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Volume 6

(Spring) 1999

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Editor's Note

RELIGION AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

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T hese are issues that I take very much to heart, so I will risk my own thoughts on the relation between religion and violence, not excluding the violence in and of religion. This is to say that I am not evading the objection made by Jean-Pierre Changeux in a recent discussion, namely, that religion as such produces violence. I do not wish to evade the objection nor to hide behind the collateral explanation that it is when religion is detoured by politics that it produces violence.

It is the presupposition that religion produces violence that brings me into discussion with René Girard. I encountered his work several decades ago and I have met him intermittently, with moments of distancing and rediscovery. This is the case for me again today regarding one of his later books, *The Scapegoat.* I cannot forget the dazzling excitement of 1972 when *Violence and the Sacred* first appeared. And then for me came a moment of hesitation, of doubt: isn't this explanation too psychologizing? Aren't the Gospels too easily exonerated of the accusation of violence? But I thereafter experienced disappointment with alternative accounts, principally sociological ones, and in particular with the one given by Maurice Bloch in *La Violence du religieux.* I am going to take the risk of a personal interpretation of the intimate relation between religion and violence. My own conviction, at bottom, is that I have been able, by broadening and deepening the issue, to discern the point where this very movement of going deeper bifurcates and branches out toward external violence.

I have clarified my position in *La Critique et la conviction* and in my more recent debate with J.P. Changeux, *Ce quifait que nous pensons* on this complicity between religion and violence. And it was in pursuing the direction opened up in *La Critique et la conviction* that I rediscovered an

interest in *The Scapegoat.* I found his interpretation not only to be complementary to my own, but its necessary complement. I will now proceed to show how René Girard's thesis is necessary to my own thinking.

So now I will go directly to my interpretive proposal, then I will turn to the position of Bloch in *La Violence du religieux,* a sociological interpretation, in order to come back in the end to Girard.

It is by way of reflection on tolerance considered as a progressive initiation that I arrived at the interpretation I am going to present. At its minimal State, we find only the tolerance of the intolerant person, who states, "I don't agree with what you believe, I disapprove of it, but I cannot prevent it. I tolerate it in the sense of not being able to prevent it; I would like to prevent it, but I do not have the power to do so."

At a second level, tolerance is more positive, saying, "I maintain the conviction that I am the one who has the truth, but I recognize, by way of being accommodating, that you have the right to profess what I hold as false, and I do this in the name of justice. That is to say, you certainly have the right, and it is one equal to mine, to profess what you believe, although I take it as false." I would say that the force of the principle of justice as thus expressed is this: any other life is worth as much as mine. Let us say that what I recognize here is the right to error. But at this stage I am torn within by the truth that I believe to be unilaterally mine and the justice that entails recognition of the other, which I place on another level from that of truth.

I make a further step in pursuing the issue, at a level farther advanced, when I say, "My adversary has perhaps a part of the truth but I don't know what it is." I would say that this is the perspectival version of tolerance: the other person sees a side of things, which I cannot see. But our positions cannot be substituted for each other. At this stage there is a crisis of the idea of truth, which is divided within itself. Therefore I have gone beyond the simple conflict between truth and justice, but the problem now is a conflict of truth within itself, so to speak.

Then I arrive at a higher level, and it is here that I encounter violence; that is, at the very basis of my conviction, of my own confession, I recognize a reality which I do not control as my own. I discern at the base of my position a source of inspiration, which exceeds my capacity of reception and comprehension by reason of its demand on thought, its power of practical motivation, and its emotional dynamic.

Indeed, I have just stated the key word around which my entire meditation revolves, the word "capacity." In *The Seif as Another* I developed in fact an entire philosophical anthropology, if one could call it that, around the theme of the capable man: capable of speaking, of acting, of narrating,

of considering himself the author of his acts and of assuming moral responsibility for them. There is therefore a fundamental "I can," which is also the correlative of an "I cannot." Indeed, it seems to me that it is this finite capacity of the "I can" that is put to the test in all religious experience, whatever its confession or allegiance. I would go as far to include Buddhism in this, because the confession of a personal god is not necessary here. So I say that it is here, in this finite capacity, that everything is put into play. It even occurred to me to express it this way: the capable man is the one addressed by religion.

In expressing it in that way I do not believe I am far from Kant in *Religion within the Limits ofReason Ahne,* where he presents religion in general, and specifically Christianity, as offering a fundamental symbolism. For him, this is the Christ-symbol, destined to engender a non-political Community whose object is what Kant calls "regeneration" and what I interpret as the healing of our capacity, which has been mutilated and paralyzed by radical evil. I remain quite Kantian here, but perhaps in a more positive way, for I am speaking of a liberation of a foundation of goodness which radical evil has never entirely eclipsed. Indeed, it is the very heart of this irenic vision that Kant himself brought to completion quite polemically, for *Religion* is a very polemical book. It does not involve simply the recognition of religion as a fact, in all its specificity, but a struggle against its defects, including the confiscation of the symbolism by self-designated Interpreters, the corruption of obedience by the spirit of servitude and immaturity, and manipulation by a particularly vicious form of power, ecclesiastical power. So it is along this dual movement of an act that is liberating yet is itself burdened by its own limits, that I am going to discover the moment of violence.

But first I would like to continue a little further, if I may, in noting not only Kant's vision of finite capacity but also a line of thought which is post-Kantian; it is Fichtean, and above all associated with Schelling, namely, that dwelling in my finite capacity is something infinite, which I would call foundational. Schelling speaks of a *Grund,* a ground or foundation, which is at the same time an *Abgrund,* an abyss, therefore a groundless ground. Here the idea of a disproportion arises which is suffered and not simply acted upon, a disproportion between what I would call the excess of the foundation, the *Grund/Abgrund,* the groundless ground, and my finite capacity of reception, appropriation, and adaptation.

I would offer a metaphorical equivalent of this disproportion, the Situation where violence slips in, a disproportion which I call foundational; the metaphor focuses on the contrast between the spring that overflows and

the vase that tries to contain it, in the double sense of offering a receptacle but also of constraining within limits. By its finite capacity the vase limits and delimits what overflows it by the excess of its superabundance. I have often meditated on this idea of disproportion and superabundance, particularly in reflecting on the relation between love and justice, and on the superabundance of love. Basically I adopt the proposition of the Apostle Paul: "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20). Here is a superabundance with regard to justice itself, which is a spirit of measure, of just measure. I find therefore the confrontation between excess and moderation within myself. I had not perceived for some time the reserves of violence implicated in this test of the finite capacity of the "I can" of the capable man.

I am now touching on the point where I encounter Maurice Bloch from one side, and René Girard from the other, as I distance myself from the former and draw closer to the latter. For it appears to me that the moment of symbolic violence consists in an attempt to force the spring to adapt itself to the dimensions of the vase. This is an Operation that I would call self-protection against what may appear, quite rightly, as the threat of an overflow, the threat of excess. And as a believer, a member of a confessional Community, I will try to strengthen the interior structures of the opening, the point of reception, in order to compensate for the kind of threat constituted by the excess in relation to a finite capacity. That is what we are dealing with here, establishing enclosure around the sides, for want of being able to seal off the top. In my view, a border or limit is situated at this point of a threat to personal and collective identity which only wants an empty space around it and which feels itself to be destabilized by excess, superabundance, overflowing.

To come back then to my earlier idea of a progressive initiation, this puts the idea of tolerance to the test, because it is difficult to admit, on the basis of my conviction, within my confession, something like a double source or ground, a deepening abyss, which destabilizes the security of my simple, honest, and sincere adherence to what I believe. It is in myself that I experience this disproportion between my finite capacity for adherence and the acknowledgment of something fundamental that exceeds me and threatens me by its excess, and thereby I suffer. So violence is then like an effort to protect myself against the danger of losing my roots, an imminent threat I only obscurely perceive.

I believe that this is experienced fairly concretely when we see how an excessive acceptance, so to speak, of difYerences can lead to the feeling that all differences are indifferent. This is the "no matter what" attitude, where

tolerance tips, as it were, by its own excess toward indifference. At this point, I withdraw to shut myself up where I feel at home and strengthen the walls once more. To strengthen the walls means to contain by force those on the inside but also to expel those whom I cannot contain. Indeed, it is at this point of explaining the transformation of excess into threat, and therefore of the conversion of the threat into defensive and offensive measures, that I encounter by turns Maurice Bloch in *La Violence du religieux* and René Girard in *The Scapegoat.* I make this detour by way of Bloch precisely in order to bring Girard's contribution into greater relief.

Bloch, who teaches at the London School of Economics and is a renowned specialist of sacrificial practices (rituals of sacrifice, initiation, fertility, marriage, exchange, etc.), has in his own right attempted an anthropological explanation, but, as we shall see, it is rather an explanation that may be identified as sociological anthropology. What he claims to give in his book is "the minimal, irreducible structure common to a great number of rituals and to many other religious phenomena." According to his Schema, it is a matter of the relation of humans to time, the lifetime that goes from birth to death while including reproduction; representations from everyday life are tied to this existence in time; it is precisely these representations that other representations, those of ritual, transform. We are going to see in what this transformation consists and that it amounts to a denial of everyday experience. This transformation is a complete reversal of everyday representation. Another life taken as Coming from beyond, from the invisible, is rendered accessible by a symbolic death that is enacted in rites of initiation. By the entry and welcome into the world of the beyond, the initiate transcends every vital process of life, reproduction, and death, but only for a time. The crucial moment is then the return to this world, after the ritual of initiation. The problem, and this is decisive for Bloch, is that this return must not be a simple repetition of the initial phase, a return to the starting Square, so to speak. In order for the return to be different from the point of departure it is necessary to proceed to what he calls "a conquest of the present instant by the transcendent," a conquering return. Now it is along this trajectory of victorious return that the sort of violence emerges that the author calls "violence in return." It is done at the expense of exterior beings, among them animals that are sacrificed, but also other persons, such as women; it involves "every manifestation of vitality to be conquered, dominated, destroyed, consumed." I cite a passage which sums up the entire book:

> The rituals that dramatize the journey of the person to the beyond
> and his victorious return are the reflection of a similar experience
> which is felt to be intrinsic to the person. The first part of the
> rituals puts into play a subjective dichotomization of the subject,
> into a vital aspect and a transcendent aspect, then as in the
> external drama, the transcendent expels the vital, such that for a
> moment the person becomes completely transcendent. This
> victory of one aspect of the person over the other is the primary
> element of violence in rituals. This violence, however, is only
> preliminary to an ulterior violence that enacts for the subject the
> triumphal recovery of the vital by the transcendent element of the
> person. This recovery of the vital does not compromise the
> superiority of the transcendent identity because the vitality
> recovered is mastered by the transcendent.

Therefore, the book argues that at the very center of the structure of ritual, which is the sequence that leads to violence in return, one may find an explanation of the symbolism of the violence present in many religious phenomena. Bloch believes his thesis is opposed to that of Girard who, according to him, presumes "an innate aggressiveness in human beings which is expressed and to some extent purged by ritual." He continues by saying that "to the contrary, I do not base my arguments upon an innate tendency to violence, for I find that violence is itself the result of an attempt to create the transcendent in religion and politics."

Leaving Girard aside for the moment, let us concentrate on the idea of a double violence, that of destruction of life and violence in return, which is intended by its external expression to distinguish the Situation of return from the initial Situation. At first glance, I am saying something fairly similar to Bloch, for I am talking about an uprooting from finitude and a violent response to the threat of excess. But according to Bloch, this is a process of total illusion consisting in a denial of the vital and the mortal condition of man: "The initiate is transformed from prey into hunter, from victim into killer, by the working of representations which are essentially alienating." This fantasy of non-mortality is the wellspring of the double violence.

Now rightly or wrongly, I take the problematic of capacity and excess, and therefore of disproportion, to be constitutive of human being. So it must be facilitated by another sort of anthropology than that of an ethnologist who takes all that for a vast phantasmorgia. It is not by accident that Bloch uses over and over the word "representation": the everyday representation of life, of death, and reproduction, and then the ritual representation of a transcendent reality which is a way, somehow, of denying life. I think that

this is a sort of fundamental Nietzscheism. Furthermore, the author does not deny that he has a personal commitment, though it is rarely declared except in the word "illusion." That word appears very rarely but it is there. The construction of the ritual drama of violence in return is an attempt to avoid the force of this contradiction. It is an apparent solution to the problem that most humans try to resolve: how can human beings be constituent parts of permanent institutional structures?

At bottom this is an anthropology of phantoms; we become aggressive phantoms with respect to life, and in order to inscribe this phantasmal world by means of ritual, we must destroy something on the outside, on the exterior. Ritual leads elsewhere, beyond, into the transcendent. So my problem is this: why is it necessary to go away from ordinary life experience if there is not a fundamental relationship that is not illusory? Indeed, my first problem concerns the relationship with the fundamental that is not simply an illusory representation. But above all my problem is with the second moment, with what Bloch calls violence in return. Why must one institute the transcendent in the mortal, why must there be a violence in return? It is simply affirmed without being explained. Bloch writes, "The central enigma of the creation of an apparent permanence starting from a changing principle is phenomenologically resolved; this creation seems to be necessary to all the social Systems that rest on the illusion of an institutional framework transcending individuals, and this is the case for nearly all the societies of the world." The basic thesis is stated here: everything comes from the illusion of a transcendent institutional framework, from which, after the violence of rupture and departure, stems violence in return on the exterior.

I will conclude with Bloch by citing this very important text:

> The true source of meaning is the practical perception of all the natural processes of life, death, and reproduction, and not the ritual system. The rituals may attempt to deny that experience of reproduction and ideas of duration on which our comprehension of life is founded, but this attempt remains futile since they cannot utilize anything as a point of departure except non-ritual experiences. Because of this they cannot be other than a secondary transformation of that experience. Ritual images are constructed on the negation of this. (51)

The key is in this text: the true source of meaning is the practical perception of these natural processes; it is not the ritual system. Thus ritual is understood as denial of the natural. And in my view this sociology best

explains the **first** stage of violence, the denial of the natural, with the reservation I have stated, namely, that to my mind there is a metaphysical experience of the fundamental, the ground. But the greatest enigma is certainly violence in return. Why do we need something exterior to destroy, and not simply an emotional self-conquest? How does the other come athwart this conquest in return of the vital or animal? Why is it necessary to have a foreigner, an adversary, an enemy?

And it is just here that it is necessary to consider Girardian mimesis. But before that, I would like to plead for the thesis that the dialectic of the finite capacity and the abyssal ground is opposed to the denial of the vital. This of course is no longer an ethnographic thesis, nor an anthropological one as construed by ethnography, but belongs properly to a philosophical anthropology on which I risk, as it were, the meaning of my existence. So now I ask you to admit for the sake of argument and with a sympathetic imagination, as I sometimes say, the philosophical Schema I am proposing, which is not the denial of the vital and of ordinary representation by myth, but the constitutive disproportion of my human being between my finite capacity of reception and the excess of the source of thought(s), action(s), and feeling(s). Then I would say that my interpretation is sufficient in itself for a time, but it is destined to encounter, like that of Bloch, a blind spot where Girard's idea of mimesis takes on renewed force. I am saying that my interpretation, taken as it is, does justice to myth which in its own prespeculative fashion has something of a presentiment, a precritical understanding of the founding dialectic. I think that in the experience of the ritual of initiation something of the relation of the living or vital to the fundamental ground is perceived with the resources of imagination, with what Bergson called the fable-making function—which in my view has its own metaphysical depth. But on the other hand, my interpretation is insufficient and even as deficient as Bloch's on the matter of violence in return, the exteriorization of destructive energy against the foreigner and the enemy, in sum what he calls the politics of myth. And it is here that Girard's interpretation can not only complete but in my view strengthen and even rescue Bloch's interpretation of violence in return. It would also do the same for what I have too rapidly named the conversion of the feeling of excess into that of a threat. Why is what is founding in and of itself perceived as threatening and not simply as foundation, as a final justification on the level of thought, action, and feeling? Why is excess menacing? I then spoke of a sort of dramatics of compensation, a way of compensating the excess of the superabundance of the source in relation to my finite capacity, the finite capacity of what the vase can contain. It is this moment of compensation that

now appears to me, after the reading of *The Scapegoat,* to require the complement and more than that, the reinforcement of the dynamic of exclusion offered by Girard's theory of mimesis.

Girard finds the key to such an extensive phenomenon as sacrifice in the structure of desire . I desire whatyou desire, I identify mimetically with your desire, and the only way to get out of this fatal cycle engendered by desire and its duplication is for you and me to become reconciled by uniting against a third person whom we expel. Thus the expulsion of the third remedies the intimate threat of mimesis. As I have said before, after an initial phase in which I had welcomed what is essential in this thesis, I resisted what appeared to me, rightly or wrongly and perhaps more wrongly, to be a psychological reductionism. But now I see, as I consider what seems to me lacking in my own interpretation, the opportunity to welcome anew the mimetic concept. But I welcome it in a directly communitarian dimension, which would alleviate the suspicion of psychologism. Let me clarify this.

At the center of my interpretation I have sited the discordance that takes place amidst an infinite appeal, the excess of the ground, and the finite capacity of reception. But this capacity of reception is from the outset what I would call a Community of reception, of reading, of instruction, such as we see in the religions of the Book. And even in the non-scriptural religions there is in the oral tradition something like a scripture, an inscription, brought about by the ritualization of instruction. It is therefore as an instructed Community that a Community lays hold of the words of this instruction and Claims to reduce this instructional power to its finite capacity of comprehension (by which I mean here the ability to receive and contain). And it is into this difference, this disproportion between the excess and a finite community's informed capacity to receive, that I see the mimetic process inserting itself.

Ijust introduced the expression "lay hold of," to lay hold of instruction to the finite extent of my capacity to understand. Indeed I would say that there is a possessive dimension in the receiving of a radically transcendent message by an instructed Community with its finite capacity of receiving and containing. I can only say two things about this. First, the transcendent ground that I name for want of a better term the fundamental, the ground less ground, is then treated as an object, a rather blurred object, of desire and fear. We know the biblical language of the fear of God, of God who is object of desire and fear. And why? Because the fundamental itself, amidst this attempt at possessive reception or receptive possession, has been treated as property. So secondly, all at once all the other historical communities who lay claim to the same transcendence, but in terms of a different confession,

appear as rivals in the struggle for appropriation of Being, the absolute Other, which is treated as a seifsame object to be possessed to the exclusion of the other possessors. So then the other communities are the rivals for this object of desire-fear, rivals in the reductively possessive reception of transcendence that is constituted by the very foundational instruction. Here is the source of exclusion of the other communities considered to be impious, heretical, impure, etc. Examples abound in the environment of monotheism, where they are perhaps the rule, whether we consider the battle of Yahwism against Baal, the massacres of the priests of Baal in the book of Joshua, the competition between the synagogue and the Christian church of the early centuries, the ritual murder of Jews in Christian Europe of the Middle Ages, or the religious wars within Christendom from the 16th to the 18th Century. We do not lack for examples.

Such is therefore how I propose to welcome the Girardian thesis, not simply within the context of my own conception but in terms of what is lacking in my interpretation. To wit, the excess of being takes the form of having, becomes the object of appropriative desire, and the other communities reach out in rivalry with the same gesture of appropriation-expropriation which extends into the very process of reception.

I said that I join once more with Girard's thesis not only in the context of my own interpretation but from the perspective of what it lacks initially. Indeed, I do not merely include or insert it; on the contrary, I see in my conception a missing link which I pointed out in passing when I said that the believer belonging to a historically determined Community perceives the excess of the superabundant source as a threat and that this threat called form a compensatory strategy of reinforcement of the walls of enclosure, of sealing up the breaches.

Now why would this foundational source be perceived as threatening and not as gratuitousness and generosity? That is really what it is, fundamentally. Is it not the projection of our appropriative desire onto the source itself of our summons, our calling to being, that transforms into a threat that which fundamentally is only the bestowal of gifts, the enlargement of my capacity of reception? Thus the God of Israel, who accompanies the entire people through their history—is he not perceived as a jealous God and, by implication, as the instigator of murders? And what are we to say about the cross, redesigned in the form of a sword to the cry of "by this sign you will conquer"?

I want to say in closing, therefore, that my agreement with René Girard extends to the point where he interprets the Christ figure as laying bare, denouncing, and dismantling the System of exclusion of the scapegoat. It is

the high priest Caiphas, according to the Gospel of John, who declares the sacrificial thesis: it is better that one man alone die for the people and that the whole people not perish. In this sense I agree with Girard when he says that the Gospels deal with the same things as described by anthropology of religion, but the Gospels reverse the relation of the victim to the victimizing System, which is then finished in the sense of being unveiled and overthrown. Moreover, I would cite this sentence from *The Scapegoat:* "The main thing concerning revelation from an anthropological Standpoint is the crisis of all persecutory representations that it provokes." But I am prepared to argue that the Christ symbol is not necessarily the only one possible. I would say that it is the one I know, it is therefore the one from which I live fundamental ly, but this transformation of the necessary victim into the victim witnessing against the System occurs elsewhere perhaps. And perhaps there is in Buddhism, if I may risk just a word on this, a sort of depreciation of victimization, which existed in the Hindu tradition under the form of karma and therefore as a kind of constraint on reincarnation . There was a sort of condemnation of their System by virtue of its very fulfillment. And within the biblical world itself, it is certainly necessary to move back from the Gospel narratives to the prophetic nucleus in the Second Isaiah. Here we find the suffering righteous one who already represents, along with Job, the deconstruction of the System of atonement, of sacrificial atonement. So this means, in conclusion, that the reception of the source or groundless ground as pure gift is henceforth, for us, inseparable from criticism of the victimary process that radically corrupts the reception of the fundamental and transforms it into entrapment in the rivalry with all the other communities that themselves were receptive communities but became entrapped. The entrapment of the source results from the conjunction between finitude of capacity and exclusion of all the other expectations, attempts, and temptations of all those who believe otherwise than I do. It is this grafting of exclusion onto the finite capacity that the mimetic interpretation helps to understand.

As for the consequences of this for education, and with due apologies for contributing very little to this perhaps, I think the implications can be summarized in two words: deepening of conviction regarding the groundless ground and reinforcing the criticism of exclusionary impulses, with the help of the figure or figures most capable of dismantling the scapegoat mechanism.

(translated by James Williams)

FROM SACRIFICIAL VIOLENCE TO RESPONSIBILITY: THE EDUCATION OF MOSES IN *EXODUS 2-4*

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> *,y* When toward the end of his life Moses tried to stave off death, God said to him: "Did I teil you to slay the Egyptian?"
>
> (MidrashinPlaut383)

I. Education in Plato and Judaism

The word "education", of course, comes from the Latin, *educare,* meaning "to lead out" or "to bring up," and both its Latinate morphology and the semantic value it assumes in English reflect its peculiar history. To "lead out" implies in the first place leadership, which is to say a relationship between one designated as a "leader" and another (or others) designated as the "led." The notion of leadership also entails a movement through which the leader propels the led, namely from a region designated as "inside," to another designated as "outside."

Within the Western context, which is to say, within the Western European historical experience which traces itself back through the romance language speaking countries to Rome and ultimately to Greece, the primary articulator of the notion of education we have inherited is, of course, Plato. Although Plato's *Republic* is nominally about justice, and even more specifically the "just" State, commentators have long pointed out that it is really about education (see, for example, Havelock). How shall the guardians of the State that we shall term "just" be educated?, Plato's interlocutors ask themselves. In this regard, of course, Plato was challenging the educational System already in place at the time at the head of which was Homer and the Homeric epics, and substituting for an older oral culture founded on an elaborate System of mnemonics another founded more decisively upon writing and the aiphabet. Some have argued that in place of a aural or

hearing-centered culture Plato was inaugurating a Visual or video-centric cultural organization, and much work is currently being done in this area (see, for example, Ong).

What was Plato's educational solution? It was an appeal, in short, to the true, to the language of reason, and to the realm of the ontological as the context in which the true could be defined. The true, as the phenomenological tradition has taught us, may be regarded as the Separation of that which has being from that which does not have being, that which only appears or seems to be from that which truly is. Reason in this context is the method or modality of thinking by which such difference or distinction between the true and the false becomes articulated. Education may then be said to be the process by which all of this occurs, by which one learns to separate appearances from reality, the true from the false, the reasonable from the unreasonable, and thereby the process by which one avoids slavery.

For at bottom the enemy for Plato remains slavery and the goal remains freedom from its ravages. Plato, for one, defines his program in specific Opposition to Greek tragedy, which he takes among the species of *mimesis* or of mimetic *poesis* that he cites to be the worst threat to his program of absolute difference. The tragic poets leave us without an antidote, he tells us, to its irresistible seductions. Even the best of us—by which he would certainly include Socrates, who has been educating these young men about the processes of education—go to the theater, follow the theatrical Performance with enthusiasm, beat their breasts along with the players, and finally praise as most worthy those playwrights who most enable this enthusiasm to take place. The distinction between the true and the mimetic, between the true and the imitational or representational, between that which has being and that which only shadows being, is always on the verge of collapsing in this context. And as a consequence the only safe State, Plato tells us, is the one that excludes theatrical Performance from its premises.

There is no place in the present context to develop any further the complicated relationship Plato has with his predecessors, and I have hinted at this relationship elsewhere (see Goodhart 261). Suffice it to say that Plato remains in this regard the master in Western circles of all serious educational programs, a program that has been invoked to lead us out of the dangers that accrue from over-attachment, from the idolatries in endless varieties that arise to lure us into cultural and psychological bondage.

Within a Jewish context, on the other hand, education has been conceived quite differently. Viewed anthropologically, education may be regarded as the means by which an individual is assimilated into a group and in its widest context involves the cultural Community overcoming the obstacles to

such assimilation—the idiosyncracies of biology, individual circumstances, and so forth. Plato's program in this regard, like any educational program designed as a "leading out," is a reaction against an older educational order that has become antiquated, fossilized, inadequate, no longer serviceable.

In this regard, Jewish education shares certain fundamental features with Piatonic education. Jewish education is also a "leading out." Focusing as it does upon the Bible, and in particular upon the story of Moses, and the receiving of the Law or Instruction or Torah of the divine (and the responses such reception elicits), Judaism defines itself as similarly iconoclastic and anti-idolatrous. Both in its founding patriarchal stories, and in its historical exodus accounts, Judaism (at least as the Rabbis have passed this tradition down to us) defines itself as the giving up of social Orders that have become inefficacious, and the reorientation towards if not precisely new gods then a way of living that no longer depends upon the gods at all, an anti-sacrificial perspective that wanders progressively away from the gods and lays human responsibility at the hands of human agents.

Housed as it has been historically, however, for nearly two thousand years within a Western cultural environment that has ranged at times from hostile to openly eliminationist, Judaism has also had to learn other lessons. Apart from the lessons of its holy scriptures, Judaism had to learn the lessons of assimilation. Jewish education from within a Western diasporic context has been above all and primarily a matter of reading Hebrew, and particularly the Biblical tradition. The Torah conceived as Tanakh, which is to say, as not only the flve books of Moses (or Torah proper) but as a body of writing that includes the Prophetic writings *[Neviim)* and the Holy Writings *(Ketuvim),* remains of course the centerpiece ofthat tradition.[1] And the texts of the four main exegetical traditions—the Talmudic writings, the midrashic collections, the esoteric writings, and the later rabbinic commentaries (not to mention other minor traditions)—Supplement and complement that centerpiece.

But the reading of the Hebrew of the Bible is not simply a matter of philology, nor even just a matter of cultural study (the way one would describe reading another ancient cultural language), since it is a matter of reading a tradition which casts the very activity of reading (as this activity has been conceived with a Western context) in a fundamentally new light.

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[1] The word *Tanakh* is an anagram of the words used to name the three books that comprise it *(Torah, Ktuvim,* and *Neviim).*

If we turn now to the work of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Lévinas, we do so as a way of illustrating this centrality of Biblical reading and in particular of the prophetic.

II. Hebrew Humanism

In 1933, four years after the death of his friend Franz Rosenzweig (with whom he was embarked on a substantially new translation of the Hebrew Bible), Martin Buber reflected on the possibility of a "Hebrew humanism" *(On the Bible)*. In the two preceding decades, he noted, the Jewish people had been renewed. The Hebrew language had once again begun to be spoken. But neither the restoration of their language nor the restoration of their history in the land of Israel had guaranteed for the Jewish people their response to what Buber calls the "prophetic" demands, and it was alone within the Hebrew Bible that one could be sure that such demands were at least audible. Such a return to the Hebrew Bible, such a defmition of Jewish humanism as a specifically "Biblical humanism," Buber noted, did not entail living in the manner of the patriarchs. It did not mean modeling our lives on those of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Rather such a renewalist ethic meant living completely in the modern world in a way that was at the same time "worthyof the Bible."

