream' (1944); *Felicias Bryllup*, 1961 ('Felicia's Wedding'). Beside references in dictionaries Sandemose has been the subject of a monograph in English: Randi Birn, *Aksel Sandemose—Exile in search of a Home*, 1984.⁵

As a writer Sandemose is probably not as aesthetically indisputable as are the members of Girard's canon; and when it comes to a purely artistic judgement, literary experts are somewhat reluctant with regards to Sandemose's qualities. Moreover, the reception of Sandemose has been misled by a strong and self-affirming tendency to regard his work from an orthodox Freudian perspective. Certainly, Sandemose was initiated to be a writer in the intellectual avantgarde-milieu of Copenhagen and especially Oslo in the Twenties and early Thirties and could not possibly have escaped the new and fresh impulses from the psychoanalysis of that time. But he never accepted the most central point in Freudian theory: the derivation of desire from the Oedipus complex. He successfully resisted the temptations because he knew a phenomenon that psychoanalysis could not explain: the lustful hatred of the rival, a paradox based on mimesis. In his writings Sandemose tried to dissociate himself from Freudian orthodoxy in the question of desire; but to a great extent his efforts have been ignored by the critics.

2.2. The Triangle

In all of Sandemose's novels his main characters are involved in either erotic triangles or in more complex versions of the triangle. In *A Fugitive Crosses his Tracks* the author's alter ego, Espen Arnakke, writes from the point where he has finally got even with all of his past, especially his childhood and adolescence in the little Danish town called 'Jante' by killing his rival in an erotic triangle in a place in Labrador called 'Misery Harbour'; in *Horns for Our Adornment* all the sailors on the ship 'Fulton'—which is the

scene of the novel—are in love with the same Islandic girl; in *The Werewolf* the three main characters—Sandemose's other alter ego, the aged author Erling Vik, and the married couple Felicia and Jan Venhaug—form a triangle that seems to be an exception from the normal, hateful triangles which are found in the rest of Sandemose's books and which surround the more happy triangle even in *The Werewolf*. However, this impression of a non-conflicting erotic triangle is somewhat corrected in the book *Felicia's Bryllup* that followed *The Werewolf*. But even if Sandemose normally chooses the erotic triangle as the main principle for the conflicts and passions of his characters, he does not restrict his observations to erotic or sexual passions, and he does not believe that the triangle fundamentally is erotic. His subjects' rivals are not necessarily erotic rivals. The three persons who most clearly are versions of (aspects of) Sandemose himself—namely Espen Arnakke in *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* and *En sømand går i land*, John Thorson in *Det svundne er en drøm* and Erling Vik in *The Werewolf* are all attributed a brother, with whom they are ambiguously involved. The objects of rivalry with the brother (or brothers) is not necessarily erotic;⁶ it is rather a question of self-estimation, of social roles and the like. Moreover, it is not necessarily the clashing of two individual erotic desires for the same object that creates the triangle; the rivals can be established as an ambiguous couple before any erotic object is introduced. The rivals fight for recognition, admiration, estimation, dominance; in this situation they are predestinated to fight also for the same erotic object. This is Sandemose's first and important criticism of the more trivial erotic triangle; first comes the couple of rivals, then the triangle.⁷ The rivals do not fight for everything else, because they fight for a woman; they fight for a woman, because they fight for everything else.

2.3. Mimetic desire

Sandemose is very clear about mimetic desire. It is the reality that directs his persons towards their objects and leads them into ambivalent relationships with their models. The triangle between Espen Arnakke, big John Wakefield and Eva is paradigmatic. At the outset the relationship between John and Espen seems stable: the model John is admired by the smaller and less prestigious Espen. But the mimetic effect goes both ways: the 'master' himself envies the 'slave': 'I take it for granted that John desired Eve because he could see that I was in love with her' (*A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*).⁸ In his smaller novel *September* it is stated as a fact, that men from times immemorial have wanted woman, 'especially other men's women'. In *The Werewolf* there is what looks like a psychiatric case story wherein a certain Kåre Svaberg is told always to suspect his wife for having lovers; the

diagnosis is that this person wants her to be unfaithful because this is the only way in which she can be valuable to him:

