

## Mimetic Theory and Hermeneutics

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The thought of René Girard has been object of much interest in the last few years, both in the “Continental” and in the “English-speaking” philosophical areas.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, René Girard’s thought is not always accepted in the academic circles. The main cause for this is that his theory is considered too “philosophical” in the Human Sciences Departments, and it seems too close to cultural anthropology and literary criticism to be appreciated by philosophers. This is the reason why it could be fruitful to focus the attention on the philosophical aspects – I am tempted to say “on the central philosophical nucleus” – of René Girard’s way of thinking.

I will try to clarify what is meant exactly by “philosophy” within the mimetic theory of René Girard and will attempt to define the borders of the problem of the “death of philosophy,” as it appears from Girard’s work. Then, I will focus my attention on hermeneutic philosophy and its relationship with the mimetic theory. Finally, I will try to answer a question which I consider absolutely central: is it still possible to speak of “philosophy” within the Girardian universe?

### **I. What is “Philosophy” according to Girard?**

#### ***(A) Religion***

To understand what Girard means precisely by “philosophy,” we have to first clarify what Girard means by “religion.”

The hominisation process begins when one man starts to imitate the desires of another, that is when a man feels inferior, devoid of something other men seem equipped with. "Wanting to be like an other" means wanting to possess what he possesses: the mimetic rivalry thus appears and the violence increases with it. Inevitably, rivals tend to resemble each other more and more, as they are models for each other, and also mutual violence grows proportionately: this is the critical moment of the birth of every culture. The resulting event is the choice – a substantially arbitrary choice – of a scapegoat: the victim is expelled and so the community finds itself united.

The miracle of the rediscovered peace is later attributed to the scapegoat, which is therefore worshipped and deified. Two events are necessary in order that the miracle can happen again and the community does not collapse in the chaos of the violence. The first is the conceptualisation of the victimage expulsion so as to be able to repeat it. The second is the expression of such an expulsion in order for the other community members to agree to it. Reason and language appear originally in this way.

The expulsion is always repeated, replacing the original victim with newer and newer scapegoats: thus rites come into being. The memory of this experience will be preserved and distorted at the same time in myths. In all myths and rites we can find the presence, hidden or explicit, of a scapegoat. Rites and myths are the spine of every religion: so every religion is a combination of actions fitted to repeat the victimage expulsion for enjoying its beneficial effects, and narrations fitted to guarantee a good outcome for the sacrifice. The sacred which is at the heart of every religion is only a mask for violence.

Therefore, there is no doubt about the sacrificial nature of every religion. Every religion can be attributed to the victimage mechanism. However, the Old Testament is not merely a series of myths, because sometimes the chorus of lynchers, devout followers of Yahweh, a jealous and violent god, is broken by a voice standing up in defence of the victim. Sometimes the victim itself refuses his part and proclaims its innocence, as does Job.

Christianity is an exception among other religions; we can affirm, indeed, that the Gospels have nothing to do with the violent sacred. As a matter of fact Christ undergoes the collective lynching, but refuses the role of the scapegoat and reveals the truth of the victimage mechanism. However, if the Christian message escapes from the accusation of mystification, the Christian *religion* does not. Christianity has become a *religion*, with an impressive internal sacred core: the death of Christ is interpreted as sacrifice, the Father as a cruel god who needs the death of his son to save humanity, the self-sacrifice as a holy action.

Religion is one of the main tools, and chronologically the first one of them, fitted to perpetuate the victimage mechanism.

### **(B) Philosophy**

We can emphasize a strong identity between religion and philosophy in the sacrificial framework. The sacrificial mechanisms are not reserved to the religious, they are the mechanisms of every thought.

First of all, philosophy is, in the dominant trend of the Western philosophical thinking from Plato onwards, research of knowledge through reason. If reason is a faculty born to conceptualise the victimage expulsion, then philosophy is sacrificial *by definition*. The second argument is that religion and philosophy hold the same function. Myths conceal the presence of the victim and of the worshipped and hated model. In the same way, even philosophical systems hide the presence of a mediator. This philosophical dissimulation is more false than the mythical one. Religions connect violence with the sacred and attribute it to a divinity which is the only one ruling the destinies of men. Philosophies, generally, tend to defend an illusory autonomy of man.