> ...only a man worthy of the Bible may be called a Hebrew man. Our Bible, however, consists of instruction, admonition, and dialogue with the Instructor and Admonitor. Only that man who wills to do and hear what the mouth of the Unconditioned commands him is a man worthy of the Bible. Only that man is a Hebrew man who lets himself be addressed by the voice that speaks to him in the Hebrew Bible and who responds to it with his life. (Buber 212)

To be open to the Hebrew Bible, for Buber, does not mean necessarily to be open to a specified content (and Buber's famous debate with Rosenzweig on the so-called "content" of the law turned upon just this point). But it does mean rather to be open to its word, to its language, to that which encloses content, to its capacity as address, to what Buber calls the "mystery of its spokenness *{Gesprochenheii)"* (214).

In the work of Emmanuel Lévinas, such openness to the Biblical proclamatory prophetic word assumes much the same form. In "For A Jewish Humanism," for example, one of several essays on *Difficult Freedom* in which Lévinas addresses the question of Jewish education, he appears to

echo Buber's position on humanism.[2] Humanism, understood as the undoing of the "prestige of myths," is already a Jewish activity, Lévinas argues, and so a Jewish or Hebraic humanism would be in fact an uncovering or disclosure of one of the "souls of [the] soul" of Western man, so to speak.

But the source of this disclosure from a Jewish point of view, is necessarily the "Hebrew language and its texts" (by which he means the Hebrew Bible and its revelation in Talmud and its commentators), the texts, he says, "to which it is substantially linked and which are revealed only through it" (275). And the source for the understanding of this language and these texts is not philology but what Lévinas calls "advanced studies," the effort "to turn these texts back into teaching texts" and to allow them to speak (268).

Both Buber and Lévinas appear to agree in other words on several key notions. To do Jewish education is to learn to do Hebrew language. But to learn to do Hebrew language is to do more than learn to enter this ancient linguistic universe. It is to learn the texts which sustain and support that world, and in particular the biblical texts which are elaborated in the various surrounding exegetical traditions—talmudic, midrashic, esoteric, later rabbinic, and so forth. And to enter that biblical world is in turn to do more than recite the themes or the formal (or historical) circumstances in which it was produced—as the so-called "high criticism" has been doing for some time. It is to engage the kind of thinking and reading that both writers characterize as "prophetic."

What is prophetic reading? What would it mean to do biblical reading as prophetic reading, as ethical reading, as reading that uncovers in Lévinas's conception our "infinite responsibility" for the other individual? In the paper that follows, I would like to examine some of these questions in context of the early life of Moses in Exodus 2-4. Afterwards I will return to the topic of education in general.

III. Exodus 1-2

The book of Exodus opens with a prologue of things to come. Ties are noted by Torah to the book of Genesis, and then there arises a ruler who has no intimacy with the Israelites of the earlier era. They are too numerous, the

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[2]Lévinas, *Difficult Freedom* (273-276). The original French title of this essay, "Pour un humanisme Hébraïque," appeared in 1956 and was republished in *Difficile Liberté* (350-354).

new Pharaoh says; they are everywhere. Let us deal wisely with them lest they join with our enemies and rise up out of the land.

Finding a Situation that displeases him, and a danger to be associated with that displeasure, the Pharaoh undertakes an action to prevent that consequence, one precisely that brings about the very outcome he feared. At the other end of the opening narrative, under the leadership of an Egyptian-raised child—Moses—the Israelites will indeed leave Egypt. In this regard at least, the story is not entirely unlike the populär Greek story of Oedipus, who also brings about unwanted consequences by the actions taken to avoid them, and the connections between the Greek story of Oedipus and Egyptian elements in the story of Moses have often been explored, most notably perhaps by Freud in *Moses and Monotheism.*

Do we have here a paradigm of what we might call "Pharaonic" power? Is this display what will constitute the "Egyptian" response to crises in Torah, so that it will be later to this process that the ten commandments or "ten utterances" (the *aseret hadibrot)* will refer when they say: "I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" *{anochiy YHVH eloheycha asher hotzeitiycha mei'eretz mitzrayim mibeiyt [ajvadiym,* 20.2)? Is this the process of idolatry in the contemporary setting?

In any event, such Pharaonic thinking results in the increase of taskmasters and burdens, and that result in turn issues only in the increased circumstance the Egyptians feared: the Hebrews multiplied still more. And so a second strategy is tried.

The ruler speaks to the Egyptian midwives of the Hebrew women, asking them to kill the male children. And here we have the first rebellion and the first instance of a gender conflict in this story: the Egyptian women "did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive" (1.17). The women undertook this behavior, Torah teils us, because the Egyptian women "feared God" (1.17). We also observe the Egyptian women speaking back to the Pharaoh: we did this, they say, when asked directly, because the Hebrew women are "lively" *{chayot).*

Do the Egyptian women refuse the Egyptian ruler's demand and then hide behind a stereotype of the Hebrew women, perhaps to protect the Hebrew women? Or do they accurately report what happened—namely, that they have been unable to do the job assigned to them because the Hebrew women gave birth without their help—perhaps because they are jealous of the Hebrew women? In either case, the second strategy issues in the same result. The feared consequence once again accrues by the very efforts undertaken to avoid it. The Israelites multiply.

With that prologue, we now move to the story of the birth and life of Moses proper, "...there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi" (2.1). What man? And what wife? We do not learn the names until later—that the man was named Amram and the woman, Jochebed, who was also in fact his father's sister (see 6.20). Why are their names suppressed here? The father will not play much of a role in what follows—and in part we may see the career of Moses as a movement from one guiding authority to another. But the mother will play a significant role.

The "woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child *(kiy-tov hu),* she hid him three months" (2.2). Why? The Pharaoh has tried a third strategy to control growth among the Hebrews. What he has said to the Egyptian midwives of the Hebrews, he has now said to the Hebrews directly: "every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (1.22). The birthing of a son (by the Hebrew woman) who is not killed, therefore, is the first decision the woman makes. And her assessment of the Situation leads to a second: she will hide him. Because he is "goodly" *(tov)* she says. Is this a value judgement on her part? Would she, his mother, have killed him if he were not "goodly" (tov)? Or are we to understand *tov* as referring to the fact that he did not cry very much, so that hiding was suitable, as opposed to some other form of concealment? The Suggestion that there may be some lack of sound on the part of the child—given the relation of Moses later to speech—is not without interest of its own, since we observe in this connection that the first thing that the Egyptian princess notes is that the child is "weeping."

Time passes and these two decisions prove inadequate. The Hebrew mother decides to do what the Pharaoh commanded—to cast the child into the water—but in such a manner that saves rather than destroys him. She builds for him an ark of bulrushes, daubs it with lime and pitch, and lays it among the flags at the edge of the river. Her daughter, whose name we learn later is Miriam, accompanies the vessel as it floats along the river. The daughter of Pharaoh spots the ark, sees the child within, and responds compassionately: behold, a male child who weeps. A Conference between the two women present ensues. The Pharaoh's daughter recognizes the child as Hebrew. The sister suggests she might call upon one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child. The Pharaoh's daughter agrees, the sister gets the child's mother, and the Pharaoh's daughter addresses her: you nurse the child and I will pay you.

In many ways, the scenes we have just witnessed parallel the previous scenes between Pharaoh and the Egyptian midwives. A command is given: kill all the male children (as Pharaoh gave the same command before to the

midwives). A series of responses is undertaken: the woman in labor does not kill her child (as the midwives did not do as the Pharaoh commanded); the woman decides to conceal her child as a way of saving it (as the midwives may have hidden their intentions behind the populär conceptions of Hebrew women as a way of saving them and their children); the woman casts her child into an enclosure in the water as a way of saving the child (as before the action taken by the midwives issues in the multiplication of the population rather than its diminution). And flnally, a series of conversations take place regarding a child rather than the murder of children (as before the midwives talk with Pharaoh about why they cannot enact his commands rather than enacting them).

But there are also striking differences. When the Pharaonic male authority acts, the Situation nearly ends in violence, a violence narrowly averted by the action of the Egyptian women. When the women act among themselves—the Egyptian women as well as the Hebrew, the older women as well as the younger—the problems are solved quickly and smoothly.

There are other patterns to be observed here—the role of language, for example. Language functions as commandment or weeping (Pharaoh commands, the child weeps) when it issues from the mouth of men. Language functions as concealment and consequently salvation when it issues from the mouths of women: the Egyptian midwives, the daughter of Pharaoh, and the sister of the child (we do not hear the words of the Hebrew mother of the child although presumably a satisfactory conversation took place).

And one other pattern should be noted. Notice how many times the action of pushing and pulling occurs within these scenes. The Hebrew mother pushes the child out of her body in labor. Then she pushes something in front of the child to conceal it from others. Then she pushes the child into the enclosure and puts the enclosure into the water, and pushes the enclosure off from the Hebrew side of the river so that it will float to the Egyptian side.

The Egyptian woman is pulled toward the sight of the child, and pulls the box containing the child toward her, and then pulls it open. She is pulled by what she sees to feel compassion for the child, and speaks (pushes out breath and sound?) to reflect that compassion. The sister (who has pulled something in front of herseif to conceal herseif) now reveals herseif (pushes away her concealment) and issues (or pushes out) words to speak. The child is placed (pushed) into the care of the sister who returns it (pushes it back) into the care of the Hebrew mother, who at the appropriate time will return (or push) the child back into the care of the Egyptian mother—the daughter of Pharaoh—who will raise (or pull or bring up) the child as her own.

Is it any wonder that this child will grow up ready to pull a massive group of people—six hundred thousand by customary accounts—out of Egypt, or that he will get them to carry an ark back and forth around the desert for forty years until the entire generation of those who undertake such an action pass away? The exodus from Egypt and the wandering in the desert is certainly more than a repetitive staging of the circumstances of Moses's birth scene. But the comparison in the present connection is not without interest.

Especially in view of what has taken place and what follows. For if the pushing and pulling that takes place among the women surrounding the birth of Moses takes place to save the child, the pushing and pulling that takes place between Pharaoh and the Egyptian midwives occurs with the express purpose of destroying children (at least on the part of the Pharaoh).

The Pharaoh issues his commandment (an imperative or enjoining mode of speech)—to snatch or pull away the male children from the Hebrew women. The midwives decline to undertake that action (they pull themselves away from it) and are summoned (pulled) before Pharaoh to defend (push away from the offense) their actions. They do so by distinguishing (pushing away) the Hebrew women from themselves, possibly to save the Hebrew women, but possibly also to reflect their jealousy of, or pull towards, the Hebrew women.

The Pharaonic style of pushing and pulling between Pharaoh and the midwives would seem in fact strikingly contrasted at this point with the care-giving and nurturing style among daughters and mothers of the Hebrews and the Egyptians.

Another pattern needs to be discussed. The narrative we have seen so far is also about boundary crises. Pharaoh issues commands which are also not commands because they are not obeyed. The midwives construct a defense which may also be an offense. The Hebrew mother exchanges her place for an Egyptian mother and the older women exchange places with the younger woman—the sister. The child keeps being buffeted from one side to the other. First he is expelled from the Hebrew mother to the Hebrew reality. Then he will be expelled from the Hebrew side of the Nile to the Egyptian side of the Nile. Then the Egyptian woman will expel him in turn back to the Hebrew woman for nursing and when he is of age he will be expelled once again back to the Egyptian side. There he will grow to manhood and desire to return to his Hebrew side. He will get himself expelled from the Egyptian court and go to live among the Midianites. Then he will encounter a God in the land of the Midianites who will teil him to return to the Egyptians.

And when he is back among the Egyptians he will convince the Egyptian Pharaoh to allow him to return—this time along with all of the Hebrews—to

the land of the Midianites, where he had his earlier encounter. And once he is back among the Midianites, and the Egyptians have been destroyed in the famed "red sea," he will get the people to wander back and forth for the rest of their (and his own) earthly lives, carrying with them an ark that is not unlike his birth vehicle.

Differing patterns of authority, of language usage, of expulsion and retraction, and of boundary violations, permeate this narrative. To sort out these patterns and their relationships with each other, let us turn to the moment of the naming of the child in which identity structures, leadership structures, linguistic structures, and spatial structures seem briefly to be conflated.

IV. "Because I drew him out of the water."

> And the child grew, and [the Hebrew mother] brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said: "Because I drew him out of the water." (2.10)

This passage has received of course a great deal of commentary, and indeed in light of the narrative movements we have been following, it is worthy ofthat attention. The mother names the child *mosheh* and says I did so "because I drew him from the water."

Scholars point out in the first place that the word *mosheh* was probably derived from an Egyptian word, *mes, mesu,* meaning something like "child of' or "born of." It is sometimes suggested that the name Pharaoh Thutmosis appears to mean "born of Thut" or that the name Ramses may mean "born of or child of the Egyptian sun god Ra."

But scholars note that *mosheh* may also be a form of a Hebrew word as well—namely, *mashah,* meaning "to draw or pull out." The word does not occur as such in Torah. But in the above passage, "I drew him out of the water" *{min-hamayim m'shiytihü), m'shiytihu* would seem to be a form of it, and scholars cite other passages in which a word play regarding the relation between *mosheh* and *mashah* may be at work—Isaiah 63.11, II Samuel 22.17 and Psalms 18.17. In the present context, if the word is Hebrew, then with in the verbal paradigm of *mashah,* the word *mosheh* would be a participial form and would mean "one who draws out".

But if we adopt the point of view that the word *mosheh* is also Hebrew, then there is a problem, namely, that in the usage the Egyptian mother makes of the name, she appears to get the Hebrew word wrong. *Mosheh* as a

Hebrew verb would assume the active feminine participial form and mean something like "one who draws or pulls out, one who extracts." But in the passage cited above, she appears to want the passive form—"she called his name Moses, and said: "Because I drew him out of the water"[1]—as if his name meant "drawn or pulled out," "extracted," "rescued." Its relation to *mashah* in that case, we might say, would only be one of assonance, not etymology, and as a passive participle meaning "drawn" its form would have to be *mashuiy* rather than *mosheh.* The attribution *mosheh* in other words would appear to have more to do with her action of drawing the child out than the child's action of being drawn out.

But perhaps that is just the point. Buber notes the irony: that Moses, the drawn, will in fact grow up to draw the people out, to engender the most massive exodus in the history of the Hebrews.

Can we can formulate the matter more forcefully? To the extent that Moses acts as his mother acts, drawing others out, rescuing others, he enacts his name: *mosheh,* one who draws out or rescues. On the other hand, to the extent that he allows himself to remain his mother's child, the one who is rescued, who is drawn from the water, he enacts a role within her language about him: he is the one she drew from the water.

Is there a relation between these two senses? The rabbis designate the relation interestingly enough as "prophetic." They say that she names for the infant what he may become, that she books a place in advance for him, so to speak. The causal link she posits seems to be the key. What if we were to say that the only mistake he could make would come in thinking that he could be one without being at the same time the other, that he could draw out without at the same time being drawn, and that the relation between the two is precisely that the second founds the first: that, in other words, he can only draw or pull out or rescue others so long as he owns the extent to which he is drawn out, or pulled, or rescued himself, and that to draw out is to learn (and to own) the ways in which one is always (already) drawn out?

There is one other possibility to which attention should be drawn. What if the traditional manner in which we have told the story of Moses' life—in terms of the paired opposite of justice and mercy—is another version of the same relationship? What if the only possible way of imagining the relation between the two is in terms of the other: if justice is only possible in so far as one is merciful, and mercy is possible only in so far as one is just; if, in short, pushing and pulling (or drawing and being drawn) and justice and mercy may be different versions of the same phenomena? The famous

midrash which finds both necessary to the creation of the world would seem a reflection of this interdependence.[3]

The entire career of Moses, I would like to suggest, may be read in this light. The "education" of Moses in this context may be said to proceed in three stages: (1) the Egyptian sequence; (2) the Midyan sequence; (3) and the Sinai sequence. Let us follow them in order.

V. The Egyptian Sequence

The career of Moses begins with an incident which, if we are to trust the midrashic accounts (one of which I have cited as an epigraph), will plague him his entire life.

The child grows to young adulthood. He knows that he is Hebrew. But he knows that he has been raised as an Egyptian, educated within the royal court, primed to be a ruler over Egypt when the time is right. One day he sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. His heart goes out to the Hebrew, the victim of the beating. The sight of the injustice is too much for him to bear. He intervenes. He outdoes the Egyptian at his own game. He does to the Egyptian what the Egyptian does to the Hebrew. Only more so. The Egyptian is killed and a curious result obtains.

The next day he comes out and two Hebrews are fighting. Not only has his intervention not stopped the violence it was intended to stop, but his action has actually increased it. Moreover, the violence has spread to the very individuals whom he tried to extricate from the beating. Nor is that all. Now the Hebrews themselves turn against him. Are you going to do to us what you did to that other man? they ask. As a result of trying to help them, he has become their scapegoat, their victim. And this "scapegoatism" that suddenly appears spreads like wildfire throughout the Community. The Egyptian court soon learns of his violent action and he is forced to flee Egypt entirely.

How are we to understand this sequence? In the Egyptian sequence we may say, Moses acts out the worst of bad childhood training. On the one hand, he enacts in part the pharaonic mode. The pharaoh feels fear, and responds by murdering. On the other hand, Moses also enacts in part the

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[3]God considered creating the universe of justice alone, the midrash goes, and turned to the angels for their thoughts about the plan. The universe would not survive Your justice for even five minutes, they said. So God proposed creating the universe of mercy. Human beings would not survive each other for even five minutes, was the angel's reply. Therefore God created the universe of justice and mercy.

maternal mode. The Egyptian mother feels compassionately drawn by what she sees, and responds by life-saving negotiations.

The problem is that Moses feels what the Egyptian mother feels—the sting of injustice—and responds as the Egyptian Pharaoh responds—with the action of murdering. Moses sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and kills the Egyptian (the Egyptian was only beating the Hebrew; Moses kills the Egyptian). Moses sees an injustice, and imposes what he sees as justice in response, which leads to the disastrous results we have noted.

There would seem to be at least five important observations to make in this connection: (1) he does more than the Egyptian did; the Egyptian was merely "beating" the Hebrew; he "slays" the Egyptian"; his response, rather than lessening the violence of the Situation, or even only equaling it, actually increases it; (2) his upping of the ante not only increases the amount of violence; it also spreads it to a larger context; now it is the Hebrews as well as the Egyptians who are fighting among themselves; moreover, the distinction he entered the fray to preserve—between a perpetrator of violence and a victim of violence—is less clear afterwards; the text speaks of "the guilty one" as if it were now a category more than a designation of one or another of the Hebrews specifically; (3) he spreads the violence in particular to the very individuals he entered the fray to protect; the next day two Hebrews are fighting, those he would save; (4) he becomes the victim of his own people; (5) and the fear of violence via Moses spreads throughout the land so that Moses is forced to flee.

The whole sequence would seem to beg for a Girardian analysis. Notice in the first place how thoroughly mimetic desire operates in this story. (1) a sense of the affliction of victims of violence on the part of Moses and the response of killing is imitative of parents: the pharaonic mode and the maternalistic mode; (2) Moses sees violent behavior in front of him and imitates that behavior as well (as that of his parents); the text calls attention to this doubling, as the same word is used in describing the Egyptian's "beating" of the Hebrew as is used in describing the action of Moses in "killing" the Egyptian; (3) having seen Moses kill the Egyptian, the Hebrews appropriate his position; just as he saw only a perpetrator of violence and its victim, so taking up the same view, they see Moses as he saw the Egyptian and the Egyptian as a moment ago he saw the Hebrews; doing what he did, they turn against the perpetrator of the violence: are you going to do to us what you did to the other man? they ask; (4) this mimetic violence on the part of all concerned—both Moses and the Hebrews—quickly spreads throughout the Community; both the Hebrews and the Egyptian Community appear quickly to rival each other in thinking that Moses alone is guilty.

Notice in the second place how quickly this Situation of common mimetic appropriation turns to scapegoating and violence. (1) the pharaonic response is already a projective behavior upon others in response to one's own fears; (2) Moses feels affliction of the Hebrews, and appropriating their position, scapegoats the Egyptian; (3) the Hebrews appropriate Moses's perspective and scapegoat him; (4) the scapegoating of Moses spreads throughout the Community; Moses is on the verge of becoming the universal scapegoat; Freud's insight that Moses may have been the common scapegoat of the members of his Community is not entirely inappropriate in this connection.

The rest of the story will be a matter of learning alternative behaviors to mimetic appropriation and sacrificial violence and will occur in two stages: in Midyan and on Sinai.

VI. The Midyan Sequence and the Sinai Sequence

The Midyan sequence involves a repetition of the earlier Situation up to a point. Moses sees an injustice being committed: women are drawing water from well (see his Egyptian mother earlier who draws him from the water), and shepherds attack. His response, however, is different. He doesn't kill shepherds; he may not even drive them away (although in the Cecil B. DeMille film he does); he simply delivers them from disaster.

And as a result, the outcome is different: not the spread of scapegoating and violence as before, but marriage and integration into a new life.

In the Sinai sequence, Moses has now become a shepherd himself (one of those who earlier attacked the women). He is located in wilderness rather than at center of this Community, and in fact on this particular day at the edge of that wilderness. He sees a curiosity that others do not observe (as before his mother saw what others did not). His observation of this curiosity is a form of being drawn: turning aside to see is a cessation of normal seeing in order to see better and an allowing of oneself to be drawn. When God saw that Moses "turned aside to see," he called his name: Mosheh! Mosheh! ("one who draws"! "one who draws!") as if to draw is already to be drawn.

Perhaps that is why God calls him by his Egyptian name, Moses, *Mosheh,* rather than by his Hebrew name, which some of the rabbis teil us is "Avigdor." Does God really need to attract Moses' attention? Perhaps the gesture is more for the benefit of Moses than God—for Moses to learn that he is only "one who draws" *{mosheh)* in so far as one is "one who is drawn," one who "turned aside to see."

The speech of God that issues from this curious bush (that burns and yet is not consumed) assumes two parts: an opening remark in which God sets the boundary between the holy and the non-holy ("Take off your shoes!" he

says, "for you are on holy ground"), and a speech, a narrative, that has four parts: (a) an identification of who God is ("I am the God of thy fathers"); (b) a Statement of condition and compassion about what has occurred ("I have seen the affliction of the children of Israel"); (c) a Statement of purpose, namely, rescue the children of Israel ("I have come to deliver them from their affliction"); (d) a Statement or assignment of commission concerning what role Moses will play in it ("You will lead them out and bring them up to Me").

But the most astounding part of God's declaration is its conformity to the Personality of the individual who Stands before it and bears its witness. This God is a God of rescue. Exactly as we saw Moses to be a rescuing Personality, this God has seen the Egyptian beating the Hebrews and is charging form to rescue the Hebrews from them! If Moses were anyone other than who he is, he might now say "Yey, God!" and lead the charge down to Egypt to rout the Egyptians and retrieve the children of Israel from their cruel taskmasters. But in fact Moses is no longer that individual; he has learned (as if intuitively) that God's expression is an account of his own actions in the past in Egypt and that his past actions have led to disaster. He learns, in other words, to read prophetically.

And so now he poses all the questions that he might have posed before—when he impulsively charged forward to save the Hebrew—but did not pose, and in the questioning that follows we learn not only what he failed to ask, but what he might have done. The questions that follow—and there are in effect five of them—are midrashic in structure. But we know that midrash is written to fill in the gaps—and thereby to call attention to them by that gesture.

Moses is forced, in other words, to become an interpreter, a reader, of his own prior behavior: (1) "who am I?" he asks in response to God's Statement. I am nothing, a nobody; my identification vis-ä-vis the Community is insufficient to carry on this task; (2) they will ask me "what is your name? what is your power?" why should they believe You can do what I will say that You can do? they will not see compassion in my description but turn against me for trying to help as they did before; they will also fight among themselves; (3) they will not trust me; they will think that I am trying to deceive them; "will you do to us what you did to the other man?" they will say to me; (4) I have no rhetorical skills; I am not adequate to the task you assign me; insufficient vis-ä-vis You; as before, the word of the Hebrews concerning me spread beyond anything that I could do to control it; (5) I don't want the job; I don't want to go; I don't have the heart to do this, as before I didn't really have the heart to do what I did.

God's response? To dismantle each of Moses' objections in as swift and final a way as possible.

> MOSES: Who am I? I am nothing.
> GOD: Don't worry about it. I will be with you.
> MOSES: Fine. But what ifthey askme why they should believe You? What do I say?
> GOD: When they ask you that here's what you say: *ehyeh asher ehyeh:* "I will be (there) with you in order that I will be (there) with you". Or, in other words, *ehyeh:* "I will be (there) with you". Or, alternatively again, *YHVH:* "He, She, it, or God will be (there) with you".
> MOSES: Fine. But they will not trust me. They will think I am deceiving them.
> GOD: TU give you some tricks to do. Do you have a staff? (Moses nods.) Take it out. (Moses takes it out.) Throw it on the ground (Moses throws it on the ground. It becomes a snake.) Now pick it up. (Moses picks it up. It becomes a staff.) You have a hand? (Moses nods.) Put it in your shirt. (Moses puts it in his shirt.) Take it out. (Moses takes it out. It has become leprous.) Now put it back in your shirt. (He puts it back in his shirt.) Now take it out again. (Moses takes it out. It has become clean.)
> MOSES: Fine. But I have no rhetorical skills.
> GOD: YOU have a mouth? Who do you think put it there? You have a brother? Does he have a mouth? He can talk. He'll speak for you. You'll speak for Me. There are a lot of possibilities
> MOSES: Fine. But I don't want to go.
> GOD: NOW, I'm angry!

In other words, the God of rescue, this God of Moses' fathers, expresses the position with which Moses might have agreed earlier in his life so that he can now do two things: (1) acknowledge this earlier position as his own; and (2) give it up before the violence to which it leads, accrues; accept responsibility for his own personality, and own the description to which that acceptance leads. He learns to read his own past prophetically. He learns to recognize the dramas in which he (along with other human beings) are engaged and to name in advance the end ofthose dramas (namely, violence) in order that he might give them up before he gets there.

Within the Biblical context, that prophetic reading of his life that Moses gets completes the prophetic understanding that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were offered before him, a prophetic understanding which has brought the Hebrews to Sinai and prepared them for the receiving of the law, the Torah, the divine Instruction—the law of anti-idolatry. This is not the first time in Torah that a revelation was issued that had to be resisted. Abraham already

came to understand in Gen. 22 the necessity of a prophetic reading of God's word: "Take your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and prepare him as a sacrifice, an *olah,* a burnt offering." What could be more imperative? He came to learn nonetheless that even such a commandment, the most imperative one could imagine, must be read prophetically. If you continue the way you are going, if you are only and literally obedient to the letter of the law, sooner or later you will hear a voice that will say to you: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and kill him." And you will do it, on that authority. What you *are* to do when you hear these words is what you have always done: namely, sacrifice a ram. In other words, provide for your son. The son "sees," the father "sees to it that." That is the rule. Here is the wood. Here is the fire. Where's the victim? the son asks. The son sees presence and absence, presence and absence of presence. The father's task is to "see to it that." "God will provide," he says to the son. And in saying "God will provide," he provides. Abraham thinks his action is provisional, temporary, make-shift, what he needs to do until a more Substantive solution comes along. What he comes to learn is that answer is Provision itself.

But provision, while necessary in the preparation of the Israelites for receiving the law, is not sufFicient. If not regarding one's son was a danger, over regarding one's son was also a danger. Jacob learned that. He glimpses it the moment he received from his other sons the famed "coat of many colors" (the *ktonet passim)* he had placed upon the head of his favored son, Joseph, this time dipped in blood. Is this your coat? they asked. Do you recognize your coat? Do you recognize your own violence? Jacob is not sure he recognizes it. A wild animal must have killed him, he says, echoing the rationalized account of the brothers. But he will learn the lesson more decisively in Egypt and it will condition his response when Joseph presents him with his two sons—Jacob's grandsons—for a blessing and instead of blessing them in the customary manner, he crosses and reverses his hands—in order that one should not come before the other, a gesture that stumps even Joseph.

The capacity to read prophetically in Genesis prepared the Hebrews for receiving the Law and answered the question raised by Cain at the other end of the narrative. Am I my brother's keeper? Kayin asked. Am I his provision maker? a question that bespoke only of his own murder of his brother. But it speaks not only of his brother, he will learn generations hence, but of everyone in the universe; an infinite or limitless Obligation or responsibility, moreover, that includes a responsibility for their own death. To be worthy

of the Bible, Buber writes, is to let oneself be addressed by the voice that speaks through it and respond with one's life.

