



MIMESIS, CREATIVITY AND RECONCILIATION

COV&R-Conference Ottawa, May 31-June 4, 2006



Ottawa seen from the Canadian Museum of Civilization

Welcome to Ottawa

Saint Paul University is looking forward to hosting the *Colloquium on Violence and Religion* May 31 to June 4. By then, Ottawa will be lusciously green and there may be a few tulips left from the tulip festival.

The Conference itself promises to be very exciting. The theme is *Mimesis, Creativity and Reconciliation*. Plenary sessions will develop key aspects of the theme. Robin COLLINS, Gregory CAJETE, Marie-Claude SICARD, Petra STEINMAIR-PÖSEL, and Rebecca ADAMS contribute foundational understandings of the concept of creative mimesis. Cheryl KIRK-DUGGAN, Thee SMITH and Valerie BRIDGEMAN DAVIS will explore reconciliation at the nexus of theory and practice. René GIRARD will hold a public dialogue on creative mimesis and peace with Norwegian Johan GALTUNG, the father of peace research. There will also be a series of public dialogues on reconstruction of the self including Girardian stalwarts Sandor GOODHART and Diane CULBERTSON and individuals active in many parts of the globe: Riffat HASSAN, Duncan MORROW and Miroslav VOLF. A number of Indigenous people from Canada will develop the theme in the light of their traditions, experience on the land, and struggle to regenerate themselves in a post-colonial reality.

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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

The *Bulletin* is also available online:
<http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/bulletin/x1.html>

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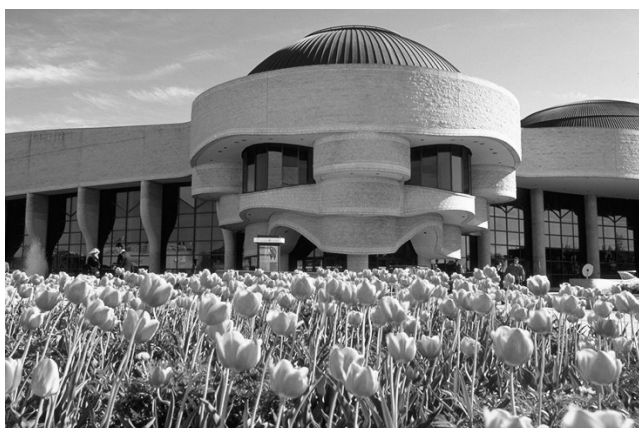


University Entrance

There will be over 75 presenters in the 27 concurrent sessions, in five blocks of time. Running through these sessions will be a sequence of five sessions on each of literature, philosophy and theology. Another stream includes arts, symbolic imagery, popular culture and psychology and a fifth stream concentrates on contextual analyses (South Africa, India, East Timor, Rwanda, etc.) and reconciliation praxis. Seven of the sessions will address the concept of creative mimesis.

Saint Paul University is a small institution backing on the Rideau River and just five minutes from Ottawa's famous 8 kilometre (5 mile) long canal. There is a new seven story residence with a block of suites reserved for the Conference. Each suite has two bedrooms, each with a double bed and its own television, a kitchen, with a microwave and refrigerator, and one washroom.

It is hoped that people will team up to fill all of the bedrooms. In addition, there are rooms available in Deschâtelets, an Oblate residence. For those wishing more lavish accommodation, downtown hotels are available; they are a 20-30 minute walk from the University along the canal. Meals will be provided at the University.



*The Canadian Museum of Civilization,
Photo by Harry Foster*

The Saturday banquet will be held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, just across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Quebec. The Museum has a unique architectural curvaceous design

created by First Nations architect Douglas CARDINAL who will speak at the event. The Museum is generously providing free admission and exclusive access to the displays on Saturday after 5:00 p.m. The banquet itself will take place in the Great Hall of the People which features a west coast Indigenous milieu, complete with totem poles and a spectacular view of Parliament Hill across the river. Music will come from a number of cultural traditions and will include unique and highly mimetic Inuit throat singing.

While COV&R Conferences have traditionally offered morning Mass as a worship component, this year's gathering will provide the possibility of participating in Muslim prayers and Jewish Shabbat service.

Another unique feature of the Conference is a time slot for generative dialogues. Those who wish to have ideas generated around a particular issue or question will be assigned a facilitator who will guide a group of participants in a process whereby they generate new understandings.

A number of artists will contribute to the Conference through musical performances, dramatic events and display of visual art.



The new residence

For those wishing to come early or linger after the Conference, there are a number of pre- and post-Conference activities. The Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution is offering its five-day Third Party Neutral training at the University. Other workshops and events are also posted on the web site (<http://web.ustpaul.uottawa.ca/covr2006/conference2006.htm>). The Canadian War Museum, the National Gallery and a number of other museums are available along with tours of Parliament Hill. Sightseeing boats ply both the Canal and the Ottawa River.

Wherever you come from, and however long you stay, our planning committee and organization team will do what they can to welcome you and provide you with a memorable experience.

Vern Neufeld Redekop

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On December 15, 2005, René GIRARD was received into the French Academy, in the Coupole or Dome, thereby joining the ranks of VOLTAIRE and others once among the forty “immortals” of that most illustrious group. He was received by Michel SERRES. Serres’s own prestige in France of course is legion. As occupant of the chair in the French Academy once occupied by Alexis de TOCQUEVILLE, and author of numerous books and essays on poetry, science, communication and in general the workings of violence in our culture, Serres is one of a handful of intellectuals, like Girard, at the heart of French cultural life.

Serres’s *discours* on the occasion was extraordinary. Beyond describing Girard’s ideas intellectually, he situated them—historically, and personally. Here is a sample, a taste of his words (translated from the French), addressed (like the rest of the speech) to René directly:

One day historians will come to you to ask you to explain the inexplicable: this formidable wave that submerged our Western world during the 20th century, whose violence sacrificed not only millions of young people during the first world war and then tens of millions during the second, in accord with the only definition of war that holds, and according to which bloodthirsty old men, on both sides of the border, agreed that the sons of the ones should really want to put to death the sons of the others, in the course of a collective human sacrifice that rules, like the great priests of an infernal cult, these enraged fathers that history calls the heads of state, and who, in order to crown such abominations with a peak of atrocity, sacrificed, I say, not only their children, but by an unprecedented reversal sacrificed also their ancestors, the children of our holiest ancestors, I mean, the religious people par excellence, the people to whom the West owes, in the figure of Abraham, the promise to end human sacrifice. In the dreadful smoke exiting from the death camps, smoke that suffocated both of us at the same time as the atmosphere of the West did, you taught us to recognize what issues from the human sacrifices perpetrated by the polytheistic savagery of Antiquity, to recognize, very precisely, that from which the Jewish message first, then later the Christian message, attempted desperately to deliver us. These abominations largely surpass the capacities of historical explanation; in order to attempt to comprehend this incomprehensibility, one needs a tragic anthropology with the dimensions of yours. One day we will understand that this century has broadened, to an inhuman and worldwide scale, your societal and individual model.

