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The Irony of Victimisation and Violence

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Abstract

This Essay presents a summary of the reading of Rene Girard's book, *I saw Satan Falling like lightning*. In my view, the book's common theme is reflected in the title of this essay: The Irony of victimisation and Violence. However, I arrived at this title after reading the 13th chapter of the book where Rene Girard discusses extensively the concern for Victims. The world shows us an increasing preoccupation with Victims yet with little concern. The chaotic drama is set by the sons of the Devil.

This Essay begins with a brief abstract, and proceeds with an introduction, to the life and works of Rene Girard. An overview of the whole book highlighting a few fascinating arguments by Girard follows. Then continues with a summary of chapter 9 about the Uniqueness of the Bible and ends with a conclusion.

Introduction

Irony in literal terms refers to contradicting ideas and actions that are further apart from the norm. There is a thin line between victimisation and violence which human beings should not underestimate. These are two aggressive factors but humanity often times puts distinction to them which makes it wry. Eventually a matrix. Therefore, in choosing violence and victimising others, we propagate the kingdom of Satan and his powers which later become part of human life. We ought always to have a moment, to reflect and reconsider our actions and behaviour. Jesus invites us to reconsider in the now, here and then. In the story of the adulterous woman, Jesus challenges the violent crowd boiling with rage and anger wanting to stone the woman as rightly prescribed by the law. *"let any among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."*¹ The word of God, logos, made flesh, invites us to stop, take a moment, think and reconsider throwing the stones to fellow human beings. In the flash of reflecting about our own behaviour it becomes clear that we are not any better than those we are ruthlessly dragging to the cave of the evil one.

Ash Wednesday ushers in the western church a period of fasting, almsgiving and prayer. It is sometimes known as the Lenten season. This practice was formalized in the first council of Nicaea in 325 CE. Initially, it began as a public penance which was a period of preparing candidates for Baptism and penance awaiting their restoration to the communion of all

¹ John 8,7

believers. As a sign of their penitence, the penitents wore sackcloth and were sprinkled with ashes. During World War II, the strict law of fasting was dispensed from the Roman Catholic Church, emphasising almsgiving and penitential practice.²

Fasting is a period of stopping and reconsidering to rebuild and amend our relationship with God but more so with fellow human beings. It is a moment of choosing good against evil. Also, to recollect our minds and thoughts so that we can detect the tricks of the ‘prince of evil’ and consciously strive to break his traps that chain us in violence and hatred against fellow human beings. Sometimes we intend good, yet the powers of the evil one are coated with these good intentions only to lead to a crisis and a chain of endless atrocities. To overcome the den of evil, one needs to live a certain type of discipline taking Jesus as a role model.

In his message for Lent 2023, Pope Francis begins by quoting the gospel of Mathew highlighting the need to deepen our understanding of our master Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ;

“The gospels of Mathew, Mark and Luke all recount the episode of the transfiguration. There we see the Lord’s response to the failure of his disciples to understand him. Shortly before, there had been a real clash between the master and Simon peter, who after professing his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the son of God, rejected his prediction of the passion and the cross. Jesus had firmly rebuked him “get behind me, Satan! You are a scandal to me because you don’t think according to God but according to men...Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace to overcome our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. This is precisely what Peter and other disciples ought to do. To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in the total self-giving inspired by love.”³

In our modern times, especially in the day-to-day political, social and economic affairs, there is a lot of victimisations. Society is best defined by the woes between offenders and victims, most victims of crime do not become offenders but most offenders have been victims, unjustified wars protest unjust sentences and all these forms of atrocities destroy our society and humanity. The dignity of certain individuals is shattered; they are hanged naked as though they were the sole problem of society. Observing the modern trend of social media, many personalities especially prominent people are targeted to halt their progress and ruin their status.

