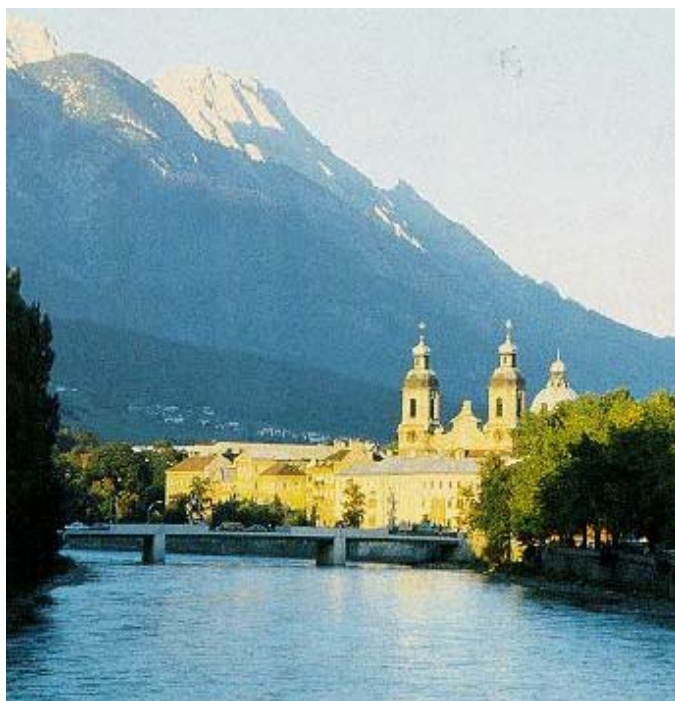




2003 MEETING: UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK

PASSIONS IN ECONOMY, POLITICS, AND THE MEDIA – IN DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

June 18 – June 21, 2003



The annual meeting of COV&R will take place nestled among the Austrian Alps. Here we will explore how mimetic theory contributes to a dialogue between social and economic scientists, philosophers, literary critics and theologians. **René Girard, Jean-Pierre Dupuy, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Rafael Capurro, and Richard Weiskopf** are among the featured presenters. The conference program, travel information, and online registration are all available at the conference website:

<http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/events/innsbruck2003.html>

Please note the deadline for advance registration is **April 30, 2003**.

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."

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Back issues of the *Bulletin* are available at the Colloquium on Violence & Religion website, <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/>.

Planning for COV&R 2004 Conference at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico

The dates for next year's COV&R conference are June 2-5, 2004. The conference theme is **Culture and Nature**: Mimesis, Matter, Incarnation, and Violence Against Nature.

The conference setting will be the hauntingly beautiful Ghost Ranch retreat center, located near Abiquiu, New Mexico. While further details will be announced at the Innsbruck conference, you might like to see a preview of the facility and its amazing landscape, <http://www.ghost ranch.org>.

If you have any thoughts about the conference theme, or suggestions for programming, Britt Johnston, the conference organizer, would love to hear from you, britton@cybermesa.com.

Scapegoats on the Web

Mimetic curiosities found on the world wide web...

- A U.K. event production company: Scapegoat, Ltd. <http://www.scapegoat.co.uk/>. "Scapegoat is more than the sum of its parts – it's really a new way of looking at things."
- Scapegoat – the band. <http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/5662/Bands/scapegoat.htm>.

Religion Evokes Violence – Objection!

A Forthcoming book by the Innsbruck Research Group on Religion – Violence - Communication - World Order¹

The aftermath of September 11 saw, among other things, a renewed debate about the relationship between violence and religion, first and especially focusing on Islam, but soon putting religion as such, understood as the great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, under the suspicion of fomenting and inciting violence.

In our Innsbruck research group, Raymund Schwager took the initiative to make that an occasion for renewed reflection on the topic for a common publication, containing some material already previously published, and some new contributions to the question from the different members of our group and their different academic backgrounds.²

The result is an objection to the contention that the monotheistic religions as such are prone to violence, while at the same time a critical analysis, as to where certain theological interpretations or political misuses of

these religions do in fact enhance violence. I will attempt to give a short overview over the project, to the extent that the contributions have been available to me already.