From ethics has come the question of justice. If Abraham learns that commandment needs to be read prophetically, even when it looks imperative, Moses learns that prophetic reading assumes many forms, that commandment sometimes needs to be read imperatively, even when it looks like a narrative description. Sometimes what looks like a narrative, a duplication of one's own history, needs to be rejected and one's own history owned and aborted. Sometimes what looks narrative and like a reading needs to be rejected for an imperative Obligation. Sometimes, if you continue to enact or act out a rescuing or missionary personality, you will end up increasing the very violence you are trying to avoid by your very attempts to avoid it. And sometimes what you need to do instead is embrace your own rescuing personality and return to the scene of your worst fears.

What you may need to do, in short, is rescue yourself, to own your own fears, give unto Pharaoh what is Pharaoh's, and unto yourself what is your own, an own or a seif, ironically enough, which is at root a giving unto, or surrendering unto, the other individual, and so the cultivation of a heteronomy in place of an autonomy.

The text of Moses is just a beginning. Owning his own rescuing personality is a necessary start; it will enable the Hebrews to receive the Torah, although not necessarily yet to understand it, to live it, to live as the rabbis say "a life of Torah." The book of Exodus is in this regard what we might call a "stammering text," a text told from the point of view of others, of Outsiders, even of non-Jews, or of Jews who have turned against their own Judaism. It looks as if it is a rescue and revenge narrative, an endorsement at a larger level, of Moses's earlier action with the Egyptian.

To suggest, as I have tried to do, that we need to give up such a sacrificial and revenge-centered reading is to suggest we read the text prophetically. How is a stammering reading a prophetic reading? To stammer is to trip over your own language. It is not simply to forget the language you are speaking, or to get the language wrong (although it may include that). It is to get it wrong in such a way that others may get it right, that others may understand where it is going, even if and perhaps especially because it does not get there.

Moreover, to stammer is to get it wrong in such a way that it also understands and owns its own stammering, its own incapacities, its own inadequacies and insufficiencies. It is the possibility of a text that owns its own stumblings, that owns its own scandals, we might say after René Girard's work. And the two principal ways of misunderstanding this

text—and Biblical reading at large—are: 1) to see it as not stammering, as literal; and 2) to see it as only stammering, as a scandal, as something offensive which causes us to reject it for that offense. A stammering is a stumbling that allows others the opportunity to wait for it, to respect its attempts to get where it is going, without ever displacing or usurping those attempts.

VII. The Stammering Text

With a discussion of interpretation, biblical reading, and alternative educations, educations which reduce violence, we are led back of course to the position from which we began. Education in the West, we said, was Piatonic education: representational, ontological, dialectical.   The rediscovery with Hegel in the modern age of the dialectic, and the rediscovery with Heidegger of the ontological, is hardly news—although we may have forgotten how dialectical, ontological, Piatonic, our culture remains.   �☇

But education in Judaism, we said, was diflferent. It was a matter of Hebraic reading, a Hebraic reading which is Biblically-centered, and a Biblical-centeredness which is prophetic rather than representational, anti-idolatrous rather than ontological, diachronic rather than synchronic.

What has the analysis of the passages on the life of Moses taught us? That the prophetic may be understood as "stammering." Martin Buber introduces the notion of a "stammering text" to talk about creation. How can we understand the texts of creation, he asks, texts which are "impossible" texts? How could anyone speak plausibly of the creation of the world? The events at Sinai, the events of revelation, have to be understood, he suggests, not as literal accounts, not even as metaphors, or representations of any kind—figurative language of any kind—but as "verbal traces of a natural event," as a witness, as proclamation ofthat event, as it has deposited itself into the language which attempts to describe it and trips over itself—as stammering accounts.

The entirety of Torah, I would like to argue, is a text of the same type, a stammering text, an impossible text, but one that is not simply impossible, but rather that proclaims its own impossibility, and urges us to do the same, both about it and about us. Biblical reading, I would like to suggest—Biblical reading as practiced ä la Lévinas, Buber, and René Girard—is precisely such a stammering or stumbling interpretation, such a *skandalon-Wko,* reading. It is a reading that owns its own violence, not in order to go on from it, but in order to give it up.

"I have been thinking," Emmanuel Lévinas said to me in the final conversation I had with him, when he greeted me at the door of his apartment in Paris four years ago, "that politeness is everything." "Please, let my people go," Moses says politely to Pharaoh, when he returns to Egypt. "Let them worship their own God free of your constraints over them." This a far cry from the murderous attack the same individual mounted earlier in his life (as the midrash with which we have opened this essay suggests); and in the transition from one education to another—from the Pharaonic to the pastoral, to the prophetic—we as readers might learn to make the same moves: to give up the kinds of mimetic behavior that led us to violence toward others, and to assume our own infinite responsibility for others, a responsibility that may in fact create the universe.

"May the LORD bless you and keep you," a famous verse from Numbers (6:24-26) goes. "May the LORD cause His countenance to shine upon you and be gracious unto you." Our violence will end only when we fulfill the covenantal imperative given to Abraham at the outset of his career—to "be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1), only when we may turn to each other, face to face, in the infinite "after you" that Lévinas calls "prayer," and say "May the LORD favor you and grant you peace *(shalom)."*

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BLACK-ON-BLACK VIOLENCE:
THE INTRAMEDIATION OF DESIRE
AND THE SEARCH FOR A SCAPEGOAT

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Rene Girard's mimetic hypothesis provides a means of interpreting texts in terms of a systematic understanding of cultural formations such as ritual, prohibition, and myth. It is based on an anthropology which accepts that most cultural texts are generated by an agency that does not appear explicitly or thematically within the texts themselves. That generative agency is the scapegoat mechanism which I will discuss extensively in this essay as it concerns black-on-black violence in American society. With some modification, Girard's ideas account for the effects of the pathogenic educational environment to which black boys are exposed and which results in such violence.

What we are witnessing in black-on-black violence may be understood in part as the consequence of scapegoating which is driven by interdividual dynamics of desire analyzed in Girard's observations of mimetic behavior among humans.

Mimetic desire is the starting point of Girard's theory. Desire is mimetic in the sense that it imitates the desire of another. One's desire copies the other's desire for an object. Such desire is potentially violent because it can and often does lead to the rivalry of desires for the very same object. When mimetic desire is acquisitive, it produces violence at its most fundamental level. It is not that all mimetic desires "produce" violence, only acquisitive desire that becomes rivalrous or conflictual.

I. The Triangle of Desire

"Mimetic" comes from the same root as "mime" and "imitate." An acquisitive mimetic desire in Girard's theory involves the "desire to have" which imitates another person's desire for the possession or enjoyment of an

object. The object of desire may be a person or a thing; it can be a non-material or metaphysical object like prestige, honor or "face" (pride). It is another who serves as the model for desiring a particular object. The greater the model's desire for the object, the greater the mimetic desire it inspires. The results are jealousy and covetousness over the possessions, positions or prestige, desired or enjoyed by the model of our desires.

Desire is imitative because it is attracted to the object(s) belonging to another; furthermore, it is activated by the desire of the other, who may be a single person or an entire group. This imitative process requires that the subject have access to, or be able to appropriate and dispose of, the model's objects or possessions.

Thus desire is triangulär in its structure, being comprised of the subject, the other as model of desire, and the model's objects. Distance between the subject and model is an important factor in this structure. It does not necessarily denote physical space, for it can also function in terms of psycho-social space (i.e., race, socioeconomic position, cultural Standing, etc.) (Redekop 7). Not only individuals, but society as a whole can serve as the model of desire. One also learns what is desirable from the aggregate of others that is society (Hamerton-Kelly 3).

Acquisitive mimetic desire necessitates the ability of individuals to see themselves in the position of the model of desire. If they are not able to see themselves in the place of the model, then the potential for the development of mimetic desire is minimal. This is why there is greater rivalry and jealously among slaves than between slave and master; among workers, rivalry is greater than between bosses and workers among siblings it is greater than between parents and children. This is the primary reason why violence is intraracial rather than interracial.

II. Internal Mediation of Desire

Mimetic desire is often reciprocal. Two people can be modeis of desire for each other, each one imitating the desire of the other for a common object. Acquisitive mimetic desire not only involves a desire to have, but includes the desire to be like, or even to be the other. This is why mimetic desire often evolves into love/hate relationships. An individual wants to be like the other, and simultaneously hates the other because he or she cannot be that other. The frustration of not being able to be another person or to have what the other person nourishes conflictual violence. This occurs most often between people who are close, such as brothers or sisters, friends, peers, and co-workers.

III. Mimetic Rivalry

As the plane of the mediator at the apex of the triangle approaches the plane of the subject and object at its base, rivalry grows with an intensity that is inversely proportionate to the diminishing distance (Hamerton-Kelly 134). The distance between the plane of powerless minorities and the plane of powerful members of the majority culture is notoriously great. Mimetic rivalry occurs as the plane of the mediator approaches the plane of the subject-object or as the psychosocial and metaphysical distance between the subject and the mediator/model diminishes. Girard points out that the closer people are in class or Status, the greater the potential for mimetic rivalry. This could be one reason mimetic desire and violence are greatest within family unit (sibling rivalry and domestic violence), within the same race (murder among blacks), and within the same class (office politics and work place violence). Throughout his works, Girard thus distinguishes between internal mediation, which I have just described in terms of the proximity of rivals, and external mediation, where the model is beyond the reach of its imitators, of its potential rivals. We need a third term to show how black boys participate in their own scapegoating, which I am calling intramediation. In this case the model is not externally beyond the reach of a rival imitator, nor entirely within the same world as the desiring subject, thereby becoming an obstacle to his or her desires. Rivalry with the model/obstacle is displaced in a way that requires recourse to other thinkers on race relations to explain its anomalies and paradoxes.

IV. Intramediation of Desire

This notion builds on W. E. B. Dubois' concept of double-consciousness, on Erik Erikson's concept of negative identity and on Paulo Freire's concept of internalized oppression. Intramediation of desire occurs via the process of transference that results in and from "internalized oppression."

Intramediation of desire occurs when the subject-model plane has disappeared. The difference between subject and model has been internalized. When this occurs, the subject develops a double consciousness that is based on a dual desire. That is, a subject desires an object from both his own and another's perspective, the internalized perspective of another.

The first concept of double-consciousness refers to the conflict black boys face regarding their African heritage, into which they are socialized by their families and Community. They cannot escape their African heritage, nor do they desire to. The program of the public schools is to socialize these same black boys into an American culture, in which they are nonetheless denied full participation because of their African heritage. They internalize

the model's desires, but without the projected consequences. But more importantly the two heritages conflict with each other within the subject's desires.

The pivotal psychological feature of this African American experience is that of mimetic rivalry for the same soul through intramediation of desire. It is a double-consciousness, that with all it's "dogged strength" is striving with itself over double aims.

> It is a peculiar Sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's seif through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Dubois 45)

African Americans' skin color marks them as a true caste-like minority (scapegoats), and, at the same time, a *model of desire* for a nation that simultaneously despises them as bearers of their own negative identities as white Americans.

The second concept concerning the theory of intramediation of desire focuses, then, on Erik Erikson's analysis of negative identity:

> The individual belonging to an oppressed and exploited minority, which is aware of the dominant cultural ideals but prevented from emulating them, is apt to fuse the negative images held up to him by the dominant majority with negative identity cultivated in his own group. Here we may think of the many nuances of the way in which one Negro may address another as "nigger." (303)

What Erikson is stating about the young African American male is that intramediation of desire is a psychic struggle grounded in social and historical realities and relationships of internalized oppression as analyzed by Freire.

Freire has observed that oppressed classes of people "have a diffused, magical belief in the invulnerability and power of the oppressor" (Freire 50). The hegemonic socialization System, the economic caste System, and the organized violence of the criminal justice System have conspired to make the dominant race seem as gods, which is to says as idols, to many oppressed African Americans. One cannot develop a violent mimetic rivalry with a god or an idol. Instead, the oppressed transfers the aborted mimetic rivalry with

the internalized oppressor (idol) either to seif (suicide, masochism, self-hatred) or to another African American (black-on-black crime). Then, he or she strikes out at another for the pettiest reasons.

Franz Fanon's analyses suggest that intramediation of desire is not just an American phenomenon, but a by-product of white domination everywhere:

> The colonized man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa .... While the settler or the policeman has the right the livelong day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; for the last resort of the native is to defend his personality vis-vis his brother.(52)

The native's psychosocial distance from the colonizer is great and the colonizer becomes an idol, a false god. The colonizers' rivalrous desire to dominate is internalized by the natives. The native seeks to defend his personality by making his brother a scapegoat.   ;   fi,

V. The Veiled: The Metaphor for the Intramediation of Desire

It is one of the paradoxes of social power relations that the oppressed replicate among themselves the violence that is exercised against them by their oppressors. Cheryl Ann Kirk-Duggan provides a metaphor for this psychosocial pathology in human relationships that she calls the "veil." The metaphor represents the psychological obstruction between the relations of the oppressed and the oppressor, which makes the existence of a fully actualized mimetic double bind possible. This view is similar to that of Du Bois, for whom the veil, represented by psychosocial anxiety, causes the double and conflicting aims of double-consciousness. Inevitably, black boys are caught in Gregory Bateson's notion of the "double bind" (according to his theory of schizophrenia; see Girard 1987, 291-94), which functions in René Girard's work very much like Dubois' concept of double-consciousness.

The subject becomes incapable of correctly interpreting the double imperative that comes from the model; for example, take me as model, imitate me—but do not become my rival, so do not imitate me. Girard sees this desire in the context of myths that operate like a veil, masking the truth

of symmetrical violence that leads to scapegoating, especially under the conditions of social domination. In this connection, Freire observes that for Sherover-Marcuse the inability of a subject within an actualized mimetic double bind to interpret the double imperative correctly also comes from the "veil."

> Having internalized the norms and values of the dominant group, members of an oppressed group often mistreat each other in an unconscious imitation of their own suffering. A dialectical perspective understands that no oppressed group can remain immune to the institutionalized and socially empowered untruths which purport to "justify" its oppression. (cited in Smith 193)

The preceding should suffice to explain how the effect of internalizing the norms and values of one's oppressor is to replicate and intensify one's own suffering by identifying with the oppressor. One's suffering at the hands of the oppressor is, by identification, transferred back to oneself. According to Freire, "They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized" (Freire 47). Internalized oppression is a particular problem of the "duality of the oppressed: they are contradictory, divided beings, shaped by and existing in a concrete Situation of oppression and violence" (40). To be behind the veil is to be submerged in historical reality and unable to see clearly the social realities that benefit the oppressor whose image they have internalized. Girard has observed the oppressed suffering from an imposed caste System, and he comprehends the double bind as that in which the desire to imitate the oppressor (who is within and invincible) establishes rivalry between two oppressed persons, who alternate as scapegoat for each other's frustrated desires. But it is Dubois[1] notion of double-consciousness that describes a Situation in which the consciousness of both the oppressed and oppressor are rivals for one dark body. The veil is a negative identity that enshrouds the identity of the oppressed within the negative perspective of the oppressor.

The oppressed is unable to see the true nature of the predicament because one's vision is obscured by the veil of double-consciousness that precludes true self-consciousness. The seif is seen through the images and perspective of the dominant race which has projected its negative identities onto the oppressed. The latter directs rage at a distorted reflection of the seif, becomes the scapegoat for others and carries the negative images of the dominant culture in his skin like a badge of honor.

According to Girard, scapegoating is not effective unless an element of delusion enters into it. I would go farther and say that black-on-black violence is a delusion that transfers the intergroup racial violence experienced in previous generations to the intragroup violence of the present generation. The scapegoating taking place is the displacement of the rage that is due to internalized oppression, and causes a transference of violence from its logical target to a Surrogate.

In this sense, the violence that black boys inflict on other African Americans can be regarded as the displacement of the violence suffered at the hands of the System while in pursuit of the myth the System generates. The violence exercised by a caste System that limits opportunities and foments self-hate, is directed towards the nearest and most accessible victim. Thus, the rage of frustrated desire (conflictual mimesis), which rightly should be directed toward the System that oppresses and dominates African Americans, is directed instead at fellow caste members.

This transference of violence is due, in part, to centuries of socializing and intimidating conditioning, including religious conditioning, that has fashioned a nonconscious conviction about the invincibility of the dominant culture (the white race), and that is propagated in the schools. This conviction makes the mimetic dynamics between African Americans and whites, largely, a function of external mediation of desire, where the model is unavailable to rivalry. Blacks strike out at other blacks because they are perceived to be weaker, making them available as scapegoats, and closer, because of the internal mediation of desire. This is the dual nature of the intramediation of desire, a scapegoating mechanism that is effective in its operations to the degree that is a nonconscious Operation. Those who are involved in scapegoating can never see it completely from behind the veil.

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* describes an episode that illustrates the double-bind, the double-consciousness and the transference of intramediation of desire. As a young man, he is goaded into an arranged flght with Harrison (a black co-worker) for the entertainment of his white bosses and co-workers. Harrison and Wright agreed to pretend to fight; intramediation of desire took over.

> The fight was on against our will. I feit trapped and ashamed. I lashed out even harder, and the harder I fought the harder Harrison fought. Our plans and promises now meant nothing. We fought four hard rounds, stabbing, slugging, grunting, spitting, cursing, crying, bleeding. The shame and anger we feit for having allowed ourselves to be duped crept into our blows and blood ran into our eyes, half

blinding us. The hate we feit for the men whom we had tried to cheat
went into the blows we threw at each other....I could not look at
Harrison. I hated him and I hated myself. (Wright 265).

Every time Wright Struck Harrison, he hit the white men who were the
source of his shame. His own blood became the veil, blinding him to his
fate. His hate of Harrison was the hate he feit for himself and his oppressors.

The lives of Richard Wright and Frederick Douglass are historical
narrative illustrations that give shape and visible form to the theory of
intramediation of desire (or double-consciousness) I have been developing.
I think that the pathogenic framework they describe makes Girard's
scapegoating hypothesis available as a heuristic tool for understanding the
plight of other black boys.

VI. The Model/Obstacle/Idol (Envy, Hatred, Rage, and Scandal)

We have seen that the mediator may be the model of desire in external
mediation, or the obstacle to desire in internal mediation, or the idol of desire
in intramediation. As the plane of the model approaches the plane of the
subject-object, the model gradually turns into an obstacle, engendering the
double bind. The subject wants to overcome the obstacle and to be overcome
by the model, because the model certifies the value of the object, while the
obstacle contests possession of it. Idols convey value to the object and the
subject, while at the same time prohibiting rivalry with the model. This
leaves the subject with an existential angst that turns into a consuming rage
that can destroy others as well as one's own seif.

According to Hamerton-Kelly, as the triangle of desire progresses from
external mediation to internal mediation (as the plane of the model
approaches the plane of the subject-object), the model of desire becomes the
obstacle of desire. The subject becomes related to the model/obstacle
through a kind of divided-consciousness. He or she both wants to overcome
(in hatred and rivalry) the obstacle and to become (out of love and
admiration) the model. As the triangle of desire progresses past internal
mediation to intramediation (the model's plane and the subject-object plane
becomes one) the model/obstacle of desire is internalized by the subject and
becomes part of a double-consciousness as its very structure.

Scandal refers to the Situation when both the role of model and the role
of obstacle are played at the same time by the same person or group of
persons. Therefore, mimetic desire loves and hates at the same time. It needs
the obstacle because the obstruction creates the value. Intramediation is
scandalous, because a "god" or "idol" becomes both obstacle and model.

The idol as obstacle/model generates mimetic desire that must be displaced on one's seif in the form of self-hatred, on society in the form of nihilism, or on someone close in the form of violent crime , whose Surrogate victim is the scapegoat of the entire mechanism.

The condition of scandal is unstable. It is not possible to manage mimesis so as to maintain this divided-consciousness forever. This love/hate relationship eventually turns into envy, then into hatred and ultimately into rage. Thus, the progression of mimesis in oppressed communities often proceeds from external mediation (to be like) or envy, to internal mediation (the wish to conquer the rival) or hate, to scandal(the wish to be like and to conquer the rival) or self-hatred, to intramediation (the wish to destroy the internalized rival) or rage. In oppressed communities, the rival is often internalized. Therefore, the progression leads from mimesis to envy to hate to self-hate to rage.

VII. Transcendence

For the purposes of this study of scapegoating mechanisms and the articulation of a pathogenic framework, transcendence is a key concept for understanding the impact of religion and spirituality on violence among black boys. Hamerton-Kelly notes that:

> The triangularity of desire means that a human being is structured with reference to transcendence. Human desire is mediated desire: it gets its goal and direction from without, not from within. The State of mimetic rivalry is the pathology of a "deviated transcendence," a desire whose goal or direction should be truly transcendent but instead is aroused by the immanent neighbor. The biblical name for this is idolatry, and its antidote is faith in the unseen God. (Hamerton-Kelly 134). ᵥ ^ ,

In other words, the aim or program of a prophetic religious education consists in overcoming a double-consciousness in the form of intramediation of desire via the process of developing faith in the unseen God as an increased sense of transcendence.

VIII. Metaphysical Desire

During the process of mimetic rivalry the object becomes progressively less important. Eventually, the object is altogether lost to view as the rivalry turns into a struggle for pride, to save face, to be number one as a matter of honor. The rivals focus primarily on each other in a struggle for the being

that they mistakenly assume the other possesses. Each riväl's desire is the desire of the other. More importantly, the fact that desire is both imitative and acquisitive means that one does not desire the object in its own right but imitates the other's desire for an object. As the mimetic rivalry progresses toward conflict, desire becomes less focused on the object and begins to focus on the other. A mimetic crisis occurs when the object is lost altogether and the desire is to dispossess the being of the other or to be the other.

IX. Substitution

During "metaphysical" rivalry, Substitution becomes possible because of the loss of the object. Therefore, passionate conflict over seemingly trivial objects causes such as tennis shoes, Starter jackets, and insignificant transgressions of inner city protocol, may lead to violence for those seeking respect, recognition and reputation. Much of the violence among black boys can often be understood in this light. In the face of the nihilistic threat that issues from the hegemonic socialization process, the respect of one's peers may have ultimate metaphysical value that justifies any level of violence for the most petty of reasons in the name of an illusive manhood.

X. Conflictual Mimesis

Acquisitive mimesis becomes conflictual mimesis when the object of desire disappears and is replaced by a metaphysical desire such as prestige or recognition. Conflictual mimesis leads to jealousy, resentment and envy. Scapegoating is the result of psychosocial propensities that are easily recognizable in ourseives and society but we are rarely aware of it because it is nonconscious. Hamerton-Kelly suggests that these banal phenomena have great power to drive the economy, from national policies through the entertainment industry.

One such banality is resentment, the subjective experience of vengeful scapegoating:

> It strikes when they fail and the subject is left with unappeased grievances. Then the subject turns the energies of desire upon itself, avenging the seif on the seifand scapegoating itself. Resentment is the essence of the culture ofvictimage because it makes the seif a victim. Resentment is a powerful ingredient in much modern nationalism, especially the German and Russian kinds. (Hamerton-Kelly 131)

Resentment has been a driving force in our national and race relations. The "abrogation" of the institution of slavery led to the destruction of the Antebellum South and a way of life, and left a nation füll of resentment. This thirst for vengeance led to the disenfranchisement of African Americans through the violence of burning crosses and lynch mobs.

Nowadays, the scapegoating mechanism appears in the illegal drug trade (particularly crack cocaine), in attacks on affirmative action, and in the dismantling of the social safety net (welfare reform). Whole communities and a generation of what William Julius Wilson calls the "truly disadvantaged" are becoming scapegoats. They are being disenfranchised through the criminal justice Systems, terrorized by proliferation of guns and drugs, while being cut offfrom participation in the mainstream economy.

The mimetic hypothesis can account for these banal psychosocial propensities that are so pervasive in the structure and dynamics of society. What it makes available to critical social theory are everyday human emotions and tendencies of vengeance, scapegoating, resentment and desire. As such it helps us to see the formation of a culture of violence and poverty developing in the underbelly of American society. This critical social theory posits Surrogate victimage at the roots of black-on-black crime and the resultant prison culture to which black boys seem destined. Scapegoating rises during times of economic instability, recessions, depressions and economic dislocation. The present criminalization and imprisonment of black boys captive to the American economy is only the latest form of scapegoating.

The application of Girard's scapegoating mechanism to modernity relies on the following paradox,

> ...all of us can observe and denounce numerous examples of scapegoating we have personally observed, yet none of us can ever identify past and present instances of his or her own involvement in scapegoating. (1987a, 79)

Indeed, scapegoating never appears as scapegoating to us. We can see numerous cases of it, yet we cannot discern our own complicity in this phenomenon.

In order for scapegoating to function it must remain *nonconscious*. This is a critical point for our discussion. Scapegoating involves its participants in operations and mechanisms that are in complicity with the dominant social structures (the mob) that seek to maintain a culture of desire.

> Why is our own participation in scapegoating so difficult to perceive
> and the participation of others so easy? To us, our fears and
> prejudices never appear as such because they determine our vision
> of people we despise, we fear, and against whom we discriminate.
> Our avoidance of them, our psychological violence, like the physical
> violence of a more brutal world, appears entirely justified by the very
> nature and behavior of these people. The negative behavior that we
> perceive as scapegoating in others we always perceive as well
> founded when it is ours. Whether physical or psychological, the
> violence directed at the victim appears to be justified by the
> responsibility of the scapegoat in bringing about some evil that must
> be avenged, something bad or harmful that must be resisted and
> suppressed. (Girard 1987, 179)

The central sociological contention in my discussion of black-on-black violence in the African American Community is that it is a form of scapegoating that maintains a racist culture that is itself based on acquisitive mimetic desire. The scapegoating mechanism is a nonconscious Operation within Western culture that this theory exposes as part of the dynamics of domination. It serves as an escape valve for society's pent-up conflictual mimetic violence that is generated by acquisitive mimetic desire. The dominant culture must find a scapegoat (a Surrogate victim of conflictual mimetic violence) upon which the mob (united mimetic rivals) may transfer the violence of its mimetic rivalries. The scapegoat is murdered; thus, by way of a second transference he or she saves society by absorbing its violence. As a non-conscious Operation, the generative mimetic scapegoating mechanism is not conceptually or thematically available to whose who comply to its twisted logic, whence the conviction that it must be revealed to us by the unseen God.

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OBEYING BAD ORDERS
AND SAVING LIVES:
THE STORY OF A FRENCH OFFICER

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The story is told that during the Paris riots of 1848, a military officer received an order to evacuate a certain Square by firing upon the "rabble." He left the garrison with his troops and started for the Square to be cleared. Upon his arrival, he took up a position with his soldiers who raised their guns to fire upon the crowd. In the profound silence that ensued, he cried: "I have received the order to fire upon the rabble; but as I perceive before me many honest people, I ask them to depart so that I may execute this order." In a few moments, the Square was vacant.

In circumstances such as these, a decision that saves both others and oneself is not easy to achieve. In such a repressive framework where legal violence is permitted, it is the duty of an officer to obey the order of his superiors, and when we hear or read this story for the first time, we do not see how a happy outcome is possible. The story ought to be dramatic, but what is astonishing is precisely that it is not. We expect the worst, which is what usually happens, the most optimistic among us perhaps hoping secretly for a happy end.

But happy endings belong to the universe of the marvelous, and life does not resemble a story, as the pessimist murmurs within us. Still, it is the happy ending that in fact occurs, and our astonishment is bound to its improbability. Is it chance? Luck? Inspiration? Premeditation? No doubt there is something of all of this in the officer's decision, and his elegant intervention raises a smile in our skeptical hearts. It testifies that although not easy, one can discover a new way that responds to the secret hope of being really ourselves without getting caught within the web of necessity. Such an attractive path merits no doubt that we dwell on it a little more.

Let us follow the officer and imagine we are in his place. It is clear that what is most striking in this story is the moment of the face-to-face between the officer and the crowd. It is worthwhile to back up a little, however. From the moment he receives his order to the moment of the face-to-face, the officer must live through some very bad moments: it is no little thing to fire upon a crowd even if legality is on our side. We all know that the worst crimes have been perpetrated under the cover of obedience. Such refuge within authority is rather a hell where one abdicates a part of oneself. The function of an officer does not stop him from being equally a man, one with feelings, beliefs, values. He knows that the rioters, whatever their fight, cannot be reduced to the term "rabble." Rabble, "rabid," dog. These people deserve no doubt a bit more consideration than that. Who can assert that the riot does not express real sufferings, legitimate rights, slighted dignities? Who could feel comfortable executing the individual who claims his due?

