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2. Illustration: 3 superimposed images composed of (a) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by author on 6/25/2010; (b) center circular image from www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org accessed 9/15/2004; and (c) additional image called *Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.

Rescuing Our Faith from Sacred Violence

Interfaith Resources for Courses & Group Work

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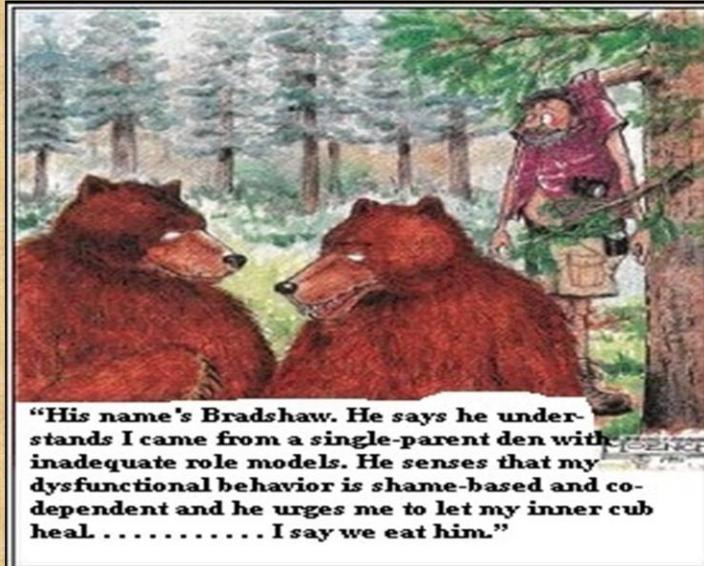
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But it's still wild out there...



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1. Illustration: "His name's Bradshaw. He says he understands I came from a single-parent den with inadequate role models. He senses that my dysfunctional behavior is shame-based and codependent and he urges me to let my inner cub heal . . . I say we eat him." Artist unknown. Accessed online by this author on June 14, 2007 at http://markbyron.typepad.com/main/2003/12/sometimes_you_g.ht ml
2. Cf. this parody of Jesus' 'Good Samaritan' parable (New Testament, Luke 10.30-37), as a 'cautionary tale' that offers a useful critique of the naïve 'psychologizing' of social pathologies: Two social workers were walking through a rough part of the city in the evening. They heard moans and muted cries for help from a back lane. Upon investigation, they found a semi-conscious man in a pool of blood.
"Help me, I've been mugged and viciously beaten" he pleaded.
The two social workers turned and walked away.
One remarked to her colleague: "You know the person that did this really needs help."
(Accessed by this author on 7/26/2010 at www.nursinghumor.com/really)



Sacred violence is...

- all societies' reliance on destructive force as saving, salvific, 'redemptive.'¹
- our species-wide remedy of last resort when all else fails—the 'final solution' when more creative efforts elude us.
- all religions' captivity to destructive processes that exploit & counterfeit the otherwise benign trajectory & ideal orientation of their beliefs & practices.

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1. Cf. "The myth of redemptive violence," Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment & Resistance In a World of Domination* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1992), pp. 13-33 et passim.
2. The symbol above is the **logo of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, COV&R**, an international association of scholars founded in 1990 and "dedicated to the exploration, criticism, and development of René Girard's mimetic model of the relationship between violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture." See www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/aboutcover accessed by this author on 6/29/2010.



... a species-wide pandemic

- that targets and sanctions some of us for destruction in the name of God /the holy, or for the sake of righteousness /justice,

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1. Illustration: “Target With Arrow” source: www.clker.com/clipart-target-with-arrow.html, accessed by the author 6/30/2010.
2. (a) Definitions

Sacred violence is our perennial reliance on destructive force as saving—as our ‘savior’ of last resort—in contexts that appear to defy more creative and life-giving solutions.

Sacred lies, intrinsic to sacred violence, are fabrications and mystifications of reality that sanction and rationalize such reliance.

Sacred lies and sacred violence are symbiotes (symbiotic) and synergetic, each fostering the other. A counterfeit form of the holy, sacred lies are also quasi-religious, a diabolical form of “The Big Lie”—a lie so totalizing that, on the basis of our common ‘distemper’ or shared traumas (cf. worldview), everyone will believe it. In this case the ‘big lie’ is that the holy includes malevolence or at best ambivalence; correlative with the claim that reality is inimical to, or at best indifferent to, human flourishing.



... a species-wide pandemic

- that targets and sanctions some of us for destruction in the name of God /the holy, or for the sake of righteousness /justice,
- accounts for the endemic distrust and terror-driven relationships experienced within and between all culture groups, &

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[Note 2(b)] In mythopoeic language both sacred violence and sacred lies are ‘diabolisms’—demonic counterfeits of the holy that substitute for, usurp, exploit, and ‘parasitize’ the benign trajectories and ideal orientations of our religious traditions. Cf. in this connection these highly suggestive instances of Johannine discourse in the New Testament:

You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s 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 own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8.44)

The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming,
 ‘Now have come the salvation and the power
 and the kingdom of our God
 and the authority of his Messiah,
 for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down,
 who accuses them day and night before our God.’ (Revelation
 12.9-10; cf. Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat
 Myth*; Princeton, 1989).



... a species-wide pandemic

- that targets and sanctions some of us for destruction in the name of God /the holy, or for the sake of righteousness /justice,
- accounts for the endemic distrust and terror-driven relationships experienced within and between all culture groups, &
- thwarts our social & historical flourishing as a species.

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[Note 2(c)] In non-mythopoeic terms the claim here is that sacred violence and lies are humanity's universal enemy and the only true adversary (not ourselves).

This formulation however does not require a thoroughgoing theological or humanist project of 'demythologizing' (Rudolph Bultmann) religious discourse. Rather I prefer the skilled 'saving the appearances' of demonological discourse offered by Walter Wink in his more phenomenological approach of representing the demonic as a type of 'inner' dimension of institutions and processes in human experience. (See Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, 1992. Cf. Gerald J. Biesecker-Mast, "Reading René Girard's and Walter Wink's Religious Critiques of Violence as Radical Communication Ethics," National Communication Association Annual Meeting; November 20-23, 1997; accessed by this author on 8/2/2010 at www.bluffton.edu/~mastg/Girard.htm)

Discussion

(1) Sacred Lies

A key requirement for observers and researchers alike is to discern religious disguises of two sorts: aliases and counterfeits. I am indebted for these formulations to Vernon Ruland's untapped concepts in the following claim [see note 2(d)].



. . . a species-wide pandemic

- *Sacred violence* is our perennial reliance on destructive force as saving—as our ‘savior’ of last resort—in contexts that appear to defy more creative and life-giving solutions.

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→ Complete definitions elaborated in note 2 below

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[Note 2 (d)]

Any psychology of religious experience ought to begin by exploring a basic ambiguity that undercuts all surveys and conjectures. This can be summed up in two brief truisms. Granted that many people are just what they seem, some prove far more religious than they appear. And second, some prove far less religious than they appear. . . An anonymous spirituality . . . I shall call a religious *alias*. . . [A] façade of lies will be called a religious *counterfeit*. Vernon Ruland, *Sacred Lies and Silences: A Psychology of Religious Disguise* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994), p.1f.

In this connection it is important to insist that an ethic of non-blaming/shaming/accusing is not reducible to moral relativism, nor a warrant to forfeit moral discernment or critical consciousness.

(2) Sacred Violence

Some current research supports the claim that every trauma or insult to the psyche, when not treated or healed, creates a mimetic record or self-replicating ‘recording’ that reproduces and perpetuates itself. Such recordings, when reactivated, can result in vicious cycles of formerly victimized groups ‘doing unto others what was done unto them.’ Mimetic patterns of reactive behavior have been described in varied terms, such as ‘repetition compulsion’ or ‘syndrome’ (Alice Miller) and ‘self-replicating cultural systems’ (Riane Eisler).



