Abstract

Understanding the proliferation of mental disorders requires more than medical explanations. In this presentation, a socio-cultural lens driven by what we have coined *mimetic loops* will be introduced. René Girard explains why individuals converge on the same diagnostic identities through mimetic desire and how a modern, subtle scapegoat mechanism ensures stability in society, whereas Ian Hacking explains how these identities in turn reshape both the people who inhabit them and the classificatory frameworks themselves. When Girard's mimetic theory meets Hacking's looping effects, we see how psychiatric diagnoses spread not merely through institutional or clinical means but also through cultural contagion. The proliferation of psychiatric diagnoses is not just a matter of increased awareness, reduced stigma, or misclassification; it might also be a proliferation of imitation. Diagnostic categories become social models that people consciously or unconsciously mirror in search of identity, meaning, and belonging. The looping process amplifies the mimetic process: as more people identify with a label, the category gains legitimacy, prompting further identification. However, psychiatric diagnoses vary in mimetic power and are best understood as situated along a culturally and historically situated spectrum. Preventing overdiagnosis caused by mimetic loops requires tolerance of uncertainty and heightened awareness of mimetic dynamics.

Keywords: Mimetic Loops · Psychiatric Classification · Ian Hacking · René Girard · Diagnostic Culture