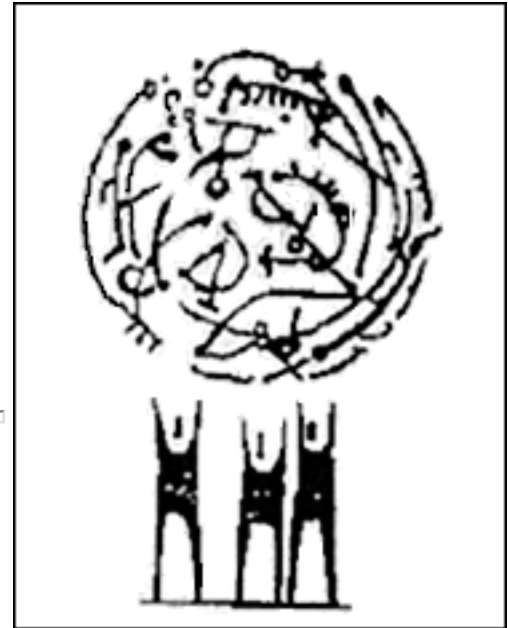


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# Anthropoetics VII, no. 2

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Last updated:

**Anthropoetics 7, no. 2 (Fall 2001 / Winter 2002)**

# **Performatism in Architecture. On Framing and the Spatial Realization of Ostensivity<sup>(1)</sup>**

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In my first article on performatism (Eshelman 2001<sup>(2)</sup>), I suggested that we have entered a new epoch in which subject, sign, and thing come together in ways that create an aesthetic experience of transcendency. Since the success of this endeavor entails a difficult, out-of-the-ordinary act, I called the techniques used in it "performances" and the epoch growing out of it "performatism." I also suggested that two of the most important devices of performatism are framing and the reduction of subjectivity. Characters find themselves encased in a frame or rigid set of circumstances that they transcend by reverting to reduced states of consciousness and/or by focusing on simple, opaque things. "Transcendency" refers here to two things: the fictional representation of successful performances, on the one hand, and a phenomenology, an act of experiencing on the other. The performatist narrative doesn't just depict acts of transcendence, it confronts us with an incredible, aesthetically mediated construct which we are challenged to accept as truth. In short, we are made to experience belief as an aesthetic fact. Whether we *really* believe is not something for a secular theory like performatism to decide or prescribe.

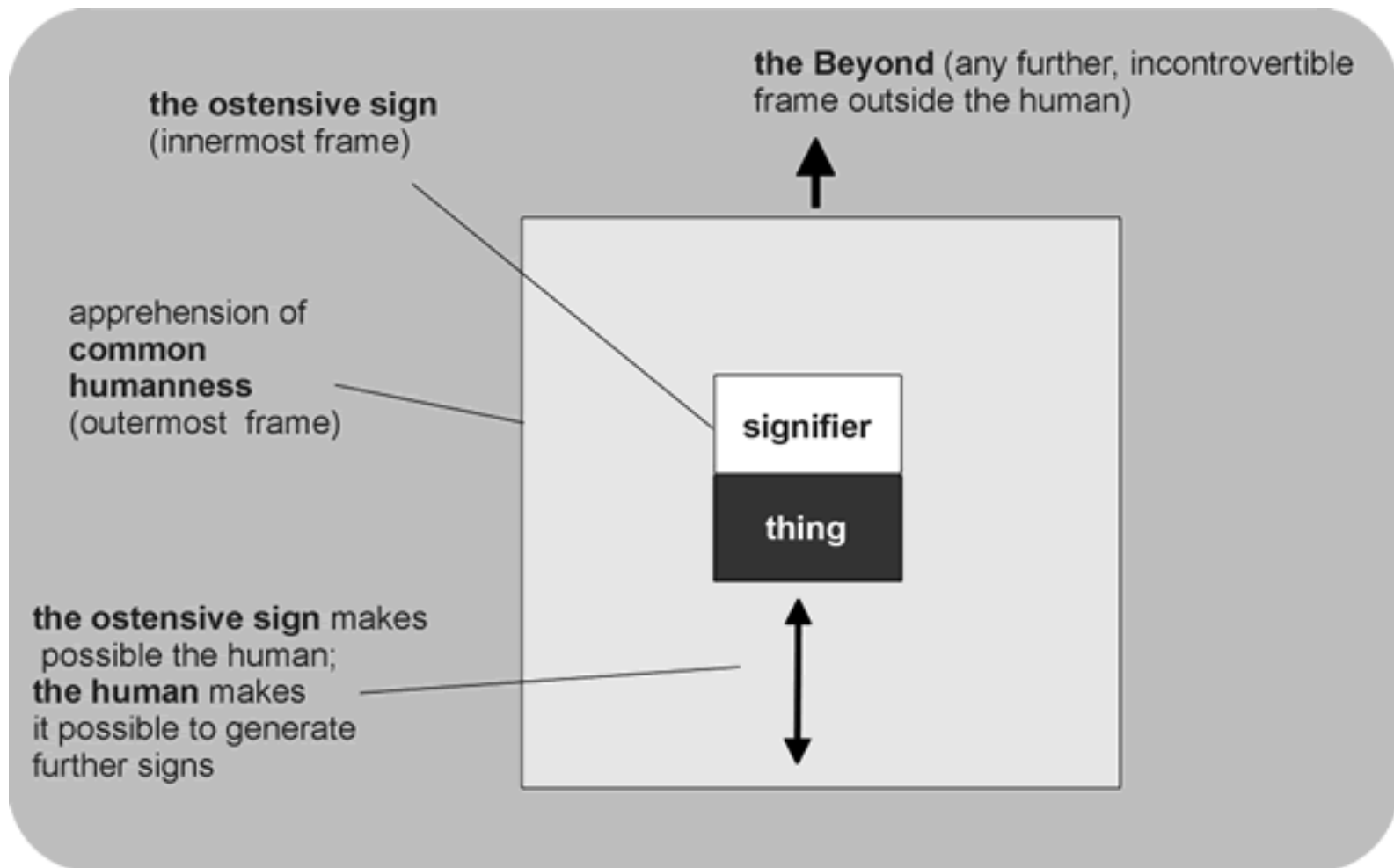
By far the most compelling way to describe performatism in semiotic terms I have found to be Eric Gans's concept of the ostensive. This concept states that all semiotic acts must be traced to the setting of a primal, whole, at first meaningless, sign that defers mimetic violence and transcends the animal state to produce the human. Gans usually presents the ostensive as a linguistic or paleoanthropological universal. However, I believe that in its historical context, as a specific reaction to poststructuralism and postmodernism, the ostensive also provides a key to explaining the aesthetic dominant of the epoch now developing around us. In other words, I think we are entering an era in which the stylization of ostensivity *qua* performance is becoming *the* unavoidable mode of aesthetic expression. Eric Gans had the prescience (or perhaps also the misfortune) to anticipate this dominant a good fifteen years before it had any direct equivalent in a work of art. I might also add that Gans has advanced a notion of his own, post-millennialism,<sup>(3)</sup> to describe the era after postmodernism, or what I call performatism. I have no real quarrel with Gans's concept, which is far more inclusive than my own. The purpose of performatism as a term is simply to focus in on the specifics of aesthetic experience and, ultimately, to help describe what I think is turning out to be a major shift in

the epochal landscape.

In the following remarks, I would like to do two things. In a first step, I would like to link the concept of framing more closely with Gans's idea of the ostensive; in a second, I would like to apply the insights won thereby to the realm of architecture and spatial relations in general. Most of the examples of performatist architecture are from Berlin, where I have been teaching recently. The radical rebuilding of the city in the wake of German reunification has spawned a whole new set of architectural devices that are no longer reconcilable with the norms and conventions of postmodernism.

### **Framing and Ostensivity**

In the originary ostensive scene as postulated by Gans, two subjects without language vie for a thing.<sup>(4)</sup> Normally, they would be condemned to imitate one another's actions until a violent struggle breaks out. At some point, however, one of them sets forth a sign to designate the desired object. When this sign is accepted by the second subject, it forms the first, ostensive, sign, which by definition always refers to a thing at hand. The sign defers a violent struggle for the thing and enables the subjects to transcend their animal status and experience a common human bond that can be developed further. The horizontal, unchanging dimension of animal appetite is transcended by the creation of a vertical, semiotic, specifically human order out of which all later culture is then generated. One could also think of the ostensive sign as a kind of primal, paradoxical sign-frame encompassing a signifier and a thing and generating a larger frame delimiting a common field, the human.<sup>(5)</sup> This could be depicted in the following way (Diagram 1):



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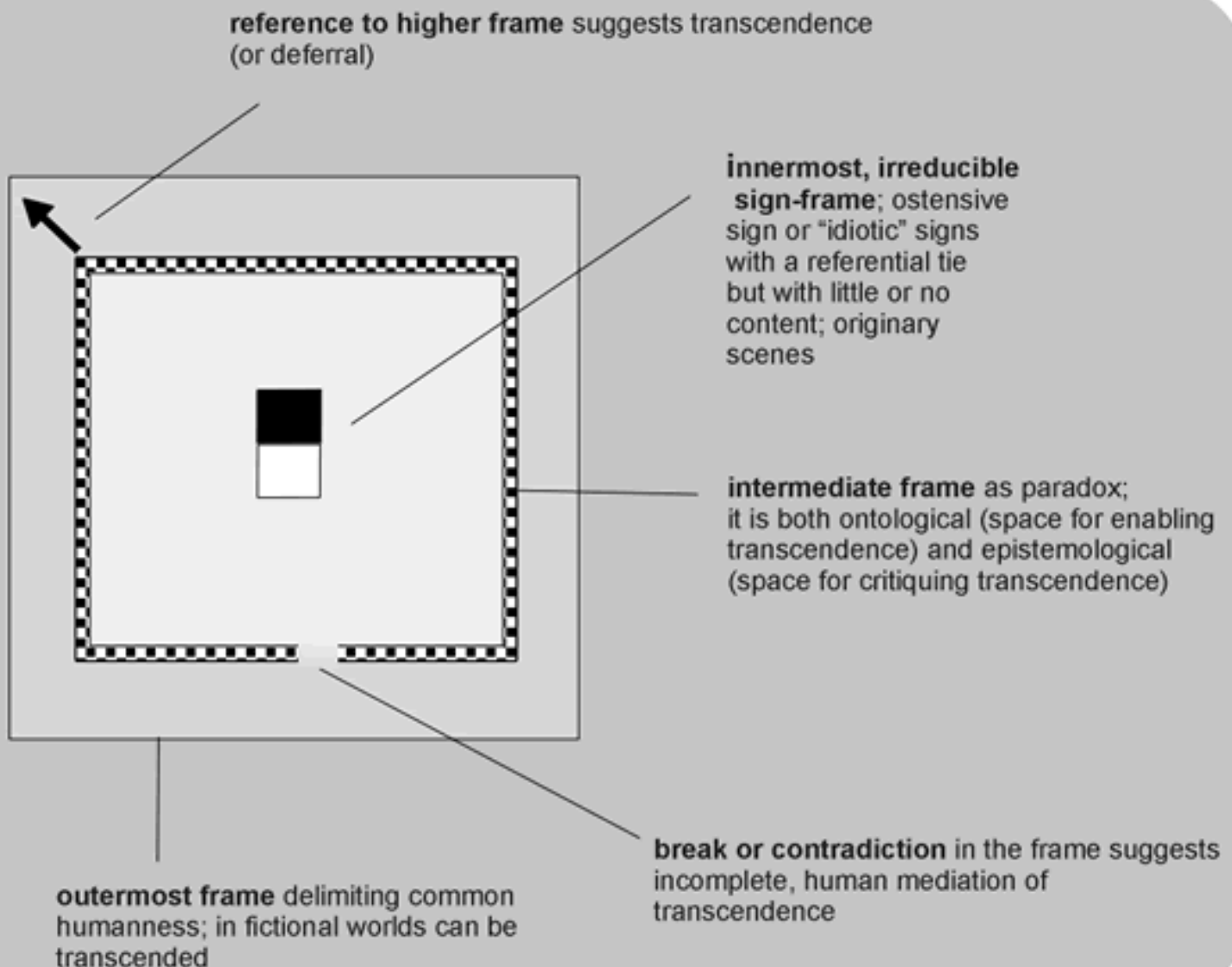
The inner sign-frame contains the abstract signifier and the concrete thing without ever being reducible to the one or the other. The thing cannot be conceived of without the signifier; the signifier has no performative power without reference to the thing. The ostensive sign has no meaning in the usual sense of the word, standing rather solely for the truth of its own reconciliatory achievement. The originary sign is, in truth, a kind of fictional construct, but at the same time a powerful and indispensable one. For once the reconciliatory power of the sign has been interiorized by the group, there is no returning to a precultural, presemiotic, or prehuman state. The originary sign-frame lays the groundwork for a larger, cultural frame that allows language-bearers to generate increasingly complex, predicative modes of communication no longer relying on the immediate presence of a thing. This ubiquitous, abstract mode of signification--what Gans calls the declarative--eventually comes to obscure the ostensive, "thingly" quality of the originary act of signification as well as the feel for its reconciliatory, transcendent achievement.<sup>(6)</sup>

Unlike ourselves, the early humans or hominids who have just created the ostensive sign still stand in awe of its power, even as they are unable to relate it directly to the origin of the human. Instead, they fetishize the powerful, mysteriously empty ostensive sign by designating it the "name-of-God" (cf. Gans 1997, 53) and by surrounding it with prohibitions and sacred rituals mediating what they believe is access to the Beyond (a still higher, incontrovertible frame outside the purview of the human). To the name-of-God then accrue semantic additions which allow the original ostensive act to become memorable and iterable. With

time, the name-of-God becomes more and more laden with conventional meanings and binding, punitive directives. Eventually, ritual frames develop out of it which regulate social and religious behavior on a much broader scale. The ritual frame is by now largely opaque, consisting of semantic, secondary accretions that have been added onto the original, paradoxical, ostensive sign-frame. The things it frames are in themselves murky, speculative reenactments or representations of the primal scene. Because they are ascribed the power associated with the name-of-God, neither the frame nor its represented contents are open to critical question. Also, in this archaic stage, the ritualized frame has the same sacral status as the things being depicted or performed; indeed, the two are relatively undifferentiated. With the secularization and differentiation of society, however, this relationship shifts. The binding frame becomes increasingly secondary, an optional ornament; the unbound, represented actions or objects it encloses become the primary focus of interest. This is apparent from the way Kant, as a leading representative of the Enlightenment, deals with frames and ornamentation. As Derrida demonstrates in his well-known critique of the "parergon" in *The Truth in Painting* (1987), Kant tries to use the frame to mark off an intrinsic, primary area from an extrinsic, secondary one, both in the work of art and in religious belief. For Kant, frames have clearly become a form of supplementary ornamentation that he would like to exclude from his ordered pursuit of reason, beauty, and faith. The frame has, in other words, become a burden, a distraction from the "reasonable" things being represented in the work of art or being performed in philosophy and religious practice. As Derrida demonstrates with his usual acuity, this sort of exclusion is impossible, since the frame is both extrinsic and intrinsic to the work of art which it surrounds. The frame is unavoidably that place where we have to begin deciding what is important and what is not important about a work of art. The frame is where we begin performing those very acts of aesthetic judgment that Kant would like to confine to an intrinsic, privileged area (which he needs the frame to mark off so that he can begin talking about that area in the first place). In a typical deconstructive move, Derrida temporarily restores the supplementary frame to a position of equality vis-à-vis the supposedly intrinsic area of representation, but doesn't consider the ontological implications of what he has done. Derrida isn't interested in the originary power of the frame; he's interested in liminal spaces which can be used to critique any sort of discourse trying to resist the uncontrollable pull exerted by outside contexts. Since all discourse is forced to do this at some point, Derrida never suffers from a lack of things to do; he simply moves on to deconstruct the next metaphysical conceit. From a performatist point of view, however, what Derrida does with the frame is a first step in the right direction; by taking the frame seriously again, Derrida inadvertently restores to it some of its originary, sacral valence.<sup>(7)</sup>

Gans's concept of the ostensive then makes this valence explicit. For the ostensive allows us to think of the frame not just as a liminal space, as a convenient starting point for an endless epistemological critique, but rather also as the minimal set of conditions necessary for effecting a very real act of transcendence (the act of becoming human, the act of acquiring a linguistically mediated consciousness). The ostensive makes it possible to think of the frame as more than simply an ornament or a supplement; it allows us to reclaim thematically something of the frame's originary, performative force without fetishizing the ostensive, as does Girard, or getting lost in the endless ironies of the declarative, as does Derrida.<sup>(8)</sup> In the sense that Gans's generative anthropology (GA) mediates between the declarative and the ostensive, it can be also be seen as a kind of discourse of framing. However, this discourse is now focused on an ontologically founded, ostensive center and the human frame surrounding it.

This mediated recovery of the ostensive is not, however, limited to the conceptually rigorous, explicit approach of GA. In recent works of literature, film, and architecture, artists are, without necessarily being aware of it, beginning to apprehend the originary qualities inherent in language and to produce works that represent and frame near equivalents of the primal ostensive scene. The reason for this unwitting convergence of art and theory is, I think, not difficult to explain. The most effective way of stopping postmodern modes of proliferation and deconstruction is to fall back on signs that are structurally similar to the ostensive sign, which consists of only a signifier and a referent and which has no meaning to deconstruct or contextualize. "Idiotic" grunts (as performed by the commune members in Lars von Trier's Dogma film *The Idiots*) or a white plastic bag twirling in the wind (as filmed by Ricky Fitts in *American Beauty*) are examples of how the intentionally framed regress to "meaningless" signs helps revitalize the lives of these and other characters.<sup>(9)</sup> The very lack of meaning allows the characters--and ourselves--to once more experience redemption, truth, and beauty at the object or ostensive level. This new way of framing could be depicted schematically as follows (Diagram 2):



As in the archaic era of the ostensive, the ostensive sign (or any similar configuration with a radically reduced semantic content and a direct reference to a thing) occupies the center of attention. As in the archaic era, the frame is now once more being used as an instrument to enable transcendence. The difference, of course, is that this striving is now mediated through art, proceeds in retrograde fashion, and is acutely aware of its own paradoxality. Using frames, we can once more represent successful acts of transcendence in fictional worlds or experience transcendence vicariously by identifying with "meaningless," "idiotic," or otherwise reduced states of subjectivity and the things they focus on. In performatism, as in postmodern culture, the intermediate frame is correctly perceived as being important in pragmatic terms but no longer reliable in epistemological ones. As Derrida has shown, the frame is both extrinsic and intrinsic to what it surrounds (it surrounds and is itself always surrounded). It necessarily has breaks or contradictions, since it derives its authority from still higher frames or levels whose veracity is no less open to question than its own. Both performatism and postmodernism are aware of the ironies involved in recurring to the authority of higher, absent frames. The difference between the two is that performatism situates narrative and spatial equivalents of the ostensive at the core of all higher-level consciousness. Performatist thinking and art reorients itself to the latter-day equivalents of a "meaningless" but nonetheless deeply significant, irreducible inner frame. This frame can hardly be deconstructed because it has little or no semantic content and almost no context; it works simply through the truth of its own existence, as a reminder of the performative foundation of the human. It is also the place where beauty, love, belief, morality and all the other originary, performative situations that postmodernism dismisses as "metaphysical" were established--situations that are now being revitalized in aesthetic settings. Just how this is being done in architecture is the subject of the following remarks.

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### **Spatializing Ostensivity: The Language of Performatist Architecture**

Performatism in architecture arises when minimal spatial relations are configured in such a way as to suggest the possibility of achieving transcendence. Given the background of modernist architecture, in which there have been no lack of minimalist attempts to stylize or appropriate transcendence, and that of postmodernist architecture, which ironicizes its predecessor's program, this implies several restrictions. Like modernist architecture, performatist architecture stylizes functionality and tends to use simple forms suggesting a single, monistic end. However, unlike modernism, performatist architecture is aimed at evoking transcendency through devices that are perceived neither as being motivated by modernist notions of ideal functionality (whose most obvious token is the grid or square) nor as displaying an ornamental plurality in the postmodern sense (citing and mixing received, recognizable codes). Instead, performatist devices call attention to spatially mediated, minimal relations which seem to overcome certain intractable material or physical limitations. One might call this *transcendent functionalism*, as opposed to the rational or technical functionalism of modernism. Instead of expressing a geometrically founded principle in a consistent, foreseeable way, the performative device suggests the possibility of overcoming some spatial limitation with heretofore unrecognized functional means. Since this functional striving for transcendence is necessarily always incomplete, the result is a "useless" architectonic relation, or ornamentation--something that modernism of course rejects. At the same time, this type of ornamentation is not postmodern: it is the willed, paradoxical by-product of an architectonic act aimed at achieving

transcendence and not the playful, ironically presented citation of previously existing, immanent styles.

In general, the incomplete architectonic performance functions in a way analogous to the ostensive sign, which founds the human through a quasi-transcendent, paradoxical act in which a thing is replaced by a sign-thing that partially overcomes the material conditions of its origin. Just as performatist narratives can be thought of as creating rough analogies to the ordinary scene using simple signs, retrograde characters, and fictional frames promising (and sometimes delivering) transcendence, performatist architecture can be thought of as highlighting certain types of spatial relationships that seem to overcome their own involvement in brute materiality. This turn towards the ostensive and the stylization of transcendence is not some sort of whim. Rather, it is a logical reaction to the legacy of modernism and postmodernism. Modernism sought to realize the aesthetic qualities of simplicity and unity in architecture but made the mistake of equating these with an essentialist relation, functionality. The result was a supposedly non-ornamental, rationally founded "ism" that with time revealed itself to be no less ornamental and no less metaphysical than any of its predecessor styles (modernist architects employed the square frame and the glass box universally, without regard to their actual consequences, such as leaky roofs or overheated office workers, and took the doctrine of functionalism to be an infallible blueprint for creating urban utopia). Postmodernism, by contrast, uncoupled style from any essentialist claims, resulting in a profusion of wittily cited ornaments and an ironic, can't-nail-me-down-to-anything attitude. The result has been a highly context-sensitive, but also stylistically superficial architectural vernacular. Performatist architecture reacts against both by returning to an aesthetics of simplicity that is founded not in functionality or in stylistic citation but in the human--more specifically, in the semiotically mediated human capacity to believe. To put this in a slightly different way, postmodernism has shown us in an aesthetically and intellectually convincing way that *knowing* involves entering an endlessly complicated, uncontrollable regress with no origin, no goal, and no binding answers. The most effective way of escaping from that regress is to *believe*, or to focus in on simple, incredible object relations that seem to transcend the material conditions of their own existence and that challenge us to accept them whether we want to or not. It is this challenge that separates performatism from the postmodern and modern. We already *know*--just as the postmodernists and modernists do--that these relations are implausible, but that is now beside the point. For what these relations now do is to force us to focus our attention on a nascent act of transcendence and to *identify* with that act in a coherent, unified way. The sum of this implausible architectonic act and the involuntary identification with that act is a *performance*, a combined making and self-making that exists, if only for a time, in a state of vibrant, unstable unity. This unity comes about through an aesthetically mediated confluence of otherwise divergent desires or interests. It is only possible because artists have systematically begun to simulate the mechanisms of belief with aesthetic means and because a growing number of people are allowing themselves to be moved by this simulation. Whoever is content to *know* these incredible acts (to "unmask" their already obvious simulatory character or appeal to belief) will miss the point. Such a viewer, though effortlessly maintaining his or her epistemological superiority vis-à-vis the aesthetically engaged performatist, will remain entrapped forever in the endless loops of postmodernist reflection.

Based on my observations in Berlin, I think it is safe to speak of nine basic devices of performatist architecture, arranged roughly in order of importance:

1. **Theistic creation (addition/subtraction of mass)**
2. **Transparency (dematerialization)**
3. **Triangulation**
4. **Kinesis**
5. **Impendency**
6. **Wholeness (closure)**
7. **Framing**
8. **Centering + ostensivity**
9. **Oneness (generativity)**

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Here is a brief rundown of each category.

### 1. Theistic Creation (addition/subtraction of mass)

A striking and very common architectonic device of performatism is to slice mass out of buildings on a grand scale or, less frequently, to add mass to them in peculiar places. The effect of this slicing or adding is *theistic* rather than ornamental or functional in the postmodernist or modernist sense. The user or viewer is meant to feel the powerful, preterhuman hand of the architect rather than to perceive some sort of ornamentally familiar form or compelling technical principle. The addition or subtraction of mass suggests a quasi-divine ability to give and take away; the architect presents himself (or herself) in the manner of a potent, but nonetheless limited manipulator of matter, as an anthropomorphic divinity who intervenes in the world below in a goal-directed, forward, but nonetheless ineffable way.<sup>(10)</sup> This may be contrasted with the demiurgical architect of modernism, whose striving for rationally guided technical perfection is not open to any sort of self-doubt, or with the gnostic architect of postmodernism, whose seemingly indifferent combining of unrelated, received styles creates an ironic metaposition lacking any fixed point of origin. In general, the performatist act of slicing/adding suggests a decisive, half-human, half-transcendent act of originary architectonic creation. This explains why in performatist structures we often see parts of roofs cut away to reveal the sky. The suggestion is that the architectural object is mediating some higher, celestial frame; the architectonic sign conveying the transcendent message ostentatiously reveals the transcendent through a gaping hole or lack in its own material makeup.<sup>(11)</sup>

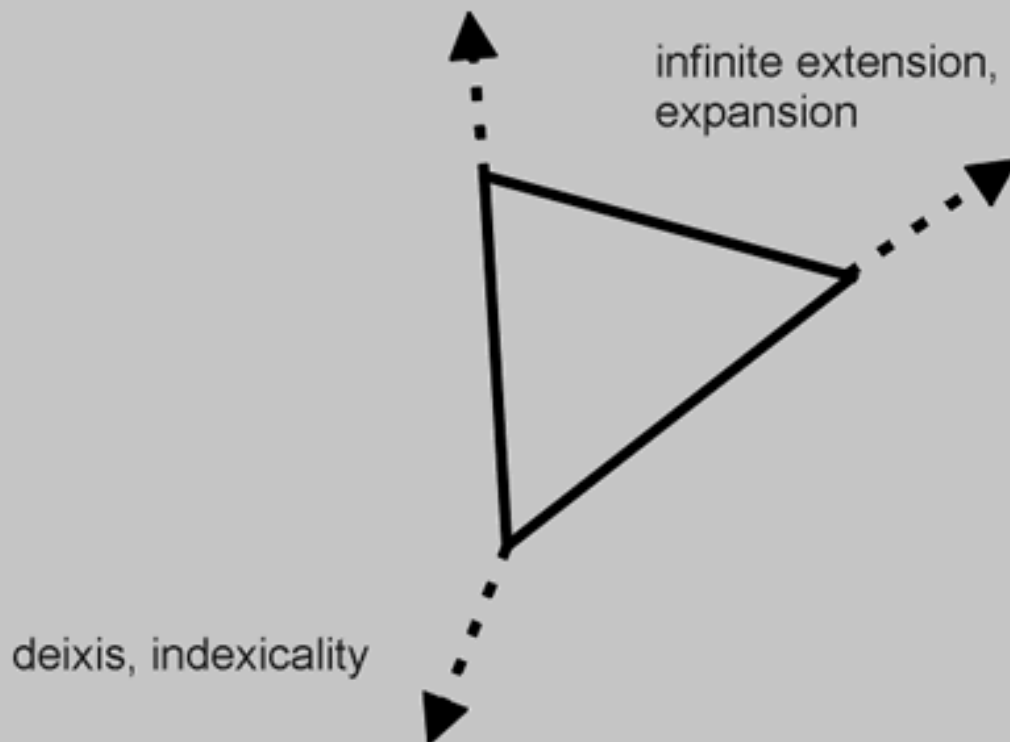
### 2. Transparency (dematerialization)

Transparency, which strongly implies the transcendent act of dematerialization, is another ubiquitous feature of performatist architecture. Performatist structures constantly evoke the possibility of transcending materiality by presenting it in the form of transparent, seemingly dematerialized planes. Postmodernism, by contrast, likes reflective surfaces because they refer back to a context and away from an origin, and bright colors, because they evoke secondary semantic associations not particular to the materials being used. Modernism, which also employs transparency a great deal, usually uses it to highlight internal formal or structural essences, as exemplified in Mies's notion that a building's glass skin should reveal its structural bones (*cf.* the discussion in Neumeyer 1986, 147-174). According to Rowe and

Slutzky's well-known essay (Basel 1997, orig. 1955), in modernism there is in addition to this literal transparency also a phenomenal one that creates overlapping, ambiguous planes, as in Le Corbusier's villa at Garches (cf. 1997, 33-41). Performatist transparency, by contrast, is demonstrative and tautological. It reifies, albeit imperfectly, the possibility of transcending materiality per se and doesn't really reveal anything particular about a structure's inner workings or essence. This has a certain analogy in the ostensive scene as described by Gans (1997, 39). The originary sign at first refers transparently to the thing. Upon seeing the thing in this mediated way, however, we discover that it isn't the thing itself we desire, but rather the "center of the scene of representation that the sign brought into existence." The thing vanishes, "to be restored through the renewed mediation of the sign" (1997, 40). Transparent planes or frames that don't reveal a particular essential content replay this semiotic disappearing act on a grand, sublime scale. In Gans's thought, I might add, this dematerialization also has crucial sacral implications, since it leads to the "discovery" of God, that is, the principle missing from the center.

### 3. Triangulation

A key spatial figure of performatist architectonics is triangulation. The triangle is a minimal figure embodying the transition from one- to two-dimensionality (from the horizontal to the vertical). Functionally, in the form of the lean-to, it no doubt represents the earliest form of man-made shelter. Visually it can be thought of as a figure valorizing the opposition divergence/convergence (Diagram 3):



The apex of the triangle acts, on the one hand, as an index sign pointing to something particular, and on the other, as two lines extending out into infinity. Triangles also dissect and dynamicize space by creating

slants and inclined planes. Modernism, although striving for geometrical purity and simplicity, traditionally disdains triangular figures, which it associates with folkloristic gables. These it replaces with squares or blocks connoting infinitely rational functionality (the block as the base for still another block, which is the base for still another block, etc.). The A-frame house, which is planted firmly on the ground, is only latently performatistic. From the postmodernist perspective it might be thought of as citing the primal, triangular lean-to; from the modernist perspective it carries a structural feature--the gable--to a logical, unifying conclusion. Performatism, by contrast, takes triangularity and makes it into a figure of belief: it tilts it and positions it in precarious, unexpected ways, suggesting that its normal function of providing shelter and stability has been overcome. A secondary device involved in performative triangulation is the use of acute angles. These "sharpen" the dynamic relationship between the concrete presence (convergence) and ineffable absence (divergence) that is played out in the triangular scene. The acute angle, which constricts space within the building and wastes space without, suggests mathematically mediated precision and rigor without usually having any real functional value (the Flatiron building is the exception confirming the rule). Finally, triangulation suggests a paradoxical, performative way of overcoming the semantic opposition of verticality/horizontality that normally helps define all architectural epochs. Utopian modernist architecture, for example, foregrounds verticality according to the building-block principle noted above. Postmodern architecture, which is interested in the horizontal relations of context and conditionality, relativizes and sometimes even parodies the utopian rationality of modernism (when Philip Johnson, for example, tops the International Style of his famous A.T.&T. skyscraper with a piece of bric-a-brac, he effectively brings the high-flying utopian aspirations it cites back down to historical earth). Performatist architecture, by contrast, revitalizes the upward motion by casting it as a dynamic, oblique line or plane, which can, however, also be perceived just as well as a conduit of downward motion (see also the discussion of kinesis below). Such a line is neither ornamental nor functional, but demonstrative and performative: it draws attention to and revitalizes some symbolic relation located along the axis of the high and the low. As in the original ostensive scene, we are made to perceive architectonic space as a paradoxical unity existing prior to these two semantic opposites. It is also perhaps not entirely coincidental that the triangular constellation is reified in the originary ostensive scene itself, which cannot be reduced to anything less than a triadic relation.[\(12\)](#)

#### 4. Kinesis

Kinesis is important to performatist architecture because it is uniquely suited to reifying transcendence by architectonic means, namely by suggesting that a static object, a building, is doing something that it cannot, that is, move. Usually, this takes place in the functional context of triangulation: the oblique side of the triangle suggests that a dynamic, "sliding" relationship between up and down is being mediated by the building. Modernist architecture, inasmuch as it follows the building-block principle, tends to promote stasis; postmodern architecture (such as the early Frank Gehry house) often suggests movement, but always in a non-directed way. An intermediate position seems to be occupied by Gehry's recent work, as in the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the Nationale-Nederlanden Building in Prague, or the conference room in the DG Bank in Berlin. These structures, which seem to wriggle and squirm in all directions without really going anywhere, might still be thought of as examples of postmodern undecidability. At the same time, however, their undulating folds and bends may also be considered unique, amorphous forms evoking the very origin of form itself.[\(13\)](#) Deconstructivist architecture, such as Daniel Libeskind's Jewish

Museum in Berlin, is also very much kinetic. Libeskind, though, emphasizes dysfunctionality and absence (the fractured, oddly arranged floor plan of the Jewish Museum is, for example, said to be reminiscent of a shattered Star of David, the empty inner spaces suggest the void left by the murder of the European Jews rather than sliced-away matter). In principle, at least, the kinetic architecture of performatism would always have to point out where it wants to move to--hence the importance of triangulation.

## 5. Impendency

A device related to kinesis and theistic creation is what I would call impendency (from *impendere*, to hang over, threaten). Buildings of this kind are architectonically so dynamic that they seem to be on the verge of collapse; they work, as it were, by putting fear of the Lord and awe of the architect into the viewer at the same time. This device, which I have found in several cases in Berlin, has certain equivalents in modernist architecture, as, for example, in Frank Lloyd Wright's elegantly cantilevered Fallingwater House(14) or Mies van der Rohe's National Gallery in Berlin, whose heavy black steel-and-concrete roof seems to float on air. The difference between modernism and performatism can be traced back to the difference between transcendence mediated by technical rationality and transcendence mediated by simple, wondrous configurations. In impendent modernist structures like the ones named, we are supposed to be aware that technical wizardry such as reinforced concrete or high-tension steel is keeping the precipitously hanging structures in place; in performatist ones, we are deliberately made to experience how a building seems to overcome imminent collapse. This sublime drama is human, and not technical: it is an expression of the architect's will or willfulness, rather than a demonstration of technical prowess. Postmodernist, particularly deconstructivist, buildings also thematize collapse and dysfunctionality. However, they do this without the metaphysical optimism of performatism, which plays out the non-rational, faith-based possibility of overcoming materiality, gravity, or functionality *per se*.

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## 6. Wholeness (closure)

Wholeness and closure are frequently thematized in performatist architecture, which stylizes them using novel, egg-shaped structures rather than the geometric, rational circles of modernism. Closure is of course anathema to postmodernism's tactics of boundary transgression and delimitation; modernism tends to favor open spaces and the utopian unlimitedness implied by them. The notion of closure is, incidentally, a crucial aspect of the originary scene according to Gans. In his scenario, the protagonists who have just created the first sign must stand back from it to admire its wholeness and closedness: "the creation of a formal object in the sign requires that the criteria for formal closure be imposed by the subject" (Gans 1997, 29). This ability to impose closure through semiotic mediation is, in turn, the condition marking the "minimal structure of human will" (1997, 29). Performatism, one could say, revitalizes this originary moment in an architectonic act.