R. Schwager and J. Niewiadomski lay out the question at hand in their introduction: Are those thinkers right who deem violence to be a particular consequence of monotheistic religion and recommend a form of modern-day paganism instead? The authors think not and neither is modern humanism a sufficient answer, because, as it loses ever more its theoretical foundations in rational argumentation, it evolves more and more into a mantra that is recited, but is not acted upon. They then describe the real dangers of fundamentalism and apocalypticism. An answer to these challenges for peace, however, cannot be found in simply ignoring them or in the vain hope of their being overcome by economic progress, it can only be found in a reading of monotheistic religion and apocalyptic texts along the lines R. Girard has laid out. That way these texts can be related to current political, social and economic problems and can contribute to finding viable solutions that enhance world peace and justice.

The first common text of the research group, edited by R. Schwager and J. Niewiadomski, "Dramatic Theology as a Research Program"³ discusses theology's status as an academic discipline and tries to ground it in a theory of knowledge and of science that is acceptable in modern discourse. It thus sets the methodological framework for the other contributions. The core hypotheses in that framework are: "A deep, true and lasting peace among people which is not based on sacrificing third persons and can exist without polarization onto enemies is very difficult or even exceeds human strength. If it nevertheless becomes reality, this is a clear sign that God Himself (the Holy Spirit) is acting in the people. ... If true reconciliation fails, the problem which people do not cope with is shifted onto third persons – often in the name of God."⁴

Pope John Paul II's prayers for peace, especially in the presence of other religious leaders, constitute a clear sign that religion should not be the catalyst for violence, but rather for peace, as W. Sandler explains in his commentary on those prayers. Another "sign" – associations or echoes of the biblical concept of "sign" are encouraged – can be seen in the prayers of forgiveness the Pope and several high cardinals said in the liturgy of the First Sunday of Lent in 2000, as part of the millennial commemorative events of the Catholic Church. In a commentary on the meaning and relevance of these prayers I try to show that by doing so the church attempts to re-examine its ways during the course of history, and by apologizing for wrongdoings it re-adjusts its understanding of its mission, acknowledging

erroneous ways and thus drawing its lessons for the future. It turns out that the church is not alone in doing that, but that apologizing has become common-place also between nations and states.

This underlines how important is the perception of honesty in these undertakings. The many-fold criticism that met the pope's decision to insert those prayers into the liturgy can be seen as misapprehending his intentions: They are neither to sully the image of the church and make the past a scapegoat – thus he does not apportion guilt to specific persons or institutions within the church, does not judge the intentions of the wrongdoers, but the outcome of their deeds in relation to the gospel they were supposed to promote – nor are they to deny any wrongdoing that has been done by the believers or representatives of the church in order to white-wash the ecclesial image. Thus the grave sins of Christianity (persecution of dissent, schisms, anti-Jewish behavior, religious intolerance and war, sexism and racism, violations of human rights)⁵ are mentioned without any moralizing or finger-pointing. The aim is described as a “purification of memory” that is to be achieved by the church forgiving those that have hurt the church and asking those whom the church has hurt for forgiveness. In doing so – at least in intention, however unsatisfactory the actual realization might be in some areas – the church can be seen as the “model” of a society that tries to enhance peace by forgiving and asking for forgiveness.

That idea complements the second common text of the group, edited by W. Palaver and W. Guggenberger: “Pluralism – Ethical Basic Intuition – Church.”⁶ It first describes the “Babylonian” chaos abounding in today's post-modern and pluralistic ethical thinking. A theoretical grounding of ethics by rational insight into what is due, as Kant and the enlightenment envisioned it, is at least not effective anymore – everybody adhering to a different kind of “rationality.” Christianity can, and to a degree has, reacted to that situation by a return to its own traditions and values, which are dependent on Christianity's own narrative tradition.

