

AN I FOR AN I: PROJECTION, SUBJECTION,
AND CHRISTIAN ANTISEMITISM IN
*THE SERVICE FOR REPRESENTING ADAM*¹

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You know well enough how to look in a mirror:
Now look at this hand for me, and tell
If my heart is sick or healthy.

The Service for Representing Adam

Far from experience producing his idea of the Jew, it
was the latter which explained his experience. If the
Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*

These wretched Jews, my own kindred, / . . . have
more to be unhappy about than other peoples.

The Holy Resurrection

No modern theorist has done more to help us understand the nature of inter- and intra-personal and communal violence than has René Girard. Perhaps his most important insight into the workings of such violence, an insight grounding his other provocative discoveries concerning human conflict, is that the antagonistic participants in acts of inter- and intra-personal and communal violence are "doubles" of each other. By demonstrating that

¹ In their hyphenated forms, the terms "anti-Semite," "anti-Semitism," and "anti-Semitic" have sometimes proved more problematic than helpful. In order to avoid "foster[ing] the false impression that there is a wider ethnic entity against which 'anti-Semitism' is leveled" (Telushkin 467), and in light of the importance of the concept of antisemitism to the history of Jew-hating, throughout this essay I follow the lead of those scholars who do not hyphenate the words "antisemite," "antisemitism," or "antisemitic." For more information concerning this issue, see Telushkin.

people fight not because they are different, but because they are the same, Girard has shown us how "violence is a great leveler of men" and has helped us to understand the serious consequences that either follow or can follow from mimetic rivalry (*Violence* 79). For example, he has helped us see how the internal violence occurring in a community in which differentiation has broken down finds its outlet in scapegoating, that mechanism by means of which a community in conflict with itself attempts to save itself by sacrificing an expendable, arbitrary victim (who lacks a champion but whose real guilt or innocence is irrelevant) onto whom the collective victimizers have projected their own guilt, their own mimetically-oriented self-hatred—their own "sins," we might say.

Among other things, Girard's critique of the mimetic rivalry characteristic of what we might call "the conflicted communal Self" also sheds light on the nature of the violence and victimization that we find in the history of Christian persecution of Jews. Without referring to Girard's ideas, the eminent historian Léon Poliakov nevertheless captures a Girardian view of this tragic history when he writes that "to massacre first, and then, from fear of revenge, to accuse afterward; to attribute to the victims one's own aggressive intentions; to impute to them one's own cruelty: from country to country and from century to century, under various disguises, this is the device we find" (106-7). In the present essay, I will attempt to show that such vengeance-laden acts of Christian persecution of Jews, of the Jew-as-Other, derive from antisemitic Christians' mimetic rivalry with Jews—an "I" for an "I," as this essay's title would suggest—and that underlying this rivalry is the introjection of real or imagined Jewish self-hatred.² I hope to demonstrate that this projected intra-victimization is marked, in part, by Christians' mimetic appropriations of fantasized or real acts of Jewish self-incrimination, punishment, or more generalized suffering. Ultimately, I will try to provide support for the idea that, despite its obvious promise and appeal of love, peace, and brotherhood, Christianity cannot wrest itself entirely from its moorings in real or fantasized Jewish self-hatred, that is, in an appropriation of enacted or imagined Judaism against itself.

If my contentions prove even partially legitimate, then an overwhelming question for good-faith Christians is whether or not the peculiar brand of antisemitism discussed above is endemic to Christianity and, if it is, whether

² Sander L. Gilman's *Jewish Self-Hatred* remains the preeminent work on the relationship between Jewish self-hatred and antisemitism. Among the scholarship that in some way links antisemitism etiologically to Christianity, see the work of Malcolm Hay, Hyam Maccoby, and William Nicholls, as well as the work of various essayists in Alan Davies.

or not such antisemitism is linked indissolubly, if not also etiologically, to Christianity. If the answer to this question turns out to be "yes," then the dominant struggle for good-faith Christians would seem to be between two alternatives: to enact their mimetically-based projected self-hatred, or to identify the mimetic structure of this self-sacrificial violence and then, in the name of Jesus, reject it. Only in this latter fashion - that is, only by assuming responsibility for their own violence—can Christians check their seemingly endless struggle with the complicated antisemitism endemic to Christianity and thereby keep this struggle from disempowering them.