... a species-wide pandemic

- *Sacred violence* is our perennial reliance on destructive force as saving—as our ‘savior’ of last resort—in contexts that appear to defy more creative and life-giving solutions.
- *Sacred lies*, intrinsic to sacred violence, are fabrications and mystifications of reality that sanction and rationalize such reliance.

→ Complete definitions elaborated in note 2 below

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[Note 2 (e)] Sacred violence is a particular form of trauma repetition. More precisely violence becomes sacred when it functions as a mimetic-magical and pseudo-transcendental solvent for ‘curing’ past trauma (cf. *salvus*; Latin: save, heal]. Intractable conflicts that present no immediate solution call for ‘final solutions’ or ‘saviors’ of last resort. Violence becomes that savior by promising to deliver or restore us through the power of lethal force. By enacting on our victims particular forms of violence we believe with infantile or primitive conviction—a naïve form of faith—that we will find magical cure for our traumas or be restored beyond them. (Typically ‘doing unto others what was done unto us.’)

Thus sacred violence operates by turning inward on ourselves as a species the collective trauma we have experienced under the conditions of existence; primally (by hypothesis) in the state of nature during our prehistory as an emerging species, and cumulatively in the conquest societies that have followed. Two vectors of our generalized (species-generic) self-destruction are:

- ‘targeting-out’ at others on the one hand, i.e., our externalized attacks on an identified ‘enemy’ in various forms, and
- ‘targeting-in’ at ourselves on the other, whether internalized as intra-group or intra-psychic assault (cf. ‘soul murder’).

Cf. Katie Kauffman, Caroline New, *Co-Counselling: The Theory and Practice of Re-Evaluation Counselling* (2004); Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade* (1988), Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* (1990).



Sanctioned targeting: defining feature of social reality



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1. Illustration: “Targeting Your Customer” by Iqoncept accessed by author on 8/14/2010 at www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-images-targeting-your-customer-image7205209 The image is employed here to illustrate our ubiquitous ‘targeting each other,’ and as a critique of targeting from the perspective of a nonviolent or anti-scapegoating agenda like the mimetic theory of René Girard. Similar perspectives are available in social constructivism or relational theory, for claiming that our targeting each other always convenes an ‘I-it’ type of interpersonal or social relationship as in the Martin Buber essay, *I and Thou*, versus Buber’s ‘I-thou’ relationship more appropriately represented by Miroslav Volf’s metaphor of ‘the embrace.’
2. Cf. ‘Every human being is the survivor of a great struggle.’
Source unknown.
3. Cf. **ubiquitous targeting behavior** from playgrounds to gossip, committee meetings to legislatures, public executions to wars.



Sanctioned targeting: [con]structure of “hidden will”

“Oftentimes have I heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you, but a stranger unto you and an intruder upon your world.

“But I say that even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each one of you . . .

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Kahlil Gibran, “On Crime and Punishment,” *The Prophet* , 1923.



Sanctioned targeting: [con]structure of “hidden will”

“So the wicked and the weak cannot fall
lower than the lowest which is in you also.

“And as a single leaf turns not yellow but
with the silent knowledge of the whole tree,

“So the wrong-doer cannot do wrong without
the hidden will of you all.”

— Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (1923)

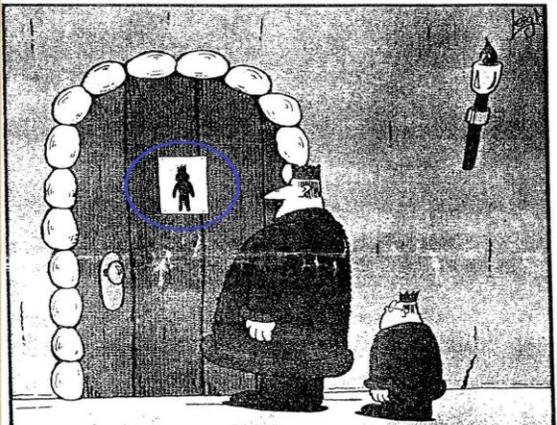
option: skip to “Deconstructing Sacred Violence” →

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0. For shorter presentation **skip to “Deconstructing Sacred Violence”**→
1. Kahlil Gibran, “On Crime and Punishment,” *The Prophet* , 1923.
Consider qualifying Gibran’s treatment of the “hidden will of you all” with Paul Ricoeur’s phenomenology of the “servile will”—the self-entrapped will that ‘binds itself in its own captivity’—in his classic study, *The Symbolism of Evil*. Paul Ricoeur, “Conclusion: Recapitulation of the Symbolism of Evil in the Concept of the Servile Will,” *The Symbolism of Evil* (Beacon Press, 1967) p. 151-157.
2. Cf. Emile Durkheim on religion as the projection of group consciousness, in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912): “Religion is only the sentiment inspired by the group in its members, but projected outside of the consciousness that experiences them, and objectified.” [supply citation]
3. It is axiomatic for this project that the pervasive and perennial nature of the violence that we human beings have experienced throughout the histories of our civilizations could not be as virulent as it is without it being the case that we are all collectively and individually sustaining the phenomena. Therefore, implicated here is “the hidden will of you all” (Gibran).
4. Cf. social constructivism in Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1996) and Paul Wehr, “Social Reality Construction,” accessed by this author on 9/1/2009 at www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/wehr7487.htm



Sanctioned targeting: defining feature of social reality



**After his father, the prince
was next in line for the throne.**

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1. Illustration: “After his father, the prince was next in line for the throne.” Artist unknown.
2. Cf. **ritual sacrifice of sacred kings**, René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ., 1977) [supply citation].
3. Cf. **ubiquitous attacks on leaders** from playgrounds to gossip, committee meetings to legislatures, public executions to wars.



‘Saving the appearances’ —a phenomenological query¹

“What could have persuaded men to kill their fellow-beings—not in the wanton, amoral manner of barbarians succumbing to their instincts, but . . .

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1. Saving the Appearances

[Source cited below]

[The term] derives from Simplicius' sixth century commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo*. Simply put, saving the appearances means that hypotheses which explain appearances are not for that reason necessarily true. Under this conception, two contradictory hypotheses can both explain--i.e., "save"--the appearances, as did both the Ptolemaic and Copernican conceptions of the cosmos.

[Owen] Barfield hastens to remind us that up until the time of the Copernican Revolution, a hypothesis was widely understood to mean a "proposition, the truth or untruth of which is irrelevant"--one intended, that is, to "save the appearances." "All that mattered was, which was the simplest and the most convenient for practical purposes." David Lavery, "Saving the Appearances," accessed by this author on 7/8/2010 at:

http://davidlavery.net/barfield/encyclopedia_barfieldiana/lexicon/Saving.html

Correlate here the classical category of ‘saving the appearances,’ in the terms expressed above, with the modern development of phenomenology as articulated by theologian Paul Tillich in the following quotation.



‘Saving the appearances’ —a phenomenological query¹

“What could have persuaded men to kill their fellow-beings—not in the wanton, amoral manner of barbarians succumbing to their instincts, but

as a reflex of the awakened consciousness of the *creator of cultural forms*, seeking to comprehend the innermost nature of the world and to transmit this knowledge to future generations by means of *dramatic representations*?”

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[Note 1 cont'd (1b)] “It is the aim of the so-called phenomenological method to describe ‘meanings,’ disregarding [‘bracketing’], for the time being, the

question of the reality to which they refer . . . The test of a phenomenological description is that the picture given by it is convincing . . . can be seen by anyone who is willing to look in the same direction . . . illuminates other related ideas, and . . . makes the reality which these ideas are supposed to reflect understandable. Phenomenology is a way of pointing to phenomena as they ‘give themselves,’ without the interference of negative or positive prejudices and explanations.

However, the phenomenological method leaves one question unanswered which is decisive for its validity. Where, and to whom, is an idea revealed... What criterion is to govern the choice of an example? Phenomenology cannot answer this question . . .