Philosophy also conceals a ritual aspect, and I will focus my attention on this point later on. Now, we have to answer a possible objection. In fact, one could say that, if philosophy really plays the same role as religion, then we also have to find the sacred at the heart of philosophy. However, this does not always happen, and in any case this does not happen within modern philosophy, which on the contrary appears as desacralisation.

Jean-Pierre Dupuy answers this objection.<sup>2</sup> He says that the desacralisation process led by modern philosophy is paradoxical. The most desacralising philosophies finally refer to a *new* sacred. Sacred is everything which is pertinent to the scapegoat, to the worshipped and hated rival. This *love and hate* creates the sacred. When one leaves a model which has disappointed him, the model stops being sacred. However, the sacred does not disappear. It reappears very soon as the attribute of a new model, which does not seem as disappointing as the previous. This is the paradox of the desacralisation process within modern philosophy.

This conclusion can be confirmed by two examples: Descartes and Nietzsche. Both of them live in a historical moment of passage: they are narrators and protagonists of a sacrificial crisis. There is a phenomenon which is connected with all moments of crisis, according to Girard: the *monstrous double*. In this way, Girard defines each phenomenon of hallucination caused, at the paroxysm of the crisis, by the monstrous reciprocity. The monster takes the place of all that everyone wants to absorb and destroy at the same time, that is, the rival. During the crisis, each one is a ri-

val of everyone else, each one is also the double of everyone else. These dynamics cause the hallucinatory phenomena of splitting. To illustrate this, it is convenient to read how Girard examines the words of Georges Poulet concerning the biography of Descartes:

We turn to the biography of Baillet, as does Georges Poulet in his *Etudes sur le temps humain*, in order to set in relief all the self division that the Cartesian experience involves. This critic shows us that "in the intoxication of Descartes, there is ... a shadow side and there is a light side ... These two sides are ... tragically dissociated." The mind of the philosopher is affected by a "pendulum movement" ... Poulet speaks even of the "enemy brother" whom the philosopher harbors in his breast. He describes "the great misfortune of a time torn between a mind which is situated in nontemporal reality and the remainder who live only an obscure and indistinct duration." Beside the "dominating" Descartes here is a Descartes "swept off his route by a power that dominates him and transcends him." This is to say that "we enter into that dark country of anxiety ... which subsists subterraneously in us and whose action upon us never ceases." It should be understood that this experience of underground division is strictly bound to what is most fundamental in the philosopher's conduct. "One in its goal, his research was double in its method."<sup>3</sup>

Girard emphasizes that the method, that is the foundation of Cartesian research, is subject to a splitting. If we can recognize the presence of the monstrous double not only in the biography of the founder of modern rationalism, but also in the founding act of that philosophy, then it is a sacrificial way of thinking.

And a second example. Girard discusses the famous "vision of Rappallo" of Nietzsche:

On the route to Portofino the writer saw his hero appear and pass him without saying a word to him. Nietzsche evoked this strange event in a poem which lets no doubt exist concerning the nature of the experience: "Then, suddenly friend! One became two! / And Zarathustra passed by beside me."<sup>4</sup>

In Girard's view, we can recognize the experience of the monstrous double in the philosophy of Nietzsche, which represents a moment of crisis within the history of philosophy – the history of a sacrificial cycle.

As a mystification, philosophy will never show the truth about the scapegoat, exactly as a ritual ceremony, whose only purpose is to perpetuate the original victimage expulsion, will never be able to reveal the mecha-

mechanisms producing it.

