

## **Girard and Anselm: The Ontological Argument and Mimetic Theory<sup>1</sup>**

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It may seem strange to connect the ontological argument for God's existence with René Girard's thought. My first aim is to clarify this connection.<sup>2</sup> In order to do so, we must first suggest three distinct hermeneutical approaches to Girard. If we take an internal, literal approach, we find that Girard writes nothing about the ontological proof. Nevertheless, he does cite Anselm. If we take an internal, non-literal approach to Girard, we can try to deduce what he might have thought about the ontological proof on the basis of his mimetic theory, thereby extending his thought while remaining within his theory. If we take a critical approach, we can interpret Girard from an external perspective and critically analyze analogies between the ontological proof and his mimetic theory on the assumption that there is no *a priori* reason why there cannot be a relationship between an argument and a thinker, even without that thinker's awareness and in spite of his intentions.

With respect to the internal, non-literal approach, we must go back to the foundations of mimetic theory and briefly clarify what Girard means by "religion" and "philosophy." According to Girard, the hominization process begins when one human being starts to imitate the desires of another, that is, when a man feels inferior, devoid of something with which other men seem equipped.<sup>3</sup> "Wanting to be like another" means wanting to possess what the other possesses. Mimetic rivalry appears, and with it, violence. Rivals inevitably tend to resemble each other insofar as they are models for each other; mutual violence grows proportionately. According to Girard, rivalry is the critical moment of the birth of every culture. The resulting outcome is the selection—a substantially

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<sup>1</sup> Helpful comments from Chris Fleming and Paul Redding are gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to Andrzej Wiercinski and Sean McGrath for their amicable assistance in editing.

<sup>2</sup> Only a few studies have explored this issue: Giuseppe Fornari, "La vittima e il corpo. La prova dell'esistenza di Dio nel pensiero di René Girard," in *Filosofia e Teologia* 13 (2/1999): 260-270.

<sup>3</sup> I have examined this issue in Paolo Diego Bubbio, "Mimetic Theory and Hermeneutics," in *Colloquy Text Theory Critique* 9 (2005).

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/others/colloquy/issue9/bubbio.pdf>.

arbitrary decision—of a scapegoat: The victim is expelled and so the community finds itself united.

The miracle of rediscovered peace is later attributed to the scapegoat, who is subsequently worshipped and deified. Two events are integral to the possibility of this miracle happening again and to the community's ability to resist collapsing into the chaos of violence. The first is the translation of the expulsion of the victim into conceptual thought, as a means of being able to repeat it. The second is the communication of the expulsion as a means of helping community members to validate it. Reason and language, respectively, appear originally in this way.

The original expulsion is always repeated, the original victim replaced with newer and newer scapegoats: it is in this way that rites come into being. The memory of the first scapegoat is both preserved and distorted in myths. In all myths and rites we find the presence, hidden or explicit, of a scapegoat. And myths and rites are the backbone of every religion. Every religion thus emerges as a combination of actions designed to repeat the expulsion of the victim, and narratives designed to guarantee a good outcome for the sacrifice. The sacred that is at the heart of every religion is only a mask for violence.

In Girard's view every religion has a sacrificial nature. Religion exists in order to perpetuate the mechanism of victimization. Mimetic theory posits a strong identity between religion and philosophy. The sacrificial mechanisms are not reserved specifically for religion, they are the mechanisms operative at the heart of all thinking. In the dominant Western trajectory, philosophy is the search for knowledge through reason. If reason is a faculty born to conceptualize the expulsion of the victim, then philosophy is sacrificial by definition.

Insofar as it is implicated in the mystification of reason, philosophy will never show the truth about scapegoating, just as a ritual ceremony, the only purpose of which is to perpetuate the original expulsion of the victim, will never be able to reveal the mechanisms which produce it. Philosophy can never reveal the mechanisms behind its production. In its origins, reason is a sacrificial tool. In order to demystify philosophy, reason would have to be above that which it demystifies, which is not possible insofar as the subject of the demystification is reason itself.<sup>4</sup> Reason alone can never completely reveal its own origins. It perpetuates itself in philosophical thinking and, in our time, in the modern human sciences. Such modes of human endeavor are the inheritors both of the power of the rite, not to mention its fundamental impotence.<sup>5</sup>

### **Girard's Argument**

Girard's early work culminates in *Violence and the Sacred*.<sup>6</sup> The turning point of

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<sup>4</sup> See Michel Serres, *Hermès V: Le passage du Nord-Ouest* (Paris: Minuit, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> René Girard, *Job the Victim of his People* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 124.