The question of the choice of an example can be answered only if a critical element is introduced into ‘pure’ phenomenology . . . Such a decision is critical in form, existential in matter . . . This is ‘critical phenomenology,’ uniting an intuitive-descriptive element with an existential-critical element.” Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*; Vol. I (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1951), pp. 106-107. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*; trans. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931) [CHK: Husserl page nos.; n.p. in *ST*, p.106].



‘Saving the appearances:’ Hypotheses

“Men do not worship violence as such.

Primitive religion is no 'cult of violence' in the contemporary sense of the phrase.

Violence is venerated insofar as it offers men what little peace they can ever expect.

Nonviolence appears as the gratuitous gift of violence . . . [as] the unanimity-minus-one of the surrogate victim.”

—René Girard ²

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2. “What could have persuaded men to kill their fellow beings—not in the wanton, amoral manner of barbarians succumbing to their instincts, but as a reflex of the awakened consciousness of the *creator of cultural forms*, seeking to comprehend the innermost nature of the world and to transmit this knowledge to future generations by means of *dramatic representations*?” Adolphe E. Jensen, *Mythes et cultes chez les peuples primitifs* (Paris, 1954), pp. 206-7; quoted in René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 91-92. Emphasis mine.
3. Correlate the preceding phenomenological query with comment by René Girard excerpted above: “Men do not worship violence as such. Primitive religion is no 'cult of violence' in the contemporary sense of the phrase. Violence is venerated insofar as it offers men what little peace they can ever expect. Nonviolence appears as the gratuitous gift of violence . . . for men are only capable of reconciling their differences at the expense of a third party. The best men can hope for in their quest for nonviolence is the unanimity-minus-one of the surrogate victim.” René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ., 1979) pp. 258-259.



Stoning Stephen

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1. Consider here the 1948 **short story classic**, “**The Lottery**,” by Shirley Jackson, described below.

2. **Image: The Stoning of Stephen** (New Testament, Acts 7.58-60); 19th Century stained glass window, Cologne Cathedral, Cologne, Germany. glazier unknown -- (photograph by Raimond Spekking) from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. Accessed by this author on 7/10/2010 at

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54257>

3. "The Lottery" is a classic short story by Shirley Jackson, first published in the June 26, 1948, issue of *The New Yorker*.

The magazine and Jackson herself were surprised by the highly negative reader response. Many readers cancelled their subscriptions, and hate mail continued to arrive throughout the summer.^[2] The story was banned in the Union of South Africa. Since then, it has been accepted as a classic American short story, subject to many critical interpretations and media adaptations, and it has been taught in schools for decades.



‘Saving the appearances:’ Hypotheses

Acts of injustice done
Between the setting and the
rising sun
In history lie like bones,
each one.

—Auden

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[Note 3(b)]

Plot

The story [of Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”] contrasts details of contemporary small town American life with an annual ritual known as “the lottery”. In a small village of about 300 residents, the locals are in a strange and nervous mood on 27 June. Children gather up stones as the adult townsfolk assemble for their annual event, that in the local tradition has been practiced to ensure a good harvest. In the first round of the lottery, the head of each family draws a small slip of paper; Bill Hutchinson gets the one slip with a black spot, meaning that his family has been chosen. In the next round, each Hutchinson family member draws a slip, and Bill’s wife Tessie — who had arrived late — gets the marked slip. In keeping with tradition, which has been abandoned in other neighboring communities, Tessie is then stoned to death by everyone present as a sacrifice, all the while protesting about the fairness of the lottery.

Reaction

Many readers demanded an explanation of the situation described in the story, and a month after the initial publication, Shirley Jackson responded in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 22, 1948): “Explaining just what I had hoped the story to say is very difficult. I suppose, I hoped, by setting a particularly brutal ancient rite in the present and in my own village to shock the story’s readers with a graphic dramatization of the pointless violence and general inhumanity in their own lives.” Accessed by author 7/10/2010 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lottery

4. Poem: W.H. Auden, “The Ascent of F6,” written with Christopher Isherwood in 1936. Act II, Scene V; quoted by Richard Adams as a chapter heading inscription in his novel, *Watership Down*. Accessed by this author on 7/10/2010 at [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/W. H. Auden](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/W._H._Auden)



‘Saving the appearances:’ Hypotheses

By hypothesis, the deep structure of systemic violence is the scapegoat mechanism (GMSM —Generative Mimetic Scapegoating Mechanism¹):

our primal process of generating unity by mimetically projecting onto some person or group the ‘cause’ of our conflicts and purging the community via their destruction or expulsion—‘unanimity-minus-one’ (Girard)³.

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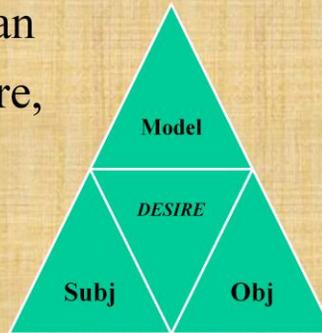
1. The term, “GMSM,” is coined by Robert Hamerton-Kelly in *The Gospel and the Sacred: Poetics of Violence in Mark*, and elaborated as follows: "It is a mistake to see the GMSM as tied to the category of sacrifice . . . because the phenomena [that the term sacrifice] used to encompass are now seen to overflow the boundaries of several categories. . . . The GMSM is a generative mechanism of the psychosocial system of desire whose action can be traced in all kinds of ethnographic and literary texts. . . . Scapegoating is a more appropriate description of the mechanism than sacrifice, because in current usage scapegoating covers a wide variety of actions and attitudes that occur in literature, politics, and academic committees." (Fortress Press, 1993) pp.8-9; cf. pp. 6-12, 129-131.
2. Cf. this double entendre in the use of the term “GMSM:” it is a mechanism that (1) operates through our imitation of each other’s desire and that (2) mimetically replicates itself through-out history and culture as a counterfeit sacred. On this second meaning cf. Riane Eisler on violence as a ‘self-replicating cultural system’ in *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), pp.82-83, 99.
3. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 259.



Implicit spirituality of human desire

“The triangularity of desire¹ means that human being is structured with reference to transcendence; human desire is mediated desire, it comes from without not from within . . .”

Cf. René Girard's
Triangle of Mimetic Desire



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1. Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, “Religion and the Thought of René Girard: An Introduction,” Mark I. Wallace and Theophus H. Smith, eds., *Curing Violence* (Sonoma, Ca.: Polebridge Press, 1994), p.6.

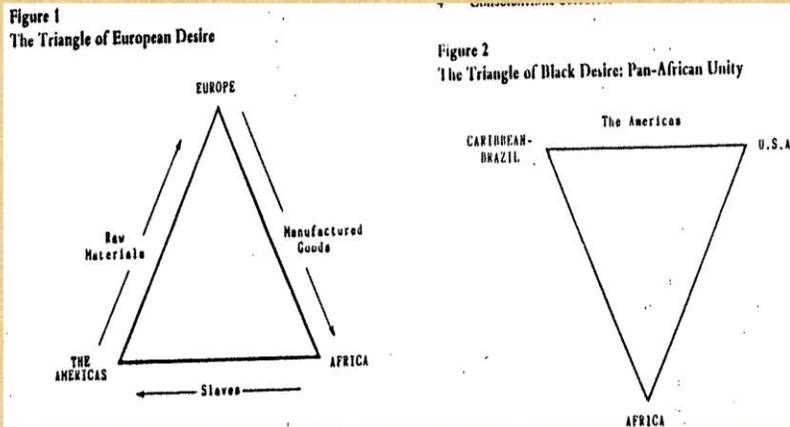
Elsewhere Hamerton-Kelly elaborates: “Eros is triangular—lover, model/obstacle, beloved—and agape is triangular—lover, creator/God, beloved. In the latter triangle the [apex] is the divine nonacquisitive desire instead of human acquisitiveness. The creator God in the place of the model/obstacle gives to the mimesis of desire its proper form as *the constituting power of the self* [emphasis mine]. Eros is desire structured by lack and the pursuit of death; agape is desire flowing from the divine plenitude [cf. generosity] that fulfills our lack. They are both triangular, but [the apex] is different, and that distinguishes the nature of each.” Robert Hamerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (Fortress, 1992), p. 166.