Girard's profound insights into the workings of mimetic hatred and violence and the nature of antagonistic doubles help to explain why anti-semitic Christians paradoxically (and sometimes desperately) need the very Jewish victims whom they also seek to displace and replace. And despite his telling us that "we can expect little help from literature . . . in our investigation of the double" (*Violence* 160-1), in his catalytic reading of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* Girard himself has certainly mapped out an understanding of the mimetic rivalry underlying Christian antisemitism. Girard shows us, one might recall, that Shakespeare's text reveals Jewish and Christian antagonists who, appropriating each other's desires for and modes of vengeance, mirror one another even in their desires and attempts to differentiate themselves from each other. Ultimately, Girard's analysis of *Merchant* suggests that Jewish-Christian conflict, rooted in mimetic appropriation, is marked by self-reflective hatred, or, more particularly, by projected introjection of imitative self-hatred.

But Shakespeare's play shows a rare side of Jewish-Christian violence, one in which the combatants engage in a relatively equal battle of mimetic rivalry, save insofar as the game is fixed in favor of the Christians. Shylock and his Christian nemeses are as bad as, and really no worse than, each other. Historically, though, Jewish-Christian antagonism is markedly different from the mimetic rivalry portrayed in Shakespeare's play; indeed, it has been rather entirely one-sided. Only someone with a Herculean ability to deny the overabundance of clear empirical data could deny the fact that, regardless of the imagined wrongs against Christians (and Christianity) that antisemitic Christians accuse Jews of committing, in this family feud, the vast majority of victims have been Jews and the vast majority of victimizers have been Christians. Following Girard's lead in his analysis of *Merchant*, let us investigate the sort of antisemitism portrayed in another literary text of persecution to see if we can reach at least some understanding of the complicated underlying psychological mechanisms and socio-religious structures peculiar to this more common form of victimization, in which, as

we shall see, Christian victimizers create the conditions of possibility for their Jewish victims' continued presence.

We'll be analyzing primarily the final part of the brief, three-part, twelfth-century, anonymously written medieval drama *The Service for Representing Adam* (also called *Ordo Repraesentationis Adae*, *Jeu d'Adam*, and *Mystère d'Adam*); in its final section, the play manifests its antisemitism by way of the speeches given to the Jewish prophets and pseudo-prophets who appear. Though not a liturgical drama *per se*, this "deservedly famous" (Hardison 253) play that one critic considers "the richest and most humane work of the early medieval drama" (Axton 130) derives in large part from the medieval tradition of liturgical drama. Moreover, it "is centered on the theme of Christ's coming, . . . is appropriate to Advent or to the midwinter period immediately preceding Lent" (it "may have been performed at one of these times, or during the twelve days of Christmas"), and "is probably designed to be acted outside the church building" (Bevington 78).³ One would be hard-pressed, then, to distance this play's manifestations of antisemitism from its clear and immediate association with Christological worship, at least insofar as such worship is imagined by the play's author, enacted by its actors, and ostensibly meant to be understood by the congregants in the audience.

Poliakov rightly observes that, in religious drama, which he considers "the incomparable vehicle for propaganda in [the Middle Ages], . . . anti-Jewish sentiment is cultivated most assiduously" (126). I would add to Poliakov's comment that, by having real persons act out before an audience the roles of fictive persons who often are meant to represent other real persons, drama always and immediately shows the members of an audience their own roles and implications in the performance. Dramas that involve victimization and overt or subtle forms of violence, such as *The Merchant of Venice* or *The Service for Representing Adam*, **thus give us a new way to understand Girard's contention concerning the power of evil, to wit, that "the discovery of the victim's evil power always comes from the crowd and never**

³ For further discussion and debate concerning the play's cyclical nature and occasional purpose, see Hardin Craig 68-74. For a discussion of the liturgical and non-liturgical roots of Medieval drama, see the first two chapters in Rosemary Woolf's *The English Mystery Plays*. Most critics of *Adam* recognize some sort of relationship between the play's liturgical and non-liturgical groundings; among others, see, for example, Richard Axton 100ff., especially 113 and 119; Glynne Wickham 40; E. K. Chambers 10-11; and O. B. Hardison 254ff. Oscar Cargill, however, "tne[s] to show that [the play] not only is unrelated to the late liturgy of the *Prophets of Christ*, but that it is equally unrelated to the mystery cycles. In a word," he concludes, "the growth theory appears inadequate to account for either [this play] or the mysteries" (104)

from the victim" ("Violence and Representation" 185; author's italics). By extension, then, as William Nicholls writes, "the origins of antisemitism are not to be sought in Jews but in antisémites" (xviii). In the play of *Adam*, the crowd witnesses, although almost assuredly without knowing it, its own reflection—and spiritual undoing—in Christologically-oriented Jewish self-hatred.