Girard took it to research and studied this system of repeated victimisation caused by ‘mimetic desires as a net of atrocities in which humanity is trapped. He claims that Christianity unveils a light that shades away the curtains of ignorance, fear and imprisonment to our own freedom to think and reason rightly. The Christian teaching that breaks this mimetic networking is

² Britannica.com/topic/lent. 10:3928.02.2023

³Vatican.va/content/Francesco/messages/lent/documents/20230125-messagio-quaresima.html

extending peace, mercy, love, forgiveness and kindness to the suspected victims. Also reflecting on our own lives before throwing the stone at the victim. That is all we need to free ourselves in our relations as human beings. Girard inspires us not to be feeble but take courage and look up to the Gospel message which gives us the right approach how to overcome the irony of victimisation and violence that still engulfs humankind.

Mimesis is the human predisposition to understand our World and learn of it through mimicking others while mimetic desire is a deep-seated need to be like others. It is grasped as superior. It is a cyclical process and revolves around adapting to coveted models of experience, success and dominance.

The mimetic Cycle coupled with these unattainable models of success produces a sort of seduction of individuals that Girard explains as the wheedling into Satan himself. Satan forges his way into our lives and we let him manipulate us into engaging in subconscious actions. We also develop mimetic tendencies of desiring and initiating others to have what they have. Sometimes this persists to the point of sacrifice and violence.

Girard refers to Satan as a *Parasite on God's creatures and the Father of Lies*.⁴ He is a stumbling block to progress. In turn without viable options, many individuals are stressed out in search of resolutions which culminate in an attack on the would-be threats. At this juncture, Girard introduces a notion of scapegoating in which there is an accusation against vulnerable groups of people perceived as outcasts.

Christ stands as the redemptive Figure and perfect example through non-violent means that the cycle of mimetic desires is combated. This is reflected through the crucifixion of Jesus, the story of Joseph and the story of Job. The Gospels reject the violence of scapegoating and the deceptions of myths that uncover the lies of Satan. Therefore, Girard points out the fact that Christianity supersedes the cultural and traditional beliefs to rectify violence rooted in humankind.

According to Girard, we do not detect *mimetic snowballing* because we participate in it without realising it. In this case, we are condemned to a lie we can never rectify for we believe in the guilt of our scapegoats and this is exactly what myths perpetrate. We could only detect the mimetic snowballing in which we do not participate and we can describe it as it actually is.

⁴ Girard, Rene. *I see Satan Fall like Lightning*. Translated by James G. Williams. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001, p.42.

Girard argues that it is only through the Bible and the gospels that we are capable of condemning and disclosing scapegoats.

Life and works

Born in 1923 in *Avignon*, Rene Girard enjoyed success as an existential Thinker. He wrote extensively and taught on a number of topics while engaging in discussions and interviews. Through his works and interviews, we come to grips with his mind and theories, especially in the Arena of Philosophical Anthropology. Rene Girard became famous for his ideas about scapegoating process, desire, ritual sacrifice and Christianity. Many Themes and his works are still relevant today. They tackle aspects such as Victimisation and the Culture of wars which are eroding not only the west but the whole world.

In 1947 he went to America and pursued a Doctorate at Indiana University. After this, he embarked on teaching at various universities. In his early stages, Girard took interest in Jean-Paul Sartre; he was also influenced by the Ideas of Heidegger and Nietzsche. He retired in 1995 and died in 2015. Some of his Works include a commentary written in 1961 on the great novelists entitled "*Mensonge Romantique et Verite Romanesque, La Violence et le Sacre 1972, de Choses Cachees Depuis la Fondation du Monde 1978*". His Work on mimetic Theory has influenced many disciplines from Anthropology to psychology.⁵

I see Satan Fall like Lightning

In dealing with the theme of violence Rene Girard expounded his ideas in his work entitled, *I see Satan Fall like Lightning*, which resounds with a passage in the Gospel of Luke:

*The seventy returned with Joy saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons, submit to us!" he said to them, I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. see I have given you Authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and all the power of the enemy.*⁶

Perhaps with this eye-catching Title, Girard wants to remind his readers that even when evil and violence linger in the world, through the power of Jesus it can be trampled on and defeated. For those with less biblical knowledge and knowing that Girard was not a theologian, it is surprising why he chooses this approach and theme. However, recalling the biblical text in mind, we can infer that Girard wants his readers to trust in the power of Jesus, that through the

⁵<https://iep.utm.edu/girard>. 18:03, 14.02.203.