All three of Girard’s major ideas are echoed: the mimetic hypothesis, the end of sacrificial violence as the logic of culture surfacing in antiquity in works like those of Greek tragedy, its full exposure and disarming only in the Jewish and Christian scriptures. As recently as last summer, Girard reflected upon them

in his interview with *NPQ* editor Nathan GARDELS. Endorsing the current Pope’s rejection of “the dictatorship of relativism,” Girard noted:

All of my work has been an effort to show that Christianity is ... not just another mythology. In mythology, a furious mob mobilizes against scapegoats held responsible for some huge crisis. The sacrifice of the guilty victim through collective violence ends the crisis and founds a new order ordained by the that of mythology in which a crisis is resolved through a single victim who unites everybody against him, thus reconciling the community...

The victory of the Cross is a victory of love against the scapegoating cycle of violence. ... [The Gospels] show that, since the foundation of the world, the victims of all Passion-like murders have been victims of the same mob contagion as Jesus. [They] make this revelation complete because they give to the [Hebraic] biblical denunciation of idolatry a concrete demonstration of how false gods and their violent cultural systems are generated. [The complete interview can be accessed online: http://www.digitalnpq.org/archive/2005_summer/10_girard.html]

But what is new in Serres’s December text is something else. Elsewhere in this talk, Serres identifies himself as René’s “shadow,” his non-rivalrous (and therefore in a curiously new way his “monstrous”) “double.” Despite minor differences in biography, Serres points out remarkable similarities: many smaller ones (age, a peculiar outsider’s relation to France and Parisian culture, an interest in America, and so forth); but some larger ones as well, the most important of which, perhaps, is that they were both refugees from violence, from the sacrificial violence of national governments, a violence on the field of war against political enemies (which inspired René most directly to leave France), but a catastrophic violence in particular against, ironically, the very people who had first imagined an end to sacrifice, a Holocaustal atrocity that would characterize our century as one of the most violent in the history of the West. In the midst of this violence, this thinker of peace in Serres’s view would, like his scriptural predecessors, come to give articulation to the nature of sacrificial violence itself, an articulation whose anthropological and tragic dimensions will prove for future historians the very model of such discussion.

When I first met René at Buffalo in 1968, and subsequently encountered the depth and reach of his understanding, it occurred to me that no matter what we who were his students did, and no matter what those who were his colleagues at Buffalo, Hopkins, Stanford, North Carolina or

elsewhere did, we were not, and could never become, his contemporaries, and that what René needed was an intellectual and cultural equal, a cohort from within his own French milieu whose own body of work was equally formidable, a counterpart beyond family, friends, and professional associations who could mirror back in a non-rivalrous way his ideas for him and assess their value within the context of fraternal advice and suggestion. The structuralists and post-structuralists—LÉVI-STRAUSS, LACAN, BARTHES, DERRIDA, and FOUCAULT—had gone their own way, however respectful of Girard's work they remained individually. Admirers of René's work would—through the COV&R organization and his own writings—eventually come along in droves. What René needed, and what none of us could provide, was an intellectual brother.

I submit that Michel Serres in December in the Coupole so identified himself, and that René Girard's work, now recognized at the center of cultural life in France, can finally accede to the end for which in my own it was destined: namely, its recognition in posterity as the primary articulation in our time of the sacrificial logic of all human groups and the relation of that cultural, religious, and perhaps even biological logic to a sacrificial violence that, if not efficaciously managed, will destroy us utterly.

Sandor Goodhart, President of COV&R, Associate Professor of English and Jewish Studies at Purdue University

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The highlight of COV&R events during recent months surely was René GIRARD's official inauguration into the *Académie française* on December 15, 2005. At this ceremony René Girard got his *habit vert*, the famous green habit of the *Académie*. On the homepage of the *Académie* (<http://www.academie-francaise.fr>) you can find a photograph of René Girard wearing the green habit, and also his speech on his predecessor Father Robert-Ambroise-Marie CARRÉ. On the same homepage you can also read Michel SERRES' honorific speech on René Girard. Both speeches are, of course, in French, because fostering and advancing this language is the main task of the *Académie*. Hopefully, someone will soon translate these speeches into English in order to make them more broadly accessible.

What I like most about Michel Serres' speech is that he emphasized the role of René's wife, Martha. Referring to the Martha of the New Testament (Luke 10:38-42) Michel Serres reminded his audience that great works of thought also rely on people who take care of many necessary things of daily life. Many members of COV&R know very well that Serres words about MARTHA GIRARD are plainly true.

I am very happy to tell you that, besides this academic highlight, interest in and research of Girard's thinking is growing and spreading. Soon after René Girard's inauguration a newly founded French Girard-association organized a meeting about which you will read more in this *Bulletin* (see report on page 5). But also far away from Europe, a new branch of COV&R is just starting. Chris FLEMING, a Lecturer in Philosophy and Social and Cultural Analysis of the School of Humanities at the University of Western Sydney, who recently published a profound book on Girard, has begun to form a group of people in Australia who are interested in mimetic theory and the main topics of COV&R. I wish them a successful and inspiring work. Against this background the forthcoming conference in Ottawa—the first time that the annual meeting of COV&R takes place in Canada—shows that COV&R has really become a global group. I am looking forward to this meeting, which will this time emphasize the positive and constructive side of mimetic theory and its contribution to reconciliation. I hope I will meet many of you in Ottawa.

Wolfgang Palaver

REPORTS ON EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

René Girard to Receive Dr. Leopold-Lucas-Award of the University of Tübingen

René GIRARD will receive the Dr. Leopold-Lucas-Award of the Eberhard-Karls-University in Tübingen, Germany. The award is worth 40,000 Euros and the ceremony is scheduled for May 16, 2006. The university awarded the prize for Girard's fundamental and seminal cultural studies on violence and its containment. The prize-committee put special emphasis on the fact that Girard sees religions as a positive force in dealing with violence, as opposed to a widely held view that religions enhance the human inclination to violence.

The Dr. Leopold-Lucas-Award is given every year to honor special achievements in theology, the humanities, history and philosophy. Main focus is to foster relations between people and peoples. The prize is an endowment made by FRANZ D. LUCAS in 1972 to mark the 100th birthday of his father, Dr. LEOPOLD LUCAS, who had died in the concentration camp Theresienstadt. It is awarded by the Faculty of Protestant Theology of the University of Tübingen. Former laureates have been, among others, the Catholic theologian Karl RAHNER SJ, philosophers Paul RICOEUR, Karl POPPER, Michael WALZER and Hans JONAS, former German president Richard von WEIZSÄCKER, former Senegalese president Sédor SENGHOR and the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin GYATSO. (For a complete list see: http://www.tuebingen.de/1564_14026.html)

The Bulletin congratulates.

Compiled from several Web-Pages

Constitution of the first official French Girard-association voted in the French Institute

It looks as if René GIRARD's home country is finally giving him the (belated) recognition he deserves. The seventeenth of December, only two days after his official entrée into the French Academy, the first important French Girard-association was set up. The constitution of the "Association pour les Recherches Mimétiques" was voted in Paris in the sumptuous "Palais de l'Institut". The new group will act in close collaboration with COV&R, but it has its own accents. As we can read in article three of its constitution, the primary goal of A.R.M. will be to "structure the research" linked to the mimetic theory of "René Girard, member of the French Academy, and organise its diffusion in the French Language". Contrary to COV&R the primary focus of activity will not be the relevance of the mimetic model for the study of religion, although that will be a significant area of research.