## 7. Framing (disassociation)

Intermediate frames are an unreliable, but nonetheless essential part of the performatist scene: they provide

the structure that enables dynamic acts of transcendence to occur at all, but are themselves necessarily fallible and dependent on an ostensive sign (the "inner frame") or on other, extrinsic frames. As is the case in impendency, performatist architecture often employs frames as tokens of theistic self-revelation. Frames may bend dynamically at odd angles or have missing chunks suggesting a paradoxical confluence of architectonic might and impotence in the face of the Beyond; very often the frame seems to disassociate itself radically from its content (or vice versa). Postmodernist architecture sometimes thematizes frames, but, like Derrida, isn't really interested in them as mediators of origin or transcendence. An example of this is the Frank Gehry house, which is an older building framed by a junky-looking new fence that establishes a liminal space between the two--readers interested in this may want to refer to Jameson's well-known analysis (Jameson 1991, 97-129). The modernist frame, as exemplified by Mies van der Rohe's Banking Pavilion in the Toronto-Dominion Center or the National Gallery in Berlin, creates an autonomous, transparent space for the individual to regard the world anew through a frame connoting technically mediated rationality.<sup>(15)</sup> The postmodernist frame is a liminal, schizoid one that creates a relationship of spatial undecidability between the solid frame and its voided content. Examples of this can be seen in many buildings of Oswald Mathias Ungers, who likes to cite and stylize the modernist, structural grid, in effect making what was once an essentialist principle into a superficial ornament.

## 8. Centering + Ostensivity

Performatist structures like to point at things for reasons outlined above in the discussion of triangulation; sometimes they also like to center them *and* point at them. I have found a few odd examples of this, although it seems a minor, hard-to-implement device. Postmodernism, obviously, eschews all centrification; modernism centers things by way of symmetrical arrangement but doesn't point at them.

## 9. Oneness (generativity)

In at least one instance, I've found a building, Mathias Oswald Ungers' Family Court in Berlin, that plays with a single form (a square) in a kinetic, three-dimensional performance suggesting that other forms are being generated out of it in a dynamic, open-ended way. This mixture of rational, radical monism and ludic generativity suggests a synthesis of modernism and postmodernism. Modernism is rigidly monist but doesn't play; postmodern hates monism but likes to play. Representing generativity in architecture directly is in any case a very ambitious, aesthetically difficult move that will probably be limited to a small number of structures.

## Performatist Architecture in Berlin

Before I start my virtual stroll through Berlin, the reader should be aware that I will be treating these buildings in terms of their place in the performatist code rather than in regard to their urban context, the oeuvre of their planners, and their success or failure as functional and aesthetic objects--that is, the usual subjects of architectural criticism. Those familiar with German and curious about these and other topics might want to consult Falk Jaeger's well-informed and richly illustrated *Architektur für das neue Jahrtausend*, which provides the most up-to-date critical overview of the architectural scene in Berlin of the 1990's. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my research assistant, Franziska Havemann,

who was instrumental in having the pictures taken and digitally "developed."

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### **The Estrel Hotel (triangulation, framing, impendency, theist creation)**

The Estrel Hotel ([fig. 1](#), [fig. 2](#)) is performatism at its most exuberant. The hotel's main structure is a gigantic wedge whose apex points down toward a specific spot on earth (you, the observer) while its open angles stretch upwards and outwards toward the infinite bounds of the sky. The upwardly directed push from solid, gleaming mass to nothingness is accentuated by an empty frame above extending the wedge structure below. The sky itself then fills out the emptied earthly construct--a common performatist device suggesting a transcendent goal. The most striking feature of the building is the enormous wopperjawed wedge resting on the inclined plane of the building's forefront. You could think of it as an immanent threat (the proverbial ton of bricks about to slam down on your head) or as a load on a ramp miraculously defying the laws of gravity. The theist implications are here, I think, self-evident: as Jaeger writes, "you can almost imagine how the architects took a knife and carved the form out of a block of clay" (2001, 179). Viewed from the side (not visible in these pictures), the Estrel also suggests the intent of a theistically inspired creator to overcome materiality. A large chunk has been carved out of the fore and aft parts of the building, which are linked only by a catwalk; the jaggedly running juxtaposition of glass (above) and stone (below) along the building suggests a willful, if uneven, transition from solid earth to immaterial sky.

### **The Kant Triangle (kinesis, triangulation, impendency)**

The Kant Triangle ([fig. 3](#)), located prominently next to the Bahnhof Zoo train station, is not especially performatist in terms of its basic ornamentation. Indeed, the reflective glass surface on the side, the juxtaposition of quadratic and circular figures as well as the ornamental struts are all typical features of postmodernism. What makes the building extravagantly performatistic is the fact that it really and truly *moves*: the triangular gizmo on top is a kind of gigantic weather vane or sail that actually shifts when the wind builds up enough (initially unaware of this fact, I made a mental note to stay clear when the first big gust of wind came along). The oversized weather vane does have a function of sorts--it can be used to clean the building--but there are probably easier and less ostentatious ways to go about doing this. With this kind of building, the context is secondary. Your attention involuntarily focuses on the giant triangle, which, depending on the way the wind is blowing, decenters itself again by pointing outward towards something in the scene around it. This is a good working example of transcendent functionalism. The "function" of the vane is to attract attention to itself so that it can refocus that attention elsewhere once again; the agency guiding that function (the wind) is part of a bigger, natural, ineffable frame that transcends us all while at the same time leaving a spatial, terrestrial marker incontrovertibly demonstrating its existence.

### **Neues Kranzler Eck Shopping Mall, Kurfürstendamm (triangulation, transparency, framing, kinesis, theistic creation)**

Also centrally located near, and visible from, Bahnhof Zoo. The extreme acute angle of the transparent, triangulated facade "wastes" space in an extravagant, visible way incompatible with any quotidian function ([fig. 4](#)). Paradoxically, this grand display of ornamental excess is derived from the Euclidian axiom that two non-parallel planes in space must converge. The true function of this rationally motivated ornamentation would indeed appear to be to direct the observer's gaze upwards in the most radical possible way ([fig. 5](#)). As in many other structures, the half-built transparent roofing and the incomplete frames ([fig. 6](#), [fig. 7](#)) suggest that the heavens above are the real, ultimate roof of the work of art (designed either by a theist, personal God interested in building a shopping mall, or a theist, incompletely omnipotent architect, in this case Helmut Jahn). A nice ornamental touch is provided by the two aviaries ([fig. 8](#)), which house tropical birds. They repeat the triangular structure of the building as a frame while also displaying living, squawking symbols of transcendency.

### **Peek and Cloppenburg Department Store, Kurfürstendamm (framing, kinesis, transparency, triangulation)**

The transparent mass of this department store on the Kudamm ([fig. 9](#)) appears to be flowing out from under its massive, upwardly directed frame. This dramatic disassociation of frame and content thematizes the possibility of overcoming an ordinary relation, which here takes on the semantic attributes of solid vs. liquid (in functional terms, the transparent shield keeps water off passers-by and prospective customers while at the same time mimicking the attributes of what it is protecting them from). In terms of gender, the transparent, flowing skirt might be thought of as a graceful female counterpoint to the masculine, muscular frame: Peek & Cloppenburg, after all, clothes both men and women.

### **The Baden-Württemberg Office, Tiergartenstraße (theistic creation, triangulation)**

A willful, theist architect has gutted the building, but in a goal-directed, elegant way made clear by triangulation ([fig. 10](#)) The horizon lines leading into the building serve to draw us involuntarily into its space, even as we are taken aback by the drastic, non-functional removal of so much matter from a rectilinear volume. Further rectangular incisions in the main triangular slice heighten this effect even more.

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### **The British Embassy, Wilhelmstraße (theist creation, triangulation)**

Because of its bright, arbitrarily selected colors and playful shapes the British Embassy ([fig. 11](#), [fig. 12](#)) near the Pariser Platz might superficially seem postmodern. Once more, however, I believe a theistic gesture of "I take away and I give" informs the building's character more than anything else. In general, it looks as if the architect first eviscerated the building and then placed an enormous triangular form in it pointing back directly out to YOU. The odd feeling of being drawn into the building and at the same time repulsed by it is strengthened by the absence of window frames allowing you to find your bearings--the horizon lines recede in such an acute way that you have the impression of no connection between the

facade and what is behind it (once more a case of a frame disassociated from its content). The total effect is more than a bit unsettling. The building is massive and yet vulnerable, attractive and yet repelling. This paradox is ordinary and performative rather than cited or semantic. There is no set of previous codes I am aware of that could help us figure out what the building is doing to us.

### **Indian Embassy, Tiergartenstraße (theist creation)**

One of a spate of new foreign embassies in Berlin trying to outdo one another in architectural brilliance ([fig. 13](#)). It was designed, it would seem, by a theistically inspired architect with a large round cookie cutter.

### **The DG Bank, Pariser Platz (framing, transparency, triangulation, theist creation)**

The usual line on the DG Bank ([fig. 14](#)) is that the overly restrictive building code for the Pariser Platz caused Frank Gehry to design a run-of-the-mill facade, while the real focal point of the building is the bizarre "Horse's Head" conference room tucked away inside. In performatist terms, however, I find that the facade, in its own way, is no less remarkable or complex than the Bilbao museum or any of Gehry's other crumpled, amorphous metallic structures. The massive, cut-off columns, which simultaneously frame oversized, movable windows, suggest a powerful upward surge which is paradoxically intensified by being chopped off at the top (that's the theist architect at work again) and by the triangular incline of the transparent window-become-balcony (which suggests overcoming the need for a horizontal frame: [fig. 15](#)). The building as a whole is dramatic juxtaposition of upwardly bound, self-transcending transparency and crude, earthbound materiality: on the one hand, Gehry creates a massive, uncompromising frame; on the other, he tries to get rid of it in a series of incompletely realized, irregular, staggered steps (note how the balconies on the second floor create a slightly protruding step or plane setting up the massive, dramatic removal of volume further above).

### **The Paul Löbe Government Office Building, Regierungsviertel (transparency, impendency, theist creation, framing)**

Placed between the Federal Chancellery and the Reichstag, the Paul Löbe Building ([fig. 16](#)) has the thankless task of linking the massive, brooding Reichstag and the swirling, effervescent Federal Chancellery. Be that as it may, it is still a textbook example of performatist technique. The large chunks cut out of the roof make a transcendent, ineffable frame--the sky--an intrinsic part of the entire architectural statement ([fig. 17](#)). This is a common, but very effective performatist device. The spindly pillars of the roof ([fig. 18](#)) look as if they could be knocked over with one swift kick (in the aftermath of September 11th, one wonders if the architect has had any second thoughts about this impendent feature). The large cuts made in the side of the building are huge theist incisions supposed to make it possible for passersby to observe, at least superficially, just what their elected representatives are up to. After decades of postmodern distrust of visual evidence, performatism--as exemplified in Gans's notion of the ostensive--suggests that truth can be made present and visible in terms of a specifically framed, artificial scene, even as this scene is always open to resentment over what it cannot depict (in this case the abstract or cognitive

aspects of lawmaking). You don't have to be a hard-boiled cynic to "see through" this particular device, but I think it should be understood together with the total theist message, which implies that the Federal Representatives are also beholden to a higher context of undisclosed origin (German cabinet members, for example, have the option of taking the oath of office either with reference to God or without).

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### **The Sony Center, Potsdamer Platz (kinesis, transparency, centering, theistic creation, triangulation)**

Designed by Helmut Jahn, the megalomaniac German-American architect critics love to hate, and owned by a multinational entertainment moloch, the Sony Center ([fig. 19](#)) is neither *gemütlich* (exuding emotional warmth) nor *volkstümlich* (of the people). It seems to attract visitors not because of any innate charm, but because several large cinemas were cleverly located in or near it. Nonetheless, the Sony Center and the surrounding buildings (also designed by Jahn) are all impressive examples of performatist spatialization. The roof, for example ([fig. 20](#)), suggests a giant whirligig about to take off on its own in defiance of all notions of functionality or common sense; the odd structure in the middle, by contrast, points dramatically downwards to a center point. As a matter of fact, it looks as if a giant dart has just plunged in the Center's roof, dramatically exemplifying the Sony Playstation motto "It's not a game." The typical incompleteness of the roof makes the firmament--and even the megalomaniac architect's ultimate inadequacy before it--a part of the total aesthetic statement. Another oddity is the enigmatic, trestle-like frame planted on the building's roof ([fig. 21](#)). As in many other performatist structures, it seems to transcend both ornamentation and functionality by combining both in a paradoxical way that resists any earthly explanation. Normally, the trestle is found in that epitome of functional ugliness, the train bridge. Planted on the top of a building like this, the trestle becomes an ornament connoting an out-of-place, as yet unachieved functionality that would presumably require us to transcend everything we have known up to now about buildings and train bridges. Unlike postmodernist ornamentation and citation, which is clever and smoothly ironic, this suggests the work of a powerful, yet not perfectly omnipotent hand (that of a theist God or of the architect mimicking Him).

The notion of theist creation also applies to the neighboring Deutsche Bahn Building, which looks as if Jahn took a very large hatchet and chopped it in half ([fig. 22](#)). Depending on your perspective, it could be either a sign of tremendous power or a bow to something higher, a sublime subtraction of mass demonstrating that less can also be infinitely more.

### **Price Waterhouse Coopers Building, Potsdamer Platz (triangulation, transparency)**

This striking Renzo Piano building ([fig. 23](#)) realizes triangulation and transparency in the extreme. Note that the transparent facade of this skyscraper doesn't really reveal any skeletal frame à la Mies ([fig. 24](#)); instead, it accentuates the non-functional, but logically realized acuteness of the triangular frame. This is a typical performatist paradox with a transcendence-seeking resolution. The acute, geometrically rigorous frame thrusting itself out of the building's functional body embodies both ornamentation and functionalism while transcending them both: it is a geometrically defined, rationally conceived, useless ornament whose

function is to point upwards and outwards towards an unidentifiable, higher source. If you reverse this function--if you think of yourself being sucked into the space cut out by the building--you are drawn into a newly built, very popular shopping district.

### **The Treptow Crematorium, Baumgartenstraße (all nine performatist devices)**

If you ever have the misfortune to die and be cremated in Berlin, your friends and family will have the good fortune to mourn your passing in this building. Many people think that this is one of the most important and beautiful structures erected in Berlin in the last ten years; indeed, the interest in the Crematorium as an aesthetic object is so great that the cemetery's administrators have had to hire a private company to conduct tours during cemetery off-hours.

Of all the buildings treated here, the Crematorium is the only one that actually fulfils a sacral function, albeit one on the fringe of Church dogma (cremation is a pagan rather than a Christian rite and seems to have become popular in recent years because it's cheaper than a regular full burial). This sacral context, which makes the set to transcendency visible to even the most hidebound cynic, is not, however, a necessary condition of performatism. Indeed, the architects, Axel Schultes and Charlotte Gill, used almost identical devices in two completely secular buildings (the Federal Chancellery in Berlin--see [fig. 33](#) below--and the Art Museum in Bonn). This more or less self-contained sacral aesthetic (or aesthetic sacrality) is more important than the context-sensitivity typical of postmodernism. Ideally, the performatist leap to the transcendent can take place anywhere, under any conditions.

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The Crematorium is a veritable encyclopedia of performatist devices. By all appearances, the theist creator seems to have carved it out of a single block (in reality the building is made of plain old poured concrete: [fig. 25](#)). Slices in the roof ([fig. 26](#)) suggest a rationally planned passage to heaven as well as the ease with which even the most solid-seeming material can be made to evanesce. Dematerialization is also suggested by the transparent walls; you can literally see through the entire building. Very effective is also the kinetic manipulation of the facade ([fig. 27](#)); the louvers make matter appear and disappear upon command. The ornamental, absolutely superfluous triangulation defining the three ominous smokestacks ([fig. 28](#), [fig. 29](#)) suggests upward, transcendent expansiveness while pointing downward, as it were, at thee. Not quite visible in the picture is the incision made in the earth, into which the theist creator has, as it were, laid the Crematorium (the actual cremating, which is done by a computer-guided mechanism, takes place underground). Inside, the twenty-nine light-tipped columns arouse universal wonder ([fig. 30](#)). It is hardly necessary to comment on how they simultaneously transcend functionality, materiality and "mere" ornamentation. An at first curious, but on second thought absolutely characteristic feature is the egg suspended from a barely visible wire hung from the ceiling above a round pool ([fig. 31](#), [fig. 32](#)). Here, Schultes and Gill are evidently citing pagan symbols of originary unity (cf. Käplinger 1998). I invite the reader to decide what is more important: the performative, magical representation of that unity, or the derivative fact of its citation. Also striking are the curiously tiered walls of the Crematorium with their regular rows of holes and casket-like incisions with sandpiles at their base. The holes contain lights which,

when lit, performatively suggest the dispersion of matter from within; the sandpiles represent the dissolution of matter into dust. These and other devices used in the Crematorium are suggestive of non-Christian sacral structures (the Temple of Karnak, the Great Mosque in Cordoba, Stonehenge, etc.) without, as far as I can tell, really citing them directly. The point is not to quote but to create what Schultes calls "suggestive spatiality" (Schultes 2001, 202) or, as he also once put it, "a new, primeval convention, an architectonic imperative" (Rauterberg 2000).

### **The Federal Chancellery, Regierungsviertel (transparency, kinesis)**

Dubbed the "Chancellor's Washing Machine" by the general public, this swirling, grandiose structure ([fig. 33](#)), which is the seat of executive power in Germany as well as the Chancellor's home, has been accused of being gargantuan and excessively garish.[\(16\)](#) Like the Reichstag, the Presidential Chancellery, and the Paul Löbe Building, it makes an important positive statement about political culture in today's Germany. In each case, the decision-making bodies involved could have opted for staid, emotionless structures suggesting stability, bureaucratic efficiency, and consensual continuity--the reassuring hallmarks of postwar German politics. Instead, the vacuum that resulted after German reunification was taken as a chance to fit out Germany with an architectonic face beholden to no particular previous historical style and conveying open, uplifting qualities. This is most certainly one case where the fall of communism has had a direct aesthetic expression: the building definitely makes a post-millennial statement in Gans's sense.[\(17\)](#)

The Chancellery itself is a great deal larger than my picture suggests. It is flanked by two massive office blocks, and from the distance its boxy exterior does indeed resemble a giant, outlandish household appliance (the popular idea of the building as a kind of gargantuan washing machine fits in well with my notion of transcendent functionalism). The facade, which is the most striking and widely photographed feature, works by radically disassociating frame and content in both vertical and horizontal space. As in the Treptower Crematorium, it is possible to see through the vast building entirely; the structure seeks in this way to disavow its own materiality. Wings have been sliced into the roof suggesting both flight and the overcoming of matter; the flight theme is echoed further below by the pterodactyl-like roof stretched out over the entrance. The profusion of chopped-off pillars suggests theist willfulness mitigated by natural growth (the trees on top). On the horizontal level, the first floor appears to be disassociated entirely from the ground floor; similarly, the louvers in back of the pillars dissect and "move" space on a horizontal axis. On the ground, the oddly configured grass strips repeat the wing patterns above and point us toward the entrance. In general, the building "opens" out towards us and tries to draw us into its space, which is then made to dematerialize as much as possible. This effect of openness, transparency, and upwardly bound movement is entirely conscious and political. Schultes wanted to make this German equivalent of the American White House as open to the public view as possible, and was bitterly disappointed that a Citizen's Information Center he designed was not built in front of the Chancellery (cf. Schultes 2001).

### **The Presidential Chancellery, Tiergarten (wholeness)**

A shiny anthracite egg ([fig. 34](#)), which connotes wholeness while at the same time managing to integrate its natural surroundings into itself visually. The building reflects, but in a humane, inclusive way, and not

in the cool, metallic-sunglass-style typical of postmodernism: black and white, nature and culture merge amicably on its receding, self-effacing surface.

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### **The Lemon Office Building (closure + triangulation, impendency, transparency, theist creation)**

Figuratively speaking, this is performatism's way of squaring the circle ([fig. 35](#), [fig. 36](#)). Triangulation, which normally involves stylizing convergence and divergence, is combined here in a paradoxical way with circularity and wholeness. Seen from the road, the Lemon Building seems to float over its base, which is marked by crisp incisions that seemingly undermine its wholeness and stability--all the work of an architect not quite of this world. In this structure, the occupants of the building unwittingly participate in the performatist plan: undrawn, the window shades realize transparency; drawn, materialization. This spontaneous individual activity of the building's users--something modernist architects disdained as a gross disruption of their rigorous symmetries--is now integrated into the total aesthetic scheme.

### **GSW Office Building, Kochstraße (transparency, kinesis, framing)**

The sail-like structure on top of this building ([fig. 37](#)) as well as the peculiar transparent facade ([fig. 38](#)) work together to create a chimney-like draft that cools the building. This demonstrates that performatist devices need not be non-functional in reality--they just have to look that way. In this case there is also still a certain overlap between postmodern and performatist language. The sail on top can be said to cite 1950's-style buildings (Jaeger 2001, 68) and the red-pink-orange color of the awnings is no doubt still a frivolous, postmodern touch. No longer postmodern, however, is the way the they interact with the transparent frame to suggest dematerialization. The awnings, whose number and arrangement is constantly changing as their users pull them up and down, put on a striking, spontaneous performance while suggesting that material things are being suspended in thin air. The frame itself appears entirely disassociated from its content, which is yet another frame.

### **The Family Court, Kreuzberg (framing, generativity)**

This building by the square-loving German architect Mathias Oswald Ungers still has ties to the postmodern aesthetic. It cites a presumably functional unit, the square or grid, and treats it as a superficial ornament rather than as the external expression of an inner functional principle ([fig. 39](#)). Here, though, it seems to me that Ungers transcends postmodernism by using the square as a generative unit that unfolds in a dynamic second dimension (on the building's facade) and in a third dimension (the empty frame beside it: [fig. 40](#)). In both instances, the square is more than a mere ornament or a simple bearer of functionality. On the two-dimensional plane the kinetically ever expanding squares demonstrate generativity (if observed from top right to bottom left) or, in a way more natural to the eye, reduction to originary unity (if observed from bottom left to top right). The disassociation of frame and content that we have observed elsewhere is realized in an especially radical way off to the left. The frame's contents seem to have taken off for parts unknown, leaving the functional structure behind as a useless ornament reminding us of a just

transpired transcendent incident. Ungers, whose manifesto "Towards a New Architecture" (1960) was a harbinger of postmodernism, has more recently expressed himself in ways suggestive of performatism. In remarks about his Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe (Ungers 1992) he notes that the building he designed is supposed to "look as if it had already always been there" (his "schon immer" being normal German usage and not a Hegel or Derrida quotation). In emphasizing the "uniqueness" (Einmaligkeit) of the building, Ungers rejects the notion of following an "eclecticistic principle." Rather, he "decomposes" aspects of other structures to form timeless architectonic invariants striving for perfection. His technique consists of "a play of formal elements which remain the same independently of historical development and which are employed in varied form and in the most varied epochs in different works of architecture." This "iconographic principle," as Ungers calls it, resembles the sacral practice of icon painting: "Just as the icon is the original image [Urbild] and in the course of time is perfected ever more, so too does the the process of assimilation consist not just in banal imitation, but also in ever new interpretations of what are essentially the same architectonic elements." His plan for the Library is thus "not just the extension of an already existing architectonic concept, but also its continuation in the sense of a search for perfection."

### **The Jewish Museum, Berlin Mitte (kinesis, theist neglect, incomplete triangulation)**

Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum ([fig. 41](#)) is a deconstructivist, late-postmodern structure that, however, shares numerous devices with performatism (just as deconstruction itself shares certain theoretical positions with Gans's GA and performatism). One of the most striking differences between deconstructive and performatist architecture is the former's metaphysical pessimism. Although manifestly theist--it stylizes an act of originary creation/destruction rather than citing previous styles--the Jewish Museum suggests the willful neglect of a theist God: the cuts in the building look as though an evil Other has slashed the building with a giant razor ([fig. 42](#)). Generally speaking, triangulation is either lacking (forms are simply oblique) or is incomplete, as in the cuts on the facade ([fig. 41](#)). The slanting, squat steles topped by greenery are more suggestive of gravestones than of structural devices; together with the rest of the building they suggest a world gone awry but slowly trying to set itself right again.

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## Notes

1. The second half of this paper was presented as a talk at the John-F.-Kennedy-Institut in Berlin on 15 November 2001. ([back](#))

2. The German original has in the meantime appeared in *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 46 (2000), 149-173. ([back](#))
3. See *Chronicle* 209, June 3, 2000. ([back](#))
4. I am following here the argumentation outlined in *Signs of Paradox* (Gans 1997). ([back](#))
5. In his internet "Introduction to GA" ([www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/gaintro.htm](http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/gaintro.htm)) Gans writes: "The spectator's separation from the esthetic representation is experienced as a *formal barrier* or frame that surrounds it, independently of the reality of the inaccessible central figure that is necessary to the sacred." ([back](#))
6. For an extensive discussion of how ostensive generates first the imperative and then the declarative see Gans 1981. ([back](#))
7. As Girard (1987, 64) 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 [...]." ([back](#))
8. As Gans says in this regard, "Girard's key limitation is a mirror image of that of Derrida: where the latter can only comprehend declarative truth, the former sees only the ostensive" (Gans 1997, 58). ([back](#))
9. See my analyses of these works in Eshelman 2001. ([back](#))
10. Analogous to the theist God, who places humankind into an imperfect framework in which He then intervenes in unpredictable, unknowable ways. Like acts of God in general, theist devices may appear to be pointless or unmotivated. ([back](#))
11. Readers familiar with deconstructive discourse will recognize this as the exact theological opposite of what is done by deconstruction. For deconstruction, such defects or lacunae mark the fatal nothingness lurking beyond signification. The whole point of occidental metaphysics, from its perspective, is to cover up, defer or deny these markers through the application of ever more discursive twists and turns. The melancholy, metaphysically pessimistic goal of deconstruction is to critique this cover-up or repression through the application of its *own* discourse, which it turn helps realize precisely that deferral which it itself is unmasking. ([back](#))
12. One could oppose this to Heidegger's notion of the *Geviert* or fourfold as the point of architectonic origin (see Heidegger 1997, 106). For example, one could think of the threefold relation as being quasi-semantic and ostensive, the fourfold relation between "earth and air, men and gods" as being always already semantic or, as Gans and Derrida would say, "metaphysical." In his own writings on architecture, Derrida (1997) suggests two by now familiar patterns derived from his text analyses. Architecture may

either be labyrinthine, a mark of the failure of the Tower of Babel to impose a universal language/architecture on humankind (322), or "an experience of the Supreme which is not higher but in a sense more ancient than space and therefore is a spatialization of time" (323)--an architectural incarnation of *différance*. In this last instance, Derrida is a hair's breadth away from generative anthropology's notions of the human and the sacred. What is missing, as always, is the causal nexus that would explain why this leap from time to space came about in the first place. Derrida's originary moment remains a brilliant, self-engendering act without any anchoring in the scene of the human. ([back](#))

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13. Gehry himself considers these structures to be no longer postmodern. However, the Nationale-Nederlanden Building in Prague (popularly called "Ginger and Fred" or "The Dancing House") as well as the so-called "Horse's Head" conference room in the DG Bank contain anthropomorphic elements reminiscent of the postmodern habit of semanticizing architectonic relations. In addition, the "Horse's Head" contains what look to me like large buckyballs, thus suggesting--by way of quotation--a double origin of undular organicity and angular crystallicity. ([back](#))

14. Whose sagging balcony now has to be held up by an elaborate set of trusses, as recently reported by the *New York Times* (Wald 2001, 1). ([back](#))

15. For more on this technique see Neumeyer 1994, 78. ([back](#))

16. The mainstream press's reaction to the Chancellery has been mixed. A positive view can be found in Rauterberg 2000. Readers interested in some of the standard criticism directed at the building should consult the interview conducted by *Der Spiegel* with Schultes (Schultes 2001). ([back](#))

17. In Gans's reckoning, post-millennialism starts with the reunification of Central Europe and the victory of capitalism, rather than with the year 2000. ([back](#))

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# **The Originary Scene, Sacrifice, and the Politics of Normalization in A.B. Yehoshua's *Mr. Mani***

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In a short essay on his novel, *Mr. Mani*, the Israeli novelist A.B. Yehoshua declares his intentions for the novel: to free Israeli Jews from the "menacing myth" (64) of the *akedah*, the binding and aborted sacrifice of Isaac. The way he tried to do this, he says, was to turn "that which in the bible story was merely a threatened sacrifice" into "an awesome reality": "by actualizing the murderous threat I could perhaps discredit its appeal and perhaps extricate the very soul of this bedrock story. This is what I refer to when I say I am annulling the sacrifice of Isaac by its fulfillment" (64). In this essay I will suggest that the logic of transference implicit in Yehoshua's project--to exorcise an ambivalent founding narrative by dramatizing or acting out its logical conclusions--takes the novel well beyond Yehoshua's explicit intentions in a manner that is of great interest to originary thinking.

Yehoshua's opposition to the centrality of the *akedah* story in Judaism rests upon more than the fact that it is clearly objectionable in moral terms. Rather, Yehoshua is most concerned by "its growing negative implications for our national self image" (63). On this level, the *akedah* story interferes with the normalization of the Jewish people at which Zionism aims, as a result of which national unification would be based upon "territory, language and history" (64) ("as all other peoples are constituted" [64]), rather than upon the "melding of seed and creed" (64). The Jewish insistence on singularity is in this case really a compulsive reiteration of the (self-)sacrificial structure of Jewish identity represented by the *akedah*. That is, Isaac, in a scene presumably reiterated throughout Jewish history, can only secure his identity in the proximity of martyrdom. This provides an explanation of decisions made by Jews collectively throughout history, which can be accounted for as pathological attempts to court martyrdom. The transcendence of sacrifice, often taken to be the meaning of the *akedah* story, is in this case taken to be an insidious internalization of sacrificial logic.

Yehoshua's attack on the *akedah* seems to follow the familiar Enlightenment pattern of demystification. This involves, first of all, secularizing the story by rendering it in psychologically plausible terms: "it is

precisely from the secular perspective that the story of the *Akedah* is plausible, and it is from such a viewpoint that I consider it and can accept its moral coherence" (63). Thus, in addition to replacing the threatened sacrifice with an actual one, Yehoshua replaces the divinely sanctioned sacrifice with one conceived in "credible psychological and realistic" (64) terms. According to Yehoshua's reading of the *Akedah*, Abraham, in founding his family line on iconoclasm, that is, "a new faith in a new unitary god," to which end "he broke the idols in the home of his father" (63), was naturally concerned that his son might grow up and do the same to him. To prevent this, "he stages an *akedah*," terrifying Isaac and then convincing him that he "owed his life to his father's God."

In addition to thus explaining the *akedah*, Yehoshua also seeks to marginalize its place in the history of Jewish national existence: "[t]hroughout the remainder of the Bible there are no further references to the *akedah* story" (63). The "major emphasis on the myth within Jewish theology began much later than the Bible, but since then, of course, it has thrived" (63). Decoding this in terms of the Zionist "creed," the *akedah* story was produced to account for a "pre-national" mode of Jewish existence, was marginalized during the "national" period of a broader, territorially based "Israeli" identity (the period recorded in most of the Bible), and then "thrives" in the exilic period. The implication is clear: the *akedah* is a Diasporic myth, and for Yehoshua a symptom of the "neurotic" condition of exile.(1) Its continuance in present day Israel therefore interferes with the normalization of the Jewish people and the development of a broader "Israeli" (rather than Diasporic "Jewish") identity.(2)

Yehoshua concludes his brief essay as follows:

For all its implausibility and lack of realism, the concept of the modern Canaanites will always serve as a fruitful challenge to Zionist Israel. When I wrote the "Fifth conversation" for *Mr. Mani*, we were in the first difficult months of the Intifada, before we became inured to atrocity, and every dead Palestinian child still caused us sleepless nights. At the time, I recalled that at the beginning of Zionism, Ben Gurion and President Ben Zvi came up with the peculiar notions that Yosef Mani [the "Isaac" of the book's culminating "conversation"] propounds--that the Arabs of the country were merely converted descendents of Jews who had remained devoted to the land after the destruction of the Second Temple. And that perhaps due to their attachment to the land they gave up their loyalty to the faith of their fathers. Yet now we torture our brothers of old with the afflictions of the occupation. (64-5)

2

This tortured (in more ways than one) paragraph requires quite a bit of explication. The Canaanites were a small group of (mostly) modernist artists and writers who, in the early days of the state of Israel, argued that the Jews were really (or should see themselves as) "Canaanites," that is, descendents, along with the Arab occupants of the land, of the people who lived there prior to the founding of the ancient "Israeli" commonwealth. Although their political program was utterly ineffectual (a bizarre, eclectic mix of the expansionism of the extreme Right with the anti-Zionism of the extreme Left), the Canaanites have had enormous influence on Israeli art and culture, including Yehoshua himself.(3) This is undoubtedly because they took "normalization" to its logical conclusion, aiming at utterly erasing all traces of an "abnormal" history.

Here, while marking their ideas as "implausible" and "unrealistic," Yehoshua also notes with nostalgia the (fleeting) appearance of these "peculiar notions" in the mainstream of Zionist thought, while the character whose tragic end is the *akedah* enacted in the novel is the representative of those ideas. But this means that, in the sacrifice enacted in *Mr. Mani*, the victim is the advocate of normalization who is too explicit, extreme, and in advance of his time. On the face of it, this poses no problem for Yehoshua's thesis--presenting his "Isaac" as a forward-thinking supporter of normalization simply implicates modern Zionist politics, with its inability to abandon its commitment to Jewish singularity, in the logic of the *akedah*. But "Canaanism" was necessarily ahead of its time (implausible and unrealistic) because it was an iconoclastic *creed* of normalization. As such, it cannot be assimilated to normalization itself (it cannot enter the promised land). The Canaanites ultimately reproduced the double bind of normalization: what greater proof of abnormality can there be than the elaborate codification of the fantasy of normalcy? And it is this creed of normalization that is paradoxically offered up as a sacrifice in Yehoshua's novel.

Let us now consider the implication that normalization is a condition of genuine peace with "our brothers of old," the Palestinian Arabs. On Yehoshua's account, the Arabs are a positive model to be emulated: they remained attached to the land rather than the "faith of their fathers" and were rewarded with the "normal," national existence which the Jews are now seeking. At the same time, of course, they don't realize who they "really" are, and, without this, a genuine reciprocity between "Jews who have forgotten they are Jews" and "Jews who can't forget they are Jews" is impossible. The Jewish experience of alienation and exile is therefore crucial for the equation. Yehoshua's proposed path to normalization is thus founded upon mimetic rivalry between Israelis and Palestinians: each has a competing and commensurable claim to the central object. This becomes especially clear when we realize that, as a result of the Jewish drive for normalization, the Palestinians have "acquired" just such an experience, along with their own claims to singularity, as the "Jews of Israel," or the "Jews of the Arab world."