Ritual thinking can never turn back to its own origin. It perpetuates itself in philosophical thinking and, in our time, in the modern human sciences. These are inheritors as much of the powers of rite as of its fundamental impotence.<sup>5</sup>

## II. The Death of Philosophy

If philosophy plays the same role as myth – in a certain sense, according to Girard, *it is* a myth – then it will have the same destiny of every myth in every culture. This means that in the long run, as the following sacrificial crisis is imminently nearer and nearer, philosophy will become less and less significant, hiding more and more the founding sacrifice. This is the reason why Girard says that philosophy is dying.

I do believe that philosophy has used up its resources. ... I believe ... that the end of philosophy brings with it a new possibility of scientific thinking within the human domain; at the same time, however strange this may seem, it brings with it a return to religious faith.<sup>6</sup>

The “scientific thinking,” which Girard talks about, is the knowledge of the victim, voicing the truth about the scapegoat. In the face of this knowledge, philosophy, as myth, is destined to fade.

However, one could say that science is a human form of knowledge, led by reason. If reason is substantially sacrificial, how can science tell the truth about the victim? This objection has to be considered seriously. In fact, Girard himself considers it. We read:

In comparison with the astonishing work of demystification effected by the Gospels, our own exercises in demystification are only slight sketches, though they may also be cunning obstacles that our minds erect against the gospel revelation.<sup>7</sup>

In a strict sense, it is impossible to perform a *logical demystification* of the mechanism, as *logical* means *corrupted by reason*, and reason is a sacrificial tool. So, does this mean the delivery to silence, the renunciation of thinking? Not necessarily. It is possible that our demystifications are cunning obstacles to the gospel revelation; nevertheless, human thinking can, at least, try to construct a demystifying knowledge, on condition that it be enlightened by the Gospels. This can happen in two different ways. The first one is *in the negative*, the second is *in the positive*.

We could define the first one as “textual archaeology” or “the unveiling of the sacred.” A clumsy lie unintentionally points out the truth that it wants

to hide. For instance, the reports of the Medieval Inquisition appear to our eyes as narrations of sacrificial persecutions. These reports consider the scapegoats guilty, but we understand that they were innocent. In the same way, a philosophical system can unintentionally show, so to say "*in the negative*," the working of a mechanism precisely when seeking to conceal it. A demystifying knowledge can show these *philosophical clumsy lies*. However, these dynamics are possible only if the one who analyses texts refers to the Gospels, as only if his analysis is based on the evangelical truth, then he can find the traces of mystification. Today, it is evident to us that witches were not culpable for a plague epidemic, but this was not so evident for a man living in the eleventh century. Why? Because, according to Girard, the Revelation has not ended with the death and resurrection of Christ, but has continued and still continues. The Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth which the Gospels talk about (overall *Gospel according to St. John*, 16, 8-11), is the knowledge revealed more and more in the world, continuing the revelation of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

We could define the second way in which a thought can try to be a demystifying knowledge as "unveiling of the lie of the sacred." If the point of view of the victim, and not that of persecutors, is assumed, then the truth can appear "*in the positive*." Shortly, I will try to indicate some examples of these two ways of thinking. However, I would first underline that "the death of philosophy," as it appears in Girard's work, is a *Christian* death, because it is mainly *resurrection*. A sacrificial way of thinking dies, but its death makes it possible to suppose a *non-sacrificial knowledge*. The evangelical message places man in the doorway of absolute knowledge: we are still in the world of reason, of thought, but this thought opens on to transcendence.

### III. Profane and Religious Hermeneutics

I will try to find the examples of those two ways of thinking which I labelled "the unveiling of the sacred" and "the unveiling of the lie of the sacred" within hermeneutic philosophy. The reasons for this choice will soon become clear.

The birth of modern hermeneutics dates back to the Protestant Reformation: the awareness of the hermeneutical problem, substantially extraneous to the previous conceptions of interpretation, appears in that historical context. The first field of application of the hermeneutic method were the Holy Scriptures: Flacius Illyricus emphasizes that interpretation reveals itself only if the interpreter approaches the texts not in an abstractly neutral way, but animated by a religious sensitivity, by a *pre-understanding* of the

truth of the text that itself searches and discovers its own confirmation. Such an affirmation fits with the Girardian view: texts have to be interpreted in the light of principles which only the Holy Scriptures hold.