The project looks very promising. Among its honorary members it has Sandor GOODHART, the current president of COV&R, five "immortals" from the French Academy, the chancellor of the French Institute (Pierre MESSMER) and even prominent people from the political and financial world, as for instance Jacques DELORS (former president of the European Commission), Claude

BÉBÉAR (president of the AXA-group) etc. Thanks to the financial backing a specialised centre for mimetic studies will soon be opened in Poissy, a town on the banks of the Seine, a little outside Paris. Benoît CHANTRE has been elected as the first president of the association. René Girard is the honorary president.

After the voting the honorary and foundational members were treated to a talk by Mark ANSPACH on the topicality of mimetic theory and to Benoît Chantre's attention-grabbing discussion with René Girard. Anspach commenced his short presentation on Girard's topicality with a remarkable observation: "Who could imagine a less topical subject in the seventies than 'Violence and the Sacred'? Who could conceive of a more relevant subject today?" Mimetic theory is never the topic of the day, but the topic of the day is often surprisingly mimetic. Actuality persistently demonstrates the underestimated power and pertinence of the mimetic hypothesis. Girard agreed and pointed to recent findings in neurosciences and experimental psychology that corroborate mimetic theory in a sometimes spectacular fashion. He even encouraged the new association to do some experimental research. One of the focuses of the investigations should be the problem of reciprocity. According to Girard nearly all our human interactions are reciprocal. Even our refusal of reciprocity tends to become reciprocal. This primacy of reciprocity is typical for humans. When animals fight, for instance, they never look at each other. To look at one another, eye-contact, is a beautiful example of reciprocity, of mimetic behaviour. The new 'immortal' invited his audience to do a little test with their pets: "try to look into the eyes of your dog or cat: they will get bored after a while". Not only eye-contact, but also violence has everything to do with reciprocity. Here Girard referred to the Prussian war-theorist CLAUSEWITZ whose writings on war contain many interesting 'mimetic' intuitions. The assembly ended with a reception and a toast on the new association. It is not unrealistic to think it will usher in a new era of Girardian studies in France and the francophone world. And with so many 'immortals' among its members the (French and international) Girard-associations are predestined to live a long life.

Simon de Keukelaere

COV&R at the AAR in Philadelphia

First, I owe apologies to the readers of this *Bulletin* and to Dr. Wandinger. I did not take care to make sure that I had copies of the papers given at our meeting before the editing deadline and so can only report on one of the four papers given. Ann ASTELL, Robert DALY, William MORROW and Nikolaus WANDINGER each gave substantial and thought provoking essays, each stimulated discussion and time quickly ran out. All in all it was a delightful time to catch up with members of the *Colloquium*.

The papers by both Ann Astell and William Morrow looked at the Hebrew Bible, while Robert Daly's essay examined atonement theory and Nikolaus Wandinger's dealt with the question of how it is possible to emulate God, whom "no one has ever seen" (John 1:18). Daly continues his work of exploring the sacrificial hermeneutic implicit in Christian theology, as he has done in his last several COV&R contributions.

William Morrow explored the historical and archeological evidence that demonstrates that the account of conquest in Torah, particularly the Deuteronomic Reform, is mythological. His essay is extremely valuable for those of us who serve in the midst of people who use the conquest narratives as a warrant for current political policies of war and the justification of violence and torture. Bill, I apologize I could not summarize your essay more accurately; I found it illuminating and worthy of prime time. I would encourage you to let readers of this *Bulletin* access an electronic copy via the COV&R website.

Ann Astell turns to the most famous parable of the Hebrew Bible: that of Nathan to King David (2 Samuel 12:1-14). She says, "that the plot of the parable is not simply a doubling of the crime committed by David against the husband of Bathsheba, but that Nathan's telling and David's reception of the parable is triangulated by reference to a hidden, third party—King Saul—whose unseen, scandalous presence in the narrative explains the intensity of David's desire to condemn harshly first the felon in the parable and then himself, when Nathan tells him, "Thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:7).

Utilizing insights from David DAUBE's exegesis of the Nathan parable, Astell points out that the original parable was encoded to deal with another crime than that against Uriah the Hittite. It is suggested that the original crime in this story

had to do with King Saul taking his daughter Michal, who belonged to David, and giving her to another man (cf. 1 Samuel 18:20-25.28-29; 25:44). This is why David is so vehement about identifying with the 'poor man' of the parable.

"If Daube is correct in his analysis of the origin of Nathan's parable as a coded, anti-monarchical protest against the injustice of Saul's treatment of David, then Nathan's use of the parable to trap David into admitting his own guilt is an extraordinary confirmation of the effect of mimetic desire and rivalry."

Astell concludes "Saul, the king the young David serves, is initially his model, but soon becomes his rival, as David begins to desire what Saul desires and to act, more and more, as Saul acts. In the competition between them, which spreads and intensifies into warfare, the kingdom itself is jeopardized and victims multiply. When, therefore, Nathan declares to David, 'You are the man!', he forces David not simply to see himself in the rich man of the parable, but also to see himself as Saul."

In the end, the use of parables is subversive, as William HERZOG has pointed out (*Parables as Subversive Speech*). We continue to decry in others the mimetic behavior we engage in ourselves. We still seek to remove the splinter from the eye of the other without being aware of the plank in our own eye. Parables are mechanisms that help us uncover our own negative mimetic projections so that we can replace them with mercy, love and forgiveness.

Thanks to all who attended the meeting and again my apologies. I look forward to the continued research of Professors Astell, Daly, Morrow and Wandinger. Their hermeneutic contributions all dovetail in exposing a sacrificial rendering of Scripture, a reading which must be challenged for its empire building, violence justifying, warmongering, discriminating results.

Michael Hardin, Lancaster, PA
www.preachingpeace.org

Celebrating Raymund Schwager's 70th Birthday

November 11, 2005 would have been Raymund SCHWAGER's 70th birthday, and had he still been alive, we would have organized great festivities, to be sure. As the circumstances were, we still wanted to commemorate our friend's and

teacher's anniversary with academic events on November 24 and 25.

The interdisciplinary research focus *Word Order – Religion – Violence* invited two noted speakers for two presentations in the *Raymund Schwager Lectures on Religio-Political Studies* and the research project *Religion – Violence – Communication – World Order* presented its two latest books. As it turned out, the whole endeavor was more difficult than we had anticipated.

The first lecture was given by Prof. Dr. Aleida ASSMANN on "Violence and the Collective Unconscious in the Eucharist". She argued that in the sacrificial ritual of the Eucharist the Church had enshrined an unconscious anti-Judaism, which nevertheless was shining through the ritual and its artistic depictions. It lurked especially behind the 12th-century debates on the real presence of Christ and in the accompanying barrage of so-called host miracles: instances where doubting priests were prompted to believe in the real presence of Christ by a miraculous bleeding of the host. This unconscious violent tendency, according to Assmann, is inherent to the Eucharist, it shows itself ever again in history up to the present and is at the roots of this central Christian rite because the Jews, who were to be the victims of Christian violence, were already omitted in the biblical descriptions of the Last Supper, and thus the violence was unacknowledged from the beginning and could therefore crop up throughout the history of Christianity without being noticed. (The complete—German—text of the presentation is available online: <http://www2.uibk.ac.at/forschung/weltordnung/idwrg/05.pdf>).