N.B.: one need not agree with this distinction between *eros* and *agape* in order to acknowledge this psychology as an insightful self/other/object relations theory. For a corrective, see Rebecca Adams on “the goodness of mimetic desire” and on “loving mimesis” in notes below [chk: note 3 of the following slide].



Implicit spirituality of human desire

Notes cont'd.



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[Notes cont'd]

- Illustration: Applications of Girard's *triangularity of desire* to social-historical contexts. Figure 1: "Triangle of European Desire;" Figure 2: "Triangle of Black Desire: Pan African Unity." Illustrated by Robert Elliott Fox in *Conscientious Sorcerers* with this explication: "Borrowing the concept of the triangularity of desire from Rene [sic.] Girard, I have proposed three formulations which are relevant to the black experience. The first is historical and relates to slavery as a vital component of the so-called triangular trade, the dynamic of early imperialist economy. That is, actually, the Triangle of European Desire (fig. 1) . . . This triangle forms the basis for black dispossession, encompassing the infamous Middle Passage which resulted in the Diaspora. It creates an Afro-American legacy characterized by the double consciousness W.E.B. DuBois articulated in *The Souls of Black Folk*; yet it is a legacy with its own special continuity, a singular soulness that provides the binding energy of a culture . . . The next triangle is one of black desire and pertains to the dream of pan-African unity (fig. 2). . . . I have turned the triangle upside down to position Africa at 'the root.' Perhaps the lines forming the three sides of the triangle should be dotted as a reminder that although they demonstrate absolute links, pan-African unity, even on the African continent itself, remains a dream. This is the triangle of longing for repossession." Robert Elliot Fox, *Conscientious Sorcerers: The Post-Modernist Fiction of Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Ishmael Reed and Samuel B. Delaney* (NY: Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 2,4.



Implicit spirituality of human desire

Notes cont'd.

Figure 1
The Triangle of European Desire

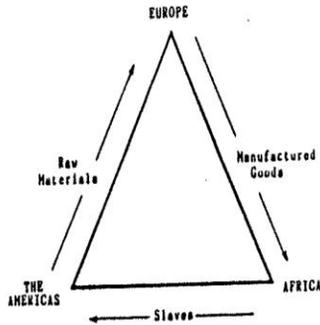
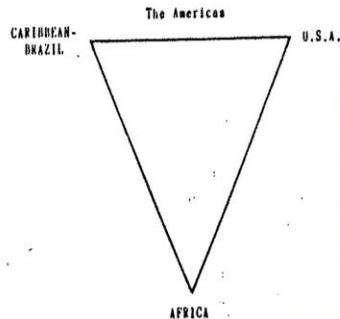


Figure 2
The Triangle of Black Desire: Pan-African Unity



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[Notes cont'd]

3. In corroboration of Elliott's schema one historian observes: "The relationship between African-Americans and Africa was, of course, first established by the African slave trade itself. New England rum manufactured from the sugar and molasses of the West Indian plantations was exchanged for slaves in the markets of West Africa. The captives were shipped across the Atlantic and sold for the sugar cane and molasses they were enslaved to produce, beginning the whole process over again.

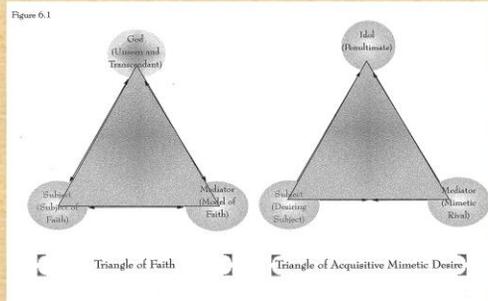
By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, this triangular commercial relationship was providing a network of contacts and communications between Africa and the Americas that laid the foundation for the spiritual and intellectual exchange that was to follow under the sponsorship of black Christians on both sides of the Atlantic—the vision of African-African American solidarity projected by men such as Garvey and DuBois." Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*, 3rd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998/2000), pp. 125-26. Emphasis mine.



Tacit theology of human desire —unaware ‘idolatry’

“The state of mimetic rivalry is the pathology of a "deviated transcendence," of a desire that should be aroused from a truly transcendent spiritual source but instead is aroused by the immanent neighbor.

The biblical name for this is idolatry, and its antidote³ is faith in the unseen God.”



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1. Quotation: Hamerton-Kelly, “Religion and the Thought of René Girard,” p. 6. Elsewhere Hamerton-Kelly elaborates:

Sacred violence and deformed desire need to be redeemed. . . . Just as the deforming act of desire produced a system of violence based on rivalry, so the reforming act of God produces a system of nonviolence based on love. . . . When the model of nonacquisitive desire replaces the model of acquisitive desire . . . mimesis does not progress to conflict and the system of sacred violence does not come into being . . . Since there is nothing in the creature that the creator desires, excepting that the creature should be, there is no ground for mimetic rivalry between the two poles, because there is no envy in the divine. Robert Hamerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (Fortress, 1992), pp. 161-62;166-67.

The emphasis here on “no envy in the divine” is convergent with this formulation: “To recapitulate the Golden Rule: we desire for the other *what the other desires for her or himself.*” Rebecca Adams, “The Goodness of Mimetic Desire,” Ch. 5 in *The Girard Reader*; James G. Williams, ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1996), p. 64.

2. Illustration: Fred Douglas Smith, Jr., “Without a Vision: A Functional Theological Proposal For A Prophetic Christian Religious Education: For Black Boys,” Dissertation, Emory Univ., 1996, Figure 6.1.



1. Illustration: “International Symbol Man on Red Target Bullseye” by Michael Brown accessed by author on 8/14/2010 at www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-photo-international-symbol-man-on-red-target-bullseye-image6778665 The image is employed here to illustrate our ubiquitous ‘targeting each other,’ and as a critique of targeting from the perspective of a nonviolent or anti-scapegoating agenda like the mimetic theory of René Girard. Similar perspectives are available in social constructivism or relational theory, for claiming that our targeting each other always convenes an ‘I-it’ type of interpersonal or social relationship as in the Martin Buber essay, *I and Thou*, versus Buber’s ‘I-thou’ relationship more appropriately represented by Miroslav Volf’s metaphor of ‘the embrace.’

2. **“Mimetic rivalry”** describes the grounding of resentment in thwarted desire: desire thwarted when our models present obstacles to our becoming like them. Of course violence is the *not the necessary* outcome of such resentment. Lower levels of antagonism and conflict are typical. However, under the conditions of existence violence is the *inevitable* outcome in contexts where destruction of the model becomes the most compelling route to successful imitation.



Tacit theology of human desire

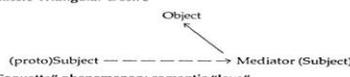
—unaware ‘idolatry’

Notes cont’d.

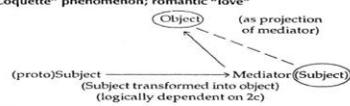
FIGURE 2: FOUR CONFIGURATIONS OF MIMETIC DESIRE

LOVING MIMESIS • 291

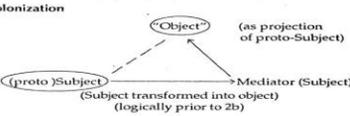
2a. Classic Triangular Desire



2b. “Coquette” phenomenon; romantic “love”



2c. Colonization



2d. Love

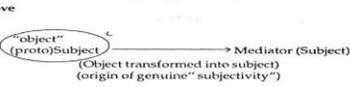


Figure 2a represents that paradigm of triangular mimetic desire with which we are all familiar. Here imitation of the mediator (subject) by the proto-subject²⁹ automatically leads, as Girard has demonstrated,

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[Notes cont’d] 3. Illustration: Rebecca Adams explicates four models (above) of mimetic desire as follows: “Figure 2a represents that paradigm of triangular mimetic desire with which we are all familiar. Here imitation of the mediator (subject) by the proto-subject automatically leads, as Girard has demonstrated to rivalry . . . and ultimately the scapegoat mechanism. . . . [In Figure 2b] The coquette, as a mediator, desires her/his own body or self *as an object* . . . Other proto-subjects, or “suitsors,” then imitate the coquette’s desire for her/his body and/or self, resulting in rivalry with the mediator for possession of the object, and so forth . . . Figures 2b and 2c are simply two halves of the same scenario, seen from the two different perspectives: that of the colonized (coquette) and the colonizer.