My reading of the novel will suggest that Yehoshua therefore exceeds his intentions by articulating a mode of Israeli identity dependent upon an agonistic form of reciprocity with the Palestinians. It is a form of reciprocity that can be sustained only insofar as the terms of exchange are inherently paradoxical, implicating "normalization" in "singularity," "territory" in "creed," and vice versa. The novel does this, as I will show, not by discrediting the *akedah* but by transforming it from a founding story into one possible response to the revelation of the paradoxical nature of the originary scene. Of course, this argument for reciprocity can appear apologetic, that is, as justifying the current unequal relations between the two peoples. And Palestinians might not find the claim that they are "Jews who have forgotten that they are Jews" much of an invitation to dialogue. Implicit in the argument of Yehoshua's novel, however, is a mode of Israeli-Palestinian engagement that would transform resentment and "elevate" mimetic rivalry: the rule of the game would be that Palestinians likewise put forward a narrative of their own that includes Israeli Jews in alienating, but ultimately "answerable" terms.

*Mr. Mani* is, as Gershon Shaked says, an "anti-family anti-saga" (277), tracing five generations of fathers and sons from the Mani family in and out of Jerusalem from 1848 to 1982. It is told in the form of five "conversations," in which we are given one side of the conversation and must infer the contribution of the other partner. The conversations, furthermore, are given in reverse order, with the final conversation

in the book therefore the first chronologically. Each conversation is set at a crucial point in modern Jewish history, where some alternative regarding the various possibilities of "normalization" (assimilation, Zionism, peace with the Palestinians) is on the agenda.<sup>(4)</sup> Finally, with the exception of the final conversation, no Mani is a conversation partner--the conversations are *about* the Manis, to whom we are therefore exposed in a mediated fashion.

The relationship between the conversation partners in the first four conversations is strikingly similar (I am setting aside the final conversation, which does not fit this pattern, and needs to be addressed separately). In each case, we have a younger speaker and an older interlocutor who is, for the most part, a listener. The younger partner is more independent, critical and skeptical, the older more conventional and affirmative of social norms. The younger partner, we are told (in the "biographical" information we are given before each conversation), had some desire to pursue interests in the arts or humanities before being forced into a more conventional profession (such as law or medicine). The speaker, then, has both the aesthetic capabilities to "see" something in his/her Mani, while being familiar enough with the more limited outlook of his/her listener, and to know how to make them "see" the same thing, albeit in a more limited way.

3

Thus, the first conversation is between Hagar, a young woman from a kibbutz, who has met Gavriel Mani, her boyfriend's father, on a trip to Jerusalem, and her mother, Yael, a "typical" kibbutznik still (in 1982) fiercely loyal to the socialist ideals of the kibbutz, and lately adding to this ideological perspective an overly literalistic belief in behaviorist psychology. The second conversation is between Egon Bruner, a budding classicist in the nineteenth-century mold, currently (1944) a German soldier in occupied Crete, and his adopted "Grandmother," Andrea Sauchon, a "typical" representative of the German aristocracy who went along with Hitler in the name of order, anti-Communism, and their own imperialist "ideals." The third conversation is between Lieutenant Ivor Horowitz, a Jewish Englishman serving as a prosecutor in the British force occupying Palestine in 1918, and Colonel Michael Woodhouse an (again) "typical" member of the British aristocracy, who represents the colonial and military norms and codes of the British ruling class. The fourth conversation, finally, set in 1899, is between Dr. Efrayim Shapiro, a skeptical Polish Jewish pediatrician, and his father, Sholom Shapiro, a businessman and enthusiastic Zionist. Central to each conversation are the questions of what, exactly, the primary speaker (who, in each case, is the one who had actually encountered the Mani) sees in the Mani, and what this speaker succeeds (or fails) to communicate to the other partner.

The conversation partner who has actually seen the Mani, I would like to refer to as the "fascinated spectator": in each case, they are inexplicably drawn to the energetic, mysterious, possibly pathological Mr. Mani. There is a strong sense that something "foundational" is at stake, that some kind of singular judgment is called for, and it is this sense that each fascinated spectator tries to communicate. To put it simply, each spectator is witness to a (self-)sacrifice and/or revelation of some kind, whose effects radiate outward to the community, depending upon the ability of the witness to communicate it. Thus, Hagar in the first conversation simply calls upon Gavriel Mani in order to give him a message from his

son, but then "slipped into his house uninvited, because I knew I had to find out what was going on in there" (23). She finds a noose in his bedroom, and concludes that Mani (whose mother had just died) was about to take his own life (a reasonable conclusion, of course, but it is just as plausible, as Hagar herself suggests later, that this is some ritual of deferred self-sacrifice). She then stays at his side, despite his attempts to send her back to Tel Aviv, for three days, until the "spell," that is, Hagar's intense conviction that she can and must save him, wears off.

Egon, in the second conversation, becomes so obsessed with Efrayim Mani's (whom Egon is responsible for arresting and deporting along with the rest of the Jews on the island) "theory" of self-cancellation, with the possibility of "return[ing] to the starting point and becom[ing] *simply human again*" (128), that he spends two years keeping a daily watch on Mani, checking to see whether, when he thinks he is not being watched, he "*cancel[s] the cancellation*" (129). Ivor Horowitz, in the third conversation, investigates with complete thoroughness Yosef Mani's "unbelievably intense" (169) world, first of all because of his scrupulousness as a British officer and a Jew who must prove his loyalty and ability to his superiors, but also because of his extremely alien, seemingly maniacal focus on politics as salvation (and/or self-martyrdom). And Efrayim Shapiro speaks of Moshe Mani's "power" that "could move you to do anything by his presence," a power which is an "illusory reflection . . . of the soon-to-surface destructiveness within him" (267). He finally has to "distan[c]e [him]self in such a way [as to] eventually muster the strength to break the chains of his captivity" (271), to resist the demonic attractive force of both Mani and Jerusalem.

In each of the first four conversations, as well, the question of that Mani's motivation, or driving passion, is left to oscillate between undecidable alternatives: pitiable pathology (or, in the case of Efrayim Mani, simple deception aimed at survival) or genuine revelatory disclosure. Each Mani is either trapped within a determinist historical structure, his vain struggles to escape merely symptomatic reiterations of that structure, or he is exercising an astonishing freedom, in which case the failure is on the part of the spectator and the larger community who are unwilling or unable to respond in kind. Here, the judgment of the fascinated spectator is crucial. For example, Efrayim Shapiro, in the fourth conversation, resolutely insists upon a pathological interpretation of Moshe Mani's ultimate self-destruction: despite what we can take to be his father's objection, he keeps claiming that all of Mani's actions (his energetic self-promotion at the Zionist Congress, his obsessive love for Linka, Efrayim's sister) were all "pretexts" set up to bring about his final suicidal act (he throws himself in front of a train just as Efrayim and Linka are about to separate from him once and for all). The reader is given to see, however, that Efrayim's insistence upon this interpretation is an attempt to evade his own responsibility for the outcome, a responsibility rooted in the skepticism which leads him to dissociate himself from any commitment. Efrayim, 46 years after "successfully" resisting the lure of Jerusalem, "sacrifices" himself at the gates of the Auschwitz death camp. His father, meanwhile, the committed Zionist, later travels to Jerusalem, seeking out the remaining members of the Mani family, in an attempt to "compensate" them, presumably, for the destruction unwittingly wrought in their lives by his children.

interpretations of Mani's or her own behavior, defending the integrity of her experience and the "revelation" she has witnessed. This mode of accounting for her experience, moreover, corresponds to her actions in relation to Gavriel Mani, whom she quite likely rescued, if not from suicide, then from a repetition compulsion that would have converted his mother's death into a withdrawal from all meaningful contact with the world. Hagar brings Gavriel into her own family circle, where a romantic connection with her mother is suggested, signifying the "integration" of the Mani family history into contemporary Israel. By bearing his grandson, furthermore, and naming him after her own father (killed in the 1967 war), without marrying his son (who disclaims responsibility for the child) Hagar refounds the Mani family in accord with a new logic.

The originary scene represented by the Mani, in other words, depends upon a spectator. In fact, I want to briefly suggest that this is true of any scene, by definition, including the originary scene postulated by Eric Gans as the origin of language. Mimetic rivalry, I would argue, only makes sense insofar as it takes place in front of a spectator, a court of appeal implicitly able to distinguish original from copy, better from worse and, ultimately, to determine whose actions out of those converging on the sacred object actually "fit" the form of appropriation demanded by that object most "closely." That this question is crucial to the speculations on justice and injustice developed by Gans in some recent *Chronicles* can be demonstrated in a way that conveniently advances my own analysis and argument here.

In discussing the Israel/Palestine conflict as a case where both parties seem to have equally legitimate victimary claims, Gans seems to arrive at several different (although not necessarily mutually exclusive) conclusions. One is that the Israelis, as the stronger party, have the obligation to take upon themselves the deferral of the Palestinians' resentment (see *Chronicle* 250). A second is that a certain unilateralism on Israel's part, in simply claiming Jerusalem as its own, might help move contemporary politics beyond the self-evident legitimacy of victimary claims as such (*Chronicle* 218). As this suggestion also takes for granted Israel's greater power, I will now suggest a problem with that assumption: it is undermined the more one introduces (as victimary discourses are especially wont to do) various "long-term" and "worst-case" scenarios, such as the acquisition of nuclear weapons by one of Israel's enemies (or one of the countries that might become an enemy if it had a nuclear weapon), the overthrow of regimes currently at peace (at least formally) with Israel and their replacement by radical Islamist regimes, and so on.

In this case, we are led to consider another model of reconciliation suggested by Gans, despite his claim that it doesn't apply to Israel/Palestine: that in cases where victimary claims are "equal," or at least where priority cannot be sorted out "internally," then the conflict can only be settled by outside intervention. If this proposal is not simply to generate further resentment (including the resentment of the third party), then it must be possible to presuppose at least the possibility of that party's disinterestedness. It seems to me that only by including the spectator in the originary scene is it possible to account for such disinterestedness. In fact, Gans's first two proposals appear as attempts to include such disinterestedness within the capacity of the stronger party to distance itself from the immediacy of its resentment. It's easy to see how this can only lead to the intensification of resentment on both sides. We can approach the issue more productively, however, if, following up on the outside intervention proposal, we acknowledge that both sides have "always already" taken the spectator into account. Even more, the resentment on both sides is always already *displayed* resentment, intended to register with a spectator--which, I would

stress, not only does not imply that it is not "real," but is in fact precisely what makes it real. I don't think it would be very difficult to prove this in the case of either the Israelis or the Palestinians.

This would further imply that the disinterestedness of the spectator depends upon his/her recognition of the scenic structure of displayed resentment (and his/her ability to take into account his/her own simultaneously internal and external relation to the scene). The intervention of the (powerful) spectator can, then, indeed be productive insofar as it is used to break with the fantasy of both sides that the "right" spectator would place them at the center, that is, to impose both responsibility and a certain marginality on both parties (it is the assumption of an "ideal" spectator, for Israel the US, for the Palestinians the UN and "world," especially European, opinion, that, I would suggest, has ultimately made negotiations interminable and impossible). For this reason, I am in fact sympathetic to Gans's support for a bit of unilateralism on Israel's part, which, I would add, must include Israel itself deciding once and for all what it wants its borders to be. That is, Israel could no longer evade responsibility in the name of "their" evasion of responsibility. The other side of the equation might be an American declaration that if the Palestinians formally announce the founding of the State of Palestine, explicitly cutting their ties with all of the rights that, ratified through a long series of UN resolutions, are to be "delivered" to them along with entire state "package," the US will immediately recognize that state. The U.S. would then commence viewing Israeli-Palestinian relations in inter-state terms. I would also suggest that the current campaign against Middle East-centered terrorism might make such an approach productive. The current situation imposes a marginality which is revealed to both parties through their failed attempts to place themselves at the center--for the Israelis, as the "original" victim of terrorism, for the Palestinians, as the party whose victimization is the source of this globally destructive resentment.(5)

5

In fact, in both the first and fourth conversations, the metaphor of the theater has a particularly prominent role. Near the conclusion of the fourth conversation--just as Moshe Mani takes his final leave of Linka and Efrayim by asserting "We shall never meet again . . . and you are to blame. Do you not see that you are to blame?"--the latter says:

I was still shaking my head when it flashed through my mind that I had made a terrible mistake--that the curtain had already risen--that before me no longer stood a doctor from Jerusalem but an actor forced to recite a script that he could not revise--one drummed into him immemorial ages ago--which--although he was the director and the theater owner too--he was not at liberty to leave unperformed and must stage to the bitter end (284).

For Efrayim, the actor possesses only an illusory freedom because the script comes from elsewhere. Insofar as the spectator is unproblematically outside of the scene (merely a "pretext" for the play), that spectator is able to see that the end was included in the beginning, and that beginning itself only refers back to another beginning, which in turn . . . To put it another way, action always presupposes a script, and the script itself presupposes another action, implicitly relying upon another script. In fact, the more control the actor has over the conditions of production (even, or especially, if he is the "director" and "theater owner" as well), the more he is implicated in fulfilling the obligations entailed in the transmitted

script, obligations that also presuppose the uninterrogated assumptions and expectations of a passive audience.

In the first conversation, meanwhile, Hagar constantly refers to herself as feeling, during her experience with Gavriel Mani, like a character in a book or a movie, that is, on display. In her case, the setting and the script pre-exist her, but she is unfamiliar with them: she is thus actor and spectator of her own actions, but is not in possession of the "script." Yet she is also scripting her own story as she proceeds, by extrapolating from her own actions (which also means that she relinquishes her claim to be the privileged interpreter): wrongly believing herself to be pregnant with Gavriel Mani's grandchild when she goes to see him, she does in fact afterward become pregnant with his grandchild. She is, furthermore, stage-managing other "productions": to her mother's crude "Oedipal" reading of Hagar's interest in Mr. Mani, she says, "Did it ever occur to you, say, that what I'm looking for is not a father for me but a husband for you" (24). In other words, it is Hagar's appropriation and differentiation of the roles rigidly separated and hardened by Efrayim Shapiro--she is actor, spectator, director, scriptwriter and theater owner at the same time, but in different relations and articulations of these roles--that enables her action to be characterized by freedom and responsibility aimed at reconciliation and a fresh start. She is the only one of the "fascinated spectators" of the novel who actively intervenes in the Mani in question's acting out of his sacrificial role--who, that is, sends the Mani narrative in a new direction.

I have been suggesting that each Mani operates as a kind of sacred center, from which violence and freedom, sacrifice and revelation, both emanate. Furthermore, the effects, and even the reality, of the sacred center depend upon the reception and response of the fascinated spectator, and, in turn, upon that spectator's relationship to an individual who is implicitly representative of a larger, "mainstream" audience. The truth of the Mani in question thus depends upon the fascinated spectator's ability to transform him/herself into a rhetorical performer who somehow finds a way to convey at least some sense of this truth so as to displace the common sense of the audience. Whatever theory of "identity" or "Jewish identity" the book is arguing for is thus articulated through these relationships. But these scenic elements themselves are rooted in resentment and mimetic rivalry, as I will show through a discussion of the climactic (but also anti-climactic) fifth conversation.

The final conversation is set in an inn in Athens, in 1848. The participants in the conversation are Avraham Mani, Flora Molkho-Haddaya (who leaves midway through the conversation) and Rabbi Shabbetai Hananiaha Haddaya (who, having recently suffered a debilitating stroke, is unable to speak and, possibly, to comprehend). Thus, in this final conversation, a Mani is a participant. Furthermore, the structure of resentment constituting the conversation is for the first time implicated in the fate of the particular Mani in question. Rabbi Haddaya was Avraham's mentor as a young man, and Flora was the woman whom Avraham had wanted to marry following the death of his wife: in fact, before marrying Flora himself (for reasons that are never clarified), the Rabbi had tried to make a match between Flora and Avraham, but she had refused. Moreover, Avraham's son, Yosef, supplanted him in the affections of both. As a merchant who was often away, Avraham often left his son in Haddaya's and Flora's household; as a more talented student than his father, Yosef is more of a disciple to the Rabbi than Avraham could ever be, and as a kind of surrogate son (and/or possibly lover) to Flora, he gains a closeness to her that was never granted to Avraham. The Rabbi, Flora, and Yosef, finally, all treat

Avraham with a rather thinly veiled contempt.

6

This, then, is the stage for Yehoshua's presentation of the *akedah* story, "in a reasonable psychological context," that is, one thoroughly saturated with resentment. Avraham has come to the Rabbi in order to seek out a judgment on whether, after having committed the crimes of killing his son and sleeping with (and impregnating) his daughter-in-law, it is now permissible for him to take his own life. His story is an act of revenge against both the Rabbi and Flora: not only has he killed their favorite, the one preferred over him, but in sleeping with Flora's lookalike niece, he has possessed her after all. Furthermore, his story of sacrifice and self-sacrifice usurps the Rabbi's central position. These motives, presented rather transparently in Avraham Mani's discourse, tend to complicate the question of what he has actually done. Regardless of what is apparently Yehoshua's explicit assertion,<sup>(6)</sup> it is not at all clear whether Avraham has actually killed his son or to what extent he is complicit in his murder. What is clear is that Yosef, shortly after arriving in Jerusalem, somehow adopted the *idée fixe* that the Arabs of Jerusalem were in fact "Jews who had forgotten they were Jews," and took it upon himself to "remind" them. He embarks on a project of indirect proselytizing (such as recruiting them for Jewish prayer sessions), ultimately arousing the opposition of Muslims and Christians alike. There is a final scene in which, pursued by Christian and Muslim mobs (and Avraham) to the traditional site of the Temple Mount (also the traditional site of the *akedah*), Yosef has his throat slit.

Elements incompatible with Yehoshua's identification of the *akedah* "pathology" with iconoclasm and monotheism are evident here. First, rather than clearly representing (actualizing) the act, his portrayal makes it thoroughly undecidable, or, rather, completely dependent upon the scene reflecting on the original scene. It is quite plausible to see Avraham as taking responsibility for an act he has not in fact committed, precisely because of the way in which it places him in the center of the structure of resentment. Along similar lines, it is possible to see his assertion of responsibility as a result of his guilt over precisely these resentful feelings. Even if we assume that Avraham has killed his son, his resentment provides a radically different and far more plausible explanation than the one Yehoshua has provided for the original *akedah*: to meld "seed and creed," that is, to found a nation on absolute obedience to an all-powerful God rather than on "territory, language and history."

This leads to yet another problem. In Yehoshua's account, Avraham is the one who wants his *idée fixe* transmitted across the generations, realizing that this can only be accomplished through the use or the threat of violence. In *Mr. Mani*, however, Yosef is the one with the "creed," and the one ready to use violence to enforce it: he speaks of the "chastisements" he will use against the Arabs if they fail to "remember" that they are Jews, and he dies for his beliefs. Avraham wants nothing more than the continuation of his "seed," that is, a "normal" family structure. This is the surface reason for his decision to sleep with Tamara, Yosef's young wife, once he realizes that the couple has never consummated their marriage (again, for reasons never clarified: some critics see Yosef as homosexual [see Band, 239-40, for example], which makes sense but to my mind is never confirmed by the text; another possibility is that Tamara's physical similarity to Flora makes their marital relationship in effect the incestuous one that

Avraham ultimately establishes with Tamara. I prefer this explanation because it implicates the marriage in the deeply tangled and ultimately unresolved structure of resentments, substitutions and displacements which the novel insistently suggests lie behind the "ideas" of the Mani men).

In other words, at the moment of truth in Yehoshua's novel, we find precisely the same antinomies that have been building all along: between pathology and revelation, historical fatality rooted in violence and free action. And the resolution of these antinomies is quite impossible here since the "spectator" is not only an actor in the drama he narrates, but is also the "stage manager" of the scene wherein he narrates it. The structural opposition between Avraham Mani, at the very beginning, and Hagar, at the very end, provides us with one key to making sense of this: whereas Avraham's violence consists in concentrating all of these roles in his unrecognized drive to place himself at the center, Hagar disaggregates these roles and thus liberates them (that is, liberates the scene) from the sacrificial structure. This suggests the following relationship between the originary scene and sacrifice: sacrifice is a particular response to the originary scene, one that aims at identifying the different parts (actor, spectator, scriptwriter, etc.) with a single, controlling, transhistorical will.

Interestingly, Gavriel Mani has no "ideas," no "project" (nor is Hagar presented as a character who would be particularly impressed by either): it is as if the "creedal" element of the *akedah* has simply exhausted itself, so that all that is left is the more easily displaced rote repetition of the self-sacrificial structure. The problem here is that this would render Yehoshua's novel, with all of its national-therapeutic ambitions, unnecessary. The *akedah* story, and its grip on the Israeli psyche, is dying a natural death, just as Zionism, in fact, would have predicted. Yehoshua's novel is describing the process of normalization rather than struggling to provoke and enact it. This, of course, might only be a problem for Yehoshua's conception of the novel and his self-conception as an Israeli artist. I would suggest, however, that while Yehoshua's own reading of the novel in ideological terms (the Enlightenment struggle against religion) is in fact undermined, the novel resituates the problem of the *akedah* in scenic terms: liberation from the *akedah* involves a liberation of the originary scenic elements from their sacrificial structure.

7

The novel's implicit contention, then, is that the deconstruction of sacrifice is indeed a perpetual necessity.<sup>(7)</sup> This is the case in Yehoshua's novel, I would suggest, primarily for political reasons. For example, even if we read the first conversation as the accomplishment of normalization, we must take note of the conclusion of the "Biographical supplements" following the conversation. There, we are told that Gavriel Mani preferred to drive from Jerusalem to visit Hagar and Yael through the West Bank, asserting that "the route through Hebron was perfectly safe and the villagers along it were peaceful" (72). However, "in the early autumn of 1987 [that is, a couple of months before the beginning of the Intifada], a large rock was thrown at the judge's car as he drove through Dir-el-Mana, a village some twenty kilometers south of Hebron. That evening he confessed to Yael that it would be wiser to stop coming via Hebron, even though he felt drawn to that route" (73). Mani might be drawn to that route for pathological, self-sacrificial reasons; a better reading, however, is that, as a descendent of a Jerusalem family, Mani is comfortable with the pluralistic nature of the country and region in a way that most

native Israelis would not be. The loss of this "Levantine" consciousness is the cost of normalization, and is closely connected with the intensification of national antagonisms, themselves an important trigger of sacrificial discourse.

Beyond this, Yehoshua's novel is perhaps shifting the debate from normalization vs. singularity to different (singular) positions within the process of normalization. The novel is extremely conscious of the implication of normalization in imitation, which is to say mimetic rivalry, but of a type with an extra double bind built into it: the desire for normalization, if taken literally, assumes that one has already surrendered on the field of mimetic rivalry (one accepts one's otherness as abnormal) while at the same time implying an attempt to now outdo the other at his/her own game. The novel suggests that one need not take this desire literally--that there is an alternative to epigonism, on the one hand, and the intensification of mimetic rivalry to the point of violence or self-destruction on the other.

So, for example, Ivor Horowitz of the third conversation saves Yosef Mani, who is on trial for stealing secret documents and selling them to the Germans while working as an interpreter for the British Army in Palestine (his "payment" is that the Germans allow him access to the Arab population still under their control in order to preach his "precocious" "two states for two peoples" solution to the imminent conflict). He does so, while going out of his way to assert his own "Britishness," by exploiting his interlocutor's British imperial prejudices and even the suspicions of dual loyalty which he knows attach to himself, as a British Jew, in aristocratic and imperial circles. In one instance, he implicitly explains Captain Dagget's (the officer who brought Mani into the British army, thereby giving him access to the documents he later steals) deception by Mani in terms of the Captain's "quintessentially" and eccentrically British "connoisseurship that borders on madness" (181) for horses--thus subtly conferring on his own "outsider" position the authority of objectivity. This courageous political move on Horowitz's part is validated, in the novel's terms, by his support, later in life, for Zionism and Israel. Similarly, even Efrayim Mani's doomed attempt to convince Egon Bruner that he has "cancelled" his Jewishness, that is, to play on the contradictions in Bruner's desire for a pure, unsullied "human" identity and the discrepancy between "surface" manifestations of identity and its real "content," manages to save his own family. The more politically responsible characters in the novel, that is, self-consciously perform rather than trying to resolve the antinomy of identity and difference.

This would imply that "normalization" is only genuine and legitimate when it rests upon the scenic revelation that pathological resolutions to mimetic rivalry either suppress or seek to systematize as ideologies. For this purpose, Yehoshua resorts to a transferential strategy adopted by an earlier immanentist critic of Zionist normalization, Gershom Scholem. Scholem's studies of Jewish mysticism were aimed at confronting the mainstream scholars of the "Science of Judaism" with the originary scene of modern Jewish identity that made their own project possible. In *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, Scholem argued that the Messianism of the Sabbatean and, later, the Frankist sects, which "Enlightened" Jewish scholars considered shameful and "irrational" phenomena to be marginalized at all costs, in fact made the Jewish Enlightenment possible by offering a space of critique of traditional Judaism. Scholem's aims here were of course political: by stressing the popular, anarchic and potentially revolutionary streams of Judaism neglected by Jewish epigones, he foregrounded Jewishness as a yet to be fulfilled political project with its own integrity.(8)

In this connection, it is significant that Rabbi Haddaya of the fifth conversation is linked explicitly to the Marranos (the Jews who survived the Spanish Inquisition by hiding their Jewish identity, conducting Jewish rituals in secret while outwardly professing Christianity; they were important forerunners of those Jews who adhered to the Messianic claims of Shabbetai Tsvi): he was, as a young man, "accepted into the talmudical academy of Rabbi Yosef Kardo, a descendent of a family of Marranos that had returned to Judaism in the early 1700s" (299). He is also linked to the Sabbateans: as an orphaned infant, he was adopted "by a childless old couple named Haddaya; according to one version, the infant was named Shabbatai for the false messiah Shabbatai Tsvi, who had lived in the previous century but whose remaining followers the Haddayas were connected with" (299).

8

In this case, insofar as we can speculate that Yosef Mani's "Canaanite" idea of "Jews who have forgotten" and must remember that they are Jews was in some direct or indirect manner gleaned from the esoteric origins and ideas of Haddaya, Yehoshua is drawing a rather direct line from these pre-modern Jewish heresies and the modernist (post) Zionist heresy of "Canaanism." In both cases, the discrepancy between essence and appearance is the site of the political articulation of identity; and in both cases this "intense," "foundational" or originary mode of politics operates upon the mainstream that disavows it, opening the mainstream to new possibilities. It is by opening this space performatively that Yehoshua's novel does, finally, discredit the *akedah*--the Manis are, in effect, a kind of alienation device dismantling the prevailing Zionist narratives of modern Jewish history. And this effect in fact requires that we not be certain of what Avraham Mani has actually done. As I suggested, each possible interpretation of the "climactic" scene refers to another possible interpretation implicating us more deeply in the resentments constitutive of the scene of telling. The novelist, that is, defers the sacrificial structure by offering the reader the scene itself as sign.

Yehoshua's novel, then, has significant implications for originary thinking in the domain of political identity. Eric Gans tends to assimilate political exchange to economic exchange, even if not as radically as many on the right. This also leaves unanswered the question of the status of sacrifice in the contemporary world: Gans's argument that modern art has essentially exhausted its theoretical potentialities follows from his claim that sacrifice no longer needs to be treated ironically (which would involve "taking it seriously"). Does this mean that sacrifice is no longer a threat, and will "wither away" with the further extension of the market? Or that, as a perpetual threat, the best way to defer it is to refuse to take it seriously? In this latter case, does this refusal to take sacrifice seriously also defer the project of reinstituting the originary sign with each act of signification (since this would raise the threat of sacrifice)? (9) In sum, can sacrifice be transcended, once and for all?

I am suggesting that only in the arena of the political can this question be addressed seriously. Politics, in *Mr. Mani*, is where the paradoxical nature of the sign is enacted concretely. It is political action that appears radically free (that is, no causal chain suffices to account for it) from the standpoint of the actor, and radically determined from the standpoint of the spectator. The reason for this is that the political act

challenges the spectator to recover the scenic elements revealed in the act. Sacrifice is the failure to take up this challenge by reverting to the categories of stability and continuity that essentially deny the act by constructing a larger, imaginary scene of which the actual scene is a mere repetition. This, in scenic terms (that is, where is the spectator in relation to the scene?), is the basis for the prioritizing of the declarative over the ostensive in metaphysical thought:(10) the spectator refuses responsibility for judging and thereby rearticulating the scene by reducing it to a prior, unchanging, universalizable scene over which the spectator (employing the "long view" available only to the spectator) exercises authority (and authorship). Only in political action is the scene that is referred to (in the political demand or polemic) the same scene as that constituted by the act itself. An expanded space of politics would certainly generate more resentment, and hence make the question of sacrifice more explicit--but might that not be a precondition for confronting it?

I want to conclude by suggesting that the tendency to forget the institution of the sign (which, after all, makes originary thinking necessary in the first place) is part of the operation of the sign itself--that is, the sign has an irreducibly esoteric structure. Those who imitate the first gesture renouncing appropriation of the sacred object are "set up" by that gesture--they have been disarmed insofar as they *find themselves* imitating a gesture whose meaning they can grasp only after the fact (after they have seen others in turn imitating *them*). It is this anxiety at "finding oneself" that is forgotten by constructing a scene putatively prior to and determining any particular scene; a scene which, furthermore, only the magician or metaphysician has access to from yet another, unseen scene. The unfolding of the egalitarian content of signification generates resentment against such esotericism. Only politics, in the sense I have given it here, can bring that esotericism out into the open, insofar as, in politics, to grasp the hidden intentions or even the essence of the other is simultaneously to constitute a space of accountability wherein those intentions can be placed on a scene that also includes their consequences.(11)

9

## Notes

1. Yehoshua has long been associated with his passionate attacks on the "neurotic" Jewish Diasporic condition and his arguments in favor of "normalization." ([back](#))

2. In a conversation with the Palestinian Israeli novelist Anton Shammas recorded in David Grossman's *Sleeping on a Wire*, Yehoshua asserts that "[f]or me, 'Israeli' is the authentic, complete and consummate word for the concept 'Jewish'! Israeliness is the total, perfect and original Judaism, one that provides answers in all areas of life. The term 'Jewish,' after all, came into being a thousand years after the concept 'Israeli' existed in practice, and it was created to describe a fraction, what remained after everything the Israeli lost in the Diaspora, until he turned into a 'Jew'" (253-4). ([back](#))

3. See Yaacov Shavit's excellent study of the "Canaanites," *The New Hebrew Nation: A Study in Israeli Heresy and Fantasy*. ([back](#))

4. See Mintz and Horn's essays on the question of historical "alternatives" in *Mr. Mani*. ([back](#))
5. I am setting aside Gans's argument that "we can tell the Palestinians to stop hating the Israelis and start writing software" (*Chronicle* 218) in the name of what I consider an equally plausible hypothesis--that political reconciliation might be a precondition of such economic processes. ([back](#))
6. According to Arnold Band, "Yehoshua himself has informed me both in written and oral communication that the father, Avraham, actually killed his own son" (244). Looking at the specific passage cited by Yehoshua, Band, like myself, is unable to see it. ([back](#))
7. Here I am engaging with the issues Gans raises in *Chronicle* 184. There, Gans argues that the "end of the ability of the esthetic to discriminate between the sacrificial and anti-sacrificial . . . liberates the esthetic from the ethical end of justifying sacrifice." But is this because sacrifice has been internalized psychologically, rather than abolished? Gans is, I think, ambiguous on the implications of this. On the one hand, the capacity to "ironize" rather than "deconstruct" sacrifice suggests that "sacrifice is no longer understood as a necessary feature of social organization." On the other hand, couldn't it be the case that the refusal to "take it seriously" really implies an inability to do so; and that the need to ironize it suggest that we have not transcended it? Would victimary discourses have the power they do if sacrifice was no longer a pressing issue? ([back](#))
8. Scholem writes, "I shall endeavor to show that the nihilism of the Sabbatian and Frankist movements, with its doctrine so profoundly shocking to the Jewish conception of things that the violation of the Torah could become its true fulfillment . . . , was a dialectical outgrowth of the belief in the Messiahship of Sabbatai Zevi, and that this nihilism, in turn, helped pave the way for the Haskalah and the reform movement of the nineteenth century, once its original religious impulse was exhausted" (84). ([back](#))
9. Gans writes: "The unique event in which the verticality of human language emerges from the horizontal world of appetite is a moment of liberation re-enacted in every subsequent act of representation. We must *think* our uniqueness that until now only religion has articulated" (1997 Acknowledgements, italics in original). If we must think our uniqueness, then we can also refuse or fail to do so; once originary thinking is available, this refusal or failure becomes a conscious decision. I am suggesting that herein lies a politics intrinsic to originary thinking that goes beyond Gans's reflections on justice and political economy so far. It is a politics that would involve not only an expanded realm of exchange but what we might call a transparent self-reflexivity regarding one's point of entry into that realm. ([back](#))
10. See Gans, "Plato and the Birth of Conceptual Thought." ([back](#))
11. I am here trying to open a line of communication between originary thinking and contemporary attempts (themselves indebted to earlier thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss) by thinkers such as Alain Badiou, Jacques Ranciere, Slavoj Zizek and others to think politics in more

originary terms, *i.e.*, as scenic and paradoxical and hence constituted through "foundational" acts rather than norms. ([back](#))

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# **Skandalon 2001: The Religious Practices of Modern Satanists and Terrorists**

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*Skandalon* is an expression found in the Gospels that refers to an obstacle upon which one keeps stumbling, a trap, a snare; it is associated with Satan. In Girardian terms, *skandalon* designates an inability to walk away from mimetic rivalry that results in all kinds of destructive practices and exemplifies the predicament of the model-obstacle of mimetic theory. This article considers five aspects of *skandalon*: personifications, rivalries, models, religions, and sacred violence, as manifested in the concepts of both Satanism and terrorism. The similarities are striking, compelling and significant.

While the theme of terrorism has been consistently and appropriately addressed in media accounts of the American tragedy that occurred on September 11, 2001, there is another relevant concept that intermittently appears in the press but has seldom been specifically considered. The Islamic extremist position that the United States is the "Great Satan," the thousands of reports of the face of Satan seen in the photographs of the smoke coming out of the World Trade Center (<http://detnews.com/2001/nation/0109/19/a05-297999.htm> or <http://www.snopes2.com/rumors/wtcface.htm>), and the essentially evil nature of this act suggest that Satanism needs to be examined. The concept of Satanism is just as disturbing, frightening, and elusive as the concept of terrorism. For some, Satan is a personified evil being, for others, he is a metaphor for the existence of evil, and, for many more, Satan is a myth that arose out of biblical literature. Whatever views you may hold concerning the reality of Satan, there is no question that Satanism exists.