Readers familiar with the Corpus Christi cycle plays of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries will recognize a familiar dramatic pattern in the *Adam* play. This seemingly incomplete drama⁴ is grounded in Christian typology (a hermeneutic approach common to the cycle plays), in which all of history is conceived of as a series of events prefiguring, coinciding with, or happening after but in response to the Advent of Christ. Thus, in the first part of the play, when staging the story of Man's Fall, the dramatist equates Satan with the serpent and has Adam assume and foretell Jesus's coming (see, for example, 1. 558). Similarly, in the play's second and third parts, the dramatist presents within a clearly identifiable Christocentric context both the story of the primal murder and a procession of prophets and pseudo-prophets from the Hebrew Bible. As Erich Auerbach writes,

everything in the dramatic play which grew out of the liturgy during the Middle Ages is part of one—and always of the same—context: of one great drama whose beginning is God's creation of the world, whose climax is Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and whose expected conclusion will be Christ's second coming and the Last Judgment. The intervals between the poles of the action are filled partly by figuration, partly by imitation, of Christ. Before his appearance there are the characters and events of the Old Testament . . . in which the coming of the Saviour is figurally revealed; this is the meaning of the procession of prophets. . . . In principle, this great drama contains everything that occurs in world history. (158)

The play's explicit use both of the Hebrew Bible in the service of Christocentric history and of Christian apologetics thus makes sense, at least insofar as Christianity founds itself on Judaism—or, more specifically, at least insofar as Jesus presents himself as the fulfillment of the Jewish

⁴ Unlike others, Cargill finds that the play *is* complete; he sees it as "a unified treatise on sin and its punishment" (99). Similarly, Hardison takes issue with a number of scholars and argues that "[t]he inclusion of two Old Testament episodes does not warrant the notion that [this play] is 'an early and incomplete attempt at cycle-building'" (260; also cf. 258-9).

Messianic promise—and certainly to the extent that "this great drama contains everything that occurs in world history." What initially makes less sense, though, is the inclusion of Jewish self-hatred in a play celebrating the coming of Christ. Since the author is engaged in pure fiction-making anyway, he could have presented a stunning dramatization of Christian mercy as both the prefiguration and fulfillment of Christ's coming. He could have had the prophet Isaiah, for example, deliver and then explain those well-known prophetic lines that most (if not all) Christians interpret as foretellings of Jesus's coming. But he doesn't do that. Instead, he has the choir read "the lesson" of the play (or perhaps of the third part of the play), which is clearly derived from the "lessons" contained in the viciously antisemitic pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo contra Judeos, Paganos, et Arianos*: "You, I say," reads the choir, "I do summon before a tribunal, O Jews" (113; stage directions).

But why is a trial of the Jews—specifically, of Jewish prophets—so important to this dramatization of prophetic Christianity? Oscar Cargill argues that the play's prophets are *not* in fact "prophets of Christ." Rather, in his view, they "*are the prophets of doom or judgment, and as such could have had no connection with the liturgical office of Christmas or the joyous celebration of that season*" (98; author's italics). But Cargill's view isn't altogether textually verified. More powerful readings have been offered by critics who, more or less like Auerbach, argue that the Jewish prophets about to be presented function only as figurative, revelatory agents in Christocentric history. Richard Axton, for example, suggests that they "have no relationship to one another; they are merely a row of icons pointing to Christ" (72). Though a bit off the mark here, Axton strengthens his view later when he argues that "these figures are 'prophets' not only in the sense that they foretell Christ's coming, but also in being themselves [his] typological precursors, his genealogical antecedents" (118). As such, they certainly *do* have a relationship to one another. However, in light of their expressions of intra-victimizing antisemitism, examples of which we'll see in a moment, we must wonder about the nature of the spiritual traits that Christ will inherit from these self-hating Jewish apologists for Christianity. In fact, one wonders why anyone would want to be baptized in the troubled, contaminated waters of this genetic pool of spirituality which the playwright fantasizes and in which the players and congregants are to immerse themselves.