A praiseworthy indignation. From that point to justify an heroic ethics of non-violence, is only a small step. "No, I will not fire upon a crowd whose wrong or right deed is to be angry." The officer must undoubtedly have in mind similar thoughts. Inversely, perhaps he justifies himself by saying to himself that after all, the rioters disturb the public order. If one does not react vigorously and repressively, the riot could degenerate into a general revolution. The order is justified not only by legality but also by a morality of the common good. And anyway, if he does not empty the Square by firing upon the crowd, someone eise will. So he might as well do the dirty job himself to avoid shifting the weight of this responsibility onto someone eise. And thus, to the devil with such qualms. Life is sufficiently complicated as it is. Let us put it simply: my job as an officer is to obey Orders? I obey.

On one side, the discourse of ethics and compassion. On the other, the discourse of efficiency. Two discourses pure and heterogenous confront each other as a conscious moral dilemma. The first is grounded in a logic of persons; it affirms that the person has a value as an end and must not be utilized as a pure means; the second is grounded in a logic of things, and seeks the best results in terms of available means. We oscillate endlessly between these two logics, and according to our own experience and sensibility, prefer one or the other.

In fact, since the dawn of philosophy, men have argued over which of these two logics is the most important. Socrates is no doubt the first hero of ethics when he affirms that "It is better to suffer injustice than commit it." Today, the American philosopher John Rawls, inspired by Kant, proclaims the preeminence of ethics in his fight against utilitarianism.

For the argument is a tough one. The partisans of the logic of efficiency are right to point out that having good feelings is useless since factually and historically "the reason of the strengest is always the best." From the Sophist Protagoras to Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism (Bentham), the line of demarcation of this "realism" is drawn between the optimists (who believe in a happy end to the morality of interest that approaches, thanks to the invisible hand, an equilibrium of the forces at work) and the pessimists (for whom the unique solution in Order to live together is repression, since man is a wolf for man).

For the moment, the officer, cornered between these two logics, is already en route towards the Square with his troops. Pressed by time, he has certainly not had the occasion to identify his dilemma, nor to name the tendencies that undoubtedly confront each other within his consciousness. He is embarked, like all of us, towards his destiny. He would like to clarify his internal discourse, but must no doubt remain obscurely dissatisfied with it. He feels the pressure of the event, the Square he approaches, the noises and cries of the rioters.

Given the outcome of the story, one can imagine that the officer has not known the paralysis of fear. A little like an actor who before entering a scene prepares himself for the inevitable confrontation with his public, and more or less masters his fright. Fear is the first enemy of the decision-maker, for if it measures the quality of the stakes (men die, the officer is right to be afraid), it taunts our reason in a way that Pascal complained about imagination, which is all the more deceitful for not always being so... The imagination offers its forecasts, scathing, as usual: "I lose face or I bring about a carnage?" In lieu of exactitude, or balance, the imagination assaults the nerves, striking with percussive images. "Lose face?" one reacts! "Not at all! I seek simply to..." One has no time to control the mental crisscross of such judgments that imagination foments in our minds. Panic is not far off. For there is nothing to oppose for the moment to the two madmen (imagination and fear): one does not know yet what one is going to do "exactly," one does not know how one is going to get out of this.

At best, we can construct his interior scenario. As soon as I arrive, I Station my troops, I put the crowd at bay, and I offer the Ultimatum: I say to them, "if in five minutes you have not evacuated, I will be obliged to fire on you." Mental relief. After all, it is a possible scenario. A glimmer of hope appears. The imagination is conquered? Not yet. "That won't work. Look: they are furious." Don't stop. I've got to try it. I've got to believe it will work.

This scenario has in this case the advantage of freeing interior energy in the direction of a third path—a still uncertain one to be sure—that is different from the other two options (to fire on the crowd and not to fire on

them). It permits the creation of a delay. This brief retard in the execution has the merit of allowing some time, the time to seize the occasion if one presents itself. Depending on the reaction of the crowd, I will see clearly what Option to choose. All the value of the anticipation is there, which is a mixture of perspicacity and observation. In contrast to the rigid scenario that applies imperturbably what has been premeditated without taking account of the reactions of the entourage, the "interactive" scenario adapts itself in real time to the Situation. The rigid scenario reflects a linear causality of the typewriter while the "interactive" scenario reflects the circular causality that is appropriate to living beings. The great difference between these two types of causality is the notion of feedback, initiated by the workers in cybernetics of Weiner and developed notably by the Palo Alto school: a cause produces an effect that reacts upon a cause that produces a new effect that... and so forth.

The scenario becomes a harmful interface between the decider and the Situation when no adaptation is possible. It induces a stereotyped behavior, at best comic according to the Bergsonian formula (the comic is a bit of the mechanical plastered upon the real), and at worst tragic: nothing is more dangerous than the reproduction of the same according to the profound analysis of René Girard. For, if I always do the same thing under the same conditions, I strongly risk provoking the same reactions on the part of others, from which comes a chain reaction that always leads only to more violence.

This is precisely what the officer must try to avoid. The unleashing of violence. The officer knows this and undoubtedly wishes to avoid it. Does he know how he is going to proceed? Does he have his scenario all ready? It is not impossible that he does, but it is more probable that his inspiration is born directly from the face-to-face with the crowd. This is the sense of the proverb cited by Seneca: "a gladiator decides his own fate in the arena" {*Letters to Lucilius,* 22).

The officer has now arrived on the Square. He has deployed his troops. The crowd has observed the maneuver. A brouhaha of movements and muted cries has succeeded the uproar of the revolt. The officer verifies that the troops are ready. He raises his saber. The tension mounts. Someone murmurs: "They are not even going to fire over our heads?" "Aim!" cries the officer. The crowd is paralyzed. Absolute silence.

The staging is impressive. The tension is at its limit, and the blast of rifles is imminent. The moment calls for action and be done with it. A word, only a small one, would unleash the carnage. However, this word does not come. It is delayed. For, before the unleashing, there is the moment of stupor, the moment of the face-to-face where everyone observes each other intensely,

reciprocally magnetized by the drastic stakes, and by the fact that everything depends upon so little.

Alain Didier Weil describes a similar Situation. A Lebanese terrorist is assigned the task of firing on anyone who crosses the street he is guarding. A woman arrives carrying a child, and she clearly intends to cross the street. She sees the machine gun aimed at her and watches the man silently.

How long does this look last? A second? A quarter of a second? The duration of this look which pits these two beings face-to-face is of little importance, for by this face contemplating him without hate, the man was thrust into an experience of stupor, in which, thus interrupted, this experience brought him suddenly to an ahistoric time. It is a time in which there could revive in him a subject who is still undecided before the choice between good and evil. The effect of stupor upon this subject was thus to deprive him, during an enigmatic latency, of his ordinary determination to obey the order of his Chiefs.

Why was he brought finally to leave this stupefaction into deciding, without voluntarily choosing to do so, to fire upon the woman and thereby give a death sentence, one he had to believe was definitive, to this face that was looking at him?

Several months later, because he was haunted by the face of this woman who continued without let up to look at him, to the point of depriving him of all possible sleep, he had to consult a psychoanalyst.

The comparison of these two stories is worth being undertaken from two points of view: that of the moment of the face-to-face, fleeting and so intense, and that of the encounter.

One could say that the time of the face-to-face changes the perception of ordinary time. The consciousness of the soldier or of the ofTicer shows a wavering in intensity, a breach within the infinite. The crowd or the woman enters into the sphere of the "you" *(tu),* and it is the order formulated by the superiors, which is relegated with lightning speed to the sphere of the "he." The moment of the face to face is no longer impersonal: the other is transfigured into a face that addresses itself to me and that I cannot evade. Beyond the confrontation, within which the only posture of the protagonists consists in not giving way, the face-to-face brings about an encounter. This experience of the other, of his irresistible presence, induces a self-consciousness like the power of recognition or a temptation to sacrilege. For the officer, to say "fire" is nothing, as for the terrorist, to pull the trigger. The disproportion between the meeting of the face of the other, this appeal to absolute respect, and the fact of firing is comparable to the paradoxical behavior of the man placed before innocence: benevolence or murder.

What does the officer think about during this silence? Nothing of great importance no doubt, his intensity is so moving. He understands this: "You are ready to die and I am ready to fire upon you. The forces present are morally equivalent. Perhaps he reminds himself of the order he received while looking for an ultimate light within which he could hide himself before saying "Fire!" "Fire upon the rabble!" He looks at them and in an ultimate internal stock-taking his despair is illuminated: "I have received the order to fire upon the rabble; but as I perceive before me many honest people, I ask them to depart in order that I may execute this order."

His intervention is unexpected. At the limit, one could well imagine a declaration in the form of an Ultimatum. He had perhaps even foreseen that. It would doubtless not have served any great purpose. The crowd has already seen the soldiers take their place, and they know that they have not come for nothing. Their presence has not made them flee. To the contrary, the Ultimatum could very easily increase by a notch the tension existing between the officer and the crowd.

Between the Ultimatum and the demagogic declaration, the officer discovers an original formula which dissolves the tension. It resembles the winking of an eye, an impertinent complicity with the crowd vis-à-vis those who have issued the order. The officer knows that these people before him are not rabble, and the crowd knows that he knows. The crowd does not for all that renounce its basic Opposition, and the officer respects that decision by not making any allusion to it. His declaration is in no way an argument, but rather an invitation to avoid confrontation by a mutual respect. While taking the crowd seriously, the officer mocks his superiors with the crowd by asking indirectly of the rogues to not budge while the "honest people" leave the Square. This good natured pleasantry is charged with benevolence. The crowd is touched; it understands the invitation of the officer and consents to it, for it has permitted them to leave with their heads held high. They accept being saved and defer their struggle.

We can imagine the intense moment when communication is established between the officer and the crowd. It corresponds to *Kairos* of the Greeks. A paradoxical moment, when intensity compensates for transience. This "almost nothing" dear to Jankelevitch is here a harmonious conjugation between a subject who explains his decision and another who adheres to it. It is as if space and time were Condensed into a State of grace constructed of transparency and jubilant communication. Whether it be speech or action, the decision reveals the subject, offering to the look of the other what was hidden. Because he is revealed, the subject can make the experience one of gratitude, which is to say that he lives this very particular moment when the

other adheres to what he wishes. The decision thus responds to the most profound wish of human nature: to dare to make his secret contribution to the good of an other than oneself, even when nothing is asked, and, contrary to all expectations, to discover that this contribution was the secret hope of the other. This unveiling is no doubt the supreme risk, for in so doing, I expose myselftojudgment and rejection. It is however the necessary passage of the relationship as soon as the subject, beyond his various self-presentations, undertakes to accomplish the meaning of his singularity, in accepting to reveal himself to the other.

For let us not deceive ourselves. What the crowd perceives when the officer begins to speak is not his function or military rank, but a brother in humanity. It is an unanticipated initiative which reestablishes the line of solidarity momentarily forgotten in the ardor of revolt. Ordinarily, one does not approach this register directly. We prefer to pass through the customs of rigor, the sociologically established dissimulations, the codes of good conduct. One observes, one tests, and eventually one domesticates. In this case, the officer has no time. He passes directly from the register of violent preparation ("aim") to that of a declaration which allows a chance. The contrast is all the more striking for the fact that the latter does not proceed from the formen

The terrorist, from the moment he sees the woman who intends to cross the forbidden region with her child, has also encountered, in the space of an instant, a person. In the thought of Saint Thomas, the person is the most precious being, the most worthy there can be in the world. Curiously, we also utilize this word in the opposite sense of "nothing," as when one responds to the question, "Was someone there?" "No, no one *(personne)."* These opposed significations of being and non-being help to clarify the moment of oscillation before the woman's face. Here, the words of Valéry slightly modified assume a particular significance, if one imagines that this time it is a woman who invites the man to enter into a relation with her:

It depends on you,
Whether I be tomb or treasure,
Whether I speak or remain silent,   ;. *
It rests entirely with you ...

Deprived of desire, man is opened to the absolute inertia of the repetitive: to pull the trigger as usual. No doubt this last time, the terrorist was not able to reduce the event: the encounter was too strong. There remains the omnipresence of the face, the definitive character of his decision, the

persistence of the question "What have I done?," the impossibility of being able to answer that question (words being so incapable of freeing consciousness from its ocean of stupor), the impression of having been an opaque being who in a supreme hesitation has given way under an infinitesimal impulse. A mysterious behavior before an ineffable presence.

The speech of the officer falls precisely, at the right moment, at the intersection of a will—his own—and an expectation—that of the crowd. This coincidence between a consciousness and a context is often the case with humor: however unexpected, its eruption is not, for all that, incongruous. As the meaning of the retort is the proof of the presence of mind resonating in unison with the event (to the great chagrin of those who will never have anything but afterthoughts), *kairos* is generally the object of a very great esteem. Forbidden to the distracted, it is just recompense to the attentive, the vigilant, those who know how to "seize the occasion."

Has the crowd understood right away what the officer said? It is a little like the Student who, not very satisfied with his exam never comes to believe that this good grade is his own, or the doctor who, despairing of seeing his patient cured, observes in spite of all his renewed health. One part of the crowd has no doubt shown a moment of hesitation. "Did I really understand you? Should I really trust you? Could this not be the ultimate cruelty, a trap to fire upon us once our back is turned?" I imagine that at first some few people leave the Square and disappear into the Parisian streets, and then others, strengthened by these early successes, progressively join them until the entire crowd breaks up.

What are the signs that the decision of the officer is a good one? He has done better than pure ethics or efficiency: he does not renounce being himself beyond the reach of demands and pressures. He finds an original solution, one that is non-repetitive, one that is elegant, and in which each of the actors of the decision discover his and her own self-interest; he because he succeeds in obeying the order (empty the Square) while entirely respecting his conscience and the crowd; the crowd, because it feels itself respected and it is spared a cruel repression; his superiors, because after all they have what they want.

In a competitive universe like our economic world, decisions (Strategie or commercial ones, for example) are most often made at the expense of another individual. One's job is saved at the expense of the individual most recently fired. One's deals are made at the expense of competitors who perform less well. One's promotion is won at the expense of less able colleagues. The System of selection, the conducting thread of our demoeratie education, is itself as well a System of decision-making that makes victims:

all the Citizens are gathered in a race for the diploma, the exam, the job, the best salary, and each step produces its share of individuals who are left out. For once, let us do something: let us abandon the excellent reasons for continuing to operate within the System which makes of us the privileged of the economy or of culture and let us forget, even if only for a moment, the rules of the System: "let us recompense the best, those who have the most talent and those who make the most effort." Let us dare to measure our educational and economic Systems by the yardstick of the officer.

You will teil me rightly that this program is impossible, that we should not generalize. But as soon as we breach the natural horizon of the System of decision-making, which is three-dimensional (me, you, and him or her) by taking refiige from within a morality of exclusive personal interest (tough luck for you, tough luck for him), or by adopting a selective strategy where one accepts the common happiness only on condition of excluding a third (so much the better for us, tough luck for him), it is useless to become indignant against the injustice of this world. Between the jungle and a form of "cocooning," between the absence of scruples and excessive attention to them, the morality of the officer (if there is one there to speak of) adopts a style which is not that of the defense of interest alone—me and mine—but that of the imagination, which is not without recalling a particular emotion: for once, in effect, it is a deflation and not a taboo which matures the decision and guides the action, and one cannot fail to recognize the natural direction of desire.

The officer reduced the violence of his decision because he believed in it. The "self-fulfilling prophecy" is precisely this type of discourse which anticipates the event, not in announcing it, but in creating it. The officer would thus have been able to say: it is because I have confidence in myself that I succeeded. Taken negatively, such a remark appears within a very romantic light: René Girard has shown with great finesse how even the most intimate decisions, those that seem to proceed only from me, are in fact prey to the mimetic illusion. They too have taken as model antecedent decisions, whether this model be explicit as in the case of the noble hidalgo, or deeply buried within our forgotten past.

Taken positively, we can say that the decision is lived as an existential project, and that in this respect, it bears down on us with a weight that often seems too heavy. The decision is lived as such when we have the certitude that behind us, no one is there to carry our bürden in the event of failure. This feeling of existence is paid for dearly by the fear of not succeeding, and by the insidious perversion that undermines us from the moment incertitude arises about being worthy to succeed. The hour of combat has thus sounded,

all the more terrible for the fact that we battle above all ourselves. We perceive ourselves as the ultimate resistance to inertia, and yes, really, we accomplish what without us would never happen. We are the prophets of our own future.

The officer is delivered from the vise of his dilemma by inventing his decision. He does not get bogged down in an analysis concerned purely with ethics and efficiency. The brüte logic of efficiency urges that he fire on the crowd. After all, he received the order to do so, and was legitimately executing his role, although the logic of morality would urge that he respect the life of innocent persons. It is not in remaining within these preliminary positions that he has been able to find a solution that is really novel, for in any case a solution of this type is not the work of logical deduction. Nor is it thanks only to "solertia," this virtue of intelligence that discovers promptly a middle term, as Saint Thomas Aquinas would say, taking up again the doctrine of Aristotle. It is perhaps above all and before everything eise because he knew how to gather together all human energies in the service of an objective other than victory. From that point, he dares to affirm that the primary condition of the right decision is the appeal of the gratuitous, of the disinterested, of this sidestepping of the declared objective, or perhaps of stepping beyond it—who knows what to call it? It is a decision possessing that mysterious power to unleash generosity and gratitude.

(translated by Sandor Goodhart)

FOR A NON-VIOLENT ACCORD: EDUCATING THE PERSON

Marie-Louise Martinez

Education has been criticized, no doubt justly, for the *symbolic violence* of its prohibitions and exclusionary rituals that mirror the violence of society (Bourdieu, etc.). But this criticism is short-sighted. When restraints are removed in teaching and education (in the family and in the school), violence wells up anew and produces at least the following two results: access to meaning and knowledge is restricted; access to the law and its structure-inducing prohibitions is restricted.

The result is that we foster vulnerable personalities who confuse fiction and reality, and who do not hesitate to turn their violence into acts of hostility directed toward themselves, other people, and society. A further consequence has been a certain violent non-differentiation that has tended in turn to produce a violent re-differentiation of society. There is a nostalgia everywhere today for a return to discipline, to the rule of law, etc. One hears talk of the "sanctuary of the classroom" or again of the necessity of preserving a "symbolic cloister." We are not able, purely and simply, to feel remorse for having maintained the rule of a violent symbolic order.

One might ask in what the symbolic consists. How is it connected to teaching and education? Is there not a fundamental violence in the symbolic? Does there exist a less violent symbolic, or even a non-violent one? How might one define it and put it to work in teaching and education? Girardian theory can help us to reinterpret various contributions from a number of authors in the human sciences (Benveniste, Lacan, etc.) and from the personalist philosophy of language. I would like to propose the hypothesis that there are two stages of the symbolic: first, a violent symbolic accord and, second, a non-violent threshold within the symbolic, which alone can serve as an appropriate model for teaching and education.

I. The symbolic and its powers.

We are not using *symbolic* in its specific sense as metaphorical or figurative language as it occurs in myth and poetry but in a more general sense, i.e., to refer to the totality of the sign and code Systems employed by human beings, as that which allows for the production and deployment of significations within society. Stemming from the Greek *symbolein* (to throw or put together, to assemble), the symbolic is that type or order of signs that assembles. Much more than the pure language of linguistics, the symbolic is the totality of verbal, non-verbal, and para-verbal Conventions, of Systems of exchange, and of rites. It also comprises the regulated use of bodies and of nature. Our defmition of the symbolic is not idealist: more than simply the expression of ideas, it is also interaction and action, on oneself, on others, and the world. It includes technical and bodily activities to the degree that these have been codified. In this sense, the symbolic (in agreement with philosophers as diverse as Cassirer or Clifford Geertz) can be said to embrace the totality of what is called culture.

But if the symbo! *throws orputs together,* it is necessary to discuss what and why and how it does so. The modern science of signs (semiology) has shown that the sign or symbol serves to place in relation. Relying on the contemporary semiology that stems from the American philosopher Pierce, and also on the work of Francis Jacques in France, we can say that this relation, far from being a simple binary one (sign/referent or sign/signifier) is a complex relation which aligns signs with the objects to which they refer, but also with the people deploying those signs. This latter signifying relation, which is intersubjective and social, was invisible in Saussurean semiology. In itself, the symbolic is the product of a complex relation which links people among themselves and the things referred to by the agency of signs. In other words, the basis of the signifying relationship is not the dyad subject/object (relation to objects) but a triadic relation, subject/ subject/object (intersubjective and objectal). This triangulär relationship, which traverses the intersubjective and the objectal, is a relationship of Convention, underlined in antiquity by Plato in the *Cratylus* (for Hermogenes, a word signified because it bore a resemblance to the thing, while for Cratylus a word signified to the degree that it was based on an accord among human beings.) Meaning is not so much based on the resemblance of the word to the designated thing as on human Convention; the symbolic, which is the fact of mediation among humans, reposes on what links them, which is to say, on desire, on intention, and on Convention.

The symbolic is not completely homogeneous. Variable over time, in space it is defined by the unstable agreement, constantly being renegotiated

within conflicted communities, or even micro-communities, upon which it imposes a fashion and dominant norm. It also varies according to the various modes of discourse (incantation, narrative, description, explication, argumentation, etc.), and according to the categories in force within the various domains of expressive action, or types of texts (mythological, religious, political, legal, commercial, artistic, etc.).

Culture, or the symbolic, is composed of textual areas, each with a textual practice. Wittgenstein says that the fundamental element of these practices is a *language game.* Contemporary sociology (influenced by the Chicago school) has shown that social interactions, what we would call elements of the symbolic, are veritable language *rituals. Game* and *ritual* are anthropological terms. These contemporary approaches to the symbolic reveal in part what an anthropological approach to the symbolic ought to illuminate fully. The symbolic rests on a conventional relationship among human beings, and is composed of ordered sequences comprising constraints, prohibitions, and rituals, whose purpose is to Channel endemic violence. As such, the symbolic contains violence, in both senses of the term. We will develop this idea below in relation to Girard's hypotheses. But first let us look at the power of the symbolic.

The symbolic, as the understanding of language games and cultural rituals and as the ability to represent, to interpret, and to act, allows one to benefit from the human experience which it transmits. Much more than something one has or knows, it is the occasion and the instrument to increase one's power over the world, over others, and oneself.

The means of symbolization give one access to the resources of the human heritage, but also to the construction of new meanings. According to the way in which humans distribute meanings, they help to construct social and cultural reality. Language is not only the expression that accompanies or illustrates action, it is also, in itself, a form of action upon the world. When humans listen, read, understand, speak, write, or when they manipulate other sign Systems, they change the world. To take part in the symbolic is to engage in *apraxis,* i.e., in a transformative action upon the real, and on social reality and its organization.

But, what's more, by this action on the objective world, the symbolic allows the subject to recognize himself as such. "It is in and through language that man recognizes himself as a subject: because language alone founds in reality, in the reality that is that of being, the concept of the ego... is ego who says ego," writes Benveniste in his fundamental work, *Problems of General Linguistics* (I, 259-60). The human being as a potential subject becomes an actually existing subject by speaking and by taking up language.

He is the result of acts of enunciation (i.e., he is the producer of Statements) through which he confers upon himself (though the individualism of this perspective is subject to criticism, for the process is one of intersubjectivity) an ontological consistency which he draws from language. In other words, it is by daring to take possession of language (oral, and, *a fortiori,* written) and by making use of the resources of the symbolic that the human being begins the process of subjectivisation. By means of the symbolic, the human participates in producing objective reality and by so doing, he defines himself as a subject. He becomes an *auctor* and thereby performs an act of authority *(auctoritas).* He increases his prestige. To be rieh in symbolic resources is, for the most part, the precondition for gaining access to other desirable resources (on the social, professional, and material, etc. level). It entitles one to consideration and to gratifying social respect. Conversely, to be deprived of these resources would, on this level, be a serious disadvantage. Thanks to a mastery of the symbolic, one is not only better equipped to survive in our sophisticated societies, one is also able to make a more substantial contribution to the polity, to the demoeratie System, and to partieipate in eulture, in familial and business life, etc. The better one's mastery of symbolic codes, the better one is able to work for more equitable social institutions. By the same token, one is also better equipped to lie, to manipulate, and to oppress. Thus the symbolic is definitely linked to the power to do good as well as evil. The place where being becomes charged with intersubjectivity, the symbolic space of desire is thus eminently desirable and desired.

II. School and the Symbolic

The funetion of schooling and education has always been to give infants access to the process of signification (French: *enseigner-Latin: insignare)* and hence to the symbolic. *Educare:* to nourish; symbolic nourishment? An etymology at least as probable as *to go out of.* Here etymology provides, as it often does, an eloquent memorial translating expeetations that have always surrounded school and scholarity. The expeetation has been that from the bosom of education students might be released from ignorance by drawing more knowledge, material goods, power, and being. For a long time, school, invested with these expeetations, has been able to appear as the symbolic and social salvation for uneducated illiterates.

But these hopes have given way to a painful disappointment. The school, with its mandate to provide gratis secular and compulsory instruetion, began the general distribution of the basic symbolic codes (reading, writing, arithmetic). But if illiteracy has long been on the decline, a new form of non-

participation in the basic forms of knowledge and in the codes and practices of literacy is now appearing on the other side of illiteracy. Now we are confronted not only by a resistance to school, but perhaps by a resistance generated by the school itself (somewhat in the manner of diseases termed iatrogenic, which are caused by the medication), meaning that the school cannot help but question itself about its responsibility. Are schools producing illiterates? How are we to understand this?

Schools today do not always give access to the forms of the symbolic that they value most highly, nor do they necessarily open the door to socio-economic Integration. Worse, by their failure to educate, schools can inflict true symbolic disqualification. Thanks to their passage through the school System, illiterates owe to it the certification, as it were, of their symbolic disqualification. Illiteracy is stigmatized deprivation and is recognized as such: to be deprived of the symbolic (left with an incompetent grasp of the written and oral codes of communication) entails exclusion. Present day students have been cruelly disappointed by school. Thus we can understand that they turn against it with hate and resentment, and also against those whom they, rightly or wrongly, consider to have been luckier or more privileged in their appropriation of the prestigious symbolic. We can also understand, insofar as they are able, that they should wage a symbolic guerilla campaign to devalue the symbolic norm by which they are disqualified, in the familiär little back-and-forth game of rejected/rejecter.

This bitter disappointment with school gets translated into acts of hostility against the seif, against the other, and society. It takes the form of resentment, but is never anything but the obverse of betrayed expectation. It does not put the necessity of education into question, on the contrary. It makes it all the more imperative that educational researchers provide a radical critique of the violence of the symbolic and the entry into the signifying process. The anthropological approach, supported by mimetic theory, will provide a better understanding of the violence inherent in both the symbolic and educational Orders, and enable a search for alternatives.

III. The Violence of the Symbolic and of the Entry into the Signifying Process

With the preceding paragraphs we are already embarked on a description of the forms of violence inherent in the symbolic. The symbolic is an accord (a series of accords varying according to specific circumstances) which defines a Community united by rituals of expulsion. The symbolic generates desire and the competitive struggle to appropriate it. Thus it comprises all the phases of violence in the mimetic process. More exactly, one can surmise

that the symbolic is based on the saerifice of the vietim who then, according to Girard, becomes the transcendental signifier: "In the founding mechanism, reconciliation is achieved against and around the vietim. There is no meaning that is not adumbrated by it and that does not appear simultaneously to be transcended by it" (143). This hypothesis is difficult to demonstrate historically, but one can find arguments in other authors that support it. Let's look at the symbolic in relation to sacrificial anthropogenesis.

We can find quite eloquent support in Benveniste's *The Vocabulary of Indo-European Institutions,* for example that the very notion of Community derives from the "munia," which is the festive meal associated with saerifice and gladiatorial games. It is also Benveniste who, concluding some interesting analyses in his *Problems of General Linguistics,* discloses the very particular Status of the grammatical third person. A veritable non-person, he/she is described in terms that allow us to recognize the ambivalence characteristic of the sacrificial vietim. "From its function as a non-personal form, the 'third person[1] derives its capacity to become both a form of respect, which makes of the person something much more than a person, as well as a form of insult, which allows for the person to be annihilated" (1,231).

We have a real case of saerifice with this expulsion of the third. These very precise remarks allow someone acquainted with anthropological concepts to recognize the uncanny similarity of the grammatical function of third person to the elassical notion of the *pharmakon* with its semantic ambivalence. The vietim whose exclusion provides communal aecord would be the originary referent of this third person. Benveniste is thus very close to recognizing, in his turn, in the exclusion of the third, which he observes and reveals, the foundational function of cultural consensus: "As soon as the pronoun / appears in a Statement where it conjures up, explicitly or implicitly, the pronoun *you* in such a way as to place the two of them in Opposition to *he,* a human experience is inaugurated anew, revealing the linguistic instrument which gave rise to it" (II, 68).'