## ***Personifications***

### ***Modern Satanism***

Satanism is present in American culture as a religion, as a genre in film, music, and art, as a political ideal, and as a popular subject in the media. Satanism is a religion, acknowledged by the US Federal Government, that maintains ethical doctrines, specific rituals, and true believers. This religion is widely

practiced in Western society, both individually and communally, through Satanic churches, covens, and grottoes. As with other organized religions, beliefs vary among different sects and congregations, ranging from a form of ethical egoism to worshipping a specific deity. In most sects, Satanism is a reversal of Christianity, and similarities are found between the symbolism and ritual practices of each group. In this article, I will present an overview of contemporary American Satanic groups, beliefs, and practices, describing how those beliefs differ from extreme fundamentalist Islamic views of Satanism and how modern American Satanists interpret the tragedy of September 11 from their own theological perspective. Finally, I will apply the Girardian concept of ritual violence and specifically *skandalon* to these manifestations of Satanism.

## *Modern Terrorism*

Terrorism too is present in American culture as a religion, a genre in film, music, and art, a political ideal, and a popular subject in the media. Like Satanism, terrorism is enacted by religious groups that maintain ethical doctrines, specific rituals, and true believers. Often referred to as cults, militias, or cells, these religions are widely practiced throughout the world, both individually and communally, and include Christian Identity, Aum Shinrikyo, Islamic fundamentalism, and many others. As with organized religions, beliefs vary among different groups and followings, ranging from a form of devout purism as a return to original strict interpretations of sacred text to the worship of a leader as a deity. Similarities are found in racist, elitist ideologies that advocate violence, terrorism, and genocide and view every other group as satanic or the evil Babylon. In this article, I will present an overview of the beliefs and practices of modern terrorists, notably including Wahhabism, the religion of Osama bin Laden and nearly every devout Muslim terrorist since the eighteenth century. I will describe how terrorists justify their violent acts theologically by claiming that American culture is completely satanic. Finally, I will apply the Girardian concept of ritual violence and specifically *skandalon* to these manifestations of terrorism.

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## *Rivalries*

### *Defining Satanism*

Definitions of Satanism are problematic because it is a relative concept determined by the theological, moral, political, sociological, and legal perspectives of each group. Basically, one man's God is another man's devil. From a fundamentalist Christian theological perspective, any practice other than Christianity is considered satanic, and from a fundamental Islamic perspective, any practice other than Islam is considered satanic. This is based on strict interpretation of identical prohibitions found in both the Bible and the Quran. The Quran 28.70 states, "And He is Allah, there is no god but He," and the Bible in Exodus 20.2-3 states, "I am the Lord your God. . . . You shall have no other gods before Me."<sup>(1)</sup> One result of these prohibitions has been a history of holy wars; another has been that some people denounce God and embrace Satanism. Modern Satanists clearly admit that their religion is anti-God, and it is

irrelevant to them whether it be the God of the Christian Bible or Allah of the Quran. However, that does not necessarily mean that all modern Satanists are devil worshippers. Contemporary Satanism entails either worshipping Satan as a personified evil being or glorifying what he represents. Other characteristics of Satanism include beliefs based on a form of hedonism or egoism. Many contemporary Satanists also identify with pagan pre-monotheistic beliefs.

Historically, Satanism was attributed to groups designated as heretical simply because they deviated from strict Christian or Islamic practices. Today, many non-traditional religions, especially those that entail occult practices, such as Santeria, Voodoo, Wicca, and Druidism, are often still categorized as Satanic. This controversy has provoked a vehement debate among new religious movement scholars. These usually fall into three general categories: Anticult scholars, who emphasize potential harms among new religious groups, cult apologists, who emphasize religious freedom, and countercult organizations, who oppose religious groups on theological grounds. The debate is complex and ongoing. The anticult position on Satanism is that it exists in a variety of individual and group religions, some of which are responsible for serious crimes. The cult apologist position is that it is a benign new religious movement and that allegations of crimes are due to satanic "panics" and urban legends. The countercult position is that, from an orthodox perspective, any group other than the true religion is heretical and/or satanic. Thus, Satanism is a culturally relative construct that varies in place and in time and is intrinsically intertwined with issues of religious freedom, even if that freedom entails the subjugation and harm of others.

## *Defining Terrorism*

Like definitions of Satanism, definitions of terrorism are problematic because it, too, is a relative concept, determined by the theological, moral, political, sociological, and legal perspectives of each group. Basically, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. There are many contrary definitions of terrorism, dependent upon the perspective of the author. Similar to the anticult / cult apologist debate among religious scholars attempting to draw the line of religious freedom, political philosophers and legal scholars attempt to distinguish between political freedoms, terrorism, anarchy, and justice.

The FBI has two general categories of terrorism, domestic and international. Domestic terrorism is defined as "The unlawful use, or threatened use, of violence by a group or individual that is based entirely within the United States or its territories without foreign direction and which is committed against persons or property with the intent of intimidating or coercing a government or its population in furtherance of political or social objectives."<sup>(2)</sup> The FBI's definition of international terrorism involves "violent acts, or acts dangerous to human life, that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any state, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or any state, and which are intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the police of a government, or affect the conduct of a government."<sup>(3)</sup>

The concept of violence is intrinsic to the definition of terrorism, but that only further complicates the

issue because not all acts of violence are considered negative. One political view will consider an act as terrorism and another will deem it justifiable retribution. Furthermore, the distinction between terrorism and retribution is dependent upon the perception of who was violated first. This is exemplified by the similarities in the post-September 11 speeches by President Bush and Osama bin Laden, in which each accuses the other of being a terrorist. "And there are civilians, innocent children being killed every day in Iraq without any guilt." "Americans have known surprise attacks but never before on thousands of civilians." "Muslims, this is the day of question. This is a new (inaudible) against you, all against the Muslims and Medina. So be like the followers of the prophet, peace be upon him, and all countrymen, lovers of God and the prophet within, and a new battle, [a] great battle . . ." "I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them." "Let the whole world know that we shall never accept that the tragedy of Andalusia would be repeated in Palestine." " I will never forget this wound to our country, or those who inflicted it." (4) The tones of the speeches are so similar that it can be difficult to identify who is being quoted. (Transcript of President Bush's speech: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>; transcript of Osama bin Laden's video: [http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/strike\\_binladentrans011007.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/strike_binladentrans011007.html) .)

3

In a recent article in *Le Monde*, René Girard commented on the current crisis and described terrorism as a form of mimetic competition on a planetary scale. "The error is always to reason within the categories of "difference," when the root of all conflicts is rather "competition," the mimetic rivalry between persons, countries, cultures. Competition is the desire to imitate the other in order to obtain the same thing he or she has, by violence if need be" (5) (<http://www.lemonde.fr/article/0,5987,3230--239636-,00.html>). Imitation and competition are not evident just in President Bush's and Osama bin Laden's speeches, they are apparent in their identical desire to protect their beliefs by violently imposing their ideologies. Eric Gans described the current conflict in terms of resentment from his originary model of reciprocity in "Window of Opportunity" *Chronicle* 248 (<http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw248.htm>). Essentially Gans claims that since every social order generates resentment, the current conflict is not a clash of religions or cultures but a battle between those who lead civilization and those whose resentment is so strong they will its destruction. Although Gans clearly states that terrorism is unacceptable, he argues that one can never wholly eliminate the source of terrorism because "Any ethical model with a claim to practical application must allow for the existence of individuals and groups within the larger society who consider that society unjust and who ardently desire its destruction, even if they be destroyed along with it." (6) The problem is that there is no means to acceptably defer this resentment. Terrorism is a culturally relative construct that varies in place and in time and is intrinsically intertwined with issues of political freedom, even if that freedom entails the subjugation and harm of others.

## *Models*

### *Typologies of Satanism*

Typologies of Satanism are just as problematic as definitions, since it is a culturally relative construct that is generally defined by its adversaries. There are additional controversies concerning the very existence of some Satanic groups. As a result of these debates, it is especially difficult to present an agreed-upon typology. It is significant to note that the study of Satanism is in its infancy; basic demographic and ethnological data have yet to be compiled, and it is unclear whether accurate information is available. However, after reviewing proposed typologies from a variety of sources, I have been able to detect four general categories, although they may be referred to by different names or only for purposes of condemnation.<sup>(7)</sup> These categories are: religious / organized Satanists, traditional / intergenerational Satanists, self-styled Satanists, and youth subculture Satanists. These classifications are broad and not mutually exclusive. In addition to the four major categories of Satanic groups, another classification is sometimes used to differentiate Satanists: Satanic groups can be characterized as either atheistic or theistic. Theistic Satanists glorify what they imagine Satan represents; they worship Satan or other deities as incarnations of an evil being. Finally, there are many other occult organizations that, although not specifically Satanic, have similar practices and rituals, such as many vampire religions, Goth, and the fetish scene. Some of these groups are described in detail in my previous *Anthropoetics* article, "The Sacrificial Aesthetic: Blood Rituals from Art to Murder" (<http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0502/blood.htm>).

### *Religious / Organized Satanists*

Religious Satanism consists of organized groups and churches with diverse varieties of Satanic beliefs. Religious Satanists are also known as "true believers," individuals who have seriously committed themselves to the beliefs, tenets, rituals, and ideologies of a Satanic religion. Currently, in the United States, some Satanic churches are recognized by the government as religions, and, consequently, are not only protected by the First Amendment but also receive tax-exempt status. There are many American Satanic churches and a variety of other religious organizations that openly practice Satanism, most of which have web pages on the Internet providing information on their beliefs and practices as well as membership applications. Satanism is often also referred to as the Left Hand Path, occultism, black magic, or the Dark Arts; various similar groups use the same designations.

Due to the provocative nature of this religion, the Internet has become the primary source for the substantial growth of the Satanic community. The World Wide Web provides a significant forum for recruiting new members, disseminating information, and exchanging ideas. There are hundreds of web sites for Satanic organizations, churches, support groups, occult supplies, and all things related to the Left Hand Path. In addition to individual web sites, there are libraries, chat rooms, message boards, and resource sites. Just a few of the more active resource web sites include: The Satanic Network (<http://www.satannet.com/>), The Australian Satanic Council (<http://www.satanic.org.au>), Devil Spawn ([http://www.geocities.com/satanism\\_au/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/satanism_au/index.html)), and The 600 Club, whose name is a deliberate parody of the Christian 700 club (<http://the600club.net/cgi-bin/community/index.pl>). There are so many Satanic web sites that there are several awards given to the best sites, including Lucifer's Top List and Tomb of Darkness. Some of the hosts of the Satanic awards have their own web sites listing the winners,

with convenient hyperlinks. They include The Fire Within Top 100, The Best Satanic Sites on the Internet (<http://members.hostedscripts.com/top.cgi?user=TheDevil>), and Blacklist Top 100, which is truly disturbing because it links to violent pornography, torture, and images of actual murders (<http://www.damnage.com/BlackList/index.shtml>).

Finally, as unimaginable as it may seem, there is Radio Free Satan, available 24 hours a day, advertised as the voice of Satan on the Internet (<http://www.live365.com/cgi-bin/directory.cgi?autostart=jallee>). The Church of Satan just recently announced the premiere of Satanism Today, another Internet radio station, whose stated goals are to publicize the philosophy of their church and its membership; they list the following topics: news from the satanic perspective, applications of satanic theory in daily life, and practical applications of greater and lesser magic, featuring a new guest each week and much more.

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The two most established, best-known American Satanic churches are The Church of Satan [CoS] and The Temple of Set [ToS], which are described in detail in the next section. It is worth noting that Satanic religious organizations are often referred to by the first initials of their names but, significantly, these initials are not read as acronyms. Some other Satanic organizations include: First Church of Satan [FCoS] (<http://www.churchofsatan.org/main.html>), Cult of Mastema [CoM] ([http://www.geocities.com/satanism\\_au/library/genintro.html](http://www.geocities.com/satanism_au/library/genintro.html)), Ordo Templi Satanis [OTS] (<http://www.satanist.net/satan/satanism/Ots/Ots.htm>), Church of Lucifer [COL] (<http://www.churchoflucifer.org/>), Ordo Sinistra Vivendi [OSV] ([http://www.geocities.com/satanism\\_au/library/svrc.html](http://www.geocities.com/satanism_au/library/svrc.html)). There are many orders, grottoes, pylons and covens of the main churches, and a significant number of unrelated, less well-known groups, many of which also have web pages on the Internet. Although it is difficult to establish numbers and geographical locations of members, most are located in the United States, Europe, and Australia; they can be found on every continent except Antarctica. On the African and South American continents, occult dark magic is practiced in the context of indigenous religions, which would account for the smaller membership in Western Satanic churches in those countries. In many countries, organized Satanic groups are not tolerated and must remain underground. Although the ideologies of these groups may be highly offensive to more traditional religions, it is generally thought that religious Satanists are on the whole law-abiding citizens whose known practices rarely constitute illegal activities. However, this has been questioned in statements of the many survivors and victims of occult-related crimes, who claim that these groups are simply covers for criminal acts.

### *Traditional / Intergenerational Satanists*

Traditional Satanists are considered a highly organized international secret cult network actively engaged in a variety of criminal activities, including arson, ritual abuse, sexual abuse, incest, kidnapping, child pornography, and ritual murder involving mutilation, dismemberment, and sometimes cannibalism. Similar to religious Satanists, traditional Satanists are also known as "true believers"; they are

exceptionally devoted to their beliefs, which comprise an extreme fundamentalist version of Satanic religion. They are also referred to as generational or intergenerational Satanists. Many members contend that they were raised in this belief system, going back as far as several generations. Ideologically, traditional Satanists worship Satan as the evil deity described in the New Testament; their religious practices include blood rituals, animal and human sacrifice, and a variety of sadistic sexual rites for the glorification of Satan. The previously described religious Satanists all vehemently deny engaging in these activities and consider the allegation as a form of defamation. Because of a lack of empirical evidence, many scholars, Satanic church members, mental health professionals, and a large portion of the general public consider these assertions to be urban myths, false memories, and a form of satanic panic. Although studies have not been conducted to determine the frequency with which it occurs, there is factual evidence that the practice of traditional Satanism exists.

Examples of criminal cases involving alleged traditional Satanists include the infamous McMartin preschool trial that lasted six years and was the first multi-victim multi-offender child abuse case. Beginning in March 1984, 208 counts of child abuse involving 40 children were directed against 7 adults; the two owners of the school, one owner's son, and four schoolteachers. By January 1986, a new district attorney dropped all charges against five of the adults; remaining were 52 charges against Ray Buckey and 20 counts against Peggy Buckey, with one count of conspiracy. After several years, in August 1990, another jury was hung and the prosecution gave up trying to obtain a conviction. This case spurred many similar prosecutions, which were referred to as witch hunts by people who argue that this type of abuse does not occur. This trial was also a national media event, the subject of many books, studies, and films. Other famous controversial descriptions of victims of Satanic ritual abuse and entire Satanic communities practicing traditional Satanism are found in the classic non-fiction (although some claim, fictional) books *Michelle Remembers* and *Satan's High Priest*. Both books describe in detail heinous ritual practices of traditional Satanists. The web site ReligiousTolerance.org lists 41 multi-victim multi-offender court cases with allegations of ritual abuse ([http://www.religioustolerance.org/ra\\_case.htm#us](http://www.religioustolerance.org/ra_case.htm#us)). Hyperlinks to more details about the cases are provided by the authors; however, the reader should take note that their viewpoint is that satanic ritual abuse does not occur. For an objective and informative description of the debates and issues concerning satanic ritual abuse, see: <http://www.gospelcom.net/apologeticsindex/s05.html> . As an example of the debates on satanic ritual abuse, an article entitled "Satanism: Skeptics Abound" can be viewed at <http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/archives/satskep.html> .

## *Self-Styled Satanists*

Self-styled Satanists are either individually involved with Satanism or belong to small, loosely organized groups. Self-styled Satanists are sub-classified either as "dabblers," people who are intermittently and experientially involved in occult activities, or as "true criminals" who use the occult as an excuse to justify or rationalize their criminal behavior. The rituals and belief systems of dabblers and true criminals are either entirely self-invented, a combination of a variety of traditions, or are emulated from media/cultural images of Satanic practices. Self-styled Satanists are not viewed as true believers, since their primary interest is usually the acquisition of personal power, material gain, or gratification through

criminal activity rather than spiritual Satanic worship. Religious Satanists are offended by the claims and actions of self-styled Satanists who bring bad publicity to their already controversial religion.

Some self-styled Satanists engage in criminal activities, ranging from child molestation and animal mutilation to homicide, and their crimes conform to their self-invented ideologies. It is in this category of Satanism that most ritualistic crimes are placed; Satanic ritual abuse is often mistaken for a form of sexual sadism or serial murder. A classic example of a self-styled Satanist is Richard Ramirez, dubbed "The Night Stalker," who in 1985 terrorized Los Angeles by breaking into people's homes, raping, torturing, mutilating, and murdering his victims, and, most notably, forcing them to declare their love for Satan. In the spring and summer of 1985, Ramirez committed over twenty attacks. In 1989, Ramirez was found guilty on thirteen counts of murder and, in a famous gesture during the trial, raised his hand with a pentagram on it and said, "Hail Satan." Currently awaiting execution at San Quentin prison, he continues to be completely devoted to Satan. For more details on Richard Ramirez, see: <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Shadowlands/4077/ramirez.html> .

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### *Youth Subculture Satanists*

Youth subculture Satanists are similar to self-styled Satanists; however, their interest in Satanism is usually transitory and may not evolve into criminal activities. Youth subculture Satanists are sub-categorized as dabblers; they are teenagers and young adults who are usually introduced to Satanism via music, film, the Internet, and other media. Most often, these young adults turn to the occult because of a deep sense of alienation from mainstream culture and spiritual traditions. They either eventually return to more traditional beliefs or are recruited into one of the many Satanic religious organizations. Their rituals usually escalate depending upon the length of time they are involved in Satanism, beginning with simple magical incantations and sometimes evolving into animal and human sacrifice. Common crimes of youth subculture Satanists include vandalism, arson, grave desecration, animal mutilation, school violence, and sometimes murder. Depending upon their level of seriousness at the time of their involvement, they can also be considered momentary true believers.

There are numerous examples of youth subculture Satanists who commit crimes. Examples of the more serious crimes of homicide and mass murder committed include the case of sixteen-year-old Luke Woodham, who, on October 1, 1997, in Pearl, Mississippi, stabbed his mother to death, then went to school and opened fire with a rifle, killing two of his classmates and wounding seven. Luke Woodham was part of a larger group of youths who had embraced Satanism. His new peers, who were part of a group known as the Kroth, which sought to destroy its enemies and practice Satanic worship, instructed Luke that murder was a viable means of accomplishing the purposes and goals of the shared belief system (<http://www.cnn.com/US/9806/11/school.shooting.03/index.html#links>). Another example occurred in Chiavenna, Italy on June 6, 2000, when three teenage girls brutally murdered a nun, Sister Mary Laura Manetti, after they had formed their own Satanic group, which, they said, was influenced by the lyrics of heavy metal musician Marilyn Manson. (See <http://www.petersvoice.com/nunmurder3.htm>

and <http://www.metalhammer.co.uk/article.asp?ID=4607&type=NWS> .) Numerous murders and suicides have been attributed to the media and cultural influence of Satanism.

## *Anti-Satanism*

A typology of Satanism would be incomplete without mentioning organizations specifically established to combat Satanism and who are chiefly responsible for assigning Satanists to the preceding categories. These are variously referred to as anticult organizations, countercult organizations, and watch groups. For an in-depth look into these categories, Apologetics Index contains a vast archive of articles, newspapers, commentaries, and resources. Apologetics Index states that it "provides research resources on religious cults, sects, new religious movements, alternative religions, apologetics, anticult, and countercult organizations, doctrines, religious practices and world views. These resources reflect a variety of theological and/or sociological perspectives." (8) Although a self-proclaimed Christian countercult organization, it provides a surprisingly objective perspective on most pages (<http://www.gospelcom.net/apologeticsindex/c11.html>).

A few of the better-known anticult groups include the Cult Awareness Network (CAN), formerly a clearinghouse for information about cults whose mission was to educate the public and to provide support to victims of cults and their families. CAN was subjected to a huge scandal when sued by the Church of Scientology, who eventually forced them to close down, obtained all their records, bought all of their logos, trademarks, and so on through bankruptcy and are currently operating their own version of CAN. The American Family Foundation, founded in 1979, is a research center and educational organization whose mission is to study psychological manipulation and cultic groups, to educate the public, and to assist those who have been adversely affected by a cult-related experience. The Watchman Fellowship is considered the foremost Christian countercult ministry; its resources include over 9,000 files and a 35,000 volume library on abusive religious groups, cults, and the occult. These are just a few of the numerous countercult and anticult organizations.

The primary goals of the previously mentioned anticult organizations are to protect their people from external violence and to preserve their way of life. As we examine the religions of modern Satanists, it will be evident that their own primary goals are identical to their rivals'. Significantly, all of the above-mentioned models of Satanism are classified not by the groups themselves but by organizations external to these groups, often acting in direct opposition to their ideologies, thus exemplifying the predicament of mimetic rivalry and the model-obstacle.

## *Typologies of Terrorism*

Typologies of terrorism are just as problematic as definitions, and for similar reasons; terrorism is a culturally relative construct defined by its enemies. The most relevant source for categories of terrorism from the ideological perspective of the US government can be found in a Congressional Statement made to the US Senate Committee on Appropriations, on May 10, 2001, by Louis J. Freeh, Director of the

Federal Bureau of Investigation, entitled "On the Threat of Terrorism to the United States" (<http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress01/freeh051001.htm>). This pre-September 11 statement accurately foreshadowed current terrorist incidents by describing recent trends, statistics, arrests, and investigations into acts of terrorism.

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## *International Terrorism*

The FBI's classification of terrorism into international and domestic is based on geography and not on the goal of the behavior. According to the FBI typology, international terrorism has three subcategories based on the structural organization of the various groups: loosely affiliated extremists, formal terrorist organizations, and state sponsors of terrorism. The first category of international terrorism, loosely affiliated extremists, includes Sunni Islamic extremists, such as Osama bin Laden and those affiliated with his Al-Qaeda organization--individuals from varying nationalities, ethnic groups, tribes, races, and terrorist groups who support extremist Sunni goals. The common element among these diverse individuals is that they are committed to the radical international jihad movement, whose ideology includes promoting violence against the "enemies of Islam" in order to overthrow all governments not ruled by conservative Islamic law. Foreshadowing the American tragedy, in the congressional statement dated May 10, 2001, loosely affiliated extremists were considered the most urgent threat to the US because their goals consisted of carrying out large scale, high profile, high casualty terrorist attacks against US interests and citizens.

The second category of international terrorism, formal terrorist organizations, includes extremist groups such as the Palestinian Hamas, the Irish Republican Army, the Egyptian Al-Gama Al-Islamiyya, and the Lebanese Hizballah. They are characterized as autonomous, generally transnational organizations that have their own infrastructures, personnel, financial arrangements, and training facilities. They have a presence in the US, with members engaged in fund-raising, recruiting, and intelligence gathering. Additionally, they maintain operations and support networks in the US. Prior to September 11, the Hizballah were responsible for the deaths of more Americans than any other terrorist group.

The third category of international terrorism is state sponsors of terrorism, consisting of countries that view terrorism as a tool of foreign policy. At the time of the May 10 congressional statement, the Department of State listed seven countries as state sponsors of terrorism: Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Syria, Cuba, and North Korea. Iran represented the greatest threat to the US because it supports financially and logistically anti-Western acts of terrorism by others.

## *Domestic Terrorism*

Domestic terrorism also has three subcategories, but these are based on the ideologies of the various groups, designated as right-wing extremist groups, left-wing extremist groups, and special-interest extremists. The right-wing extremist groups are characterized by adherence to the principles of racial

supremacy and their embrace of antigovernment, anti-regulatory beliefs. Formal right-wing hate groups that represent a continuing terrorist threat on a national level include the World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) and the Aryan Nations; racism-based hatred remains an integral component of these groups' core orientations. Another group in this category is the Southeastern States Alliance, an umbrella organization of militias in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and other southern states, a group that planned to attack national guard armories in 1999. The goal of this group was to create social and political chaos, thereby forcing the US government to declare martial law, an act they believed would lead to its violent overthrow by the American people. Two of the seven planned acts of terrorism prevented in 1999 were potentially large-scale, high-casualty attacks.

The second category of domestic terrorism comprises left-wing and Puerto Rican extremist groups who view themselves as protectors of the people against the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and imperialism. Generally professing a revolutionary socialist doctrine, they believe in bringing about change through revolution rather than the political process. Several of these groups are seeking to secure full Puerto Rican independence from the US. These extremist Puerto Rican separatist groups are the Armed Forces for Puerto Rican National Liberation, FALN, Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional Puertorriquena, and Los Macheteros. FALN has carried out bombings in the US mainland, primarily in and around New York, and Los Macheteros is suspected of three bombings in Puerto Rico.

The third category of domestic terrorism is special interest extremists, who differ from right- and left-wing terrorists in that they seek to resolve specific issues rather than overthrowing the entire political system. They conduct acts of politically motivated violence in order to bring public attention to their specific causes. These groups occupy the extreme fringes of animal rights, pro-life, environmental, anti-nuclear, and other political and social movements. The groups most noted for acts of vandalism and terrorist activity include the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), which have caused millions of dollars in damages to businesses they consider hostile to the environment or to animal rights.

## *Current Trends in Terrorism*

Additionally, the FBI's terrorist typology includes a category called "current trends in modern terrorism." These fall into two categories: weapons of mass destruction, including what is currently referred to as bioterrorism, and the use of the Internet to commit acts of terrorism, including what is currently known as cyber-terrorism. Weapons of mass destruction include chemical, biological, and radiological agents. A 1999 *Emergency Response to a Terrorism Self-Study Manual*, published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to train fire, medical, and hazardous materials first responders, lists five categories of terrorist incidents. The acronym B-NICE is a simple way to remember the five: biological, nuclear, incendiary, chemical, and explosive. FEMA also lists the four routes of entry: inhalation, absorption, ingestion, and injection, and the four common types of biological agents: bacteria, viruses, rickettsia, and toxins. The FEMA manual describes handling of biological, nuclear, incendiary, and chemical incidents. Chemical agents fall into five classes: nerve agents, blister agents, blood agents, choking agents, and irritating agents, the effects of which are described in horrifying detail.[\(9\)](#)

Statistics listed in the May 10, 2001 FBI congressional statement claim that, between 1997 and 2000, the FBI investigated 779 weapons of mass destruction reports, generally involving individuals or small groups. The vast majority of these cases were found to be without merit; the two agents most involved in the investigation were the biological toxin ricin and the bacteriological agent anthrax. Surprisingly, although the actual ricin toxin had been involved in some cases, no anthrax agents had been uncovered in any law enforcement investigation in the United States, even though, in 2000, 90 of the 115 biological threats investigated involved the use of anthrax. In a more recent congressional statement specifically on bioterrorism, dated November 6, 2001 (<http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress01/caruso110601.htm>), posterior to the events of September 11 and the tragic deaths of five persons from anthrax, the FBI claims to have responded to approximately 7,089 suspicious anthrax letters, 950 incidents involving weapons of mass destruction, and an estimated 29,331 telephone calls from the public about suspicious packages. Their statement on bioterrorism classifies potential threats into two categories: overt and covert releases, based on the way the biological agent is released into the community. An overt scenario involves the announced release of an agent; a covert release is not discovered until individuals report symptoms.

Terrorists are increasingly using the Internet to recruit members, communicate between cells and members, raise funds, and spread propaganda. Other terrorist uses of the Internet include attacks on government websites and e-mail servers and attempts to inundate systems with e-mail messages. Cyberterrorism is the use of cyber tools to shut down or degrade national infrastructures, such as energy, transportation, communications, or government services, for the purpose of coercing or intimidating a government or civilian population.

## *Anti-Terrorism*

As with Satanism, a typology of terrorism would be incomplete without mentioning organizations specifically established to abolish terrorism and who are chiefly responsible for assigning terrorists to the preceding categories. These are variously referred to as antiterrorist organizations, counterterrorist organizations, and watch groups. The FBI and other US government agencies have counterterrorist divisions; legislation is enacted and armies are mobilized to enforce antiterrorist laws. The most recent notable examples include the USA Patriot Act, an acronym for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (Enrolled Bill H.R.3162), whose purpose is to deter and punish terrorists around the world and to enhance law enforcement's investigative tools (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:H.R.3162.ENR:>); the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (Enrolled Bill S.1447) to improve aviation security (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:S.1447.ENR:>); and Authorization for Use of Military Force (Enrolled Bill S.J.Res.23) to authorize the United States Armed Forces to take action against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:S.J.RES.23.ENR:>). For a complete list of legislation related to the attack of September 11, 2001, see the Library of Congress web site or Thomas legislative information on the Internet

(<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/terrorleg.htm>). In addition to government legislation, there are many private terrorist watch groups, such as the Terrorism Research Center, dedicated to informing the public of the phenomena of terrorism and information warfare (<http://www.terrorism.com/index.shtml>), and the Emergency Response and Research Institute, which provides 24-hour news, information, analysis, and coverage of disasters and major emergency events. The Institute, located on the web at <http://www.emergency.com>, contains a Counterterrorism Operations page that lists a summary of worldwide terrorism events, groups, and terrorist strategies and tactics (<http://www.emergency.com/cntrterr.htm>). The Southern Poverty Law Center's intelligence project tracks active hate groups in the US (<http://www.splcenter.org/intelligenceproject/ip-index.html>). Domestic terrorists have their own watch groups; one example is a white supremacist web site called Jew Watch, a response to Hatewatch, advertised as keeping a close watch on Jewish communities and organizations worldwide (<http://www.jewwatch.com/>).

The primary goals of these antiterrorist organizations are to protect their people from external violence and to preserve their way of life. As we examine the religions of modern terrorists, it will be evident that they share these goals.

## *Religions*

### *Modern Religious Satanism*

Just as Christianity is manifested in a number of diverse Christian religions, there are many varieties of Satanism and Satanic sects, sometimes pejoratively designated as cults. Most practitioners of Satanism proudly acknowledge the designation of Satanists, others admit that their religion entails occultism, magic, and worshipping specific deities but do not consider it specifically Satanic; all religions vehemently disavow the category of cult. Commonalties among the major Satanic churches include: hierarchical structures, opposition to Christian tenets, magical ideologies, and advocating ethical egoism and the acquisition of personal and political power. Like other religious denominations, individual Satanic churches profess spiritual superiority over each other and claim that they are practicing the one true faith. Most of these groups do not practice theistic Satanism, worshipping Satan as a personified evil being, but atheistic Satanism, glorifying what they imagine he represents, including indulgence, vengeance, and engaging in sin as a source of self-gratification or self-deification.

Three active groups best exemplify the religious practices of modern Satanists: the Church of Satan, the Temple of Set, and Ordo Templi Orientis--which earnestly claims that it is not a Satanic organization. All three groups have large international memberships, degrees of initiation, and sophisticated web sites translated into many languages, and are recognized as religions by the US Federal Government.

Scholars generally agree that modern religious Satanism evolved from two specific traditions and the writings of their influential leaders, Aleister Crowley and Anton LaVey. However, there is a debate as to whether modern Satanism began with Crowley in the early twentieth century or with the founding of the Church of Satan by Anton LaVey in 1966. We should note that self-styled Satanists, satanic dabblers and traditional Satanists may follow unrelated philosophical and mystical traditions.

## *Ordo Templi Orientis*

Aleister Crowley never considered himself a Satanist, although he was a member of many secret occult societies, founded the Abbey of Thelema, and proclaimed himself the Antichrist in 1904. Crowley's writings on magic influenced many contemporary Satanic groups, most notably the Ordo Templi Orientis or O.T.O. (<http://www.otohq.org/oto/>). "O.T.O. is incorporated in the State of California as a not-for-profit religious organization with tax exemption in California and the United States under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. O.T.O. currently operates in 40 countries around the world and has approximately 3,000 active members."<sup>(10)</sup> According to its web site, "O.T.O. functions as a fraternal, initiatory, social and educational organization of a religious nature."<sup>(11)</sup> Although officially founded at the beginning of the twentieth century, O.T.O. draws from a variety of traditions of esoteric wisdom, such as the Freemasonic, Rosicrucian, and Illuminist movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Knights Templar of the Middle Ages, early Christian Gnosticism, and the pagan mystery schools. The O.T.O. was founded in 1895 by Karl Kellner and Theodor Reuss, both of whom were high level Freemasons. Reuss brought Crowley into the O.T.O. in 1910 and admitted him to the level of three degrees. In 1912, Crowley was appointed National Grand Master General X for Great Britain and Ireland. He subsequently revised rituals and moved O.T.O. away from Masonry and towards Thelema. In 1922, Crowley was appointed the highest-level Outer Head of the order, which he remained until his death in 1947. His writings became the cornerstone of the contemporary O.T.O. Current members of O.T.O. take Crowley for their prophet; they practice his religion, known as Thelema, and call themselves Thelemites.

The Holy Books of Thelema, all authored by Crowley, form the canon of Thelemic Holy Scripture. The most important text is *Liber AL vel Legis, sub figura CCXX*, commonly referred to as *The Book of the Law* (entire text at <http://www.otohq.org/oto/1220.html>). Another significant text that is part of the Thelemic canon but not the Holy Books is *Liber XXX: Aerum vel Saeculi, sub figura CDXVIII*, commonly called *The Vision and the Voice*. "The theology of Thelema postulates all manifested existence arising from the interaction of two cosmic principles: the infinitely extended, all-pervading Space-Time continuum; and the atomic, individually expressed Principle of Life and Wisdom. . . . The Thelemic theological system utilizes the divinities of various cultures and religions as personifications of specific divine, archetypal, and cosmic forces. Thelemic doctrine holds that all the diverse religions of Humanity are grounded in universal truths. . . . History is considered to be divided into a series of Aeons, each with its own dominant concept of divinity and its own formula of redemption and advancement. The current aeon is termed the Aeon of Horus. . . . According to Thelemic doctrine, the expression of Divine Law in the Aeon of Horus is "Do what thou wilt."<sup>(12)</sup> Thelemites keep a record of their personal practices in a magical diary, practice a particular form of prayer four times a day, and often take mystical

names for themselves as a sign of commitment. They customarily greet each other with the phrase, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," to which the customary response is, "Love is the Law, love under will." (13) O.T.O. has a liturgical arm called Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica (E.G.C.), the Gnostic Catholic Church, whose principal ritual is called the Gnostic Mass. There is a Thelemic calendar, which begins in 1904 EV (the year *Liber AL* was received); each Thelemic year starts on March 20 of the civil calendar, at the Vernal Equinox. Holy days are observed as set forth in *The Book of the Law*; they include the equinoxes and solstices and dates important to Crowley's life. Three rites of passage are observed in each Thelemite's life: birth, puberty, and death.