Mrs. Svaberg has never been faithless to her husband, and I believe with the doctor that this has plagued him the most. He has felt painfully hurt that no one has wished to share her with him. He has felt insignificant for this reason, but does not suspect it. (p. 264)

This small narrative looks as if it was an illustration of a remark in *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, a remark that beautifully formulates the necessary double bind of mimetic desire: 'This woman is mine, and *therefore thou shalt lust after her*'.⁹ Sandemose even calls this sentence 'the triangle's secret caption'.

It is remarkable that Sandemose in this case—which closely resembles Dostoevski's 'eternal husband'¹⁰—deplores his lack of a suitable psychiatric terminology; this is one of the clearest evidences of the ways in which Sandemose differed from Freudian psychoanalysis. To Sandemose, mimetic desire was a category *sui generis* which did not fit into what he knew of Freudianism. Therefore, inevitably the Oedipus complex had to be taken into consideration. And even here, Sandemose's answer is close to Girard's:¹¹ 'We are always prompt to admire the person who is loved, because we ourselves are not loved or because we do not believe that we are. The one who was loved was bound to be in possession of excellent qualities [...] We love Father because Mother loves him, and vice versa'.¹² It is obvious that with the same starting point—namely the insistence on the irreducible character of mimetic desire—Sandemose and Girard arrive at conclusions strikingly similar.

Therefore it is not surprising that to the contrary of what is generally the case in this same literary tradition Sandemose is able to conceptualize the phenomenon and reflect generally on it. In *Horns for Our Adornment* he gives it a most precise designation: 'vicarious delight'.¹³ In *Det svundne er en drøm* he terms it 'parasitic love'.

2.4. *The Voyeur*

One of Sandemose's archetypal scenes is the scene of the voyeur. In *En sømand går i land* Espen Arnakke murders his rival John Wakefield after a scene where he unwillingly witnesses John making love to the girl Espen loves—and 'his pain felt like lust', as Sandemose says with a phrase typical for him. In *Det svundne er en drøm* the brother's fiancée Jenny looks through the window and happens to watch John Thorson making love to another woman; nor less typically Sandemose comments: 'she lies hidden behind a bush in joyous pain and sees that the rival woman is pretty'. Felicia—the

main female character in *The Werewolf*—entertains a complicated relationship with her own gardener when her lover is absent. She walks naked in her greenhouse, knowing that her gardener believes he can watch her without being noticed himself and enjoying being looked at by somebody whom she dislikes and with whom she could never dream of having a sexual relationship. The voyeur ambiguously watching the couple is the scene where mimetic desire is demonstrated in its most basic form; the play between Felicia and her gardener is a—certainly very rude—instance of what Girard termed 'coquetry',¹⁴ and Sandemose describes it as a phenomenon very close to what Girard termed 'theatrical sadomasochism'¹⁵—in all instances a triangle with only two 'actors'. The relationship between John Thorson and his mistress Susanne in *Det svundne er en drøm* is of the same kind. On the scene of Oslo in the beginning of the war they play the roles of Julien Sorel and Mathilde de la Mole in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, with John Thorson leaving Jenny (whom he took over when his brother was put in jail—for a murder that probably was committed by John himself), because she loves him unconditionally, and turning instead to his friend's wife Susanne precisely because he dislikes her.

In all of this Sandemose no doubt repeats old themes;¹⁶ but the way they are presented are much clearer, much more obvious than ever before. Peeping through the window is one of Sandemose's favourite scenes exactly because of its emblematic character—because this scene more than probably any other illustrates what mimetic desire is.

Sandemose hints at the above mentioned term 'parasitic' in *Det svundne er en drøm*, where he discusses the window peeper as a type:

This type behaves as a parasite on others' pleasure [...] Are we not all to some extent acquainted with this? At least we have read about it in the literature, often as an elegiac dreamer. But certainly he is hiding many things behind his dreams.