Here, however, the proximity and difference of those narrations to the myths of human societies has to be taken into account, and Girard's analysis becomes an invaluable tool. Christian ethics thus has to draw on the model of Jesus and the experiences of the first disciples with him: among them the experience of their own complete moral failure and Jesus' response of forgiveness. This distinguishes Christian from Platonic ethics: while both share the same ideals, Platonic ethics merely seeks to avoid a breach of those, while Christian ethics also offers a way to deal with breaches that occur ever again: forgiveness. Christian ethics therefore

challenges Christians in the first place to live by it – and to constantly try to rekindle the willingness to forgive. If Christians and the churches do that, they become in themselves “models” for other groups or societies and that way, “their” ethics return – not theoretically, but practically – with a universal claim.

With that the projected publication moves on to the current situation. W. Palaver offers an analysis of terrorism as a phenomenon: its essential marks, origin and relation to religion. Terrorism is a modern phenomenon, originating in Europe after the French Revolution as a means of “propaganda by action.” Violent acts of destruction for political or social ends are used as means to achieve a wide public perception, thus evoking fear in the attacked, and support by those who stand to gain from their success. That means that terrorism is dependent on and makes use of the most modern mass media available. Without these means of communication, its intended goals could not be reached. Terrorism is a fighting instrument of the weak against an over-powerful enemy, and it is aggressive and not merely defensive. From the beginning terrorism and religion were in close proximity.

However, it would be short-sighted to see religion as the only catalyst for terrorism. There has been secular terrorism as well, yet marked by a clear pseudo-religious attitude. There are two main reasons for the close relation between terrorism and religion: 1) the closeness of religion and violence, as the mimetic theory has laid it out; 2) terrorism can be seen as a “parasite of biblical thinking” with its concern for victims and the downtrodden. All three monotheistic religions can be viewed as “religions of lamentation” that – as the Lamentations in the bible – expect a violent solution to their problems, a solution coming from God in an apocalyptic Armageddon, which some might aspire to bring about themselves in the name of God. However, the biblical apocalypse, while taking up those themes, transforms and actually inverts them: it is humans who commit the violence, it is God who soothes and heals and who recommends patience to all those feeling downtrodden or being treated unjustly. Thus terrorist and apocalyptic solutions are a distortion of the biblical and monotheistic message.

The fourth group-text, edited by R. Schwager “September 11, 2001 and a Theology of the Signs of the Time”⁷ aspires to read the attacks of 9/11 as indicators for the particular historic situation the world is facing. They can be seen as a symptom of a fundamental difference between the way modern Western society and Islam see the relationship between religion and public order: the first wants them strictly separated, the latter sees them as integrally one. That way, what is tolerance

for one is intolerable for the other. Christianity finds itself in a strange in-between position. While it cannot accept the narrow restraining of religion to the private sphere (as in secular modernism), it has learnt in a long, oftentimes violent and painful history, that there is a legitimate distinction between a particular religion's convictions and public order in a pluralistic society. Thus Christian-Muslim dialog could be seen as a bridge between two cultures that, at least in certain shapes, seem to be divided by an unbridgeable chasm, however difficult it may be because of past violations and sins of the religions against one another. Such a dialog only has a chance of success, if it is conducted with candor and does not avoid painful or divisive issues.

The fifth and final group text, edited by R. Schwager and J. Niewiadomski, tackles one of the most difficult political problems of our days, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and analyzes the ways religious ideas contribute to it and how religion could help in finding a solution. It shows how each of the conflicting parties rightly claims to be a victim in that conflict, but how, in laying exclusive claim to the status of victim and in denying that status to the other party, each avoids part of reality, and that in turn constitutes a grave hindrance on the way to a solution. The conflicting parties have become rivals in their claim for victim status.

Religion contributes to the conflict in several ways, among them the Jewish theology of the land and the Muslim theology of *dar al islam*, which holds that territory, once Muslim, may not be given up again. American support for Israel is also in part motivated by Christian apocalyptic groups that see the existence of Israel on its biblical lands as a prerequisite for the second coming of Christ. These groups among the religious right can exert considerable influence on US policies in the region. Finally the most extreme political or terrorist groups on either side of the conflict support their extremism with religious arguments. Solutions can only appear when this cycle is broken. One step towards that would be the quest to come to a common understanding of the common history of the conflict, where each party would acknowledge the other's having been victimized too, so that each side becomes "ready to sympathize with the anxieties and sufferings of the other side," the aim being reconciliation through forgiveness rather than through satisfaction.