Naturally this presentation met with a lively debate. The theologians in the audience were disappointed and shocked about the measure of misunderstanding of the Christian Eucharist, while many non-theologians found the talk very intriguing. Dramatic Theologians in Innsbruck have decided to formulate a more detailed response to Dr. Assmann's thesis. For a short reply: Could it not be the case that the real root and essence of the Eucharist is a celebration of the one who rather endured violence himself than exerted it, and that the anti-Jewish atrocities that undoubtedly have occurred in the history of Christianity were a slipping back into ancient sacrificial patterns? In that case Aleida Assmann missed the real meaning of the Eucharist. She rightly criticized a sacrificial misconception of

this central Christian rite, but at the same time she held that misconception herself.

The next event, on the afternoon of the following day, was the presentation of two recent books in the series *Contributions to Mimetic Theory*, which was co-founded by the late Raymund Schwager. The first volume *Kirche als universales Zeichen* [Church as a universal Sign] contains, among other texts by different authors, the last two articles authored by R. Schwager (you will find a review on page 11 of this *Bulletin*). The second volume is by Schwager's longtime friend and fellow-Jesuit Herwig BÜCHELE and is called *Vor der Gefahr der Selbstauslöschung der Menschheit: Die Zeichen der Zeit – theologisch gedeutet* [Before the Danger of Humanity's Self-Annihilation: The Signs of the Times in Theological Interpretation]. The author asks serious questions about humanity's future: Are we bound for more collective suffering and death? Is there an increase of chaos and a decrease of order in our world? We are facing, he argues, a profound crisis, namely the real possibility of self-annihilation. For Büchele the solution lies in a "four-dimensional world republic" and in an ethics of gifted existence that can be developed from the Christian experience (*detailed review in the next Fall Bulletin*).

To prepare the way for peaceful coexistence at our faculty we offered a buffet and some drinks fostering our physical strength and our communication. For the evening's lecture Jean-Pierre DUPUY had been scheduled to speak on "The Ethics of Technology before the Apocalypse". However, despite apocalypse's deferment technology failed to bring him to Innsbruck. Due to fog in Munich he was stranded at Paris airport, and Wolfgang PALAVER, the organizer of our events, was forced to improvise. Since Prof. Dupuy had sent his manuscript in advance, I was asked to read it in his place, and so I had the privilege to impersonate Jean-Pierre Dupuy for an hour. For the discussion, however, I switched back to being myself, while Wolfgang Palaver tried to answer the questions from his overall knowledge of Dupuy's thought.

In his paper Dupuy argued that in the case of modern-day technology the famous definition of the devil given by Mephisto in Goethe's *Faust* had to be updated and in a sense reversed: it is now "*ein Teil von jener Kraft, die stets das Gute will, und stets das Böse schafft*" (p. 3) [part of

that force that stands, for always wanting Good, but still creates the Bad]. Dupuy illustrated that by concentrating on two areas in which technology has had or is expected to have a tremendous impact on the history of humanity: the use of the atomic bomb at the end of World War II and the ongoing “transformation of the role of the engineer in the framework of the so-called ‘NBIC convergence’ between nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive science. The former illustration has to do with technologies of death, the latter with technologies of life. The most remarkable feature of our time is that that difference makes no difference.” (p. 2) In both instances humanity is not anymore the master of technology but vice versa: the very existence of the technology seems to force its use onto us.

Especially in the new field of NBIC, humanity’s creations will not be controlled anymore by us but will elude our control, as only natural phenomena did hitherto. Dupuy referred to Hannah ARENDT’s analyses of how the human scientific undertaking makes nature from something that confronts us into something which is more and more molded by us and the conditions we set for it. That way even life comes to be viewed “as an artifact, as something that can be fabricated.” (p. 12) What are the ethical problems associated with that? Dupuy argues that a stance that judges this as the prideful human endeavor of putting ourselves in the place of God cannot claim Judeo-Christian roots. On the contrary the Biblical religions have desacralized nature, have brought about “the progressive elimination of every taboo, prohibition or limit” (p. 13) and have thus paved the way for the technological advances of modernity. This leaves us with the question of how we are to set limits for our use of technology. Dupuy defends our ability to do so and rejects a technological determinism, yet he realizes that in as much as modern technology remodels nature, and thus for the secularist abolishes any kind of exteriority, it undermines our ability to set unambiguous moral limits. Dupuy readily admitted that he does not have a solution but by way of searching for one he recurred on human love and its object: while the perfect simulation of a human person with all his/her properties might one day be possible, real love will only be directed toward the real person, never to the simulation. (The complete English

text of this presentation is also available online: <http://www2.uibk.ac.at/forschung/weltordnung/idwrg/04.pdf>; page references to here).

The discussion after the stand-in presentation was somewhat reluctant, though some interesting points were raised. Among them: Is it really true that the Judeo-Christian desacralization of nature eliminated “every prohibition or limit”? Or ought we not to distinguish between taboos, as ineffable and therefore non-discussable prohibitions that Judeo-Christian desacralization indeed abolished, and argumentatively disputable limits that are nevertheless based on arguments of natural rights and duties? At least the Catholic reading of the Christian heritage has always been arguing along these lines.

Finally, despite setbacks and bumps on the road, we felt that we had succeeded in organizing two days of discussion and celebration which Raymund Schwager would have enjoyed. Since death transcends the usual limits of perception, maybe he listened to our talks from the crypt of the adjacent Jesuit church and wished us well in our feeble attempts at truth.

Nikolaus Wandinger

BOOK REVIEWS

René Girard: *Oedipus Unbound: Selected Writings on Rivalry and Desire.*

Ed. with an intro. by Mark R. Anspach. Stanford: U. P., 2004. (131 pp. + introd., liv. pp.), ISBN: 0804747806, \$ 22.95

This is the first English-language book by René GIRARD to appear since *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (2001). Mark R. ANSPACH, a long-standing member of COV&R distinguished by (among other things) his English-language translations in the anthology *Violence and Truth: On the Work of René Girard* (1982), deserves applause for orchestrating and conducting this set of pieces. The first three chapters, each appearing here in English for the first time and together taking up 94 of the 113 pages authored by Girard, make the *raison d’être* for the book: these three essays reveal in detail the René Girard of the 1960s and 1970s wrestling with the Oedipus myth itself, with SOPHOCLES’ dramatic revisioning of it, and with the hardened academic wisdom (i.e. FREUD, psychoanalysis as dominant ideology) then blocking access to Sophocles’ approaches to anthropological (but not theological)

truth. We must not pussyfoot with the fact these essays are now rather strangely “early.” Four of five appeared between 1965 and 1973: Anspach has translated chapters 1 and 3, which originally appeared in *Critique* (November 1965 and February 1973 respectively), and chapter 2, which was delivered as a lecture in 1965, published in 1970. Chapter 4 reprints a 1973 article from the notoriously ethereal American journal of literary theory, *Diacritics*. That chapter reminds one of the courage René Girard possessed back then, conversing (for example) with the excessively revered DERRIDA without succumbing either to flippancy or sycophancy, and interpreting SHAKESPEARE (for another example) without kow-towing to the legions of dust-sniffing footnote-insane experts on the Bard. Chapter 5 gives us an excerpt (if “adapted” implies “excerpt”) from a 1985 essay published in *Literature and Belief*, which contrasts Oedipus and Joseph and possesses more explicit continuity with the Biblically-oriented mode of most work in mimetic theory today.

