



APOCALYPSE REVISITED

Japan, Hiroshima, and the Place of Mimesis



The ICU Chapel

COV&R 2012 Conference: July 5th-8th, on the campus of International Christian University (ICU), Tokyo, Japan

For the first time in its history, COV&R is to hold its annual conference in Asia. We will meet on the beautiful campus of ICU, located on the western edge of Tokyo. It is an opportunity for the members of COV&R to contemplate a number of issues, including the applicability of mimetic theory to non-Western, non-Christian traditions, the meaning of Hiroshima, as well as the peculiar turns mimetic conflict can take in an post-industrial, highly developed society.

We could not know, when first we began to plan this conference, the terrible disaster that would strike Japan on March 11, 2011. In fact, there were a few weeks last year when we thought we might have to try to find another venue for the 2012 conference. Fortunately, our worst fears were not realized. Tokyo is safe, and the Conference can go ahead as planned. But meeting in the shadow of this disaster, a disaster that so perfectly combines natural and human elements, means that we cannot forget those who suffered and those who suffer still. Our opening and closing plenary session will touch on this matter directly. I suspect that other sessions will as well.

I would like to introduce the speakers we have planned for the plenary sessions at this point. *continued on p. 2*

COV&R Object: "To explore, criticize, and develop the mimetic model of the relationship between violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture. The Colloquium will be concerned with questions of both research and application. Scholars from various fields and diverse theoretical orientations will be encouraged to participate both in the conferences and the publications sponsored by the Colloquium, but the focus of activity will be the relevance of the mimetic model for the study of religion."

The *Bulletin* is also available online:
<http://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/bulletin/>

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Membership Form

Raymund Schwager, S.J., Memorial Essay Contest

To honor the memory of Raymund SCHWAGER, SJ (†2004), the Colloquium on Violence and Religion is offering an award of \$1,500.00 shared by up to three persons for the three best papers given by graduate students at the COV&R 2012 meeting at the International Christian University. Students presenting papers at the conference are invited to apply for the Raymund Schwager Memorial Award by sending a letter to that effect and the full text of their paper (in English, maximum length: 10 pages) in an e-mail attachment to Jeremiah Alberg, organizer of COV&R 2012 and chair of the three-person COV&R 2012 Awards Committee at jlalberg@gmail.com. Due date for submission is the closing date of the conference registration, June 1, 2012. Winners will be announced in the conference program. Prize-winning essays should reflect an engagement with mimetic theory; they will be presented in a plenary session and be considered for publication in *Contagion*.

COV&R Travel Grants

Travel grants to attend COV&R 2012 are available for graduate students or independent scholars who are first-time attendees of the COV&R conference and will normally be expected to present a paper at the conference. Write a letter of application accompanied by a letter of recommendation by a COV&R member to that effect to Executive Secretary and conference organizer, Jeremiah Alberg (jlalberg@gmail.com) until the closing date of the conference registration, June 1, 2012. The board will sponsor the attendance of up to ten persons with a maximum amount of \$ 500 each. The officers of COV&R will award the grant in the order of application.

Prof. Norio AKASAKA has used mimetic theory extensively in his research over the last twenty years. He is the author of over twenty books, many dealing with the Tohoku region which was so severely afflicted by the catastrophe. In the aftermath of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear radiation he was named to the government's committee on rebuilding Tohoku. He has spent the last 14 months laboring tirelessly for the people of this region.

Prof. Jean-Pierre DUPUY is well known to the members of COV&R. He will open the Conference with a paper titled, "Catastrophes and Near-Misses". His work, *Petite métaphysique des tsunamis*, has already been published in Japanese, so his thoughts on this latest disaster are highly anticipated in Japan as well in other parts of the world. He will think through the meaning of being "that close" to annihilation in terms of human history.

Prof. Paul DUMOUCHEL will be joined by a distinguished panel to discuss his important monograph published last year, *Le Sacrifice Inutile*.

Prof. Chris FLEMING, the author of the outstanding *René Girard: Violence and Mimesis*, will deliver a paper dealing with Hiroshima and the Holocaust. He will be examining some of the different moral and cultural impacts of these two quite different "events." The title for the

paper is "Apocalypse and Modern Victims."

Prof. Eric GANS has given much thought over the years in his *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* to the meaning of various twentieth-century catastrophes such as the Shoah, and Hiroshima as he has developed his theory of Generative Anthropology. COV&R welcomes him again as he addresses us with a paper titled "Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and the Victimary Era."

Profs. Sandhor GOODHART and Julia ROBINSON will hold a session that investigates the phenomenon of lynching.

Prof. Shoichiro IWAKIRI is the translator of Girard's *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning*. He will be "translating" again as he addresses us on the topic of "'It is all like a strange dream.'"—The Girardian Structure and the Dionysiac elements."

Ms. Somaly MAM is known for her work helping the victims of the sex-trade and human trafficking in Cambodia. A victim herself, she tells her own story in *The Road of Lost Innocence*. She has received a number of rewards and recognition for her work, being named *Glamour's* Woman of the Year and one of CNN's Heroes in 2006. In 2009 she was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people. Somaly MAM's extraordinary personal strength and ongoing struggle for a just world

where human beings are no longer enslaved and exploited, earned her the first Roland Berger Human Dignity Award in 2008. I would urge COV&R members to look at her foundation's website: <http://www.somaly.org/>

Prof. Richard SCHENK, O.P. was recently selected as President of the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany (2011-2016). SCHENK's publications have centered on issues in the history and systematics of philosophical and theological anthropology and interreligious relations. We are honored to have him deliver the 2012 Raymund Schwager, S.J. Memorial Lecture.

The translation of all the papers for the plenary sessions will be completed by the start of the conference. In addition, simultaneous translation of the plenary sessions will be provided.

We have a very good number of highly interesting presentations of individual research. We will have some participants from Korea (via Innsbruck), from Africa, and from India. In addition we are looking for a larger than usual contingent from Down Under.

Most participants will be staying in spacious dorm rooms located right next to the building in which the plenary sessions will be held and a five minute walk from the classrooms for the parallel sessions.

I have put Ann ASTELL in charge of the weather, so I am expecting sunshine and balmy temperatures, unlike the mugginess we usually experience in July. I also plan on posting a PDF page (so you can print it out and show it) for the directions from the airport to the university.

If members would be so kind as to send me their flight information, I may be able to arrange someone to meet people, if enough land around the same time.

Finally, another unique feature of this year's conference is the fact that it is being held in conjunction with the Generative Anthropology Society and Conference (GASC): that is, panels and plenary sessions will be held concurrently with those constituting the 2012 annual meeting of the Generative Anthropology Society. We welcome the members of this fine body and look forward to productive exchanges.

Please check the website often as we update it: <http://www.japan-girard-association.org/conference/>

Jeremiah Alberg

COV&R AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

Program of the Annual Meeting November 17-20, 2012, Chicago, IL

COV&R will offer a slate of three sessions at the November, 2012 AAR meeting in Chicago, IL. Exact days and times of the two sessions that will be on the main program will be determined in late summer and will be announced in the fall Bulletin. The three sessions show the strength and diversity of mimetic scholarship. The book session will offer an opportunity for attendees to engage two scholars in reflection on topics that intersect with mimetic theory and the theme of religion and violence. The session on GIRARD's *Sacrifice* will be the first time that GIRARD's achievement in his latest publication has been explored in a national forum. A thought-provoking conversation is anticipated among the comparative specialists who have been assembled for this panel. Finally, in continuing a tradition of co-sponsoring sessions with AAR groups with which COV&R members have intellectual affinities, our session on BONHOEFFER and GIRARD features three insightful and compelling papers that also will generate widespread interest among those attending the session. Questions about COV&R sessions at the AAR may be directed to Martha Reineke, Coordinator of COV&R sessions at the AAR, martha.reineke@uni.edu.

Session I

Saturday November 17, 2012, 9:00 AM-11:30 AM (Location TBA)

9:00-10:10 a.m.: Book Session: Kelly Denton-Borhaug's, *U.S. War-Culture, Sacrifice, and Salvation*

Panelist: Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Moravian College

Responding: S. Mark Heim, Andover Newton Theological School

From the book description: Kelly DENTON-BORLAUG "traces the enduring links between U.S. war-culture and the discourse and rituals of sacrifice. Sacrificial rhetoric and practices energize and naturalize war-culture's base and operations; sacrifice permeates just war discourse and tradition; and popular Christian un-

derstanding of redemption in the U.S. also relies upon sacrificial formulations.” DENTON-BORLAUG exams whether Christian understandings of sacrifice can be disentangled from images of sacrifice in politics, economics, and military and popular culture. She explores ties between Christian notions of salvation and sacrifice and these other sacrificial frameworks and practices in order to “encourage wise and more life-giving ways forward as communities of faith and as a nation.”

10:10-10:20 a.m. Break

10:20-11:30 a.m. Book Session:

Richard Beck’s *Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality, and Mortality*

Panelist: Richard Beck, Abilene Christian University

Responding: Martha Reineke, University of Northern Iowa

From the book description: BECK reflects on the biblical passage, “‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ Echoing Hosea, Jesus defends his embrace of the ‘unclean’ in the Gospel of Matthew, seeming to privilege the prophetic call to justice over the Levitical pursuit of purity. And yet, as missional faith communities are well aware, the tensions and conflicts between holiness and mercy are not so easily resolved. At every turn, it seems that the psychological pull of purity and holiness tempts the church into practices of social exclusion and a Gnostic flight from ‘the world’ into a ‘too spiritual’ spirituality. Moreover, the psychology of purity often lures the church into what psychologists call ‘The Macbeth Effect,’ the psychological trap that tempts us into believing that ritual acts of cleansing can replace moral and missional engagement. Finally, time after time, wherever we see churches regulating their common life with the idiom of dirt, disgust, and defilement, we find a predictable wake of dysfunction: ruined self-images, social stigma, and communal conflict. In an unprecedented fusion of psychological science and theological scholarship, Richard BECK describes the pernicious (and largely unnoticed) effects of the psychology of purity upon the life and mission of the church.”