This analysis of 'the elegiac dreamer' is identical with the way in which Girard criticizes the young Dostoevsky from the stand-point of the mature Dostoevsky:¹⁷ in the first many years Dostoevsky had a significant and revealing passion for erotic triangles, where an unsuccessful lover displays a chivalrous passion for doing everything possible to serve the happy couple. The reality behind this idyllic surface is the 'resentment' of the 'underground man' and the 'eternal husband'. Obviously, a practically identical criticism is formulated in Sandemose. This is most important, for it shows that with the same point of departure—namely mimetic desire in its most basic form—consequences which to all practical purposes are identical can be developed. In this respect Sandemose's work can function as a kind of

experiment. As in the case of the mimetic reformulation of the Oedipus complex this example shows if not the 'truth' of the theory of mimetic desire then at least the cogency with which its implications are developing. And this is also a kind of 'verification'.

2.5. *Models and Monsters*

All the psychological implications of the ambiguities of mimetic desire are represented in Sandemose. The ambivalent relationship to the Mediator as a model and an obstacle creates monsters in the dreams of Sandemose's persons and makes his main characters monstrous themselves.¹⁸ John Thorson in *Det svundne er en drøm* suffers from split personality and amnesia, and unknowingly he draws a picture of himself as a Janus with two faces. But John Thorson regards himself as a Janus in time rather than in space. This is further elaborated in *The Werewolf* where almost all characters suffer from the ambivalent connection with the other, the term of which is envy and the emblematic expression of which is the werewolf. Espen Arnakke in *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* limps on his left foot, his left arm is gnarled and stiff, and he is as good as blind on his left eye; Sandemose said the same things about himself as a real person.

2.6. *Brothers*

Since the Oedipus complex was precisely what Sandemose could not accept in psychoanalysis, the father is not the rival behind all rivals. The archetypal expression for the rival in Sandemose is the brother: '[...] I sat with tears in my eyes and thought how terrible it would be were I to kill my father by accident. More often my mind would fasten upon a brother'.¹⁹ Sometimes this figure is a kind of mediator (in the structural sense) between the Freudian father and the pure rival who is totally on the same level as the subject; in that instance he is pictured as the big brother; but sometimes the persons simply are brothers—a trait which of course signifies the absence of any difference between them.²⁰

2.7. *Sandemose and Dostoevsky*

In its motifs and themes Sandemose's work is very close to Dostoevsky's. Triangles, underground mentality, split bodies, ambivalent feelings, mimetic rivalry within the family—all this is a common repertoire for these two writers. We know that Sandemose had read Dostoevsky; but no evidence has yet been shown to demonstrate that Sandemose borrowed neither directly or indirectly his themes from Dostoevsky. Probably they were based on personal experiences; the same goes for his understanding of mimetic desire. Sandemose appears as a 're-writing' of Dostoevsky—with the difference

that Sandemose was able to formulate the principles of mimetic desire on a conceptual level.

2.8. *Sandemose's Anthropological Reflections*

Sandemose's main effort lies within the 'psychological' realm of mimetic desire as it takes place in the triangle between two actors. But in his works there is also a strong interest in the psycho-sociological mechanisms within constellations which encompass more than two persons. Sandemose is often occupied with scapegoating in various forms and he displays an unusual understanding of the phenomenon's mechanisms.²¹ But what really matters is the fact that according to Sandemose scapegoating is not a phenomenon sui generis. On the contrary: it is generated from mimetic desire. The most basic feature is that mimetism functions on the level of the group according to the same rules as those governing the mimetic triangle. In *Det svundne er en drøm*, John Thorson comments on memories from his adolescence and the way in which couples were formed:

Everybody was extremely occupied with the others' stories and with the question of who went with whom. New poles of tensions developed around each and every new 'steady relationship.' It would have been more sensible, I thought, if we had assailed a girl who for the time being was disengaged; but it was a strange game: everybody ostentatiously had to throw himself down in the well where another was drowning. Then, when finally a disengaged girl was attended on, immediately the limelight was thrown upon her, and suddenly she was the one who occupied the centre of an erotic storm. For the one who is capable of using his eyes it is impossible not to see the primeval perspectives.²²

