

# ELEMENTS TO A PHENOMENOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

Centre for Thought of John Paul II (Warsaw)  
Instituto de Filosofía "Edith Stein" - International Academy of Philosophy (Granada)

Course of the International Summer School: 06.2015

Professor: Mátyás Szalay

## I. DESCRIPTION

Religion is often called the cause of violence. The meaning of these words, however, is quite ambiguous. Through a phenomenological analysis of certain conscious phenomena like the 'fundamental attitude', the 'act of empathy' and 'giving a testimony' we will offer some elements towards a more sophisticated account of what kind of religion might cause violence. We hope to arrive thereby at a better account of the relation of religion and violence through a careful distinguishing and describing of conscious experiences, illumined also by readings in classic literature.

## II. CONTENTS

Session 1: Introduction into a Phenomenology of Consciousness

- Actions, Acts, Attitudes, Psychic States

Session 2: Typology of Attitudes

- Violent Attitudes in the Light of the Fundamental Attitudes

Session 3: The Intersubjective Sphere of Violence. The Act of Empathy.

- The Other – Friend or Enemy?

Session 4: "Religious Violence"

- Fundamental Attitude Causing Violent Acts?

Session 5: Giving a Testimony of God

- Religion and Peace versus Religion and Violence

## III. METHODOLOGY

Seminar discussion

## IV. EVALUATION

Final examination

## V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander Pfänder, *Die Seele des Menschen. Versuch einer verstehenden Psychologie*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle a. S., 1933
  - Zur Psychologie der Gesinnungen, in: *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*", Halle (Max Niemeyer), Band I (1913) und Band III (1916).
- Mariano Crespo, 'Esbozo de una fenomenología de las disposiciones de ánimo. *Diálogo Filosófico* 68 (2007) 229-249. o.
- Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, *Reconciliation and penance*
- Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (1st Edition) 2014
- Stein, Edith. 1989. *On the Problem of Empathy*, translated by Waltraut Stein, ICS Publications.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch. Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution* [1912]. Ed. Marly Biemel. *Husserliana* 4. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, especially §§18a–b (60–70), §§36–42 (152–69), §§59–60a (266–77), et passim.

# **POLITICS OF CONFLICT: CHRISTIAN – MUSLIM ENCOUNTERS**

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Course of the International Summer School: 06.2015

Professor: Monika Gabriela Bartoszewicz

## **I. DESCRIPTION**

The issue of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims is a highly contested issue. It becomes a political issue not only in a contemporary context of recent acts of terrorism perpetrated in the name of Allah, but also when taking into consideration a greater context of previous violent encounters and conflicts of the past. To what extent does it influence (or perhaps determine?) interactions between Christians and Muslims and in what way the religious elements of hostile actions (both physical and symbolic) in their spatial and temporal dimension of globalised world render the conflict insolvable in political terms?

## **II. CONTENTS**

Session 1: Introduction. (Huntington, Roy)

Session 2: Spiritual Struggles? (Ratzinger, Weigel, Trifkovic)

Session 3: Heritage of the Past. (Cook, Sookhdeo 2007)

Session 4: The Cross and the Sword. (Ibrahim, Spencer)

Session 5: New Frontiers vs. New Frontlines (Phillips, Sookhdeo 2007)

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

Each seminar will consist of a short lecture introducing the topic followed by a case study and subsequent discussion. The sessions will be devoted to exploring (and challenging!) different concepts and theories concerning the encounters between Muslims and Christians. This way not only will you gain a sound knowledge on the issue, but also you will learn how to apply the theoretical tools into practical use.

## **IV. EVALUATION**

Case analysis.

## V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cook, D. (2005). *Understanding Jihad*, pp. 5-48.
- Huntington, S.P. *The Clash of Civilisations*. Sections: *La Revanche de Dieu* and *The Islamic Resurgence*.
- Ibrahim, R. (2013). *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians*, pp. 31-84.
- Phillips, M. (2006). *Londonistan*. Chapters 3, 4 and 8.
- Ratzinger, J. *The Spiritual Roots of Europe: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*.
- Roy, O. (2004). *Globalized Islam. Introduction*.
- Sookhdeo, P. (2007). *Global Jihad. The Future in the Face of Militant Islam*. Chapter 11, pp. 240-269.
- Sookhdeo, P. (2008). *Faith, Power and Territory. A Handbook of British Islam*, pp.35-53.
- Spencer, R. (2007). *Religion of Peace? Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn't. Chapter 8*, pp. 137-152.
- Trifkovic, S. (2002). *The Sword of the Prophet. "Ecumenical Jihad" section*, pp. 83-87.
- Weigel, G. (2007). *Faith, Reason, and the War against Jihadism. A Call to Action. Part One: Understanding the Enemy*.