Consider, for example, the following lines given to Abraham, the first "prophet" to speak: Abraham tells the audience that "a man will issue from his seed, / Who will commute our sentence of damnation, / And by whom the world will be ransomed" (11.763-5). By linking the Jews' "sentence of damnation" to the coming of Christ, Abraham is obviously linking Jews to

Christians. More than that, he shows the congregants that important Jews from biblical history denounce themselves as Jews and "accept" Christ. In fact, he seems to imply that Jews' real or symbolic conversion to Christianity is inextricably tied to their denunciation of Judaism, an anti-Jewish position at odds, it would seem, with the stance taken by many Christians and Jewish converts to Christianity who see their Christian faith as a fulfillment, and not as a denunciation, of Jewish teaching.

Before we consider more details from the play, let us take a moment to examine this phenomenon in which real or imagined Jewish antisemitism is linked to Jewish conversion to Christianity—a phenomenon, central to the workings of *Adam*, whose implications reach far beyond the liturgical and aesthetic stakes of medieval religious drama.

In his work on the history of antisemitism, Poliakov alludes to a 1378 decree in France that chronicles antisemitic acts supposedly committed by "renegade Jews . . . [who] became the principal enemies of their former coreligionists." "Several of their law," the decree states,

who have recently become Christians, envious and spiteful because they no longer derive any advantage from having done so [Poliakov notes that this is the case because these converts "can no longer enjoy the profits they made when they were Jews"], have sought and do seek from day to day to accuse the Jews, making many denunciations . . . on account of which accusations and denunciations they have been and are oftentimes seized, molested, belabored, and injured (Poliakov 116; ellipses in the original)

Whether or not the above-mentioned "renegade Jews . . . became the principal enemies of their former coreligionists," many Jewish converts to Christianity have in fact turned against their former coreligionists (see, for example, Paul's antisemitic assertion in 1 *Cor. 11.4* that "any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head"). In our own era, we find some of the most tragic examples of Jewish intra-victimization in the cases of a number of Holocaust survivors who converted to Christianity (these examples do much to support a Girardian understanding of the ways in which unconscious projection underlies the relationship between the hated Other and the hated Self). An extreme example of this disturbing state of affairs is the case of Rachmiel Frydland, a Holocaust survivor who converted to Christianity and who, as Yaakov Ariel writes, believed that "the entire Holocaust would not have happened if the Jews had accepted Jesus as their

Savior" (64). Here, Christian antisemitism as a reflection of Jewish self-hatred acquires new, and ultimately tragic, meaning.

In citing and commenting upon these examples, I do not mean to blame the victim. Rather, I'm merely trying to demonstrate that at least one crucial link between, on the one hand, Nazi-orchestrated Judeocide and Christian antisemitism and, on the other hand, antecedent displays of Christian antisemitism which are directly associated with Christian worship—such as those that we see in the play *Adam*—involves the real or fantasized enactment of Jewish intra-victimization. This real or imagined Jewish self-hatred both mirrors and provides at least some of the grounding for Christian antisemitism. Seeing real acts of Christian persecution of Jews in light of these acts' dramaturgical-religious antecedents, we can sense how powerfully these earlier forms of antisemitism both give an air of spiritual sanction and respectability to antisemitic Christians' real victimization of Jews and, at the same time, mendaciously but putatively validate the victimizers' attempts to make themselves appear as the victims and to make the victims appear as the victimizers.⁵ With respect to *Adam*, this move on the part of the victimizers seems all the more egregiously disingenuous, since the church officials who sanctioned the performances of this play must surely have known that the dramatist's revisionist understanding of the Hebrew Bible does not square at all with either the spirit or the letter of the texts that he appropriates for his own contribution to Christological celebration. Nor does his anti-Judaism say much for the advent of Christianity. For the same Abraham who fathers those Jews serving a "sentence of damnation" will provide the seed out of which "will issue" the man "by whom the world will be ransomed" (11.763-4).