Finally the article argues that an honest and thorough search in each and any of the Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – will provide theological answers to the situation that could enable the conflicting parties to overcome the current stalemate in violence: "A faith such as this lives out of the perception of a God that turns to humans – directly in their

experiences as victims – as comforting, strengthening, and nonviolent." This text is complemented by an introduction to the symbolic significance of the City of Jerusalem by A. Vonach.

In chapter 6, the university course "communicative theology" offers its contribution to the central theme: M. Scharer sees communicative theology as a practical model of how a theologically inspired dealing with conflicts can work and lead to reconciliation. F. Weber sees the church's efforts to live its catholicity as a test case of a fruitful dealing with tension and conflict.

The final chapter presents some reflections by individual members of the research project. W. Ernst considers the origin of violence in the Adamic myth from a psychoanalytical perspective. H. Büchele and E. Kitzmüller pose the question whether the 21st century will be an American century, critically analyzing the policies of the current U.S. administration. These are seen to be driven by a messianic self-view of the U.S.A., intending a kind of benevolent hegemony distinguished from dominance.

However, even a benevolent hegemonic power needs a justifying ideology for keeping up its role. That ideology has to hide the negative consequences of its behavior and constitutes a lie to the power itself. This clouding of the view of the power leads to a hardening of its stance, a disruption of the checks and balances of power within and thus subverts the very order it aspires to guard. Moreover the attempt to protect freedom and participatory democracy by unilateral action, which denies others the freedom to voice their concerns and to participate in the process of decision-making, is a self-contradiction. Thus the hegemonic concept for restoring and upholding law and order in the world is not satisfactory. As an alternative conception the authors develop a "vision of a world-republic of freely aligned states."

Nikolaus Wandinger

¹ Schwager, R. / Niewiadomski, J. (Hg.): Religion erzeugt Gewalt – ein Einspruch! Forthcoming Münster: LIT, 2003.

² See <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/rgkw/index-en.html>. And for publications, <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/rgkw/publ/index-en.html>.

³ This English translation unfortunately is a little bumpy, <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/rgkw/xttext/research-0.html>.

⁴ "Sacrifizing" was corrected into "sacrificing" by me, see <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/rgkw/xttext/research-10.html>.

⁵ For a summary see the Vatican website, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000307_memory-reconc-itc_en.html.

⁶ A German version is at <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/itl/18.html>.

⁷ An English version is online at the web address http://theol.uibk.ac.at/rgkw/xttext/september_11en.html.

The Michigan Girard Study Group

In July of 2002 Gil Bailie met with several friends for a one-day seminar in Traverse City, Michigan. During that seminar I mentioned my desire to create a Girard study group in the Detroit area. Cheryl McGuire (also from the Detroit area) quickly responded, and we began planning what I thought would become the Greater Detroit Area Girard Study group. After two meetings, we have discovered that it should be called the Michigan Girard Study Group since we have drawn people from as far north as Traverse City and as far west as the Benton Harbor area.

The group serves to provide a focus on mimetic anthropology using the work of Rene Girard, and to provide a forum for the discussion of the implications of mimesis. For our inaugural meeting in September 2002 we decided to focus on the main elements of Girard's thought. Of the dozen who attended, many had very limited exposure to Girard's work, so Cheryl and I felt that we needed to lay a foundation for further discussion. Dr. Mack Stirling came down from Traverse City and presented an overview of mimetic theory. Our two hour seminar format was followed by a discussion period. We decided to have a forum for our next meeting.

On February 7, 2003 fifteen people arrived to participate in an open discussion based upon a paper written by and presented by Dr. Harold Ellens entitled "Religious Metaphors Can Kill." James Sullivan provided some open-ended questions to guide group discussion.

What impressed me immediately about the attendees was the cross section of interests and backgrounds. There were men and women who represented civic government, education, manufacturing, technology (computer programmers and consultants), ministry, crisis counseling, and health care.