⁶ Luke 10,17-19

word of God that became flesh, God is with us. Evil sacrifice, scapegoating, victimisation and the violent power in the world today can be defeated.

In her review of the Book, *I see Satan fall like lightning*, Sarah Cook commends how Rene Girard explores a deeper reflection into the relationship between the Cultural and Gospels hence underscoring Jesus' influence in shaping human experience.

Main sections

In the division of the content and subject matter, Girard uses three sections. In the first section of the Book, he highlights themes such as scandal must come, the cycle of mimetic violence the nature and manipulations of Satan.

According to Girard Satan who is sometimes referred to as the devil in the New Testament, is the “power of accusation and the power of the process resulting into blaming and eliminating a substitute for the real cause of the troubles of the community. In social chaos, such confrontations against one another will escalate into a *Contagion of Mimetic desires*, resulting in the identification of a victim. The Victim is always weak and marginalised⁷.

Satan is the Source of rivalry. However, Satan should not be personified. Philosophically, we know that Satan has no real being, he does not exist independently but rather exists as a parasite on the being of humankind; the satanic powers are imaginarily attached to the victim so as to make him appear as a demon or devil. Satan should be primarily understood as the process of desiring and stumbling over models that are rivals and obstacles. That way, Satan deprives humankind of its liberty and everything that protects humanity from mimetic rivals.

In the Gospel of Mathew, Jesus's rebuke to Peter was a way of melting the mimetic rivalry which could have been ushered in by Peter. Why does Jesus in a radical fashion call Peter Satan and in another instant the rock, on which he will build his church?

He said to them, “but who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, you are the Messiah, son of the living God and Jesus answered him, Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah! For Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in Heaven⁸

From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at hands of the elders and chief Priests and scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” But he turned and

⁷ Ibid., p.33.

⁸ Mathew 16,15-18

said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on Human things."⁹

Jesus was reluctant to accept the title of "Messiah". Before the Jews, the messiah would be a powerful King. Therefore, it is not a surprise when Peter reacts as any other Jew would have reacted, but it is striking that he moves from "Peter the Rock" to "Peter the Satan". It is scandalous. In the modern world Peter, the rock would represent all famous, powerful influential people who later fall into the trap of a satanic mimetic system. They fall from grace to grass. Peter the Satan falls and finds himself far away from grace. Jesus distances himself away from the Trap by rebuking Peter. According to Peter, Jesus announces a crisis which he should never undergo. Indeed, he does not understand the tricks of the devil.

Jesus shows us that great crises lead us to the true mystery of Satan, to his astonishing power of expelling himself and bringing order into human communities¹⁰ By accusing, he transforms the community and takes different forms; accusation and demonstration. In this Phenomenon, we tend to believe especially in the Political arena that human life cannot exist without destabilising itself. It is reflected in death and resurrection. The death of Jesus ruined the satanic plan. The violent death of Jesus was the right pacification that transformed the dangerous crowd.¹¹ A crowd full of anger, craving to kill an innocent man. All those guilty of human suffering and atrocities in the world have the Devil as their father.

John 8: 42-44

Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love me for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do his desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his nature, for he is a liar and the Father of lies.¹²

Girard speaks of two kinds of models; the God model and the Satan model. These are the two supreme models. Under these models, there is one type of model which never becomes an obstacle to another type of model. It is also important to note that the imitators imitate not only the models but also the desires of their imitators. Girard proposes that we ought to imitate Jesus

⁹ Mathew 16, 21-23

¹⁰ Girard, Rene. *I see Satan Fall like Lightning*. Translated by James G. Williams. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001, p.34.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.37

¹² John 8,42-44

Christ as our model because if we do not imitate him “our models become the living obstacles that we also, in turn, become¹³.

The second part of the book, entitled “*The Enigma of myth resolved*” covers five chapters discussing themes such as powers and principalities, mythology, sacrifice and the founding murder. Using the miracle of Apollonius, Girard unmasks the conversion of mimetic rivalries into unanimous violence which temporarily creates tranquillity, peace and social ties¹⁴. Indeed, just as in the miracle of Apollonius of Tyana, the world has faced terrible plagues and crises in form of unjustified wars, natural disasters, refugee problems and just recently the corona Virus.