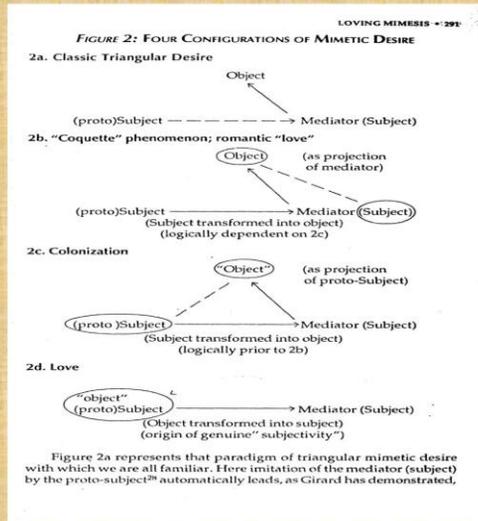
Figure 2c shows why the Girardian theory is potentially such a valuable resource for historically victimized peoples . . .

Model 2d illustrates . . . What happens if the object desired by the mediator is the *subjectivity* of the proto-subject . . . [who,] being unformed and thus not yet truly a subject, *is* a kind of “object.” . . . if the proto-subject were to imitate [*that*] desire of the mediator, then the proto-subject would desire his or her own subjectivity. *Model 2d thus creatively fulfills both conditions of the double bind* (Imitate me! Don’t imitate me!) . . . if proto-subjects fulfill the first half . . . and desire their own subjectivity, they also by definition fulfill the second: They will not merely imitate the mediator’s subjectivity.”



Tacit theology of human desire —unaware ‘idolatry’

Notes cont’d.



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[Notes cont’d]

4. Following her interview with Girard on the “goodness of mimetic desire,” Rebecca Adams developed the following revision of mimetic theory:

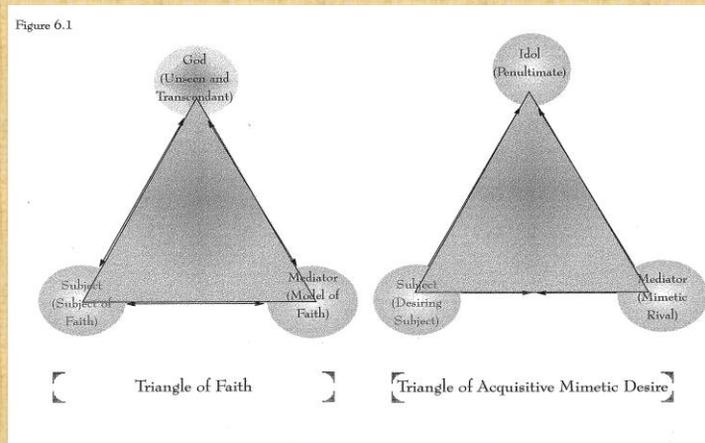
In this new scenario . . . I will be inclined to desire another’s subjectivity . . . because it enriches *both* of us to do so. It is *both* selfless (altruistic) and self-interested (selfish, narcissistic) to desire the subjectivity of the other, since I also desire my own subjectivity in the process. By definition, in desiring your subjectivity I get or acquire an inter-subjective relationship with you . . . but I do so without acquiring you as an *object* . . .

A reconstructed view of the Girardian theory . . . maintains that the victimage mechanism, though a social and political reality, is not the foundation of culture; rather mimetic desire is . . . In the revised view these institutions have an ambivalent and not simply negative relationship to love and freedom . . . [Thus] human institutions serve both to regulate violent mimesis *and* to express and propagate our highest ideals . . . they are founded on mimetic impulses which originate both in scapegoating and in creative love. (Rebecca Adams, “Loving Mimesis and Girard’s ‘Scapegoat of the Text’: A Creative Reassessment of Mimetic Desire,” in Willard M. Swartley, ed., *Violence Renounced: René Girard, Biblical Studies, and Peacemaking* (Telford, PA: Pandora with Herald Press, Scottdale, PA, 2000), pp. 300f. and also in Rebecca Adams, “Creative or ‘Loving’ Mimesis Revisited,” PDF pp. 20-22,28 accessed 8/6/2010 at <http://web.ustpaul.uottawa.ca/covr2006/conferencePapers.htm>)



Tacit theology of human desire —unaware ‘idolatry’

Notes cont’d.



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[Notes cont’d]

Moreover, Adams argues, “[This model] particularly undoes many traditional theological and philosophical dichotomies. Some of the most compelling are those between self versus other, Eros versus Agape, persecutor . . . versus victim . . . and humanism versus Christianity. This model allows for both/and. It suggests that subjects need not be conceived as emerging out of an inevitable violent opposition and exclusion but could be understood as the creative product of the dynamic of loving mimesis [imitation] itself. Idolatry might be perceived as the attempt to quash this dynamic of creative mimesis by dividing the world up into subjects who act and objects who are acted on, perhaps out of fear, or to try to control things by giving them fixed meanings... Perfect love, however, casts out (that is, transforms) this fear of mimetic play.” Swartley, ed., *Violence Renounced*, p. 295 and p. 23 respectively.

4. Illustration: Fred Douglas Smith, Jr., “Without a Vision: A Functional Theological Proposal For A Prophetic Christian Religious Education: For Black Boys,” Dissertation, Emory Univ., 1996, Figure 6.1.



‘Likely Story’ I

“Once upon a time there was a group of hominids that found itself unable to do anything in concert because of rivalry among them. Each one found himself inwardly compelled to imitate some other . . . and the more like the model he became the more violent became the rivalry.

See notes on the status of a ‘likely account’

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1. In regard to such ‘likely stories’ or hypothetical reconstructions it is important to maintain this perspective, repeated from a previous note above: “Men do not worship violence as such. Primitive religion is no ‘cult of violence’ in the contemporary sense of the phrase. Violence is venerated insofar as it offers men what little peace they can ever expect. Nonviolence appears as the gratuitous gift of violence . . . for men are only capable of reconciling their differences at the expense of a third party. The best men can hope for in their quest for nonviolence is the unanimity-minus-one of the surrogate victim.” Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (pp.258-259). On the epistemological status of such ‘likely stories’ see the note immediately following.

2. The Status of [a ‘Likely’] Account [Source cited below]

In his prefatory remarks [in Plato’s dialogue, *Timaeus*] Timaeus describes the account he is about to give as a “likely account” (*eikôs logos*) or “likely story” (*eikôs muthos*). The description is a play on words: the subject of account is itself an “image” (*eikôn*) and, Timaeus avers, “the accounts we give of things [should] have the same character as the subjects they set forth” (29b3–5). Fashioned after an unchanging and eternal model—a possible subject of a definitive and exact account—the universe as a thing that becomes is shifting and unstable, and hence any account given of it will be similarly lacking in complete accuracy and consistency (29c4–7). This apology is clearly meant to lower our expectations: the account is no more than likely. At the same time, Timaeus says he will strive to give an account that is “no less likely than any” (29c7–8) and, while the account cannot be grasped by understanding (*nous*, 29b6—the faculty for apprehending unchanging truths), it nevertheless merits our “confidence” (*pistis*, 29c3 [cf. ‘faith’]). As Timaeus’ account proceeds, we are frequently reminded of its “likely” character, and both the negative and positive connotations of that description should be kept in mind.