GIRARD, Mary DOUGLAS, Ernest BECKER, and Mark HEIM are among the thinkers who inform BECK’s reflections. In inviting Professor BECK to join us and in serving as a respondent, Martha REINEKE is interested in exploring with

him links between sacrifice and issues of bodily purity and impurity. Of particular importance is reflecting on how a psychology of disgust can illuminate experiences of shame and humiliation as well as other expressions of bodily discomfort that so often are co-present with scapegoating and the victimage mechanism.

Session II

Date, Time, and Location TBA:

Theme: René Girard’s *Sacrifice*

Panelists will discuss René GIRARD’s lectures on the *Brahmanas*, translated and published in 2011 by Michigan State University Press as *Sacrifice*. In this work, one of Girard’s most accessible accounts of mimetic theory and violence, Girard compares the ancient tradition of the Vedas with the Christian biblical narrative.

William Johnsen, Michigan State University, Presiding

Panelists: David Dawson, Universidad de Costa Rica; Brian Collins, North Carolina State University; Kathryn McClymond, Georgia State University; Francis X. Clooney, Harvard Divinity School.

About the panelists: David DAWSON is one of the translators of *Sacrifice* and author of a monograph on structuralist theories of myth entitled *The Magic Word and the Logical Machine* (2008). Brian COLLINS is author of the forthcoming *Yajnantara, the End of Sacrifice: Mimetic Theory and Hindu Myth*. His research interests include the Sanskrit epic *The Mahabharata*, religion on film, and theories of religion. Francis CLOONEY’s primary areas of scholarship are theological commentary on the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions of Hindu India and the developing field of comparative theology. Recent publications include *Beyond Compare: St. Francis and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God* (Georgetown University Press, 2008) and *The Truth, the Way, the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of the Srivaisnava Hindus* (Peeters Publishing, 2008). Kathryn MCCLYMOND specializes in the comparative history of religions, Hinduism, and ritual theory. She is the author of *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

Session III

Date, Time, and Location TBA

Co-Sponsored session with the Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Group

Theme: Bonhoeffer and Girard in Conversation: Revelation, Scandal, and the Theology of the Cross

Nikolaus Wandinger, University of Innsbruck, Presiding

Working from different starting points, using dissimilar concepts, and speaking to distinct audiences, Dietrich BONHOEFFER and René GIRARD nevertheless concur on many points. Kevin LENEHAN explores resonances in BONHOEFFER and GIRARD's work that issue in a "prophetic critique of the Gospel" which is post-critical, revelational, relational, and violence-renouncing. Craig SLANE argues that the scandal of the cross reveals an opposition between a logos originating from Greek culture that inclines toward violence and a logos originating in the love of God that points to a non-sacrificial Christianity (GIRARD) or "religionless Christianity" (BONHOEFFER). Nicholas BOTT and Reggie WILLIAMS examine a shared Christological ethic of imitation. For GIRARD, Christ is adopted as a model and mediator of one's desires; for BONHOEFFER, imitation may be described as the constant encounter with the "moment of decision" in which we hear a call to answer "yes" to Christ and "no" to self when we encounter others.

Kevin Lenehan, MCD University of Divinity: *Standing Responsibly Between Silence and Speech: Doing Theology in the Light of Bonhoeffer and Girard*

In this paper I argue that bringing the work of Dietrich BONHOEFFER and René GIRARD into conversation in the contemporary context provides an important and timely contribution to a fundamental theological 'style'. This style is described as (1) post-critical, in that it moves beyond an uncritical synthesis of Christian faith and Western culture and addresses our context—both post-Christendom and post-secularist—on its own terms; (2) revelational, in that it witnesses to the priority of God's self-communication in human existence and history, and to the transformative effect of this encounter with irreducible otherness; (3) relational, in that it rethinks theological categories from the perspective of an anthropology based on rela-

tionality with the other; and (4) violence-renouncing, in that it is alert to and responsible about the propensity to violence within human communities and their religious traditions, including the Christian tradition.

Craig Slane, Simpson University:

Two Logics, One Scandal: Understanding Expulsion with Bonhoeffer with Girard

This paper connects the thinking of Dietrich BONHOEFFER and René GIRARD by focusing on three interrelated ideas appearing in their writings: *logos*, *skandalon*, and expulsion. BONHOEFFER and GIRARD stand together in their conviction that there are two kinds of logos: one originating from Greek culture that inclines toward violence, and the other originating in the love of God. For both thinkers, the scandal of the cross reveals these logics in their opposition and opens a retrospective glance at human history that enables us to see more clearly how expulsion works to unify human cultures and retrench mythological thinking. A careful examination of select texts from each thinker may help us grasp what BONHOEFFER was searching for from his time as lecturer in Berlin to the end of his life when he imagined a "religionless Christianity."

Nicholas Bott, Stanford University and Reggie Williams, Baylor University: *"Solidarity in Suffering": René Girard's Theological Pedagogy in Conversation with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Experience in the Harlem Renaissance*

The development in Dietrich BONHOEFFER's Christian witness that empowered his prophetic stance against the Nazis resulted from his experience in the Harlem Renaissance. BONHOEFFER's development of a Christ-centered hermeneutic as a "view from below," observing history "from the perspective of suffering" exemplifies the workings of the divine pedagogical process detailed by Girard, whereby Christ-like models raise awareness of the vicious cycle of imitation and rivalry, highlight Christ's scriptural representation of this process, and reveal God as sufferer, not inflictor, of violence. Next, we examine the significance of contemporary Christian witness for BONHOEFFER's theology in light of the importance GIRARD places on the role of the saints in embodying a hermeneutic of suffering servant linked to Christ. Finally, we explore epistemological resonances between

BONHOEFFER's emphasis on solidarity-in-suffering with Girard's hermeneutic of the scapegoat, each representing an "epistemology of love" whose characterization of God as suffering violence grounds a spirituality of imitation.

Compiled by Martha Reineke

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all from me in South Bend, Indiana. To write to the members of the international Colloquium on Violence and Religion from this small city in the Midwest U.S.A. is to remember that we are all connected to one another, from point to point, in a great network of relations, thanks to our annual meetings, communication through the media, collaborative projects, travel, friendships, and common interest in the mimetic theory. Few scholarly organizations can compare to COV&R in sheer intellectual vitality across the disciplines—a vitality springing from the strength of the mimetic theory itself in application to lived experience and cultural expression.

In my last letter, I highlighted several different answers that our members have given to the question "What's next in the critique, development, and application of mimetic theory?" Inspired by René GIRARD's apocalyptic historiography in *Battling to the End*, Andrew MCKENNA's emphatic answer has been "History!"

Judging by the martial themes of three major Girardian meetings in 2012, MCKENNA is not alone in that assessment. Each of these three meetings has focused or will focus attention on the historiography of a different war. The question "What Was the Civil War?" inspired the proceedings of a symposium held at Wheaton College, March 16-17, 2012. Co-sponsored by the Raven Foundation, Imitatio, and the Center For Applied Christian Ethics at Wheaton College, this symposium featured four speakers—Mark NOLL (University of Notre Dame), Laura ROMINGER PORTER (University of Notre Dame), Luke HARLOW (Oakland University) and Tracy MCKENZIE (Wheaton College)—who highlighted the place of religion and theological understanding in the rhetoric of both sides in the conflict.

With the partial support of Imitatio, COV&R members at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, have organized a conference, "Rethinking Europe's Wars of Religion," which is scheduled

to take place June 7-9, 2012. Building upon important recent scholarly challenges to the commonplace view that religious differences caused the violence of these wars, this conference promises to add a Girardian perspective on the historians' scapegoating of religion in order to promote the autonomy of the State.

Again with partial support (generously given and gratefully acknowledged) from Imitatio, COV&R will hold its annual meeting in Tokyo, Japan, July 5-8, at International Christian University. The theme selected by its organizer, Jeremiah ("Jay") ALBERG, is "Apocalyptic Revisited: Japan, Hiroshima, and the Place of Mimesis." In Japan, COV&R members will remember that the violence of history is not only recorded in archives and textbooks, in the "places" of rhetorical invention. It is written into bodies and memories, inscribed in cityscapes, landscapes, and public memorials. It haunts the physical places where it has occurred, keeping the past present.

MCKENNA's answer "History!" is not the only watchword taken up by COV&R members in recent months. Inspired by the fiftieth anniversary of the publication in French of *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, nine COV&R members have answered "Literature!" to the question "What's next?" As I write this letter, I eagerly await the arrival of the next issue of *Religion and Literature*, which contains a forum of short essays by Pierpaolo ANTONELLO, Ann ASTELL, Benoît CHANTRE, Robert DORAN, Sandor GOODHART, Justin JACKSON, William JOHNSEN, Wolfgang PALAVER, and Heather WEBB on the "religious dimension" of GIRARD's first book. The publication of this forum is a timely accompaniment to the release in January, 2012, from Michigan State University Press of a paperback edition of René GIRARD's *Resurrection from the Underground: Feodor Dostoevsky*, in the English translation of James G. WILLIAMS.