Let us acknowledge a risk right away. A person might lift this volume from the bookstore shelf, skim the back cover, check the table of contents, leaf through and surmise there is “nothing new here.” In one sense, the impression is accurate: there are no previously hidden-in-the-wings ideas that leap like surprises into the light here; there is nothing to crack any of the orthodox floorboards or open trap doors on the Colloquium’s dance floor. Much of chapter 1 recalls *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*; much of chapters 2 and 3 echo *Violence and the Sacred*. But such a first impression would be only superficially accurate: for the reader committed to mastering mimetic theory, to return *Oedipus Unbound* to the shelf and saunter away would be a mistake. There *is* “something new” here. Permit me a domestic metaphor. We all know that moving the furniture around in a familiar room—even when no conspicuously new object from the Home Furnishings depot has been brought into the room—moving things around may make the room look and feel quite different. One experiences that sort of newness in working through *Oedipus Unbound*. One is surprised, refreshed, satisfied with a sense of fresh perspectives; one sees sides and backs and spaces in Girard’s thinking that one might not have noticed before; one is rewarded by the exercise.

I took pleasure (to digress in a personal way) in being allowed to indulge a certain nostalgia for the good old days of the dark, seemingly pre-Christian or only marginally Christian René Girard of *Violence and the Sacred* (1977), the Girard whom Hayden WHITE mistook so egregiously as a defender of social oppression, the Girard who had exposed to me the vanity of metaphysical desire and the role of collective violence in human history but had not yet shared the wondrous possibilities for a non-sacrificial reading of the Gospels presented in *Things Hidden* (1987). Put another way, I was reminded forcefully that long before we worried about finding models for “positive mimesis,” Girard was labouring tirelessly to convince people of the negative force of human desire and the ultimate nullity of human conflict, the hardest thing to admit. It is that intense focus on and exposure of the vanity of expecting spontaneously good and uniquely autonomous human models to appear, that focus on the necessary humiliations in the truth of the “paradoxical tendency of rivalry to beget imitation—and of imitation to beget rivalry” (Anspach, viii), which dominates in the three big showpiece essays here. Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* shows us that darkness (and only glimmers of the light that the Gospels give), but it is a darkness nobody wants to stare into; his drama demonstrates nothing if not the utterly destructive force of desire producing indifferenciation and the one ugly difference that keeps “civilization” residually afloat, the difference between scapegoat and community. This is the Girard who was discovering the powerful concept of *indifferenciation as the end of desire*, symmetry as indifferenciation, the humiliating equivalence of desires, the horror of sameness and the horror—for those unwilling to give up the violent self of autonomous difference—of the truth. Now that we are pursuing “positive mimesis,” it is timely to recall *how hard Girard had to work* to convince intellectuals to pay attention to, well, “negative” mimesis. Nobody wanted to hear the theory that the self-flattering Oedipus complex was false and the self-humiliating equivalence and symmetry of human desire is true. Nobody wanted to trade Freud for the Bible. And most intellectuals still do not want to make the trade. Look up the holdings in your local university library under the Library of Congress subject heading “desire.” Only a tiny minority of the

books that come up will have anything to do with *mimetic* desire, negative or not.

Perhaps my indulging in nostalgia is based on illusion or idiosyncrasy. I rush to add, therefore, that one may be pleasantly surprised by the robust continuities between the early Girard and mimetic theory today that emerge in *Oedipus Unbound*. That is, some hitherto underspoken or merely implicit links in the evolution of his thought appear here, perhaps for the first time. I have always felt there were puzzling gulfs between *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* and *Violence and the Sacred*, and greater gulfs between the latter and the positions taken in *Things Hidden*. None of the masterful introductions to Girard's thought I came across (by William JOHNSEN, by Robert HAMERTON-KELLY, by James WILLIAMS, by Gil BAILIE—I could go on) could quite satisfy my hunger for something by Girard himself, a record in his writing of his leaping of those gulfs, a showing of his movement from the positions in one book to those in the next. It was as if Girard had leaped from one cliff of insight over a great canyon to a new cliff of insight with each book, but I never got to see him making the leaps. With each English translation, he simply appeared magically on a new cliff. How did he get there? Well—here in *Oedipus Unbound*, one might see him *in the act* of bridging some of those gulfs, crossing some of those divides.

One might argue that “From the Novelistic Experience to the Oedipus Myth” (chapter 1) bridges the gulf between the end of *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* and *Violence and the Sacred*, for example. This essay is concerned with defining the “masterpiece” and the “great writer,” with spelling out the features or “the emergence of novelistic genius” and the “unifying, synthetic character of ... the properly novelistic intuitions” (9). It reminds us of the disturbing demand that the novelist must die to the concrete world of all-too-human models, admit the *metaphysical* quality of desire before freedom from the lie of romantic autonomy can be achieved: “discovering the Same in what passed for absolute Difference means unifying reality. But first of all it ... means dying” (9). The chapter contains analyses of desire in PROUST and STENDHAL much like those in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*. But about halfway through, Girard moves into an analysis of *Oedipus the King*, followed by remarks on CAMUS' major novels, and

by fascinating comparative interpretations of what he names the “oracles” in *The Red and the Black* (Julien thinking he sees blood in a basin of water), and the *Madeleine* scene in *Remembrance of Things Past* (18-27). We get to see connections, but differences as well. Notice the favourable connotations that the word “myth” has in the following sentences: “Myth is ... the living witness of the novelistic experience. Myth is the glimpse of a structure linked to the genesis of truth” (12). For Girard, at that time, the Oedipus myth and Sophocles' two tragedies (*Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*) offered more compact, direct access to the representation of indifferenciation than could be afforded by the *long* narrative structures of the great European novelists. We notice the revelatory power that Girard granted these ancient texts: “The Oedipal myth presents us successively with the reflection of desire—the illusion of the initial subjectivity—and the experience which, revealing the desire, destroys this illusion” (14). The necessary contradiction between the “original intention” and the revelatory conclusion in the novelist is homologous to the “illusion of the initial subjectivity” and the “experience ... [which] destroys this illusion” (14) in the Oedipus stories. Girard keeps Oedipus in his favour here as one who overcomes the illusion of his difference from others. The chapter contains no open connecting of any of this to the Christian revelation, although perhaps a hint of it in the close-to-the-end remark that “the formidable and fertile mechanism that always leads to intersubjective struggle and that *can* lead to demythification” is a mechanism “peculiar to the Oedipal myth proper *and to the Western world*” (26) [emphasis added].