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[1] Benveniste writes: "Now we see the human sciences develop in their entirety, a vast anthropology (in the sense of a general science of man') being formed...I am always acutely aware that it is the signifier that unifies the human sciences in their ensemble"(I, 38). But Benveniste was not able to contribute to this projet of epistemological unification. Doubtless captive of the notion of strueture, he could not focus on origins, still less on their sacrificial dimension, which he has nonetheless exposed massively. I will pursue below this discussion with reference to the linguistic model of intersubjeetive identification.

The symbolic, in the sense that Benveniste has given it, i.e., as the representation of the original or transcendental or archetypal signifier, is indeed that anteriority or precondition required for the construction of culture and society. As such, the symbolic fully justifies the intuition of the linguist concerning the possibility of unifying the human sciences. As the immediate consequence of the *sacrificial accord* on which it rests (the signifier being the first substitute for the victim), the *symbolic accord* is the precondition laterally informing all the other conventional forms contained within it (linguistic, cultural, social, economic, political, etc.), with their contractual regionalization.

In sum, Benveniste, without having formulated the sacrificial hypothesis, nor *a fortiori* being concerned about subjecting it to a critique, is satisfied with demonstrating it at work.

One can come up with the same findings in Lacan's work. He discovers and minutely explores what he calls the symbolic, and what we would call the primary threshold of anthropogenesis. The Name-of-the-Father is the founding death that gives to language its signifying power. This is the ultimate rule of linguistic structuralism declared by Benveniste to be unsurpassable. It is the key for entering into a culture structured by language as a System of differentiations.

In fact, to enter into the symbolic accord is to accept the rule of sacrificial violence that founds all culture. Lacan has shown with great precision and subtlety how the unique entry of the subject into the symbolic is negotiated, tracing its intersubjective history. In this regard, his contribution is considerable. Lacan's project, in our view, is extremely interesting because it goes so far as to discover the meaning of the sacrificial symbolic accord for ontogenesis. The author, in fact, comes close to discovering the role of sacrifice in the symbolic accord. He can only understand it , however, as being of the order of myth. He attributes no anthropological credibility to sacrifice, nor *a fortiori* any ethical value, whether negative or positive. How, in that case, can we think of reducing violence or of getting beyond it by calling for the reintegration of the third? Lacan shows that the sacrifice of the third that provides the basis for a field of differentiated communication, in the last analysis, is confirmed by the sacrificial accord. We must simply accept the *exclusion ofthe third (The-Name-of-the-Father) as the guarantee of the code.* This author, like Benveniste, does not really see what he reveals. For him, sacrifice remains a purely nominal given without a referent because sacrifice in *Totem and Taboo* functions as a pure fable. Thereby he remains a prisoner of the mythological misrecognition of sacrifice, which is what characterizes culture

in its violent accord. This allows us to understand in passing why the symbolic is most often viewed as nothing but a fable; this nominalist use of the term simply comes from the misrecognition that forbids us to recognize the revelation of sacrifice as a real fact. Which of course prevents us from seeking to move beyond it. For our part, we rediscover sacrifice by calling for the integration of the victimized third who had been previously expelled.

One could show that this anthropogenetic violence is echoed and repeated at the sociogenetic and especially ontogenetic levels.

The symbolic accord contains violence at several levels, which we will rapidly review befcre attempting to determine to what degree it might be possible to envisage a non-violent symbolic.

Because the symbolic is eminently desirable by virtue of the power and the surplus of being which it confers, it has much to do with appropriative craving, and so with rivalry, and with competitiveness, and also with the rejection ofthose who, due to their disqualification, both ratify and enhance the qualification and prestige ofthose who enjoy mastery of the culture's codes.

It is well known fact that inasmuch as certain symbolic areas are highly prized as a source of great power, access to them is strictly monitored and shut, indeed placed off-limits by highly complex rites of initiation (education is replete with them).

The symbolic accord is certainly not the result of a fully conscious or totally rational human decision. It is probably not homogenous; it is frequently called into question here and there, or transformed, or restored, etc. And no doubt it is compartmentalized into many kinds of communities and sub-communities. According to Wittgenstein, language in its totality consists of a multitude of *language games,* with their specific codes and rules.

To enter into language means to learn these different games and their specific rules. Some are very simple and others very complicated, demanding long and difficult apprenticeships. The first apprenticeships occur in the family, and then get developed in the other institutions of daily life, i.e., in school, among neighbors, in business, sport, church, clubs, etc. Thereafter highly specialized and highly precise aspects of the symbolic will be developed in function of the apprentice's relationships, his group-memberships, education, academic or Professional specialties. Theoretical ethnologists, who study the sociology of human interaction, refer to cultural *affiliation.* According to them, these language games, rather than games, would be genuine instances of ritual requiring that their accepted Conventions, both written and oral, be respected under pain of expulsion

from those communities where they are in force. Ritual belongs to the sphere of the sacred, and its prescribed Conventions are absolute. A ritual is a little ceremony around sacred objects; it is a matter of the utmost importance that rites be scrupulously carried out, for they concern life and death. In a ritual, to manipulate a sacred object is to attempt to appease the wrath and violence of the gods (or of human beings), for they pose a threat both to the individual and the Community.

This anthropological and sociological theory of interaction is very illuminating; it helps us better to understand why the symbolic in its totality (in all its domains) is an accord among human beings. This symbolic accord consists of a series of Conventions, of games and rituals, more or less complex, which establish the rules for containing and permanently dealing with human violence. But if ethnological theory, through its notion of ritual, shows us that human sociality is permanently imbued with violence and the sacred, it unfortunately does not inform us about the source of that violence. Thanks to mimetic theory, however, we are able to see desire and sacrifice as its outcome. Thus to try to gain access the symbolic is to expose oneself to the foundational violence that makes man a wolf to man, and no doubt to compromise oneself with it. It is not surprising that some people refrain from ever risking it (a perspective, by the way, that might offer a fresh view of autism). And by the same token one can understand all the wounds and self-deprivations of those who, having striven to master the symbolic, have, at some point in their effort, become discouraged by the oppositions they encountered.

For clearly the symbolic accord is not simply something acquired, a past victory for the human species on the phylo- or anthropogenic level; it is, first and foremost, a requirement and an indispensable modality of social existence.

On the level of ontogenesis (i.e., individual development), perhaps one must first have experienced in one's life and close relationships the lack of such an accord before one can consent to enter the symbolic. In other words, it is likely that it is through a personal crisis experienced in one's immediate relationships that one feels the need to gain access to the symbolic. According to anthropologists (speaking of anthropogenesis, i.e., the evolution of the species) as well as psychologists (speaking of psychogenesis, i.e., the evolution of the individual), access to the symbolic is a threshold that can only be crossed with great difficulty and by passing through a crisis.

Wallon and Lacan have clearly shown, each in his fashion, that at the level of ontogenesis it is always the result of an interdividual crisis that the

subject is enabled (or not) to join the Community of Speakers. The leap is hard to take because of the weight of the renunciation it entails, but the result is decisive. Moreover, it is clear that the leap is not made once and for all. There are, no doubt, several stages by which one enters into the symbolic accord.

To a greater or lesser degree, all human beings are in the symbolic: thus they share with others certain conventional Systems of meaning, certain language games and certain rites. However, the passage is not easy, nor is it always homogenous, nor is it irreversible, and it is accompanied by a host of dangers: these can be understood on both the psychological and sociological level.

In terms of psychology, the pathologies associated with the impossible entry into the symbolic are *autism* or *aphasia,* for instance. Here the subject is prevented from generating Symbols. In the case of *delirium,* he has recourse to such aberrant and idiosyncratic signs that they depart from generally established Conventions, and thus can no longer communicate or be shared with others. Wittgenstein has shown that there can be no such thing as an individual language. And of course the essence of the symbolic is that it can be shared conventionally with a group of Speakers irrespective of its size.

On the level of society we find additional problems. It is simply the case that not all language games or social areas and symbolic Systems enjoy equal Status in a given culture. Certain of them are much more esteemed and valued than others, depending upon the culture, the milieu, and the historical period. These require a long apprenticeship, they develop considerable abilities, they confer superior power and prestige upon those who master them. Written language with its systematizing power is a highly valued source of prestige, but then so are many oral language games, involving explanation, or argumentation, or injunction, or theatrical rhetoric.

It is clear that there is a large amount of psychosocial intimidation that figures in the apprenticeship to both oral and written language; this is the main point that Bourdieu has developed in his discussion of symbolic violence. The Speaker with dominant language competence, the one who seems the most authorized to speak, puts pressure on the others, who often lose and dissolve their abilities in the presence of the norm. Illiteracy is perhaps the most visible manifestation of this intimidation. It is likely that those involved with determining significations compete with each other to capture and exercise exclusive control over them, rather than allow them to circulate freely among everyone. Instead they seek to trip each other up.

But let us try to get a better view of the violence of the symbolic on the various levels where it appears and according to its different effects. For if it is so that man is the symbolic and hence they social animal, the beneficiary of an articulated language (the well-known precondition of his evolutionary success), it is nonetheless obvious that he has paid a high price for this privilege. The cost can be inferred from past and present crises on the level of his interdividual relationships, both psychological and social, as well as on the level of Community.

In order to examine the interdividual crisis in the history of the subject, we will turn our attention to those disciplines that have illustrated it best: psychoanalysis, with its well-known model, but also sociology and anthropology.

Freud and his successors, Mélanie Klein, Jacques Lacan, etc., have helped to show that the development of the child is contingent upon its relations with the mother, but also with the father, during its first years. The relational configuration within the family triad promotes (or inhibits) access to language, to the symbolic, and to a more or less balanced development. In other words, these relationships can produce either dysfunction and violence or, conversely, harmonious personal development.

Following birth, the infant's early attachment to the mother can very quickly become lethal if lasts too long, if it shifts into dependency, etc. This dyadic and dual relationship can only provide structure if it allows room for a third, i.e., for the father or his representative (the Name-of-the-Father for Lacan) whose function is to provide distance. For this to happen, the dyad fits itself within a triadic relationship. This permits Separation to occur from the prenatal corporal bond, now outmoded and stifling, and reinscribes the child in a larger Community. The transition is delicate because it involves renouncing one's initial prenatal beatitude in order to gain access to the universe of multiple, open-ended relationships with the world of culture by the intermediary of signs. Of course this Separation ought to occur by stages in a gentle manner. Here too, it is necessary to mourn the immediacy of the thing and to accept the rule and the law, of which the third is in some fashion both the witness and the guarantor, and which provide the basis of Convention and signification. The conditions for this access are difficult and costly, as we have seen, all the more so since the advantages of the symbolic are not rapid but require a long period of babbling. The decision to exchange ones initial Situation of fusional immediacy for a new and initially less intimate relationship with a symbolic Community is not a conscious one. It is negotiated under duress as the only possible resolution of a relational crisis.

For psychoanalysis, it is through the Oedipus complex as a conflictual relational process marked by rivalry that a sufficient distance is gained from the mother and an appropriate place provided for the father and the third (neither too exalted nor too minimized). It goes without saying that the delicate balance in this triadic relational configuration is of concern to each of its actors. Each has to make a personal contribution for there to be a relational harmony that ought to return or be re-created in various other occasions of daily life and with other partners. The triad is most likely the basic figure of all social and relational geometry (see Théodore Caplow, *Two Against One*).

For the psychologist Henri Wallon, the leap into the symbolic, the "primary passage for the intellectual future of the child as it has been for the species is the one that takes him in his fusion with the object or the Situation and leads him to the moment where he can give them an equivalent made of images, Symbols, or propositions" (155). This occurs as the outcome of relational crisis very similar to the one envisaged by the psychoanalytical model. Both mimeticism and the aspiration to fusional contagion with the adult model very quickly become ambivalent: "cannibalism provides an image of it: absorb the beloved or admired being; annihilate it as well, by sacrificing it to oneself. Inversely, to become absorbed into it so as to achieve a more intimate assimilation, even to the point of renouncing oneself and becoming abolished" (156). Wallon insists, however, on drawing some important distinctions from the Oedipus Complex; this ambivalent rivalry is not by any means limited to the sexual domain, and it is not deployed exclusively in regard to the parent of the opposite sex. The process must be conceptualized generally, Freud over restricted its scope. And finally, the order stated by Freud must be inverted, according to which "the infant begins by wanting to claim the mother from the father by wishing to see the latter disappear. Then, helped by his remorse, he takes the latter for the object of his admiration and as a model to be imitated. In fact, the order is the inverse of this" (ibid). Below, we will have occasion to underline the stränge resemblance of Wallon's model to that of René Girard.

In any event, it is clearly as the result of a serious relational crisis that the leap into the symbolic is accomplished. This makes it easier to understand how the risk run by the subject itself requires the difficult renunciation implied by the engagement with the symbolic. There is a loss and expenditure that will have to be renegotiated many times and on many levels, throughout the psychogenesis and the entire life of the subject.

For the development of the subject is accomplished by a concomitant sociogenesis that allows him to adapt to a group, a Community, indeed to a

heterogenous hyper-community with socially differentiated subgroups arranged in hierarchies. There the subject, whatever his original background, has to come to terms with new knowledge and new symbolic codes, as for example those of writing. It is evident that his social distance from writing codes will make their assimilation problematic.

The distance and the Separation will be all the more favorably experienced to the degree that there are third person mediators (teachers and guides) who are able to reassure, grant permission, andprovidebridges. The attachment to certain milieux of origin may seem to prevent access to a new symbolic universe. Novelty can often be legitimately feared: one knows what one is losing, one has no idea what one might gain.One risks well-established modes of relationship, and one fears, with good reason, not to be welcomed in the new circles. Social distance is an open wound.

The role of the third person is crucial on the level of anthropogenesis for understanding how to access the symbolic. Lacan, following Freud, refers to this when he speaks of the Name-of-the-Father as the necessary prerequisite for gaining access to the symbolic. Lacan is not simply thinking of the empirical father in the family structure, or his representative (who on occasion can be the grandmother or anyone eise), he is thinking of the archaic Father of the primal horde to whom Freud refers in his final work, *Totem and Taboo.* It is by the collective murder of the oppressive Father who claims all the women for himself, and who would forbid everything to his sons, that the sons establish the Community. A foundational sacrifice forms the basis for the signifying Community, speaking and acting with its rules and Conventions in a common accord of equals.

Thus, in the psychoanalytic theory of origins, the entry into the symbolic pact is violent. For the individual it commemorates the assent to collective violence. In fact, according to the explicit Statements of Lacan, it represents the Integration of the third person as the dead Father: the one who founds the fraternal consensus. Accordingly, it is important to bear in mind that the symbolic accord, achieved as the outcome of a crisis and of a sacrificial plot, is tainted by an initial violence that has laid the foundation for the signifying Community. In other words, to enter into the symbolic, one must first give one's assent to a primordial violence and be willing to perpetuate it by means of the sacrificial exclusion of the third person. Because the symbolic bears the traces of a sacrificial anthropogenesis, does that mean that each person in turn, in order to gain access to language, must ratify it with his or her consent? Yes, according to Lacan, under pain of sinking into psychosis. What he terms *the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-*

Father would be for the subject the impossibility of assenting to that foundational violence, to the Integration of the third as the excluded one.

For us, it is a question of seeing the symbolic not simply as the general case with its structured and universal differentiation capped by the signifier of the-Name-of-the-Father, but, on the contrary, as a genetic structure with levels distinguished by thresholds. Lacan helped to show the first threshold of the entry to the symbolic, the one commemorated by an arch of human concord marking a first limitation or regulation of saerificial violence. But if that phase of human eulture was the first threshold of anthropogenesis, it was not the last.

For us, the second anthropogenetic threshold, a truly non-violent threshold, implies a critique of violence (a critique all the more difficult to aecomplish in that it needs to be radical without, however, stepping outside of the category of sacrifice) and, especially, the integration of the third as a person. Here it is perhaps a question of integrating the excluded third as much on the level of logic as of a previously excluded human third. This suggests how little our view can aecommodate itself to the hegemonic rule of binarism that governs the structurally differentiated symbolic space of saerificial anthropogenesis. The instauration of a new cultural Space by means of a non-violent symbolic aecord is characterized by the integration of the third who had been previously excluded from the saerificial scheme. Thus our postulate differs fundamentally from Lacan's: we distinguish two genealogical thresholds within the symbolic.

Now we must consider the multiple aspects of the violence that oecurs when the subject enters the symbolic and common sense:

There is violence against oneself when one gives up fusion with the primitive mother, with the immediaey of things, with the warmth of one's original communities. This is a scalpel-like violence that makes separations that are always premature. There is violence done to the seif in the original act of Separation.Then there is the violence done to the other as the excluded third and dead primitive Father, and then to all those who by their expulsion provide cohesion to the gathered assembly. If the symbolic aecord oecurs by means of a plot against the saerificial third, then the number of these excluded thirds from various aecords is great.

Finally there is the violence of every sociogenesis that requires giving consent to dubious acts of collusion. To assent to new alliances seems to require betrayal of the previous ones. When a child of the third or fourth world gains access to writing, new resonance is given to the notion of the dead or excluded third. For his entry into a sacrificially constituted

Community is ratified by all who are not part of it. In some fashion he must assent to a symbolic accord based on the exclusion of his own people.

By resolving these crises, as expensive as they are profitable, the subject leaves behind his State of dependence and acquires the words and the other symbolic resources of the tribe. He pays his dues and acquires his symbol. On the other hand, one can understand that there are some who would never deign nor be able to do this, who prefer to lock themselves into autistic silence, or resign themselves to the humiliation of illiteracy.

And so the question arises as to whether there might not be a less violent entry into the symbolic. Couldn't there be a more open manner to enter language and the ritual language games of culture, one that would not be based on excluding one or more third persons? Couldn't there be a symbolic accord to integrate those third persons who had been previously excluded, where the act of sacrifice, if it still remained, would no longer require the eviction of the other but rather the oblation and gift of seif? Is such a thing possible? The structuralist model (Benveniste, Lacan) and psychoanalytic modeis (Freud, Lacan), even if they practice such a thing on the level of therapy, really have no place for it theoretically. They are utterly locked into the anthropological and logical rule of the expelled third. But such is not the case with Girard's anthropological model, which allows us to understand not only the archaic mode of sacrificial anthropogenesis, but also to conceptualize and contemplate the overcoming of violence. Based on his model, one can envisage the possibility of integrating the other as third in the discursive praxis of culture and the symbolic.

In personalist language philosophy we find the concepts and tools we need to conceptualize the integration of the third within educational relationships. But the critique provided by mimetic theory remains essential; it summons us to be on guard, for integrating the third can produce either the best or the worst results.

IV. The Person as Model of a Non-Violent Symbolic

Clearly, an intersubjectivity characterized by a less violent mode of relationship would favor the emergence of a less violent subject. To arrive at this goal, two requirements must be met.

We must avoid sacrificing the third, by integrating the previously excluded third into a genuinely triadic structure. The principle of non-sacrificial communication is not exclusion/collusion, rather it is coalition offered to each person in a synergy which harms no one. The result is an unstable equilibrium, given the rarity of its occurrence on the anthropological level.

We must avoid the undertow of mimeticism. This is all the harder to do inasmuch the process is constantly shadowed by the caricatures offered to it by perverse triangulär structures, i.e., those described by René Girard as epiphanies of mimetic desire, which must constantly be undone in human action and interaction.

The integration the excluded third proceeds from an anthropology of the person,allowing us to determine what would apply to everyone in communicational and educational interchange. Such universal validity cannot be found by empirical means. In empirical reality, the pressure of chance and the overpowering force of events determine that, most of the time, habitual conditioning and archaic reflexes carry the day. Here the oppression of the strongest prevails, along with inequity and a lack of reciprocity.

Must we then base this validity on a transcendental *a priori*[1]*?* The modern-day followers of Kant, Habermas, Apel (see especially his *L'Ethique ä Vâge de la science)* or Jacques, pursue this line of thought. For these language philosophers, ethics can be based on reason, taken as the critical precondition of the transcendental Community. Each individual is bound by the rational and ethical rules of language games (the principle of non-contradiction in argumentation, of verification, of respecting sworn testimony, etc.). Each person is responsible to fulfill the obligations to which he has assented by taking up language with its language games and rules.

The position of Lévinas, though similar to this, nevertheless is different. For him, the ethical demand is neither empirical nor rationalist, rather it obeys a demand anterior to every transcendental *a priori:* the irruption of the other as a primary given, prior to culture and even to experience. The other, especially by his face and the nakedness of his face, is the wretch *(Je pauvre)* whose irruption makes an absolute demand on me. For this philosopher, the simple existence of the other requires me to respond to him, he challenges my responsibility, I become his protector, his debtor.[2] To the canonical question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4, 10) an ethics based on responsibility replies with an unequivocal "yes."

But can we, for all that, establish an ethics, or *a fortiori* a practical reason (with a rule governing communicational practice) on such an excessive sense of responsibility vis ä vis the second person? Pushed to the

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[2] In *L'Humanisme de l'autre komme,* Lévinas writes: "The epiphany of the absolutely other is a face, where the Other calls upon me and signs an order by his very nakedness, by his very denudation" (53).

limit, if I owe everything to you, we again have a lack of reciprocity, and my effacement can appear to be the supreme ruse of an invasive and arrogant ego, swollen with its own sense of responsibility. Will not the other feel crushed by my solicitude, or is he not condemned to an exhaustive bidding competition in a kind of potlatch of responsibility (after you, no, after you, etc.)? This could be a sterile rivalry driven by egotism, no matter how moral. What's more, it is difficult to see how it would be possible to base an ethics and educational rule on the preeminence of the oblative seif. Very quickly the subject being educated could feel himself crushed by the limitless solicitude of the willing hostage who would be his educator.

Lévinas himself is well aware of the folly of this responsibility of an ego unconditionally in debt to the other in a dyadic relationship. It is only with the other as *third;* as a third person, that a genuine ethics and rule appear. The order of justice and of equitable measure appear when the third appears: if I owe everything to you, it is to the degree that you do not oppress the third, the defenseless wretch, the widow, and the orphan. The ethical order is the Obligation to intervene, to step in between you and him. It is he who makes us give up the excessive one-sidedness of a univocal responsibility. It is our concern for the third that gives us the Standard and rule for a good life.

One cannot establish an ethic without envisaging the relationship with the other; indeed we must go further and situate ourselves in a triadic relationship where I am the mediator between my feuding brothers, and the defender of the excluded third person. Lévinas, with his beautiful concept of *that one-ness {Hiêltê:* the personal third who is present despite his absence, between us), takes a great step toward establishing a truly transcultural ethic.

Nevertheless, this chivalrous morality, when pushed to the limit, appears to remain too much beneath the yoke of the primacy of Husserlian transcendental subjectivity (see Jacques, "E. Lévinas") to allow for the constitution of a truly relational anthropology.

But in the anthropology which flows from Girard's theory of the scapegoat we see the possibility of positing, more radically, the integration of the previously excluded third person as a meta-value. The social and cultural order, the dynamic of interpersonal and institutional relations, are traditionally founded on the expulsion of the third, the reconciling victim, the scapegoat whose exclusion forms the basis for the others[1] collaboration. But a higher demand for justice and reconciliation (inherited, according to Girard, from the prohibition against violent sacrifice that originates in the Bible) requires that this persecution and this exclusion be denounced. Thus

we can see in the command to integrate the previously excluded third, precisely the value called for above whose legitimacy would be above suspicion.

Indeed, this value is no longer open to the charge of ethnocentrism. For although it has been inspired particularly by the Biblical text and the Judeo-Christian tradition, the command to make room for the stranger, for the pauper, for the least among us, does not belong to a project of cultural domination. Rather, this value is anti-cultural to the extent that every culture remains based on the scapegoat. From within, it surpasses and denounces the culture that mocks it. No culture nor oppressed minority is in doubt about this. Each Claims the dignity of the scapegoat in its own defense, and justly so, only to forget and finally disavow it when it becomes a persecutor in its turn. This value can be considered transcultural and available to every culture for the simple reason that it really belongs to none. It comes from beyond culture and from the wholly other.

This imperative no longer has anything to do with the abstract universal, nor is it the case of each individual defending himself with indifference to others. Rather, it is a question each time of being attentive and responsive to the individual face of the poor person that this particular Situation has bruised more or less covertly, more or less elegantly.

The integration of the third is not asymmetrical; the ego does not have primacy by reason of its Obligation. Each person in an intersubjective relationship has been invited in. The subject can and should proclaim his own suffering, like the psalmist, if he has been the target of persecution. To call for justice from within intersubjectivity, even in ones own favor, frees everyone (on the condition, of course, that one does not lock oneself into the victimary posture, which consists in occupying the place of the victim in order to be better able to oppress).

Final ly, this value can be considered to be a true meta-value in that it provides a powerful criterion for evaluating other values that have become "insane."

The goal of education is this: at the end of the educational process to produce a non-egocentric personality marked by a dynamic consciousness, confident of itself and its possibilities, capable of engaging itself with critical awareness in communal action and thought without excluding itself or others. The final result of the educational process ought to be a self-esteem linked to an empathic perception of the other, lived out in mutual and reciprocal respect. Thus the feeling of belonging to a larger Community would reinforce ones concern for the other, both proximate and distant. The common allegiance to a transcendent social project (both hyper- and

multicommunal) would authorize a plan of action and thought oriented toward an unfolding future, without ever loosing its concern for the other in his or her singularity. And while it is always possible to assent to the free gift of oneself, no common good can ever can justify the sacrifice of the third person. Nothing can ever justify the exclusion of another individual nor particular category of people. The integration of the third is the sole norm in terms of which all other educational values can be criticized and implemented.

Now if the interlocutive and relational integration of the excluded third is the supreme value of education, it directs us to the notion of the *person.* The concept has been explored in many disciplinary fields (theater, law, grammar, philosophy, theology, etc.); a relational anthropology of language is best suited to give an account of the results. Christian theology provides an exceptional model: God, who is unique yet nevertheless articulated in himself by a loving intersubjectivity. This is the direct opposite of the old anthropogenetic structure of group collusion based on the exclusion of the third. We might say that the Holy Spirit is the model of the integrated third who installs the others in their plenitude. This non-anthropological example offered by trinitarian theology is difficult to understand and even more to make happen. Augustine, who worked for many years on *De Trinitate,* is clear on this point.

Thus the person is conceptualized according to a triadically intersubjective model of relationship where each contributes to the definition of oneself and the other by participating in a dynamic that produces meaning, authentic subjects, and equitable institutions (see Ricoeur, *Le Soi comme un autre).* Also, the person is the intersubjective result of the intersubjective process of identification, each with the others. Following the habitual notion of the person, one can say that each ought to be treated as a person to the degree that he or she is called upon to become one. In this way this demanding model of intersubjectivity and subjectivity can be reevaluated by a relational anthropology summoned to establish a true science of the human. Specifically, its future task is to bring about a reevaluation of the subject of education.

The person is an *ethical value,* but also *apractical value:* the person is generated during and at the end of a process of personification through language games and the interlocutive, symbolic practices in which the subject engages.

In addition, the person is also a *cognitive value.* Indeed, meaning will be all the more effective and cognition all the greater in proportion as the dialogue is genuine. Now true dialogue is conditioned by the intersubjective

configuration of the person. A monologue that takes peremptory hold of meaning does not permit new knowledge to arise. Confronted by a monologue, the other cannot operate in the interlocutive mode nor grasp meaning in a way that recontextualizes it effectively (F. Jacques). Only the framework of dialogue with its cognitive conflict and collaboration (objections, contradictions, arguments, counter-arguments) increases meaning and knowledge. Both dialogue theory and the social psychology of learning confirm these notions. But the dyadic relationship of dialogue is not all that is required, we must be more specific and go as far as the rule requiring the integration of the third. So that the interlocutors may be placed at optimal distance to each other, they have to leave room for the other as the third who has been excluded from their ideological connivance. For the dyad, whether it be fusional in the mode of collusion or, contrariwise, oppositional and agonistic, allows of no further augmentation of meaning, it is condemned to a partisan repetition of the same. In a true dialogue, however, the excluded third who is not addressed (the one who is habitually overlooked) ought to able, actually or potentially, to speak in his or her turn.

From this one can deduce that the person as model and intersubjective process of the integration of the third is not only the canonical subject of education, but also the value that in various ways fulfills its ultimate goals. The fostering of the subject, fully as much as the goal of an integrated and thus more equitable educational institution, returns us the person understood as a value that is both ethical and practical. And as for the attainment of knowledge as the product of the educational dialogue, it is achieved by a personalizing process that in itself represents a cognitive value.

