



# Desire and Persecution in "Therese Desqueyroux" and Other Selected Novels of Francois Mauriac

*Timothy J. Williams*

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This study provides an analysis of the novels of Francois Mauriac, particularly his "Therese Desqueyroux", applying the theories of mimetic desire and scapegoating as postulated by philosopher and literary critic, Rene Girard. This work should appeal to scholars interested in French literature and those who work with Girardian or scapegoat theory. This study is a Girardian analysis of Francois Mauriac's "Therese Desqueyroux" which reintegrates Therese's act of violence into the hostile conditions in which she lived, suggesting that Therese, though an oppressor herself, is largely a persecuted victim in the story that bears her name. A careful analysis of the antagonistic relationship between Therese and Anne de La Trave confirms Rene Girard's belief that great novelists, such as Mauriac, are instinctively aware of the mimetic nature of human desiring. Moreover, a detailed examination of two unrelated novels, "Le sagouin" ("The Little Misery") and "L'agneau" ("The Lamb"), as well as discussion of other selected novels, further reveal that scapegoating is an important, though largely unexplored feature in Mauriac's fiction.

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