<sup>6</sup> René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

his thinking is contained in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*.<sup>7</sup> Here Girard still claims that every religion is sacrificial. The Old Testament, he continues, is not, however, merely “mythological”; sometimes the chorus of the lynch mob, the devout followers of the jealous and violent Yahweh, is broken by a voice rising up in defense of the victim. Sometimes this is the victim himself, proclaiming his innocence, as in the Book of Job. Christianity, for Girard, is an exception among religions insofar as the Gospels break with the violent sacred. On this view, Christ undergoes the collective lynching but refuses the role of the scapegoat and reveals the truth of the victimage mechanism.<sup>8</sup> But how is Christianity an exception? The Gospels gravitate around Christ’s passion, which is the same drama narrated by every mythology: the collective murder of a scapegoat. The Gospels, however, are not myths in this sense, precisely because they lay the blame for the violence on the persecutors, not on the victim. They deny the ambivalence of the sacred in order to reveal the arbitrariness of sacrificial violence.

From Girard’s arguments it can be deduced that the victimage mechanism encompasses all of reason, language and civilization. It cannot produce, at least not without “external” contributions, a doctrine, a hypothesis, or a theory able to demolish it. In order to denounce the victimage mechanism, it is necessary to be outside the mechanism. Only a man who is free from the chains of the mimetic, who does not think according to the rules of violence and is extraneous to it, could do this. But the whole of mankind is the prisoner of this circle. No mere human could ever reveal the truth that we read about in the Gospels. The fact that the Gospels possess an authentic knowledge of violence reveals that its insight cannot be merely human. Therefore, according to Girard, Christ cannot be simply a man; he must also be divine. Girard writes:

To recognize Christ as God is to recognize him as the only being capable of rising above the violence that had, up to that point, absolutely transcended mankind. . . . We do not have to adopt the hypothesis of Christ’s divinity because it has always been accepted by orthodox Christians. Instead, this hypothesis is orthodox because in the first years of Christianity there existed a rigorous (though not yet explicit) intuition of the logic determining the gospel text.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Christian message is free of mystification, the Christian religion itself is not. Christianity has developed an internal sacred core: The death of Christ is interpreted as a sacrifice to the Father, the cruel god who

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<sup>7</sup> René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 438. The first French edition appeared in 1978.

<sup>8</sup> “Victimage” is the term Girard uses to denote the process of scapegoating, the purging of guilt through a scapegoat that symbolizes society’s guilt.

<sup>9</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, 219. See also 216: “If the Son of Man and the Son of God are one and same, it is because Jesus is the only person to achieve humanity in its perfect form, and so to be one with the deity.” See also Fornari, “La vittima e il corpo,” 263-264.

requires the death of his son to save humanity. Girard cites Anselm's theory of justification in this regard. Anselm, like most Medieval thinkers, believes that God requires a precious and beloved victim to avenge his honor.<sup>10</sup>

### **Girard's Implicit Ontological Argument**

I suggest that Girard's argument for the divinity of Christ, if properly reconstructed, is formally and logically equivalent to Anselm's ontological proof. Indeed, Girard's argument does not work without implicit reliance upon Anselm's proof.

Let us look at the first formulation of Anselm's ontological proof. In the *Proslogion* Anselm gives two definitions of God. The first one, and the better known, is *id quo maius cogitari nequit*, "that than which nothing greater can be thought" (IQM). Later on, in chapter 15, Anselm gives another definition of God: *quiddam maius quam cogitari possit*, "something greater than whatever can be thought" (QM). The second is implicit in the first: God must be QM; otherwise he would not be IQM.

Anselm's demonstration of God's existence is based on the definition of God as IQM. The demonstration proceeds as follows:

The one who denies the existence of God refers to God as IQM.

Therefore, the denier has the idea of God in mind (that is, God exists as an idea in the mind).

But the IQM cannot exist only in the mind, because an IQM that exists would be greater than a being that exists only in the mind, and this is a contradiction.

Therefore, God exists.<sup>11</sup>

Let us try to formalize Girard's argument.

Girard says: The Gospels are the only texts in which we can read the truth about the victim. Christ, with his preaching, shows the arbitrariness of the scapegoat and thus completely demystifies the mimetic mechanism. But no human being could do this, because all are trapped in the mechanism; reason itself arose to perpetuate the victimage expulsion, and thus is unable to know and express the complete truth about the victim (that is, it is unable to do what Christ does). Thus, Christ is not simply a man; he also has a divine nature (that is, he is the son of God). Therefore, God exists.

We note, in this argument, an insistence on the epistemological role played by Christ with his preaching. Christ is the only one who can tell the truth.