James Sullivan prepared the following three questions:

- In regard to "Religious Metaphors Can Kill": if the cross is removed from the Christian faith, what is the impact on (or what is left of) Christianity and the Girardian project?
- In light of the many parties involved in the War on Terrorism (al Qaeda, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel, U.S., etc.) can a single Girardian triangle accommodate all of them? Are there any scapegoats?
- Is the Girardian project compatible with the classical concept of a Just War?

Dr. Ellens provided a synopsis of his article. He asks: "What is it that, almost every time we perceive ourselves to be in a temporary crisis, readily, easily, and automatically justifies a quick and radical resort to the grossest forms of violence; violence as the exception to the rule of grace, violence always available in any emergency, violence as the exception which has not simply proven the rule, as the old adage says, but has really always functioned as the rule?" He then asks: "Is it possible that we have, fixed in our individual or collective unconscious, a metaphor which contradicts our conscious commitment to the decency of statesmanship, to the advantages of negotiated conflict resolution; and to the redemptive ethic of that grace?" Violent religious metaphors work against the non-violent ideal found in the scriptures. Specifically, the metaphor of the angry god who must punish his son in order to be appeased serves to validate righteous violence. The cross, then, has become a symbol of divine retribution. These symbols and metaphors operate deeply within us and orient us to a rash display of violence posed as righteous indignation.

So, how does Girard's work inform our understanding of violence, of the cross, and of God? At this point we considered James Sullivan's first question. All felt that the cross was central to Christianity, but that the cross reveals human violence. The drama has turned from a divine drama with God as the protagonist to a human drama with Christ as the victim and the crowd as the protagonist. Harold mentioned that such a shift moves the focus from the divine to the social and psychological realm. The cross cannot be removed from the Christian faith, but it must be deconstructed. The stage of the passion drama moves from heaven to earth and this shift turns centuries of hermeneutics upside-down. We must see a human victim who being informed by the love of God does not retaliate but rather endures the suffering in order to expose violence. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." Such love, for Dr. Ellens, is the key to understanding the cross. Christianity does not need to drop the cross, but rather to carry it in light of mimetic anthropology.

Our discussion then considered what it means to be authentic – to follow Christ. Must there be victims? Must one who incarnates love expect to be a victim? No, but we must realize that loving others unto the end can indeed lead us down the path of Christ. The essence of the work of Christ is self-donation. Such self-donation may lead to a cross, but does not have to lead to a cross.

A story was shared about a woman who was the victim of sexual harassment in the workplace. Rather than remaining passive as a victim, she entered the circle of her tormentors getting to know each on a personal

level. She noted family pictures in their work area and began asking questions about their familial relationships. Over a period of time, the harassment ended and she was accepted. Was this an example of love defusing a violent scapegoating episode? Perhaps. One member of the group wondered if the harassers were ever confronted with their behavior. Perhaps the woman in question defused her situation, but, if the harassers did not face their penchant for scapegoating, will the same scene be repeated for the next unfortunate woman? Be that as it may, the group generally felt that the emphasis should be on self-donation and not on victimage.

Discussion then led to our second question. How do we deal with September 11th in terms of mimetic theory? James Sullivan reported that after reading several papers dealing with September 11th from a Girardian perspective, he was dissatisfied with the observations since they did not seem grounded in the fundamentals of mimetic anthropology. Specifically, where do we find internal mediation in the current crisis?

This led to several possible conclusions that demonstrate that there are several possible ways to look at the problem. Some mentioned the relationship between the royalty and Al Qaeda in a struggle for power while others mentioned the East-West struggle with the West mediating the desire of the East. It appears to me that since we are dealing with internal mediation (which is resentment), it is extremely difficult to sort out the factors of that mediation. This is especially true since we are in the midst of it. In regard to mimesis, the following was posted on the Generative Anthropology listserv [I believe it was by Peter Goldman]: "Mimesis is a dynamic structure fraught with unforeseeable feedback loops; it identifies a complex pattern in human relations which is indispensable to their understanding."