2.9. *Mimetic Desire and the Mob*

These 'primeval perspectives' Sandemose had explicated in his earlier novel *Horns for Our Adornment* in a most interesting reflection which he places as a 'preface' to the chapter 'The Rat'. In this passage Sandemose combines the erotic triangle and mimetic desire with mimetic reactions in a group which is confronted with a leader who is to become a scapegoat. Sandemose sees deep historical perspectives in this complex and he foresees the possibilities of a sort of 'generative scapegoating', that is, a theory of rituals and other cultural formations as generated from the primeval phenomenon of collective mimetic desire. No doubt, the passage is far from being clear in all respects;²³ but the overall impression is astonishing. I give some extracts from this passage:

The hunting instinct and the impulse of cruelty appear to be relics of more

ancient forms of the mating instinct [...] We went forth in a mob and chased a single individual, in the same fashion as dogs still give expression to their sexual urge—and the strongest got the girl, while the others simply looked on. [...]

The strongest won our grovelling admiration, though we madly rejoiced when he fell. [...]

In the passion of Christ the ape-stage of our development became crystallised as legend. Lynch-justice is canine sexuality. The passion, as recorded in the Bible, is in essence no different from what the Negroes of the American South are risking every day of their lives today.

English 'gentlemen' rag out in red coats and ride a fox to death. As though to render the symbolism even more expressive, they provide themselves with a pack of howling dogs to precede them. [...]

Do you recall your bitter jealousy, and do you sense in it something of herd sexuality when someone else takes the one you love? You feel puny and forlorn in the rôle of the spectator. You experience something which seems to tear the scab from a thousand-year-old wound, you shriek with vicarious delight and dare not look into your own soul when your horns begin to sprout. Much goes on in the breasts of the young stags, standing in the woods near the edge, peering out while the old boy takes the business in hand. [...]

You will also recall that both hero and scapegoat played essential parts in your boyhood gang. (p. 64f)

2.10. Sandemose, 'Salvation', and Christianity

In his most important novels Sandemose never appears as a friend of religion of any kind. In *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* and *Horns for Our Adornment* he presented Christianity or perhaps more precisely Christian institutions and its personal representatives in a very harsh way. Altogether, when it came to institutionalized religion Sandemose was a rationalist, in spite of another tendency towards 'mystical' experiences. On the other hand, *nolens volens* he was clear about the fundamental 'Christian' character of his problematic. This is obvious by the way he uses motifs, metaphors and concepts from the Christian tradition. In the preface to the second edition of *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* he declares that the real title ought to have been 'From the abyss we invoke though, oh Lord'. It is certainly not by accident that the same book has chapters with titles like 'Confessional', 'Original Sin', 'Sin and Atonement', 'Virgin Birth', 'Salvation' and 'Resurrection'. This probably signifies that Sandemose saw his project as analogous to a certain Christian tradition's image of the world as the realm of sin, from which the Christian should work for his own liberation. According to Sandemose, the world of sin is undoubtedly the world of what we call mimetic desire. In scholastic Christian dogmatics desire, of course, is sin or at least the primary effect of sin.²⁴ Sandemose's subject was desire—*concupis-*

centia—which he understood as mimetic, and it makes the world a hell because it entangles man in destructive double binds of hateful, envious desire. In spite of his outspoken suspiciousness towards Christianity he recognized his own problematic in the language of the church. Therefore he lets his alter ego, Erling Vik in *The Werewolf*, commit the social blunder of quoting lengthily—in front of a 'literary interested couple'—from one of the masterpieces of the Danish eighteenth century hymn writer Thomas Kingo—a hymn that praises the subject who is to leave this world of vanity, and he even stresses the line: 'Jealous eyes no more to see'.