The religious structure of O.T.O. is similar to Freemasonry and the ancient mystery schools. It is based on a series of ceremonially conferred initiations. This very complex system involves 21 initiate degrees: thirteen numbered degrees and eight unnumbered intermediate degrees or sub-degrees. Membership is divided into two primary categories, associate and initiate. Associate members have access to publications and may attend activities but do not enter into degree ceremonies. Membership in Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica is conferred through ceremonies of baptism and confirmation. The O.T.O. U.S. Grand Lodge hierarchical structure includes a Grand Master General, Grand Secretary General, Grand Treasurer General, Initiation Secretary, Electoral College, Quartermasters, and Internet Secretary. The international headquarters is located in Berlin, Germany. As of this writing, there are 96 separate web sites listing branches throughout the world. They are referred to as Camps, Oases, Encampments, or Lodges, with identifying names preceding them. Membership information and detailed accounts of the religion are readily available through their many web sites. O.T.O. does not consider itself to be a Satanic Religion or a Freemason practice, although the theology and ritual practices have significant elements of both. Ordo Templi Orientis is listed as a Satanic religion in most reference books and web sites.

There are no recorded incidents of violence; however, litigation is documented in US courts involving claims by different factions of O.T.O. to ownership of the copyrights of Aleister Crowley's works, intellectual property issues, and administrative control. There are also conspiracy theories surrounding high-ranking members' activities during the World Wars. Although O.T.O. vehemently claims not to be a Satanic religion, Aleister Crowley, their prophet, variously known as The Great Beast 666, the Antichrist, and the wickedest man who ever lived, inspired the basic principles of many contemporary Satanic groups.

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## *Church of Satan*

The beginning of religious Satanism in America is generally dated from the establishment of the Church of Satan, CoS (<http://www.churchofsatan.com/home.html>), founded on April 30, 1966, Walpurgisnacht on the occult calendar, by Anton Szandor LaVey. LaVey declared himself the High Priest of the Church, the Black Pope, and announced that a new era, "I Anno Satanus," had begun. The church was officially formalized on September 20, 1971 as a California non-profit religious corporation. (There is contrary information concerning its application for tax-exempt status: one claim states that they were denied this

status by the IRS and the California Franchise Tax Board, while current leaders claim that they oppose government assistance and that the church never applied for tax-exempt status.) The Church of Satan received nationwide attention as the first publicly self-proclaimed Satanic religion. Because its membership is kept private, there is no available data on the number of current members.

The founder, Anton LaVey, worked at various unusual jobs before founding the Church of Satan, including lion tamer for a circus, carnival hypnotist, organ player at a burlesque club, and photographer for the San Francisco police. In 1950, in San Francisco, LaVey started a group known as the Magic Circle, an occult club that began to attract attention and led to the founding of the Church of Satan in 1966. In 1967 the Church received tremendous publicity when LaVey presided over a Satanic wedding, a Satanic funeral for a church member, and the Satanic baptism of his three-year-old daughter Zeena. LaVey was also an actor and consultant on several Hollywood films, playing the role of the devil in *Rosemary's Baby*. Many celebrities are purported to have had connections with the church, including Sammy Davis Jr., Jayne Mansfield, and Kim Novak. More controversial connections include Marilyn Manson and one of the murderers in the Charles Manson family.

Although just about every aspect of Anton LaVey's history has been scrutinized, with several allegations that his personal history was fabricated, there is no doubt that, in 1969, he authored *The Satanic Bible*, which has sold over a million copies and is widely distributed throughout the world. This book contains the core beliefs of the Church of Satan. Additional texts by LaVey include *The Compleat Witch* in 1970, later entitled *The Satanic Witch*, and *The Satanic Rituals* in 1972. Anton LaVey, who inspired thousands to embrace modern Satanism, died on October 29, 1997, leaving a controversial legacy.

The Church of Satan is a hedonistic religion that does not worship Satan as a supernatural being but as a symbol of defiance against Christianity. The central doctrine of the church is summed up in the "Nine Satanic Statements" written by Anton LaVey in *The Satanic Bible*:

(1) Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence. (2) Satan represents vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams. (3) Satan represents undefiled wisdom, instead of hypocritical self-deceit. (4) Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates. (5) Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek. (6) Satan represents responsibility to the responsible, instead of concern for psychic vampires. (7) Satan represents man as just another animal, more often worse than those that walk on all fours, who, because of his divine spiritual and intellectual development has become the most vicious animal of all. (8) Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification. (9) Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years.[\(14\)](#)

There are also Nine Satanic Sins: stupidity, pretentiousness, solipsism, self-deceit, herd conformity, lack of perspective, forgetfulness of past orthodoxies, counterproductive pride, and lack of aesthetics. Additionally, there are Eleven Satanic Rules of the Earth, and a 1988 treatise entitled *Pentagonal*

*Revisionism, a Five Point Program.* The theology of the Church of Satan proposes that emotions such as greed, lust, and hatred are natural instincts and that the denial of these feelings is wrong. Members consider themselves to be in tune with the carnal nature of humanity. Their religion incorporates magical ideologies, occult symbolism, and three main types of rituals: sexual rituals to aid in attaining physical ecstasy, healing or happiness rituals to help loved ones, and destructive rituals to release anger and hatred. Ceremonies are pageants where male members wear full length black robes, female members wear sexually suggestive clothing, amulets are often worn, and the most distinguishing symbol is the Sigil of Baphomet, a goat's head drawn within an inverted pentagram. Candle magic is employed, the language is "Enochian"; in the church's early days, a nude woman was used as the altar.

The hierarchical structure of the Church includes a grotto system, which consists of individuals in geographic proximity who form a grotto for ritual activity, socialization, and the pursuit of various projects. Grottos are run by individuals referred to as Grotto Masters; many grottos remain underground while others have Internet sites. The official representatives of the philosophy of the church are found in the higher levels, which include the Priesthood of Mendes whose initiates are given titles of Priest/Priestess or Magister/Magistra. Members of the priesthood make up the Council of Nine, which is the ruling body of the organization, responsible to the High Priest/Priestess. The Order of the Trapezoid consists of individuals who assist in the administration of the Church. Membership in the priesthood is by invitation only. As of April 31, 2001, Magister Peter Gilmore and High Priestess Blanche Barton, who was the mother of LaVey's son Xerxes and his partner until his death, are High Priest and Priestess.

The Church of Satan has no recorded incidents of violence; however, the *Satanic Bible* has been in the possession of and/or cited as an influence by many self-styled Satanists who committed heinous crimes. The Church of Satan has been involved in many legal disputes and controversies surrounding LaVey's life: his daughter Zeena's becoming a Priestess in the rival Temple of Set, divorce proceedings, financial problems, and claims to succession fought between Barton and LaVey's daughter Karla. Notwithstanding the controversies, the Church of Satan has had an irrefutable impact on the establishment of Satanic churches and on advancing Satanism as a contemporary religion.

10

## *Temple of Set*

The Temple of Set, ToS (<http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/>), was founded in 1975 by Michael Aquino, a former High Priest of the Church of Satan. The same year, it was recognized as a non-profit church and subsequently received exemption from federal and state taxes. This is a highly sophisticated, intellectual religion, whose philosophy is focused on the acquisition of self-knowledge and power through magic, responsibility, and will. Michael Aquino, still the head of the Temple of Set, is a former Lieutenant in an Army intelligence unit that specialized in psychological warfare. His secular *vitae*, which is available on the Temple of Set web site, lists among his accomplishments a Ph.D. in Political Science with a dissertation entitled "The Neutron Bomb," many distinguished service awards, military decorations including the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, and Vietnam service medal for three

campaigns, and training in special forces and military intelligence. Aquino joined the Church of Satan in 1969 while he was in the army, became a priest in the church in 1970, and was promoted to the level of Magister IV, the highest ranking below High Priest, held by Anton LaVey. In 1975, philosophical differences, as well as the feeling that LaVey was using the Church for his own personal gain, led Aquino to leave the Church of Satan, along with a number of others, to found the Temple of Set.

Historically, the Temple of Set may be considered a sect of the Church of Satan. However, in contrast with Anton LaVey's hedonistic philosophy, Setian philosophy aspires to ultimate self-control and power through magic. Members refer to themselves as Setians because they identify the Egyptian God Set as a much more complex role model than the Judeo-Christian Satan. However, they still consider their religion to be Satanic, in that it is a Left Hand Path that opposes traditional Judaeo-Christian beliefs. The Temple of Set rejects the spiritual emptiness, nihilism, and mindless hedonism of modern society, as manifested in phenomena from advertising to superstition; its ideal is "Being is Knowing," the opposite of the Buddhist Right Hand Path philosophy of "Being is Suffering." "Setians, even though they believe in a literal deity, do not worship Set in the same way that Christians worship God. Rather they honor Set for representing a deeper consciousness and individual strength--thus worshipping Set is analogous to worshipping the individual. The ultimate goal of Setians is to reach this higher spiritual consciousness and understanding of the self--the process of self actualization is called Xeper, an Egyptian term meaning "to come into being." (15) Their goal is to recreate a tradition of self-deification. In brief, they do not pray to Set, they emulate him. *The Book of Coming Forth by Night*, written by Michael Aquino, supposedly with the help of Set himself, may be considered a sacred text of the Temple. The Temple also maintains a series of encyclopedias entitled *The Jeweled Tablets of Set* and a regular newsletter called *The Scroll of Set*.

The Temple of Set's religious hierarchy entails six degrees of initiation: Setian I, Adept II, Priest/Priestess of Set III Magister/Magistra Templi IV, Magus/Maga V, and Ipsissimus/Ipsissima VI. New members start out as Setian I, then advance to Adept II only after mastering the essential principles of black magic. If new members do not advance to Adept II in two years, their membership is discontinued. Most members stay at the second degree level throughout their membership in the Temple. Executive authority in the Temple is held by the Council of Nine, which appoints both the High Priest of Set and the Executive Director. The Temple of Set is highly organized and has members worldwide, but, because it avoids publicity and keeps its membership private, there is no available data on the number of members. Their web site, The Official Temple of Set World Wide Web Site (<http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/>), provides information in seven different languages. The organizational structure consists of Pylons, named after the gates of ancient Egyptian temples, which are geographically localized and are under the trust and responsibility of a designated officer called a Sentinel. There are also divisions in the Temple called Orders that specialize in one or more particular fields of the magical arts and sciences. Each member, once having reached Adept II status, must affiliate within one year with an Order reflective of his or her personal interests and aptitudes. The collective knowledge of all of the Orders is available to the Temple membership. The Temple of Set currently lists eleven pylons and nine orders, each with its own corresponding web page.

The Temple of Set has no recorded incidents of violence. However, the Temple has been plagued with legal issues over the years, specifically concerning its founder. In 1986, a scandal broke out involving allegations of child molestation at the day care center at Presidio Army Base where Michael Aquino was assigned. "Gary Hambright, a daycare worker, was charged with 12 counts of sodomy, oral copulation, and lewd conduct. Aquino, along with his wife Lilith, were identified by some of the children as possibly being another who had participated in the molestations. However, no formal charges were ever brought against Aquino and the case against Hambright was later dismissed. In 1994, Aquino sued Linda Blood, a former member of the Temple of Set, for libel in her book *The New Satanists*. The book, Aquino's attorneys claimed, depicted him and his fellow Setians as pedophiles, child abusers, murderers, and the masterminds behind a nationwide Satanic conspiracy. The suit was settled out of court, with details of the settlement kept confidential. The latest lawsuit, in 1997, was brought against an Internet provider for failing to block defamatory posts from an anonymous user. A person using the name "Curio" had posted over 500 messages that accused Aquino of having participated in heinous crimes, sexual perversions, and acts of moral turpitude, according to Aquino's lawyers. The case against the Internet company Electriciti was thrown out of court.[\(16\)](#) Notwithstanding the controversies and the Temple's position on keeping details of its development private, there can be no doubt that the Temple of Set is a highly organized, sophisticated, influential, and flourishing Satanic religion.

## *Modern Religious Terrorism*

Just as there are many varieties of Christianity manifested in a number of diverse Christian religions, there are many varieties of non-recognized religions and religious sects pejoratively designated as terrorist religions or cults. Practitioners of these non-recognized religions vehemently disavow the terms "terrorist" and "cult." Commonalties among the major non-recognized religions designated as terrorist groups/cults include: hierarchical structures, opposition to mainstream Christian tenets, and the quest for personal and political power. Similar to other religious denominations, these religious sects profess spiritual superiority and claim that they are practicing the one true faith. I will confine my discussion to three active religions that exemplify the religious practices of modern terrorists: Christian Identity, Aum Supreme Truth, and Wahhabism, all three of which earnestly deny that they are terrorist organizations.

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## *Christian Identity*

The Christian Identity Movement is comprised of many radical fundamentalist Christian churches, extreme right-wing political groups, and survival groups. It is a complex, highly varied, and loosely organized movement whose fundamental teachings are based on the ideology that Anglo-Saxons are the direct descendents of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and are thus the true chosen people of God. Current groups that practice Christian Identity are associated with preaching hate, racism and genocide and condoning violence towards minorities, especially Jews. However, the original movement evolved from the British Israelism movement of the mid-nineteenth century, which did not start as a hate group nor did its leaders preach violence. Christian Identity took shape in early twentieth-century America, when it was

influenced by American Nativism, the Ku Klux Klan, and various strands of anti-Semitism. By the 1970s and 1980s, Christian Identity ideology merged with anti-tax and paramilitary movements and rhetoric, and its actions became more violent. In its current form, Christian Identity is the unifying theology for a number of diverse groups; it provides its members with a religious basis for racism and a religious doctrine that allows believers to fuse religion with hate, conspiracy theories, and apocalyptic fear of the future.

There is no single founder of the movement, which developed over a period of seventy years and is still changing. Three people who were significant to its evolution are Reverend John Wilson, Edward Hine, and Howard Rand. Wilson and Hine began the movement as British Israelism in 1840. It developed into the Identity Movement when Howard Rand founded the Anglo-Saxon Federation of America in 1930 with the help of Wesley Swift, who was a member of the KKK. Later, Swift founded his own church, called the Church of Jesus Christ Christian, which developed into the Aryan Nations.

The following beliefs are held in common by most Christian Identity groups: (1) A very conservative interpretation of the Christian Bible, which is their main sacred text. This interpretation includes a hatred of homosexuality and homosexuals, and a strict rejection of followers of other religions. (2) A view of the white race, which is sometimes referred to as the Adamic Race or True Israelites, as superior to all others. The view that other races are the satanic spawn of Cain leads to a hatred of African Americans, Native Americans, and any person from "non-Aryan" countries. (3) The belief that other pre-Adamic and non-white people were already in existence when Adam was created and that Adam and Eve were white. This leads directly to the belief that Anglo-Saxon Protestants are the true descendants of God's chosen people of the Hebrew Scriptures. (4) That the commandment which forbids adultery does not refer to extramarital affairs but to racial adultery and interracial marriages. The tenth commandment in their view already bans adultery. (5) That they are the direct descendants of God's chosen people, the Jewish people having descended from Cain. This belief is associated with extreme anti-Semitism within their movement. These beliefs can be summed up in what is referred to as the "two-seedline" doctrine: "Christian Identity followers assert that Adam was preceded by other, lesser races, identified as 'The beasts of the field' (Gen.1:25). Eve was seduced by the snake (Satan) and gave birth to two seed lines: Cain, the direct descendent of Satan and Eve, and Abel, who was of good Aryan stock through Adam. Cain then became the progenitor of the Jews in his subsequent matings with the non-Adamic races. Christian Identity adherents believe the Jews are predisposed to carry on a conspiracy against the Adamic seed line and today have achieved almost complete control of the earth." [\(17\)](#)

Christian identity does not have a national organizational structure; rather, it is a grouping of churches throughout the country that follow its basic ideology. Some of these churches are as small as a dozen people and some have memberships in the thousands. The Southern Poverty Law Center currently lists 602 active hate groups, of which 32 are specifically identified as Christian Identity groups (<http://www.splcenter.org/intelligenceproject/ip-index.html>). Some of the better known organizations that follow Christian Identity beliefs include: Aryan Nations, American Nazi Party, Church of Jesus Christ Christian, Confederate Hammerskins, National Association for the Advancement of White People, Kingdom Identity Ministries, Posse Comitatus, Christian Research, Scriptures for America, White Aryan

Resistance (WAR), and White Separatists Banner. Although many Internet search engines will not link to racist web sites, the *Nationalist Observer* prides itself on having the world's largest white racist internet links page: <http://www.cwporter.com/RACISTLINKS.html> .

The Aryan Nations is a particularly large group that adheres to Christian Identity and espouses hatred towards Jews, the federal government, African Americans and other minorities. Their ultimate goal is forcibly to take over five northwestern states, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, and Montana from the US government in order to establish an Aryan homeland. Aryan Nations has a headquarters in Hayden Lake, Idaho and a number of state chapters. Its annual World Congress attracts a number of different factions from right-wing groups and has strengthened their base of support.

The activities of Aryan Nations and similar groups led to a study conducted by the FBI, announced on October 20, 1999 as "Project Megiddo." This study was intended to alert US law enforcement to what is described as "the potential for extremist criminal activity in the United States by individuals or domestic groups who attach special significance to the year 2000." An accompanying FBI statement mentioned that, "The threat posed by extremists as a result of perceived events associated with the year 2000 is real. The volatile mix of apocalyptic religious and New World Order conspiracy theories may produce violent acts aimed at precipitating the end of the world as prophesied in the Bible."[\(18\)](#) The data for the report was collected over nine months by the FBI's domestic terrorism unit and was not supposed to be made public. However, the Center for the Study of New Religious Movements, CESNUR, a cult apologist organization, obtained a copy and placed it on their web site, at [http://www.cesnur.org/test/FBI\\_004.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/test/FBI_004.htm) . The Christian Identity movement was discussed at length in the Project Megiddo report because of its apocalyptic beliefs.

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Christian Identity also believes in the inevitability of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. It is believed that a cleansing process is needed before Christ's kingdom can be established on earth. During this time, Jews and their allies will attempt to destroy the white race by any means available. The result will be a violent and bloody struggle, a war, in effect, between God's forces, the white race, and the forces of evil, the Jews and nonwhites. The view of Armageddon varies among Christian Identity believers. Some contend there will be a race war in which millions die; others believe that the United Nations, backed by Jewish representatives of the antichrist, will take over the country and promote a new world order. Only after the final battle is ended and God's kingdom is established on earth will the Aryan people be recognized as the one true Israel. Christian Identity adherents believe that God will use his chosen race as his weapon to battle the forces of evil. They believe that they are among those chosen by God to wage this battle during Armageddon and that they will be the last line of defense for the white race and Christian America. To prepare for these events, they engage in survivalist and paramilitary training, storing foodstuffs and supplies, and caching weapons and ammunition. They often reside on compounds in remote areas.[\(19\)](#)

The Megiddo Report also identified potential violent threats from groups and individuals whose mission

is to bring about a race war. Some of their stated reasons for potential violence were the lack of structure in Christian Identity, which creates a greater potential for violence from lone offenders and/or leaderless cells, the ease with which persons can move from one group to another until they find a more radical one, the increased cooperation between different groups pairing up with militias and receiving paramilitary training, and, finally, the formation of splinter groups or state chapters whose leaders have diminished control over the members. Unfortunately, there are many examples of violence committed by practitioners of Christian Identity. A subgroup of the Aryan Nations called The Order, headed by Bob Matthews, committed a number of violent crimes, including murder. Their mission was to bring about a race war, and they inspired several other groups to pursue the same goal. Dennis McGiffen formed a cell called The New Order whose members were arrested before they could follow through on their plan. Another person who spent time at the Aryan compound, Chevie Kehoe, was convicted of three homicides, conspiracy, and interstate transportation of stolen property. Just a few of the recent incidents perpetrated by Christian Identity members include bombings at a Birmingham, Alabama abortion clinic and at the Atlanta Olympics, the torching of three synagogues in Sacramento in July, 1999, and the murder of a gay couple near Redding, CA. Christian Identity openly advocates racism, hatred, violence, genocide, and terrorism.

## *Aum Shinrikyo*

Aum Shinrikyo, translated as Aum Supreme Truth, is a Japanese religious movement founded in 1987 by Shoko Asahara. This religion, which reached a peak of about 40,000 members worldwide, was officially registered with the Japanese Government under the Religious Corporations Law (*shukyo hojin ho*) in August 1989. Aum Shinrikyo, which combines elements of Buddhism, Christianity, and a variety of Asian traditions, evolved into an apocalyptic movement. It is best known for its violent acts, including detaining, coercing, torturing, and killing people and, most notably, the development and use of weapons of mass destruction. Both CESNUR (<http://www.cesnur.org/testi/aum1.htm>) and Apologetics Index (<http://www.gospelcom.net/apologeticsindex/a06.html>) have pages listing the many articles dealing with this religious group and its activities.

Shoko Asahara, born in 1955 as Chizuo Matsumoto, was partially blind at birth. He attended a school for the blind from the age of five, and after graduating in 1977, he moved to Tokyo, where he failed to get into Tokyo University and turned to studying acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. He married in 1978, and, in the early 1980s, opened a folk medicine shop and established a school for yogis with his wife. During that time, he joined Agonshu, a "New New Religion" that stressed liberation from bad karma via mediation. In 1986, while alone in the Himalayan Mountains, he claims to have received enlightenment, and upon his return in 1987 changed his name from Chizo Matsumoto to the holy Asahara Shoko. This inspired him to organize his religion, which he named Aum Shinrikyo. The name of the religion includes the Hindu and Buddhist sacred syllable "Om," which, Asahara taught, refers to the creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe. Shinrikyo is translated as "teaching of the supreme truth"; Aum Shinrikyo teaches the "supreme truth" about creation and destruction.

Aum Shinrikyo's fundamental religious claim is that it offers liberation from suffering and illness. "Full

of Hindu motifs and practices, the primary deity in Aum is Shiva, the god of destruction. This deity embodies Aum's main focus: the creation and destruction of the universe. The Buddhist ideas incorporated include transmigration and rebirth, the world of suffering, and the goal of better rebirths and enlightenment through meditation. . . . He initially taught that members must work to transfer evil energy into positive energy and avoid mass destruction via nuclear war."(20) "Asahara claimed he was the savior who would establish the perfect Shambhala kingdom on earth. The aim was to make Japan into Shambhala, and then to make the whole world into Shambhala. . . . In Asahara's 1987 book *Initiation*, he predicted that a nuclear war would occur between 1999 and 2003, but could be averted if Aum established centers overseas and gained 30,000 renunciants. . . . Even if Armageddon occurred, Aum devotees would be saved because they would have the ability to consciously abandon their physical bodies for existence in the astral world."(21) With this theology, he began what was called the Lotus Village Plan, the building of small communes in order to be self-sufficient and rebuild civilization after Armageddon. "But Asahara's thought began to take a more pessimistic turn as he studied the New Testament Book of Revelation on which he produced two commentaries, *Doomsday*, 1989 and *From Destruction to Emptiness: A Sequel to Doomsday*, 1989. By 1990 the Lotus Villages needed to be equipped with shelter for protection from nuclear, chemical and bacterial weapons . . . In 1989 to 1990 his focus shifted to a catastrophic millennialism involving a pessimistic evaluation of society and unredeemable humanity, corresponding with Aum's increasing conflicts with the world outside its communes."(22)

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In 1990, Asahara and a number of other top-ranking members of the group announced their candidacies as Supreme Truth Party representatives for the House of Representatives. They believed they were serious contenders and were severely disillusioned when they lost. "The loss of the election combined with many negative news articles significantly affected the ideology of Aum Shinrikyo; they now viewed the world as persecuting them and no longer attempted to save the world, only Aum members. In addition, Aum members were being taught that enemies identified as the United States military, Freemasons, the Japanese government, and Jews were conspiring to destroy them. Asahara started preaching Armageddon by utilizing the predictions of Nostradamus, the New Testament book of Revelation, Hitler's statements about a thousand-year Reich and his own psychic powers."(23) In 1992, he wrote *The Ideal Society Shambhala*, and, in 1993, he compiled a collection of his public talks entitled *The Frightening Prophecies of Asahara Shoko*.

In the years after founding the religion, Shoko Asahara claimed that he was a Buddha who possessed psychic powers, including the power to levitate and to soul-travel out of the body, and that he had an infallible power of prophecy. "In his book *Initiation*, 1987, Asahara claimed that *shaktipat* given by himself to the devotee was necessary to awaken the *kundalini*. In 1994, Aum scientists began producing drugs, LSD, sodium thiopental, mescaline, methamphetamine, and PCP, for use in religious initiations. Even those chemically induced mystical experiences were attributed by Aum believers to the Shakti, the spiritual power, energy of the guru."(24) Members of Aum believed that their own enlightenment would come if they submitted to Asahara as the guru; in fact, they were encouraged to repeat 20 times a day, "I

pledge faithfulness to Aum, the Guru and the God Shiva. Please lead me (name) quickly to enlightenment." (25) Shoko Asahara not only identified himself as the Buddha of the current age and the reincarnation of the god Shiva, but, in 1992, he published a book entitled *Declaring Myself the Christ*, where he also claimed to be the lamb of God who absorbed the bad karma of his disciples even though it made him ill. "Asahara taught that people who rejected him as the guru were destined for rebirth in the lower realms of the animals, hungry ghosts, and the hells due to their bad karma. Acceptance of Asahara as the incarnation of Shiva, as the guru was necessary to attain good karma and salvation" (26) "Asahara's role as the messiah was to enable persons to attain a superhuman condition. Aum Shinrikyo was an organization of superhumans, who would survive Armageddon and then establish Shambhala on earth, which would be a 1000 year kingdom." (27)

Shinrinkyo rituals included the "initiation of blood," a secret Tantric rite where the blood of the Guru is taken into one's body; consequently, vials of Asahara's blood were sold so that devotees could absorb his special DNA by drinking his blood. Special caps called PSI, short for "perfect salvation initiation," were rented and worn by members to bring their thoughts into harmony with the Guru. Asahara insisted that his devotees practice an extreme form of asceticism or else they would not achieve salvation in the Shambhala millennial kingdom. His practice of asceticism included fasting or living on a meager diet, being lowered into scalding or near-freezing water, being hung upside down, or being given drugs such as LSD to stimulate altered consciousness. "Every member was encouraged to meditate and practice a variety of yogic disciplines, and the most committed disciples became shukkesha, renunciants. Becoming a renunciant meant cutting off all contact with one's family, turning over all property and assets to Aum, pledging devotion to Asahara, living communally and practicing rigorous asceticism. By these means, shukkesha believed they would develop superhuman powers of clairvoyance, levitation, and the ability to travel through the spiritual realms. The shukkesha aimed to become superhuman beings, the only ones who would not be destroyed in Armageddon" (28)

Aum Shinrikyo reportedly was worth over a billion dollars from real estate, stocks, blood and headgear sales, and donations from members. Asahara also had a number of small businesses. Aum attracted highly educated young men and women who felt that Japanese society had become too commercialized. The men who became the Aum leaders were highly educated scientists who researched and developed a variety of weapons of mass destruction. There were also a significant number of female leaders involved in diverse fields such as medicine, nursing, and bookkeeping who oversaw the administration of the communes and the factory work. Asahara had sex with a number of Aum women with the intention of impregnating them and explained this by claiming that the guru knew how to catch the good souls floating in the air and bring them into physical incarnation. There is little information about the children except that they were generally neglected.

Members were convinced that society outside the Aum compound was under the influence of evil mind control and that Aum counteracted society's brainwashing with good mind control that taught supreme truth. Aum members would listen for hours to audiotaped affirmations that they should not doubt Aum because doubt is an illusion caused by earthly desire. Members were severed from contact with their families and the outside world, and systematically indoctrinated into worshipping Asahara with the use

of standard mind control techniques, such as drugs, sleep and food deprivation, fear, physical beatings, isolation, and constant reinforcement of new beliefs. Once inducted into Aum Shinrikyo under orders of Shoko Asahara, members were prepared to destroy the world in order to recreate it.

The violence associated with Aum Shinrikyo ranged from the extreme ascetic practices of its members to murdering individuals and attempting to annihilate thousands of people. The following is a chronology of some of Aum Shinrikyo's acts of violence. In 1988, a member died while being subjected to cold water immersion. In 1989, several parents hired the Yokohama lawyer Tsutsumi Sakamoto, who represented the Aum Shinrikyo Victims Society, families of members in the group. He was interviewed in 1989 by the Tokyo Broadcasting System and revealed details of the group's illegal activities. The interview was never broadcast, because Tsutsumi, his wife, and their 14-month-old child were kidnapped and murdered in their Yokohama apartment by Aum members, who later confessed to the killings. In June 1993, Aum scientists tested their first weapon of mass destruction by using a fan on a rooftop of a Tokyo building to spray anthrax across the city. Birds, pets, and plants died, people got sick, and cars and clothing were stained. In June 1994, sarin gas was released by Aum devotees from a truck in the central Japanese city of Matsumoto, killing seven people and injuring 600.

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In January 1994, two former members attempted to rescue one of their mothers who was still in the commune. They were captured and brought before Asahara and his wife; one was forced to murder the other and then report to family members outside the commune that everyone was fine. In September 1994, a lethal gas used in WWI was released into the apartment of a journalist who had written two anti-Aum books and critical articles; she was hospitalized but survived. In December, a Tokyo parking attendant who had provided shelter for five defectors was injected with VX nerve agent; he was hospitalized but survived. In December 1994, a man who was believed to be an undercover police agent was killed on the street when an Aum member injected him with VX nerve agent. In January 1995, the head of the Aum Shinrikyo Victims Society was sprayed with VX as he walked across a parking lot; he was in a coma for several weeks but recovered. In February 1995, a businessman who was hiding his sister after she defected was abducted from a Tokyo street and injected with sodium thiopental; he died during interrogation, and an industrial size microwave oven was used to incinerate his body. His sister had donated about \$600,000 to Aum. Aum also ran a hospital in Tokyo where they treated dissenting and disruptive members by incarcerating and drugging them; this hospital had an unusually high death rate. Japanese police concluded that Aum members killed approximately 32 people between October 1988 and March 1995; at least eight died from ascetic practices and others were killed for wanting to defect.

On March 20, 1995, five members of Aum Shinrikyo boarded five subway cars at different stations in Tokyo. At 8:00 AM, they deposited plastic bags containing sarin gas on the floor, punctured the bags, and immediately disembarked. The fumes of the deadly nerve gas injured over 5,000 people and twelve people died. Two days later, a videotaped message from Shoko Asahara was broadcast in Japan that motivated members to further violent actions. On March 30, the head of the National Police was shot outside his residence as he left for work and seriously injured; two hours later, an anonymous call to the media warned that more police officers would be assassinated if the investigation was not stopped.

Asahara predicted that on April 15, 1995, a huge catastrophe would occur in Tokyo; this prediction caused the closing of two shopping complexes, quieted the normally bustling Shinjuku station, and caused 20,000 police to be deployed. On May 5, an attempt to release hydrogen cyanide at Tokyo's busiest station failed when the device burst into flames. An intensive police hunt led to the arrest of over 200 Aum members, but Asahara remained at large until May 16, when he was found hiding at Aum headquarters. He was charged with murder in connection with the Tokyo subway gas attack, the Matsumoto gas release, the murders of the Sakamoto family and Kariya, and the production of illegal drugs. On the same day as his arrest, May 16, 1995, a letter bomb was sent by Aum devotees to the Tokyo governor's office that exploded in the hands of a secretary. This was attributed to the governor's announcement of his intention to revoke Aum Shinrikyo's status as a registered religion. [\(29\)](#)

Shoko Asahara went to trial on 17 criminal charges in April 1996. In October 1998, an Aum member was sentenced to death for the murder of four people, and in September 1999 and June 2000, two other members were sentenced to death for releasing sarin gas in the subway. Many members were given long prison sentences. Asahara maintains his innocence, although many followers have confessed their involvement in these crimes and have claimed they acted under Asahara's direct orders. On June 22, 2001, Asahara's trial reached its 200<sup>th</sup> hearing with no verdict in sight. In January 2000, the cult, still in existence, changed its name to Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, indicating a new beginning. Although the group has publicly renounced its founding leader Asahara, police have found instructions for making nerve gas in a member's car. Aum's every move is now being monitored by authorities under a new law, passed in December 1999, that allows police to conduct raids and demand information without a warrant. In the aftermath of September 11, the US government updated its list of foreign terrorist organizations on October 5, 2001 to include Aum Shinrikyo/Aleph. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2001/index.cfm?docid=5258>)

## *Wahhabism*

Fundamentalist sects of Islam emerged in the eighteenth century in reaction to what was felt as the weakening of Islam through Western influence. Fundamentalists believe that the law of Allah that was first revealed by the Prophet is just as relevant today as it was then, and they seek to establish the ideal society that Allah proposed. Although Islamic fundamentalists may adhere to the basic principles of Islam, their political interpretation of Islam is significantly different from that of most Muslims. This is most obvious in the fundamentalist application of the concept of Sharia. Sharia is a complete sacred legal system, derived directly from the Quran, that guides Muslims in all times and all places, governing every aspect of individual and social life. Whereas the Quran may be viewed as the constitution of Islam, the Sharia comprises the revealed and canonical laws of the religion. It is the core of Muslim practice regardless of sect and is essentially what unites all the diverse communities of Islam. How the Sharia should be interpreted to adapt it to modern times is a major point of contention among the different sects. Islamic fundamentalists attempt to live by a strict interpretation of the Sharia and view the lifestyle of the West as a threat and the antithesis of what the Sharia represents. An excellent paper by Knut Vikor entitled "The Sharia and the Nation State: Who Can Codify the Divine Law?" presented at the Fourth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies in August 1998, describes the political significance of this

concept. (See <http://www.hf.uib.no/smi/pao/vikor.html> .)

Although there are other Islamic fundamentalist religious sects, two of the most important are the Kharijites and the Wahhabis. The Kharijites are the oldest sect of Islam; the name means "seceders." They were formerly extremely violent and were responsible for the assassination of the fourth caliph, Ali. Today they are strict fundamentalists and Quranic literalists, and they believe that the succession of the Prophet is open to anyone of true faith, not just the Sunni and Shiites.

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The Wahhabi movement is considered the most conservative of all Muslim sects in its refusal to accept any revision of Quranic Law. It is essentially a purification of Sunni Islam that regards the veneration of images, ostentatious worship, and luxurious living as evil. Its goal is to return to the ideal, fundamental form of Islam of the era of the first four caliphs following the Prophet; it teaches that all additions to Islam after the third century of the Muslim era are false and should be rejected. Members describe themselves as Muwahhidun (Unitarians), those who firmly uphold the doctrine that God is one, the only one, Wahid. The Wahhabi view of Islam asserts that all who do not adhere to its beliefs are infidels, including mainstream Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Wahhabis practice an extreme form of Puritanism; they limit themselves to simple short prayers, worship in undecorated mosques where even the name of the Prophet cannot be inscribed, and refuse to celebrate his birthday. Many Islamic scholars and organizations have published denunciations of Wahhabism as a rigid minority sect intolerant of other forms of Islam. For one such article published by the Islamic Supreme Council of America, see <http://www.islamic supremecouncil.org/RadicalMovements/radicalism.htm> .

