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Title: The Participatory Surrogate Victim: A Dialogue Between Girard and Owen Barfield

Proposal:

This essay seeks to open a dialogue between Girard and the philosophy of Owen Barfield. While Girard's attitude towards myth was primarily one of demystification, exposing the inherent violence behind myths, Barfield in his seminal work *Saving the Appearances* understood myth and archaic religion as a form of "original participation"—that is, as direct spiritual access to a meaning-latent cosmos. Barfield and his fellow members of the Inklings (Lewis, Tolkien, Charles Williams, et.al) could be said to represent an intellectual school apparently irreconcilable with the Girardian understanding of myth.

Nonetheless, both schools see Christianity as representing a major paradigm shift in the history of sacrifice: while the "Inklings school" would romanticize Paganism, framing the transition to Christianity primarily as an intellectual and aesthetic dichotomy of precursor/fulfillment, Girard would see in Christianity an anthropological revelation of the lie behind all myths.

While their methodologies, styles, and assertions are markedly different, both are invested in deciphering the fundamental "meaning" of myth. Ultimately, this essay argues that while Barfield overlooks the violent dimensions of archaic religion, his exposition of "participation" via Aquinas demonstrates on philosophical grounds how community transference of guilt onto the surrogate victim is psychologically possible.

Introducing the concept of Barfieldian participation has the potential to enrich mimetic theory with fresh spiritual and philosophical content which Girard himself displayed less interest in. Inviting a dialogue between these two thinkers expands the territory of mythological studies in both its anthropological and literary iterations.