Sandemose's personal idea of a 'salvation' from mimetic desire is not very convincing. He proposes something like a stoic ideal, an experience of the real nature of desire which makes it possible for a person to withdraw from mimetism. He talks often about such a person 'who no longer has any use for a competitor' and he pictures himself—in the shape of Espen Arnakke—as having 'reached the point where I can pass both men and women coldly by; I have reached the point from which the world can be moved'.²⁵ In *Horns for Our Adornment* the difference between being mixed up in mimetic desire and being free of it is presented as the difference between *dogs*²⁶ and *bears*:

The bear deserves to be envied. Sure, he's got troubles of his own, I know. But he's purer of heart than man is. Except when he's got a definite job of begetting on his hands, he walks right by other bears [...] People and dogs always have to mess around with other people and other dogs, have to convince them, coerce them, convert them (p. 247).²⁷

In this novel the main character 'Gullhest' dreams of being able to sit 'like a Chinese joss, both knowing and not knowing, while life goes on like a blissful dream of blood.' (p. 179) To Sandemose, there were only two alternatives: either to be mixed up in mimetism, envy and rivalry, always in need for a rival to support the subject's desires, or to withdraw from the world in a less than splendid isolation. All human contacts are necessarily infested with envy and mimetism, according to Sandemose. Therefore he recommends isolation so warmly; but his rhetoric cannot obliterate the impression of an only postulated heroism, whose cynicism and numbness is merely too obvious.

Christianity is the exact point where Girard's way parts from Sandemose's. As it was clear from the longer passage from *Horns for Our Adornment* quoted above, there is no disagreement between Girard and Sandemose in their understanding of the events narrated in the story of the Passion. Sandemose too regarded the death of Christ as a repetition of primeval scapegoating scenes: in the passion of Christ the ape-stage of our

development became crystallized as legend. But contrary to Girard, he did not ascribe any liberating force to it—all that Sandemose could see was depressing primitivism without even the minimum of reconciling hypocrisy that cultural elaboration could offer. The main difference between Girard and Sandemose is that because of his pessimism Sandemose never comes across the idea that the knowledge of scapegoating could be a culturally and historically established reality. In fact, Sandemose never questions knowledge of scapegoating as an epistemologically central fact in the way that Girard has done. Sandemose never distinguishes between societies—and to him Western society differs in no essential way from any other society with regard to its basic features, that is, with regard to the importance of mimetism.

While Sandemose's main thematic axis is the one between the world and himself, Girard places himself on a socio-cultural level; his main axis is Christian culture versus other cultures. To Sandemose, the world has nothing to offer except mimetic double binds; therefore the only alternative is to withdraw from the world. To Girard, 'salvation' is possible in the world, because its possibility does not come from the subject itself but from the world wherein the subject is situated—namely from a mediator who does not involve himself in mimetic rivalry. According to Sandemose, there are but two possibilities: either to be a dog and regard everyone else as a 'model-obstacle', or to be a bear and look at the world only in so far as objective needs must be satisfied and otherwise ignore it totally. According to Girard, there is a third possibility between being a dog and a bear, namely to be a human being who is neither ignoring the other, nor taking him as a rival. In the Girardian 'dialectic' this becomes possible by taking the right person as a model, a model who does not desire himself and who does not involve in mimetic rivalry.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Cf., Ivan Karamazov's slight limp (Girard, 'Dostoïevski. Du double à l'unité' [1963]; reprinted in *Critiques dans un souterrain*, [1976]).
- ² With regards to Dostoevski's *Notes from the Underground* Girard remarks: 'Dostoïevski n'a pas réussi à traduire en concepts la psychologie souterraine.' (*Critiques dans un souterrain*, 62). On the other hand, Shakespeare seems to have shaped semi-conceptual renderings of 'mimetic desire'; Girard notes expressions such as 'suggested desire', 'suggestion', 'jealous desire', 'emulous desire', as well as other formulations, e.g., 'love by another's eye', 'do you love him because I do'. Girard, *A Theatre of Envy. Shakespeare* (1991) pp. 4f.
- ³ Compare the mob possessed by a 'mimetic crisis' in *Don Quixote* in the vision of the tennis playing devils in the underworld. Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* Trans. Yvonne Freccero. (1965) pp. 102f.
- ⁴ A more elaborated presentation of the present paper's subject has been given in Danish: Hans J. L. Jensen, 'Trekanten, dobbeltgaengeren og den enarmede tyveknaegt' ['The Triangle, the Double, and the One-Armed Thief'], *Kredsen* 56/2,