In sum, if the person as the result of the integration of the third is truly the desired value, it is clear that educators ought not only to teach that value in an explicit way, but especially put it into practice in the process itself.

V. The Conditions Required for a Person-Oriented Pedagogy and Education

We need to create the conditions for relationships that would integrate the third without setting in motion a mimetic undertow. The various triadic combinations of which the educational relationship is susceptible within the multitude of possibilities offered by education ought to serve as the focus of study for teams and entire laboratories. Here we can already formulate some of the rules governing the basic triangle constituted by the following relationships:(1)master/student/object of knowledge; (2) master/student/other Student; (3) master/student/student concluding the educational process.

(1) The teacher as mediator between the Student and the object of knowledge needs to make knowledge attractive and accessible without focusing the desire of the Student on oneself by establishing external mediation.

(2) The teacher as mediator between students needs to make concern for the otherthe rule and make use of prohibitions that provide structure. Value is given to each without competitive manipulation, making sure that emulation within collaboration benefits the Student who is having the greatest difficulty. Confront conflict rather than stifle it.

(3) The teacher as mediator between the Student and him/herself needs to maintain an attitude of confidence supported by reason. Integrate the weakest Student, giving helpful evaluations, and making use of the support provided by mutual agreement.

VI. Conclusion

The human is a symbolic animal. Meaning links the real to the relationship of desire that humans maintain among themselves. This relationship can be violent, a byproduct of mimetic behavior that leads to sacrificial exclusion (the primary accord of anthropogenesis). This relationship can also be an external mediation of desire based upon genuine transcendence and cooperation. For the latter, personal structure as the framework of a triangularly transformed inter- and intrasubjectivity provides the model. It is specifically applicable in education, but also in the other areas of life. It constitutes the accord of non-violent anthropogenesis. It is not a prelude to anthropogenesis, but its distant horizon and greatest expression.

(translated by William Mishler)

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IJIME

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I n Japan, in particular in junior and senior high school, there is a violent phenomenon known in Japanese as *ijime,* a term which could be translated as bullying. While the word may be culturally marked, the phenomenon it describes is certainly universal. Bullying is a process through which a child becomes the victim of one or more of his classmates. A bully is a little brüte, a person who pushes with his elbows, steps in front of others and, generally, brutalizes his comrades for no reason, it seems, except because he can. A bully is a torturer, and bullying refers to the set of actions involving torment, molestation, persecution, teasing, harassment, in short the set of cruelties and vexations inflicted on the victim. This is something which exists at every latitude, but in Japan it sometimes takes on disturbing proportions, both in terms of number and seriousness of incidents. Between the beginning of the year and April 1995, it was possible to identify four suicides which clearly resulted directly from bullying, in other words where notes (generally called "testaments") left by the suicide victims explicitly stated that the cruelty of which they were the victim was the reason for their suicide. Four suicides between January and April, in other words an average of one per month. This is enough to raise a few questions.[1]

Japanese educators, sociologists and journalists often wonder, especially during bad years like 1995, what could be the cause, origin or reasons for the *ijime* phenomenon. In general, they blame the greater individualism characteristic of the period since the war, the excessive competition typical of both Japanese society and school, the father's reduced role in family discipline, or the fact that children in today's society of abundance are too

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[1] The important information, which I do not have, would be to compare the number of *ijime* related suicides to the total number of suicides in Japanese high-schools.

weak or spoiled. In short, the phenomena invoked are all related to the modernization of Japan, even to its recent modernization, that which has taken place since the end of the war. I tend to believe that *ijime* is not linked so much to the modern world, to anomy, individualism, excessive competition, as it is to the immemorial origin of society (and not just that of Japanese society, of course). Likewise, I tend to believe that incidents of bullying are not accidents, that they are not malfunctions, ruptures within the Japanese education System, but to the contrary a Virtual institution, events which until very recently were relatively normal. It is not that I believe such persecution is the result of an open policy, much to the contrary: the phenomenon is much more fundamental than that. The high number of incidents of bullying which are reported now, and which are found in all sociological studies and research, do not indicate so much that the phenomenon is more frequent than before as they do that it is working less well, that it is beginning to crumble and that it is becoming possible to talk about it and see it. Allow me to explain.

Numerous studies on Japan (see for instance, Benedict 253-316) provide certain reasons for thinking that the phenomenon *of ijime* among secondary school students is not recent, that it can be traced to the pre-war period, and perhaps even further back. (I do not know whether this phenomenon was present in the period preceding the Meiji era. It would be interesting to see if phenomena of the same sort already existed in the temple schools which were responsible for most education during the Edo period.) The little information I have been able to find on this subject (during the Meiji period) seems to indicate that the victim perished more often in the hands of his torturers than he did by his own hand. However this is nothing but an assertion. (We will see below why it is unlikely we will find easy access to information on *ijime* in ancient Japan.[2])

It is true that Japanese elementary and secondary schools are very restrictive for students, but they are so in their own way, which is not ours and which is inseparable from the Special role school in Japan plays in the socialization of children. Indeed, above and beyond purely academic activities, school is the place of many sports and cultural activities in which children are strongly encouraged to participate. As well as requiring

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[2]If *ijime,* as I believe, is closely related to the Girardian mechanism of victimage. The fact that torturers do not see their tortures as such, but to the contrary as justified, explains why we should not expect them to view their activity as one of victimization, hence as *ijime,* but as legitimate punishment.

uniforms, schools regulate the appearance of students even outside of school. For instance, they stipulate the length of students' hair, and the places students can go alone or in the Company of their parents or other adults. In other words, the school's authority has precedence over that of parents. It is the school, not parents, which has the final word on what children may and may not do outside of school hours, on holidays and even during vacations. Very often if parents wish to take their children on a long trip during the annual vacation, they must inform the school. In consequence one might think, as is generally believed, that Japanese secondary schools are very strict and that they have semi-military discipline. This impression is not entirely false, but, if I am to believe my colleague Richard Rubinger, a specialist on education in Japan whose three daughters, ages eleven to fourteen, spent a year in Japanese schools, it certainly is misleading.

Anyone who enters a Japanese secondary school will be Struck by the disorder, the chaos reigning there. There is running and chasing in the hallways. In one class there is a fight, in another students are jumping on the desks. What are the teachers doing? Why, they are not there. They are all in the staff room, waiting for the bell to call them to the next class. In the mean time the children are under no supervision whatsoever. Thus, when there is a case of suicide or especially serious *ijime* and teachers claim they knew nothing about it, that they were not aware, they are not always in bad faith. With the teachers, discipline, or at least a certain form of it, returns. The notion of leaving groups of adolescents unsupervised for a certain time comes, perhaps, from the desire to let them breathe a little, to compensate them for the usual rigours of discipline. Yet it is in continuity with the attitude of parents of young children I know, and it is not without consequences. Japanese parents of children between two and four years old, the ages of my sons Étienne and Mathieu at the time I was in Japan, discipline their children very little and almost never intervene in their conflicts. It is as if they consider that resolving their conflicts on their own is not part of the training they must be given, but to the contrary that it was something obvious, or that could be learned without the help of an adult. The main consequence of such an attitude is that it recognizes as legitimate the relation of strength, whatever form it takes, which is established following a confrontation between children.[3]

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[3]These comments should be nuanced by taking into account the difference between the way young boys and young girls are treated. Especially the fact that their tantrums are not dealt with in the same way and that the two parents expect very different behaviour from them in this regard.

When the teachers return to class a certain discipline is restored, as I was saying, but according to my sources not all discipline. In Japan there is a high number of reports of incidents of violence by students against their teachers. Moreover, in Japan corporal punishment is widely accepted and it can sometimes have very serious consequences. Some students have died or committed suicide after having been too severely punished by their teacher. In the cases I heard about, such punishments were not inflicted for grounds which could be called strictly academic, but for reasons related to discipline. Generally, Japanese schools enforce a strict dress code, which regulates the students' uniform, length of hair, colour of pants or skirts, and students are frequently hit because they have not respected one of the rules. For example, in 1985 an adolescent died after having been beaten by his teacher. He had broken a rule concerning school trips by bringing an electric blow-dryer with him! Beyond the apparently innocuous nature of the offences and the disproportion between the wrongdoing and the punishment, what is striking is that the discipline in question does not aim to promote a certain type of interaction between the agents but a code of behaviour. Its aim is not to ensure what we would spontaneously call class discipline, but to train children to respect general rules which apply to each child individually. What I mean by this is that such discipline is not intended to prevent adolescents from creating an uproar, fighting or stealing by teaching them to develop different form of interactions with others, but by bringing them to comply with an abstract code of conduct. It is not directed to forms of interaction, but to respect a set of rules concerning dress or behaviour. This is why there is no contradiction between the rigidity and extent of the discipline which is exerted even outside school, and the freedom and disorder which reign in schools. The two go hand in hand. They are inseparable.

Two things result from all this. First, the relation between teachers and children is essentially conflictual. It is a relation of Opposition characterized by a good measure of violence. Often the correct description of students and teachers is that they are enemies. Second, such violence is not related to the properly academic role of school, but to school as an institution for socialization. This is why I believe there is no reason to think that the greater number of cases of *ijime* reported in recent years is the result of recent changes to the Japanese educational System, such as increased competitiveness or difficulty of university entrance examinations, because such changes belong mainly to the academic dimension. The socialization produced by Japanese schools is of a very Special type, not only because it teaches children to respect general rules which apply to them individually,

rather than to respect rules of interaction, but also because academic results are themselves the first general rules they learn to respect in this way. School teaches students that marks provide a scale that the rest of society must respect when careers and benefits are distributed. It shows children that general, abstract criteria have precedence over their interactions. At the same time schools assign academic grades, in other words they classify students according to academic criteria. It follows that adolescents are, rightly, very rapidly convinced that everything is at stake, that their whole future will be decided during those few years when they are at the mercy of their schoolmasters.

Under such conditions, it is easy to understand how the victims of *ijime* are scapegoats in the sense in which Girard uses the term. They are substitute victims, safety valves through which pass all the hatred, violence and frustration which cannot be expressed or resolved otherwise. This is almost too clear. It is true that there are bullies, little brutes, ringleaders, torturers. Yet, without exception, the notes left by those who commit suicide repeat the same thing: "they are *all* against me", "no one helps me", "they all reject me". The unanimity goes even further. In newspapers there are articles in which educators and other social workers propose that a solution to the problem would be to provide Special psychological help for the victims of *ijime,* for according to such workers it is the victims, not their torturers, who have difficulty behaving properly! Of course children sometimes go too far and teachers must make sure such excesses do not occur, say such educators, but it is the persecuted, not the persecutors, who are at fault! Today such suggestions give rise to indignation, at least in some people, but until relatively recently they expressed the, if not official then at least unofficial, doctrine of most schools. "If your child is victimized by his classmates," schools often said to parents, "it is because he acts in a certain way. It shows that he has not succeeded in adjusting to the others." In consequence, I believe, the large number of cases of *ijime* now reported do not indicate a growth in the phenomenon, but the crumbling of (or at least a few cracks in) the wall of silence, the fact that the mechanism is working less and less well. Such unanimity often includes teachers and sometimes the notes of suicide victims identify a teacher as the worst of the victim's torturers, sometimes responsible for physical violence against the victim, as we have seen, but also for psychological violence. This should not surprise us. Given the conflictual relationship opposing students and their teachers, the teacher is often designated the victim of collective violence. By choosing the same victim as the children he can deflect the amassed resentment and succeed in bringing the threatened discipline back into the class, in recreating

unanimity. This is not a strategy teachers use consciously. To the contrary, everything leads us to believe that they are firmly convinced that the Student is at fault, and they do not consider it surprising that the same students who are the victims of their classmates are those who are often in trouble. This shows that their peers do not reject them without reason.

All but one of the characteristic circumstances of the typical Situation involving the scapegoat mechanism are present here. First there is a social and cultural crisis marked by generalized undifferentiation. This is symbolized by the uniform. School removes the marks of social diffierentiation which come from the children's families. It makes all students equal. From rivalry between such equals, a new social difFerentiation emerges which, in Japan, mirrors the structure of society almost perfectly.[4] School also teaches children to respect this structure. Second, the victims commit crimes which threaten the social order. This is what the participation of teachers in this process means. Such students have broken a rule, worn a skirt too short or brought a hair dryer on a trip, an insignificant rule, an inofTensive transgression, but so was Remus's action when he crossed over the line Romulus drew to mark the city yet to be built: such a transgression threatens the whole social order. Third, the victims have marks which identify them as victims, difFerences which in themselves are often insignificant but which isolate them from the group: their classmates accuse them of smelling bad, being ugly, being animals, being foreigners, having hair too long. Fourth, the violence exerted against them is unanimous. Fifth, the violence is invisible. Clearly no one is persuaded of having done wrong. It is only through the notes of the suicide victims or because the brutality has reached such a scale that the police has had to intervene that the wall of silence begins to crumble. To my knowledge, there is only one thing missing: the metamorphosis, the consecration of the victim, his salutary destiny.

However when we think about it, that the victim does not undergo such a metamorphosis should not surprise us. Rather it is what we should expect given the Situation, and, in itself, it is even a confirmation of the preceding analysis. The order which comes out of the victimization mechanism in this case is by definition structured in a conflictual manner. The Opposition

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[4]The social hierarchy matches, or perfectly reproduces the academic hierarchy, in that the students who graduate from the best schools with the best marks hold the best positions in the economic and political hierarchy. For example, since the war all the Prime Ministers of Japan have been graduates of the Department of Economics of the University of Tokyo.

between students and teachers does not disappear but, to the contrary, is reasserted. Thus it is normal and predictable that conflicts, the same conflicts, re-emerge rapidly. However, the metamorphosis of the victim into a sacred being, unlike refound peace, is not an immediate consequence of the victimization mechanism. It occurs little by little, as the refound peace lasts and becomes established. Then, and only then, the evil being that was the victim becomes salutary, and the victim comes to be seen as responsible for the new peace and harmony. However in the cases we have been examining, everything leads us to believe that the period of harmony following the death of the victim is generally not long enough to lead to his transfiguration. Note in passing that in the studies of Sudanese societies by Simon Simonse (477), where the king is at once the victim and enemy of his people, kings killed by their people are never consecrated. Only those who die of natural causes become sacred.

A note of caution in conclusion.One of the interest of this example or illustration of the scapegoat mechanism at work is that it brings the phenomenon closer to home. Of course one might be tempted to say: "these are stränge people, living in a faraway land, the products of a very different culture, it is therefore not surprising if they should act in a bizzare way." It is true that we like to think the Japanese are very different from us. But they are also very much like us and quite good at what we think we do best, modern science, modern technology, modern economy. What I want to stress, is not the distance between Japan and us, but the proximity. When we read René Girard's description of the scapegoat mechanism in *Violence and the Sacred,* we tend to represent to ourselves a definitively non-modern environment, in which strangely dressed others are subject to a fit of wild violence and excitement. *Ijime* suggests, I hope, that the violent mechanism which brings peace back into society may correspond to much more "normal" behaviours.

Another point of interest is that *Ijime* constitute what may be called a proto-institution. Something which is in between an institution, like monarchy or a sacrificial ritual, and a simple regularity of behaviour. In that way it is somewhat like "The Ancient Trail Trodden by the Wicked" as analysed by Girard in *Job: the Victim of his People.* Neither a real institution, nor a purely spontaneous outburst of violence, *Ijime* bears witness to the social efficacy of the mechanism of scapegoating by showing us how victimization can be present within an institution, like education, and play there a fundamental role without seeming in any way to structure the institution itself. Simultaneously, it helps us understand why the mechanism of victimization can be so hard to see, though nothing hides it from us.

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DESIRE, TECHNOLOGY, AND POLITICS

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T his essay examines the relationship between desire, technology, and politics in three stages. First, I discuss modernity as a deviation from the general human way of life. By that I mean the general life pattern of human beings since "the foundation of the world," since the emergence of human culture. The expression designates the traditional pattern of subsistence economy. This general pattern is contrasted with modern life as of the sixteenth-century in the West, from which time capitalism governs habits of accumulation and spending that we take to be "natural." But it is in fact exceptional when seen from a larger historical perspective. In the wake of René Girard and in particular Paul Dumouchel, modernity is to be interpreted as the realm of scarcity which is the result of a new way of dealing with mimetic desire. Second, this theory of scarcity is connected with Albert Borgmann's device paradigm of technology which is shown to fit the paradigm of scarcity perfectly. According to Borgmann technology is a matter of devices that procure commodities. In modern ideology technology turns out to be the ally against scarcity. Third, this pattern of the device paradigm is recognized in all our societal and political processes. In this context political problems are solved along the lines of the device paradigm. The consequence is that political ideas and ideals have been eroded.

I. Traditional and Modern Society
The human way of life that has emerged in the West since the Middle Ages is a new phenomenon in history. One could even argue that modernity as the new life pattern is a deviation from the general human way of life. Nearly everybody agrees on the difference, but there is no unanimity about the nature of the difference between traditional and speciflc modern

patterns. A host of Interpreters, Karl Marx, Georg Tönnies, Max Weber, Norbert Elias—to mention only a few Germans—have commented on the transition from what I am calling the general way of life to modernity as a kind of deviation. In the wake of René Girard and Paul Dumouchel I would characterize modernity as a different way of dealing with the problem of mimetic desire as the basic form of human behavior. By mimetic desire I mean that people do not cherish authentic desires, but take their desires from others. They imitate others in their desiring. It is the other who teils them what is desirable. This theory of mimetic desire is at bottom a theory of conflict, because conflicts arise from the Situation where one desires what another also desires, with the result that the two desires clash with each other over the same object. The norm in traditional cultures is to restrict mimetic desire by various taboos, rites, etc. It is specifically modern to set it loose, with consequences I shall examine herein.

Let me formulate this theory in another way: we are not born with fixed ideas, wishes, desires, but we learn them from the social and cultural environment we were dependent upon. Our parents were the first significant others. We learned to look at the world through their eyes. To us reality looked as they saw it. They provided us with their frame of reference to Interpret it. This social and cultural learning process is of eminent importance for how and what we think, want or feel. What we found after our birth became our point of departure and was considered as "normal." In this sense, children are the most adapted beings. They will only speak the language they hear, although they have an innate ability for every possible language. Thus we desire in terms of the desires we meet in our environment. We do not start life with a fixed identity, but identity is the result of a learning process that goes on through our whole life. On the one hand, mimesis opens up our possibility of relationships with our fellow men and the world, and on the other hand, mimesis can also be an invasion route for all sorts of entanglements, conflicts and rivalries.

How to deal with mimetic desire is a cultural problem. In order to avoid mimetic conflicts people have developed cultural strategies as answers to the question how to live in relative "peace" within a Community in spite of the fact that the human condition of the mediation of desires leads as a matter of course to complicated entanglements. To make a long story short: in a traditional society religion plays a dominant role in containing conflicts for example by way of religious prohibitions. These prohibitions tried to prevent cultural disintegration and banned what could become a cause of conflict: do not commit murder, do not steal, do not give false evidence, do not covet, etc. In a modern society the dominant role of religion with its

prohibitions, myths and rites has been played out and scarcity has become the organizing principle. How can we understand this?

At school we have learned that economic science begins with the assumption that human beings have indefinite needs which they want to satisfy. The means for satisfying these needs are called goods, and all goods are scarce. That is, the means to satisfy the needs are always limited. Such assumptions apply to modern society, but it is possible to doubt their applicability to a traditional society. Ironically, only modern and affluent societies are convinced of the importance of scarcity as a determinant of social behavior, while traditional societies tend to rest on a different conviction. In traditional cultures, wishes and desires are not seen as endless or indefinite but as religiously and culturally constrained. Of course, traditional societies are used to shortages, but precisely because of a commitment to the constraint of desire such shortages are dealt with in ways quite different from those typical of modernity. To State the issue dramatically, a shortage of sheep does not necessarily mean a scarcity of sheep. Sheep are scarce only when they become an issue of competition or rivalry. But in a traditional society all sorts of institutions—religious myths and rites, cultural interdictions, division of space—function to prevent or limit rivalries. One tries to avoid situations in which things become the objects of competitive desire. Neither economic laws nor maximization of self-interest, but traditional norms and institutions, are the primary influences on the nature and scale of production. Production is not for a market but for subsistence.

René Girard has made the following observation: "When men no longer live in harmony with one another, the sun still shines and the rain falls, to be sure, but the fields are less well tended, the harvests less abundant" (Girard 1972,8). From this perspective it is the social understanding of the fundamental meaning of human existence that is the main determinant of the appearance of scarcity. Shortages of natural resources do not define scarcity; scarcity is the social construct of a particular web of human relationships. It is in this sense that Paul Dumouchel, following Girard, contends that scarcity is the organizing principle of modern society. In this sense scarcity entails "general abandonment of the obligations of solidarity which united the Community. Scarcity is the deliberate abandonment of the religious interdictions that restricted human desires" (Dumouchel 1979,179). This is the modern climate within which *homo economicus* has originally appeared and has flourished. It is a new realm in which people look out for and protect their own interests while paying little or no attention to the interests of a neighbor—except insofar as the satisfaction of

a neighbor's interests can be of economic benefit to them. Thus we witness an "explosion" of economic growth arising from countless independent and isolated rivalries which, however, go hand in hand with the destruction of old institutions that once guaranteed Community solidarity. Thus in modernity it is the abandonment of solidarity that creates scarcity.

Distinctive of the post-medieval philosophical tradition is the idea that scarcity under such conditions is the cause of violence. According to both liberals and Marxists, human desires are focused on the same object because of a limitation of resources. In an interesting way Girard and Dumouchel turn this idea around. It is rivalry that creates scarcity, not scarcity that creates rivalry. The discovery of scarcity in nature as the cause of social violence has, according to Dumouchel, made possible the articulation of modern economic principles as ethical and political ideals. The typically modern argument runs as follows. If the cause of violence is a shortage of goods, then economic competition and the accompanying explosion of economic growth are the only means to social stability. This economic ideology—in which economic development replaces religious restraint—is a revolutionary approach to social order, because it conceives one kind of social rivalry, namely economic rivalry, as the foundation for peace in all other aspects of society.

Contemporary ideology holds the conviction that scarcity is relative to technology in the sense that, for instance, the one-time scarcity of wood was overcome through the coal industry and the one-time shortage of whale oil through kerosene production. But we widerstand that Substitution of the one for the other does not bring any relief of scarcity, because the human desires remain endless and unlimited. Therefore, modern ideology incorporates the imperative of growth, because Stagnation means decline. The Situation is even more paradoxical: technology embraced as an ally against scarcity produces scarcity.

Excursion on modeis

Let me interrupt this discussion with a methodological question: is it permissible to speak of traditional society without differentiating between tribal societies, city states in ancient Greece, feudal societies in medieval France, etc. or of modern society without taking fundamental changes in capitalist societies in the eighteenth or twentieth Century into account? At what point are differences, changes, nuances, etc. of minor importance? These questions rest upon a misunderstanding of the use of ideal types or Weberian modeis.

In the first place, they do not describe reality but are *rational constructions* whose usefulness is not only dependent on whether these types tally with facts, because due to the modeis it is also possible to register deviations. In this way modeis are means to uncover reality and make it visible, they open up the possibility to understand and to explain reality. Models in the Weberian sense do not mirror reality but their function is to compare and to measure reality. They are Geiger counters which pay attention to specific phenomena and lay bare facts which could not have been observed otherwise. In concrete cases one sometimes has to admit that the modeis do not clarify all the facts you speak about. Let me take as an example the hypothesis that human behavior is inspired by scarcity. This model can describe very adequately the loss of charitable values and the rise of a new ethos without any place for almsgiving on the threshold of modernity. Most interesting is Hume's remark in his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals:* "Giving alms to common beggars is naturally praised; because it seems to carry relief to the distressed and indigent; but when we observe the encouragement thence arising to idleness and debauchery, we regard that species of charity rather as a weakness than a virtue" (II.2). Hume still knows about the traditional ethos but he does not consider that ethos preferable to his new moral ideas under the dictate of scarcity. Living in the realm of scarcity does not mean that *all* human behavior can be explained with that model. Family relationships are mostly not characterized as relations of exchange. Children get their food without giving any financial compensation. The parent's solidarity with their children is evident. Children get help when in need. This means, that in the realm of scarcity, there are islands where the principle of scarcity does not reign. This does not invalidate the scarcity model, only an extra-hypothesis is necessary. If the model needs too many extra-hypotheses you had better throw away the original model and think about a new one. Weber always insisted that modeis as such cannot be invalidated, that is, their worth cannot be effectively assayed. Reality itself is, in his view, chaos, but it is the human task to create order and structure amidst the limitless plurality of everything that is the case. In other words, modeis represent, according to Weber, different ways of bringing order into a chaotic and endless reality. They do not mirror reality, in the sense that the relation of reality to the model representation is univocal. Many modeis are possible; the more the better, because different modeis might give different insights into reality. It is not that other modeis are false, but they mostly shed light on different aspects of reality. According to Weber, there unquestionably is a "free play of societal interpretations." Reality itself does not resist complementary

modeis, because reality is overcrowded with structures. Of course, there are all sorts of modeis: they may be particularly revealing, helpful, less fortunate, idiosyncratic, uninteresting, superfluous, etc. The knowledge that many modeis are possible should not lead to the conviction that anything goes in any old way. Most attractive is that model that has most illuminating power with regard to reality. But the illumination also depends upon what you want to demonstrate.

II. Technology

This is not the place to deal with the history of scarcity and technology in detail. But I want to mention briefly its beginning before turning to Albert Borgmann's fully fledged theory of technology. In this history Locke is extremely important, because he Stands for the reevaluation of labor as the source of riches. Labor figures in his writings as the highest value pushing aside all other human activities. In hailing the modern interpretation of labor he launches into a polemic against traditional charitable values. In this way Locke paved the way for a glorification of technology as a specific form of labor in our time. Of course, technology was not dominant in his days and neither was it in his thinking. The Situation changed with Adam Smith. His book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth ofNations* is to be read as a project of Progress and Enlightenment. The seed of Locke's thinking seems to have grown into a mature labor philosophy. Scarcity is his point of departure. Smith's concern is how to increase labor productivity. Increasing it systematically is his modern idea. That is the reason why he pays so much attention to the di vision of labor. In detail he speaks about improvement of the workman's dexterity, time saving of production and application of proper machinery. The *motor of Smith's project* is the desire to better the human condition, a desire "which comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave." But Smith is aware of the ambivalence of desire: "The desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the stomach; but the desire of conveniences and Ornaments of building, dress, equipage, and household, seems to have no limit or certain boundary." The father of the economic science appears to hold nearly "Girardian" views about the motor of his project of Enlightenment. He asks himself what is the end of avarice and ambition, of the pursuit of wealth, of power, and preeminence (Smith 1976, 50). He is convinced that it is not a matter of subsistence or survival. "It is the vanity, not the ease, or the pleasure which interests us."

Albert Borgmann's paradigm of technology gives us an interesting insight into the implications and consequences of modern technology. His thesis is that the character of our contemporary life has been shaped by technology. He uses his paradigm to emphasize the change in human attitude towards nature under the influence of technology. This change amounts, in his view, to a loss of engagement with reality. Therefore, he makes a plea for modern "focal things" and practices as a remedy to the regrettable change and as a rehabilitation of engagement with reality. These practices are specimens of a new desirable attitude towards reality amidst technology. In this paper I borrow from Albert Borgmann only his paradigm and seek to connect it with the scarcity paradigm. In his *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* Albert Borgmann develops his device paradigm as a characteristic feature of modern technology. It Stands for a speciflc pattern that arranges distinguishable elements in their mutual relationships. Technology is a matter of *devices* that procure *commodities.* The car, the coffee machine, the water-tap, the air-conditioning, the electric mains, the refrigerator, etc., are examples of devices that procure commodities as speed, coffee, water, cool air, electricity, cold temperature. These commodities are supposed to enrich our lives and are technologically *available* to us and they do so without imposing burdens on us. We want to have them on demand! We ask for the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven and we put the compact disc on the CD player. And the music sounds out. We put the ignition key in our car and we have speed. We turn the tap and we have clean water without delay. Turning up the thermostat guarantees us an agreeable temperature. This is the way we like to think about and deal with technology. Thus technology paves the way to the land of Cockaigne. This availability of goods is interpreted by Albert Borgmann as the fulfillment of the promise of technology. Something is available if it has been rendered instantaneous, ubiquitous, safe and easy (Borgmann 1984, 41). We have to take notice that this availability of commodities procured by the device belongs to the foreground of technology. This foreground has its condition in the concealment of the *machinery* of the devices. We use the Computer as a typewriter without any knowledge of the machinery of that device. It does not matter whether our watch is digital or mechanical with regard to the indication of time. We enjoy the disposal of all sorts of goods, but are technologically illiterate and quite ignorant of the background workings of technology. This has far-reaching and breathtaking consequences for the labor process, the division of labor, the relation of labor and leisure, etc. It is even exciting to discover that this pattern of the device paradigm is to be

recognized in all sorts of societal and political processes. In this regard Albert Borgmann's book is a stimulating eye-opener.

