

sense of an inclusive 'WE', beyond the many exclusive ones that acerbate crises all over and drive marginal groups into turmoil. Speaking from the point of view of her organisation WJJ, the recipient not only thanked for the fascinating collection of original reflections, but pointed out how the practical hermeneutics practiced in this type of studies, becomes effective by raising the awareness of mimetic mechanisms. This helps when, as both editors have shown in practice, one engages in religio-social trouble spots. She called on the audience to pick up a copy and read Tolle, lege Her advice was taken in earnest, causing the publishers' salesman to run out of stock, much like André's father once ran out of his neighbour's herrings.

Wiel Eggen

René Girard et la Théologie Report from a Conference of the Association Recherches Mimétiques at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris

Thanks to Benoit CHANTRE's efforts René GIRARD's academic estate will soon be taken over by the French National Library in Paris. What would have been more fitting than conducting a Girard symposium at this highly reputed institution! Thus, CHANTRE invited for March 16, 2012 to a conference of the Association Recherches Mimétiques into the breathtaking architecture of the library, and more than 200 participants followed his invitation. Theological questions were the focus of this conference, and this was aptly so because the theological reception of GIRARD's thinking in France is still quite fragmentary and sometimes distorted. The very first theological reactions to *De Choses Cachées* viewed mimetic theory as the destruction of Christian traditions, especially the theology of sacrifice. Therefore professional theologians seemed to withdraw from the debate very quickly. Hopefully the French translation of R. SCHWAGER's *Must there be scapegoats?*, which has recently appeared with Flammarion Publishing House (also thanks to CHANTRE's efforts), will rectify some of the distortions.

For these reasons the conference mainly wanted to attract French theologians. In his opening presentation Benoit CHANTRE placed the emphasis on theological methodology: Differentiating between the divine that "comes

from humans" and the divine that "comes to humans" allows for the revision of traditional theological methods and provides a link for a creative dialogue with our current culture.

The main talks of the conference splendidly corroborated this basic assumption. James ALISON presented his outline of a theology of original sin, which is inspired by GIRARD and joins together the doctrine of original sin and the message of the resurrection. The center of his presentation was sin as pathology of desire, which could be seen as paying homage to *Mensonge romantique*. Francois EUVÉ, Dean of the Jesuit Faculty Centre Cevres, discussed ALISON in a "creative" way and developed an outline of his own, a relational anthropology, which also found its focus in the message of the resurrection and the constitution of the body of Christ. The Jewish interlocutor, Dan ARBIB propounded a clear-cut thesis, namely that GIRARD's anthropology was "perfectly Christian" and therefore—because centered on sacrifice?—it was in the final analysis "pagan". ARBIB drew on the distinction between a Judaism of the law within the land (which would have to be centered on sacrifice as well) and a Judaism of the dispersion among the peoples, which had to be centered on the word. He provided a masterpiece of Rabbinic learnedness, also drawing on Levinas. His basic argument that Jewish anthropology was an "anthropology of the word" and therefore completely anti-sacrificial was used by ARBIB as an argument against GIRARD. I suspect, however, that the presenter is more indebted to GIRARD in his argument than he would admit.

Another masterpiece of learnedness, this time philosophical, was provided by Lucien SCUBLA. Starting from the supposition that the strongest part of GIRARD's theory was his ideas about sacrifice, he positioned these between ROUSSEAU and PASCAL. He even diagnosed a chasm between GIRARD's Catholic attitude and his theory of sacrifice. This actually was water on the mills of the early French theological receptions. Dominique PECCOUD concluded this intriguing day with an outline of a Trinitarian theology, which was original and also inspired by Girard. Other participants included—besides this reporter—Michael KIRWAN from London and Jean Pierre DUPUY.

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