Those who would name "Theology!" as the (ever) new frontier in the work of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion have many new publications in which to rejoice. I want to call attention to the winter issue of *Modern Theology*, in which two major articles (by Cyril O'REGAN and Kevin MONGRAINE, respectively) focus on GIRARD as a theologian (a title GIRARD himself has always declined to accept for himself). Another theologian, Richard SCHENK,

O.P., is scheduled to give the Raymund Schwager, S.J., Memorial Lecture at the 2012 COV&R meeting in Japan.

The call for “Education!” can be heard from the Dutch Girard Society. With the support of *Imitatio* and through the leadership of Thérèse ONDERDENWIJNGAARD, a Summer School in Mimetic Theory will again take place in The Netherlands, July 15-29.

No single answer to the question “What’s next?” is given by the members of the Australian Girard Seminar, where a vibrant interdisciplinarity is alive. Through the generous support of *Imitatio*, it was my honor and privilege to travel to Australia for the second annual conference, organized by Scott COWDELL, Chris FLEMING, and Joel HODGE. Held January 13-14 at St. Mary’s College, at the University of Melbourne, the conference took as its theme “Sacrifice in Life, Love, and Literature.” About eighty participated in the meeting, which attracted many young scholars, as well as long-time readers of the work of René GIRARD. Imagine my surprise and joy to find Michael and Lorri HARDIN there in Australia, representing Preaching Peace. Present for my keynote lecture, “Hearing the Cry of the Poor: René Girard and St. Augustine on the Psalms,” were also a number of distinguished, invited guests—Professor Gerald O’COLLINS, S.J. (perhaps Australia’s foremost theologian), Professor Anne HUNT, Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at Australian Catholic University, and the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne. I was very impressed by the papers I heard, the people I met, the spirit of the seminar (whose membership is active and growing), the extraordinary hospitality. The officers of the Australian Girard Seminar can be justly proud of the fruit of their labors, which includes a collection of essays forthcoming from *Continuum*, *Violence, Desire, and the Sacred: Girard’s Mimetic Theory Across the Disciplines*.

I want to end the world-wide itinerary of this particular trip in France, René GIRARD’s homeland. Benoît CHANTRE and Sandor GOODHART are working together, again with the financial assistance of *Imitatio*, to organize a symposium in Paris, to be held November, 12-13, 2012, during which various invited speakers will compare and contrast the thought of René GIRARD and Emmanuel LEVINAS. By staging a

philosophical conversation between these two great religious thinkers, CHANTRE and GOODHART hope to assist the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in its public celebration of the newly acquired Girard archive.

In the space of this letter, then, I have travelled a long way from South Bend just by thinking of what is known to me (and I realize how incomplete that is!) about the recent efforts of COV&R members to study, critique, and apply the mimetic theory. The many other articles and reports in the Bulletin and on the webpage help to paint a fuller picture. My thanks to each one of you for what you do, individually and together, to make and to keep the Colloquium the very special organization that it is.

Hoping to see many of you in Tokyo!

Ann W. Astell

MUSINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Naturally, my musings tend toward the upcoming meeting – wondering if I will get the details right, if everyone will have a bed and some food, if the tables and chairs will all be set up. Worrying if people will actually come. It seems at once so far off and so close.

But my musings also take another turn. I think there are some things worth pondering in the event itself. The theme is, of course, *Apocalypse Revisited: Japan, Hiroshima, and the Place of Mimesis*, but the very mention of the name Hiroshima should give us pause. Who are we, I speak now of our organization, to come to a country for the first time and address an issue so immense, so horrible, so horrific that one could argue the only proper response is respectful silence? Who are we to come to this country, of which most of us know so little, and speak on the issues of Fukushima, of Tohoku, of disasters natural and human? I have lived in this country for over twenty years, I speak its language, I work in its institutions and I am sure that I have done no more than scratch the surface of the mystery that is Japan. It smacks of arrogance, doesn’t it, to come here and begin holding forth? I think it does smack of it, and that we would be irresponsible as an organization not to recognize the hazard that we run.

So we have to ask, what authorizes us to speak? And this is always a delicate question. Anyone can speak and, by and large, we are

free to say what we want to say. Conversely, no one has to listen. There are plenty of other voices out there, plenty of other, more mesmerizing alternatives. COV&R, through its activities, would like to make a difference. We are not holding the meeting in Japan for the sake of trip. It is a real effort to expand the sphere of our discourse, to be able to hear more directly voices that otherwise we might never know of. But we also come here to talk. And so I ask again, what authorizes us to speak? There has been a gentle back and forth between Japan and mimetic theory for over thirty years now. GIRARD wrote some books and some Japanese scholars found them worth the effort not only to study and absorb but to translate and publish. Other works, by people like Jean-Pierre DUPUY and Paul DUMOUCHEL, have also been translated. Then there is the original research by Japanese scholars. All of this forms a kind of implicit invitation for COV&R to travel to Japan and make the conversation more explicit, more focused.

I hope that there is also something larger going on. COV&R is part of a movement in history toward taking the side of the victim and uncovering his or her story. It is about cutting through the distortions of the persecutors that prevent the truth of the victim from emerging. Given this, COV&R is (if I may butcher the language a bit) authoritatively authorized to speak. That is, if COV&R remains true to its own mission, it not only can speak, but must speak about the unspeakable. The various members will do this each in their own way, but the common mission remains enabling one another to see, to hear, to touch the wounded and afflicted. It is to give voice to those who have been silenced and whose memory is in danger of being effaced through collective violence. This presupposes that we ourselves have, to some extent, allowed ourselves to be divested of those mimetic distortions we seek to point out to others. More profoundly, it presupposes the humble acknowledgment that recognizing the speck in one's brother's or sister's eye is a child's game compared to discovering the beam in one's own. It is only insofar as that beam has been recognized that our words will carry any weight here in the East.

Jeremiah Alberg

REPORTS ON CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

COV&R at the Meeting of the American Academy of Religion 2011 in San Francisco

It is a tribute to the leadership and organizational skills of Martha REINEKE that three, very informative and successful sessions were mounted at the meeting of the AAR in San Francisco, CA.



Charles Bellinger explaining his book's ideas

In the Saturday morning session on books, Charles BELLINGER summarized his argument in *The Trinitarian Self: Key to the Puzzle of Violence*. He explained his purpose to construct a grand theological anthropology synthesizing Christian trinitological notions and the thought of KIERKEGAARD, VOEGELIN and GIRARD. Working from a primary figure having three axes: a vertical axis (God-nature), a horizontal axis of cultural formation (neighbor-state), and a temporal axis of the formation of selfhood (past-future), BELLINGER organized and compared a set of analogues (theological virtues, atonement theory, pathologies of human society, creation narratives, philosophical systems, etc.). At the end of his exposition, BELLINGER's conclusion fused Kierkegaardian oppositions with a version of the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, maintaining that we are violent because we have refused to live at the intersection of the various axes, holding all dimensions of reality together in tensile complexity.

In the lively discussion of the book which followed, respondent James FODOR (Bonaventure University) assessed the strengths and weaknesses of BELLINGER's book. Among the

strengths were: its synthetic reach (it brought together KIERKEGARD, VOGELIN, GIRARD and trinitology), its basic level (it required no prior technical knowledge), its straightforward prose and examples. Among the weaknesses FODOR identified were a tendency toward procrustean structures, the vaulting ambition of the project, and BELLINGER's vagueness about conversion as a solution to the human predicament.

When the discussion was opened to the audience, it became very wide-ranging, involving the possible applicability of BELLINGER's structures to the "Occupy" movement, a discussion of the meaning of Trinitarian missions and appropriations and whether BELLINGER had gotten them right, a challenge to the basis and generality of BELLINGER's analogies, and wonder about how the centerless triangle of desire could be given Trinitarian interpretation.

Next, Anthony BARTLETT (Theology and Peace) spoke about the writing of *Virtually Christian*. He began his exposition by describing his book as the theological equivalent of "crawling out on a branch," inasmuch as it was an attempt to create a constructive theology by moving it from metaphysics to anthropology, in particular, to create an anthropologically-based semiotics. BARTLETT characterized his contribution as the making of a genealogy of compassion to complement GIRARD's genealogy of violence; his original discovery was that Girardian semio-genesis could be turned against the processes of violence via the "photon of compassion." In the postmodern world, the role the media played in the geometrical multiplication and amplification of this "photon," meant that it was causatively and externally effective in ways that were not explicitly recognized in those who were exposed to it. By this action, the limited categories of traditional Christianity not sufficient to comprehend it were exploded. BARTLETT concluded his optimistic summary with the hope that, as the Girardian understanding of violence proliferated rhizomically, a critical mass might be achieved resulting in a "chain reaction," reversing the world's direction and moving it from a culture of violence to a culture of compassion.

The response to BARTLETT's presentation came from Christopher MORELAND standing in for Diana PASULKA (University of North Carolina). MORELAND's response was largely appre-

ciative, especially with respect to the positive tone of BARTLETT's thesis, in contrast to the somber note sounded by GIRARD's recent apocalypticism. MORELAND also affirmed that something like a photon of compassion has multiplied and proliferated in the wider semiotic sphere, so that the scapegoat-victimage structure has become widely-recognized and repudiated. Finally, MORELAND affirmed the role the sphere of the virtual played in the reproduction of compassion and suggested that this is where the resources of pastoral mission ought especially be directed in the 21st century.