When such catastrophes occur, many people lose not only hope in natural and scientific healing but also question the meaning and essence of life which shakes their faith in God. The Corona pandemic saw many losing social bonding. There was a lot of fear caused by uncertainties. Human social values were put to test. There was a dire need for immediate healing from an ‘averting God’. While the virus was consuming lives, God seemed to be deep in slumber. In the Apollonius approach and solution to the plague, the Ephesians were called to stone a beggar whom they accused to be possessed of demons. This miracle is an example of *mimetic Contagion*¹⁵. In late “2019, the Corona Virus was first detected in Wuhan in China, which later set off a global pandemic.”¹⁶ Some political leaders referred to it as the China Virus. As a result of this belief, many Chinese abroad and in different parts of the world were identified as carriers of the virus. Some owning restaurants registered a decrease in clients and customers. Hence, such stereotypes could have easily triggered a mimetic contagion.

On the other hand, Jesus teaches us a different approach by which we can deal with mimetic contagion. He goes beyond the provisions of the Law and successfully deals with the scenario of the Adulterous Woman which is narrated in the Gospel of John. In this narrative, Jesus avoids provocation and does not look in eyes of the offenders but rather lets them look into their own eyes. Looking at their own eyes, the offenders are challenged by their own provocation.

They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing Adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now, what do you say? They said this to test him so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept

¹³ Ibid., op. cit., p.40

¹⁴ Ibid., p.62

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 49-50

¹⁶<https://www.webmd.com/covid>

*questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."*¹⁷

The Third part entitled *the victory of the Cross* begins with chapter nine up to chapter thirteen. In this section Girard reflects on themes such as the uniqueness of the Bible, the uniqueness of the Gospels, the Triumph of the cross, scapegoats and the modern concern for Victims.

Today, we experience concern and the rise of many humanitarian Organisations and institutions agitating for freedom and human rights. Through the activities of these humanitarian organisations, we observe and realise that somehow everyone is capable of being victimised. The challenge lies in the criteria and the-how to address the question of victimisation. We ought to have clear criteria and a system that traps such challenges. Although the church was the first to reveal criteria challenge the contagious mechanism, it seems, with the ongoing sexual abuse, the church has for a long time paid a deaf ear and a blind eye to many cries for social justice

Myths

Following the Old school of European Anthropologists, Girard believes that myths are the narrative corollary to rituals and those myths recapitulate the scapegoating themes. To ensure that scapegoating works is to ensure that the participants remain unconscious of the mechanism by distorting the story of the events that lead to the victim's death. Myths will always tell a story of someone doing a terrible thing and therefore deserving to be punished. The victim will always be portrayed as the culprit whose deeds brought about social order, but whose death or expulsion brought about social peace, though for a while.

Gerald's example of myth is that of Oedipus. According to the myths, Oedipus was expelled from Thebes because he murdered his father and married his mother. But according to Girard, this story should be grasped as one, written by the community that chose a scapegoat and blamed him for Parricide and incest hence this justifies his persecution. But Girard insists that all myths are founded upon violence.

Girard thinks that modern societies have an equivalent to myths: persecution Texts especially in the witch hunts and persecution of the Jews there are many stories which were written from the perspective of Mob violence; a crisis that appeared as the consequence of some crime committed by a minority. However, the Author of the Text is part of the persecuting mob,

¹⁷ John 8, 4-7

thereby projecting the Victim all typical accusations and thereby justifying the mob's actions. Modern lynching is an example of such persecutory dynamics.

The uniqueness of the Bible

According to Girard, Christian Apologetics depart from a comparison of myths and the Bible. According to Girard, myths are caught under the dynamics of the scapegoat mechanism by telling the stories from the perspective of the scapegoat. The Bible contains plenty of stories that tell the story from the perspective of the victim.

In myths, those who are collectively executed are presented as Monstrous culprits that deserve to be punished. In the Bible, those who are collectively executed are presented as innocent victims that are unfairly accused and persecuted. Girard thinks the Bible is unique in its defence of victims.