I wonder if the reason post 9/11 articles seem indefinite is due to the fact that there are so many layers to the problem that it will take years to peel them away. Surprisingly nobody mentioned the role of religious metaphors in the current world situation. Specifically, the relation between the Christian Kingdom of God and the Moslem Umma has been explored by other (notably Eric Gans). One participant in the forum did mention that when world domination is the object, there can be only one winner and violence is inescapable.

We ended our evening by discussing Just War theory. After reviewing the traditional elements of Just War, we asked how this applies today and in light of Girard. Does the victim have the right to retaliate? Does one more powerful than the victim have the right to intervene for the victim in the name of justice? As part of this discussion, Dr. Ellens wondered if there is any

place for negotiations in Girard's work. It appears that a mimetic situation is binary: there is the build up of violence and then the release. But is there any way to prevent the escalation of violence through negotiations?

At this point the discussion turned to the work of Eric Gans. Dr. Gans' work based on the deferral of violence through representation does indeed open the door to negotiations – to exchange (<http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/home.html>).

Views 248 through 252 published after September 11th deal specifically with the necessity to move away from victimary justice and towards a negotiational justice. It appears to me that in the Girardian scenario the buildup of mimetic violence can be defused either through the designation and destruction of a scapegoat or by the conversion (metanoia) of the mob. When considering a world wide scenario such as that presented since 9/11, how realistic is the expectation of the masses turning away (metanoia) from the madness of violence. I shared with the group how Dr. Gans' originary scene provides a deferral of violence through the very practical method of exchange – specifically the exchange of the sign. The essence of the originary scene where language begins is reciprocity (which is also the essence of negotiation).

Dr. Ellens shared his concern that when we consider Just War we must consider the long term effects of violence. As his paper mentioned above states: "After every major war the society which has victoriously waged it is racked by a sizeable increase of domestic social violence for a couple of generations. It is no accident that after having waged the particular butchery of the Civil War, our society went on to channel those pathological energies into the Indian Wars. Not negotiation for land. Rather, theft, encroachment, abuse of treaties, and the policy of extermination of the Americans who happened to inhabit this continent before us."

So, we covered a lot of territory during our evening Girard forum. The questions stirred some great discussions. Some members who knew very little about Girard and mimetic theory were challenged and informed. One participant noted that hearing our discussion helped her understand Girard more. The discussion helped to put things into perspective. Although we ended our forum after two and a half hours, several remained for another hour engaging in spontaneous conversations about Girard. I must admit, one participant asked me: "Why bother with all of this? What does it matter?" My answer: "It's about violence. It's a matter of life and death!"

Robert W. Stead

Girard's "Satan" book in German

Among other things, the fall of 2002 stood out because of the reception of the German edition of René Girard's latest book: *Ich sah den Satan vom Himmel fallen wie einen Blitz. Eine kritische Apologie des Christentums*. Übers.: E. Mainberger-Ruh. München und Wien: Hanser 2002. This was outstanding, because Girard's work had not been received so well up to then and was even ignored to a large degree. The more surprising it was that now most major newspapers and *feuilletons* in Germany, Austria and Switzerland reviewed the book, and again most of them favorably.

Of course, Raymund Schwager also gave a review, emphasizing how Girard's theory is an "anthropological and social access to the religious question, an access that can only be ignored at great cost: a strong narrowing of one's view and the creation of taboos in important realms of inquiry,"⁸ and stressing how it transcends the usual left-right-divide in politics. The renowned *Süddeutsche Zeitung* recommended Girard's book to its readers as "among the most unconventional reading of the year."⁹ The Swiss *Das Buch*¹⁰ offers Girard's work in first place for the best reading this winter and – as the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*¹¹ – uses the occasion for an all-out summary of the mimetic theory.