In the lively discussion that followed, pointed questions were put to BARTLETT. He was challenged on his claim that GIRARD was not concerned with positive mimesis and compassion. Another objected that the competition for victimage status contradicted BARTLETT's argument—people were fleeing *to* victimage instead of rejecting it thus turning the scapegoat mechanism against their persecutors and, in the process, becoming persecutors. A couple of participants also took issue with (what they perceived to be) BARTLETT's naïve optimism, arguing that virtual culture was *as exclusive* as it was inclusive (enabling its participant to insulate themselves against the photon of compassion). They characterized it as wishful thinking to imagine that the world has become a less violent place and that the tide against violence might be stemmed by "magical" action of the photon of compassion, instead of active commitment.

The second very full and well-attended AAR session was dedicated to using mimetic theory as an interpretive frame for cinema and was co-sponsored with the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group. This joining of themes and groups seemed to this reporter to be a breath of fresh air at the AAR; it was a collaboration worth repeating.

After some very minor audio-visual difficulties, the first presenter, Brian COLLINS (University of Chicago) showed clips from the films, *The Wrestler* and *Black Swan*, to illustrate his presentation entitled "Sacrificial Ram and Swan Queen." In his presentation, COLLINS argued that the unifying theme in both movies was director Darren ARONOFSKY's use of scapegoating as a structure for the exploration of the human body as a site of mimetic rivalry. In both

movies, the dedication *to* and rigors *of* physical exertion became a metaphor for self-sacrifice.

In *The Wrestler*, Mickey Rourke improbably played a Christ figure wrestler, whose ring name was “The Ram.” Emblematically bearing the image of the crucified Christ tattooed across his back, he was a celebrity who lost his following, who went from fame to failure, from an insider to an outcast, and who was raised from a first death (heart attack) to face a second death in the ring with a rival known as “The Ayatollah.” According to COLLINS’s interpretation, “The Ram” was a sacrificial victim reduced to a near nullity, a dispossessed survivor who has no oblation except his broken-down body.

COLLINS’s take on *Black Swan* was that the genetic anomaly of cygnic blackness stands for the dangerously repressed shadow-side of the main character. COLLINS noted that Director ARONOFSKY admitted DOSTOYEVSKY’s story, “The Double,” was a key inspiration. This was evident throughout the movie as the revelation of this repressed self surfaced in a series of hallucinations in which the ballerina, Nina (Natalie Portman), fused with her doubled competitors (Beth, her mother, Lily, and then even with her schizoid self). This doubling was also signaled by pervasive mirror imagery. At the climax of the film, Nina, metamorphosed into the bird of the title, finally achieved a perfect performance by self-sacrificially dying from a self-inflicted mortal wound, the wound she imagined she had inflicted on Lily. Only too late, Nina discovered she had been in mimetic rivalry only with herself.

The second presenter was David HUMBERT (Thorneloe University) on “Hitchcock and the Scapegoat: A Girardian Reading of *The Wrong Man*.” HUMBERT described his purpose—a part of a larger book project—as interpreting the films of Alfred HITCHCOCK which surprisingly had not received much Girardian treatment. The Hitchcock film presented was based on real events about a musician wrongly accused of a robbery and the contagion of false accusation and guilt that resulted in the mental illness of his wife and the breakdown of his family. Clips were shown to illustrate how the legal system was only partially able to contain the murderous passions of the crowd, so that even within nomic constraints the social order dissolved, pitching each as the enemy of the all. At the

center of anomie, Manny Bellastrero (Henry Fonda) became the safety valve for the release of strife and the restoration of order. Though the film was a bit melodramatically shrill, HUMBERT made a case that there was a realistic message behind the film. It is not true that the innocent person has nothing to fear because the crowd is always waiting to seal his fate. The legal system is only partially able to contain the scapegoat mechanism in its corporate and individual forms.

The third presentation by Una STRODA (Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago), “*No Country for Old Men*, Girard and Bataille: Can Violence Make Sense?” was an application of theories of BATAILLE and GIRARD to make sense of the film’s violence. Taking BATAILLE as foil to GIRARD, STRODA argued that the movie was an exploration of the question: “What do we do when life collapses into chaos?” In her discussion, STRODA maintained that the central character of Chigurh (Javier Bardem)—the psychotic embodiment of surd evil—was the necessary product of an *already* violent society, and served its order instrumentally by constituting the community which opposed him. More controversially, she also claimed that the character of Chigurh had a transcendent and sacred function. As a grim reaper, he was beyond good and evil; he killed not out of malice but to destroy the *thinghood* of the individual, one of the forms of alienation from intimacy. Though psychopathic murderer, Chigurh was also a spiritual emancipator: he freed the spirit of his victims and momentarily reintegrated society. But, in the long run, societies ensure the creation of an endless supply of Chigurhs to maintain their integrity.

The fourth and final presentation for the session by Nicholas BOTT (Christ Community Church) was “How Can Satan Cast Out Satan? Violence and the Birth of the Sacred in Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Knight*.” In his reading of the film, BOTT came to the daring conclusion that contrary to popular opinion—and much superficial symbolism—Batman did not function as a figure of the Christ, but—if anything—as a figure of the Antichrist. Although Batman might be thought to be an embodiment of justice, he was actually caught in a web of rivalrous desire with the Joker; he did not break free of mimetic structures but is complicit with

the view that it is acceptable to do evil to accomplish good. This means that Batman fundamentally inverted the mission of Christ. Though Christ sacrificed himself to reveal truth, Batman sacrificed himself to suppress the truth about himself, Harvey Dent, and The Joker. In such a reversal, the more aware Satanic figure—The Joker—determined the sequence of actions, ultimately engineering his own expulsion, an expulsion which sealed Batman's corruption. The corruption of the Caped Crusader was expressed in an epigram Batman spoke toward the end of the film, an epigram which is an infernal reversal of both the primacy of truth and the order of salvation: "Sometimes, truth isn't good enough; sometimes people's faith needs to be rewarded."

The discussion which followed touched upon many of the interpretative details of the movie scenes shown, but also raised a number of interesting issues. Among them was curiosity as to whether ARONOFSKY had read GIRARD, his cinematographic vision being so close to that of Girardian theory. A vigorous discussion also broke out, revealing that the audience was generally uncomfortable with STRODA's (perhaps too Nietzschean) interpretation of Chigurh, one of them mentioning that the title of the novel/movie was from YEATS and a clear allusion to the Antichrist.

The purpose of the third and final session was to take up the notion of the Apocalypse and the way it can be read in a variety of texts. Three thinkers considered the idea of apocalypse in three different textual sites: in anti-Semitic and philo-Semitic ideology, in the novels of ACHEBE, and in CASSIAN's writings on discernment.

Kevin MILLER (Huntington University) led the session by sharing his eye-opening research on the rhetoric and function of apocalyptic narratives. In a paper entitled "The Jewish Mirror: Double Mimesis in the Apocalyptic Narratives of the Christian Identity and Christian Zionist Movements," he showed how the Girardian sequence of eruption of chaos, retrospective accusation of criminal origin, identification of the perpetrators, marking of the perpetrators, and violent expulsion has been repeated historically and accompanied by (one of two versions of) a three-stage Ricoeurian mimetic hermeneutic of the prefigured, configured, and refigured. In the

case of futurist accounts of apocalyptic expectations, MILLER showed that these were constructed with the claim of factuality while at the same time having an emplotment which was fictive. Persecution texts, on the other hand, were shown to have an especially strange narrative which appropriated the persecutory narrative of another group, while rhetorically turning it against the very group from which it was appropriated.

William JOHNSEN (Michigan State University) followed this up with an eloquently crafted paper entitled "Acherbe's Apocalypse." In this presentation, JOHNSEN argued that GIRARD's theory of the modern was essentially apocalyptic, and there were continuities between this view and the view expressed in ACHEBE's novel, *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo (the protagonist) is portrayed as experiencing the transition from tribal culture to modernity as critique and apocalypse. The transition experienced by Okonkwo was charged with the apprehension that the terminus of this process can only be in a new demonic order, this fear expressed in circular and indignant resentment. The narrator was thus shown as being caught in a double-bind, questioning the violent, sacrificial Ibo culture but also rejecting the alien culture of the Christian missionaries.

The final paper of all the sessions was that of Kevin LENEHAN (Catholic Theological College, Melbourne), "Living Faithfully Where Danger Threatens: Christian Discernment in Escalating Times." In his presentation, LENEHAN offered a "reading cure" for the Christian facing apocalyptic times by suggesting that the apocalyptic apprehension identified by GIRARD, need not be a pessimistic dead-end but might be harnessed spiritually. Using John CASSIAN's four stages of spiritual discernment—discerning the two ways, interpreting God's desire in the moment, response with moderation and mediation, and growing authentically toward God—LENEHAN gave CASSIAN's approach to discernment a Girardian reading, illustrating what this might mean as a contemporary repudiation of mimetic violence.

Unfortunately, this reporter was unable to stay for either the extended discussion of these papers or for the business meeting. (He very nearly missed his plane.)

Thomas Ryba

The editor thanks Tom very much for his extensive report. The results of the business meeting can be seen in the preview to the next COV&R at the AAR session, starting on page 3.

Niki Wandinger

The Dutch Girard Study Group celebrates the 50th anniversary of *Mensonge romantique*

The 50th anniversary of GIRARD's 1961 ground-breaking *Mensonge romantique* has mainly been commemorated by variously sized conferences all over, from the US to Brazil, Poland, etc. Their papers will appear in due time.