However, according to Girard, this is not merely a narrative perspective shift but something more profound. As much as the Bible presents stories from the perspective of victims, the Biblical Authors reveal something not understood by previous mythological traditions and by so doing they made scapegoating inoperative. Once scapegoats are recognised for what they are, the scapegoating mechanism no longer works. Thus, the Bible is a subversive text in as much as it shatters the scapegoating foundations of culture.

The Hebrew Bible

Girard thinks that the Hebrew Bible is a text in travail. There are plenty of stories told from the perspective of scapegoating. And most importantly, it continuously presents a wrathful God that sanctions violence. However, Girard appreciates some important shifts in some narratives from the Bible, especially when they are compared to myths that present similar structures. This phenomenon can be seen in the contrast presented in the story of Cain and Abel and the myths of Remus and Romulus.

Girard compares the story of Oedipus with the story of Joseph. Oedipus is accused of incest and the myth accepts this accusation, therefore, justifying his expulsion from Thebes. Joseph is also accused of incest (he allegedly attempted to rape *Potiphar's wife*, his *de facto* stepmother.) But the Bible never accepts such an accusation.

In Girard's view, the Hebrew Bible is also crucial in its rejection of ritual sacrifice. Some prophets vehemently denounced the grotesque ritual killing of sacrificial victims although, of course, the ritual requirement of sacrificial rituals permeates much in the Old Testament. Girard

understands this as a complementary approach to the defence of victims. The prophets promote a new concept of divinity: God is no longer pleased with the ritual violence (this is vocative of Hosea's plea from God) "I want mercy, not sacrifices". Thus, the Hebrew Bible takes a twofold reversal of culture's violent foundation. On one hand, it begins to present the foundational stories from the perspective of the victims while on the other hand, it begins to present a God that is not satisfied with violence and therefore begins to disassociate the sacred from the violence.

Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible

The mimetic cycle is a theme common to both myth and the Gospels. It is found partially in Old Testament accounts. There are also mimetic crises and collective violence in the old testament. However, the mimetic cycle is absent; the sacred revelation, the resurrection that reveals the divinity of the victim. Quite evident in the Hebrew texts is that the victims never rise again. God is never victimised, nor the victim is divinized. The difference between the Hebrew Bible and the Myths is that in biblical monotheism we can not suspect God of being the Product of the scapegoating process.¹⁸

The biblical account story of Joseph and the Myth, the story of King Oedipus

We always find the mimetic process of crises and violent expulsions mythical as well as in biblical Texts. Myth and biblical stories are much closer to one another and resemble each other. However, it is not so to say that they agree on every essential detail. The myth and the Biblical story are in basic opposition over a decisive question that collective violence poses. Is it warranted, is it legitimate? In biblical accounts, collective violence is never unjustifiable. In the myth, the victim is always wrong but his persecutors are always right, the reverse is true in the Bible.¹⁹

Biblical stories do not consider the accusations of the victim seriously. It recognises the typical obsession of hysterical crowds against those whom they make victims for the last thing. Unlike Oedipus, not Joseph but the wife of his master the guilty one. Oedipus is responsible for the plague but Joseph is not responsible for the famine. Does the hero deserve to be expelled? The myth answers at every point, yes and the bible answers no.

The career of Oedipus ends in expulsion whose finality confirms his guilt while Joseph's career ends in Triumph whose finality ends in Triumph. "The Fundamental Nature of the Contrast

¹⁸ Ibid., p.107

¹⁹ Ibid., p.109

between myths and biblical narratives, suggests that the latter is the expression of any anti-mythological inspiration and this inspiration discloses something essential in the myths that would remain invisible outside the perspective of biblical narratives, that myths always condemn all victims, who are isolated and overwhelmed. They are the work of agitated crowds incapable of identifying and criticising their own tendency to expel and murder those who can not defend themselves, scapegoats that they take guilty of the same stereotypical crimes: parricide, incest, bestial fornication and other horrible misdeeds whose perpetual and improbable recurrence point up their Absurdity.”