The Wahhabi Movement was founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century. In 1744, Abd al-Wahhab was exiled from his native city, Uyayna, because of his controversial preaching from his book *Kitab al-tawid* or *Book of Unity*. During his exile, he went into the northeast Nejd and converted the Saud tribe. Once the Saudi sheik was convinced that it was his religious mission to wage holy war, jihad, against all other forms of Islam, he began the conquest of his neighbors in 1763. By 1811, the Wahhabis ruled all Arabia, except Yemen, from their capital at Riyadh. The Ottoman sultan attempted to crush them by sending out expeditions, but to no avail. However, the Sultan met with success when he called on Muhammad Ali of Egypt, and, by 1818, the Wahhabis were driven into the desert. In the Nejd they reassembled their power and from 1821 to 1833 gained control over the Persian Gulf coast of Arabia. Their subsequent domain steadily weakened; nonetheless, a third triumph came for the Wahhabi movement when Ibn Saud advanced from his capture of Riyadh in 1902 to the reconstitution in 1932 of nearly all his ancestral domain under the name Saudi Arabia, where Wahhabism remains dominant to this day. Members of the Wahhab family continue to hold prominent positions in Saudi Arabia because their ancestors helped the Saudi ruling family unify its kingdom in 1932. Wahhabism has also served as an inspiration to other Islamic reform movements, from India and Sumatra to North Africa and Sudan.(30)

Wahhabi theology and jurisprudence is based respectively on the teachings of Ibn Taymiyah and on the

legal school of Ahmad ibn Hanbal; they stress literal belief in the Quran and Hadith and the establishment of a Muslim state based solely on Islamic law. The contemporary Wahhabi movement is flourishing in every Muslim country. In Lebanon alone, the movement is estimated by officials to have about 4,000 members; it is far larger in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. It goes by many names, including Ikhwan, Salifiyya, Mowahabin, and the best known, Taliban. Anti-Wahhabi Muslims refer to Wahhabism as *fitna an Najdiyyah* or "the trouble out of Nejd." Wahhabis receive financial support at the highest levels of the Saudi Arabian government.<sup>(31)</sup> Wahhabi religious schools, known as *madrassas*, are part of a worldwide network of Muslim extremists. Beginning at ages 7-15, Wahhabi schools indoctrinate young men into the fundamentals of strict Islam, religious obligations, and radical militancy. Between the ages of 15-25, the young men are prepared for jihad and are trained to fight for the conquest of Wahhabi Islam. Not all of the young men who attend Wahhabi schools turn to violence. Some become religious teachers, and the vast majority of Wahhabi communities do not openly maintain armed militias, although they may engage in paramilitary training. The exception is the Taliban, who do not conceal weapons or other arms.<sup>(32)</sup> The term Wahhabi has pejorative connotations, and Saudis themselves do not use the term, preferring to call themselves Unitarians, believers in one indivisible deity.<sup>(33)</sup>

The Wahhabis' strict interpretation of the Sharia has sanctioned extreme laws and forms of punishment. According to Stephen Schwartz in the October 6, 2001 *London Spectator*, virtually all recent acts of terrorism have been enacted by Wahhabis. "Bin Laden is a Wahhabi. So are the suicide bombers in Israel. So are his Egyptian allies, who exulted as they stabbed foreign tourists to death at Luxor not many years ago, bathing in blood up to their elbows and emitting blasphemous cries of ecstasy. So are the Algerian Islamist terrorists, whose contribution to the purification of the world consisted of murdering people for such sins as running a movie projector or reading secular newspapers. So are the Taliban style guerrillas in Kashmir who murder Hindus."<sup>(34)</sup>

According to some sources, the Taliban do not practice Wahhabism but belong to what is known as the Deobandi Movement, named after a small town in the Indian Himalayas where the movement was founded in 1860, during the period of British rule in India. Similar to Wahhabism, it is an unusually strict form of Sunni Islam. The followers of both the Deobandi movement and the Wahhabi movement make a sharp distinction between revealed sacred knowledge and profane human knowledge, which they reject. Deobandi philosophy has helped spawn many fundamentalist groups in the Muslim world, including the Taliban, although Afghans have been part of the Deobandi movement since its beginning. Over time, Deobandi philosophy has evolved toward more orthodoxy and militant fundamentalism.

The violence inflicted because of Deobandi and Wahhabi religious ideology has been substantial. Among the thousands of discussions of Islamic fundamentalism since September 11, one statement sums up the religious connection: "Not all Muslims are suicide bombers, but all Muslim suicide bombers are Wahhabis."<sup>(35)</sup> There is no debating the violence that this belief system has inspired and continues to inspire. Unfortunately, we have all become familiar with the names of terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, Harakat ul-Mujahidin in Pakistan, and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, all of whom have been linked to bin Laden. (For a complete list of terrorists and groups identified under Executive

Order 13224, signed by President Bush on September 23, 2001, see <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/2001/index.cfm?docid=6531> .) The violence perpetrated by these groups includes many incidents of suicide bombing, kidnapping, hijacking, and murder.

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The following is a selected list of documented Islamic Fundamentalist terrorist crimes in the past twenty years against US citizens abroad and at home. April 18, 1983: bombing of the US embassy in Beirut by the Islamic Jihad, killing 63 people, including the CIA's Middle East Director, and injuring 120; October 23, 1983: simultaneous bombing of marine barracks in Beirut by the Islamic Jihad, killing 242 Americans; March 16, 1984: kidnapping and murder of Embassy Political Officer William Buckley in Beirut by the Islamic Jihad; April 12, 1984: restaurant bombing by the Hizballah, killing 18 US servicemen and injuring 83 people near a US Air Force base in Torrejon, Spain; June 14, 1985: hijacking of a TWA flight by the Lebanese Hizballah, killing a US navy sailor and holding 145 passengers for 17 days; October 7, 1985: hijacking of the Italian cruise liner Achille Lauro by the Palestine Liberation Front, killing one US passenger; April 5 and February 17, 1988: kidnapping and murder of US Marine Corps Lt. Col. William Higgins, serving in Lebanon, by the Hizballah; February 26, 1993: First World Trade Center bombing by Islamic terrorists, leaving 6 dead and injuring 1,000; February 23, 1997: Empire State Building sniper attack by a Palestinian gunman, killing one and wounding 4; November 17, 1997: attack on tourists in Egypt by Al-Gama'at al Islamiyya, killing 58 tourists and wounding 26; August 7, 1998: U.S. Embassy bombings in east Africa, attributed to Osama bin Laden, killing 91 and wounding over 5,000; October 12, 2000: attack on the USS Cole, attributed to bin Laden, killing 17 sailors and injuring 39, and, of course, the September 11, 2001 hijacking of commercial airliners, destruction of the World Trade Towers and attack on the Pentagon, also attributed to bin Laden, leaving approximately 4,000 dead and an undetermined number injured. For a complete list of terrorist incidents from 1961-2001, see <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/fs/index.cfm?docid=5902> .

A final observation is that the treatment of women under the Taliban is a heinous form of physical, psychological, symbolic, and spiritual violence that exceeds even the most extreme interpretations of patriarchal religious tenets. For an excellent article written prior to September 11 on the treatment of women under the Taliban, see "Buried Alive: Afghan Women under the Taliban" by Jan Goodwin (<http://www.echonyc.com/~onissues/su98goodwin.html>).

## *Sacred Violence*

### *Satanism and Sacred Violence*

Regardless of how heinous, irrational, or inexplicable it may be, sacred violence is always considered justified by the religious groups that practice it. The two most common sacred and secular justifications are sacrifice and retribution. Throughout history and across cultures, sacred violence has been sanctioned, condoned, and deemed necessary on religious principles. In the year 2001, sacred violence is

still sanctioned, condoned, and deemed necessary on religious principles, only now we have the technology to, at best, scandalize the world and, at worst, completely destroy it.

## *Sacrifice*

Satanic sacred violence is manifested in both overt and covert ways. The most obvious example is sacrifice, derived from the Latin *sacrificare*, meaning "to make holy." An ancient concept of sacrifice involves a religious offering or gift to a supreme being, in which the offering is consecrated through its destruction. The Satanic religions mentioned above, Ordo Templi Orientis, Church of Satan and Temple of Set, have published vehement disclaimers affirming that they do not engage in Satanic ritual abuse, blood rituals, or any form of animal or human sacrifice. However, there is one traditional Satanic group that openly promotes sacrifice, a British-based organization called the Order of the Nine Angles or ONA (<http://members.easyspace.com/oww/satan/Satanism/Ona/Ona.htm>). Their web site provides a guide to human sacrifice that advocates both voluntary and involuntary sacrifice, that is, ritual murder. The ONA have three methods of involuntary sacrifice: (1) by magical means, (2) by the "death ritual," the direct killing of a person chosen as a sacrifice, and (3) by assassination. The ONA describe ritual death as a powerful form of magic that has two purposes: it releases energy which can be directed or stored and draws down dark forces which can then be used for specific goals. Their sacrificial rituals are described in detail on their web page, <http://members.easyspace.com/oww/satan/Satanism/Ona/Odoc10.htm>. The ONA refer to human sacrifice as just another way of furthering the work of Satan.

Voluntary sacrifice occurs every seventeen years as part of the Ceremony of Recalling: the one chosen becomes Immortal . . . An involuntary sacrifice is when an individual or individuals are chosen by a group, Temple or Order. Such sacrifices are usually sacrificed on the Spring Equinox . . . There are no restrictions concerning involuntary sacrifices other than that they are usually in some way opponents of Satanism or the satanic way of living. . . . Candidates are zealous interfering Nazarenes, those (*e.g.*, journalists) attempting to disrupt in some way established Satanist groups or orders, political/businesspersons whose activities are detrimental to the Satanist spirit, and those whose removal will aid the sinister dialectic and/or improve the human stock. . . . The victim or victims are brought or enticed to the area chosen for the Ritual, bound by the Guardian of the Temple, and, at the appropriate point in the Ritual, sacrificed either by the Master or the Mistress using the sacrificial knife. The body or bodies are then buried or otherwise disposed of. . . . Those who participate in the Ritual of Sacrifice must revel in the deaths.(36)

In addition to groups such as the ONA, there are many examples of teenagers and young adult youth subculture Satanists who regularly kill animals in an attempt to develop their magical skills. In fact, when examining a mutilated animal carcass, the most effective way to identify the perpetrator is by the level of skill evidenced in the attempted ritual sacrifice. Unfortunately, animal sacrifice can easily escalate to human sacrifice, especially when teenage dabblers can get detailed instructions instantaneously on the Internet.

## *Violent Scripture*

Violence is not blatantly evident in the rituals of the Church of Satan, Temple of Set, or Ordo Temple Orientis; however, sacred violence is explicitly expressed in many verses of the holy scriptures of the OTO. In Chapter III of *Liber AL vel Legis / The Book of the Law*, Crowley the Thelemite prophet speaks:

III,11: Worship me with fire & blood; worship me with swords & with spears. Let the woman be girt with a sword before me: let blood flow to my name. Trample down the Heathen; be upon them, o warrior, I will give you of their flesh to eat! III, 12: sacrifice cattle, little and big, after a child. III,18: mercy let be off: damn them who pity! Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them! III, 24: The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers: last of some beast, no matter what. III, 34: Another prophet shall arise, and bring fresh fever from the skies; another woman shall awake the lust & worship of the Snake; another soul of God and beast shall mingle in the globed priest; another sacrifice shall stain the tomb; another king shall reign . . . III, 51: With my hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. III, 52: I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed & blind him. III, 53: With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din. III, 55: let Mary inviolate be torn upon wheels: for her sake let all chaste women be utterly despised among you![\(37\)](#)

It is apparent from just these few verses that *The Book of the Law* is the antithesis of Christianity. According to Crowley's final comments at the end of the text, it is mandated that Thelemites interpret the holy scripture of *The Book of the Law* for themselves. Although it is possible to interpret it as a form of allegory, there can be no doubt that the writings of Thelemite holy scripture advocate violence, and are anti-Christian and anti-Islamic. Although Thelemite rituals do not explicitly contain violence, their principle that "do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" has an obvious potential for violence.

## *Vengeance*

The Roman legal concept of *lex talionis* or "law of retaliation" is a common form of sacred violence and one of the fundamental principles of Satanic religions. The *lex talionis* is also the basis for retributivist justifications for punishment, such as the death penalty in the US, and is associated with the Old Testament maxim of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. According to the retributivist view, when a person has been wronged, the state is justified in inflicting the same degree of harm that the perpetrator inflicted on the victim. Retribution is, so to speak, legal revenge administered by designated authorities

to prevent vigilantism from leading to a cycle of mutual revenge. Satanic churches not only promote the *lex talionis* but argue that it requires stricter and swifter enforcement. This concept is so important to Satanism that Satanic churches refer to *lex talionis* as *lex Satanicus*.

The law of retaliation is one of the fundamental principles of the Church of Satan and is found in several of their tenets. The fifth of the nine Satanic Statements found in the *Satanic Bible* reads, "Satan represents vengeance instead of turning the other cheek." The *Book of Satan* portion of the *Satanic Bible* is quite clear on this issue, "7. Hate your enemies with a whole heart, and if a man smite you on one cheek, smash him on the other!; smite him hip and thigh, for self-preservation is the highest law! . . . 9. Give blow for blow, scorn for scorn, doom for doom--with compound interest liberally added thereunto! Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, aye four-fold, a hundred fold!"(38) Finally, the application of the *lex talionis* is found in the third point of the Church of Satan's Pentagonal Revisionism:

Third, we call for the re-establishment of Lex Talionis throughout human society. The Judeo-Christian tradition which exists secularly under the guise of liberal humanism has exalted the criminal over the victim, taking responsibility away from the wrongdoer with their doctrine of forgiveness. Such thinking is a disgrace towards the ideal of justice . . . Satanists are particularly disgusted by the extraordinary level of criminal activity which abounds today and advocate a return to the Roman "Lex Talionis"; let the punishment fit in kind and degree to the crime. To achieve this, we would be pleased to see the institution of an elite police force, of men and women in peak physical and mental condition, trained in advanced techniques of crime fighting who would be truly equipped to handle the vermin that make so many of our cities into little more than concrete jungles. Man is by nature a social creature and makes his social contract with his fellows, thus rules of conduct are established to allow maximum freedom for individuals to interact. Disobey those rules and punishment should be swift and sure, and most probably public as well.(39)

The Satanic concept of *lex talionis* is consistent with Satanism's political Social Darwinian philosophy and their promotion of eugenics. Eugenics is advocated in the first point of their Pentagonal Revisionism and is referred to as "stratification," where each member of society reaches a level commensurate with their own development based on the principle of survival of the strongest. For an in-depth article on the Church of Satan's philosophy, see "Satanism: The Feared Religion" by Magister Peter H. Gilmore (<http://www.churchofsatan.com/Pages/Feared.html>). For a Satanic interpretation of the *lex talionis* by Magister R. Strunch of The Fire Within, see <http://home.vest.net/re-jo/satanism/lextalionis.htm> .

In the first chapter of his classic text, *Violence and the Sacred*, René Girard addresses the concept of retribution. Girard demonstrates that the institution of sacrifice and the judicial system share the same function: to subdue violence, stifle the impulse to vengeance, and stop it from escalating in an endless

cycle of uncontrolled reciprocal violence. "The procedures that keep men's violence in bounds have one thing in common: they are no strangers to the ways of violence. There is reason to believe that they are all rooted in religion. . . . Whether it be through sacrificial killing or legal punishment, the problem is to forestall a series of reprisals." (40) Modern Satanists hold the same fundamental premise concerning violence and human nature as that put forth in Girardian theory. Satanists maintain that humans are violent by nature; they recognize mimetic desire, and consider rituals of sacrifice to be sacred and necessary to defer violence. The significant difference is that Satanists embrace these attributes and manipulate them for their own agendas. They are cognizant of mimetic rivalries and not only welcome them but instigate them, which is what makes them authentically Satanic. Since Satanists advocate indulgence in human desires, it logically follows that they recognize the need for strict punishment. The *lex talionis* is attractive to Satanists because it provides them with a cultural mechanism for dealing with what they deem to be unacceptable behavior, indulging in the emotion of revenge, and enforcing their Darwinian ideology. The Satanic emphasis on revenge also serves as an excellent recruiting device, since revenge is exactly what alienated teenagers are often seeking. Whether you refer to it as the *lex talionis*, retribution, retaliation, or vengeance, without some such system of conflict resolution, whether in the form of religious sacrifice or the secular death penalty, there is always the looming threat of a cycle of uncontrolled reciprocal violence.

### *Satanic Responses to September 11, 2001*

There were a variety of responses to September 11 from different Satanic groups. Most expressed condolences, informed their members if anyone was killed or injured, and provided hyperlinks to donate blood or money. Of course, their acknowledgment of the tragedy had a particularly Satanic perspective; for example, Grand Magister Blackwood of the Worldwide Order of Satanists posted on his web site, "Sept. 11, 2001, a day on which the stupidity of those who believe in god crap and their stupid holy war shit has taken lives. As Satanists we can not let the screwballs win this war. I plead with every Satanist out there to donate blood and save a life. We know that god does not exist and it is up to real people to step in and save someone who may need it." (41) Satanic Priests, similarly to many other American clergy, wrote sermons concerning the tragic events and interpreted their theological implications for their followers. *Lex Satanicus / Lex Talionis* was explicitly expressed in many of the Satanic responses to the events. Peter Gilmore, High Priest of the Church of Satan wrote on their web site, "Moving among my fellow New Yorkers, it was heartening to hear residents of this city calling out for the blood of those who are the cause of these acts of war, as well as for the punishment of those who shield, support, or otherwise sympathize with terrorists. The philosophy of Satanism is clear on such issues: the Fifth Satanic Statement from the Satanic Bible says 'Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek' . . . many of the people of this nation now share this point of view. Yesterday, Americans saw things they hold as precious being shattered by those who view our society as being the adversary of the theocracy they wish to establish. They call us The Great Satan. It is time for our nation to play that role with grim purpose." (42) For the complete statement, see

<http://www.churchofsatan.com/Pages/News.html> .

Lord Egan, the High Priest of The First Church of Satan, discussed his church's position on the attacks

on their web site:

On September 11, in the Year One, commercial airliners were hijacked by a group of Islamic fundamentalists who perceived the United States as "the Great Satan" . . . On behalf of the First Church of Satan, I wish to express our profound sorrow and grief for the tragic loss of life and suffering . . . [R]ather than shun evil, we should strive to understand it, for without darkness there can be no light. We must strive to close the gap which separates God from Satan because, if we don't, millions more will die. The split mind theology is part of our national heritage of international psychosis. Good and evil cannot be divided as quintessential absolutes, for certainly there are strengths and weaknesses in everyone. Furthermore, spiritual salvation does not require blind obedience to the will of a messiah. Satanists speak of a process whereby we continue to challenge ourselves and strip away the layers of blindness which separate us from our own humanity. . . . I am understandably opposed to rhetoric used by leaders who refer to these terrorists as "evil." . . . However, I am not opposed to the use of force against those who initiate force, therefore we support US President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and others who have called for military action.(43)

To view the entire statement, see <http://www.churchofsatan.org/main.html> .

Patriotism is not lost on Satanists, and some flew American flags in recognition of their support; however, since it is obviously against their beliefs to write God Bless America, Grand Magister Blackwood of the Temples of Satan ([http://www.realsatanism.com/real\\_satanism.htm](http://www.realsatanism.com/real_satanism.htm)) wrote "Hail America," as in "Hail Satan," under the image of the American flag. A European Satanic organization called The Black Order of the Trapezoid (<http://www.schwartzorden.org/>) also had an American flag, but underneath they wrote "God Hates U.S. All!" The Black Order of the Trapezoid, like many other Satanic groups, openly advocates neo-Nazism, which they have merged with Satanism. Their response to September 11 was that the U.S. provoked the attack with their foreign policy, and they took the opportunity to curse the US government.

Unfortunately, many Satanic groups used the tragic events of September 11 as an opportunity to recruit young Americans by appealing to their fresh emotions of revenge, disillusionment, and insecurity. Modern Satanists fundamentally understand the nature of sacred violence and know how to manipulate the political situation so that ordinarily peaceful people will engage in violence as a necessary religious obligation. Trapped in a cycle of righteous revenge, one feels no remorse, because sacred violence is always justified.

## *Violent Priests*

Sacred violence is manifested in the Christian Identity Movement in a concept referred to as the Phineas Priesthood. This relatively new tenet justifies the use of violence if it is perpetrated in order to punish violators of "God's Law," as found in an extreme interpretation of the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Numbers. These Priests are initiated by committing violent acts such as murder, referred to as "Phineas Acts," against non-whites, Jews, and homosexuals. Unfortunately, this is a very appealing concept to Christian Identity extremists, who believe they are being persecuted by a Jewish-controlled US government and are eagerly preparing for Armageddon. The Phineas Priesthood is viewed as a call to action or a badge of honor.

The concept of the Phineas Priesthood in Christian Identity originated in an obscure book entitled *Vigilantes of Christendom: The Story of the Phineas Priesthood* by Richard Kelly Hoskins, published in 1990. According to Hoskins, history is a series of ongoing judgments meted out by God and responded to by believers. This response takes the form of murdering those who transgress the Law. "For Hoskins, the Phineas Priest--the embodiment of Christian Identity belief and obedience to God--is not one who prepares for impending race war, but one who commits racist, anti-Semitic or homophobic murder to stave off God's ongoing judgment of white people for failing to uphold the "Law." For Hoskins this includes such "crimes" as interracial marriage and allowing homosexuals to live." [\(44\)](#)

The concept of the Phineas Priesthood was further advocated in a gathering in Estes Park, Colorado that included Reverend Pete Peters of the La Porte, Colorado-based Church of Christ, Identity followers, and members of the neo-Nazi Movement and the Ku Klux Klan. They met shortly after the murder of Vicki and Samuel Weaver in 1992, during an armed standoff with federal agents near Naples, Idaho, and the result was a report that many observers claim to be the impetus for the armed wing of the Patriot Movement, the militias, and the Phineas Priesthood. The Estes Report, initially called "Special Report on the Meeting of Christian Men held in Estes Park, Colorado October 23, 24, 25, 1992, Concerning the Killing of Vickie and Samuel Weaver By the United States Government," clearly advocates vigilante violence:

As was the case with our Founding Fathers, the establishment of a Christian civil body politic should be a primary goal for Christian men across the nation, for it is the chief means for carrying out the judgments of God. It has the authority to punish the evildoer as mandated in Romans 13. This country's existing government does not fit the description of the "governing authorities" in Romans 13. The current situation in America is one in which the established government does not punish evildoers, but rather is increasingly using its power to punish the righteous. It is a tyrannical government. Therefore, it is not a Christian civil body politic. . . . The means for Christian men to bring about Divine judgment is not limited in certain cases to the actions of the body politic. In such cases, God's Word also provides precedent for what is today termed "vigilante action." Vigilante

action is Scriptural, but any such action must be in conformity with Bible precedents and directives. Vigilante action is the exception, not the rule. It should be noted that the action of Phineas (Numbers 25:1-9) is considered by many not to be true vigilante action, but was in fact the carrying out of directives of God through the civil body politic.[\(45\)](#)

Reverend Peters' writings have made him one of the foremost leaders of the Christian Identity Movement. The Estes Park Report also included a text by Louis Beam Jr., Ambassador at Large for the Aryan Nations and former Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, entitled "Leaderless Resistance," which was used as a model by the paramilitary right for the creation of "phantom cells"--decentralized gangs of terrorists that carry out special operations in militia groupings.

Christian identity ideology has inspired many individuals to commit heinous crimes. In just the two months of July and August 1999, subsequently known as the "Summer of Hate," there were three unrelated incidents of hate crimes involving murder. Benjamin Smith, a 21-year-old student at the University of Indiana, went on a weekend shooting rampage in Illinois and Indiana, killing two people and wounding nine before he committed suicide. He specifically targeted minorities; on July 2, 1999 he first murdered the well-known college basketball coach Ricky Birdsong, then wounded six orthodox Jews in Chicago. The next day, Smith opened fire on two African American and six Asian men in the Illinois towns of Springfield and Champagne-Urbana. On July 4, Smith killed a Korean man outside a church in Bloomington, Indiana, and then shot himself when police were closing in. Smith was a member of the World Church of the Creator (<http://www.wcotc.com/index.shtml>) headed by Reverend Matthew Hale, Pontifex Maximus, that publishes texts such as *The White Man's Bible* and overtly preaches white supremacy. Dr. William Pierce, head of The National Alliance (<http://www.natvan.com/>), author of the *Turner Diaries* and a leading figure in the White Supremacist movement, commented on Benjamin Smith's shooting spree in an article entitled "Knowledge and Discipline":

I don't know anything about Smith except what was on the television news and the internet, but I cannot help but feel sympathy for him. Smith, according to those who knew him, was intelligent, quiet, and serious. He was a student of criminal justice at the University of Indiana. Most notably, however, he was racially conscious. He was unhappy about the destruction of our White society in America and the perversion of our European culture by the program of Multiculturalism promoted by the government and the media. He distributed leaflets on the University of Indiana campus in Bloomington, expressing his views, and the university administration harassed him for it. He distributed leaflets off the campus in Bloomington and in the Chicago suburb of Wilmette, Illinois, where he grew up. Leftists, feminists, and Jews organized a public demonstration against him in Bloomington in an effort to stop his leaflet distribution, and the police in Wilmette arrested him. Blacks repeatedly smashed the windows of his apartment in Bloomington to show their disagreement with Smith's "racist"

views. It must have been very stressful for Smith, trying to exercise his freedom of speech in a society which pays lip service to our Bill of Rights but which actually tries its best to make life difficult for anyone who doesn't toe the party line.(46)

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To view William Pierce's entire article, see <http://www.natvan.com/free-speech/fs997d.html> . This is a clear example of how white supremacist ideology justifies violent acts and praises their perpetrator as a hero.

This incident inspired legislation called the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, a bill that amends the existing federal hate crimes law to expand the government's role in investigation and also expands the definition of hate crime to include sexual orientation, gender, and disability. Unfortunately, one day before the bill went to congress, another hate crime occurred. On July 21, 1999, two brothers, Benjamin Matthew Williams and James Tyler Williams, broke into a gay couple's home in Northern California and shot them to death. During Benjamin Williams' confession, he said his only regret about the murders is that they didn't inspire others to emulate him, and he insisted that his actions do not constitute a crime. The Williams brothers are practicing members of Christian Identity. Benjamin Williams stated, "You obey a government of man until there is a conflict, then you obey a higher law. . . . It's part of the faith. So many people claim to be Christians and complain about all these things their religion says are a sin, but they're not willing to do anything about it. They do not have the guts."(47) Williams is revered in jail by his fellow white supremacists and received considerable media attention. The two brothers were also suspected of three Sacramento area synagogue arsons and were recently given lengthy prison sentences: Benjamin Williams received 30 years and James Williams, 21 years for the synagogue fires. They both still face murder charges. The police discovered a letter from Benjamin Williams to National Alliance leader William Pierce in which he allegedly asked the white supremacist for assignments and suggested he could bring other recruits aboard.(48)

The third major incident in the Summer of Hate occurred on August 10, 1999. Buford Oneal Furrow, Jr. walked into the North Valley Jewish Community Center in suburban Granada Hills, California and opened fire, wounding five including one five-year-old and two six-year-old boys. Shortly afterward, he murdered a Filipino-American postman. In the early 1990s, Buford Furrow had joined the Aryan Nations (<http://www.aryan-nations.org/>) and was influenced by the Christian Identity concept of the Phineas Priesthood. *War Cycles Peace Cycles*, another book by Richard Kelly Hoskins, was found in his possession. According to the indictment, Furrow expressed no regrets over the killing of Joseph Santos Ilete and the wounding of five people at the Jewish Community Center. In the 61-page indictment, he said he would not have killed the postal worker if he had been white and that he targeted the center because of his hatred for Jews. At the time of his arrest, Buford Furrow admitted the crimes and said it was a wake up call to anti-Semitic and hate groups.

One of the major influences on these crimes is Reverend Pete Peters' book *The Bible: Handbook for*

*Survivalists, Racists, Tax Protesters, Militants and Right Wing Extremists*, where he reinterprets the Biblical story of Phineas for his racist believers: "perhaps there was an organization in Phineas' day known as the NAACP, National Association for the Advancement of Canaanite People, who took exception with this teaching of segregation. Perhaps there were pulpits proclaiming a more tolerant and socially accepted view and government agencies crusading for affirmative action. We really do not know; but we do know from the Bible story in Numbers chapter 25 that the Israelite people began to disobey God's law, accept integration, cultural exchange and a type of interracial marriage, and thus were struck collectively by a plague. Phineas was the man who courageously fought against the racial treason even to the point of bloodshed, and he too was honored by God." (49)

Another radical and influential voice of the racist right is Alex Curtis, who, through his Internet magazine, the *Nationalist Observer*, and telephone hotlines promotes a new ideology called "Lone Wolf Activism," which encourages white supremacists to act alone in violent ways. He advocates a two-tiered revolutionary hate movement. The first tier is above ground and spreads subversive propaganda that guides the underground, the second tier are lone wolves, racist combatants acting alone or in small groups who chip away at the government's infrastructure by daily anonymous acts. (50) Curtis also copied a chart from Louis Beam's book *Essays of a Klansman* that assigns point values to various targets and entitled the chart the "Lone Wolf Point System." "Policy Formulation and Decision making Leaders of International satanic anti-Christ Conspiracy for control of the world are each worth one full point. Members of Congress are each valued at one-fifth of one point. The Director of the FBI carries a reward of one-sixth of one point and lone wolves earn half of one point for each national leader of the NAACP. A racist who collects one full point earns the designation Aryan Warrior, one-third of one point merits the title Commando and so on." (51) Curtis was the target of a joint investigation of the FBI and the San Diego Police Department dubbed "Operation Lone Wolf," which revealed that Curtis led a cell of various white supremacist associates to commit criminal acts and target public figures who spoke out against hate crimes. The investigation led to an indictment charging Curtis with conspiracy to violate civil rights by targeting prominent members of the community. For the entire investigation, see the FBI web site at <http://www.fbi.gov/majcases/lonewolf/lonewolf1.htm> . For an article written by a white supremacist on the subject of lone wolves, see <http://www.wakeupordie.com/html/lupus.html> .

This ideology has not only influenced Phineas Priests but led to a number of other violent hate crimes. Two particularly disturbing examples are the 1998 sadistic dragging death of James Byrd Jr., in Jasper, Texas, during which the three white supremacists who tortured and murdered James Byrd made reference to William Pierce's *Turner Diaries*, and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing of the Murrah Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh, killing 168 people. McVeigh referred to the dead children as "collateral damage," and his only regret was that their deaths were a public relations nightmare that detracted from his cause of avenging Waco and Ruby Ridge. The crimes committed in the cause of white supremacy are too numerous to mention but, significantly, not one of the perpetrators has displayed remorse, because violence in the name of the sacred is always justified.

## *Holy War*

Islamic fundamentalists justify sacred violence through various interpretations of the religious doctrine of *jihad*. This term, which does not literally translate as "holy war," is very controversial, and Islamic scholars have continually been divided on how it should be interpreted. Similar to other concepts in the Quran, the interpretation of jihad is dependent upon the religious and political views of individual Islamic sects. Even contemporary definitions are contradictory. According to the *Islamic Glossary of the Muslim Students Association at USC*, "Jihad, sometimes spelled Jihaad, is an Arabic word the root of which is Jahada, which means to strive for a better way of life. The nouns are Juhd, Mujahid. Jihad, and Ijtihad. The other meanings are endeavor, strain, exertion, effort, diligence, and fighting to defend one's life, land and religion. Jihad should not be confused with Holy war; the latter does not exist in Islam nor will Islam allow its followers to be involved in a holy war. The latter refers to the Holy War of the Crusaders" (52). The *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion* states, "The Islamic idea of Jihad, which is derived from the Arabic root meaning to strive or to make an effort, connotes a wide range of meanings, from an inward spiritual struggle to attain perfect faith to an outward material struggle to promote justice and the Islamic social system." (53); T.P. Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam* presents a different definition, "Jihad: An effort, or a striving. A religious war with those who are unbelievers in the mission of Muhammad. It is an incumbent religious duty, established in the Quran and in the traditions as a divine institution, and enjoined specially for the purpose of advancing Islam and of repelling evil from Muslims." (54) (For the entire dictionary entry, see <http://www.answering-islam.org/Index/Hughes/jihad.htm> .) For some, jihad means to struggle to maintain one's faith, for others, it represents the duty of Muslims to preserve Islam by ridding the world of Western influences. The concept of jihad for militant Islamic fundamentalists, including Osama bin Laden, is holy war to rid the Muslim Holy Land of infidels; it is their duty to wage war against all enemies in their struggle for an Islamic State. In fact, some consider Jihad the sixth pillar of Islam, the missing or forgotten obligation.

The origins of bin Laden's concept of jihad date back to early twentieth-century Pakistan and Egypt. Two leading figures, Hassan al-Banna and Syed Abul Maududi, sought to restore the Islamic ideal of the unity of religion and state, which, they believed, could only occur by returning Islam to a traditional society governed by a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Al-Banna and Maududi emphasized the concept of jihad as holy war in order to end foreign occupation of Muslim lands. Maududi views true Islam as a modern revolutionary party: "Islam is a revolutionary ideology which seeks to alter the social order of the entire world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals. . . . Jihad refers to that revolutionary struggle and utmost exertion which the Islamic Nation/Party brings into play in order to achieve this objective." (55) In the 1950s, a prominent member of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Sayed Qutb, took the arguments of Al-Banna and Maududi much further, proclaiming that all non-Muslims were infidels, even the so called people of the Book, the Christians and the Jews, and he predicted a future conflict between Islam and the West. "Islamists emphasize the battle against jahiliyya, traditionally understood as the pagan state of ignorance in pre-Islamic Arabia, but reinterpreted by Qutb to mean any contemporary system not based on the original holy sources of Quran and Hadith and not operating under Sharia. Qutb also reinterpreted jihad to mean permanent conflict between the Islamic system and all contemporary jahili paradigms. The concepts of the two systems are totally incompatible,

so there is no possibility of compromise or coexistence between them." (56) When Egyptian President Abdel Nasser executed Qutb, his writings gained even wider acceptance in the Arab world, especially after the defeat of the Arabs in the 1967 war with Israel. Qutb's writings shaped the militant view of Islam and contributed to the fundamentalist designation of the US as the Great Satan: "Qutb divides the world into two camps: God's party versus Satan's. Man faces a moral choice he cannot evade, and he must voluntarily submit to God's moral laws in Sharia. There is only one God and one truth. All else is error. There is only one law, Sharia. All other law is mere human caprice." (57) For further reading on how radical Islamic movements have altered traditional Islamic concepts, see <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2001/issue4/jv5n4a2.htm> .