However, it is interesting to note that Johann Heinrich Ernesti distinguished between “a theological hermeneutics” and “a profane hermeneutics.” This distinction, from a Girardian perspective, generates the illusion that a text can express its truth – the truth of the victim – apart from the demystifying principles of the Holy Scriptures. Ever since, hermeneutics has maintained this fundamental ambiguity. Even today, we can identify between “profane” hermeneutics, asserting that there are infinite interpretations, and “religious” hermeneutics, leading to the unveiling of the only valid interpretation, that is the only one revealing the truth about the victim.

### ***(A) Profane Hermeneutics – Jacques Derrida and the Unveiling of the Sacred***

I define “profane hermeneutics” as the position of those who assert the equivalence of all possible interpretations. They emphasize that their position is the only one which respects differences. They are sincere: “they do not know what they are doing,” in the literal sense that Girard attributes to the words of Jesus. In fact, this “respect for differences” legitimates the lynching of the innocents, because it asserts that the lie of the persecutors is an interpretation as valid as any other. As a result, this way of thinking leads towards the refusal of any knowledge and truth, as basing itself on the false principle that to believe in anything and to be violent are the same thing.

Modern philosophers usually tried to prove the divinity of man, each one asserting to be closer to the truth than the others. Today, there are philosophers who are trying to prove the same thing, but through opposed means. They assert to be closer to the truth as suspending the verdict about every truth. This is the reason why the truth, from this philosophical view, is the absence of every truth. Girard writes:

This still partial deconstruction confounds our present philosophical and cultural crisis with a radical impotence of thought and language. One no longer believes in philosophy but one keeps rehearsing the same old philosophical texts. And yet beyond the current crisis there are possibilities of a rational but no longer philosophical knowledge of culture. Instead, deconstruction seems content with a pure mirroring of the sacred that amounts to nothing, at this stage, but a purely literary effect; it risks degenerating into pure verbalism. And what the literary critics and academic disciples of deconstruction do not real-

ize is that as soon as one seeks nothing but the essence of literature it disappears.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, the philosophical text becomes the place in which the victimage expulsion is continuously repeated and, therefore, ritualised. However, Girard says, it never reaches a conclusion and for this reason it is possible to repeat it.

According to Girard, this is the case of Jacques Derrida.<sup>10</sup> About this, Girard writes:

If you examine the pivotal terms in the finest analyses of Derrida, you will see that beyond the deconstruction of philosophical concepts, it is always a question of the paradoxes of the sacred, and although there is no question of deconstructing these they are all the more apparent to the reader.<sup>11</sup>

Beyond every deconstruction, in Derrida's works there is the undemystified sacred. Therefore, his thinking is an unveiling of the sacred, because it is proposed again, on an interpretative level, in its lie. It is a "profane hermeneutics," because it does not make use of the demystifying principles provided by the Gospels.

As an example of these dynamics, we can consider Derrida's work "Plato's Pharmacy." Derrida's thesis is that the platonic condemnation of writing in the *Phaedrus* is ambiguous. On the one hand, Plato asserts that the *grammè* falsifies philosophical speech, as replacing the "alive voice." On the other hand, Plato underlines the duplicity of writing and writes his dialogues. Therefore, writing is a poison and a remedy at the same time, that is, a *pharmakon*.<sup>12</sup>

From a demystifying point of view, everything becomes clearer. Philosophy was born with an expulsion, the expulsion of writing. However, like every victim, writing returns and it becomes, in fact, the milestone of a new culture – Western culture, and then also philosophical culture. Every culture is based on the sacred violence done to the victim. In "Plato's Pharmacy" the sacred is absent and present at the same time. It is absent as it is denied; it is, indeed, the only thing which is not deconstructed. It is present because everything, in the deconstructions themselves, refers to a completely unexamined ground.