(1990) 7–39. In Norwegian, the analogies between Sandemose and Girard have been noticed by Knut Gørvell, *En emigrant krysser sine ord. Studier i Aksel Sandemoses Det svundne er en drøm*, ['An Emigrant crosses His Words. Studies in Aksel Sandemose's *Det svundne er en drøm*'] (Aschehoug: Oslo, 1990).

⁵ The English translation of *The Werewolf* is provided with an introduction to Sandemose.

⁶ In *Det svundne er en drøm* it is; but here the relationship is also in other ways transformed from the more normal Sandemosean structure: here the main character is the big brother, not Sandemose's typical—even 'archetypal'—smaller brother.

⁷ This is the case in Sandemose's very early *Maend fra Atlanten* ('Men from the Atlantic', 1923) and the following versions: *Klabautermannen* (Danish 1927; Norwegian 1932) and *Horns for Our Adornment*; it is even so in the triangle in *Misery Harbour* (*En sømand går i land* and *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*).

⁸ P. 273. In the 1933 edition—from which the English translation is made—this remark is followed by a modification: 'though it is possible he wanted her for her own sake...'; this line Sandemose dropped from the 2nd ed. (1955)

⁹ P. 292; Sandemose underlines.

¹⁰ Carl-Emil Nordberg, the author of one of the leading Sandemose studies, *Aksel Sandemose* (1967), explicitly refers to Dostoevsky's novel.

¹¹ 'The Oedipus complex is one particular case of mimetic rivalry ...', 'To Double Business Bound', p. 56.

¹² *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, p. 257.

¹³ P. 65.

¹⁴ *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, p. 105.

¹⁵ *Things Hidden*, p. 328.

¹⁶ But probably without knowing exactly to what extent; nothing from Sandemose so far has been found to indicate that he knew

he was working in an established literary-thematic tradition.

¹⁷ In Dostoevsky. *Du double à l'unité*.

¹⁸ The tiger in the priest's dreams in *Horns for Our Adornment*, the Werewolf in the novel of that title.

¹⁹ *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, p. 85.

²⁰ The 'brothers' in *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*; in *Maend fra Atlanten*.

²¹ Fine examples in *En sømand går i land* (the aggression against the outsider and his wife); *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* (the chapters 'Maybe you don't think I know something about you?' and 'Witness-dread'); *Horns for Our Adornment* (the chapter 'The Rat').

²² *Det svundne er en drøm*, pp. 40f (my translation).

²³ There is a certain 'biologistic' and 'sexualistic' undercurrent which could seem to make the passage as a whole out of date. However, it is clear that it is mimesis that Sandemose is aiming at, and the reference to mobs of animals is understandable, when his intuition that mimesis as such is not a cultural fact is taken into consideration. In Girard, of course, the 'power' (so to speak) of the concept of mimesis lies not least in its ability to function as a 'missing link' between nature and culture, the non-human and the human. Moreover, the sexuality in this passage has nothing to do with sexuality in the Freudian sense.

²⁴ Petrus Lombardus: 'Quid ergo originale peccatum dicitur? Fomes peccati, scilicet concupiscentia vel concupiscibilitas ...'; Bonaventura: 'Peccatum originale est concupiscentia ...'; Duns Scotus: 'peccatum originale non potest aliud quam ista privatio; non enim est concupiscentia'.

²⁵ *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, p. 292.

²⁶ Dogs are one of Sandemose's favourite metaphors for people being wrapped up in mimetism; cf. the passage from the same book quoted above.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

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