By the way in which he appropriates and then revises the discourse of the ostensibly rivalrous but ultimately conquered Other (the Abraham of the Hebrew Bible), the dramatist demonstrates his own troubled thinking, which amounts to the projection of his own fantasy of Jewish self-hatred onto a hated Other (Abraham as representative of the Jewish nation) whom he creates and forces to serve a sentence of damnation. Though the Abraham of the Hebrew Bible never mentions anything about Jewish antisemitism, let alone about the advent of Christianity, the author's Abraham is a self-hating Jew supposedly serving the interests of Christian apologetics. As such, he becomes a sort of screen onto which insecure Christians could (uncon-

⁵ For a blatant example of the extent to which these two problems manifested themselves in incidents of church-supported antisemitism during the Middle Ages, incidents ripe for a Girardian analysis of the relationship among introjection, projection, and mimetic violence, see James Parkes 42-4,

sciously) project their own desire to differentiate themselves from the hated Jew-as-Other. However, introjecting the author's projections, antisemitic Christians witnessing and validating this display of Jewish self-hatred engage in an unconscious mimetic rivalry, not with Jews, but with fantasized projections of self-hating Jews, projections that, through the performance, they appropriate from other antisemitic *Christians*, including the play's author.

In the lines that the author gives to Solomon, the play further documents the interrelatedness of introjection, projection, and mimetic violence, echoing *Deuteronomy* 28:58ff. in the process. Rather angrily, bitterly, and resentfully, Solomon addresses his fellow Jews as if he were not one of them: "O Jews, God gave you his law, / But you have not borne him faith. / He made you custodians of his kingdom, / You were well established; / You have not judged justly, / Your verdict was against God. / You have not done his will; / Your iniquity was very great" (11. 791-98). The message here is hardly subtle: the Jews had their chance, but they blew it. Once "well established" as God's chosen people, they proved traitorous as the anti-Gods of spiritual judgment ("You have not judged justly, / Your verdict was against God"). Thus, their evil (their "iniquity"), indeed, was "very great."

Curiously, though, the author has Solomon speak in the past tense. Shortly, we'll learn—or so it seems—that the Jews as a nation will hearken to Solomon, Daniel (see 11. 827-40), and other prominent Jews from the Hebrew Bible, who, in the author's mind, dissociate themselves from and turn against their own people as part of their Christian "awakening." In a scene involving a Jew "from the synagogue" (119; stage direction), we meet an apparent representative from this new generation of Jews, who are to emerge from the spiritual wilderness of their enslaved ancestors and, abandoning their golden calf of mistaken belief, heed the truth of Christianity's promise: "We will take you for our master," this ostensibly paradigmatic representative of the new generation of Jews says to a Christologically-oriented Isaiah. Concerning the latter's so-called prophecy of Christ's Advent, he continues: "And this generation / Will hearken to your teaching" (11. 910-12). However, this Jew offers his assurances to Isaiah only after Isaiah tells him that the Jew will never "get better" from his sickness of "error" (11. 903-4)—a rather odd prologue to the impending drama of the Jews' conversion to Christianity.

Perhaps the playwright draws a confusing portrait of this Jew from the Synagogue because, by trying to have this Jew embody the past, present, and future Jewish nation, he is simply trying to do too much. Be that as it may, this imagined Jew personifies two well-known Christian antisemitic archetypes: on the one hand, he appears to be the stubborn, spiritually blind

and thus spiritually dead Jew who refuses to "accept" Jesus (he tells Isaiah concerning the latter's prophesying abilities, "You seem like an old dotard to me" and "You appear to me to be senile" [11. 898 and 897]); on the other hand, this second-generation Jew (as it were) seems to represent the futuristic, saved Jewish convert to Christianity. Since the playwright was hardly intending to offer a dramatic warning to congregant *Jews* sitting in the audience, we cannot help but wonder about the representational nature and status of this Jew, and, by extension, of both the "Jews" in general who are being portrayed in this play and those who, "outside" of the play, serve as the playwright's referents (or, perhaps more accurately, serve as both his play's signifiers and its signifieds). Given that clerics are probably playing the roles of the play's Jews and that the audience was comprised of Christians, we might justifiably ask about the nature of the internal and external audiences at whom the dramatist is directing his play's words and lessons. Enigmatically, the play itself provides some answers to our questions: "You know well enough how to look in a mirror," the Jew says to Isaiah just before he asks the prophet whether or not the latter can "tell / If [the Jew's] heart is sick or healthy" (11. 898-900). Unfortunately, as suggested above, Isaiah offers the Jew a bleak diagnosis and prognosis concerning the Jews' spiritual condition. Remembering Hamlet's ultimately self-incriminating lines concerning guilty creatures sitting at a play, we begin to wonder who really is on trial in this play of putative Christian celebration.⁶