The Unequivocal fashion of the biblical opposition to mythic collective violence is confirmed in the real conclusion of the main plot of Joseph being sold by his brothers and expelled by his own family. The final episode of the story of Joseph is a meditation on the kind of collective violence with which the biblical story is obsessed just like the myths but the result is just the reverse. The Final Triumph of Joseph is not an insignificant happy ending but a means of making explicit the problem of violent expulsions. Without ever leaving its narrative framework, the biblical account pursues a reflection on the violence whose radicalism is revealed at the point where pardon replaces obligatory vengeance.

It is only this pardon, forgiveness that is capable of stopping once and for all the spiral of reprisals which are sometimes interrupted by unanimous expulsions but violently and only temporarily. The biblical account accuses the ten brothers of hating Joseph due to his intrinsic superiority. The real cause of the expulsion is a mimetic rivalry.

At this point, Girard seems to challenge post-modernity with the claim that myths and biblical tests embody two opposing positions on the question of collective violence. The Comparison of the myth and the story of Joseph shows that the Biblical author probably intended to criticise not the myth of Oedipus specifically but one or several unidentifiable myths that must have been similar to Oedipus’s myth. The Biblical story condemns the general tendency of myths to justify violence which is part and parcel of the accusatory, vindictive nature of foundational myths²⁰.

“We must not think of the relation between myth and the Bible in terms of the sole difference in perspective on victims and executioners, nor must we think of this relation in terms of similarities only, to arrive at the true meaning we must focus on the differences in the context of all similarities”

²⁰ Ibid., pp.112-113

Differences in the context of all the similarities

In Myths as in the Biblical text, the expulsions of individuals adjudged to be evil-doers play a huge role. Whereas both biblical and mythical texts agree on this role the myths are incapable of criticising this role. The biblical acc. Attains this level of questioning and resolutely affirms the injustice of collective violence.²¹

In order to dismiss post-modern differentials which only lead to further absurdity, we need to concentrate on the essential divergence of biblical truth from the lie of mythology according to Girald, the truth transcends the question of referentiality in the Biblical account. The essential truth of the Joseph story lies not in its possible correspondence to facts outside the text but in its critique of mythic expulsions. The critique is absolutely relevant given that these expulsions always have their source in mimetic contagion hence not the fruit of rational, impartial judgement.²²

The divergence of the biblical Accounts and the myths of Oedipus are so great that no greater difference could exist; the difference between a world where arbitrary violence triumphs without being recognised and a world where this same violence is identified, denounced and finally forgiven, is the difference between truth and deception. He argues that in this scenario we either succumb to the contagion of the mimetic snowballing and fall into the lie of victimisation with mythology or resist this contagion and rise to the truth of the innocent victim. In this way, the biblical narrative discloses a universal human truth hence in both contexts it is not appropriate to place the Bible and the myths on the same level on the pretext that their contrasting prejudices are equivalent.²³

The Bible refuses to demonise or deify the victims of violent crowds. The ones really responsible for expulsions are not the victims but their persecutors, the crowds or mobs caught in mimetic contagion such as envious brothers and Egyptians who blindly accept false accusations. Biblical narrative entails a peculiar truth while in ordinary speech myth means to lie. However, all victims in the Bible do not have good fortune as Joseph, they don't always succeed in escaping their persecutors. These victims are alone abandoned by all and encircled by numerous and powerful persecutors. The story of Joseph has a happy end "optimistic" in which the victim defeats his persecutors while in many biblical accounts, it is never the case,

²¹ Ibid.,

²² Ibid.,

²³ Ibid., p.114

but it does not keep them from witnessing to same truth as the Joseph story and opposing the mythical perspective in exactly the same way.²⁴

Unique Character of the Bible

What gives The Bible its specific character does not consist of painting reality in cheerful colours and minimising the power of evil. It consists rather in interpreting with objectivity the mimetic war of all against one. In identifying the role played by mimetic contagion in a world where there are still only myths. In the biblical world, human beings are just as violent as in the mythic world and single-victim mechanisms bound. What stands against any world of contagion and violence is the Bible itself, the biblical interpretation of its phenomenon.²⁵