Derrida's analysis is basically correct. However, from the Girardian point of view, Derrida does not understand that writing could become a *pharmakon* only with the expulsion, not before: this is the reason why Derrida accuses Plato. In other words, this kind of hermeneutic thinking enters into the lie of philosophy and religion, unveils their metaphysical and violent claims, but reproduces their structure. The sacred does not disappear, it is



indeed at the heart of the “interpretative rite.” Unveiling the sacred, concealed in religion as well as in philosophy, does not yet mean revealing the truth, but means reproducing the lie on an interpretative level. The “profane hermeneutics” can be, therefore, the unveiling of the sacred, but not the unveiling of its lie.

**(B) Religious Hermeneutics – Paul Ricoeur and the Unveiling of the Lie of the Sacred**

Interpretation has always been relevant in the process of demystification. The Gospels can be read as sacrificial texts or as the main tool of demystification. A “history of interpretation,” that is to say a progressive understanding of the truth of violence, is possible only as a result of Gospel revelation. On the other hand, a “history of salvation” is possible only if the Holy Scriptures are reinterpreted beyond their sacrificial interpretation.<sup>13</sup> Girard writes:

Traditional Christian thinkers could proclaim the cleavage between Christianity and everything else, but they were incapable of demonstrating it. Anti-Christian thinkers can note the continuity but they are unable to come to terms with its true nature. Among our contemporaries, only Paul Ricoeur, particularly in his fine work *La symbolique du mal*, is willing to argue with determination that both positions are necessary.<sup>14</sup>

According to Girard, Paul Ricoeur’s thinking is therefore an example of the one which I defined as “religious hermeneutics” or “unveiling of the lie of the sacred.” In the work cited by Girard, Ricoeur considers myth as a symbol, that is, a revealing text, only if it is interpreted in the light of demystifying principles. Ricoeur distinguishes between mythical heritage and the narrations contained in the Holy Scriptures. For example, we can see this distinction in the opposition, which Ricoeur gives as evidence, between the Jewish Genesis and the other cosmogonic myths. In the myths, violence is central; in the book of Genesis, the Word is central.

The distinction between the mythical element and the Christian element is clearer in the way in which Ricoeur treats the figure of Christ. He emphasizes the profound change between the protagonist of myths, who finally ended up by accepting the violence and his guilt, and Jesus, who lets the violence destroy him, but only in order to lucidly unmask its role. The figure of Christ appears to Ricoeur irreconcilable with the mythical heritage. Ricoeur notes that, whereas all the myths can be read through the hermeneutic method, the evangelical narration cannot. Hermeneutic thinking reads myths, but only the evangelical demystification can read the her-

meneutics.

The hermeneutics of Ricoeur is therefore a demystification of mythical heritage made possible thanks to the principles of interpretation provided by the evangelical texts. The interpretation of myths opens a way to a knowledge which, reading myths, drops the false and keeps the true. Ricoeur positions himself within a religious hermeneutics. Because the interpretation of the evangelical texts given by him does not run the risk of relapsing into sacrificial logic, he puts into practice the unveiling of the lie of the sacred. The hermeneutics of Ricoeur is therefore the overcoming of the oblivion of the sacred.

In *La symbolique du mal* Ricoeur often emphasizes that the symbolism of the sacred coincides with the *aporia* of the representation, but, at the same time, it is also the *representation of the aporia*, in the doorway of absolute knowledge. If we are in the doorway of absolute knowledge, this means that we are still in philosophy, in the *logos*; on the other hand, it also means that this *logos* opens us to transcendence, to a faith which is not blind and groundless.

We can therefore conclude that hermeneutics can be a revealing thinking. However, it runs the risk of ritualising its interpretative act and therefore of perpetuating the mechanism. If we want to avoid this, we have to follow that idea of freedom which Dostoevskij's "Great Inquisitor" refused to follow, in so far as he considered it too dangerous: the freedom to leave the way of mystification and to set out on the way of demystification. Leaving the way of mystification is called by Girard the "death of philosophy." This means to recognize the truth of philosophy, that is, its lie with regard to the sacred. However, if the truth of philosophy is its death, the death is not the truth of "knowledge," of the philosophy which has been freed from every mystification.