‘Likely Story’ I

“Once upon a time there was a group of hominids that found itself unable to do anything in concert because of rivalry among them. Each one found himself inwardly compelled to imitate some other . . . and the more like the model he became the more violent became the rivalry.

“Co-operation was impossible until one day, the greatest day in the history of human culture, the two of them discovered that it was possible to agree on one thing, to agree to kill someone else [‘surrogate victim’].

“This was such a compelling possibility that the whole group imitated them, and so the first moment of human solidarity happened as the fellowship of the lynch mob . . .”

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[Note 2(b)]

The account, then, is presented as reliable (meriting our confidence) but neither definitive nor complete (cf. 68b6–8), and thus open to possible revision (cf. 54b1–2, 55d4–6). A definitive account of these matters eludes humans (29d1) and is available only to a god (53d4–7). It has sometimes been argued that the qualification of the account as “merely likely” supports a metaphorical reading of the cosmology. This, however, is a mistake; it is not easy to see how the distinction between an exact and definitive versus a reliable but revisable account maps on to the distinction between a literal versus a metaphorical account. The contrast should rather be seen as one between apodeictic certainty (about intelligible matters) and plausibility^[13] (about empirical matters). To the extent that the subject of the account is a thing that becomes rather than a thing that is, as well as a thing that is perceptible rather than a thing that is intelligible, the account will be no more than likely. To the extent that it is beautiful and ordered, modeled after a perfect reality and fashioned by a most excellent maker, the account will be no less than likely.

“Plato’s *Timaeus*,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; First published Tue. Oct. 25, 2005; substantive revision Mon. Feb. 2, 2009 at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-timaeus/>; Copyright © 2009 by Donald Zeyl <djzeyl@uri.edu>; accessed by this author on 7/31/2010.

“Fellowship of the Lynch Mob”



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1. Illustration: “Marketing Target Concept” by Adindurdu, accessed by the author on 8/14/2010 at www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-images-marketing-target-concept-image9627529 The image is employed here to illustrate our ubiquitous ‘targeting each other,’ and as a critique of targeting from the perspective of a nonviolent or anti-scapegoating agenda like the mimetic theory of René Girard. Similar perspectives are available in social constructivism or relational theory, for claiming that our targeting each other always convenes an ‘I-it’ type of interpersonal or social relationship as in the Martin Buber essay, *I and Thou*, versus Buber’s ‘I-thou’ relationship more appropriately represented by Miroslav Volf’s metaphor of ‘the embrace.’

2. Cf. our universal human nightmare of being publically exposed when naked, i.e., abysmal shame. Equally familiar is the shame-rage cycle common to us all: targeting-out (rage) to relieve targeting-in (shame). On this view no human being would target-out were we not already targeting-in and, in the most extreme cases, imprisoned in abysmal, unbearable shame—so unbearable that one feels compelled to die (cf. ‘soul murder’) or kill. See further below, Appendix: RTJ (Restorative & Therapeutic Justice).



‘Likely Story’ II

“The victim, as the source of the sudden unity and order, was regarded as a savior, and he was [also] blamed for causing the previous disorder. Thus he acquired the double valency of the sacred: attraction and revulsion [cf. Otto’s *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*].

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1. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine* (1926). The sacred is ‘holy’ with features that are simultaneously awesome, terrifying—*mysterium tremendum*, and attractive—*fascinans*.
2. The passage above continues: “The victim became the god, at the stage of the emergence of the gods. Thus society was formed in the crucible of religion. Religious feeling is the individual’s awareness of the group in its propensity to mimetic violence; therefore religion is essentially sacrifice; essentially threat and promise for the individual.” Hamerton-Kelly cont’d from ‘Likely Story I’ above.
3. N.B. this fascinating novelistic parallel in Richard Adams’ fictional account of a warren of rabbits which has become inured to the culture of victimization and death. “The rabbits became strange... They knew well enough what was happening. But even to themselves they pretended that all was well, for the food was good, they were protected, they had nothing to fear but the one fear . . . They forgot the ways of wild rabbits. They forgot El-ahrairah, for what use had they for tricks and cunning, living in the enemy’s warren and paying his price? They found out other marvelous arts to take the place of tricks and old stories . . .”



‘Likely Story’ II

“The victim, as the source of the sudden unity and order, was regarded as a savior, and he was [also] blamed for causing the previous disorder. Thus he acquired the double valency of the sacred: attraction and revulsion [cf. Otto’s *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*].

“From the victim came the building blocks of social order: prohibition to control the course of rivalry; ritual sacrifice to reenact and so represent to the group the unifying energy of the founding moment; myth to explain and obscure the violence by covering it up with transformations . . .” [Cf. Jenson above re: *homo necans* as “creator of cultural forms,” “dramatic representations,” & n.3 below]

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[Note 3 (b)]

. . . Frith sent them strange singers, beautiful and sick like oak apples . . . And since they could not bear the truth, these singers, who might in some other place have been wise, were squeezed under the terrible weight of the warren's secret until they gulped out fine folly--about dignity and acquiescence, and anything else that could make believe that the rabbit loved the shining wire.

But one strict rule they had; oh yes, the strictest. No one must ever ask where another rabbit was and anyone who asked 'Where?' . . . must be silenced. To say 'Where?' was bad enough, but to speak openly of the wires--that was intolerable. For that they would scratch and kill.

. . . You suggested that Hazel should tell them our adventures, Blackberry, but it didn't go down well, did it? Who wants to hear about brave deeds when he's ashamed of his own, and who likes an open, honest tale from someone he's deceiving? . . . And kill them, you say, and help ourselves to the great burrow? We shall help ourselves to a roof of bones, hung with shining wires! Help ourselves to misery and death!” Richard Adams, *Watership Down* (New York: Avon Books, 1972), pp. 122-24.

Victim: “source of unity & order”



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1. Illustration: “Targeting Your Customer—Arrows” by Iqoncept, accessed by the author at www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-photography-targeting-your-customer-arrows-image7205077 on 8/14/2010. The image is employed here to illustrate our ubiquitous ‘targeting each other,’ and as a critique of targeting from the perspective of a nonviolent or anti-scapegoating agenda like the mimetic theory of René Girard. Similar perspectives are available in social constructivism or relational theory, for claiming that our targeting each other always convenes an ‘I-it’ type of interpersonal or social relationship as in the Martin Buber essay, *I and Thou*, versus Buber’s ‘I-thou’ relationship more appropriately represented by Miroslav Volf’s metaphor of ‘the embrace.’
2. Cf. the classical Latin proverb, ‘**Man is wolf to other men,**’ in re: the human being as *homo lupus*.
3. Our millennial, enduring human predicament prompts this quintessential question of our well-being as a species: What can be done to ameliorate our nature as *homo lupus*—humans as intra-species predators, or *homo necans*—the human being as killer, and privilege our behavior as *homo pacificus*—the human being as peacemaker? That issue is arguably as determinative of humanity as our rightly prized rationality as *homo sapiens*, or the promise of our technical genius as *homo faber*. The project of treating ‘sacred violence’ addresses this predicament in the context of our millennial development as *homo religiosus*.



Deconstructing sacred violence

- is the collective project of our species,
- implicating all cultures and traditions at deep structural levels . . .



option: resume here from
“Sanctioned Targeting” above

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1. Illus: Vasily Vereshchagin, “Apotheosis of War” (1871). Cf. Peter Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics & Social Change* (1974) and Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966); and Raymund Schwager, *Must There Be Scapegoats? Violence & Redemption in the Bible*. (Harper & Row, 1987).