In “*Oedipus Analysed*” (1965; 1970—chapter 2), Girard patiently dismantles all the differences that critical tradition built up to preserve us from the truth of the sameness of the players in *Oedipus the King* (and the spectators' sameness to Oedipus). There is the difference between Oedipus and Laius, that between Oedipus and Creon, that between Oedipus and Tiresias: Girard dissolves each in turn, showing the humiliating similarities underneath the violent illusions of difference which preserve the alleged uniqueness of Oedipus as the incestuous, patricidal monster singled out by some obscure fatalism. We might be surprised when Girard moves, into a discussion of animal sacrifice and Abraham as patriarch

(44-48), to point out that Sophocles' Oedipus *refrains from* performing blood sacrifice and in that very act opens the path of Greek "reason" and debate that leads to his own scapegoating. Oedipus' way is seen *favourably* here, not unfavourably, in comparison with the passion of Christ—as it would later and properly be demoted. Later in the same essay, Girard shifts from the exploration of the benighted oracles in the Oedipus myth to the revelatory prophetic voices of ancient Israel: "Even if he [Sophocles] approaches the brink, he does not fall into the abysses of unreason, and he arrives obscurely at a domain that is closed to Greek thought. Only the prophets of Israel penetrate within this domain, and the dialectic of this penetration moves through their works, that of the second Isaiah in particular" (56). So, in short, this text shows outright some of the pathways Girard took between *Violence and the Sacred* and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*.

In "Symmetry and Dissymmetry in the Oedipus Myth," the final big piece newly translated (chapter 3), the movement from considerations of Oedipus to reflections on Christianity's unique and decisive role in Western culture is more explicit and open. In the same essay, Girard also enters into a dialogue with Freud that is familiar to readers of *Violence and the Sacred*, but which has a certain sharpness and clarity owing to the fact that the essay was written *after* the publication of that book and seems to be deliberately answering some of the criticism it received.

I must add that the introductory essay by Mark Anspach is a delight—informative and scholarly, lucid, lively and creative, at times comical, and full of provocative hypotheses about the reasons for Freud's tenacious insistence on "the primacy of concealed sexual impulses" (I) in human desire—hypotheses which connect Freud's personal family history to his intellectual decisions and which link those decisions in turn to a certain sad perpetuation and reversal of the terrible historical rivalry between Christians and Jews (xli-liv).

Readers of *Oedipus Unbound* will, I wager, both enjoy and find enlightenment in the newly-combined set of essays by Girard and Mark Anspach's expert introduction. My advice would be to take the book down from the shelf and take it home.

Andrew Bartlett

Roman Siebenrock, Willibald Sandler (eds.):
Kirche als universales Zeichen
[Church as a Universal Sign]:
in memoriam Raymund Schwager SJ
 (BMT 19) Wien: LIT 2005. (459 pps.)
 ISBN 3-8258-8910-6; € 39.90

Number 19 in the Contributions to Mimetic Theory series opens with two essays of the late Raymund SCHWAGER on the 'lived theology' of JOHN PAUL II: 'The Church as a universal sign' and 'The saviour of humanity: soteriology in the proclamation of John Paul II and the challenges of our time'. These explorations of the teaching of the late Pope and of the Second Vatican Council from the perspective of dramatic theology were discussed within the Innsbruck research project on 'Religion – Violence – Communication – World Order'; parts II and III of the volume comprise eighteen responses, mainly from other participants in the research project: on the Church as 'Heilsdrama'—dramatic theology in conversation—and 'the Church as sign: in conversation with Raymund Schwager' (from the perspective of communicative theology). The collection as a whole therefore serves as a retrospective on the ecclesiology of Raymund Schwager and of John Paul II, while also providing a work in progress report on the Innsbruck research group.

The question which runs through these essays is: how can the Church, after the Second Vatican Council and in the light of massive social and ecclesial upheavals, be recognised as a universal sign, as described in Chapter 1 of *Lumen Gentium*: 'a sign and instrument for the innermost unity with God and for the unity of the whole of humanity'? Raymund Schwager's answer to this question is set out in terms of the post-conciliar Church's actions as worldwide sign. She has demonstrated an increasingly explicit commitment to the quest for world peace and reconciliation, exemplified in many different aspects: in Catholic social teaching from *Pacem in terris* onwards; in the persistent advocacy of human rights, especially in addressing such fora as the United Nations, and in principled resistance to political dictatorships of right and left; through initiatives which enhance ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, most dramatically the gathering of world faith leaders at Assisi in 1986; finally, in the request for forgiveness which accompanied the Jubilee year celebrations in 2000. All

these events and tendencies demonstrate a Church whose actions (especially in the person of its most visible and official representative) go well beyond the concerns of the community of Christian believers by addressing all men and women.

The challenge for the theologian is how to give an account of the Church's universal sign value, one which does not fall into an integralist or triumphalist description on the one hand, nor allow itself on the other hand to be drawn into a pluralistic relativism which simply equates the Church's actions for universal peace with other religious or even secular ideologies. What distinguishes a Christian understanding of human rights, universal peace etc. from a secular one is understood by Raymund Schwager in terms of the dramatic theological model, according to which an authentic peace (one which is not established on exclusionary scapegoating) is impossible to achieve by human efforts alone. Even if all are agreed, for example, on the value of human rights, there must still be a recognition of the elements of transcendence which allow for their formulation and sustenance. Raymund Schwager draws two examples of this from the writings and practice of John Paul II: firstly, the late Pope's assertion that the post-war Declaration of Human Rights has to be seen as a response to, and even a fruit of, the terrible sufferings of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. Schwager explicates this theologically in terms of the awful mystery of Jewish suffering for the salvation of the nations, which we find in the Servant of Yahweh passages in Deutero-Isaiah.

The second observation is that the most important pronouncements of the Pope were made not in formal addresses to politicians or to news conferences etc, but in the context of the liturgy, particularly the Eucharistic celebrations which took place all around the world before tens of thousands of people. These were certainly media events, but it is a distinctive use of the media; the liturgical settings ensured that the Pope's words and gestures had a resonance and solemnity far beyond 'ordinary' speeches and policy statements, while drawing attention to the transcendent source of peace, reconciliation and justice.

A number of the subsequent essays refer to this theme of the distinctive media usage of John Paul II, and its implications for the role of the

papacy (e.g. Thomas H. BÖHM). Here, the reflections from communicative theology are significant, as the third section of the volume explores its Trinitarian (Matthias SCHARER) and missiological implications (Franz WEBER; Franz GMAINER-PRANZL). Andreas VONACH follows up the disturbing insight from Schwager about the role of Israel in an essay reflecting on 'Israel as a sign among the nations', and how this might apply to the Church; further biblical insights are offered by Martin HASITSCHKA's reading of John 17:21. The essay by Bernd Jochen HILBERATH seeks to bring together the two perspectives of dramatic and communicative ecclesiology, taking up the question of the Church and human rights as a test case. Roman SIEBENROCK formulates theses on the ongoing significance of "political theology".