One way of understanding what is at stake here is to recall Girard's discussions of contamination, ritual reenactment, and ritual purification. Historical and sociological data document the extent to which Jews have been viewed as disease, as contamination itself, and not just as the carriers of disease. The Nazis, of course, openly talked about Jews as bacteria. Within Christian history, we find many antisemitic myths and legends in which Jews are associated with organic disease (such as the Black Plague) and with spiritual disease. Chaucer's infamous Prioress, for example, says that "Sathanas . . . / hath in Jues herte his waspes nest" (11.558-9). Martin Luther, the great reformer, added to the list of organic metaphors for Jewish contamination the image of Jews as "'poisonous bitter worms'" (Gilbert 19). In *Adam*, Isaiah tells the recalcitrant Jew alluded to above—the Jew who at first seems unwilling to accept a Christocentric reading of Isaiah's prophecy in *Isaiah*

⁶ Four hundred years after this play was written, a French "aristocrat who scorned popular religious entertainment of any kind" intended to "persuade the Parliament to ban a **proposed performance . . . of the *Mystery of the Old Testament***, because he believed the audience **to be so stupid . . . that they might be converted to Judaism by it**" (Elliott 245-6)

11—"You have the disease of wickedness, / From which you will never recover in your life" (11.901-2). Though, to be sure, the relationship between ideology and action is always quite complicated, the many acts of persecution suffered by Jews at the hands of antisemitic Christians trying to guard themselves against incurable Jewish disease would seem to have their literary roots in plays such as *Adam*, which subtly allow the congregational audience to engage ritually, communally, and vicariously in a purging of this perceived diseased element from their own spiritual body.

And yet, such purging cannot possibly be effective, at least not permanently. Like scapegoating, which insures the need for more scapegoating because, rather than ending violence, it keeps violence within the community and allows the victimizers to imagine that they themselves are safe from harm, this play's dramatic reenactment of Christian "purgation" of Jewish "disease" overtly or covertly reminds the congregants that they are spiritually descended from the very people who *they* believe are spiritually diseased and from whom they want to imagine themselves entirely differentiated. To make matters worse, by acting in the author's play, the clerics who play the role of the damned Jews literally enact the author's (and perhaps their own) - antisemitic fantasies and bring the Jewish disease into their ostensibly (might one say "ethnically"?) cleansed community. Seen in this light, structural dramatic convention only adds to the problem of exegetical self-defeat: most likely, the playing space on which this drama was staged was both on and contiguous with church property (the church itself was used in the performance). The play itself, then, is a carrier of the very spiritual disease (now spreading among the congregants) against which antisemitic Christians imagine themselves to have been inoculated.

In his depictions of self-hating Jewish apologists for Christianity, the play's author has unwittingly dramatized the fear (*his* fear?) that Christians might be too much like the Jews, those spiritual ancestors whom many Christians desire but fail to supplant and in whose imagined gardens of paradise they nevertheless also try to plant themselves. Mimetically desiring what they imagine is the Jews' desire to be God's chosen people, troubled Christians ultimately desire the Jews' being: in short, they want to be the Jews. But that certainly won't do, since being the Jews would necessarily mean being the anti-Christ, that recalcitrant anti-God referred to by some of the Jewish prophets and pseudo-prophets in *Adam* (this, at any rate, seems to be the logical conclusion of antisemitic Christian teaching and antisemitic Christians' own thinking). Ironically, but not surprisingly, the harder he tries to draw clear lines of spiritual demarcation between saved Christians (and Christocentric Jews) and damned Jews, the more the play's author highlights

his inevitable inability to differentiate Christians from their putative spiritual rivals, whose teachings Christians obviously cannot do without, lest they commit spiritual suicide, but whose teachings many simultaneously refuse to follow. The real object of the author's hatred is not the Jews, but his and his fellow antisemitic Christians' fearful, fantasized, troubled, and—vis-à-vis the promise of Christian mercy and fulfillment—ultimately self-defeating conception of the Jews-as-Christians or, what amounts to the same thing here, of the Christians-as-Jews. In the final analysis, this play shows us that, when we unmask Christian antisemitism, we find Christian self-hatred.