It is hardly conceivable to us who are used to modern technological conveniences that we could live in a non-technological society. A comparison with the procurement of commodities in traditional societies remains after all instructive, not because the traditional way represents an alternative which by any chance could belong to our choices but because it makes us sensitive to our modern bias. Technology is of course an instrument in our hands but it is more than just that, because the mere presence of modern technological instruments devalues other instruments we might dispose of. Given the technological society, many traditional possibilities of dealing with problems are blotted out. Medicine, for example, has become technology that has to procure the commodity "health." We speak about the good life in terms of commodities due to the device paradigm. Even politics turns out to be a struggle for commodities.

III. Politics and Technology

Having become acquainted with the device paradigm that refers to concrete technological artifacts, let us now look at illustrations of this paradigm from outside this sphere: namely in politics. In our liberal democracy notions such as freedom, equality and self-realization are central. They form a certain equilibrium, because these ideals are, in a sense, a question of give and take: we always absolutize one at the expense of another. In this sense they need each other: freedom as such means an assault on equality, the ideal of equality may encumber freedom. The ideal of self-realization ends up in nothing without the reciprocal correction of freedom and equality. The idea behind democratic society is the development of individual capacities in freedom and equality. The term self-realization is formal in the sense that there is no prescription of the direction of self-realization. This triad of development, freedom and equality is at odds with the principle of the capitalistic market as regulator of chances, opportunities, and commodities. Liberal democracies are also tributary to it. There is no agreement on the seriousness of the conflict between market and political ideals. Some think that the market is very efficient—in a sense not corrigible—in allocating positions and chances, and that in case of imbalances and instabilities, political correction mechanisms are amply available. Others do not share this political optimism with regard to the market. In current political discussions questions of financial and socio-economic nature are predominant. It looks as if economic policy assigns boundary conditions to all other questions such as

ecology, education, geriatric care, safety in the public domain, etc. From this perspective it looks as if we should treat these questions as market questions. Political discussion is preferably limited exclusively to financial means. Violence in the public domain, for instance, is increasingly put on the political agenda. This issue of the citizen's safety is translated into an issue of more financial means for police and criminal justice System so that they may procure the commodity of safety.

In light of these considerations we would like to defend an affinity between democracy and technology in the sense that each supplies what the other requires. *Democracy* yields no material determination of the good life. It is its glory not to fix the character of the citizen's life style. It does not want to be paternalistic, and leaves the question of responsibility about how to live where it is at home, i.e., to the Citizens. Similar things can be said about *technology*. It promises freedom for new developments, because its task is the liberation of life's bürden. Moreover it leaves open the question of the good life. But there is not only an affinity between democracy and technology. Democracy is bound to technology if it wants to realize its ideals. Unfortunately, between democratic ideals and their realization stand practical hurdles. How to face actual concrete inequalities within a Population? Poignant inequalities of material, social and cultural chances are to be overcome more easily by raising labor productivity than by redistribution. Technology takes charge of this role on the condition that it may raise the commodity stream. But in this way the good life receives its interpretation along the lines drawn by technology. Although technology is considered to be instrumental, the idea of consumerism as interpretation of the good life cannot be avoided. No matter how instrumental technology may be considered, it is no longer value free. Technological products such as cars, telephone, TV have changed the world in such a way that recovery of the world without technological products is not possible any more. Technological choices cannot be undone in a simple way. Allowance of these technological commodities means as a matter of principle a choice about the interpretation of the good life. The basic structures of economic and social nature are impartial with regard to the choice of concrete commodities, but they are nevertheless a declaration in favor of consumerism. In other words, technology is not offered as a life style to be preferred to other styles but is promoted as a base for choices. People are allowed to make their own choices in the context of technology. Their desires contribute to the welfare of society. A choice against technology, or rather against technologically impregnated democracy, can only be thought of as a choice against freedom and for prejudices and paternalism. Not

accepting the technological promise of enrichment and liberation, we should have to embrace shortages, poverty, misery. Thus, a choice against or pro technology is not an issue. Technology is deeply anchored in our life and tends to become invisible.

In short, the promise of technology and that of democracy are a good match: the promise of technology developed into a life style that subjected the political ideals of freedom to a certain erosion, and the promise of democracy was technologically specified. In this context politics gave itself airs of a meta-device for technological society. Politics is modeled according to the d;vice paradigm. Government agencies are created to attend to the faltering of the machine. They become devices for the procurement of a definite social benefit. The roles of Citizens are limited. Their main role is that of beneficiary of social commodities, payers of taxes and supporters of the governmental machinery. The government itself attends to society like a technological shop. With regard to this management, political colors are subordinate in relevance. In Western Europe—not to speak of the USA—socialism, liberalism and Christian democracy do not lead to productive differences. Maintenance of the machinery is everybody's concern.

Modern technology is unavoidably our horizon. We are all accomplices in the dominance of technology because we like to reap its fruits and thus we strengthen its realm. Having doubts about this regime we used to speak ab out norms and values to respect. But this reflection on norms and values as expression of our preferences with regard to technology finds us running up in loose sand. Jumping is out of the question. Of course, it is a serious matter which norms, values or aims are chosen, but within the framework of technology they remain commodities to consume. It always comes down to a matter of money or the redistribution of it. In any case, spheres of policy are discussed in market terms. Money is par excellence thought of as a means for steering and regulating commodities such as safety, ecology, education, health. The call for freedom, equality, justice, efficiency, people's participation, and other politically correct values leaves the technological base intact. Whoever wants reforms has to take into account the cultural, social and political implications of the device and desire paradigm. They fit like gloves, even so nicely that we would like to consider this analysis to be incorrect. Caught up in our consumerist seduction, we, as happy slaves, do not like to be liberated.

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THEEDUCATOR
IN THE FACE OF REFORM

Enrique Gömez León

It might be claimed that all the reforms of the educational Systems of the wealthy nations of the West aim to accomplish the motto of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. The principle goal of school today is the formation of Citizens. Laws enshrine this sacred purpose, and politicians repeat it in every conceivable declaration of their programs. Public schools are of course part and parcel of the State. It is the ideals of the State that govern the educational process, and this in a double sense: schools should train pupils in these values, and at the same time reproduce these values in their functional processes.

A quick glance at the characteristics of any high school allows us to recognize the values in question:

a) Freedom of expression for teachers and pupils; freedom of programs, or rather the multiplication of subjects to be taught, since schools should represent every facet of our complex reality; freedom also from etiquette, from formal rules of behavior regarding what to wear, the way to speak up, how to address teachers; freedom, finally, from parents, who abandon to schools the role of primary and fundamental educator.

b) Equality, a benefit of democratization, which bears with it the Obligation of schooling for all; boys and girls study the same contents, and there is no exclusion for economic or religious reasons, nor for intellectual ones.

c) Fraternity nowadays cashes out as tolerance, a true fetish word in the contemporary world. It is a tolerance which implies an absolute laicity so as to allow the expression of every kind of belief, or its lack, and which implies the right to speak far beyond what science allows, and yet to fall far short of what it demands, since emotion and sentiment demand their place alongside, or above, truth.

The indubitable goodness of these objectives, these ideals—which no one would dare to criticize in public—does not manage to hide a spreading sense of malaise: teachers complain that pupils learn less and less, discipline Problems increase; adolescents complain that school doesn't frighten them

any more, it's just boring; parents complain that there are no longer any good manners, their children are wasting their time; the newspapers deplore the increase of violence in the schools. Often the motives behind these complaints are quite banal: teachers focus on their own convenience and resist change; comparisons with the past are no longer valuable, since now everybody has become a product of schooling; most adolescents, above all, are extraordinarily entertained by school, where they meet up with their friends; parents forget that they had already scandalized their own parents with their astounding new mores; newspapers are slaves to the moment, obliged every day to forget what happened yesterday.

We should not overlook the bad reasons for complaining about the malaise, but we should equally give it its due attention. I would like to bring out some arguments underlying it, as described from the position of a teacher of adolescents who loves and enjoys his profession.

This malaise does not spring from resistance to the ideals of our era—liberty, equality, fraternity—but from the experience of a surprising fact: the more one exalts that slogan, the more the intellectual task of the school recedes into the background. As a consequence, freedom is reduced to lack of direction, equality to simple indifference, and fraternity to a paralyzing absence of any meaningful boundaries. School, then—we are still talking about the State education System—may tend to produce what it is trying to avoid: a society both less free and more unequal.

It is the apprehension of this future that provokes some disquieting questions among teachers: What use is this? What am I doing? What might I be able to do? In other words: What power do I have? So as to bring out some elements for discussion, and with the goal also of justifying the preceding hypothesis, I am going to approach the problem by first drawing away from it. In this way I hope to gather the necessary "élan" to underline two points—among many others—which, in my opinion, deserve more thought.

Mircea Eliade repeats on several occasion this defmition: "By initiation one generally understands a collection of rites and oral teachings, by means of which a radical modification of the religious and social Status of the subject to be initiated is achieved" (1971, 185). The author then proposes a classification of the types of initiation, the first of which, because of its universality, Covers the whole ränge of "puberty rites," processes of initiation by which an adolescent is promoted to the Status of responsible member of the Community. This initiation brings with it the acquisition of certain knowledge—the sacred myths and traditions, adult techniques and institutions, prohibitions and sexuality—but also the subjection to more or

less dramatic or even violent "ordeals"—Separation from the mother, isolation of the novices with an instructor, circumcision...

On re-reading these characteristics one might be tempted to establish a correspondence between school and the rites of puberty or, even better—so as to avoid the simple transposition of the elements in question—an analogy: school plays in our day the same role that rites of puberty played in primitive societies. Of course progress has introduced some sweetening elements, thanks above all to the evolution of medicine: it is hospitals that vaccinate or practice circumcision. These are nuances, in any case, regarding what I want to underline as the cultural task that is achieved either by schools or by rites of puberty.

On the other hand, however, Mircea Eliade begins one of his books with this observation: "It has often been affirmed that one of the characteristics of the modern world is the disappearance of initiation. Of a capital importance in traditional societies, initiation is practically non-existent in Western society nowadays" (1959, 11). Eliade then wants to remind us of the essential differences between the desacralised modern world and traditional societies. Even though one can find some similar scenarios on both sides of the divide—for example, the passage from childhood to adult life through becoming a member of a group of neophytes who receive the cultural heritage of their ancestors—the functions to be achieved are not the same.

If one examines the traits which mark the singularity of puberty, they can be listed in this way (still following Eliade, 1959, 275-76):

a) Initiation repeats the operations carried out "in illo tempore," notably the violent putting to death of the supernatural being, which makes of the initiated ones first dead people, then new-born ones.

b) This dramatization of the origins justifies the absolute power of the instructors over the adolescents and the vertical and one-way nature of the messages: it is the past which is speaking, the only real time.

c) It is the whole Community—not only the adolescents—which is religiously regenerated on the occasion of the initiation.

What is expected from modern schools works in direct contrast to this Situation. The past is only a resource to prepare for the future. There are no more myths, only history. Even though history can become a myth, as it does for instance just before or after wars, or when an attempt is being made to expropriate a territory, we are oriented towards the future, as consistent with advances in science and technology. School is not a "return to the womb," so there is but one death, no re-birth: we only move forward through time, with no possible return. Education is understood as a work of social importance, but its primary recipient is the Single individual, always

possessing personal characteristics, and deserving because of these a Special attention. The fruits of schooling should be the flourishing of the selves which it produces.

I would like to direct the discussion towards these two issues—time and the subject—that the comparison with initiation rites elicits, by describing the role which the teacher plays nowadays. By that I mean in the most modern schools, the progressive ones, in the most modern of societies—the type of society which David Riesmann analyses with extraordinary penetration in *The Lonely Crowd.*

Both political society and the individual come into being at the same time. By this remark I wish to underline the distance between the more or less free subjects of a juridical organization and the members of a consciously sacrificial society. To be modern means, among other things, the impossibility of being able to use violence "naïvely." The language of political society hides the foundational role of violence, at least in its use of vocabulary, to an excessive degree. Just think by way of example of the Penal Code.

This represents some sort of progress, no doubt; but it betrays a lack of understanding. While the unveiling of the roots of social order is only partial—what Girard explains in correlating myths with texts of persecution in *The Scapegoat*—it provokes a biased Interpretation of conflicts. It is differences which are held to be the causes of violence, differences which are read by contemporaries as a vertical being-out-of-phase, to use a geometrical metaphor. There are other differences, which one might call horizontal, deserving a name with a more positive connotation: diversity. While the former have the reputation of crushing individual spontaneity, of making it disappear, diversity, it is said, favors the flourishing of individual subjects. And it is perhaps because of this that the most modern schools pursue to the extreme the "peaceful" wishes of their states, carefully effacing all traces of verticality. And this is all to the good if one considers it from just one angle: the sadism of the teachers, a commonplace motif from several autobiographies and not a few films, has disappeared. But this removal of verticality goes further still: every sort of difference is thought to hide within it some danger. Behind every position, an imposition is denounced. And so we come to the teacher who must become a friend for his or her pupils, the best-informed pal.

When we speak of the loss of teachers' authority—which many analyses study in relation to the loss of authority of the father as a way of sketching the profile of our era—we must not become nostalgic. That would be a harmful nostalgia. We must instead ask the essential question: Does this

modification of the teacher's role really help individuals in their development?

One might very well doubt this. Let's step into a classroom to see what goes on there, and Start with a revealing anecdote. In Spain, school uniforms exist no longer. There has even been a certain ideological struggle against uniforms, which are seen as destroyers of personal creativity. You do not have to be clairvoyant to guess the results: complete domination by fashion. The fact is trivial, but it points up to perfection the need which adolescents have—like everyone eise, but more sincerely—to follow a model.

Thus far there is no major problem. The problems begin when one thinks of the activities proper to a teacher in a classroom. S/he is in the midst of a group of individuals who exhibit their diversity. Most of the time the diversity is invisible; fashion has levelled appearances, though perhaps one or two aesthetic sub-groups rise to the surface, and even here the diversity of capacities and interests remains hidden. The teacher, with great honesty, if you'd like to call it that, refuses to impose modeis so as to avoid crushing the pupils[1] selves. S/he knows, furthermore, that it is impossible to develop a discourse that is of value for everybody. We remember the charges made against the demanding schools of yesteryear: that they were schools which frustrated the less gifted, where only one aspect of the capacities and tastes of the students was developed. Against this, it is a matter of allowing the emergence of diversity; speaking is, above all, about organizing dialogue. Working is, above all, about organizing work. Teaching is, above all, teaching how to learn.

Adolescents, at least some of them, then undergo a striking experience: they demand directions, but receive only this message: you must direct yourself. First they react with anxiety; all social science teachers know the phenomenon, for the pupils' questions are always the same: "But who is right?" "Who teils the truth?" "But what must I believe?" Shortly thereafter the reaction is more passive: the pupils become more and more homogeneous, soldered together as a group. That is also well known. When a teacher asks in class, "Who has read this book?"—no one replies. Three hours later, in a school corridor a Student confesses: Tve read that book." But earlier he had said nothing. He did not wish to stand out in class. The adults—in all humility?—are no longer oracles. In the absence of external reference points, the adolescent group becomes self-referential. They imitate each other. The teacher—the one who watches over the hypothetical spontaneity of the individuals—is only, as Riesmann says "a leader of opinion."

Even though the expression "leader of opinion" has the air of belonging to a world where hierarchies are blurred, the teacher only loses a certain sort of power to find him or herseif in possession of a much more decisive power. It is not "the voice of tradition"—as would be the case with ritualized initiations—or "the voice of knowledge"—as would be the case with the minority of schools which form the élites, which speaks through the teacher, undergirding the authority of such a position. Rather it is another voice, which one might call "popularity," that gives the teacher formidable power. It is all the more decisive for not being regulated. The teacher, or better still, certain teachers, manage to achieve this. We know the phenomenon: in certain classes there is a "good atmosphere." This is born not from what is said, but from the manner of saying it. The contents of each subject are always less important than the attitudes which certain subjects—or the teachers of certain subjects—can awaken. The purely intellectual task is of secondary importance to that of mediation. The teacher dreams of directing without commanding; while insisting on equality as a model, he no longer orders, he seduces. But the seduction is only a surface effect, and one which is, furthermore, unstable. It achieves no real advances. It achieves only the stage management of the spectacle.

This conception of classes-as-spectacle is not entirely sought after, but is undoubtedly brought into being—at least in Spain—by the "masters" of the new education: the pedagogues. Pedagogues, in Spain, are those Professionals who, in spite of their almost complete absence from regulär classroom teaching, ceaselessly rail against the vices of unprogressive schools: the monotony of magisterial lessons, the absence of participation and of communication—another shibboleth—the importance given to intellectual content and the contempt for modeis, the partiality of the formation imposed on the pupils, the lack of reciprocity in the relationship between teacher and pupil...

What they propose, on the other hand, is the integral formation of the individual. Let us remember: it is a question of promoting Citizens.

Paradoxically, this desire is translated into reality as the preponderance of method over content. For we must flee absolutely from classifications. That would be—according to them—to assume the inequality of persons. One might caricature their style by means of this comparison: if the school of yesteryear can be accused of sharing Macchiavelli's opinion that the end justifies the means—that is to say, that intellectual formation justifies the punishments and the Darwinian selection of the students—then the progressive school preaches just the reverse: the goodness of the means justifies the ends. A catalogue of activities designed to help teachers

illustrates this tendency perfectly. One can find courses on the use of Computers, of photocopiers, on films...all for classes. We find the most varied techniques to rivet the attention of the pupils, the most exotic advice on how to organize classroom time. The list almost never contains any courses that are "scientific" in the strict sense. The problem is not there, they say. Their struggle is waged against boredom and in favor of a representation of the real world that is as true to life as possible.

An ideal class then, would be a sort of participatory spectacle. Ten minutes of this activity, fifteen minutes with something eise, another ten for a complete change of task. And the same for the subjects: three months of this, two months ofthat, and so on.

If initiations, as we have seen, simulate the time of origin, that is, real time, what sort of time is it that is lived out at school? If one follows the political declarations, then it would be the future. The Judeo-Christian tradition, as secularized nowadays, has taught us that time never returns. But the truth of schools is something diflferent: they never move on from a kind of false present, the false present of the game. What they imitate is not the world of work, but that fringe of leisure which our society has been able to achieve for itself. The entire dynamic—the word has become essential—of school is a kind of circular movement which leads back to the point of departure. One is in class as one is sitting before the television screen: jumping from Stimulation to Stimulation to give oneself the idea of absolute simultaneity where nothing changes. A sort of perpetual Channel surfing, whose effects can be observed in the growing incapacity of pupils to sustain a discourse any different, both in content and in form, from the piecemeal soundbites of the mass media. Virtues like patience—that is, ordering of life over time—belong to a universe that has almost disappeared.

I would like to conclude these reflections by drawing once again from Mircea Eliade, who observes of puberty rites that they end up either by being transformed, or by dissolving into rites of initiation into secret societies (1971, 187). A small segment of the population thus undergoes more refined and cruel ordeals so as to be reborn with a surplus of power. Although the allusion is a risky one, we might attempt to predict our future from this lesson.

Our era has already laid its wager on science, technology, and technique. As consumers we ceaselessly demand the competence of the informed and of technicians, we demand practical human skills and the reliability of machines. Can the renewed school System provide what the world needs? Evidently not. In the absence of a reaction from the public, it will be the private schools which form tomorrow's leaders. Schools that are less

sensitive to procedure, less delicate in the face of attitudes, but very demanding on the intellectual, and, sad to say, on the financial, front. Profane secret societies.

Twelve years of feeble amusement in the public school System will result quite simply in holding out a false hope. After school, the déluge, one might say. It is then inevitable to think of men like Albert Camus—and many others—who thanks to the public school System was able to avoid his "natural destiny." No one can read *The First Man* without emotion on this issue. Maybe the next generation will no longer be capable of understanding the emotion stirred by Camus's memories. Unfortunately they will merely have memories of some sort of kindergarten peopled by actor-policemen and women who were from time to time more or less cool.

(translated by James Alison)

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ADOLESCENCE, INDIFFERENTIATION, AND THE ONSET OF PSYCHOSIS

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The onset of psychosis happens, by definition, only once. The first psychotic episode is unforeseeable and risks being overlooked. Left to itself its future is uncertain, and the prognosis is potentially unfavorable. The variety of its manifestations as well as its thymic and cognitive instability explains why so little is written on this subject. The psychiatric literature, by its almost exclusive reference to evolved psychoses, has not distinguished the qualities peculiar to the onset of psychosis (nascent psychosis). Yet recent research reflects an interest in early diagnosis of psychosis to secure qualitative improvements and the chance of a favorable outcome for patients.

A Special approach must be used for patients during the stage of nascent psychosis. Something must be done, but early treatment is not enough. Psychotropic medication has no more than a sedative effect and there are few specifics at this stage (Swain 175). Further, one risks obliterating the patient's lived experience. The entire battery of interventions, above all the first consultations, must follow from a rigorously organized and intensive strategy to directly engage with this subjective experience. For many years at l'Hötel-Dieu, a general hospital situated in the center of Paris, we have harnessed ourselves to this task.

First I shall describe the existence of centrality. It constitutes the most characteristic and permanent trait of the onset of psychosis. From the concept of concernment, I propose a phenomenological morphogenesis of the initial sequence of psychosis. Next I turn to the State of indifferentiation that overcomes the subject, and then to the vulnerability peculiar to adolescents. I shall end with some fundamental epidemiological data.

Centrality

To be mad is not only the feeling of being uniquely in contact with all humanity, whether as alienated from it or as uniting all of it in oneself conceived as the only member of the species. It is this certainly but also more than this. It is to infer that one occupies a unique place in the human world. It is the feeling of being encircled by everyone. Without being responsible, the patient is placed in the forefront of some grandiose project. His centrality, whatever the mode of expression, Orients him towards a form of mental disorder. As a general rule, at the beginning, centrality is never explicit and passes unnoticed. The physical and verbal behavior of the patient suffice to accuse him, without any further investigation, of unintelligibility and incoherence.

Centrality is above all an emotion about which we should admit that we know almost nothing. People with nascent psychosis are the prey of intuitions impossible to comprehend. Like Rimbaud's drunken boat, they flee, drifting or hiding themselves, Coming back and taking off again. They are therefore incapable, wherever they go, of living an instant of unconcern. Incapable of expressing their singular rapport with the world, they keep silent. Very soon nevertheless centrality engenders a torrent of questions. Silently, voicelessly, patients apprehend in an almost automatic manner the responses to these questions in the verbal and gestural behavior of others. Since Esquirol (Gauchet and Swain 464) identified hallucinatory phenomena as the cause of psychosis, they have occupied a disproportionate place in mental science for 200 years. This construction of the concept of hallucination in psychiatry, key to the orthodox vision of psychosis, assures a watchful vigilance to rule out every non-symptomatic treatment of patients.

Hours or perhaps days later, no longer capable of abstaining from interpretation, patients begin to sketch out an explanation of the prodigious Situation which they have experienced. They interrogate their relation to others and the intentions and the degree of unanimity of people towards them. Invoking demons and monsters often gives their explanations a first coherence which is in harmony with the scale of their experience. On their side the psychiatrists, to facilitate verbalizing the experience, suggest paraphrases of a general order: influence, mental automatism, exterior action, xenopathia, etc. To mask centrality, to get away from it, or in response to the gravity of the event, the patients, in search of some responsibility, envisage more elaborate scenarios: mission, conspiracy, trial, condemnation. A political vocabulary, more plausible but less universal than a religious one, takes up the reins. Religious terminology is effective for

expressing the unknown, the invisible, but it loses ground today to a scientific and technical vocabulary. If patients appeal to some supernatural action, they also invoke the idea of an extra-sensory or telepathic communication. In personalizing the Situation they create many delirious narratives. Then they enter into another phase of psychosis.

Psychotic centrality rarely touches a person without leaving some trace and sometimes some damage to the intellect. Sometimes at the very onset the central experience evolves in a very schematic fashion but more often, after several relapses, it develops towards disruption of mood or behavior, or delirium. The experience of centrality triggers lengthy relapses into so-called affective psychoses, chronic delirium and schizophrenia. Moreover this ränge of Symptoms poses several problems insofar as it is also susceptible to cyclical evolution, of improvement and even return to the first stage of treatment.

The Failure of Psychiatry

Psychiatrie descriptions measure the interactions between patients and their circle of acquaintances. By neglecting what is purely or mutely relational in psychosis, what takes place before these overt interactions, the psychiatric examination, no matter how careful, remains inadequate. What do we mean by this? Akin in many respects to medical or psychological examinations, it remains highly individualized and fragmented, and this shows up in the treatment of the patients. To bring their centrality into view, it is necessary to proeeed otherwise, to adopt a subjeetive and relational point of view: "What is happening to you?," and, more importantly, "what is going on between us?" In approaching with patients their entry into centrality by the sequential and relational angle, we have forged the beginnings of a therapy.

The decline into psychosis is never experienced as a rupture, regardless of what we think about the first clamorous aspects of their mood. When a person enters the nascent stage he is practically anonymous, at the heart of a network of relations. It is important to insist that nascent psychosis is continuous with what precedes it. Patients do not pereeive this inclination towards the unleashing of their troubles, not because they do not pay attention but because it is in part difficult to grasp. In the same way, those who Surround the patients do not notice anything, not through blindness but because, plunged into the same everyday activities, they partieipate in the establishment of centrality without being able, even sometimes afterwards, to sense the first moments. The practitioner, whether medical doctor or psychiatrist, always has the feeling of having arrived too late. His

interventions, no matter how early they might be, thrust him into the heart of an interpersonal turbulence at once as blatant and incomprehensible as the stormy relationship that the patient has with everyone eise.

As Professionals, confronted with patients, we think in terms of Symptoms and we take a step backwards: we have recourse to a clinical semiology forged in the nineteenth Century and refined in the twentieth. Patients do not have anything like this. They do not know what happens to them, and what is more, it remains for them untranslatable. We offer them images or comparisons but these life-buoys thrown to them, born of our neuro-psychiatric and psychological terminology, do not allow us to come close to them. We are incapable of justifying our treatment of them. We cannot, however, fail to understand that this double, symmetrical incompetence leaves on both sides an insurmountable feeling of frustration and powerlessness. It is customary of course not to linger on this common feeling, but how are we to escape this impasse after 200 years of a practice fashioned on medical and philosophical modeis (Gauchet and Swain 413-456)?

Patients admit the interpersonal origin of their travail. It is even the Single point they never question. They feel a tacit participation of others in the most secret part of themselves. Every human being confronts them with insoluble alternatives. Their lives are inspired from the outside, but if patients never doubt the active contribution of others to their own intimate life, none doubts his own contribution to the lives of others. From now on they hesitate to attribute to themselves alone what they do and think, while what happens around them seems to be entirely dependent on themselves. While at the same time being dictated by others, guided, carried, curbed by the movement of the world, patients have also the feeling of directing it, in a spiral without end or beginning.

Can we not consider our mutual incapacity to exchange a few pertinent words about the Situation which unites us, patients and psychiatrists, not as a symbol of a distance or an extreme proximity, but above all as the index of an inextricable mirror Situation? To attempt an understanding of how they arrived there, it is necessary to take the patients at their word, and by this bias, the discovery of paths they take and which are ours also, try at least to understand what gives such an intense and universal foundation to their experience. It is what we have undertaken during repeated and variously organized interviews which leave behind the worn-out spatial metaphors, those of cleavage, of distance or of deviation.

Motory Incitement   ?

Psychosis begins, in our view, in a stew of coordinated movements, real, Virtual, or memorized, which at once stimulate people and subject them to one another. The form that we give this hypothesis to facilitate its explanation may seem to be an oversimplification. Let us begin nevertheless with some obvious facts. The absence of precise perception of our movements and those of others—intention, release, execution—does not alter the well-established feeling that we have of the gestural autonomy of normal human beings. The feeling of being oneself—of being the unique subject of our acts and thoughts—persists along with automatic and involuntary movements in the presence of others. Most of us are not affected by these movements we make as we move among others. Nevertheless, we are coordinated like muscles in movement. Do not these exchanges with fellow beings hide an ambiguity?