But the Dutch Girard-study group chose another way by publishing a collection of articles, on date. The editors Michael ELIAS and André LASCARIS got some 18 authors from their circle to write on a topical theme in mimetic perspective. The resulting 283-page book was launched on November 26, 2011, in central Amsterdam. The location of the De Balie was a former courthouse and the day's chairperson Nico KEIJZER, the group's senior member and a retired judge himself, alerted the 100 plus audience to one of GIRARD's finest insights, namely that the modern legal system has effectively taken over the role of religious institutions in pacifying society. He invited the two editors to describe the 30 years of the Dutch group's work of fruitful reflection on GIRARD's mimetic theory and to give to the audience a brief summary thereof. Both showed the theory to be fun, by citing amusing examples; Michael recalled our late Prince Consort's hilarious rebellion, when he mimicked the fair sex's privilege of a *décolleté*; and André, by one-upmanship, lauded his own father's precursory grasp of mimetism's mercantile potential, as he helped sell his neighbour's unsalable lot of herrings by just raising the price by a meagre 250%! That said, they spelled out how the good-humoured group had done a creative job, over the 30 years, thanks also to deceased members who deserved special mention.

A review of the book can be found on page 16 of this Bulletin. It rests with me to cite chairman Nico's convincing way of relating the book to the special interest of the theologian Dr. Manuela KALSKY who received the 'offering' of the first copy. Her organisation project called W!J (We!) indeed, at the Dominican Theological Study Centre (DSTS), strives to create a

sense of an inclusive 'WE', beyond the many exclusive ones thatacerbate crises all over and drive marginal groups into turmoil. Speaking from the point of view of her organisation W!J, the recipient not only thanked for the fascinating collection of original reflections, but pointed out how the practical hermeneutics practiced in this type of studies, becomes effective by raising the awareness of mimetic mechanisms. This helps when, as both editors have shown in practice, one engages in religio-social trouble spots. She called on the audience to pick up a copy and read Tolle, lege Her advice was taken in earnest, causing the publishers' salesman to run out of stock, much like André's father once ran out of his neighbour's herrings.

Wiel Eggen

René Girard et la Théologie Report from a Conference of the Association Recherches Mimétiques at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris

Thanks to Benoit CHANTRE's efforts René GIRARD's academic estate will soon be taken over by the French National Library in Paris. What would have been more fitting than conducting a Girard symposium at this highly reputed institution! Thus, CHANTRE invited for March 16, 2012 to a conference of the Association Recherches Mimétiques into the breathtaking architecture of the library, and more than 200 participants followed his invitation. Theological questions were the focus of this conference, and this was aptly so because the theological reception of GIRARD's thinking in France is still quite fragmentary and sometimes distorted. The very first theological reactions to *De Choses Cachées* viewed mimetic theory as the destruction of Christian traditions, especially the theology of sacrifice. Therefore professional theologians seemed to withdraw from the debate very quickly. Hopefully the French translation of R. SCHWAGER's *Must there be scapegoats?*, which has recently appeared with Flammerion Publishing House (also thanks to CHANTRE's efforts), will rectify some of the distortions.

For these reasons the conference mainly wanted to attract French theologians. In his opening presentation Benoit CHANTRE placed the emphasis on theological methodology: Differentiating between the divine that "comes

from humans” and the divine that “comes to humans” allows for the revision of traditional theological methods and provides a link for a creative dialogue with our current culture.

The main talks of the conference splendidly corroborated this basic assumption. James ALISON presented his outline of a theology of original sin, which is inspired by GIRARD and joins together the doctrine of original sin and the message of the resurrection. The center of his presentation was sin as pathology of desire, which could be seen as paying homage to *Mensonge romantique*. Francois EUVÉ, Dean of the Jesuit Faculty Centre Cevres, discussed ALISON in a “creative” way and developed an outline of his own, a relational anthropology, which also found its focus in the message of the resurrection and the constitution of the body of Christ. The Jewish interlocutor, Dan ARBIB propounded a clear-cut thesis, namely that GIRARD’s anthropology was “perfectly Christian” and therefore—because centered on sacrifice?—it was in the final analysis “pagan”. ARBIB drew on the distinction between a Judaism of the law within the land (which would have to be centered on sacrifice as well) and a Judaism of the dispersion among the peoples, which had to be centered on the word. He provided a masterpiece of Rabbinic learnedness, also drawing on Levinas. His basic argument that Jewish anthropology was an “anthropology of the word” and therefore completely anti-sacrificial was used by ARBIB as an argument against GIRARD. I suspect, however, that the presenter is more indebted to GIRARD in his argument than he would admit.

Another masterpiece of learnedness, this time philosophical, was provided by Lucien SCUBLA. Starting from the supposition that the strongest part of GIRARD’s theory was his ideas about sacrifice, he positioned these between ROUSSEAU and PASCAL. He even diagnosed a chasm between GIRARD’s Catholic attitude and his theory of sacrifice. This actually was water on the mills of the early French theological receptions. Dominique PECCOUD concluded this intriguing day with an outline of a Trinitarian theology, which was original and also inspired by Girard. Other participants included—besides this reporter—Michael KIRWAN from London and Jean Pierre DUPUY.

*Józef Niewiadomski,
translation: Nikolaus Wandinger*

BOOK REVIEWS

Astell, Ann W. and Goodhart, Sandor (eds.):
Sacrifice, Scripture, and Substitution: Readings in Ancient Judaism and Christianity.
Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011; 475 pp.; U.S. \$ 49;
ISBN 978-0-268-02038-5 (pbk)

This book is a labor of love for the editors and a volume in which every essay is worth the time spent for study, reflection, and further research. Not that all the contributions speak directly to the title, but it is nonetheless an excellent volume. That interrelation indicated in the title is more directly addressed in the editors’ introduction and some of the essays in part one on sacrifice. Beyond that, as a set of readings in ancient Judaism and Christianity, it is a remarkable anthology, which contains a number of papers first delivered in June 2002 at the annual meeting of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion at Purdue University. Due to space limitations, I must limit this review to a critique of just five of the contributions and list the remaining sixteen with a brief characterization of their argument.

GOODHART’s and ASTELL’s piece introducing the anthology is extremely thorough. Before presenting a survey of all the contributions they place the volume in context by helpfully explicating substitutive reading and its relation to GIRARD’s mimetic theory. Their explication turns on delineating four types of substitution (logic of equivalency, commemorative experience [repetition of conversion], substitution of one expression of the sacrificial mechanism for another, and the sacrifice of sacrifice). They pose the fundamental question whether the evolving of these types of sacrifice may lead, through Jewish and Christian practice, to a fifth, higher perspective and practice that is ethical—responsibility for the other.

I wonder about the accuracy of two points in the editors’ introduction, which are minor in the total context of their presentation: the statement that “by temperament and conception Girard’s work derives from Durkheim” (p. 2) and the identification of KANT with “historical-critical method in biblical criticism” (p. 12). GIRARD’s work is *related* to DURKHEIM’s by temperament and conception, and the latter’s sociology served to confirm aspects of the mimetic theo-

ry. However, if the editors mean it *derives* from DURKHEIM, that is incorrect according to what GIRARD has said, namely that his basic concepts of mimetic desire, the scapegoat mechanism, and role of the victim in biblical revelation, were already formed before he studied DURKHEIM. As for KANT, his concept of the moral imperative in practical reason influenced biblical scholarship's way of interpreting moral and spiritual progress from Israel's beginnings to the great prophets, but a critical form of textual reading that arrived at differentiation of compositional units in the Torah had begun long before KANT. In fact, one can find its beginnings already in SPINOZA.

In GOODHART's interview of GIRARD, "Mimesis, Sacrifice, and the Bible" he gently prods and evokes GIRARD in eliciting an excellent introduction to GIRARD's thought. In this conversation GIRARD is most engaged in the phenomenon of sacrifice stemming from scapegoating and the emergence of an anti-sacrificial perspective in some of the world's great religions (but see p. 64 for his qualification of that), especially in Judaism and Christianity. One wonders whether one of GIRARD's remarks concerning mimesis, which is that because societies are formed on the basis of mimetic rivalry, this "means that you cannot stop imitating the violence of your opponent" (p. 43), should simply be understood in the context of introducing the historical reality of mimetic desire. Is it inconsistent with what he has otherwise said about the power of forgiveness, especially through identifying with the Christian revelation? But on the other hand, is it actually consistent with the historical pessimism expressed in his last major book, *Battling to the End*, where he renounces his former naïve illusion that one could transcend the historical process in committing oneself to an essential Christianity and declares that historical Christianity has failed?

Thomas RYBA's essay, "Bloody Logic," is methodologically important. Drawing upon M. MAUSS and H. HUBERT, he distinguishes different logics of sacrifice, which are food for thought and research. He does not relate this to GIRARD's work except in a very general fashion. One future task for him and others would be to determine the relation of mimetic desire, directly or indirectly, to the different varieties of sacrifice that he differentiates.

RYBA's intention is to show the continuities and discontinuities between the Jewish and Christian understandings of sacrifice. Christian sacrifice stemming from the Eucharist is based on the same economy of bread (signifying "life," the absolute commensurate standard) and blood (signifying health or "life force") as the Old Testament tradition of sacrificial patterns.

His method at arriving at sacrificial patterns in both OT and NT is quite complex and complicated by the use of symbols from logic. I myself found them more confusing than helpful. He concludes that there are continuities between these patterns in the OT and the NT, but there are two primary differences. One is that in the exchange involved in sacrifice, the commensurate standard, life, is equivalent to the substance of the God-Man, Christ, which is mediated by the bread and the wine. The other difference is that the self-offering of Christ is a unique substitutionary sacrifice (99-100; see 95-100). One of the insights RYBA offers is that in relation to the OT, Christian sacrifice, as represented in the Eucharist, is transgressive in its transformative character.