Hermeneutic thinking seems therefore to be a problematic place, ambiguous and decisive at the same time, which presages the possibility of a non-sacrificial philosophy. The question which I will try to answer, at the end of this analysis, concerns exactly the right of citizenship of such a possibility.

#### IV. Knowledge in Faith

We have established that reason has, since its origins and also in its fundamental practices, shown itself to be a sacrificial tool. To develop a demystifying action, reason should be more than what it wants to demystify; but this is not the case, because the subject of this demystification is pure reason (reason without outside help), and the object is reason itself.<sup>15</sup>

However, in the Girardian universe, what could appear to be a defeat is then revealed as a victory from the point of view of the history of salvation, because it prevents the same mistake from happening again. We can therefore say that the mimetic-victim mechanism, which we can label the “logic of the world,” is, above all, a set of thoughts. Such a system is all-inclusive of reason, language and every other intellectual, cultural and social form of civilization. It will therefore never be able to produce, at least not without “external” contributions, a doctrine, a hypothesis, or a theory able to demolish it. The aim is to go beyond the kingdom which violence and its untruth have been building “since the foundation of the world” and a mere form of human “wisdom” is not sufficient for this. So, it is necessary for evangelic cunning to oppose the cunning of reason. Nothing in the Gospels seems to push man to disown his mimetic nature; in fact he could not do so, because this is the nature of man. The Gospels, according to Girard, do not preach an ethic of spontaneity. They do not expect man to give up imitation; they recommend imitating the only model which cannot change into a charming rival. And this only model is Jesus, because, thanks to his divine nature, he is not in fact bound by the chains of desire and violence, does not compete with those who imitate him, but he returns imitation with love. The Gospels furthermore push man to the imitation of the desire to refuse every imitation. The real difference between slavery produced by every other imitation and freedom produced by the imitation of Christ becomes one between a charmed imitation and an imitation in full humility of that model which promises the biggest happiness, the most lasting wealth.

What link has this knowledge, illuminated by faith, with philosophy? If we deprive philosophy of its logical framework to replace it with the Christian message and if, moreover, we deprive it of a specific field of investigation and of the pretension to the intelligibility of the world according to the canons it has always given, can we still talk about “philosophy” in the demystified Girardian universe?

What we can do is: we can still talk about philosophy as a gateway to knowledge that is the narration of the difficulties encountered in the search for truth. Philosophy not as possession, but as research. Now, this “knowledge in faith” is precisely the non-sacrificial philosophy which we were looking for. A knowledge in faith assumes reason, cancelling its violent effects. This non-sacrificial philosophy is “incarnation”: the point from which the strength of the Logos of revelation can work with all its efficacy, the centre of that circle of violence on which humanity has always moved. This knowledge does not bring with itself residues of violence because the centre is not “the privileged point of view,” but the gathering place of every point of view, that is, the nothingness of all the “points of view.” This does not mean

that it is not possible to understand the centre as such (this would be a “mystical” result); it rather means that this possibility is not a “concept”: it is not, an “idea,” in the Greek sense of the term (*idéin*) – it is not a “point of view.” Girard insists on the fundamental inadequacy of every purely philosophical and rational effort to gather what, by definition, eludes the Greek *logos* to be met again, now transfigured, in an “other” form of knowledge. The choice between destruction and palingenesis, between violence and love, is then totally delivered in the hands of humanity and of every single man. The ways which culture will decide to behave constitute this choice in its deepest essence. If the reason remains a pure sacrificial tool, man will choose apocalypse; if instead man accepts the evangelical illumination, the choice will be palingenesis, that is, the regeneration which will happen after the coming of God’s Kingdom.