The mutual and spontaneous connection of gestures hides in effect a Potential equivocation, not about the identity of the interpreters but their author, that of the true initiator or promoter of the act. What emerges from these exchanges under the form of reciprocal movements will be marked, if not by the sign of incertitude, at the very least by a coefficient of subjective indecision. If this habitual play of reciprocity, as we think, can induce brief moments of subjective indeterminacy, they appear above all when the gestures of the protagonists converge in communal and repetitive activities. We do not lack examples of such gestures: the human species, more than all the others in the animal kingdom, has at its command not only an elevated level of consciousness and subjectivity but also an exceptional capacity for learning by imitation (Girard 1978). Subjectivity and learning allow one to move through stages of individuation and also a life in relation to others. The schemes of innate behavior, those of language, for example, must be activated by the presence of modeis. We leave this vast terrain and stay with the exchange of elementary gestures.

During everyday transindividual sequences, many of our actions are launched without conscious adjustment by the movements of others. It is these, for example, which make it possible to dodge a collision in a crowd or govern facial expressions in conversation. No one can assign with any precision the origin of such movements to just one of the agents in such Situation. These intraspecific mechanisms coordinate actions and their agents. Anterior to every subjectivity, these gestures still arise from individual agency (Jeannerot and Fourneret 1998). Although one can become conscious of such gestures, in their first immediacy they are no more seen as incitations than they are bearers of intentions. There is that in

them which belongs to no one and which no one can lay claim to. There exists a collective gesturing, for each species, based on motory coordination and made of complementary gestures which are crudely mimetic or antagonistic in the sense of the physiology of movement. This gesturing is a relational propriety which has priority over all that one can connect to the subject or agent. As Paul Dumouchel has remarked (Dumouchel 94) in his approach to emotions, the relational properties of this type are those that an isolated individual cannot possess and still less exercise. The expression of this gesturing is continuous and is not addressed to particular persons. Everyone knows that the localized and limited character of these motory actions, a simple affair of the moment, escape the notice of those who do them. The link to a movement made by someone, whether physically enacted or represented in a motory image, is not perceived before its occurrence. These events which happen in common, below the threshold of consciousness, are usually inconsequential. Is it always so?

Concernment

This term is used by Jean Starobinski (Starobinski 243) to designate Jean-Jacques Rousseau's delirious susceptibility to feelings of megalomania and being persecuted. We give concernment a broad meaning: it resides in the physical presence of others, and each being shares it with his species. The motor-sensory phenomena which constitute it in part escape consciousness and no one truly pays it any attention. Our hypothesis is that the alteration of this motory level of interindividuality, by reason of the subjective ambiguity which cloaks the most insignificant interpersonal contacts, can have unforeseeable subjective consequences on the stage of concernment (Grivois and Proust 1998).

Let us go back to our patient. Stimulated and hindered, pushed to act and restrained, this person is assailed by irreconcilable thoughts and intentions. Supported and contradicted in his own movements, he has the feeling of assisting others but also being their obstacle. In other words, he no longer separates what happens to him by the existence of others from thoughts and initiatives instigated through his own initiative. The impression of movement, and even simply that of being alive, is coupled to the feeling of ascendancy over others and encroachment on their part as well as an inextricable mixture of emancipation and inhibition of thinking. Having left normal concernment behind, what comes next?

At first concernment is just a feeling one has. In the beginning, it does not matter that it goes through different stages, that it appears stränge or ordinary, that it has the attraction of undeniable evidence or of a marvelous

revelation. Vague and neutral, concernment remains familiär even as it becomes difficult not to confirm the presence of others, at least from the point of taking notice of them. Concernment is nevertheless not an elastic idea which spreads without bounds. More precisely, it is a turning point in the physical order: concernment, patients certify, becomes irreversible while it is only perceptible in a general way. The patient is then in centrality. Despite the implausible character of this belief, nothing limits it any longer: cut off from every conscious basis, it is irrefutable. Without model and without reference to the past or future, the patient has the feeling of being himself the originating cause of collective movements.

The triggering of psychosis disturbs an elementary reciprocity, innocent of cognitive and emotional presuppositions. At the beginning, it is not desires or conscious incitements which direct the patients but simple movements which solicit them without their being conscious of it, giving them the feeling of being under the influence of real but indistinct intentions, personal as well as exterior to them. Certain patients show proof of their perspicacity by affirming that their movements depend on others. It is essential to the patient to put back into question the elementary fact of being solely responsible for their own acts and thoughts.

Language is starkly affected, it loses all efficacy for them. Advice addressed to the patients is far from having the impact desired. Words do not work anymore; they cannot slow down the interpersonal process. Words no longer fulfill the fundamental role which accompanies every signification. Whatever its intention, speech risks inflaming the process. In effect, the movements of the face and larynx are so many motory solicitations which float between interlocutors. The words belong to no one; they are in search of a subject or bearers of a plural subjectivity. The use of the power to say "I" is no longer limited to oneself. Everything passes by way of centrality, which derails patients towards indefinable feelings. This generalization of concernment gives priority to the assigning of an origin to the most minute phenomena. Quickly the Situation becomes untenable. It becomes all the more urgent to find meaning everywhere, in that before this point it was obviously useless. It is then, if not before, that acquaintances officially play their role in psychosis.

The responses of acquaintances to the patient's stränge behavior and impenetrable remarks ranges from indifference to compassion, insult to constraint. Although secondary, all these reactions reinforce the patient's thinking: on the one hand to a belief in a general collusion of others, on the other hand to his certitude that he occupies a unique position. Whatever the context, this accentuates the instability of the Situation. These two paths,

arbitrary singularity and collective accord, ensure that sooner or later nascent psychosis will appear in the form of a crisis, of which the patient will occupy the neuralgic point. This Situation, by the manner in which it is constituted, is not assimilable, at least at first, to anything other than psychosis itself. It is no longer a question of phenomena occurring outside consciousness. Discrete or ostentatious, these reactions lead to diverse therapeutic rituals.

In the short term everything seems to return to order: not into some supposed natural order but into the order preceding psychosis. The relation to others returns to normal and the world raises no more questions. Once again people ignore the patient and by the same fashion they are nothing to him. Henceforth his initial interpretations are useless. A division is newly possible, everyone has enough difference: each in his movement has taken back his place and each is mutually indifferent as before.

The patient (and this is astonishing) asks few questions. What could he ask questions about, while nothing has appeared or disappeared? Does he think that our incompetence is equal to his, or is it that the phenomenon continues but in the strictest secrecy? On the other hand the patient poses questions in ethical terms: in what way am I responsible? To this question we are incapable of responding. Moral considerations and judgments, so present in the psychiatric texts up to recent times, have disappeared. One no longer talks of pride concerning psychosis. For a long time it was thought that a moralizing discourse (not to be confused with the moral treatment of the first alienists) facilitated the return to the Community.

The patients have participated in a major event. What's more, they never doubt that they have not lived it alone. A verkable self-criticism is demanded of them. This notion is often used in a blind fashion. That which one asks a patient to critique must be relativized and nuanced. From concernment up to centrality, the patient must radically separate the central event from all that has been imagined and constructed by him, by his acquaintances, and by the psychiatrist. Schematically, nothing has happened other than a modification of the feeling of being a subject. This massive loss or gain between destruction and centrality is spawned by the subjectivity of others, through the ordinary motory incitements transmitted by them.

In sum, patients in nascent psychosis pass from a natural reciprocity to centrality by modification of their interpersonal perceptions at the price of disrupting their subjectivity. Centrality carries them into nascent psychosis: even if to their relief the limited autonomy of subjectivity disappears, it gives way to an unlimited subjectivity. This leads us to the notion of indifferentiation.

Psychotic Indifferentiation

Social philosophers remain silent about the fate of the subject when differences disappear among participants during unanimous violence or manifestations of panic. They approach it, certainly, but by the angle of methodological individualism, which is necessarily more theoretical than empirical (Grivois and Dupuy 5-21). Medical doctors move in the opposite direction, using the term mental confusion for the disoriented, amnesiacs and those uncertain of their identity. In the case of indifferentiation revealed through examination, mental confusion has no priority other than determining the individual origin and possible treatment as the case arises. Between these schematic poles, social and medical, the indifferentiation of nascent psychosis, if it strikes the patient in his subjectivity, does not lead to the threshold of unreality, like fever, dementia, or hysterical dissociation. As we have hypothesized, the indifferentiation of nascent psychosis arises from interindividual mechanisms, which is of another kind.

Whether he comes to centrality in a few days or a few months or in a lightning moment, the patient never loses the notion of who he is. Psychotic indifferentiation is never a question of identity. In nascent psychosis incertitude bears on the intention and origin of acts and thoughts, but does not touch the identity of whoever does or perceives them. Centrality poses a problem of relative subjective indifferentiation, the specificity of which is borne by the patient, uniquely touched in the world of an indifferent crowd. Nevertheless he acquires this indifferentiation from contact with others (Anspach 97-107). Because of the mere existence of others, one can be close to annihilation, while at the same time, interindividual polarization marks one as prodigiously different from everyone. One can no more isolate the fall than the rise of subjectivity without misunderstanding the double and paradoxical movement which provokes it and leads the subject from indifferentiation itself to nascent psychosis. In effect, the risk is not to misunderstand the extreme aspects of the subjective indetermination but to separate the obviously contradictory but indissociable sides: the sense of the diminishment of seif and that of centrality. It is difficult to conceive of this and to account for it with the words we use to discuss emotions.

If an intense relation to the human species coexists with a subjective effacement and the effacement increases with this intense relation, centrality is not a defense or an ultimate recourse before a sudden narcissistic hemorrhaging. It is not a survival Operation, a kind of massive and urgent transfusion of differences. It is, for the patient, the single real difference that remains. Without ignoring them, the patient does not care about all the individual particularities which Surround him. From gestural reciprocity to

generalized concernment, centrality becomes a subjective mode of existence, the last difference to subsist. The patient fastens in his body a manner of sensing his presence among his fellows. An inextricable amalgam of triviality and monstrosity, this person who flees every relation to avoid being annihilated by the presence of his fellows perseveres meanwhile in his quest for subjective existence which he cannot achieve except in their Company. Subjective indifferentiation and centrality only increase, and from each other. This of course is never made explicit. The patient remains in this disabling condition at the cost of anguish, high exaltation, and major instability of judgement.

If we are to distinguish psychotic centrality from other forms of mental confusion it is necessary to be wary of relating psychosis to the histrionic and romantic centralities which abound in ordinary life, literature, and neurosis (Grivois 1999). The subject of desire, even by means of a desperate effort, never arrives at the place where the subject Coming to psychosis finds himself from the very beginning. Psychotic centrality is not the result of a strategy, the last degree of some unconscious feeling or a desire of omnipotence. Novelistic genius unveils the force of mimetic desire and the absence of the hero's autonomy (Girard 1961). The psychotic himself, from his entry into psychosis, is already very far from ressentiment and the conflict of doubles. Much later, on the other hand, in delirium he returns to such conflicts, and this renders his disorder comprehensible anew. For the moment he does not linger there. What he lives is situated at another level: psychotic centrality, veritable birth to madness, is a relation with all the members of the human species. We will come back to these points.

Force, Weakness, Violence

We have shown that a compelling relation exists between subjective annihilation, centrality, and interindividual coordination. We now return to an essential point. Each patient believes that a vast sea of influence drowns the framework of his customary life. The dynamic induced by this Situation puts an unlimited power at his disposition. He gives off an impressive sense of force. He is by turns immobile in an anguishing perplexity, or follows a wandering track while feeling directed to a precise goal. Experience places him on a road without return where he risks destruction. Why this behavior? Why doesn't he temporize, why not search out a medical answer, from the forces of order, religion or simply from his acquaintances? Why does he not rise to some reflection, some spiritual exercise, Pascalian, Husserlian, or other? Why doesn't he interrupt his movement and his unrelenting quest for reason?

In the patient's view, his downfall is the worst of dangers, which threaten him as it threatens the world: the absence of any living subject in the frightening emptiness that a mechanical crowd invades. We have seen that all the exchanges around the patient concern him. His most minor acts harbor an efflorescence which overwhelms him. The requirement of significance becomes for him a major question. The interpersonal network of which he is the center is saturated. While everyone seems to address him he cannot address anyone. Whatever his opinion, that the Situation is intolerable and at the same time it could be viewed with enthusiasm, that he could be distrustful and fascinated, it is necessary at all cost that this movement take shape and that the crowd that he embodies and polarizes undertake to speak. A sign, a beginning of signification, something at stake and a conflict, it matters little, whatever responds to his expectation, and, at this level, he never doubts it is known by all. It is thus that his interpretations as well as his hallucinations remain the sole guarantee of his agency and the subjectivity of his acts and thoughts in the world; he never achieves any stability in this.

From now on this universal sense appears to depend on a unique experience, his own. The sole means by which the patient does not sink into an inorganic indifference and by which to conserve the Status of being human is to perceive and to attribute a massive coherence, a cosmic and metaphysical unity to experience in its relation to him. The other, in psychosis, is always legion. "I am the human species," Alain said at the age of 18. His survival and that of the world required this unifying Statement, this State of unity. Alain said, "The world has confided in me," a little after he returned to ontological duality. It is necessary to understand that the psychotic patient has no access to what has happened to him other than through centrality. It is to centrality therefore that he seeks to give meaning. Moreover, if we do not know that his centrality takes root in everyday interindividuality we know nothing as well of the oscillations of being, and we know nothing of the heart of nascent psychosis, except madness as currently understood, that is, not nonsense but incoherence of all sense as decreed absolute by orthodox psychiatry.

In psychosis, indifferentiation, gestural, then subjective, threatens being, but not existence. People are menaced, and menace each other, with subjective disappearance, not in some merging with a fantastic model of a devouring mother, a castrating father, or in the mimetic exacerbation of some desire, but simply in the presence of others in the movements they all share as they move along together. It is in this sense alone that psychotic indifferentiation is life-threatening. On the other hand the central

polarization always marks the maintenance of a difference outside of the ordinary. The exigency of being is primary in psychotic centrality: the desire to be and to survive as subject precedes every other desire and in particular the desire to be an Other. The term death is therefore of little use if it refers us to the run of mimetic violence, to envy and to murder as its conclusion. Subjective indifferentiation, as I use the term here, has little to do with the violence reported in myth or by teachers or police, or with the self-destructive violence of which social philosophers speak.

It is the force and weakness of nascent psychosis, more than its violence, which we must understand. The subjective State granted by the feeling of centrality is in equilibrium with the menacing feeling of annihilation. This force is rarely utilized at the adolescent stage: the subject of nascent psychosis is in rivalry with no one. Confrontation only exists beyond centrality in the multiple representations that we have of it. On the brink of psychosis, the subject is luminously transfigured by centrality, or he collapses without being. His fellows have chosen him, humanity accompanies him in all of his actions. The subject has no other representation of unanimity and the general will available for his use other than himself and the invisible masses.

Sometimes the patient adopts a sacrificial vision and applies it to himself in a delirious melancholy. He can also, reinforced by the general will, overcome obstacles. Often, seeing some constraint to the realization of a grandiose mission, he assaults someone close to him as if he acts in the name of the Community. The psychotic who commits murder has already returned to normal. He is no longer psychotic, he makes a banal gesture, in consonance with the force for which he acts, and which responds in reflex fashion to the feeling of provocation Coming from the outside. Murder and melancholy are exits from this State: they do not belong to nascent psychosis. In the ensuing delirium the psychotic subject apes normal and romantic attitudes, and their neurotic lying, guilt and violence.

Adolescence and Vulnerability

Our perspective does not suppress all individual causality nor does it exclude a variety of forms for this disturbance. On the other hand our perspective keeps its distance from traditions of causality bearing on signifying processes and from the idea of an individual anomaly prior to psychosis. It is no doubt of interest that ambition, desire, fear, hashish or LSD, even fever and dreams induce states similar to psychotic centrality. However, what is properly nascent psychosis, in the absence of every preliminary representation, does not emerge from the ensemble represented

by such individual or familial situations and all those other conflictual situations, nor from neurological or toxic effects. That we search for a distant origin is understandable, for example a vulnerability that is in some way genetic, cerebral, psychological or systemic, on the medical model or Freudian; we look for a silent fault which manifests itself much later or all of a sudden. From what is most recent to what is long ago, what happened before and especially what close acquaintances report can serve as a first truth for psychosis. But if we successfully uncover historically imputable and compatible underlying conditions, what is produced so profusely is never expressed until after the fact.

Our hypothesis, the interindividual mediation by mutual motory incitation, explains facts in consonance with the constitution of the life of centrality, but the turn that psychosis takes lets one think that a motory genesis, despite its didactic character, is incomplete. The discovery of motor-sensory difficulties that are not clinically discoverable perhaps enables us to confirm the hypothesis of a confusion of the relations of reciprocity but it does not identify this confusion as an anterior cause. Nascent psychosis is not limited to an affair of intersubjective perplexity. If no recognizable circumstance regularly accompany the outbreak of psychosis, it nonetheless does not strike just anyone at any time.

In the majority of cases, the subjects stricken with psychosis are adolescents. They traverse a key moment of their development and their history which for them alone contains an element of risk, even a cause of motor discoordinatation. The vulnerability of adolescents and young adults comes from their social and biological Status, which is intermediate between childhood and adulthood. This position varies slightly across cultures and epochs, but, on some points, it is invariable. Adolescents are fragile observers, not fully.operative, yet already implicated in the activities of adults, victims to the necessity of furnishing the first proofs of their efficacity. They are vulnerable to corporeal changes, to social and sexual developments, to puberty, and yet more transitory changes in our traditions: entering higher education, military Service, even staying abroad. These situations have in common the necessity of unforeseen mimetic adjustments and chiefly concern young subjects.

Adolescents are mimetic torches waiting to be lit. Random prey to emotional and interindividual reciprocity, their vulnerability is collective before being individual. Everyone goes through adolescence. Spontaneously, the adolescent is already inclined toward indifferentiation: between infancy and adulthood, between absence of a sex life and active sexuality, between boys and girls, and in the last analysis, between Submission and autonomy.

This ill-defined place exercises for both men and women a stränge and familiär attraction. Adolescents attract attention and this interrogatory regard is for them a supplemental stimulant to incertitude about identity. There is a lot more to say on this matter.

A word here abut treatment. The place where madness is born and to which we have no access is also the place where we all live together. The coordinations and reciprocities amidst which they grow with ease is short-circuited by consciousness. This implies that it will always be too late to operate the primal decoding and intervene in the outbreak of psychosis. Because of a lack of ability to treat through clinical examination, must we content ourselves with holding back outbreaks through medication while awaiting the occurrence of an irreversible delirious construction?

Psychotropic drugs slow down the interindividual changes but is that the sole goal sought? In approaching step by step the experience after the return to calm, the terms and the modeis utilized by our discipline are a priori incapable of comprehending the experience in its totality. It is too late. We overlook what is essential. In hurrying (like the patients themselves) to discover some meaning to their nascent psychosis, we think we show that we have great respect for them. But what happens? In proceeding thus one has the feeling, to be sure, of remaining on their side while in fact one does nothing except drift with them. We ignore the living interactions which take place here and there between them and us when we encounter them for the first time. The individual and collective representations which early or late color the experience are never constitutive. In other words, in interrogating the patients one obtains bits of sense, responses and commentaries, but one loses the fundamental primary stage of all delirium.

For us the essential point of treatment is to avoid this, as a matter of urgency to underline the role of interindividuality and make them understand its role and its most unbelievable consequences—centrality—as well as its most contradictory—subjective indifferentiation. The loss of the common feeling of being a unique subject of one's acts and thoughts is matched by the feeling of being responsible for the actions of the world. After the silence of the first hours, no better expression of this exists than the divine (and not religious) and the monstrous, or to say it another way, the feeling of suffering divinisation and individual monstrosities. It is necessary to isolate and privilege these ideas under whatever form they appear, without relegating them to the rank of grandiose delirious themes. It is necessary on the contrary to exploit them as early as possible, before they extinguish themselves, to understand why the patient has recourse to them.

An Endemic Hominid Disease

Concernment arises from contacts people have among themselves. Centrality is a consequence of these contacts, whose inexorable occurrence is regulated according to laws which escape us. One cannot ignore the contribution of epidemiology. The universal incidence of psychosis is a fundamental anthropological characteristic which seems to transcend our approach and which we will sooner or later elucidate. Psychosis strikes the entire human species but it never gets out of hand, remaining limited to about one percent of the population. Nascent psychosis predominates in adolescence and it is spread equally among girls and boys. It develops only among humans but above all where they live together. There is no known culture where it is absent. That psychosis cannot touch someone immersed in total solitude is not demonstrable: the experimental conditions permitting a proof are not realizable in face of the most elementary ethics. The basic fact remains that a person who goes mad feels concerned indifferently by all his fellows: a person familiär or unknown, no matter who, is for him an inductor to concernment and finally centrality.

If centrality only engenders a crisis of subjectivity, we nonetheless have the feeling, from our experience with these patients, of touching on something that the species holds within it as most universally human. The adolescent, more so than others, is in search of this universality. Since each one of us has in himself an imaginary propensity to centrality, the concept of the individual in centrality as approachable by the majority of readers remains without doubt for them one ofthose metacultural abstractions. The notion of centrality remains theoretical as long as one is not faced with an individual who embodies it. In the context of nascent psychosis it exercises a real fascination for those around it.

The subject in centrality is suffering, in effect, from an ailment which he does not know: the dissemination of humanity in him. If one thinks through the comparable terminology which epidemiology provides, the subject reaches a septicemic stage, the paroxysm of infection. Invaded by others, he disregards every particularity and acquires in his own mind a singular Status, divine and monstrous all at once. A curious contamination which escapes every known method of propagation! It is more like the inverse of contagion: an epidemic expands, in fact, from one contaminated individual to others. But here the inflammation of absorbing the mass of others touches only him and is limited to him. Nascent psychosis is not contagious, contrary to a number of psychological phenomena. It affects one person while the others around him, extremely contagious for him, activate and populate his private centrality. They remain unharmed, either immunized or healthy carriers.

If each agent (by the fact of his coordination) participates directly in the determination of the movements of others, and is reciprocally acted upon, then each, in relation with others, is ultimately in relation with all others. This intraspecific coordination, during unforeseen convergences and in the ignorance of all, initiates global movements in which merge the phenomena of panic and social centrality, such as, for example, lynching and the sacrificial crisis (Girard 1972). In nascent psychosis a centrality also arises from human interindividuality amidst a general misunderstanding. But the difference is that if all participate without understanding, this centrality begins with one person, stays with him and spares the others.

Psychosis does not await the development of language. It is possible to imagine its outbreak and its first manifestations in a group of hominids not yet expert in the art of Speech. What would be the consequences? The group makes a circle about one of its members. Archetype of spontaneous situations of the all-against-one type, nascent psychosis, in the absence of verbal exchange, constitutes on the collective terrain a model of which the spontaneous repetition cannot pass unnoticed. The Girardians recover in this description the trace of their founding model. Is this Situation comparable to others? Does it place in danger the group deprived of a collective System of restraint or does it play a beneficial role in collective appeasement? Is it controllable otherwise than by violence? We must not let psychotic centrality slip into social or philosophical references which are foreign to the clinical Situation. We must keep away from conclusions hastily constructed upon isomorphisms with social and religious mechanisms or metaphysical essences. Despite certain analogies, all other social situations of the all-against-one type differ from psychotic centrality by their genesis but also by their relation to desire and consciousness.

As a kind of motory snowballing effect, centrality in psychosis feeds off every movement, off every human life which comes within reach. Each person by his or her very presence anticipates and participates in the experience of the solitary person. Psychotic centrality can certainly remind us of the position of the victim in the sacrificial crisis. The initial sequence is reversed; everything goes on in the head of one person. In both cases, nevertheless, everyone participates, without being conscious, in the divinisation of one person. The psychotic crisis, when it is not avoided, is also public and general. But it does not imply a murder. The bloody resolution does not take place but the result is the same: a man becomes God. What economy of method for a result entirely the same! Nothing prevents one from thinking that the two phenomena, psychotic and sacrificial, are able to encounter and feed off each other. But note, if one

enters into fiction, the life of the subject of psychosis is not a fiction. The life of the sacrificial victim, on the other hand, is related to the way we represent the life of an individual deprived of verbal communication, the newborn, for example; this belongs to the material reported by anthropology.

Emergent madness is a collective event lived in solitude. Already relational, this event becomes collective in a clear fashion through the response given to the most visible manifestations. This collective or institutional response is dissimulated: the black-out of ritual and traditional medicine (Asia, Africa) or the legalized secret of hospitalization, the consequence of our individualist and democratic revolutions (Gauchet, Swain). Madness retains a potentially public and political force: faced with madness, people instinctively regroup and flee it. They feel threatened in their cultural experience by one of their number whose fluctuating and unforeseeable subjective force disrupts notions of personal difference. Madness sheds a light on the frailty of the human subject in a blind and insupportable manner; while it frightens those who feel they are very close to it, it gives them the illusion of escaping from this fragility.

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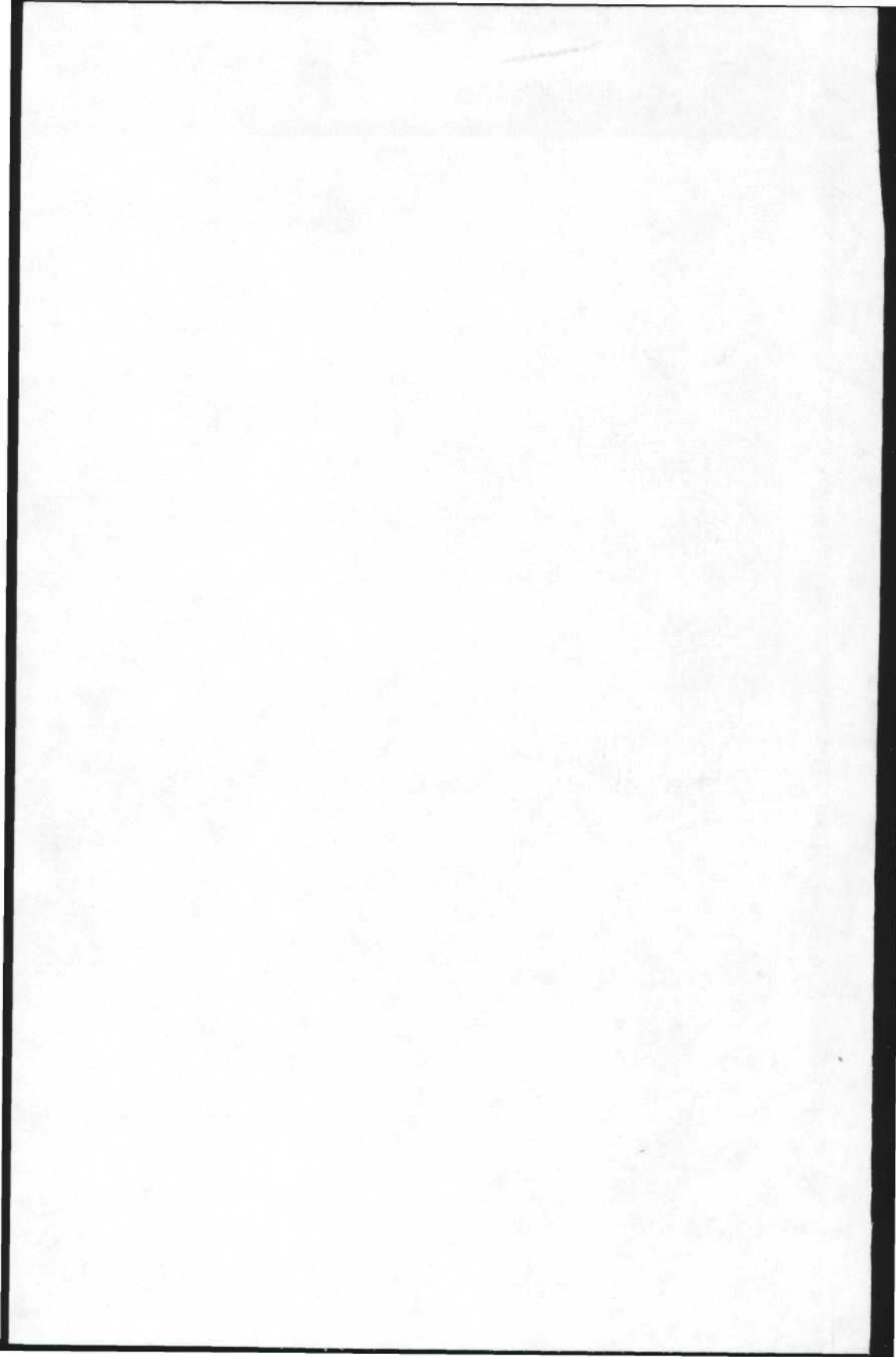
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