RYBA's analysis and proposals merit further consideration. The one reservation I have is that he accepts as fact the widely held conclusion that the pre-exilic prophets "never objected to sacrifice as such ..." (88). However, the historical perspective of the majority of biblical scholars is misinformed by the belief, for whatever reasons or warrants, that animal sacrifice was simply part of the religion of ancient Israel accepted by everyone, and the challenge of the great prophets was to restore moral uprightness and social justice as the necessary concomitants to authentic offering of sacrifices. To the contrary, that belief is belied in some of the great pre-exilic prophets (Isaiah 1:10-17; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-25; also Micah 6:6-8, if the latter passage is pre-exilic). Not just these verses but their context too indicate a prophetic intuition combining opposition to blood sacrifice and the insight that the ritual itself has some connection with the spilling of human blood—violence and murder (Hosea 6:4-11; cf. Jeremiah 7:30-34; 19:1-9). This evidence points to at least a partial prophetic exposure of the sacrificial mechanism, although it does not go as far as the revelation of God participating with the prophet in a salvific sacrifice that would end sacrifice.

Yet—is there not prophetic movement in that direction? In Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Second Isaiah we see something remarkable: the prophets not only experiencing the suffering of their people but also their interiorizing of the pathos of God’s grief over the waywardness of his people. (See G. von RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. II [tr. D.M.G. Stalker. New York: Harper and Row, 1965], 274-277; cf. also A. HESCHEL, *The Prophets* [New York: Harper Collins Perennial Classics, 2001].) How far are these prophets from the Passion of Jesus of Nazareth? They lack, historically considered, only a sustained historical movement of disciples who participate memorially in their suffering and resurrection (the latter declared of the Servant of YHWH in Isaiah 53:11-12).

Two other contributions present interpretations that are methodologically significant, although I have serious reservations about them. One is “The Unbinding of Isaac” by Stephen STERN. STERN draws partially upon LEVINAS in construing the Akedah as the divine call to Abraham to take responsibility for his son Isaac, to receive him truly as his son, a gift of peace, when he frees him. It is a stirring and inspiring reading. However, the *midrashic* method, which is employed also to view Sarah as the true victim of the Akedah, comes across as a mode of interpretation that creates plausibility out of texts that are felt to be too terrible—or in some cases, too puzzling—to be plausible. The method may point to what is relevant or true for an extra-biblical audience but it comes across to me as a way of “saving the texts” that undercuts their validity in biblical interpretation.

I have the same problem with Sandor GOODHART’s review of STERN’s and PATILLO’s readings in “Blessing and Binding.” He continues this midrashic mode by bringing together in fundamental unity the readings of PATILLO and STERN and more generally the thinking of GIRARD, LEVINAS, and the rabbis. This appears to be “misplaced meaning.” That is, the meaning attained, what is signified, is full of insight, but it is simply loaded into the biblical text as if it is already there. More true to reality, which I take to be historical and evolutionary, is to understand the Bible as a process that evinces the beginning of a problem or question, or one could say the initial revelation of still embryonic meanings that point toward some end, a goal.

In the case of the Christian interpretation, this would be Christ and his witnesses. In the case of Judaism it would be the rabbinic tradition as witness to Torah. But these meanings are in the Bible as possibilities, potential, not actuality. In the midrashic model it looks as though the Bible is sacrificed to midrash, which is concerned with history in the sense of contemporary questions and thinkers, but it does not do justice to the travail of the historical process that produced the biblical foundations of Judaism and Christianity.

The following are the other contributions to the anthology, each of which has something important to say, whether directly addressed to the volume’s title or not. Michael FISHBANE, in “Aspects of the Transformation of Sacrifice in Judaism,” examines the rabbinic transformations of sacrifice after animal sacrifice became impossible when the Second Temple was destroyed. Bruce CHILTON, in “The Eucharist and the Mimesis of Sacrifice,” sketches different traditions relating to the Eucharist in the New Testament, and posits the generative event as Jesus’ substitution of himself for the sacrificial ritual of the Temple. Robert DALY, in “Eucharistic Origins: From the New Testament to the Golden Age,” follows and approves of most of what CHILTON proposes, but emphasizes that the Eucharist, as practiced in the traditional liturgy of the church, developed fully only in the later centuries. Alan SEGAL, in “Life after Death: Violence, Martyrdom, and Academic Life in Western Religions,” gives a survey of views of afterlife in which he touches lightly on the connection of martyrdom to the mimetic theory in terms of sacrificial offering as self-sacrifice. Louis FELDMAN in “Anti-Josephus, and the Hellenistic-Roman Period,” concludes that Jews were not subject to “anti-Semitism” in the Greco-Roman age in any fashion comparable to the persecution occurring in the medieval and modern world (*pace* the anti-Jewish writers, Apion, Manetho, and Chaeremon whom Josephus cites). Eric GRUEN, in “Anti-Judaism: Beyond the ‘Lachrymose Version’ of Jewish History,” agrees with FELDMAN and argues that the Jews had, more or less, an accepted place and role in a pluralist, polytheistic culture and economy. Stuart D. ROBERTSON, in “Mimesis, Scapegoating, and Philo-Semitism,” also agrees with FELDMAN, but asks the astute question

whether admiration and emulation of Jews by the Gentiles in Alexandria, where pluralist competition was intense, turned into the mimetic rivalry that led to the violent pogrom.

The second part of the volume, focusing on Scripture as such, begins with Matthew PATILLO's essay, "Creation and *Akedah*: Blessing and Sacrifice in the Hebrew Scriptures." He argues that the *Akedah* (Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac) reveals victory over mimetic rivalry with god and identification with the victim that forms a profound unity with the death and resurrection of Christ as the *Akedah* for the world. Chris CARTER, in "Mimesis, Sacrifice, and the Wisdom of Job," acutely contrasts certain modern interpretations of Job that argue for literary union of the book and Job's mystical or mythical union with Deity to Girard's reading, according to which the book contains contradictory strata that expose the scapegoat mechanism. William MORROW, in "The Expulsion of Complaint from Early Jewish Worship," holds that the crisis of faith in God's justice presented in Job owed much to a pre-exilic psalmody heritage, but later, in the Second Temple period, the ruling authorities (Temple priesthood and foreign overlords) imposed limitations that suppressed complaint prayer, at least in public liturgy. Sandor GOODHART, in "The Book of Job and the Problem of Evil," draws upon LEVINAS and the midrashic tradition to interpret Job as a process, not of rational solution to evil and suffering, but as a poem calling for responsibility for the other, indeed for creation itself. William Martin AIKEN in "Luke and the Opportune Time," offers insight into the devil's desire for the selfhood of Jesus as Jesus chooses to be his Father's son and live in grateful obedience to the Father. Gerald ROSSE in "A Gospel That Preaches Nonviolence and Yet Provokes Violence," demonstrates contradictory motifs in Matthew: the love of enemies tied to the proximity of God's kingdom and the polemic against the Pharisees, probably due to expulsion of Christians from the synagogues, a polemic which has had a regrettable effect on Jewish-Christian relations throughout history. Ann W. ASTELL in "'Exilic' Identities, the Samaritans, and the 'Satan' of John" interprets the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in John 4 as the Fourth Gospel's substitution for the temptation account in Matthew and Luke, a

meeting in which Jesus resists the temptation to exclude the foreign other. Christopher S. MORRISSEY in "Aristotle's 'Natural Slaves' and Colossae's Unnatural 'Scythians'" presents a model of detailed, though somewhat speculative, exegesis of Colossians 3:11 that unearths mimetic rivalry, part of a divisive false attitude on the part of "Greek" Christians. Poong-In LEE in "Is an Anti-Sacrificial Reading of Hebrews Plausible?" argues that GIRARD was quite right to accept R. SCHWAGER's interpretation of Hebrews as anti-sacrificial (or better, non-sacrificial), for in Hebrews we find two powerful interpretive topics that undercut the sacrificial language and references of the work: (1) The emphasis on faith and obedience attested in the Old Testament forebears and in Jesus, and (2) the imperative for followers of Jesus to go "outside the camp" and offer themselves there with him in his suffering. Finally, Anthony W. BARTLETT, in "Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and René Girard: A Response to Christopher Morrissey and Poong-In Lee," offers an appreciative critique that suggests ways in which these two essays could contribute significantly to the release of the dynamic, apocalyptic force of GIRARD's thought.

James Williams

**Elias, Michael / Lascaris, André (ed.):
*Rond de crisis Reflecties vanuit de Girard
Studiekring. Parthenon, Almere, NL (2011),
283 pp.; € 22.99 ISBN/EAN 9789079578320
pbk; ISBN/EAN 9789079578368 Epub***

Fifty years after the publication of the first great study of René GIRARD (*Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, 1961), the Dutch Girard Society has marked its own thirtieth anniversary with a volume in which eighteen authors point at the usefulness of GIRARD's mimetic theory for cultural analysis. The book demonstrates, for a broad (Dutch) audience, and in an accessible and non-specialist way, that GIRARD's insights into the triangular structure of human drives may reveal hardly visible but determinant mimetic tensions and conflicts in contemporary culture. The central idea in this volume is—see the title—that our culture continuously undergoes crises.

After an editorial introduction, the volume opens with a fine essay by cultural-anthropologist Simon SIMONSE on the meaning of the

concept of crisis. SIMONSE observes, by the way, that this concept is almost absent in Girard's later works, supposedly because of Girard's view that we live, not in an era in which periodically a crisis occurs, but, as SIMONSE writes, in an 'inevitably linearly escalating end time' (p. 44)! So a critical reader of the volume may ask whether Girard could be right in not using the concept of 'crisis' anymore, and whether it makes sense to consider our modern times as being entrapped in continuous crises, as the editors of this volume apparently believe. One may, after all, wonder whether 'crisis' is a meaningful concept for designating our modern times, when one observes linearly deteriorating processes?