Psalms

Biblically, human beings are as violent as portrayed in the world of myth and are bound to single Victim Mechanisms. Girard stresses that despite this vulnerability, it is the Bible itself that can stand against any world Of Contagion. Therefore, what is true of the story of Joseph is also true in the diverse forms used by narrators in psalms. The texts in psalms are the first in human history to allow those who would simply become silent victims in the world of myth to voice their Complaints as hysterical crowds beside them. These victims are not silent, they curse their persecutors loudly and express their anguish with an energetic and picturesque, forcefulness that scandalises and irritates crowds.²⁶

In Psalm 138 the psalmist prays an individual prayer praising God for his goodness. This could be replicated in a situation of a victim is saved from his or her persecutors. A victim who recognises that this saving moment from suffering was a prayer answered by God could pray:

I give thanks, O lord, with my whole heart; before the gods, I sing your Praise; I bow down towards your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything. On the day I called you answered me, you increased my strength of soul²⁷.

On the other hand in Psalm 137, a lament of the destruction of Jerusalem, the psalmist cries out to the lord remembering his good deeds although yet in a moment of sorrow. He prays in agony to the point of almost accusing God. Hearing how the sons of Israel lament in exile clearly shows that the strong forces of the mimetic mechanism are to be found within Israel. Even at

²⁴ Ibid.,115

²⁵ Ibid.,

²⁶ Ibid., p.115

²⁷ Psalm 138, 1-3

the hands of our tormentors and nd captors we ought to lay our trust in the lord and not the devil.

*If I forget you, O Jerusalem. Let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth. I fi don't remember you if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.*²⁸

He criticises professors who regard these speaker victims as a lack of polite speech regarding their lynchings. He states that it is only the verbal violence that scandalises these professional redress of wrong. They think that only texts are violent and that what is essential about human violence escapes them. In this way they have neglected what the psalms are all about; the violence of the victims and not that of the persecutors. The situations that these psalms present are just as mythic as the story of Joseph.²⁹

The Book of Job

The book of Job is, in effect an immense Palm and its uniqueness lie in its confrontation with two conceptions of God. The Pagan conception; is that of the crowd who long venerated Job but who at once by an inexplicable mimetic whim turned against him. This conception sees the will of God in the crowd's unanimous hostility just as in its idolatry. The crowd's hostility is the irrefutable proof that Job is guilty and must confess his guilt- the crowd takes itself for God

The three friends are the agents of the crowd. Throughout these three friends, the crowd terrorises the victim, accused of trying to get his mimetic assent to the verdict that condemns him, just as in the totalitarian trials of the 20th century. The book of the psalm shows an admirable way that the sacred and the crowd are the same things in mythic cults. As such the primordial expression of the mythic cult is the 'sacrificial lynching and dismemberment' of the victim.

Most important in the book of Job is not the murderous conformity of the multitude but the final audacity of the hero himself whom we see hesitate at length, vacillate then finally take hold of the mimetic contagion and defeat it. In doing this, Job does not only resist totalitarian Contagion but wrests the deity out of the process of persecution to envision him as the God Of victims, not of persecutors.³⁰ This is what Job means "*as for me, I know that My Defender Lives*"³¹

²⁸ Psalm 137, 5-6

²⁹ Ibid., op. Cit., p.116

³⁰ Ibid., p.117

³¹ Job 19,25

Important to note in all these biblical texts

The victims are innocent while the executioners are guilty of persecuting innocent victims. The Bible demonstrates a scepticism regarding mimetic violence that was never the case before. The Bible calls into question the guilt of the victims whom their communities unanimously condemned. No Tradition had done this before the bible.

The keystone of Biblical inspiration is the reversal of the relationship between innocence and guilt between victims and executioners. The Bible highlights the most crucial problem where mimetic rivalry continually disrupts human relations. Girard affirms that if we are to understand the biblical profundity of all its results, we can understand the biblical Profundity of the Talmudic principle of Emmanuel Levinas, and he quotes “If everyone is in agreement to condemn someone accused, release him for he must be innocent” he adds that Unanimity in human groups is rarely a carrier of truth; more often it is nothing but a mimetic, tyrannical phenomenon. It resembles unanimous elections in totalitarian countries³²

Demonising and deifying victims

In Myths, the real reasons that impel the persecutors to deify their victims are concealed. When the (ten)10 brothers expelled Joseph, they must have been tempted to demonise him and when they finally recognised him in Egypt they must have been tempted to deify him. They, however, did not deify him rather Joseph is humanised.