# The Political Theology of René Girard

Centre for the Thought of John Paul II (Warsaw)  
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Course of the International Summer School: 06.2015

Professor: Michał Łuczewski

## I. DESCRIPTION

René Girard is one of the most influential thinkers of our time. Over the years, in the course of developing and extending his theory, he came to recognize it as a powerful tool of Christian apologetics, which provoked his own conversion. As a consequence of his intellectual conversion he underwent a subsequent spiritual conversion and became an ardent follower of the Catholic Church. Purely secular mimetic theory has turned out to be – as Girard puts it – the anthropology of the cross.

Since his classic study, "Violence and the Sacred" (1972), Girard has explored the relation between violence and religion or – more broadly – the constitution of humanity. Whereas mythical religions put their violent roots behind a veil, Christianity, the only true religion, exposes the founding murders that constitute human culture. The goal of this seminar is a critical engagement with Girard's thought and an in-depth scrutiny of his political and theological insights. The strength and originality of his thought is best seen when it is juxtaposed against key papal encyclicals: *Fides et Ratio*, *Evangelium vitae* and *Redemptor hominis*.

## II. CONTENTS

Session 1: The Anthropology of the Cross

- a. R. Girard, The Anthropology of the Cross
- b. Redemptor hominis

Session 2: Violence and Culture

- a. R. Girard, Triangular desire; Scapegoat
- b. Evangelium vitae

Session 3: The Violence of Myth and the Truth of the Bible

- a. R. Girard, Are the Gospels mythical?
- b. Fides et ratio

Session 4: Forgiveness and Atonement

- a. R. Girard, Violence and the Lamb Slain
- b. Reconciliatio et paenitentia

## Session 5: The apocalyptic Enlightenment

- a. R. Girard, Nietzsche versus the Crucified, Christianity will be victorious
- b. Ecclesia in Europa

### III. METHODOLOGY

Seminar discussion  
Commentary of texts

### IV. EVALUATION

Participation in the discussion  
Final examination

### V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*
- John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*
- John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*
- John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*
- John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*
- Girard, R. *I see Satan fall like lightning*, Gracewing Publishing, 2001
- Girard, R. *Are the Gospels Mythical?* "First Things" 4/1996
- Girard, R. *Battling to the End: Conversations with Benoît Chantre*, Michigan State University Press 2009
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- Girard, R. *Violence and the Sacred*, Bloomsbury Academic Press 2013 (1972)
- Girard, R. *War and Apocalypse*, "First Things" 7/2009
- Palaver, W. *René Girard's Mimetic Theory*, Michigan State University Press 2013
- Williams, J. G. (ed.), *The Girard Reader*, The Crossroad Publishing 1996

# RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND THE DIFFERENCE OF THEOLOGY

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Course of the International Summer School: 06.2015

Professor: Aaron Riches

## I. DESCRIPTION

It is the conventional wisdom of liberal democracy that the nature of religious faith and claims to metaphysical truth have an inherent propensity towards intolerance and violence. This conventional wisdom is putatively confirmed by history, by the Wars of Religion and the Inquisition, the Holocaust, and more recently by the unending cycle of violence in the Holy Land and the new murderous terror of ISIS. This seminar course, dedicated to a close reading of various texts, will problematize this widespread presumption, and signal to various different and less reductive analyses.

## II. CONTENTS

### Session 1: Critique of Violence

- Benjamin, 'Critique of Violence'.
- Benedict XVI, Regensburg Lecture.

### Session 2: Metaphysical Violence

- Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, pp. 97-192.

### Session 3: Divine Violence

- Žižek, Slavoj, *Violence*, pp. 178-205.

### Session 4: Religious Violence

- Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, pp. 123-180.

### Session 5: The Peace of Theology

- Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 259-442.

## III. METHODOLOGY

Seminar discussion  
Commentary of texts

## IV. EVALUATION

Participation in the discussion  
Final examination

## V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benjamin, Walter. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1986.
- Cavanaugh, William T. *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Milbank, John, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Schall, S.J., James V. (ed), *The Regensburg Lecture* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2007).
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