Maybe part of the reason for the surprisingly widespread reception of the book is the epilogue it contains by the controversial, but well-known German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. He seems to concur with Girard's analysis of mimetic desire and its oftentimes violent consequences, but dissents regarding the uniqueness of the Judeo-Christian tradition (as seen by Girard), and to the interpretation of Nietzsche. However the review in *Literaturen*, which chose Girard's book as one of the books of the month of November, considers Sloterdijk's contribution itself as "of little help: his remarks and his critique reflect more of his own agenda and evoke the impression of a co-presentation."¹²

Most of the reviews have some critical remarks, though: they are unhappy with what they see as a lack of differentiation by Girard and an overstretching of his theory and also criticize the close relationship Girard perceives between Nietzsche and Nazism. *Die Zeit* misses an answer to the question as to "why a religion that has uncovered the secret of the mythological order of sacrifice in such a great way [Christianity] has historically promoted the very violence it claims to abolish today."¹³ The review in Austria's *Die Presse* is full of irony toward Girard's book, but even more so toward theologians who do not utilize the results of mimetic theory. The author seems to overlook the fact that some do. He concludes his review with the remark:

"Carrying Girard's books under their arms, theologians who have a world-historical inferiority complex might walk about a little more confident in the future."¹⁴

Only one of the reviews is outright negative, interestingly in the *Rheinischer Merkur*, a paper with Catholic ties. Here the critic resorts to irony when he cannot find arguments and seems to think that the falsity of Girard's theory is self-evident, when he takes out several quotations from Girard's book in order to simply continue by saying: "No comment is needed here."¹⁵ So what? Someone might have different self-evidences.

All in all, the fact that Girard's new book received such wide-spread attention in the German-speaking countries is remarkable.¹⁶ It remains to be seen whether this was a seven-day wonder or will have some lasting impact. Schwager for his part already sees "ever clearer traces [of Girard's thinking] in all the realms of human, social and religious studies as well as in theology" despite the recurring disappearance of Girard's thought from public discourse.

⁸ Schwager, R.: Von der umgekehrten Gewalt. In: Die Furche. Wochenzeitung für Gesellschaft, Politik, Kultur, Religion und Wirtschaft. 31. Oktober 2002, 9, also <http://www.furche.at/archivneu/archiv2002/fu4402/11.shtml>. All translations are my own.

⁹ Flasch, K.: Alte Mordgeschichten. René Girard verteidigt das Christentum – Es wird trotzdem weiter geopfert. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 9. Oktober 2002, V2/20.

¹⁰ Krause, P.: Das Heilige und die Gewalt. In: Das Buch (BücherPick) 21 (Winter 2002) 8-11, also: www.das-buch.ch.

¹¹ Wenzel, U. J.: Ein Volk von Teufeln. René Girard sieht den Satan vom Himmel fallen und auf Erden wandeln. In: NZZ, Nr. 233, 8. Oktober 2002 (also: <http://www.nzz.ch/dossiers/2002/buchmesse2002/2002.10.08-fb-article8FP34.html>).

¹² Meyer, Th.: Einer wirft immer den ersten Stein – und dann? Wie Gewalt erklärbar wird und warum kein Mythos die Religion je ersetzen kann. In: *Literaturen* 11 (2002), 50f., here 50 (also: <http://www.literaturen-online.de/nav/fr3.html>).

¹³ Assheuer, Th.: Teufels Kreislauf. Was ist Heidentum? Was Monotheismus? René Girard verteidigt die Bibel. In: *Die Zeit* Nr. 40 v. 26. Sept. 2002, 49f.

¹⁴ Holl, A.: Und unter den Altären die Blutrinne. In: *Die Presse*, 23./24. November 2002, Spectrum VII.

¹⁵ Britsch, E.: Der Sündenbock. Um Streit beizulegen, wird ein Außenseiter getötet. Das verbindet alle Kulturen, behauptet René Girard. In: *Rheinischer Merkur* Nr. 36 (5.09.2002).

¹⁶ In addition to those mentioned already: Tyrell, H.: So weit die Füße des Mythos tragen. René Girard schreibt im Namen Satans eine Apologie des Christentums. In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 257, 5. November 2002, L 17. Laudien, K.: Die Götter sind grausam. Aber Gott ist gut: René Girard und das Christentum. In: *Die Welt*, 28. 9. 2002, also: <http://www.welt.de/daten/2002/09/28/09281sb359001.htm>. I am indebted to Dietmar Regensburger and Wolfgang Palaver for the compilation of all the reviews.