2. E.g., process theologian John Cobb reprises Alfred North Whitehead’s explanation of the pragmatic necessity of a two thousand year evolution in the abolition of slavery, despite the longstanding philosophical and theological rationale for abolition already implicit in ancient Greco-Roman, Platonic and Christian thought. "In his account of the movement toward the abolition of slavery, Whitehead faced . . . the fact that the extension of freedom and equality are not the only or even the most fundamental values. Even more fundamental is the survival of human community. More concretely, Whitehead speculates that the price for the abolition of slavery in the Roman Empire might well have been too high. He asks:

Would Rome have been destroyed by a crusade for the abolition of slavery in the time of Cicero or in the time of Augustus? Throughout the whole period of classical civilization the foundations of social order could scarcely sustain the weight upon them—the wars between states, the surrounding barbarians, the political convulsions, the evils of the slave system. In the age from the birth of Cicero to the accession of Augustus to undisputed power, the whole structure almost collapsed, before it had finished its appointed task. Even earlier, it had nearly met its fate, and later by a few centuries came the final collapse . . .



Deconstructing sacred violence

- is the collective project of our species,
- implicating all cultures and traditions at deep structural levels, and
- requiring systemic and millennia-long processes of exposé & re-construction¹
- for which some key religious and humanist resources follow (PART II & III).

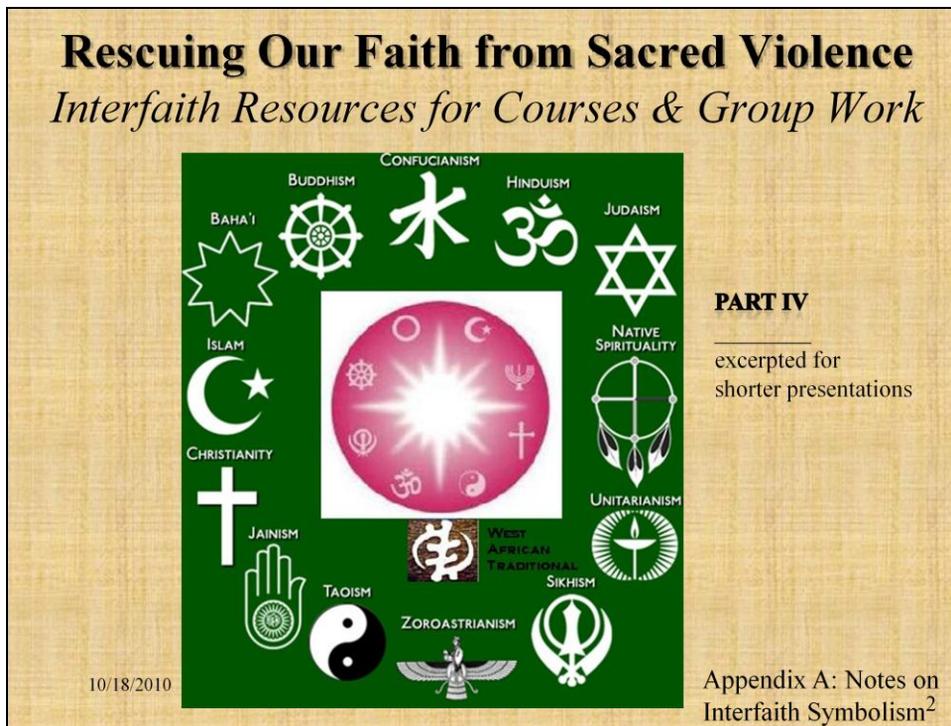
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[Note 2(b) cont'd from above] “. . . It is impossible to doubt the effect of any vigorous effort for the immediate abolition of the only social system men knew. It may be better that the heavens should fall, but it is only folly to ignore the fact that they will fall.” Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (NY: Free Press, 1933), p. 25f.

Cobb continues: “Political theologians seem, on the whole, to be willing for the heavens to fall. Whitehead judged otherwise, and in this judgement most process theologians are likely, reluctantly, to follow. We need to appreciate the positive contributions of existing social structures as well as to be sensitive to their failures to embody the principles of freedom and equality . . .

There is no doubt that this point can encourage support for existing structures which in fact should be overthrown. What now functions can always claim to have proven itself, whereas the proposals of revolutionaries have not. We must recognize the danger that ‘realism’ can be used to justify what in fact it does not justify. But we must recognize the danger that the abandonment of realism can lead to unjustifiable projects also. . . . imagination must be disciplined by a knowledge of political, social and economic theory. But it must not be restricted to the patterns into which the thought of the past has been channeled.” John B. Cobb, Jr., “Process Theology as Political Theology by John B. Cobb, Jr.,” accessed 7/27/2010 at www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=3035&C=2543 .



1. **Presenter:** Theophus “Thee” Smith is a native Atlantan, an associate professor in the Religion Department of Emory University, author of *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (Oxford, 1994), and coeditor of *Curing Violence* (Polebridge, 1994). Since the 1990s Thee Smith has facilitated forums and workshops on diversity and reconciliation issues at Emory and throughout the nation. Since 2003 he has served as a co-founding director of Southern Truth and Reconciliation—STAR (www.southerntruth.org), a regional nonprofit that consults with local communities seeking truth-and-reconciliation approaches to U.S. racial violence. Raised Baptist in the (U.S.) Black Church tradition, Thee is also a priest associate at the Cathedral of St. Philip in the Episcopal diocese of Atlanta. For additional information see: faculty profile at www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/faculty/smith.html and sermon archive at www.stphilipscathedral.org/Sermons/default.asp
2. Illustration: 3 superimposed images composed of (a) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by author on 6/25/2010; (b) center circular image from www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org accessed 9/15/2004; and (c) additional image called *Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.

Rescuing Our Faith from Sacred Violence

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[PART III: Sample Practicum /Workshop}	SEPARATELY
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Conclusion: Our Collective Wisdom Traditions

“If we take the world's religions at their best, we find the distilled wisdom of the human race.” —Huston Smith

“We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence.” —Gandhi

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1. Huston Smith, *The Religions of Mankind* (?) [chk]

2. M. K. Gandhi, *Harijan* journal 1935-55, & J. Bondurant, ed. Vol.8 (8/25/1940): 260, Garland Lib. of War & Peace (NY:1973). Cf. this related credo by M. L. King, Jr.: “I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.” Martin Luther King, Jr., “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech,” *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by James M. Washington (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), pp. 225-226.

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Appendix A

Notes on Interfaith Symbolism I

A. What is covert here?



B. What is covert/missing here?



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1. **Covert in image A:** (A1) Temple symbol (?) for Greco-Roman religions as an ancient type of world religion (?) followed by (A2) the cruciform Greek letters *chi* and *rho* for *Christos* or Christ. Note too the other contemporary world religions with the addition of Taoism: (A3) Buddhist prayer wheel; (A4) Hinduism; (A5) yin-yang of the Tao; (A6) Jewish ‘Star of David;’ and (A7) Muslim ‘Star and Crescent.’

2. **Covert in image B:** the center-most upper left quadrant features an empty ring or vacant circle symbolic of no-religious traditions (cf. ‘null set’). **Missing in image B:** African Traditional Religions (ATR), e.g., the center lower image added to image B in slide one above—*Gye Nyame*, “Except for God,” the Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.).

3. Sources: (a) generic black and white image composed of internet clip art circa 2001; (b) green background image from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> accessed by this author on 6/25/2010 and altered with (c) a superimposed center image accessed 9/15/2004 at www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org

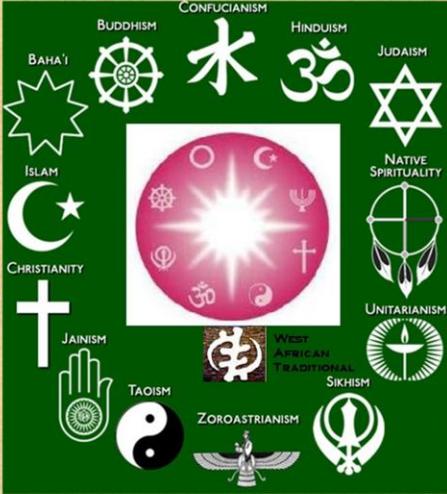
Appendix A

Notes on Interfaith Symbolism II

**West African
Traditional Symbol**



Gye Nyame
“Except God”



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1. ***Gye Nyame***, “Except God” or “Except for God,” the classic religious Adinkra symbol of West Africa (Ghana etc.), accessed at www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra/gyen.htm on 7/1/1010.
2. Other sources: (a) green background image accessed by author on 6/25/2010 from <http://themgv.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/interfaith1.jpg> and adapted with
(b) a superimposed center image accessed 9/15/2004 at www.OneSpiritInterfaithSeminary.org

APPENDIX B

RTJ Restorative & Therapeutic**Justice:** *Unified Theory in Ethics & Psychology, Law & Religion*

- “In recent years, an alternative approach to law, a worldwide movement, has been building momentum. This movement has two vectors, restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence . . .
- Perhaps a welding together of the two models into one, **RTJ**, would make the movement more effective.”