The writings of Qutb and Maududi influenced many younger Arabs, including Palestine scholar Abdullah Azzam, who had fought with the PLO in the 1970s. While studying Islamic law in Cairo, Azzam met the family of Sayed Qutb; he eventually taught at the University in Saudi Arabia, where one of his students was Osama bin Laden. The battle to liberate Afghanistan from Soviet occupation in 1979 provided Azzam with an opportunity to put his revolutionary ideals into practice. He was dubbed the "Emir of Jihad" because he was one of the first Arabs to join the Afghan fight along with Osama bin Laden. They worked together to recruit Arabs to fight in the holy war, and Azzam published books and magazines advocating the moral duty of every Muslim to undertake jihad. Azzam's assassination by car bomb in 1989 contributed to the emergence of a still more radical fundamentalism, led by the Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahri, whose cause was again furthered by the 1991 Gulf War, which brought US troops to Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden and his Muslim soldiers were extremely disturbed to see land they regarded as sacred occupied by infidel soldiers. It was Zawahri's influence over Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda organization that paved the way for the famous 1998 "Declaration of War" against the United States and the beginning of the terrorist attacks on American targets. (58) The February 23, 1998 Declaration of War, entitled "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," has now become evidence that links the bin Laden network to the September 11 attacks. (To view the document, see <http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/wif.htm> .) Osama bin Laden justifies his declaration of war against the US and his terrorist actions as a defensive struggle against enemies who attack and occupy Muslim lands. "Usama bin-Laden does not theorize about jihad, but simply claims that it is part of the Islamic religion, especially relevant in the case of repelling infidel invaders. The stationing of Western military bases on the soil of Muslim states constitutes an occupation by infidels, a clear cause for jihad. In his notorious 'ladinese Espistle' in which he declared jihad against America, he bases himself on Ibn-Taymiyya who stressed the importance of dealing with the greater *kurf* (danger) before dealing with other, lesser dangers. It is a religious duty to repel the greatest danger even if it means ignoring smaller enemies for a while. He identifies the greater *kurf* as America, because of its occupation of the Arabian Peninsula and its support of Israel." (59) The suicide attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are a form of jihad, as are all the other acts of terrorism attributed to Islamic fundamentalists. Since suicide is religiously prohibited in Islam, suicide attacks have to be viewed as a form of sacred violence. Killing oneself for the glory of Islam is considered by extremist fundamentalists to be a supreme form of jihad and a type of terrorism allowed by the Sharia; it is not suicide, *intihar*, but martyrdom, *istishhad*, one that will procure a special place in Paradise. "Active martyrdom is another area of reinterpretation and implementation. Martyrdom is being actively encouraged and glorified by

fundamentalists, and its rewards in the afterlife stressed to induce many to court it. Extreme fundamentalists have revived the khariji and assassin traditions of suicide-killings as a legitimate weapon in their contemporary jihad. . . . Most radicals agree that suicide is a major sin forbidden in Islam. However, they use Quranic verses, Hadith, and cases from the early history of Islam to prove that the voluntary sacrifice of oneself in the cause of Islam (including blowing oneself up as a living bomb) with the objective of defending Muslims and hurting their enemies, is not considered suicide but is a legitimate fight to the death." [\(60\)](#)

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Christian Identity groups and Islamic fundamentalists may be surprised to discover that they have many ideological views in common. Both view history as a fundamental cosmic struggle between good and evil. Both justify sacred violence in remarkably similar interpretations of their view of man's relationship to God, both consider the US government to be Satanic, both share anti-Semitism, racial supremacist views, and justifications for terrorism and suicidal missions, which naturally results in their hatred for each other. Hence it is not surprising that there were conspiracy theories claiming that it was white supremacist groups that attacked the World Trade Center or that they are still high on the list of suspects for the anthrax attacks. The two groups also have in common their ability to recruit individuals for their religious cause and their willingness to break government laws in the name of a higher sacred law. Modern terrorists, like white supremacists, understand the nature of sacred violence and know how to manipulate the political situation to incite ordinarily peaceful people to engage in violence as a necessary religious obligation.

## *Skandalon*

The similarities of the religious practices of modern Satanists and terrorists are striking, compelling, and numerous. All of the previously mentioned religions legitimize violence with the principle that the end justifies the means, whether the end is individual gratification or the establishment of an ideal world. This is evident from a brief review of the five sections of this paper. *Personifications* demonstrated that Satanism and terrorism are present in American culture in many forms. *Rivalries* showed that Satanism and terrorism are relative concepts determined by the theological, moral, political, and legal perspectives of each group and intertwined with issues of religious and political freedom. *Models* demonstrated that typologies of Satanism and terrorism are defined by antithetical ideologies and that the concepts are culturally constructed. *Religions* provided insights into the variety of religious practices of six different Satanic and terrorist groups and demonstrated that they do not consider themselves cultists or terrorists. Finally, *Sacred Violence* demonstrated that, regardless of how heinous, irrational, or inexplicable, religious violence is always felt to be justified and never thought of as sacrilege or terrorism by the groups that practice it. Throughout this article it is apparent that both Satanists and terrorists are in continual conflict with opposing ideologies.

According to their writings, these groups essentially desire what most individuals and cultures desire: respect, acknowledgment, power, control, and so on. However, their goals are not easily achieved, since

their absolutist ideologies are in direct opposition to the absolutist ideologies of mainstream Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with each accusing the other of worshipping false gods. In Girardian terms, these phenomena are referred to respectively as mimetic desire and mimetic rivalry. The manifestation of these rivalries was visibly evident in the previous sections on Rivalries, Models, and Religions. The section on Sacred Violence demonstrates that these rivalries eventually escalate to reprehensible acts of violence, provoking violent reprisals which then evoke violent retaliation, in an endless cycle of mutual revenge, with each group righteously proclaiming that they are justified. According to Girard, it is at this point that a mimetic crisis has been reached, "the war of all against all." Girard describes how the mimetic crisis is resolved by a scapegoating process that he refers to as the "single victim mechanism." The single victim mechanism assigns blame to a single individual so that the community can avoid social chaos and unity can be reestablished. "The resulting violence of all against all would finally annihilate the community if it were not transformed, in the end, into a war of all against one." (61) The inability to walk away from these mimetic rivalries, escalating violence, assignments of blame, and endless cycles of mutual violence is referred to as skandalon.

To quote Girard, "In order to designate the exasperation of mimetic rivalry, the Gospels have a marvelous word that, at times seems almost synonymous with Satan, skandalon. The idea comes from the Bible and it means the obstacle against which one keeps stumbling . . . The skandalon designates a very common inability to walk away from mimetic rivalry which turns into an addiction . . . The skandalon is all kinds of destructive addiction, drugs, sex, power, and above all morbid competitiveness, professional, sexual, political, intellectual, and spiritual, especially spiritual." (62) In *The Scandal of the Gospels*, David McCracken refers to skandalon in terms of offense: "A scandal may titillate or outrage us; either way, the titillation or moral indignation effectively prevents any challenge of the sort that offense brings to the assumptions and truths we hold most dear and the idols we cherish most deeply. Offense violates our assumptions about what our world is or what we think it ought to be. Whatever is unofficial, unestablished, or non-normal, deviant or nonstandard, in our view, carries with it the possibility of offense." (63) McCracken's concept of skandalon as offense treats scandal as a personal affront that incites one to action. There can be no doubt that most individuals find the religious practices of modern Satanists and terrorists to be a form of scandal that is highly offensive and seriously provocative.

An examination of the religious practices of modern Satanists and terrorists allows us to reduce the fundamental basis for all rivalries, scandals, and violence to one concept: the transgression of the prohibitions of idolatry. Girard recognizes idolatry as the quintessential scandal in the Old Testament: "idolatry, which means the scapegoat given sacred status in the form of a solid and material object--the obstacle made divine. Idolatry is the quintessential stumbling block." (64) Girard describes the paradox of scandal, "The words that designate mimetic rivalry and its consequences are the noun skandalon and the verb skandalizein. Like the Hebrew word that it translates, scandal means, not one of those ordinary obstacles that we avoid easily after we run into it the first time, but a paradoxical obstacle that it is almost impossible to avoid: the more the obstacle, or scandal repels us, the more it attracts us." (65) Modern Satanists indulge in the worst form of idolatry, worship of other gods, and the ultimate offense, the aspiration to *be* God. On the contrary, most extremist fundamentalists desire stricter enforcement of Biblical or Quranic prohibitions. Satanists and terrorists represent two extreme responses to the laws of

idolatry, complete indulgence versus austere rejection of all objects of desire, both culminating, ironically, in acts of sacred violence. A primary characteristic of idolatry is the simultaneous attribution of attraction and repulsion also found in the concept of skandalon. The fundamental nature of idolatry entails transgression and taboo. Desiring the transgression creates the need for the prohibition; the transgression essentially defines the taboo, which explains how religious groups with diametrically opposing doctrines can fall into the same trap.

Satanists embrace sin consciously because, in their arrogance, they assume that if they accept scandal they can control it, which is how they are trapped. Modern terrorists embrace prohibitions because, in their self-righteousness, they assume that if they can control scandal they can avoid it, which is how they, too, are trapped. Idolatry is the perfect obstacle; it causes believers to stumble through both sin and righteousness. Skandalon, the personification of Satan, the father of lies, seduces extremist fundamentalists through righteousness and Satanists through sin, trapping them in rivalries that cause accusations leading to scandals and escalating into an endless cycle of reciprocal violence. Although scandal cannot be altogether avoided, we must do our best to recognize the snares it lays for us in these two serious and dangerous contemporary manifestations of idolatry.

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## Notes

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12. *Ibid.*, 1-2. ([back](#))

13. *Ibid.*, 4. ([back](#))

14. Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (New York: Avon Books, 1969) 25. ([back](#))

15. *The Official Temple of Set World Wide Web Site* (<http://www.xeper.org/pub/tos/welcome.html>). ([back](#))

16. Religious Movements Homepage at the University of Virginia, *Temple of Set Legal Problems*, 4 (<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/satanism/tempset.html>). ([back](#))

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# A Dialogue on the Middle East and Other Subjects

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**Editorial Note:** This text was composed in September-October 2001 as an interview intended for publication in the Arabic-language webzine *Maaber* ([www.maaber.com](http://www.maaber.com)). In part because it clarifies my position on matters that have preoccupied us since September 11, I requested Mr. Abdulhamid's permission to publish it in *Anthropoetics*. Taking advantage of what the French call *l'esprit de l'escalier*, I have appended some additional material in [brackets]. - EG

\* \* \*

EG - Before beginning, I would like to commend you for your courage and perseverance in keeping a West-Middle East dialogue going at this difficult time, which is precisely when such dialogue is the most necessary.

AA - For the benefit of your Arabic readers who are, for the majority, quite new to the concepts of Originary Thinking and Generative Anthropology, please give us brief definitions of these terms.

EG - The term "Generative Anthropology" (GA) was suggested to me by my publisher; I had wanted to use "genetic anthropology" (translating the French word *génétique*) but in English this would refer to genetics. Thus the term implies no relationship with Chomsky's "generative grammar." The central idea of GA is that language, and human culture in general, insofar as it falls under the general category of "representation" or the use of signs, emerges as a collective, "scenic" means of deferring the violence occasioned by mimetic desire. Perhaps the simplest characterization of humanity is that it is the species that has more to fear from its own members than its natural environment, including predators, starvation, and everything else. (The terrorist attack on New York provoked someone to remark that this was harder to bear than a natural disaster because "you know they *wanted* to kill you.")

GA begins with René Girard's model of human desire as *mimetic* or imitative; each person's desire is incited and reinforced by the desire of others. As a positive force, mimetic desire helps us to acquire new values and learn new behaviors. But it also has a negative side: since we all imitate each other's desire, we all tend to become rival contenders for the same object. As our ancestors became more human, they became correspondingly more mimetic, with the result that the potential violence of their rivalry became too great to be controlled by animal modes of communication. I hypothesize that the first use of representation arose as a means to prevent, or, as I prefer to say, adopting a term of Jacques Derrida, to *defer* this mimetic violence. A capsule formulation of the fundamental hypothesis of GA (which I call the "originary hypothesis") is that the human is uniquely characterized by *the deferral of violence through representation*. In a scenic configuration, with the participants on the periphery of a circle and an object of desire (say, a source of food) at the center, each wishes to appropriate the object for himself, but, as each fears the others, his gesture of appropriation is cut off from its object and transformed into the first sign. Thus the linguistic sign may be considered an "aborted gesture of appropriation." The sign as a representation of the object can be shared by all participants, and each communicates through it to all the others that he has renounced his attempt to possess the object. At the same time, this concentration of all signs--of all *significance*--on the central object is the originary model of the sacred. Thus one may consider the first sign the *name-of-God*.

All cultural activities remain scenic, even when the scene is internalized in the individual imagination. GA is a way of thinking about human culture that derives its fundamental categories from the originary scene. For example, the principle of reciprocity is fundamental to most conceptions of morality, in particular, to Kant's famous "categorical imperative." But where does this principle come from? GA's answer: from the reciprocal exchange of signs in the originary scene. Each emits the sign and at the same time is aware of the others' equivalent action. Since we all possess language, we are all potential interlocutors. The inequalities that generate resentment--an important concept in GA--may all be understood as exclusions from dialogue.

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A few years ago I began to use the term *originary thinking* as a synonym for GA in order to make clearer that Generative Anthropology is not a branch of the academic discipline practiced in Anthropology departments. GA is a way of thinking about the human. As such, it does not have a specific research program of its own--something that makes more difficult its acceptance in our university system--but it can help clarify the fundamental presuppositions of all disciplines, including Anthropology, that deal with human culture.

AA - In one of your *Chronicles*, you described Western Civilization as "the most successful of human enterprises." A recent point made in the debates of the GAlist raises the issue of applicability of the basic concepts of GA, such as minimality, to other cultures. Before we go any further, then, it might be important to wonder: *how Western is GA really, despite its universalist aspirations and claims?*

If I understand your question, you are asking, "Isn't GA really (just) a Western mode of thought?" Certainly GA was developed in the West, and it owes a great deal to the vision of (Judeo-)Christianity, or the (Judeo-)Christian vision, of René Girard. This in itself says nothing about its universal applicability, any more than it would for a hypothesis in physics or biology. But a theory of culture is of necessity itself an element of culture; and because human beings naturally resent exclusion from dialogue, it is impossible simply to propound a universal anthropology without reflecting on its origins in a particular culture.

I don't think it is chauvinistic to point to the success of the Western mode of "liberal democracy" in creating for its members both prosperity and (relative) political freedom. I can't prove that these are the highest human values, but the number of people who seek to emigrate to Western-style nations seems proof enough, as it was in the days of the Berlin Wall. Who would not prefer better health care, a longer life expectancy, and more options in every domain of human activity from work to food to leisure?

If one seeks to understand what it is that has permitted this superior effectiveness, one is led to compare the forms of organization in different social groups. The modern market system arose in the Christian world, and even beyond Max Weber's well-known association of capitalism with the "Protestant ethic," it owes something to the Christian vision of the Kingdom of God as the mutual recognition of individual souls. I think one can make the case that "consumer society" is motivated by a worldly form of this very vision: each individual's unique pattern of consumption makes him a recognizable model for all the others.

But, however important it may be to explain the origin of the market system, this is a backward-looking quest, whereas the point of any research is to improve things in the future. It seems to me that today's global marketplace is no longer adequately described as "Western civilization." To the extent that it can be viewed as such by those who feel excluded from it, it has not yet fulfilled the essential task of any social organization, local, regional, or global, which is to defer violence. Nor will this task be accomplished, as some superficial critics suggest, through the elimination of all cultural differences for the benefit of MacDonal'd's and Coca Cola. Globalization has given us Chinese jazz, French rap, and California-Thai restaurants. The essential thing is to increase the global exchange system's degrees of freedom--and this means helping less advanced societies to benefit from participation in it.

To those who cite the resentment of the enemies of the global market as proof of its fundamental inadequacy, I can only say that, although a great deal of divergence is possible concerning the way in which the world order will evolve, the very nihilism of recent attacks on this order, from the farce of the mindless rioting at WTO meetings to the tragedy of suicidal mass annihilation, demonstrates that there is no real alternative. Forgetting their moral horrors, atavistic regimes like that of the Taliban cannot even feed their people. For the world as a whole to follow their path, it would have to lose nine tenths of its population. [It is nevertheless imprecise to call the al Qaeda terrorists *nihilistic*. Although their religious motivation makes them indifferent to the annihilation of the world, it provides the ground for a "medieval" Islamic utopia, all the more powerful in that its realization on earth is not indispensable.]

But your question has a theoretical as well as a practical point: does GA's principle of "minimality" not in

fact exclude the values of non-Western cultures? I do not think so. The claim that all human culture is dominated by the problems posed by mimetic desire could perhaps only have been formulated in the West during the postwar or postmodern era. But the evidence for this claim in every culture is overwhelming. I don't think it's a Western prejudice to believe that people are all basically the same, that only their forms of organization differ, and that, over the course of history, some of these forms prove more effective than others and tend to replace them. Certainly I have never seen any evidence to the contrary.

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AA - What are the mechanisms of "exclusion" at work here in your opinion, I mean with regards to the global marketplace? How much of it do you think is *intentional* due to greed or some form of superiority complex vis-à-vis other cultures? Is the idea of "the virtue of selfishness," advocated by Ayn Rand among others, manifesting itself here, be it consciously or unconsciously?

EG - The "virtue of selfishness" as the motor of market society goes back at least to Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees; or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1714). Others, in contrast, have cited the mutual trust that is essential to the operation of the market system. Rather than emphasize either trait, I would simply insist on the notion of minimal constraint; people are both good and bad, selfish and generous, but the optimal exchange system is one that permits individual interests to interact with each other as freely as possible, as opposed to systems where the distribution-system is centrally controlled.

I don't think the difficulties of integrating the less-advanced economies into the global market should be seen from the perspective of "exclusion"; this is a victimary term, and, as you know, I think that in the post-millennial era the persecutor-victim model is increasingly less useful. Indeed, rather than seeing international relations as the zero-sum game of "imperialism" in which the resentment of the poor countries is taken as a sign of their exploitation by the wealthy ones--not that this never happens--this resentment is better understood as reflecting their lack of presence in, and profit from, the marketplace. Rather than depending on, say, African nations for their profits, the advanced economies today scarcely know that Africa exists.

There is no simple formula for successfully integrating all economies into the global market. Neither coercion nor charity are very effective. But the current outpouring of resentment, however horrible its mode of expression, should be understood as a sign that this integration is indeed taking place, and that, barring world catastrophe, those who prefer medieval society to globalization are reacting against the inevitable.

AA - With the collapse of the Soviet Union and what has been described as the downfall of communism (though one can hardly tell considering the continuing proliferation of communist parties and ideologues out there), the notion of free market economics now dominates the scene. You seem to be quite a "believer" in this system; how much of a "believer" are you? What would you have to say about programs such as Affirmative Action meant to somehow establish a system of checks and balances within the overall system of free market economy for

## the purpose of controlling resentment?

EG - I think that it has been shown that socialism as a system--in contrast with "social democracy"--does not really exist, that its alternative status to "capitalism" was a sham. This does not of course preclude the success of the experiments in mixed economy that we see in countries like China or Singapore. But I find it hard to believe that Chinese "communism" can survive as more than a vestigial justification for the political oligarchy, or that this oligarchy itself will not evolve at some point--as I believe it is already doing--into a more democratic system.

As for being a "believer" in the market, I believe that all social forms are best understood as modes of exchange, and that the best form is the one that generates the greatest number of degrees of freedom. The lesson of the past century is that, like it or not, there is no real alternative to the market system because no other conceivable social order can be "wiser" in allowing for a greater contribution of the members of the society to its decision-making process. The market is an agency whose outputs all can influence but no one can forestall or dominate. Any system that purports to improve life by repressing the market must involve confiscatory economic policies backed by a tyrannical political structure, and such policies cannot succeed even in the economic domain. This does not mean we should leave all decisions to the market. In the liberal-democratic polity, a *political* exchange-system oversees and regulates the economic system; mature market economies provide, among other things, a "safety net" for people unable to compete in the marketplace.

As for Affirmative Action and social policy in general, I would state my position on two levels: a general one of political theory, and a more personal one of political preference. On the general level, I would say that the debate on Affirmative Action as it has taken place in the US, despite all the hypocrisy and self-serving claims of victimage--notably on the part of privileged white women who have been by far the most successful beneficiaries of these policies--is nevertheless exemplary of the messy yet, no doubt, maximally fair way such things are decided in a democracy. On this level, I think it is a fine thing that we have both a Left and a Right, Democrats as well as Republicans, supporters and opponents of Affirmative Action.

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On the level of personal political opinion, while I can understand that long years of discrimination call out for some remedy, I believe that any policy favoring one social group over another is best implemented indirectly. Racial quotas enforced by means of differential admission criteria (such that a Black or Hispanic with score X is admitted and a White or Asian rejected) may have positive effects, but they are ultimately demeaning to the groups they are intended to serve. I observed more racial tension on campus during the Affirmative Action era than there had been twenty years earlier. As an example of "good" affirmative action, I would cite a recent initiative of the University of California to sponsor high-school graduates normally not admittable as first-year students for two years at community (two-year) colleges, with the assurance that, if they perform satisfactorily, they will be admitted to the University in their third year. This allows the University to monitor and encourage the education of "minority" students without selecting them at the expense of others. [Unfortunately, implementation of this policy has been postponed

for budgetary reasons.]

\* \* \*

**[Digression: The Persistence of Politics:** The conjunction of this article with Adam Katz's in this issue, which gently takes me to task for neglecting the political, makes this an appropriate moment for me to revisit the relationship of political to economic exchange.

In the originary scene, substitution of the exchange of (reproducible) signs for that of the (irreplaceable) central referent is, like the multiplication of loaves and fishes, a "miracle" that defers violence. This act of representation permits the inauguration of a human economy through the attribution of "equal" portions of the central object, and, subsequently, the birth of genuine economic production, which takes place in "private" but whose value will be tested on the public scene of representation, the originary market. The long-term outcome of this process of deferral and confirmation is the dissemination of sacred centrality into the myriad desire-objects of the modern consumer economy, such that, as a general rule, no single object holds a sufficient sacred charge to motivate violence.

A similar diffusion of sacrality may be said to take place in the political sphere. Once the creation of surplus-producing agricultural economies makes it possible to acquire the political power of the sacred center by usurping its (ritual) redistributive functions, the scarcity of such power makes it a perennial object of conflict, but this conflict is nevertheless restrained in principle by the dependency of political power on the exchange of representations between sovereign and citizen. As society has evolved, this exchange has become progressively more democratic and interactive.

I have sometimes given the impression that I view politics in liberal democracy as merely a safety valve for the resentment generated in the economic sphere. But the very existence of this sphere is predicated on a prior acceptance of political authority. Economic exchange depends on social peace, not just negatively, but as its *raison d'être*, the source of all the cultural meanings that make it more than pillage or extortion.

In contrast to Marxism's insistence on the primacy of the economic, originary thinking implies that history is driven by the evolution of its dominant modes of social organization, which is to say, its *political* forms. This view is, notably, implicit in my characterization of the postmodern era by the widespread adoption, in reaction to the Holocaust, of an ethical epistemology that understands asymmetrical political structures as victimary and therefore as untenable. Yet this characterization conceals an eschatological temptation: to affirm that now, in the post-postmodern or post-millennial age when, arguably, all significant political asymmetries have been eliminated, the appropriate model for human relations has become economic rather than political, so that complaints of injustice can henceforth be replaced by negotiations from a standpoint of formal equality. I admit to having succumbed at times to this temptation.

Any affirmation of the end of politics is itself unavoidably political. Just as socialism's "from each

according to his abilities . . ." fails to abolish politics because the "abilities" (and "needs") of each can be determined only by an all-powerful central authority, so political authority alone can impose a negotiatory (economic) model on parties who complain of (political) injustice. Nor can the transcendence of the political be achieved by "bracketing" or deferring the moral status of such complaints, since this bracketing is itself precisely the substance of the (political) paradigm-shift from the political to the economic.

The minimalist position that the "wisdom of the market" should decide in the political as well as in the economic sphere logically implies that it is itself subject to the wisdom of the political marketplace. Acting out paradoxes of this sort leads to the infinite regression of "mimetic crisis," which human culture came into existence to avoid. Our lucid acceptance of this paradox does not, appearances to the contrary, signal the end of (political) history. What it suggests is rather that the political debate will be defined, with increasing sharpness, by the opposition between an all-inclusive global system for the exchange of goods and representations and an unstable margin constantly seeking new tactics for contesting this system "from without."

5

This margin can by (self-)definition be dealt with only politically. In its most dangerous mode, it forces itself on our consciousness, as it has done recently, through a victimary claim so extreme that it goes beyond victimage. If I am ready to blow myself up along with everyone else, I no longer need "white guilt" to make you realize that participation in the "all-inclusive" exchange system is a political act for which, on occasion, one may be held responsible.

However we may be tempted to explain it in terms of psychology, even of psychopathology, the marginal stance is a defiantly political one that precludes any final, "rational" decision as to the optimum rules of the economic game. We may denounce *ad infinitum* the *mensonge romantique* (romantic lie) of the victimary attitude, but this attitude, we discover, endlessly renews itself, because, in our very ontology, we are *all* "outside" the economic exchange system, whether we happily participate in it or prefer to remain apocalyptically apart as its victim and divinity. Of the consequences of this post-millennial revelation, we can as yet draw only the most crucial: henceforth, the politico-economic game, whatever its rules, *cannot be played violently*, lest it endanger the entire human experiment of deferring violence through representation. This is an eschatology that "we," as minimally rational human beings, can all agree on, and confidently impose with all necessary force on its would-be falsifiers.

Adam Katz also raises a more fundamental question, that of the politics of originary thinking itself. *D'où parlez-vous* (from where do you speak?) when presenting the originary hypothesis? What is the politics of the hypothesizer's theoretical / spectatorial position outside the scene? This is not an issue I can deal with here at any length. I think it can be approached from *within* the scene by reference to the tension between center and periphery. The "moral model" of perfect reciprocity among the participants on the periphery of the scene can never be completely realized because it depends on their non-reciprocal difference from the "sacred" center. Which is why we have consumer society (and terrorism) rather than the Kingdom of God. To minimize the political stance of the originary hypothesizer is to ensure the compatibility of his

model with the maximal number of different possibilities for valorizing--or ignoring--the constitutive difference between center and periphery, possibilities that correspond to real and potential forms of political organization. This minimization is homologous in the political sphere with that of the difference between God creating man and man creating God in the religious sphere. Which is not to say that this statement of principle solves, or can ever solve, the problem of *its own* "politics."]

\* \* \*

AA - To go back to a point you made above, can we understand from your response that language (as the linguistic sign or the act of representation), and with it the whole of human culture, emerged as a result of an act, namely: "the aborted gesture of appropriation," that sought to counter-balance the tendency to engage in appropriation at any cost and, thus, to help ensure the survival of the group? In other words, wouldn't language itself here appear as some sort of an affirmative action program meant to contain resentment and thus defer the violence that could result from a "mindless" continuation of mimetic appropriation?

EG - Yes, language bears with it an implicit moral model of reciprocal exchange that we all share. Animal societies are governed by pecking-order hierarchies; the originary scene of human language begins with a *universal* renunciation of the central object that becomes sacred to everyone, including the "alpha animal." Primitive hunter-gatherer human societies are egalitarian; the sacred stands above any individual, and all are equal with respect to the fundamental configuration of the scene of representation. Human inequality only emerges from this originary equality when wealth begins to be accumulated and the sacred center becomes a locus of redistribution that a "big man" can appropriate.

Thus I think you are right to see "affirmative action" as implicit in human language. Affirmative action is motivated by the "white guilt" that the originary reciprocity that defines the human has been violated, that others are being excluded from the social dialogue. The whole postwar era has been dominated by the confrontation of the resentment of the excluded with the guilt aroused by their exclusion.

AA - You hinted, in one of your early *Chronicles*, at the demise of liberalism; does that make you a conservative from the point of view of American politics?

EG - My critique of socialism is not that it's inferior to "capitalism" but that the concept itself has no coherent meaning. I am almost tempted to say the same thing about what Americans call "liberalism." (As I'm sure you know, in France a "liberal" is someone Americans would call a neo-conservative, even a libertarian, someone who "believes" in the market.) The word has almost entirely disappeared from our national political vocabulary. I recall Michael Dukakis' embarrassment in 1988 at being asked if he considered himself a liberal; I doubt if Al Gore ever used the word in last year's campaign. To the extent that this term has become associated with a particular moment in post-war American politics, that of Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society," when it was believed that we could eradicate poverty and related ills simply by handing out money to the poor through the welfare system, liberalism died with the adoption of welfare reform a few years ago.

But, as I said in answer to the previous question, on the level of political theory, although there need not be communists in a democratic society, there must be liberals, relatively speaking. There must be a debate about what kind of safety net is necessary, about how to balance productive efficiency with the concerns of the consuming public, including long-term concerns such as the environment. The American electorate has never been inclined to close off the liberal-conservative debate, even if its terms must occasionally change. As a result of one such change, we may consider post-war liberalism to be dead, but now there are "neo-liberals" to carry on.

In the *Chronicle* you allude to, I was implicitly referring to *academic* liberalism, which corresponds roughly to the ideology of a European "Green" party. My point was that today's liberals condemn all existing social forms in the name of equality, yet deny that their resentment of inequality, which extends vicariously to animals and even to plants and rocks, is the product of a uniquely human experience--one for which the originary hypothesis offers a generative model. This denial leads to unfortunate concepts like "animal rights." We punish those who abuse animals, just as we punish someone who despoils a monument. Does this mean the monument has "rights"?

As I believe I also said in that *Chronicle*, in the current vocabulary of American politics, I am rather a neo-conservative than a conservative. A conservative is less someone who thinks he should put his faith in the dynamic of the exchange-system than someone who puts his faith in God, or, in any case, in "tradition." I find this "paleo-conservatism" incompatible with, or at least, uncongenial to, GA's minimalistic presuppositions about the human.

AA - How would you appraise someone like Noam Chomsky and his "neo-Anarchist" colleagues?

EG - What little I know about Chomsky's politics gives me no desire to know more. Chomsky is very nearly a Holocaust denier; he burns with resentment for every victimage in the world but that of his own people. His political writings, from what I have seen of them, are litanies of accusations of immorality and greed directed against those in power, particularly in the United States. At best, such criticism can bring scandals to light; it is incompatible with any kind of political theory. "Anarchism" is just another word for a personal nihilism protected--and in cases like Chomsky's, richly rewarded--by the very order one affects to despise. Were I an anarchist, I would feel myself obliged to reject the benefits of such an order. Diogenes lived in a barrel; I doubt if Chomsky does.

AA - From what I read of Chomsky, he seems more a revisionist than a denier. He throws some doubts on the scale of the Holocaust, and criticizes the way it was used as "a propaganda tool." What do you have to say about this, considering that he is not the only Jewish scholar of late to raise these issues?

EG - I believe I said "very nearly" a denier. No, Chomsky doesn't deny the Holocaust, nor (for example)

the massacres of Pol Pot, but whenever one talks about the Jews who died, he complains that we have forgotten the Gypsies, and when one talks about the massacres in Cambodia, he reproaches us for forgetting those in East Timor. Here is a quote about September 11: "The terrorist attacks were major atrocities. In scale they may not reach the level of many others, for example, Clinton's bombing of the Sudan with no credible pretext, destroying half its pharmaceutical supplies and killing unknown numbers of people (no one knows, because the US blocked an inquiry at the UN and no one cares to pursue it)." In other words, by deploring an atrocity against a group Chomsky dislikes (and the US, far more than the Jews, is the central object of his hatred), one is complicit through silence in what is presented as a worse atrocity--even if the ill-advised bombing of the Sudan factory was done on credible if erroneous information in response to a terrorist act (the bombing of two US embassies), and deliberately staged at night in order to *avoid* killing "unknown numbers of people." I fully agree with David Horowitz' assessment in "The Sick Mind of Noam Chomsky" (Salon.com; September 26, 2001) that Chomsky is "a pathological ayatollah of anti-American hate."

Here is a less polemical quote, from Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "On Faurisson and Chomsky" in *Assassins of Memory* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1992): "To be sure, it is not the case that Chomsky's theses in any way approximate those of the neo-Nazis. But why does he find so much energy and even tenderness in defending those who have become the publishers and defenders of the neo-Nazis, and so much rage against those who allow themselves to fight them? That is the simple question I shall raise. When logic has no other end than self-defence, it goes mad."

AA - As for Anarchists, yes, you're quite right, they are indeed using the very "system" they criticize. But how else are they supposed to operate? Working from outside the system turns them into outlaws, and perhaps even terrorists, while living in barrels will only serve to marginalize them and undermine their ability to communicate their ideas.

7

EG - My reference to barrels was facetious. But if "anarchists" like Chomsky are not only tolerated but lionized by the academic world and the intellectual community in the United States and Europe, that strikes me as a demonstration that they are in no way dangerous to the system, but serve as outlets for resentment, somewhat like stand-up comedians. It's a familiar aspect of the market system since the Romantic era that those who stridently oppose the *bourgeoisie* are very much a part of it. My real criticism of "anarchists" is not that they don't live in barrels, but that they propose no alternative to the system that shelters them. Rather than lonely voices of sanity, they are simply part of the background noise of the market system. The recent protests at WTO meetings and the "peace rallies" after the recent events transmit no positive political views. Marxism may be fundamentally flawed, but it is a coherent political philosophy. "Anarchism" is not--unless you are referring (and I don't think you are) to libertarians à la Ayn Rand, who are at the antipodes of Chomsky, and whose views I find almost as irrelevant.

AA - GA, in many ways, is based on the works of French anthropologist René Girard, but the latter has proven too Christian for the tastes of many of his colleagues, including perhaps you.

Still, one has to ask, how Christian is GA, if it is Christian at all?

EG - Abstracting from the question of belief, one can consider Christianity, at least as Girard presents it, as an anthropology. This is the substance of Girard's most recent book, which is, not coincidentally, perhaps the one most impregnated with Christian vocabulary: *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair*. Girard's conception of Christianity is that it alone fully reveals the "scapegoat mechanism" that is the principle of all earlier, sacrificial, religions and that remains present in "sacrificial Christianity" that fails to adhere to the implications of its founding revelation.

I have no difficulty with the notion that, in comparison with other religions, Christianity has a firmer grasp of the ideal of reciprocal morality and is consequently sharper in its critique of sacrificial practices. But the difference between a religion and a minimal anthropology is nowhere made clearer: Christianity can only commemorate the historical locus of its founding revelation by attributing to the source of this revelation a unique sacred status. However ingeniously we "anthropologize" this attribution--by generalizing it to all human beings, by finding parallels to the Trinity in the individual mind, by demonstrating the identity between the victim of sacrifice and the divinity of sacrifice--it remains bound to a particular historical experience and a particular person, and is consequently not fully generalizable. Christianity is a "universal" religion, but no religion can become the global religion. This is a translation into religious terms of my remarks about Western civilization above.