Now it makes sense that Jewish self-hatred plays a part in this drama concerning the Advent of Christ. Now we can understand what is at stake in the author's appropriating for his own Christologically-oriented dramaturgical purposes important Jewish figures and texts, whom/which he then turns against themselves. And now we understand the stakes of that scene in which the Jew says to Isaiah, one of the most important of the Jewish prophets, "You know well enough how to look in a mirror: / Now look at this hand for me, and tell / If my heart is sick or healthy," and in which Isaiah diagnostically and prophetically responds, "You have the disease of wickedness, / From which you will never recover in your life" (11. 898-902). Assuredly without knowing it, in this scene the author dramatizes the idea that he and his coreligionists have inherited the seed of intra-victimization, in particular, the seed of Jewish self-hatred. In light of the fact that, as expected, supposedly healthy victimizers cannot meaningfully differentiate themselves from their victims, whom they fantasize as being contaminated, we find new meaning in Isaiah's prognosis that his interlocutor has an incurable spiritual illness. In the following, fuller context of the relevant lines, we find a rather troublesome new twist to the notion that Christianity completes Judaism, and a new wrinkle in the idea that the hope for universal salvation lies in Christian conversion:

Jew: Am I sick, then?

Isaiah: Yes, of error.

Jew: When will I get better?

Isaiah: Never.

Jew: Now begin your soothsaying.

Isaiah: What I say will not be untrue.

Jew: Now **tell** your vision again,

If it was a rod, or a stick,

And what will be born from its flower

We will take you for **our** master,

And this generation

Will hearken to your teaching.

Isaiah. Then listen to this great wonder.

**Never has our listening heard anything so
magnificent _____ (ll. 903-14)**

The dramatist's portrayals of self-hating Jews teaches us something about **the** mechanism of mimetic appropriation that underlies Christian anti-semitism. His invention of Jewish self-incrimination reveals the antisemitic Christian's unconscious fear that real Christian protagonists are too much like their fantasized Jewish antagonists. This fear, sadly enough, historically has both derived from and driven far too many Christians' desires *and attempts* to supplant and "take over" Judaism—in effect, to be the Jews (in many of the pogroms during the Middle Ages, envious, antisemitic Christians took possession of Jewish property, much as, during the Holocaust, many "innocent" Germans and Poles, among others, took and retained possession of the property owned by deported Jews). Such Christians have long tried to argue that there is only one God, and that He is theirs (in this play, Adam points to the conflation of Jesus and God when he says that he "will be redeemed thence by no mortal, / None save God in his majesty" [11.377-8]). As long as Christians see Jesus in God and God in Jesus, it will be pointless for them to argue that they and the Jews believe in the same God. Yet, even if we grant for the moment the divine connection between Jesus and God that Christians insist on seeing in one form or another, the fact remains that Jesus was a Jew. At the primal level, then, Christians are supposed to imitate, to **act like**, a Jew.

But let us be generous to the play's author. Perhaps he is merely trying to warn the congregants of what will happen should they lose faith in Christ and thus become like the "other" Jews, who, unlike the "insightful" Jews depicted in the play, don't understand and accept Christian truth and thus are damned, some eternally. Or maybe he is simply trying to celebrate the "fact" **that the** Advent of Christ foretells (embodies?) the Gentiles' spiritual victory over the Jews. Or possibly he is trying to justify Christianity's appropriation of Jewish texts, texts which Christians in effect rewrite in order to have them make sense within a Christological context. All such possibilities notwithstanding, a pressing question still remains: If the Jews' sins against God are so well known and accepted by the clerics and congregants, and if these persons comfortably believe that the Jews have been permanently replaced by Christians as God's chosen people, why, then, was it necessary for at least some communities of Christians to enact and reenact a play in which anti-semitic Christians celebrate their spiritual victory? Given the ubiquity which has marked this repetition compulsion throughout Christian history, one

cannot help but wonder what continually frightens so many of these would-be **Christian** victors.