After this introduction on the concept of mimetic crisis, philosopher Joachim DUYNDAM gives an intriguing argument on the hermeneutical character of mimetic theory. Based as this theory is on mythical, biblical and other classical narratives, we are entitled, as apparently DUYNDAM suggests, to work with this theory in free and open ways. These two essays form the first part of the volume, together with an essay by (Emeritus) Professor of nuclear medicine, Guido HEIDENDAL on the biological conditions for social mimesis: mirror neurons form a biological condition for behavioural mimesis.

The second part of the volume deals with mimetic rivalries in the field of economics. Philosopher Paul DUMOUCHEL argues convincingly that scarcity is not simply an economic fact, but a social construction which exhibits mimetic dimensions, while economist Hans WEIGAND postulates that the current financial crisis in the West makes it clear that economic processes should be studied not strictly from the theoretical perspective of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), but from the perspective of Complex Mimetic Systems (CMS!): the so called adaptive economic processes actually function as processes of mimesis and rivalries! Subsequently, management consultant Frits BAKKER interprets reorganisation processes in major commercial concerns as types of rituals in which managers as kings/delayed scapegoats can be sacrificed, while communication consultant Huub ter HAAR indicates that new forms of commercial advertising are no longer product-oriented, but oriented on the desires of life-style aspirations: as if modern commercial 'commu-

nicators' have learned from GIRARD's views on the triangular structure of human desire!

The third part of the volume deals with politics. Legal scholar Philippe de KEUKELAERE asks in an investigative way in his essay on the conflicts between French-speaking and Flemish-speaking groups in Belgium, whether both groups can be considered to be 'doubles', that is rivalling mirror images of each other. And while cultural-anthropologist Mark ANSPACH interprets the recent revolts in the Arab world 'mimetically' as the sacrificial victimizing of the former ruler, linguist Michael ELIAS demonstrates socio-linguistically that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often a semiotic conflict, in particular on the issue who is the major real victim in the region.

In the fourth part of the volume, on 'Christianity', man of letters Berry VORSTENBOSCH, reflects on the public conflicts in the West about real victimhood. He asks: may one remember the perpetrator of a public shooting as a victim, or are only the persons shot or struck by the attackers real victims? And theologian André LASCARIS, while observing that in our time the boundaries between perpetrators and victims are sometimes erased—sidetracked bankers or fallen politicians who present themselves as victims and scapegoats etc.—pleads strongly for a clear distinction between the public ('the mob'), real perpetrators and real victims. Both essays in this part will help the reader by asking questions on mimetic theorizing on scapegoat and victimhood; the simple question for instance: is a scapegoat inevitably a victim?

The fifth part, on 'Letters and modern media', seems to be reserved for the only three female authors in this volume. Sonja POS, woman of letters, asks: what happens when, in a specific situation, a scapegoat cannot be removed, but confronts us continuously? She illustrates this kind of situation with a refreshingly written analysis of SARTRE's *Huis Clos*. Equally refreshing (and empirically well founded) is the essay of theatre scholar and writer Els LAUNSPACH on the way Dutch media in the nineties once victimized 'mimetically' (and unwittingly) the late right-wing politician Hans Janmaat. The last essay in this part will please all those readers who love to criticize the new social media: according to political scientist and theologian Melanie J. van OORT-HALL, Face-

book is a climax in the cultural diffusion of 'the romantic lie' (GIRARD's *Mensonge Romantique*). Facebook lives according to van OORT-HALL on snobbism and increases the mimetic contagion of desiring each other's desires. This essay is a well written (and well documented) specimen of a rather conservative form of cultural criticism, so it asks for counter criticism.

The last, sixth part of the volume is about social institutions and mimetic theory. Student (and teacher) of religion Erik BUYS writes about the institution of the secondary school. He advances in his essay the thesis that one may interpret the rebellious attitude of student teenagers on secondary schools as a form of entrapment in mimetic rivalries with their teachers. Ethicist and cultural-anthropologist Wiel EGGEN focuses on the Christian view of the institution of marriage. EGGEN works in line with GIRARD's views, where he postulates that in Christianity, horrible mimetic human interrelations are revealed and can be transcended. The Christian view on the sacrament of marriage points, according to EGGEN, to the potentials for deregulating mimetic relations between man and woman. In the last essay of this volume legal scholar Nico KEIJZER points with Girard to some continuities in the role of the sacrificial priest and the role of the contemporary legal magistrate. And KEIJZER asks what should happen to the administration of law now that we live in a time in which the once almost 'sacred' (sacrificial) authority of the court is increasingly challenged.

This book, in which the fecundity of GIRARD's theoretical concepts on mimesis is abundantly demonstrated, closes with a bibliography and indexes on names and subjects, which makes the book useful indeed for students. Let's hope that this volume may have its readers, and its criticism.

Anton van Harskamp

**Hedley, Douglas: *Sacrifice Imagined. Violence, Atonement, and the Sacred.*
London NY: Continuum, 2011. (240 pp.);
ISBN: 978-1-4411-1003-9 (hc);
ISBN: 978-1-4411-9445-9 (pbk) U.S. \$ 34.95
Kindle-ed.: \$ 20.15**

Sacrifice in its Totality

Douglas HEDLEY's *Sacrifice Imagined* must be one of the academic books richest in content I have ever read. Also *Sacrifice Imagined* is the first book which has made me really question GIRARD's nonsacrificial view on sacrifice (alongside GIRARD's own shift in perspective). The richness comes, both from the broad spectrum sacrifice is seen through, alongside the wealth of thinkers and authors he presents and discusses in order to underline his case. Many themes and presentations may at first sight seem marginal to the central theme, but, by the way Mr. HEDLEY uses them, they tend to become strikingly relevant. Among the wealth of philosophers, theologians, poets, dramatists and novelists, the likes of VICO, de MAISTRE, WORDSWORTH and VOLTAIRE are among those who become relevant in order to understand sacrifice. This is actually quite surprising.

Clearly the most important thinker for HEDLEY, in order to give a profound and positive view on sacrifice, is Joseph de MAISTRE, who was, as HEDLEY himself is, a Christian Platonist with a rather somber view on man. For HEDLEY sacrifice is the core of existence, either its meaning is violent or it means sacrificing oneself for the benefit of others. He wants to tell the reader that a sacrificial understanding of life enables us to delve into the deepest and most profound areas of existence, something which a purely rationalist view on life neither can fathom nor uncover. It is therefore understandable that HEDLEY initially delves into Greek tragedy, trying to give tragedy and myth a more positive significance than what is the case in GIRARD's interpretations. Also viewing/seeing sacrifice and conversion as something dependable on each other (for example DANTE's Purgatorium), is forcefully argued. Everything he says on SHAKESPEARE is also worth a read.

Douglas Hedley, a Christian Platonist, nonetheless gives a profound and unsentimental understanding of the *condition humaine* as deep-

ly imbued by original sin, this being even more surprising as his views are romantic—albeit not in any pompous manner. He seems to consider the Romantic spirit as some kind of fertile imagination in tune with a Christian-Platonic concept of a higher nature in man, distinct from all other creation. This emphasis on human uniqueness and violence caused by social Darwinism makes him a pronounced anti-naturalist.

In the prologue HEDLEY writes that “this book does not try to answer the problem of evil, but endeavors to explore some aspects of the inherited topics of suffering, violence, and atonement as sacrifice imagined.” (p. 6.) However, the great challenge (and difficulty) in *Sacrifice Imagined* is coming to terms with how the author understands *imagination* and how it is used in relation to sacrifice. Initially it stands for the opposite of fantasy, it builds on inherited imagery and instead of ritual slaughter, it refers to participation of life (p. 11). This rather messy attempt to introduce a vital concept really never gets clear cut (although a lot clearer) perhaps because HEDLEY is too eager to use and connect the same primary concept from his previous book, *Living Forms of Imagination* (2008). Sacrifice for HEDLEY is both real and a part of our cultural imagination. The latter means that sacrifice has a capacity for analogy (p. 38). Despite the reader feeling uncertain about how to understand *imagination* in sacrifice, the discussion on sacrifice as the center of existence gradually becomes more poignant and important. However the *imagination* bit is felt through the whole book as slightly forced. Hedley seems to become less focused on the symbolic side of sacrifice, as he moves on and becomes more preoccupied with sacrifice in a theological context.

HEDLEY sees GIRARD and BURKERT as the two most important modern thinkers on sacrifice. However, the emphasis on GIRARD’s understanding on sacrifice is based on GIRARD’s earlier views, not on GIRARD’s more sacrificial approach after *Things Hidden*. HEDLEY’s view that man cannot avoid partaking in the sacrificial, however, is in accordance with the later GIRARD’s work. While GIRARD in *Violence and the Sacred* analyzed sacrifice in relation to archaic religion, without any pronounced theological perspective, HEDLEY expands the discussion on sacrifice in order to understand its contemporary impact on culture. Sacrifice is locat-

ed both in the modern and secular as well as shaping history. HEDLEY seems to expand the territory of sacrifice in order to get to grips with its mimetic nature, both its negative and positive effects, and in its totality.

All in all there are only minor differences between the later GIRARD’s and HEDLEY’s understanding of sacrifice. Both would wholeheartedly agree with Simone WEIL that the false God changes suffering into violence while the true God changes violence into suffering (p. 177). After reading both GIRARD and HEDLEY I am still not sure if sacrifice, in the words of J. R. LUCAS “describes, but does not explain Christ’s death.” GIRARD and HEDLEY would say that sacrifice does both. However it is important to have in mind that mimetism is always prior to sacrifice and therefore capable of leading to other outcomes than sacrifice. But in the case of Jesus in the time of the Roman Empire it would be hard to see another outcome.