Perhaps inevitably the essays which explore the tensions in the description of Church as a universal sign will meet with most interest. As mentioned above, this tension is already present in the dramatic model, which insists on the impossibility of success by human means alone, so that there is never a coincidence of the Church's action for peace and justice and a purely immanent or secular one. And yet for many commentators the gap is greater: there seems to be an outright contradiction between the Church's advocacy of human rights and autonomy in the world at large, and her refusal of democracy and inclusivity within her own ranks. Essays which address these issues include: Nikolaus WANDINGER on a dramatic understanding of ecclesial infallibility; Willibald SANDLER on the possibility of legitimate dissent in the Church; Gertraud LADNER on the Church as an ambivalent universal sign for women; Wilhelm GUGGENBERGER on what kind of sign the Church might be; Maximilian PAULIN on the danger of a visible sign becoming a mimetic rival; Dietmar REGENSBURGER on acting as a sign during the Nazi-era; Wolfgang PALAVER's refinement of the notion of 'hierarchy' in relation to Church-hierarchical and state-democratic organisation; Józef NIEWIADOMSKI's citation of the 'sinful Church in a God-forsaken world', as evoked by Graham GREENE's whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*.

There is no space here to examine these essays in detail, but the volume bears full testimony to the vitality and creativity of a theological research group which draws on two theoretical ap-

proaches (dramatic and communicative theology). It is hard to think of a subject which better illustrates the richness of this approach than post-Vatican II ecclesiology; the essays seek to open up a space for the Church between an aggressive assertiveness and resignation (STEINMAIR-PÖSEL / HUBER). The volume is dedicated to the memory of Raymund Schwager, and concludes with an essay by Werner W. ERNST on Schwager's understanding of the relationship between transcendence and immanence. Ernst's personal testimony of the benign influence of Raymund Schwager's intellectual companionship is intended to represent the experience of many of the other contributors to this volume. But it is evident that Professor Schwager shares these pages with the daunting presence of Pope John Paul II, whose embodiment of the Church as both a 'universal sign' and a 'sign of contradiction', an actor with a strong sense of the power of gesture and ritual to communicate in a media age, has generated a fascinating collection of theological reflections. This collection is, as the editors sadly note, an interrupted conversation; it is also a snapshot of the Church at a distinctive and important moment of its history, as we seek to assess the legacy of the Second Vatican Council forty years on, and of the Pope who for more than half that period has been its most dramatic and influential interpreter.

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Burschel, Peter: *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit. Zur Kultur des Martyriums in der frühen Neuzeit* [Dying and Immortality. On the Culture of Martyrdom in Early Modernity].

München: R. Oldenbourg 2004 (Ancien Régime, Aufklärung und Revolution, Bd. 35). 371 pp., 85 illustrs. ISBN 3-486-56815-9; 49.80 €

This work by Peter BURSCHEL deals with the violence that Christians directed at each other for religious reasons. This phenomenon has existed since antiquity, but the 16th and 17th centuries saw its culmination. The victims of these acts of violence were seen as martyrs by their fellow believers and therefore were venerated. Peter Burschel has already published several works on the history of violence. This time he investigates the significance of martyrdom in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation by analyzing selected, representative sources—mainly texts, but also pictorial material. Interestingly the media pre-

dominantly used by the different denominations are characteristic for them: leaflets, songs, extensive martyrologies, stage plays, pictorial cycles. The study confines itself to the German-speaking countries, plus the Netherlands and (for the Catholic side) Rome. The bibliography amounts to 67 pages (289-355) and the footnotes take about half the space of the book. The work is supplemented with 85 illustrations.

The introduction labors with a difficult theoretical jargon to situate the work within cultural anthropology, which investigates cultural patterns of interpretation. The introduction also looks ahead at some of the results: Martyrdom was a medium of collective memory and self-appropriation; thus it significantly contributed to the formation of denominational identities in the 16th century. This process involved the marking of boundaries because accusing the perpetrators was part of the depiction of martyrdom. These accusations unmasked the opposed denomination as agents of Satan or adherents of the Antichrist. In addition, martyrdom displayed models of saintliness, it was an important part of catechesis in order to influence the lives of the faithful.

The seven chapters of this volume are so rich in material that they can only be presented in a raw sketch. The first three chapters are devoted to Lutherans. Ch. 1 analyzes the numerous leaflets about the execution of five of Luther's adherents which were performed in Germany and the Netherlands between 1523 and 1527. These leaflets made the executions widely known and interpreted them as signs of the eschatological end-time. Ch. 2 examines the first martyrology of the Reformation, which was published in eight parts between 1552 and 1558 by Luther's student Ludwig RABUS from Ulm. It reads the history of the Church from Abel to LUTHER as a heroic succession in an implacable fight between God and Satan, in which the papacy had always been collaborating with the powers of darkness. The third chapter interprets the play *Catherine of Georgia* by Andreas GRYPHIUS in 1630, which mirrors the experiences of the Thirty Years' War: within the chaos of this world it is senseless to trust in political reason.

The next two chapters focus on the movement of Anabaptists, who—as a minority without political backing—were fiercely persecuted till the end of the 16th century. Ch. 4 explores the 23 martyr-songs of the *Ausbund* [Collection of the

Best], a hymnal of the Anabaptists of southern Germany, which saw several editions from 1570/71 till 1949. It impressively testifies to the attitude of *Leidsamkeit*, or “martyrological mentality” that Anabaptists developed as a response to the pressure of persecution. Ch. 5 compares two Anabaptist martyrologies: the *Geschichtsbuech* [History Book] (begun in 1570 by Caspar BRAITMICHEL in Moravia; the original was taken to South Dakota in 1874, where it is still kept by Hutterites near Tabor) and *Het Bloedigh Tooneel Der Doops-Gesinde* [The Bloody Play of the Baptist-Minded] (published in 1660 by Tieleman Jansz van BRAGHT in Dordrecht, Holland). These works differ in their understanding of history: The *Geschichtsbuech* does not recognize any continuity in history; it views the Anabaptist movement as a God-created inauguration of the end-time. In contrast to that *Het Bloedigh Tooneel* understands church history as a heroic succession of Baptist-minded persons who have always formed the essential core of Christianity.

The final two chapters investigate the development of the adoration of saints and martyrs in the Counter-Reformation. Ch. 6 introduces Roman particularities: a special flowering of the veneration of martyrs after 1550, extensive Roman pictorial cycles of martyrdom, the interest in Saints of the Catacombs. Ch. 7 describes the high importance violence had in the numerous stage plays of southern Germany’s Jesuit schools. The Jesuits favored visual media for theological reasons: meditating the plays or the images should increase the onlookers’ readiness for martyrdom and ascetic self-discipline.

In spite of the huge differences in theology, spirituality, and socio-political situation martyrdom is of central importance for the appropriation of world and self in all denominations. All of them maintain that their martyrs died joyfully, and nurture the tendency to seek—almost to force about—martyrdom. Everywhere it is considered a sacrifice and connected to asceticism.

