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MIMESIS: THE SCAPEGOATING FUNCTION OF CHRISTIANITY

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In my presentation, I will discuss Rene Girard's theory of mimesis and the scapegoating function of Christianity. In Girard's theory of religion and culture, he offers what he calls to be the science of humanity that can answer the questions surrounding the origins of culture and religion. The components that comprise of these theories are mimetic desire and violence, the second being the scapegoat, the third is religious awe, and finally the Bible and the revelation of Jesus Christ. Girard differentiates mimetic desire with imitation in that imitation is copying while mimetic desire functions as a triangle with subject, object, and mediator. Furthermore, violence is added because mimetic desire unlike imitation later leads to rivalry over object desire. Thus, the mediator becomes both the model and obstacle and mimetic desire intensifies rivalries, which Girard believes early modern societies experienced paroxym. This explains the situation in which human beings revert to the Freudian death instinct, which eventually leads to a single victim or outsider on the margins, whom the community thrusts their bane upon and blames for the problems apparent in all members of the community (otherwise known as the scapegoat.) After the scapegoat has been sacrificed, the community begins to experience greater peace and deifies the scapegoat as a god. The act of killing the scapegoat becomes holy and is at the center of Christ's crucifixion on the cross and Christian-Judeo culture. In my presentation, I will discuss the importance of Girard's theory of the scapegoat mechanism on Christianity today and the socio-political implications it has had on marginalized groups today. I will also discuss how the scapegoating function of Christianity completes the need for atonement of the global community's sin by both canceling the bane and reviving the peace needed for the community to thrive.

Keywords: Mimetic Desire, Scapegoat, Religious History, Anthropology

Recent Publications

1. Oxford Symposium on Religious Studies at the University Church of St. Mary "Unshakable Faith Amidst the Storm: The Role of Black Intellectualism and Religious Leadership in the Formation of the Civil Rights Movement"
2. The Many Faces of War: An interdisciplinary symposium on the experience and impact of war throughout history "Auxiliary Recruits: The Emergence of Women in Modern Warfare during World War I"
3. The 19th Annual Graduate Conference History Conference at the University of Memphis "Unshakable Faith Amidst the Storm: The Role of Black Intellectualism and Religious Leadership in the Formation of the Civil Rights Movement"
4. The Ninth International Conference on Religion and Spirituality in Society at the University of Granada "Mimesis: The Scapegoating Function of Christianity"

Biography

Ogechi Ibeanusi has completed her BA in history at the age of 22 years from the University of Southern California. She is the career awareness program coordinator of Beacon Aptos Middle School CYCSF program, a premier middle school college and career service organization. She will present up to five academic presentations in the following year.

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