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<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that Von Balthasar considers this Girardian reading of Anselm's thought to be "altered"; for this reason, he associates it with Rahner. Von Balthasar compares Girard and the early Karl Barth. According to Barth, the *analogia entis* "is the Antichrist's trick"; according to Girard, the religious dimension is "Satan's trick." Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theodramatik* III (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1980), 276-291.

<sup>11</sup> According to Graham Oppy, this is the conceptual (or hyperintensional) formulation of the ontological argument. See Graham Oppy, *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Nobody else can. Thus, Girard's argument for the divinity of Christ, and the consequent conclusion about the existence of God, seems to be based on the following definition of Christ: Someone who knows something greater than whatever one could think (CQM). This definition is the „epistemological translation“ of Anselm's definition of God as QM. Is the definition sufficient to demonstrate both that Christ is not simply a man, and that God exists?

(a) Is Christ not simply a man?

Girard deduces that Christ is not simply a man from CQM. Nevertheless, there is an aporia in this passage. If Christ is the holder of a divine message (i.e., CQM), this does not imply that this holder is the Son of God. Holding to Girard's premises, we could argue that God wanted the birth of a completely innocent man, extraneous to the mimetic rivalry that binds us all, without necessarily deriving from this that this man is the Son of God. Girard cannot deduce (a) from CQM because, given the premises, salvation seems to depend on knowledge. Girard clearly emphasizes the epistemological and ethical dimensions of salvation:<sup>12</sup> Jesus saves because he tells the truth about the victim (and because he offers himself as the only model who cannot turn into a rival).

In passing, I want to emphasize that, according to the Christian tradition, it is not sufficient to say that Christ saves: Christ himself is salvation. The distance between the two affirmations is not negligible. If Christ merely saves, Christ differs from many others victims (Job, for example) because the presentation of the truth of his victimization, and of the lie of the persecutors, is clearer and more complete; the difference is, therefore, purely quantitative. If Christ is salvation, on the other hand, he is salvation because he is God, and his sacrifice thus assumes a decisive value; only in this case is the difference between Jesus and the other victims qualitative.<sup>13</sup> We cannot deduce from CQM that Christ is not simply a man (a) because (a) depends on (b).

(b) Does God exist?

Can we demonstrate from CQM that God exists? A syllogism seems to lead in the desired direction:

MP: Christ is someone who knows something greater than whatever one could think (CQM)

mP: Only God could know something greater than whatever one could think

C: Christ is God

The question is: Why can God alone know something greater than whatever one could think? There is no logical reason to affirm this, unless we surreptitiously assume the definition of God as the most perfect being, that is, the IQM. Thus:

Girard affirms CQM.

He deduces (a) and (b) from CQM, but

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<sup>12</sup> Girard himself admits this. See René Girard, *Les origines de la culture*. Entretiens avec Pierpaolo Antonello et João Cezar de Castro Rocha (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> See Massimo Cacciari, *Dell'inizio* (Milano: Adelphi, 1990), 561.

(a) depends on (b), and

(b) implies IQM

Therefore, (b) is true if and only if IQM is true.

Let us go back to the ontological proof. The demonstration of God's existence is based on this definition of God as IQM. As is well known, Kant considers this proof either contradictory or impossible. It is contradictory if God's existence is assumed in the concept of God. It is impossible if his existence is not assumed, because in that case the existence must be added synthetically to the concept, that is, through experience—but God is beyond experience.<sup>14</sup> The ontological proof seems to be convincing because it surreptitiously assumes in the definition of IQM that which has to be proved, namely God's existence. According to Kant, then, the ontological proof is invalid. We cannot deduce the existence of God from the definition of God as IQM.

With respect to Girard's repetition of the ontological proof, we cannot assume the existence of God to be implicit in IQM—to do so would be to assume what remains to be demonstrated, that is, the existence of God. But if we do not assume the existence of God to be implicit in IQM, we must also admit that we cannot deduce that God exists from CQM.

### **Anselm, Hegel, and Girard's Hermeneutics**

The problems I have raised do not arise, I suggest, from any inadequacy in Girard's analysis. They arise, rather, from the *coherence* of his method. Girard often emphasizes his distance from contemporary philosophy. He contends that philosophy is properly a reiteration of a series of myths, having at its center the same narrative structures as mythology. Girard considers mimetic theory to be a scientific hypothesis. But the choice of this „scientific“ method can lead solely to the epistemological and ethical conclusion we have seen. The definition of Christ as „someone who knows something greater than whatever one could think“ is precisely what Girard can admit to while remaining faithful to his premises and his methodology. In fact, this decision presents transcendence as the culmination of theory, which is why it cannot be accepted as its presupposition.