The brief ending (285-288) is merely a summary of the seven chapters. Without further argument it concludes: “Finally they all make one realize that it is not the experience of common killing that generates culture, but the experience of common dying.” (288) However, Burschel’s investigation seems too specialized to warrant such a universal claim. Yet we can take this conclusion to be a general anthropological conten-

tion directed against GIRARD, whose *Violence and the Sacred* is listed in the bibliography. The formula “common dying”, however, is at best problematic, more likely outright wrong. But—withstanding the fact that it occurs nowhere else throughout the book and might be an accidental slip of the pen—this formulation contains the anthropological problem of this book and of martyrdom in general. There certainly are common experiences of suffering from suppression and persecution, as especially ch. 4 on the Anabaptists shows. But identifying with the martyrs in veneration does not mean dying together with them. Quite the opposite: One wants to win strength for one’s own life from this identification, as most chapters of this book demonstrate. And this is a very ambivalent process because it might establish and foster patterns of enmity. These patterns overtly or covertly continue the cycle of violence whose victims the martyrs had become. That way the martyrs’ devotees are in danger of becoming their murderers’ accomplices and of making the martyrs common scapegoats of both parties. They are media of defining the boundaries for both sides, which draw their identity from these media. The martyrs become the lynchpin for the process of identity-formation. It makes almost no difference that this is done from opposite perspectives. In each case identity is gained through enmity. For that reason it is regrettable that the study pays only marginal attention to the self-understanding and justification that those who brought the dissidents’ death about had for their actions. It mentions that the Catholics Thomas MURNER and Johannes ECK called Lutheran martyrs “martyrs of Satan” (p. 29). The execution rituals of the Inquisition receive attention of pp. 31-49. On p. 239 Burschel reports that Iroquois people who tortured the Jesuit Jean de BEBROEUF and a companion to death in 1649 mocked him with the words: “Actually we are your friends [...], for the more you suffer the more your God will reward you.”

Theologians who work with mimetic theory may have concentrated too narrowly on the critique of a sacrificial interpretation of Jesus’ death. The veneration of martyrs is also an essential aspect of Christianity—not only among Catholic and Orthodox Christians. In analogy to the misunderstandings of a theology of the cross, we are faced with the danger of a twisted understanding of Christian martyrdom as well. That

way the victim whose innocence one defends becomes a weapon in the fight against others.

Bernhard Dieckmann, Marburg;

Translation: N. Wanderinger

**Nagel, Ivan: "Krieg in der Kunst.
Thesen zu David und Goya."**

["War in Art. Theses on David and Goya."]

**In: *Das Falschwörterbuch. Krieg und Lüge am
Jahrhundertbeginn*, 121-139.**

Berlin: Berliner Taschenbuchverlag (BvT 0105)

2004. 144pp, ISBN: 3-8333-0105-8, € 7.50

Although it is somewhat unusual to write a review of just one chapter from a book, I thought other parts of the book would not deserve that much attention, while this one is of high relevance for the COV&R community. The book is a collection of essays, most of which oppose the two latest US war-engagements in the Persian gulf. The little essay I want to review here originated as a lecture at Berlin's Humboldt-University. In it Ivan NAGEL, the well-known German-Hungarian expert in dramatics, looks at the work of the two great painters Jacques-Louis DAVID and Francisco José de GOYA Y LUCIENTES and analyzes how the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars figure in them.

The biographical dates of the two artists are almost co-extensive: Goya lived from 1746 to 1828, David from 1748 to 1825. The essay concludes by stating: "David was the most moral painter in history, Goya the most immoral. Or vice versa." (139) Nagel leaves no doubt that he sides with the "vice versa". From the beginning, war and sacrifice are central themes in David's work; he celebrates the heroism of self-sacrifice and thus justifies the terror of the French Revolution and of the wars in its wake. It is possible to "understand David's complete work as a single cycle whose title might be, adapted from CALLOT: 'Les bonheurs de la guerre'." (129) David's preference for the large history painting in oil, his turning away from the erotic genre painting of the rococo, corresponds to his ideological idealism.

To illustrate this thesis, David's early masterpiece *Le Serment des Horaces* / *The Oath of the Horatii* (1785) is juxtaposed with Goya's etching *Y no hai remedio* / *And there is no remedy* from the series *Desastres de la Guerra* (1810). David's painting depicts the father as he obliges his three

sons to self-sacrifice. Although the Horatii are friends and even in-laws with the Curiatii, in fighting the Curiatii there is only the alternative of victory or death. Thus the painting glorifies the sons' readiness to self-sacrifice, as well as their father's, who also sacrifices himself in his sons. At the right-hand edge of the painting we see the women of the family mourning their sons and brothers in advance. The contemporary onlooker was familiar with LIVIUS and CORNEILLE and knew that only one of the Horatii had survived the battle. This one, however, then killed his sister because she mourned the death of one of the Curiatii to whom she had been engaged. Thus the painting anticipates the civil war resulting from the revolution and justifies its brutality.

Quite to the contrary Goya adjoins his work to rococo painting and intensifies it to a realism hitherto unheard of, by depicting the unvarnished suffering of the victims. His etching *Y no hai remedio* / *And there is no remedy* exhibits the mechanical killing in war. The barrels of three guns protrude into the picture, targeting head and chest of the victim, who is placed in the foreground in glaring white. "He does not have dignity because he is beautiful, strong or courageous—but because he is none of these. He is 'man', exposed as a creature" (135), one among many. A dead body lies in front of him, behind his back a second firing squad is in action.

Nagel's theses utilize juxtapositions. But I was impressed by the importance that the two key painters of the revolution period accorded to the question of sacrifice and by the striking contrast of their positions: glorification of sacrifice on the one hand, sympathy with the victims on the other hand. Classicism's harking back to Roman authors' rhetoric of virtue contributed to preparing the ground for the terror of the French Revolution. With this rhetoric the pagan indifference toward victims was absorbed as well. Museums in Geneva and Munich own versions of a painting by David's friend Jean-Pierre SAINT-OURS: *Le Choix des Enfants de Sparte* / *The Selection of the Infants of Sparta* (1786). It depicts the testing of Spartan babies for viability as a sacrifice to Minerva.

Bernhard Dieckmann, Marburg;

Translation: N. Wanderinger

1) Books concerning the entire work of René Girard

- Florey, Sonya: *René Girard, critique littéraire?* Col. Essais 6. Lausanne: Archipel, 2003.
Haeussler, Eric: *Des figures de la violence: Introduction à la pensée de René Girard*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005.
Jeffrey, D: *Rompre avec la vengeance lecture de Rene Girard*. Laval: Pu Laval Presse Univers, 2002.
Kirwan, Michael: *Discovering Girard*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2005.
Ramond, Charles: *Le vocabulaire de Girard*. Paris: Ellipses editions, 2005.
Vinolo, Stéphane: *René Girard: Du mimétisme à l'hominisation. 'La violence différante'*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006.

2) Articles concerning the entire work of René Girard

- Anon.: "René Girard élu à l'Académie française." In *Nouvel Observateur*, March 18, 2005.
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EDITOR'S THANKS

Again the editor thanks everyone who contributed to this *Bulletin*, especially those whose contribution I received within the original time frame. If some readers might find that too many reviews of books in German are contained in these pages, I would like to apologize for that. I hope that next time we can be more balanced again. Let me add an invitation to that: Readers of good books within the range of interests of *COV&R*, be they in French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese or any other language (even English), **please volunteer to write reviews** for the *Bulletin*, so that those who are not able to read these books can at least get an impression from your review.

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