Girard adds that the refusal to deify victims is a significant element revealed by the Bible. The deity is no longer victimised. This is a unique character of the bible whereby for the first time in human history the divine and collective violence are separated from one another. The Bible rejects gods created by sacralized violence. Though in certain biblical texts, and historical books there are traces and residues of sacralised violence. The divine is not weakened or vanishes but most important is the biblical discovery of a divine reality that no longer belongs to the sphere of the collective idols of violence.³³

However, Girard frequently asserted that he was not a Christian for the early part of his life but his humanistic work drove him to Christianity. Some argue about Girard’s lack of precise scientific language, even if one were to accept a profound nature about human beings and

³² Ibid., op. cit., p.118

³³ Ibid., p.119

culture, scientifically minded philosophers would object that Girard's language is too obscure and too religiously based for scientific purposes.

Conclusion

The trick of the devil is to make you think that you are doing the right thing. He scarfs you with a veil of lies which makes you believe that what you are doing is right. Myths will always tell a story of someone doing a terrible thing and therefore deserving to be punished. The victim will always be portrayed as the culprit whose deeds brought about social order, but whose death or expulsion brought about social peace, though for a while. By choosing not to come to an understanding with the situation of those who are victimised, knowingly or unknowingly then you are under the influence of the prince of evil. We ought to be benevolent because to do an act of charity doesn't entail firstly being Christian but rather human. It is the whole of humanity that is in dire need of mercy, compassion, service and tolerance. Through the Gospels, we realise that that was the teaching of Jesus. He did not just teach but practically lived his word. Jesus the living word of God reveals that the human being is capable of rejecting and resisting the devil.

The irony of victimisation and violence results from the majority being oppressed by the minority and vice versa. The majority then can't take it anymore and, in this sense, the minority who are the offenders of the majority tend to be victims. Sometimes, the power of the tongue assembles famous and influential people susceptible to violence, especially through social media. At the end of the day, we have to acknowledge that we are all offenders and, in another way, offended. Therefore, quick to amend and slow to judge and act according to our wishes and desires. This is because by so doing we are most likely to fall into a ditch of scandals hence resulting in violence.

Humanity is capable of resisting the mimetic system only if we raise our heads and focus on the crucified Christ. He is the pleasing sacrifice we offer daily to God. We Christians profess that it is *in him, with him and through him, that all were created*. The prophets promote a new concept of divinity: God is no longer pleased with the ritual violence. This is evocative of Hosea's plea to God, "I want mercy, not sacrifices". Thus, the Hebrew Bible takes a twofold reversal of culture's violent foundation; on the one hand, it begins to present the foundational stories from the perspective of the Victims; on the other hand, it begins to present a God that is not satisfied with Violence and therefore begins to disassociate the sacred from the Violent.

I believe it is not a matter of passive disassociation but rather faith to employ an active understanding of how humanity and culture operate. To keep it always in check and balance with reason and faith. Girard clearly shows us that due to a limited understanding of humanity, and the revelation of the word of God especially as portrayed in the Gospels, our epistemological, social and anthropological vision is impaired by the illusions of the mimesis. As a result, we experience conflicts, all turning against one, minority oppressing the majority, and this goes on and forth in a manner of consistent series. The reality turns into trickery, mockery, abuses, torture, massacre and hatred to the point that such infliction of pain and suffering seems to be a norm and justified. Girard invites us to recognise that such behaviour is not reality. It is an illusion aimed to chain us into the traps of Satan.

I agree with Hodge Joel (2012) who argues that according to Girard in order to understand violence we need to appreciate both the collective structure that leads to violence and the anthropological foundation for violence in human beings. The effects of Violence are only an indicator of a deeper reality in the human condition. If we intently look in the face of the suffering and oppressed, do not shy away from accepting failures, ready to dialogue and contemplate the word of God, then we are not far from understanding the irony of violence and victimisation geared by the evil one, Satan.

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