Sure, “knowledge in faith” emerging from the Girardian reflections is a borderline concept: it always remains beyond our descriptive possibilities. In fact, we are in the time of no more (because the omnipotence of the sacrifice definitively waned) and of not yet (because revelation is not completely accomplished) and because of this, we need knowledge that can perceive the distance that separates us from the “last times.” If and when humanity is able to reach, or better, to build God’s Kingdom, the knowledge itself will have served its purpose, or it will undergo a palingenesis. In any case, we are venturing into hypotheses that are not really demonstrable, because they refer to another time and another condition, so far from ours that it would be a presumption (or superstition, so, once more, sacrificial thinking) to try to imagine them. In any case, this is really the direction in which all the Girardian thinking can be developed.

As a conclusion to this work, I want to point out the fruitfulness of research in the field of philosophy as knowledge in faith. We can call upon a metaphor of such knowledge in faith in the parable of the “Great Inquisitor,” as Girard presents it. Nowadays, philosophy (or human reason, if it is preferred), exactly like the Inquisitor, sees everything, knows everything, even understands the silent appeal of love, but it is unable to answer. The meaning of the kiss that Christ, without saying a word, gives to the unfortunate old man is that, when there is no answer, all that can be done is to reaffirm the presence of this love. So this kiss can be the image of that *Logos* the “Gospel According to St. John” talks about, of that “knowledge in faith” which may constitute the future of philosophy.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A previous version of this paper was presented at the Conference "Celebrating Girard" at Heythrop College, University of London, which was held on the 9-10 October 2004 in the presence of Girard himself. Helpful comments from Michael Kirwan are gratefully acknowledged.
- <sup>2</sup> Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *Ordres et Desordres* (Paris: Seuil, 1982).
- <sup>3</sup> René Girard, *Resurrection from the Underground: Feodor Dostoevsky* (New York: Cross Road, 1997), p. 91. The quote from Baillet is in "Le songe de Descartes," in *Etudes sur le temps humain* (Paris: Plon, 1950), pp 16-47.
- <sup>4</sup> Girard, *Resurrection*, p. 92.
- <sup>5</sup> Girard, *Job the Victim of his People* (Stanford: Stanford U. P., 1997), p. 124.
- <sup>6</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the Word* (Stanford: Stanford U. P., 1987), p. 438.
- <sup>7</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, p. 179.
- <sup>8</sup> Gianni Vattimo, "Storia della salvezza, storia dell'interpretazione", *Micromega*, 3 (1992), p. 107.
- <sup>9</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, p. 64.
- <sup>10</sup> "Philosophy, like tragedy, can at certain levels serve as an attempt at expulsion, an attempt perpetually renewed because never wholly successful. This point, I think, has been brilliantly demonstrated by Jacques Derrida in his essay 'La Pharmacie de Platon'." Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P., 1977), p. 296. See also B. Basso (ed.), "Interview with René Girard", *Denver Quarterly*, 13 (1978), pp. 28-40.
- <sup>11</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, p. 64.
- <sup>12</sup> For an analysis of the problem of the pharmakon in Derrida, see Girard, *Violence*, pp. 385-7; and "Lévi-Strauss, Frye, Derrida and Shakespearean Criticism", *Diacritics*, 3 (1973), pp. 34-8. For a discussion about Derrida's analysis on the pharmakon in Plato, see J. G. Williams, "On Job and Writing: Derrida, Girard, and the Remedy-Poison", *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 7 (1993), pp. 34-9.
- <sup>13</sup> Gianni Vattimo, elaborating Girardian suggestions, wrote: "the history of salvation lets the history of interpretation be, but at the same time: the history of salvation happens solely as history of interpretation. ... Interpretation, above all the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, has obviously always concerned, in the Hebrew-Christian tradition, the salvation." Vattimo, "Storia della salvezza", p. 106.
- <sup>14</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, p. 445.
- <sup>15</sup> See M. Serres, *Hermès V: Le passage du Nord-Ouest* (Paris: Minuit, 1980).