Girard nevertheless considers the divinity of Christ to be central point in his theory. It may seem surprising that Girard, who is always critical of metaphysics, which he considers to be a myth, makes considerable if unconscious use of the ontological proof. Is he simply guilty of naivety?

Not all who follow Kant reject the ontological argument. For example, Hegel refuses Kant's argument.<sup>15</sup>

According to Hegel, Kant's barbarous triviality lies on the fact that we

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<sup>14</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B667.

<sup>15</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970-1971), §51.

all know that concept and being cannot be united in finite beings. But the ontological proof refers to the infinite being . . . Hegel refers to the use by Kant of a finite being to refute the ontological argument . . .

Therefore, Kant's refutation of the ontological argument would in fact ignore, Hegel would say, that existence is stated as a predicate of the infinite being only and not of a hundred thalers or some other finite being.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, according to Hegel, the starting point of the ontological proof is the concept, or consciousness, of God as the absolutely perfect being. The proof shows the means by which religious consciousness can conceive the unity of finitude and the infinite. Hegel refuses Kant's argument because, although in the finite there can be no unity of concept and being, this unity is properly constitutive of God.<sup>17</sup> Properly speaking, this is not an argument, since it assumes that the infinite exists. Even Anselm, in his answer to Gaunilo, explains that in his proof he was addressing the believer, who sees the whole; in this way also "the fool" (the *insipiens*) will be able to understand the existence of God. The ontological proof thus only seems to make sense from a particular point of view, in a particular hermeneutic horizon.

We might be tempted to say that there is no difference between the traditional use of the proof and Girard's use of it. I think that there is a significant difference, however. For Anselm, "God exists" is a proposition that is true because it has been revealed, and that revelation is the central point of the history of salvation. This means that the proposition is true by authority: Only after we have affirmed this truth can we prove it. For Girard, too, revelation is part of the history of salvation. Nevertheless—and this is the point—the history of salvation coincides with the history of interpretation. In fact, according to Girard, revelation has not ended with the death and resurrection of Christ, but has continued since and continues on. The Paraclete, the spirit of truth of which the Gospels speak,<sup>18</sup> is the knowledge that reveals itself more and more in the world and continues the revelation of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

The birth of modern hermeneutics dates back to the Protestant Reformation: The awareness of the hermeneutical problem, substantially extraneous to previous conceptions of interpretation, appears in that historical context. The first application of the hermeneutic method is in the interpretation of scriptures: Flacius Illyricus emphasizes that interpretation reveals itself only if the interpreter approaches the texts not in an abstractly neutral way, but is

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<sup>16</sup> Maria de Lourdes Borges, "Hegel and Kant on the Ontological Argument," in *20th World Congress of Philosophy Abstracts I* (Boston: EUA, 1998), The Paideia Project, <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Mode/ModeDeLo.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion III*, trans. P. Hodgson (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 351-8.

<sup>18</sup> See John 16: 8-11.

<sup>19</sup> See Gianni Vattimo, "Storia della salvezza, storia dell'interpretazione," *Micromega* 3 (1992):

animated by a religious sensitivity, by a pre-understanding of the truth of the text that searches and discovers its own confirmation. Such an affirmation fits with the Girardian view: Texts have to be interpreted in light of principles that the scriptures alone hold. It is interesting to note, however, that Johann Heinrich Ernesti distinguishes 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 scriptures. Even today we can distinguish between a “profane” hermeneutics, which asserts that there is an infinity of possible interpretations, and a “religious” hermeneutics, which leads to the unveiling of the only valid interpretation - that is, the only one that reveals the truth about the victim. It is evident, from Girard’s texts, that when he criticizes hermeneutics, he refers to the latter and not the former.

I define “profane hermeneutics” as the philosophical position that emphasizes the equivalence of possible interpretations, instead of that which distinguishes them. According to mimetic theory, this “respect for differences” legitimates the lynching of the innocents because it can lead one to think that the lie of the persecutors is only one interpretation, as valid as any other. As a result, this way of thinking leads towards the refusal of any knowledge and truth, basing itself on the principle that to believe in anything and to be violent are the same thing. According to Girard, profane hermeneutics holds itself to be closer to the truth by 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 realize is that as soon as one seeks nothing but the essence of literature it disappears.<sup>20</sup>

For Girard, the philosophical text becomes the place in which the expulsion of the victim is continually repeated, and thereby ritualized. However, he says, philosophy never reaches a conclusion; for this reason it is possible to repeat it.<sup>21</sup> Unveiling the sacred does not yet mean revealing the truth, but rather

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<sup>20</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, 64.