In *Sacrifice Imagined* sacrifice is basically seen as something positive and renewing. This is because HEDLEY sees the most true and advanced form of sacrifice as something fundamentally non-violent; an act created by a loving and forgiving God. From such a viewpoint he naturally criticizes OTTO for laying too much emphasis on *tremendum* and too little on *fascians* (p. 36). In relation to this, HEDLEY, with the aid of the analytic philosopher Richard SWINBURNE, is very convincing when he argues that man’s repentance and apology are insufficient “tools” for atonement, and that *reparation and repentance can only be offered by man through Christ* (p. 165). Hedley’s understanding of atonement is perhaps not strikingly new, but the argument, as far as I know, has never before been done in such a logical and “love-oriented” manner.

Hedley is probably on to something when he claims that GIRARD is a romantic figure despite himself (p. 177). If that should be the case, I would like to add, a romantic trying to overcome his Romanticism. But HEDLEY does not see any danger in Romanticism as he does not consider the blindness caused by the excesses of desire. I fully agree with HEDLEY in attacking Naturalism, which, in my view, is, from the point of desire, a Romantic turned cynical, but a Romantic all the same, driven by animalistic desires.

I am profoundly impressed by the thoroughness and learnedness in HEDLEY's book. At times the latter is slightly overdone. The Greek and Latin references are rarely translated. However, HEDLEY is so much of a pedagogue that the reader nevertheless understands it from the way the discussion is formed. Thus, the manner in which HEDLEY introduces de MAISTRE by beginning with Isaiah BERLIN's negation of his thought is a wonderful piece of pedagogic!

HEDLEY's ability to use different thinkers for his own purpose is impressive. His single-mindedness is so strong that he does not seem to fear any thinker at odds with his own views. Despite this HEDLEY impresses by his lack of Manichaeism (rarely creating oppositions between himself and others); he seldom fails to find something necessary and useful in the thought of those who do not belong to his "*famille d'esprit*".

Another thing which I admire in this book is the way the author manages to convey how, through self-sacrifice, suffering is turned into something which restores our humanity—without the author retorting to anything fanatically religious.

What I dislike in *Sacrifice Imagined* is the way the author tries to reignite PLATO and the Platonic tradition with regard to Christianity and sacrifice especially. The parts on the Cambridge Platonists do not seem to be as forceful as the other parts, and, I think, rather useless as a part of a modern debate on sacrifice. It tends to temper the whole discussion; at least I do not think it is very relevant for the mainstream theologian. The philosopher may find this discussion more relevant but, I fear, in order to soften the Gospels appeal to repentance towards our violently sacrificial tendencies. The whole discussion becomes too Gnostic and elitist, and not able to renew anything in Christianity. Neither am I convinced by HEDLEY's attachment to PLATO regarding sacrifice. PLATO has an understanding of sacrifice which, in my mind, is sacrificial in a really violent manner. Hedley himself would most certainly be the first to be kicked out of the Republic by revealing such a positive attitude to mimetic authors.

All in all I find it quite unrewarding to once again try to fuse Platonism and Christianity to-

gether. (Personally I have not found it very fruitful in my—Christian—life.) And when you come to sacrifice, PLATO is, and you can't really blame him, just like all the other pre-Christian Greek thinkers and poets. Neither am I convinced about the Christian Neo-Platonist's contribution to sacrifice, although there must have been some kind of non-sacrificial inspiration in ORIGEN's view on *apokatastasis*. But is there not, both in form and content, a major benefit by the way St. Paul (who is not a major figure in HEDLEY's book) conveys both sacrifice and the good news compared to the Christian Neo-Platonists?

HEDLEY's attempt to once again revive a Platonic Christianity without becoming a Gnostic (which I think is quite hard) is the part of the book I would like to delete. When reading this part I recalled a scene in a biography on Mussolini, where the biographer describes the last days of fascism in Italy. The scene consists of a group of fascists, among them Mussolini's son-in-law, sitting together in their cell waiting for their execution, where they console each other by discussing PLATO's concept of the eternal soul. This, of course, was their final hope of an afterlife. However, their hope for an everlasting life requires no act of asking for forgiveness, no prayers of absolution, no coming to grips with their atrocities—and therefore requires no kind of personal sacrifice whatsoever. In my mind this says something essential with regard to sacrifice and conversion, revealing the qualitative difference between Christianity and Platonism.

Finally I would underline the strength in HEDLEY's thinking. He is a remarkable thinker, remarkable because of his ability to change one's views. The prime reason for me calling HEDLEY a remarkable thinker is that *Sacrifice Imagined* has, to a certain degree, changed my attitude on sacrifice (towards a more positive interpretation). Also, I must confess, my reading of GIRARD has meant me trying, for the last 25 years, to suppress my rather romantic inclinations. *Sacrifice Imagined* shows that perhaps there is something valuable and life-giving in what I have tried to suppress—after all.

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SECOND SUMMER SCHOOL MIMETIC THEORY 2012

**The Netherlands
15 – 29 July 2012**

In his essay about the conceptualization of crisis in René GIRARD's work Simon SIMONSE (2011, p. 27; see also p. 16 of this Bulletin) poignantly writes: "We, human beings, are constantly involved with crises; we cause them, we avoid them or are busy solving them." Thinking through times of crisis therefore is what Mimetic Theory is about and what scholars studying the theory are doing. It is also the title of the second Summer School Mimetic Theory, which will be held in Leusden (The Netherlands) from 15 till 29 July.

At the moment of writing we are in the final stages of preparation. The deadline for application has passed with nineteen MA and PhD students being accepted to take the course, nine women and ten men. They make up a very interesting group and bring in a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds: theology with foci on ethics, Hebrew studies and Buddhist studies, philosophy, literature studies, anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology and studies of education. They also represent a wide range of nationalities: American, Finnish, Dutch, French, Italian, Slovenian, Austrian, Polish, South-African, Indian and Australian.

Besides promising students I am happy that James ALISON, Mark ANSPACH, Paul DUMOUCHEL and Sandor GOODHART agreed to teach and together form the teaching team one could only dream of. As James ALISON and Paul DUMOUCHEL also taught at the 2010 Summer School, we could build upon previous experience and design a new curriculum. This time GIRARD's key works make up the core of the course with Sandor GOODHART addressing *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, Paul DUMOUCHEL *Violence and the Sacred* and James ALISON parts of *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*. Mark ANSPACH will, during the final two days, present current day social psychological phenomena like master-disciple relationships and anorexia, with the aim to review these through an anthropological lens while 'undoing psychology'.

With this curriculum we intend to give the students mastery of basic concepts of mimetic theory, a clear understanding of its epistemology, insight in its innovative and interdisciplinary character, and awareness of its applicability in a wide variety of fields. Moreover, we hope students will enjoy and grasp the fruits of the inspiring ambiance and hospitality of the International School for Philosophy, and connect with each other as a network of young Girardian scholars.

For more information check: www.girard.nl/educatie/summer-school-2012

Thérèse Onderdenwijngaard

2012 Raven Foundation Essay Contest Winners



To broaden awareness of mimetic theory, the Raven Foundation sponsored a contest for the essay that best communicates the theme of the 2012 Colloquium on Violence and Religion (COV&R) conference, *Apocalypse Revisited: Japan, Hiroshima, and the Place of Mimesis*, to mainstream audiences. The submissions covered many interesting topics. The essay, *Meanders of Evangelization in Asia*, by Marcin KAZNOWSKI has been awarded first prize. Honorable Mentions were earned by Luke NELSON for “*Taxi Driver, Mishima*”, and *Suicidal Aesthetic* and L.G.

MARINCOWITZ for *Unravelling Nigeria’s Violence!* The authors will present their papers at the conference in Tokyo, Japan. More information about the contest and the authors is available at www.ravenfoundation.org/contests

James Alison’s *The Forgiving Victim* Adult Christian Education Video Series

The Raven Foundation is proud to announce that the initial rollout of James ALISON’s *The Forgiving Victim* Adult Christian Education Video Series will occur in fall of 2012 at three locations in the United States. Containing four units of four sessions each, the video course can be used for group instruction or individual study. An hour long video overview, available for viewing or downloading at www.forgivingvictim.com, contains a selection of clips from the course created to give you a sense of the topics James will cover, a glimpse of his playful teaching style, and a feel for the way dramatizations are used to bring life to the Bible stories that James interprets. If you would like to learn more about the program or participate in the launch events, please sign up at www.forgivingvictim.com. This program is produced by the Raven Foundation with the financial support of Imitatio.

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We invite you to send books and articles dealing with René Girard and Mimetic Theory to Dietmar.Regensburger@uibk.ac.at (digital format and references) or to Girard-Documentation, c/o Dr. Dietmar Regensburger, University of Innsbruck, Karl-Rahner-Platz 1, A-6020 Innsbruck / Austria (print copies).

The *Bibliography of Literature on the Mimetic Theory* (Vol. I–XXXII) is Online available at:
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Editor's Thanks

Again many thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the Bulletin. Special thanks to Martha Reincke for her preview of our AAR activities (if the AAR had announced times and locations, it would be a complete program). By the way: Martha was awarded the AAR's 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award (see: http://www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/Teaching_Awards/) and we can learn from her at the AAR conference in Chicago during the Special Topics Forum. Congratulations, Martha!

Nikolaus Wandinger

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