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[Source cited below]

“RTJ has the potential to resolve many kinds of conflict and reduce inequities in the legal system. Compared to the traditional legal model of justice, courts, judges, lawyers and prisons, restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence are quite similar. The difference between the two is mostly conceptual. As a frame within which to criticize and modify legal justice, therapeutic jurisprudence offers a strikingly different model, the mode of therapy as it is used in medical and psychological treatment. Although close inspection reveals that the therapeutic model is quite diverse, and therefore somewhat ambiguous, it does offer a framework to contrast with the legal model. Although restorative justice is the larger movement of the two, it suffers from the lack of such a model. Without a model, restorative justice offers piecemeal changes to correct the present legal system, one step again. Perhaps a welding together of the two models into one, RTJ, would make the movement more effective.” Thomas J. Scheff, "Community Conferences: Shame and Anger in Therapeutic Jurisprudence," *Revista Juridica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico* (University of Puerto Rico [U.P.R.], Rio Piedras Campus, School of Law) 59:1 (1990; 1-23):1-2.

APPENDIX B

RTJ Restorative & Therapeutic**Justice:** *Unified Theory in Ethics & Psychology, Law & Religion*

- Restorative / therapeutic justice (**RTJ**) benefits from the application of human psychology and counseling expertise to the goals of criminal law and social justice.
- The purposes to which **RTJ** applies therapeutic jurisprudence include the following . . .

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A key feature in this connection is what Scheff calls "reintegrative shaming," borrowing the expression from John Braithwaite in his book on *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. For reintegration of an offender to occur following conviction and sentencing, Braithwaite determines, the process must achieve the following balance: enough shaming for the seriousness of the offense to be made clear, but not so much that the level of humiliation plunges the offender into hopelessness, bitterness and spitefulness towards rejoining the community. Cf. John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* (1989). Cf. John Braithwaite and Stephen Mugford, "Conditions of Successful Reintegration Ceremonies: Dealing with Juvenile Offenders," *The British Journal of Criminology* 34:2 (Spring 1994):139-171.

The offender must be ashamed of what he did, and this shame must be visible to the [victim/community]. It is this shame—along with other emotions, such as grief—that allows a preliminary bond to be formed between offender and victim, because the offender's visible expression of emotion allows the victim to see the offender as a human being. Scheff, "Community Conferences," p. 11.

APPENDIX B

RTJ Restorative & Therapeutic**Justice:** *Unified Theory in Ethics & Psychology, Law & Religion*

- (1) repairing the social fabric torn by crimes and systemic injustices, and (2) reinstating or recovering the shared humanity of all the parties involved, thus (3) addressing not only the victims and the perpetrators of any given crime or conflict but also (4) the community-at-large as the most adequate site for **RTJ** processes and issues.

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A community skilled in restorative and therapeutic justice (RTJ), Scheff suggests, is able effectively to manage victim-offender shame and the moral indignation of victim parties and of the observing community.

The crucial point about moral indignation is that when it is repetitive and out of control, it is a defensive movement. It involves two steps: denial of one's own shame, followed by projection of blame onto the offender (I am not dishonorable in any way, whereas the offender is entirely dishonorable). For the participants to identify with the offender, they must see themselves as alike rather than unlike (there but for the grace of God go I). . . Thus, uncontrolled, repetitive moral indignation is the most important impediment to symbolic reparation and reintegration. On the other hand, to the extent that it is rechanneled, moral indignation can be instrumental in triggering the core sequence of reparation. (Scheff, "Community Conferences," p.15)

To admit the co-humanity that Scheff invokes above is not to exonerate offenders' crimes or misdeeds, but rather to mediate the process by which they may be induced to offer "symbolic reparation." In Scheff's terms such reparation involves dialogical expressions of respect and courtesy, regret or remorse, apology and forgiveness. In this regard it often precedes and enables offenders to agree to *material* reparation. Thus acknowledging offenders' co-humanity can establish an ethic of reciprocity; a moral basis for acknowledging and symbolically restoring the violated humanity of their victims. Cf. T.J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979; and Thomas J. Scheff and Suzanne M. Retzinger, *Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991.



Appendix C

Axial Age Axiom I¹

“What is required is an internal regeneration of the individual. The spiritual *habitus* of man himself will have to change. . . A new culture can only grow up in the soil of a purged humanity . . . [of a] *katharsis* . . . which liberates from the violent passions of life and leads the soul to peace.

“For the spiritual clarification which our time needs, a new *askesis* will be necessary.”

—Johan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (1936)²

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1. Cf. **Karl Jaspers’ Hypothesis of an "Axial Age"** introduced above in my ‘Axial Age’ Proposal, slide 23, where I explain:
The era 600-400 BCE was called “axial” by German philosopher Karl Jaspers. Radiating out from 600-400 BCE and extending more gradually from 800 to 200 BCE, key religious traditions in multiple parts of the world developed more enlightened, benign, and pro-human versions of their originating beliefs and traditions. For more detailed description see above.

2. Johan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1936), pp. 231,233-35. Huizinga (1872-1945), also the author of *Homo Ludens* and *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, was a Dutch historian and philologist with training in Indian literature.

In his brief three-sentence preface to *Shadow*, Huizinga was concerned that his negations of conventional forms of social and historical transformation—the “organs of society” such as “nations, churches, schools or parties” (p. 231) would “lead many to think of me as a pessimist. I have but this to answer: I am an optimist.”

In this connection consider Gandhian activism as a 20th century asceticism of nonviolence in re: *Askesis* (Greek): a renunciatory discipline, exercise, practice.



Appendix C

Axial Age Axiom II

- Our goals require informed ‘middle practices’—*mesoterica*
- to mediate effectively the nonviolent orientations that are espoused, but then subverted, by our most valued traditions and institutions—*esoterica*
- so that they find decisive realization in ordinary behavior and normative beliefs and practices—*exoterica*.

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In this schema *mesoterica* are required to mediate effectively the *terra incognita* (unknown terrain) between *esoterica* and most people’s ordinary experiences of *exoterica*. However consider this theorist’s caveat:

The emancipatory *intent* of a subjective practice cannot guarantee that its own activity in the service of liberation will be free from domination. This practice cannot escape its embeddedness in the historical context of domination. There is no external vantage-point from which a subjective practice could claim an immunity to the influences of the oppressive society against which it itself is directed.

A practice of subjectivity cannot assume that the effects of institutionalized imbalances in economic and social power, education and general welfare will disappear at its “borders.” Indeed the positing of such an ideal for a practice of subjectivity reveals a basic misconception about the dynamics of oppression in today’s society. A practice of subjectivity thus faces a permanent risk of being “contaminated” with the toxins of domination. The danger of the degeneration of such a practice is a permanent danger, intrinsic to the very nature of oppression in a mass society.

The recognition of this fact must go hand in hand with a commitment to counter the continuing effects as well as the causes of this degeneration. An emancipatory subjective practice would thus have to struggle continuously against its own reification, against the incremental sedimentation of liberatory processes into fossilized procedures, against the distortions of domination which ingress into all attempts at liberation. It could only do so if its own praxis nourished and encouraged in individuals a critical intelligence and a sense of self-worth *in the context of a developing solidarity* [with others]. Erica Sherover Marcuse, *Emancipation and Consciousness* (Blackwell, 1986) p. 141.

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