<sup>21</sup> According to Girard, this is the role of Jacques Derrida: “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.” René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins



reproducing the lie on an interpretative level. Profane hermeneutics can be, therefore, the unveiling of the sacred, but not the unveiling of its lie. This is the case because a profane hermeneutics does not make use of the Gospels' revelation. It is the mirror-like opposite of Anselm's position. Anselm's argument occurs within the horizon of the history of salvation. Profane hermeneutics recognizes no salvation, considers solely the history of interpretation.

Interpretation has always been relevant in the process of demystification. A "history of interpretation," that is to say, according to Girard, a progressive understanding of the truth of violence, is possible only as a result of the Gospel revelation. On the other hand, a "history of salvation" is possible only if the Holy Scriptures are reinterpreted beyond their sacrificial interpretation.<sup>22</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>23</sup>

According to Girard, Paul Ricoeur's thought is therefore an example of what I call "religious hermeneutics." It is not by chance that Girard cites this work of Ricoeur's. Here Ricoeur observes that, whereas all myths can be read through the hermeneutic method, the evangelical narration cannot. Hermeneutic thinking reads myths, but only the evangelical demystification can read hermeneutics. Religious hermeneutics is therefore a demystification of mythical heritage made possible by the principles of interpretation provided by the evangelical texts. The interpretation of myth opens a way to a knowledge that can discern the false from the true.<sup>24</sup>

In *La symbolique du mal* Ricoeur argues that the symbolism of the sacred coincides with the *aporia* of 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; on the other hand, it also means that the question of symbolism opens us to a faith that is not blind and groundless.

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University Press, 1977), 296. See also Bruce Bassoff, "Interview with René Girard," *Denver Quarterly* 13 (1978): 28-40.

<sup>22</sup> Elaborating Girard's suggestions, Gianni Vattimo writes: "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, salvation." Vattimo, "Storia della salvezza", 106.

<sup>23</sup> Girard, *Things Hidden*, 445.

<sup>24</sup> I have examined this issue in Paolo Diego Bubbio, "Literary Aesthetics and Knowledge in René Girard's Mimetic Theory," in *Literature & Aesthetics* 17 (1/2007): 35-50.

## Conclusion

From a logical point of view, Girard's argument is just as "fallacious" as Anselm's proof. Nevertheless, I think that the hermeneutic turn constitutes a difference between his argument and the classical formulation of the ontological proof. For Girard, the history of salvation runs through the history of interpretation. Even religious hermeneutics must conform to the rules of logic. If it does not, it becomes exactly that which Girard abhors—profane hermeneutics. Girard does not say so explicitly, but I think it is clear that only an *a priori* choice validates his argument. His argument cannot be accepted simply because he wishes to be faithful to a scientific paradigm and because he proclaims the "death of philosophy."<sup>25</sup> But his argument has indeed a philosophical sense if we accept the assumption that there is always a wager at the root of every philosophical position: We can wager for the transcendence or for the absence of transcendence. From this point of view, Girard's thought does not require an "act of faith" (as Anselm's thought does); rather, it requires a wager, in Pascal's sense. Deriving the divinity of Christ from the definition of „someone who knows something greater than whatever one could think“ means precisely to accept this wager. A wager is not a shift to some fideism; or, better, it is no more an act of faith than is the opposite choice. The wager shares with phenomenology a fundamental feature, that is, the capacity to re-conquer "a second naïveté presupposing an initial critical revolution, an initial loss of naïveté."<sup>26</sup> Girard's argument could be considered "a second naïveté," based on a wager that manifests itself as interpretation. In this sense, I think we can speak of a "Girardian hermeneutics." In the contemporary context, dominated on the one hand by a crisis in traditional metaphysics and, on the other, by the position of those who are sympathetic the equivalence of all possible interpretations (that is, the absence of truth), the perspective opened by Girard's thought can be fruitful for a philosophy that intends to reappropriate its own speculative vocation.

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<sup>25</sup> "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." Girard, *Things Hidden*, 438.

<sup>26</sup> This is Ricoeur's expression. He refers here to the thought of Gabriel Marcel. Paul Ricoeur, "Gabriel Marcel and Phenomenology," in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Lewis Edwin Hahn (La Salle: Open Court), 491. A comparison between Girard and Marcel could be very fruitful. I focused my attention on the topic of the "choice of sense" in Marcel's thought in Paolo Diego Bubbio, "„If there is a Plot“. Gabriel Marcel and Second-Degree Reflection," in *Between Description and Interpretation: The Hermeneutic Turn in Phenomenology*, ed. Andzej Wiercinski (Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press), 55-70.