Hence, despite my admiration for Christianity, I do not consider GA a Christian way of thinking. I would go further; I don't consider Girard's anthropology "Christian" either. His steadfast affirmation that all his ideas are already present in the New Testament is something he no doubt believes, and it is certainly more reassuring--and less resentment-generating--than the claim to have discovered it all himself, but it is no truer than if I were to claim that all the ideas of Generative Anthropology were already present in the originary scene. They are all *derived* from it, and filiations can be traced, but they could not have been made explicit at the time, any more than the authors of the Gospels could have formulated the theory of mimetic desire, let alone the originary hypothesis. I see this making-explicit as a continuing process that began with the first sign and continues throughout history. For Girard--and he is not without self-contradiction on this point--all "sacrificial" religions disguise the truth, and Christianity, partially anticipated by Hebrew religion, reveals it. All is then revealed, but the revelation must be renewed, and that is Girard's function. I don't think this is the appropriate way to understand human history. *All* history is revelation, not just one being's miraculous appearance.

AA - You have stated quite clearly in many of your writings that GA is meant to *replace* religion as a way of thought with regards to human origins. Can you clarify that more? Can you clarify more the relationship (potential, real) between GA and religion?

EG - It would be utopian, not to say megalomaniacal, to claim that GA or any other way of thinking could replace religion. To use an oxymoron, which is a genuine paradox, GA may be considered a *minimal religion*--provided we take into account that religion is not a minimalist form of representation. In effect, what we do when we "minimalize" religion into GA is reduce the institutional sacred to its minimal form, which is *language*. For example, the minimal core of God's immortality is the immortality of the sign,

whose relation to its meaning does not live and die in worldly time. In minimal terms, God is the subsistent center of the scene of representation, that is, the Being that by "eternally" guaranteeing the meaning of the sign as *langue* permits our communicative use of it in *parole*. In the same vein, the individual soul's immortality is that of its possessor's "story." In Homer's day, the poet who told your story was considered to have made you immortal. Proust's great novel about recovering "lost time" is meant to serve a similar function.

But I have no illusion that this kind of reduction can replace religion. I would define the "religious experience" as precisely the feeling that one can extrapolate from the mere formal persistence of meaning to a force that impinges on the world. And the essential function of this force is to preserve us from violence. There are "no atheists in the foxholes" because, in times of danger, we rely on God to defer violence in the same way as the representation of the sacred deferred violence in the originary scene.

8

I have every sympathy with those who pray to God as the ultimate interlocutor in moments of crisis. If there is a minimal God who guarantees the permanence of language and of the scene on which it appears, then who can know the limits of this guaranteeing Being's capacity to defer violence? But, by a paradox characteristic of representation in general, once you have defined God in this way, you cannot "believe" in his power beyond that of the representations that he is said to guarantee. God is always conceived as prior to and independent of our representations of him. Minimally, God is coeval with humanity; as an object of knowledge, he is unknown before the emergence of human representation. Yet this representation could not have come into being had it not designated a presence prior to its emergence. The sacred is not something I *invent*; I can only *discover* it. Yet it had never manifested itself before that moment. To the extent that one can bound one's spiritual life by the understanding of this paradox, and only to that extent, one can substitute GA for religion.

AA - Is Jesus, from the point of view of GA and regardless of sacrality considerations, a figure of love or resentment? Or did he make a transition from one to the other as his "mission" proceeded?

EG - The "historical Jesus" being pretty much a chimera, we have only the Jesus of the Gospels, who is presented as free from all resentment. When Jesus gets angry, which is pretty often, this is not resentment but a lesson to us not to tolerate evil. (Those who think it is Christian to blame ourselves for the recent terrorism should reread these passages.) Nor is there anything in the Gospels that supports the idea of a spiritual "transition" on Jesus' part, except perhaps from optimism to pessimism concerning the reception of his mission. We may of course speculate that the "historical Jesus" was a Jewish patriot or "zealot," as one theory has it. If we compare Jesus with predecessors like the Maccabees, one can see a progression from resentment to love, from violence to the renunciation of violence--but also from political effectiveness to political quietism. It's a good story, maybe a plausible one; it's just not the one told in the Gospels.

This is not to say that formulas like "the last will be the first" do not presuppose resentment. But the

resentment is deferred beyond death; we are asked to renounce acting on it. And it is never presented as Jesus' resentment.

AA - What about a figure such as Muhammad; do you know enough about his life and career to formulate an opinion from the point of view of GA?

EG - My picture of Muhammad is fragmentary, to say the least. I think of him as a latecomer to the monotheistic tradition who founds a religion for its *outsiders*. Whereas the Hebrews of Exodus *leave* the world of the archaic empires, Islam attracts those who are *left out* of early Christian (and Jewish) civilization. Its enormous presence today in the so-called third world reflects this vocation.

Christianity conquered the empire from within; Islam attacks it from without. Unlike Jesus, Muhammad was a warrior as well as a prophet. Where Jesus, in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, denounced worldly power [all the better to obtain it, Nietzsche might say], Muhammad sought such power. This does not make one "better" than the other, but it leads to important differences in the social orders associated with the two religions. However absolute the power of Christian monarchs, there was always a distinction between the private world of reciprocal morality, which evolves into what comes to be called "civil society" and eventually into the market system, and the institutions of central political power. In Islam, where the prophet is both conqueror and law-giver, there is no such distinction. This makes the relationship of Islamic countries with the global market-system, and with democratic politics, particularly problematic. Islam has often, I think unfortunately, been a means of resisting the *embourgeoisement* without which civil society and democracy cannot flourish.

AA - What would say about the use of victimary rhetoric in East-West relations?

EG - I assume that by "East-West" you are referring to the relations between industrialized nations and those less developed, most of which were formerly either colonies or political dependencies of the "West." I would say *grosso modo* that rhetoric, any rhetoric, is useful as long as it allows new participants to enter the dialogue, but that it becomes harmful when these new participants continue to use it and thereby shut off dialogue. Like stock market booms, inflationary periods of victimary rhetoric tend to last a little too long. In the post-colonial world, the persistence of the persecutor-victim model has greatly delayed the integration of many economies into the world market system. Compare South Korea with Zimbabwe or Algeria. Victimary rhetoric incites resentment to express itself as violence rather than recycling it into the exchange-system.

I read an interview the other day with a Pakistani admirer of Bin Laden. When asked why he hates the United States, he cited, among other things, the bombing of Iraq. For this man, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, not to speak of the violence its government has wreaked on its own citizens, is discounted as secondary conflict *within* his world, as opposed to the violence of the *external* persecutor-victim relation. Thus in the Gulf War, rather than defending Kuwait--and Saudi Arabia--we were persecuting Iraq.

AA - How about the use of victimary rhetoric in the Arab-Israeli struggle? What sorts of light can GA shed on this whole issue, in your opinion?

EG - This is, as you know, the touchiest of issues. As a Jewish American whose son was brought up in Israel, I cannot claim neutrality. Jews are no strangers to victimary rhetoric. In my view, the postwar / postmodern era that saw the end of colonialism and racial discrimination in the USA and even South Africa, as well as the enforcement of the rights of women, religious minorities, the handicapped, homosexuals, and so on, begins with the Holocaust and the legitimacy it granted to victimary rhetoric. Here was a case where there was no need to "see both sides": the Nazis were persecutors and the Jews were victims. This model could then be applied to all other overtly unequal relationships.

This being said, what strikes me most in the rhetoric of both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict is that, whereas many Israelis, at least until recently, have openly sympathized with the Palestinians and considered their grievances legitimate or at any rate understandable, I have never heard from any Palestinian spokesman any sign of similar sympathy for the Israelis. When Sadat came to Jerusalem, there was truly a moment of mutual sympathy that led to a durable peace treaty--and, unfortunately, to Sadat's assassination. I doubt that Arafat is capable of such a gesture, either personally or politically. The Palestinians present themselves as victims of absolute injustice. If they kill Israelis, however brutally or arbitrarily, they are simply responding to persecution. But if Israeli soldiers kill a Palestinian even when they are being shot at, they are persecutors and the Palestinians are victims, martyrs. Here you have a clear case where victimary rhetoric prevents dialogue: if Israel is by its mere existence a persecutor and the Palestinian community its victim, no conversation is possible. Many people had hoped that the Oslo peace process would lead beyond this mindset, but the new Intifada proved them wrong. I think that even now a good deal of the distrust on the Israeli side would be dissipated rather quickly if the Palestinians showed some signs of reciprocity.

Conversely, from what I understand, the great flaw in Barak's approach was that, however generous his concessions, he never treated the Palestinian negotiators as equal partners in dialogue, thereby confirming their victimary apprehensions. I hope that, despite the scenes of hateful celebration, the recent events will lead both sides to welcome the resumption of negotiations, as seems, very tentatively, to be occurring.

AA - Well, I guess due to our particular backgrounds none of us can actually claim neutrality when dealing with the issue of the Arab-Israeli struggle. Nonetheless, our mutual commitment to the use of language to defer violence already creates a bond between us that I am sure would help us forge ahead with this dialogue regardless of the touchiness of the issue involved. Having said this, let me respond to couple of points you made in your answer to this question.

- Can the Palestinians realistically be expected to sympathize or show any sign of reciprocity with the Israelis where there is nothing yet created on the ground that can give them any sense of closure? Sympathy seems to be the prerogative of the strong.

EG - I understand your point here. But the whole idea of the Oslo process was that real negotiations, that

is, between *symmetrical* partners, were possible. This has subsequently proved illusory.

Let me put the discussion on a more general level. As a reader of my *Chronicles*, you are aware that I have been trying to construct an ethic for our "post-millennial" or post-victimary era. Our problem is that the political mechanisms of liberal-democratic society are effective only between relative equals, yet the victimary approach to asymmetrical relations that worked in the past is no longer viable. In other words, we have to understand resentment and attempt to allay it, but we cannot accept it as a source of truth.

The application of this formula to the Israeli-Palestinian situation is that, indeed, the Israelis must maintain their sympathy for the Palestinians, but they cannot simply accept the Palestinians' vision of reality and the demands that flow from it. Palestinians customarily describe Israel in the most violently hostile terms. Here is the beginning of a recent, typical, article in the *Palestine Times*: "It all began more than 52 years ago when Arab nations sold Palestine to marauding Jews from Europe and America who came to the land of Milk and Honey to pillage, plunder and massacre the native inhabitants." Even Israeli "revisionists" critical of Zionist policy toward the Palestinians cannot engage in dialogue with this kind of language.

10

No doubt it is too much for Israel to expect sympathy from the Palestinians, but we can hope for a gradual diminution of resentment. Unfortunately, having Sharon on one side and the terrorists on the other is not conducive to this process. But I do not think we should see failure as inevitable, or as irrevocable. Had Barak been more diplomatic, had Arafat been more statesmanlike, it seems to me that there was a real chance for peace. Such a chance, we must believe, will come again. Arafat has certainly been *sounding* pretty statesmanlike lately. [This was written before the recent (December-January) Palestinian promises and attempts to crack down on terrorism. At the very least, the change in tone reflects the delegitimation of political violence since September 11, which, hopefully, can provide some common ground for both Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.]

- Palestinians are in many ways doing everything the Zionists did to create their state. Their violence is neither unusual nor unique. Some would argue that it is even more "justified," since they are seeking to liberate *part* of their original homeland, most Palestinians having already accepted the right of Israel to exist. Can we blame the Palestinians for being as prone to violence as any other people in the same circumstances? I mean, personally, I do condemn violence, and I am not one of those people who condone suicide bombings for any reason. But the circumstances of the struggle, and the way the world is responding to it, are such that the Palestinians seem to be encouraged indeed to think of themselves and, hence, act as ultimate victims.

EG - *Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*, and one can well understand the Palestinians' frustration. But terrorism makes negotiation impossible. Whatever its crimes, Jewish terrorism before the creation of the Israeli state was limited and purposeful; it focused on discouraging the British so that they would get out, which they did. What is the focus of Palestinian terrorism? It is a mode of revenge rather than a

political act. And its result is to harden Israeli positions. Sharon wouldn't be in power without the Intifada, and he wouldn't be occupying Bethlehem as I write if one of his ministers hadn't been assassinated. The only possible rational context for Palestinian terrorism is a campaign to drive the Jews out of the Middle East altogether--a desire often expressed in Arab countries, as you know.

- You said: "if Israel is by its mere existence a persecutor and the Palestinian community its victim, no conversation is possible." But then, the Palestinians were *indeed victimized* by the creation of the State of Israel with hundreds of thousands of them getting thrown out of their homes (Barak himself, it is said, came very close to admitting that, without endorsing the right of return, of course). Thus, they were victimized in the ultimate sense because there is no undoing the injustice that fell upon them.

For a long time this is what the Palestinians have been unprepared to accept, but with the Oslo Accord, they proved that they have finally come to terms with that. What went wrong after that?

Let me be more clear. You refer to the assassination of Rabin in a *Chronicle* that came out at that time; do you think Rabin would have been able to deliver peace? As such, is the problem with the peace process related to the leaders involved? Or are we faced here with a typical Girardian situation where the people on both sides are dictating the course of action to the leaders and demanding the right *sparagmos*. If so, how can this situation be handled?

EG - No doubt the Palestinians suffered in 1948, but you can't forget that the Arab countries invaded Israel at the outset and that history would have been very different had they accepted the original partition agreement. And of course you are aware that Israel only took over the West Bank after another invasion in 1967, and that Jordan subsequently refused to take it back.

But I don't think we should be discussing the subject on this level, where each side can cite its arguments. The fundamental problem is that, in the eyes of the Arab world, certainly until recently, and I think still today in most quarters, Israel simply has no right to exist. The Oslo accords (which followed peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and some lessening of international tension) seemed to reflect a change in this attitude. But here I return to my earlier point: if Israel has a right to exist, and the Palestinians have a right to a state, then, however disparate their power, they must be able to negotiate in symmetry. Which is to say that some signs of mutual sympathy are necessary. I'm not sure if Rabin and Arafat shaking hands was quite enough, but it was a first step.

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I understand the Palestinians' desire for a "right of return," if only as an acknowledgement of their symmetry with their interlocutors. Perhaps there is a way of finessing that issue. Clearly Israel can't just give back its land, most of which has been greatly transformed, to those who occupied it before 1948. Nor

is it very clear what a returnee would do with his property in a country utterly unlike the one he left. Perhaps some kind of compensation would be satisfactory; perhaps even the right of Israeli citizenship, although one must understand Israel's fear of no longer being a--the only--"Jewish state." Or perhaps, as I heard at the time of the negotiations, all the Palestinians desired was an acknowledgement of their right *in abstracto*. Yet I can't help thinking, considering the extent of Barak's offer, that the real reason it was not accepted was not that Israel had rejected the "right of return," but that, when push came to shove, the Palestinian leadership--not to speak of the Palestinian "street"--just could not bring themselves to accept the legitimate existence of Israel.

I don't know if Rabin would have been able to bring peace, but if, as I believe, there *was* a real chance of peace, perhaps just a little thing like that handshake on the White House lawn, coupled with Rabin's great prestige in Israel, might have made the difference. I also believe that Arafat had genuine respect for Rabin and would have been far more willing to take a chance on him than on Barak, who, as I understand, never reached out to him personally.

Now we'll just have to wait for the latest cycle to play itself out. Perhaps if the US is successful in destroying the al Qaeda network (which remains to be seen), the glamour and apparent usefulness of terrorism and "martyrdom" will diminish even in "the land of milk and honey." After all, the IRA has begun disarming; the Berlin wall fell; apartheid was ended. One should never despair.

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AA - How legitimate, in your opinion, is the feminist criticism of GA and the works of Girard as being too "masculine?" How would you respond to this criticism?

EG - There have also been attempts at Girardian feminism. Since Girard is "for the victim," his thought has sometimes been appropriated by practitioners of victimary thinking. This being said, and putting aside the rhetorical aspects of the feminist critique, I think the point of legitimate debate is whether culture, including language, functions primarily to defer violence or whether it is an artifact of humanity's unique family structure, a domain in which women may be considered to have taken the lead. The evident facts that women's bodies, including both primary and secondary sexual characteristics, have been modified by evolution far more than men's, and that sexual attraction was and continues to be the driving force in this process--whose adaptive function is clearly to secure masculine support for our helpless, large-brained infants--might seem to imply some linkage between our sexual uniqueness and that other distinctive human trait which is representation.

By one account (written by a man, incidentally), the first intentional signs were ochre markings used by women to simulate menstrual blood in order to attract males. But such speculations have not persuaded me to abandon the fundamental principle that culture exists primarily, because critically, to defer violence. There is really no society, except perhaps our own, in which women have an equal part in social decisions, particularly those concerning the sacred. Either women are deemed unclean and kept away from sacred rites, or they are considered sacred and placed at the center of these rites--two variants of the same general configuration. If women had been the originators of signs and therefore of culture, how

could they have "lost control" of it? No doubt there have been throughout history fluctuations in the relative power of men and women, but the notion that men at some point "usurped" a once-maternal power is just a resentful myth.

It is not simply because men are physically stronger than women that culture has always been dominated by males, but because culture functions primarily to defer violence and violence is a male prerogative-- and a male danger. A society that sends its women into battle is not going to survive through very many generations. That doesn't make women "inferior" to men; on the contrary, their lives are generally held more precious than men's. I can imagine a feminist of the future who, on reading that in the Titanic disaster most of the women were saved while most of the men drowned, alleges this as proof that in 1912 women held more political power than men.

12

AA - In one of your early *Chronicles*, you rejected the hypothesis that language and representation were indeed invented by mothers seeking to communicate with their infant children. The essence of your objection seems to have been that the intimacy of the mother-child relation would have stood as an obstacle in the face of disseminating any system of communication that developed between the two.

A potential counter-argument here could be that intimacy at the time did not require privacy. The mother-child relation, no matter how intimate, was not quite private, as such mimesis could have taken over and the system could have easily spread to the community.

The real point here is this: why insist that representation was strictly invented in order to defer violence? Why can't we speculate that language had evolved through some other system, but its *potential* for deferring violence was only "discovered" at a certain mimetic crisis?

EG - My answer to the previous question can be applied here. As you see quite clearly, the real question is whether language and culture emerged in order to defer violence or whether this deferral is merely a collateral function.

The point of the originary hypothesis is to account not so much for the superiority of human language over that of our ape cousins as for its different mode of operation, through symbols as opposed to "indexical" signals. Human is to ape language more or less as the Keplerian is to the Ptolemaic planetary system: both can enunciate certain basic facts, but the latter, in contrast to the former, cannot be extended to other data without an exponential increase in complexity. Apes can no doubt communicate all sorts of things in their languages. But a language of conventional signs, even if at the start it doesn't communicate very much information, has an essentially unbounded capacity for such communication, whereas animal signal systems do not. What must be explained is why we adopted a *potentially* more effective system at a moment when it *did not* convey more information.

The originary hypothesis explains exactly how the linguistic sign differs from the signal: it is not part of an action to appropriate its referent, but a gesture of renunciation of this referent, incarnating a general interdiction that could only have arisen as a means to defer conflict. Girard presents a good deal of evidence in *La violence et le sacré* in support of the hypothesis that all rites are sacrificial and that sacrifice is a means of channeling and dispelling violence. Why should language, which is a minimal rite, have a different origin?

As for the mother-child relationship, when mothers teach their children to speak today, they don't invent a private or semi-private language, they teach them a simplified version of the language they speak with other adults. Language is a reciprocal exchange and the mother initiates her child into language so that he can learn to take part in this exchange. How could such an exchange have originated in the context of a fundamentally *unequal* relationship? Barring some radical reformulation, the idea of mother-child language origin seems to me a feminist pipe-dream rather than a serious hypothesis.

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AA - In one of your recent *Chronicles* you raise the issue of vulnerability and the possibility of relapse as a counter-argument to Francis Fukuyama's thesis expounded in *The End of History and the Last Man*. But Mr. Fukuyama himself has repeatedly asserted that he does not discount the possibility of relapse.

What he seems to be suggesting is this: in a society that, for one reason or another, failed to achieve liberal democracy, or where there occurred a relapse, aspirations will still lead the people, sooner or later, towards the fulfillment, or at least, the envisioning of liberal democracy as the system that could not be improved upon. This means that the discovery of liberal democracy marks the ideological end of history.

In Mr. Fukuyama's own words in his introduction to the '93 paperback edition of his book: "While some present-day countries might fail to achieve stable liberal democracy, and others might lapse back into other, more primitive forms of rule like theocracy or military dictatorships, the *ideal* of liberal democracy could not be improved upon."

By arguing against Fukuyama, are you, by any chance, suggesting that the liberal democratic system *can* be improved upon? Or are you simply trying to keep the option open so as to safeguard the idea of liberal democracy from becoming a "dogma"? Or is there some other explanation?

13

EG - I think some of the *Chronicles* I have written recently make my position clearer. I admire Fukuyama's clarity and forcefulness and have often referred to him in my columns. But there is a contradiction between unilaterally declaring the end of history and describing this "end" as a political

mode that is incompatible with any such declaration.

Fukuyama, following Kojève's Hegelian fundamentalism, doesn't seem to see the difficulty of applying Hegel's "absolute idealism" to an open-ended human temporality that continually generates new knowledge and options. The nation-state is not the final incarnation of the *Weltgeist*. Marx, at least, thought of the Hegelian "end of history" as the beginning of a new, creative world of freedom. Fukuyama, in contrast, in the only silly passage in his brilliantly prescient 1989 article, evokes the wistful sadness of seeing history come to an end and the boredom of living "after history," when just the opposite should be the case. Forgetting for the moment about Bin Laden, the integration of all of humanity into the global economy would not result in a stagnant utopia but in ever more creative and unpredictable forms of interaction on every level.

But we *cannot* forget about Bin Laden. As I said in my *Chronicles* in answer to some remarks of your own, even if al Qaeda doesn't have right now the ability to destroy the global market system, we can't just assume that next time this will still be the case. We must respect our adversaries enough to acknowledge the coherence of their world view. The "medieval" society they prefer--with or without Islamic law--is exactly what they would bring about if they did succeed in destroying modern civilization. This gives their destructive actions a consistency that was not the case for either right- or left-wing "socialism" (recalling that Nazi is short for "National-Socialist"). These doctrines, however cruel, claimed that, once the eggs were broken, the omelet would be superior to anything eaten before, in both the moral *and* the material sense: the International Soviet or the Thousand-Year Reich would be not only morally superior but more economically productive than bourgeois society. (In the Depression, such claims had a certain credibility.) The terrorists make no such promises of material prosperity.

Fukuyama is certainly right that their ideology does not express any really new ideas. But suppose they won; suppose our civilization were destroyed. Would it really be useful to say that we were still really at the end of history, but that the Idea just met with some temporary setbacks on its way to incarnation? I think that, even in the narrow sense in which Fukuyama uses the term, the "end of history" requires, at the very least, a consensus of all states or state-like entities. One can argue that McVeighs will always be possible within liberal democracies (I have made this case in an article called "Originary Democracy and the Critique of Pure Fairness," in *The Democratic Experience and Political Violence*, ed. David Rapoport and Leonard Weinberg, London: Frank Cass, 2001, 308-24), but al Qaeda is a problem for the Idea itself. It's all well and good to talk about liberal democracy and globalization, but if large parts of the less developed world can't be integrated into the global system fast enough to prevent events like September 11, then some changes must be made, the Idea must be tweaked.

To speak more concretely: at a minimum, as life in the US demonstrates more clearly each day, "liberal democracy" must install a much more powerful and pervasive security apparatus. And this, in turn, will necessarily restrict the liberties in which the Idea of liberal democracy consists. Liberal democracy is successful because it is maximally adaptable. But one can't simply dismiss every possible adaptation as epiphenomenal by claiming that it's already implicit in the Idea of liberal democracy. This is closed, apocalyptic thinking, like Girard's claim that Christ has already revealed the whole of anthropological truth. For Girard too, life in post-history is boring.

One more point. The "end of history" is homologous with the end of war. WWII was the last total war that civilization, and perhaps humanity itself, could survive. War between the most advanced states having always been the motor of political history, the impossibility of war brings history to an end. Throughout the Cold War, as its name implies, the possibility of war seemed to be not abolished but indefinitely suspended, so that the "two world systems" were expected to remain face to face indefinitely into the future. The end of the Cold War then appeared to put an end to the very Idea of war. But now we are waging a new, "asymmetrical" kind of war. And all of a sudden we realize that our side is vulnerable--that if we don't do things right, we could lose. If even this time of uncertainty and tension doesn't qualify as "history" in the eyes of our faithful Hegelian, then we'll just have to imitate Marx and stand him back on his feet.

AA - You have touched in your responses on the September 11 terrorist attacks, but let us here address this issue in a more direct manner. In your *Chronicle* referred to above you introduce the concept of the "Talibanization" of the world. What exactly do you mean by that? Do you buy into the notion that this attack represents in some way a "clash of civilizations?"

EG - I've tried to answer this question in my most recent *Chronicles*. No, I agree with you (and Fukuyama) that there is no "clash of civilizations"; the conflict or "dialectic" is taking place *within* global society. But the conflict is with an "internal other" not satisfactorily conceptualizable in Hegelian terms. Resentment is not a Hegelian category; even in the master-slave dialectic, the slave isn't resentful, he just learns while the master vegetates, and eventually, as Kojève puts it, he becomes a freed slave, a *bourgeois*.

14

What I meant by "Talibanization" is certainly not that the Taliban would take over the world. But if the terrorists and their friends, this time or the next, can put together enough weaponry to destroy the fabric of global civilization, the keepers of the order that would emerge in the ensuing "state of nature" would be gangs of armed men, the most stable and powerful of which would probably follow a rigid, transcendently imposed ideology like that of the Taliban. As Durkheim observed, the core function of religion is ensuring social cohesion; secular society requires a much higher level of organization than religious society.

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AA - Finally, and by way of ending this second part of the interview, let me revisit the issue of the Holocaust, if only by way of registering a personal sentiment.

It is rather unfortunate that many Arabs choose to ignore this issue. I can understand the reasons behind this attitude, namely the way the Israelis and their supporters use this issue on occasions to make the world turn a blind eye to developments in the Occupied Territories.

Still, I think the issue is much too significant in the course of human history to be so ignored or, worse, to be considered as some sort of political fraud, as some conspiratorialists imply at times. On the other hand, I really fail to understand why so many people in Europe and the States seem to be so obsessed with not revising the numbers involved here. Would the tragedy be any less significant had its victims been one million rather than six? It is the *nature* of the tragedy and not only its *scale* that is significant here.

Here is one example where one people were singled out for destruction not because of any real fault of their own, but because of the internal logic of the Nazi movement and Nazi society. The reasons which the Zionist fathers give to explain the persecution of the Jews in Europe, namely their perceived isolationist tendencies and what seemed like archaic particularities, could explain (but never justify) discrimination, an ugly tendency in itself. But they could never explain something like persecution, pogroms, or a holocaust. Never. These things could never be explained by any alleged "fault" of the victims, or their way of life.

As such, I totally agree with you when you say that, in this case, there is no need to "see both sides."

EG - This is a good place for me to express my admiration for your concern for dialogue, on this as on a whole range of issues. First, a couple of details. No doubt it is impossible to determine the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust within ten or a hundred. I have seen low estimates of somewhere around five million. But there is a point at which, as Engels might have said, quantity turns into quality. Killing one million would no doubt be bad enough, but when the consensus of historians, both Jewish and non-Jewish, has settled on the figure of six million, reducing it to one million cannot but cast doubt on the basic thesis. If all these people have been exaggerating by a factor of six, then, perhaps, beyond the usual wartime brutality, nothing really happened at all. Maybe, as the revisionists say, there never were any gas chambers; the prisoners just died of overwork and disease. I won't go any farther along that path.

I'm not sure what you mean by the "Zionist fathers'" explanation of the persecution of the Jews. No doubt assimilated Jews like Herzl displayed a certain impatience with the "*shtetl* Jew" and his archaic ways, but the obsession with the "Jewish question" beginning in the mid-nineteenth century requires a more organic explanation. After all, if these backward tendencies were the problem, there would be no need for Zionism; one could just modernize, as most Jews have done in the US. Zionism reflects a deep despair (born in part from Herzl's experience of French anti-Semitism during the Dreyfus affair) that the Jews would ever be accepted within Christian society.

The "Jewish question" fascinates me for many reasons. One is that few people, even few Jews, really understand modern anti-Semitism--the one thing that Tim McVeigh and Bin Laden have in common. Anti-Semitism is not garden-variety racism. We should certainly accord Gypsies, homosexuals, the mentally ill, not to speak of millions of Russians, a place in our memorials of the Holocaust. But, numbers aside, in how many speeches, in how many political tracts, did the Nazis refer to these other groups? Anti-Semitism was their constant obsession, the very core of their political doctrine. I have several times had

occasion to refer in my *Chronicles* to the American neo-Nazi novel *The Turner Diaries*--most recently because, at the climax of the story, the protagonist flies a nuclear-armed airplane into the Pentagon. This novel portrays the triumph of the White race over a United States run entirely by Jews, for whom Blacks and others serve as henchmen: the Jews punish disobedient Whites by handing their wives over to Blacks to rape. The Jews are vermin, but they are also the secret masters of market society, as the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*--still reprinted, unfortunately, in the Arab world--makes clear. Given the association of Jews with the market, it should not surprise us that the first modern anti-Semites were men of the left: Alphonse Toussenel, the author of the first major work of French anti-Semitism (*Les juifs, rois de l'époque*, 1844), was a socialist, a disciple of Fourier.

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The Holocaust--the greatest of human horrors, as even Chomsky affirms--was focused on the Jews. It provided the archetype for the victimary epistemology that was so spectacularly successful in the postwar era. Jew is to Nazi as: colonial to colonizer, Southern or South African Black to White, woman to man, homosexual to straight, handicapped to "normally abled" . . . This process, like affirmative action, has scarcely benefited the Jews, who have gone from sub-human to Honky in a generation. The only compensation the Jews received for the Holocaust, aside from some inadequate and still largely unpaid reparations, was Israel. The British finally gave their blessing, the Soviet Union its recognition, Germany a good deal of financial assistance--and, of course, the United States its backing and continued support. During its first decades, Israel was seen (outside the Arab world) as a courageous little country fighting against huge odds. But since 1967, or at least since the Yom Kippur war in 1973, when Israel's military superiority became incontestable, anti-Zionism has become the new rallying cry for the enemies of global market society--Chomsky being, once more, a usefully caricatural example.

Thus, all question of blame or responsibility aside, the Jews once again find themselves at the center of the historical dialectic. It is far from fantastic to speculate that, without Israel, there would be not only no al Qaeda, but no fundamental friction between Islam and the West; perhaps the Arab countries would even have evolved into democracies, or in any case into more vigorous economies . . .

Some might see this revival of the "Jewish question" as just a historical accident, but it seems inherent in the mimetic ambiguity of the notion of the Jews as the "chosen" people. The Jews are in a very real sense the first *nation*, the first people who define themselves by something other than a territory. Whence their survival in a stateless condition for so long. Yet, again in contrast to the Gypsies, the religion they created to ensure their survival (or vice-versa) is at the core of all Western or "Abrahamic" religion. However many Jews have converted to either Christianity or Islam, the persistence of Judaism makes it impossible for either of its more successful rivals to declare itself the "end of history" in the religious sphere.

Over the past century and a half it has become increasingly clear that, however absurd it may appear to Enlightenment rationalism, the stigma of sacrificial election borne by the Jews is the central sore point of Western history. The "end of history" has to do with the Jews in a quite literal sense. Christians identified "the conversion of the Jews" with the end of this world and the coming of God's kingdom. The Marxists wanted to void the "Jewish question" by abolishing religion altogether and treating the Jews as a

"nationality"--Stalin's increasingly vicious anti-Semitism after WWII reflects his frustration with the failure of this policy. And for the Nazis, of course, the extermination of the Jews was the key event that would move society into "post-history."

These eschatological visions are defunct. Fukuyama's is not, but it requires correction. If we take Marx's association of the Jews with capitalism not as an anti-Semitic slur but as the Hegelian assimilation of a people to an Idea, then we may interpret Fukuyama's thesis as saying that history is over, not because the Jews have been eliminated, but because they have univocally triumphed: globalism even more than liberal democracy is "Jewish" in its disregard for national boundaries and its insistence on the circulation of capital. But to put Fukuyama's thesis in these terms is only another way of displaying its inadequacy. The end of history cannot be defined by either the annihilation or the triumph of any people.

Today the "Jewish question" is concentrated in Palestine. The Palestinians did not exist as a people before the founding of the state of Israel; they were simply the Arabs living in a particular area in the Middle East, one that had been incorporated into Trans-Jordan (as it used to be called) but that could just as well have become part of Syria. The very idea of a Palestinian nation, as you suggest above, emerged in mimetic opposition to Israeli statehood. I do not mean to say that it is for that reason spurious or inauthentic. In a very real sense, all nationalism takes the Jews as its model. This was quite clear in the case of Germany, as a number of Jewish-German thinkers pointed out before 1933: the Germans, always the odd men out in Western Europe, fancied themselves the "chosen people" of the Aryan race.

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Israel is perceived by most Moslems as a source of rage and humiliation. Jewish exceptionalism is realized there in the most scandalous possible way, by the implantation of a Western-type society in one of the central holy places of the Umma. History's answer to those such as Toynbee who thought that, with the founding of their own state, the Jews would become an ethnic group like every other, is that Israel merely amplifies the scandal of the "chosen people" to state level, obliging the Jews to affirm for the sake of their very survival the sense of superiority to other groups that they had always been accused of secretly harboring.

History would be easier without Israel, but it is only with Israel that it can achieve closure. One of Barak's proposals that I hope will one day be renewed is the agreement to share control of Jerusalem. It is certainly true that Jerusalem, whatever its significance for Moslems, is the only city sacred to the Jews; no one is asking for joint control of Mecca or Medina. But, precisely for that reason, the peaceful sharing of power in Jerusalem would be the sign of a genuine peace, even the beginning of friendship between Israelis and Palestinians, and thus between Jews and Moslems. In biblical (or Koranic) terms, this would be the reconciliation of Isaac and Ishmael, the legitimate heir and the outcast. By sharing Jerusalem, the Jews would symbolically share the "choseness" that has made them the objects of millennial resentment with an Arab nation that is in a very real sense Israel's own creation. However unrealistic it may sound at the moment, I think it is only through the benign example of the oldest nation serving as godfather to the newest that the phase of history dominated by war will end.

As things are going at present, this peace and friendship may be a long time in coming. Meanwhile, by way of making a beginning in the realm of ideas, I am grateful for this opportunity to converse in peace and friendship with you.

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# Anthropoetics VII, 2 Benchmarks

Although the articles in this issue touch on diverse subjects, all seek to come to terms with the historical specificity of our "post-millennial" era. **Raoul Eshelman** strikingly confirms the analytic value of his aesthetic concept of *performatism* in his extensively documented analysis of recent Berlin architecture. In **Adam Katz's** first article for *Anthropoetics*, the question of Jewish/Israeli "normalization" is the occasion of a rethinking of the originary hypothesis, including a redefinition of the concept of "sacrifice," that sheds new light on the dilemmas of contemporary politics in the Middle East and elsewhere. **Dawn Perlmutter** pursues her interest in the sacrificial elements of our culture with a richly documented parallel study of recent American Satanism and contemporary terrorism. The issue concludes with a dialogue between **Ammar Abdulhamid** and myself, largely focused on the Middle East, that resonates with some of the considerations in Katz's article.

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**Eric Gans's** CV may be found by clicking on his name below.

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