Life of Bill Mishler

William “Bill” Mishler, one of COV&R’s most active and committed scholars died unexpectedly at his home in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 9, 2002. A member of the Advisory Board of COV&R for two years, Bill had been an ardent and generous participant in COV&R conferences for many years. He was a prize-winning translator, Fulbright scholar, and professor of Scandinavian studies at the University of Minnesota. He recently finished his first commercial book, *A Measure of Endurance: The Unlikely Triumph of Steven Sharp*, to be published this summer by Alfred A. Knopf.



Bill Mishler.

Bill was on the editorial board of *Anthropoetics* in which he published two articles: “Bone of the Lamb, Blood of the Lamb: Ibsen’s Brand and Generative Anthropology” (3,1), and “The Question of the Origin of Language in Rene Girard, Eric Gans, and Kenneth Burke” (5,1). The second of these articles was based on his presentation in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1999. In *Contagion* he published “Sacrificial Nationalism in Henrik Ibsen’s *The Pretenders* 1 (Spring 1994), 127-38.

He contributed extensively to many COV&R conferences, reading papers in New Orleans (“The Tragic Instability of the Akedah in Ibsen’s Brand”); Chicago (“Rivalry and Sacrifice in Ibsen’s *Emperor and Galilean*”); and St. Denis, France (“The Fairy Tale as Mirror of Mimetic Desire”). His article “The Virgin

Spring and the Seventh Seal: A Girardian Reading” appeared in *Comparative Drama* (Spring 1996), 106-34. After the conference in St. Denis, Bill assisted in the translation of the French papers for the *Bulletin* and wrote the report of the Antwerp conference in the April 2002 *Bulletin*.

Born in Cleveland, Bill graduated from St. Ignatius High School and Holy Cross College of Worcester, Massachusetts. He received his doctorate in Scandinavian Studies from the University of Minnesota, where he was a professor until his retirement in 2001. He studied in Laval University in Quebec and the University of Oslo in Norway. His wife wrote to us recently: “He truly was a gentle man, a valued friend to many and a champion against injustice and violence. He was an active member of Amnesty International since 1988, making financial contributions as well as letter writing on behalf of victims.”

Bill is survived by his wife, Marie Hubonette of Amherst, Massachusetts, daughters Kristin Mishler and Lara Mishler; step-daughter Lisa Anderson (Peter), son Jesse Mishler (Priscilla) and two granddaughters, Olivia and Audrey.

Those of us who knew and worked with Bill continue to grieve. There will be a memorial service for him in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Sunday, May 4th, 2:00 PM at the Calhoun Beach Club.

Diana Culbertson
dculbert@core.com

Note from the editor

It takes a lot of people to put together a good *Bulletin* – especially those who write and who encourage others to share their work.

Beginning with this issue I am happy to be joined by two colleagues who will be helping to find news, articles, and other items of interest to COV&R members.

Nikolaus Wandinger, at the University of Innsbruck (nikolaus.wandinger@uibk.ac.at), will especially be looking for contributions from European members.

Cheryl McGuire (CherylEM@aol.com) will be doing the same work, concentrating on Middle and Western North America.

In addition to providing news about events of interest, we also seek to provide a variety of examples of current work related to mimetic theory. Please contact Nikolaus, Cheryl, or myself with ideas for the *Bulletin*. Pieces for the next issue, volume 23, are due August 1.

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Membership

We invite you to become a member of COV&R. Annual dues are \$40 U.S. per household, or \$20 U.S. for matriculated students. Those in soft currency areas who find it difficult to pay this amount in U.S. currency are invited to apply to the executive secretary for a special rate. Member includes voting rights, research collaboration and discussion, and opportunity to support the aims of the Colloquium, and also subscription to this *Bulletin*, and to *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*. Please do not delay to join COV&R if you are committed to our *raison d'être*.

Bibliography

The Documentation of Literature on the Mimetic Theory is searchable online, <http://starwww.uibk.ac.at>. For further information, see Bulletin no. 9 (1995), p.6 (online at <http://info.uibk.ac.at/c/c2/c204/drama/bulletin/>).

We invite you to send us copies of your articles, as well as references to any kind of literature dealing with mimetic theory.

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