Perhaps we catch a glimpse of an answer to these questions in Solomon's **speech, in which, turning** Jewish texts against themselves (see, for example, *Deut.* 26:19 and 28:58ff. and possibly *Isa.* 11 and 34), he tells his fellow **Jews**, "All you have done **will be** made manifest; / Extremely harsh vengeance will be visited / On those who were the most high: / They will take a fearful fall. / God will have pity on the lowly: / He will make them **very** happy" (11.799-804). This strange **mix** of "Old Testament vengeance" and "New Testament mercy" proves an equally strange foretelling of the Advent of Christ (Solomon tells the audience that "this prophecy will be fulfilled / When the son of God dies for us" [11.805-6]; see, too, *Matt.* 19:30 and *Mark* **10:31**). Indeed, remembering Portia's assurance to Shylock, **only** moments before she begins to destroy him, that "the quality of mercy is not strained" (**IV.i.183**), the reader of the *Adam* play might be tempted to ask, a la Girard's insights, "Which are the Christians here? And which the Jews?"

Like many religious persons from other faiths, many Christians have trouble acknowledging that the game of spiritual reckoning can be played on grounds other than those on which they imagine their own version of spiritual reckoning is played. Concerning Jewish-Christian relations, even many *good-faith* Christians seem unable or unwilling to understand that very few Jews have a keen interest in whether or **not** Christianity is the fulfillment of **Judaism**. Christians who cannot or will not accept Jews' indifference to **Jesus**—an indifference **that** many Christians read as Jews' hostility to **Jesus**—seem to think that, since Jesus is important to them (as he obviously should be), then he must or at least should be important to Jews, too. In the worst cases—for both Jews and Christians—we find that **such thinking** underlies the perniciously antisemitic belief that the Jews who really know the truth share a Christological vision of antisemitic Christianity. Such is the attitude dramatized in *Adam*.

Unfortunately, neither this play's author nor his fellow Medieval anti-semites are alone in holding this view about "insightful" Jews. If one were to close one's eyes while listening to the soundtrack of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, a classic film study of the Holocaust, without too much difficulty one might be able to imagine that the author of *Adam* was reincarnated as a certain Mr. Kantarowski, who, during a celebration of the Virgin Mary's birthday, and in the presence of one of only two survivors of the mass killings at Chelmno, tells us what a friend ostensibly told him concerning the fate of some Jews at the hands of the Nazis:

The Jews were gathered in a square. The rabbi asked an SS man: "Can I talk to them?" The SS man said yes. So the rabbi said that around two thousand years ago the Jews condemned the innocent Christ to death. And when they did that, they cried out: "Let his blood fall on our heads and on our sons' heads." Then the rabbi told them: "Perhaps the time has come for that, so let us do nothing, let us go, let us do as we're asked." (99-100)

Now, from where might Mr. Kantarowski's "friend" have gotten this idea? Perhaps from *Matthew* 27:20-26: "And all the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'" (27:25; the ideas expressed in *Matt*, and by Mr. Kantarowski are echoed in *Adam*, 11.807-14.) Or possibly from *Deuteronomy* 28:62ff.: "And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you . . ." (28:63; also see *Deut.* 5.9).⁷ Whatever the "friend's" source, hearing lines such as Mr. Kantarowski's and reading plays such as *The Service for Representing Adam*, one can easily see why Franklin H. Littell, the Dean of Christian Holocaust Studies scholars, has recently written that "it is important... to bring the endemic antisemitism in Christendom to the bar of judgment" ("Review" 124).⁸

Christians who are serious about understanding the roots and nature of Christian antisemitism can learn quite a bit by studying the antisemitism displayed in *Adam*. Among other things, the play dramatizes antisemitic Christians' unconscious fear that they have become the hated Jew by their having usurped (what they imagine to be) the Jews' place as God's chosen people. Beneath its veneer of Christian celebration, the play teaches us that antisemitic Christians implicate their *own* feelings of guilt and self-hatred in their enactment of antisemitic Christian worship, however little such displays of troublesome psychodynamics have to do with the substantive teachings of Jesus, and however unaware these antisemites are of their actions and motivations. Not surprisingly to students of Girard's work, this enactment of

⁷ For some cogent remarks concerning the relationship among Christianity, antisemitism, and Nazism, see the first chapter in Hay's *The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism*. It should be noted that some Jews persecuted by the Nazis did see their fate in terms of a divine plan, specifically, as a divine punishment (Elie Wiesel movingly captures this phenomenon on pp. 110-112 of his novel *The Fifth Son*). In fact, in one sense, the term "Holocaust" itself problematically suggests a relationship between Jews and Nazis as agents acting out such a divine scheme (cf. Garber and Zuckerman 200).

⁸ See, too, Littell's concluding remarks in his "Essay" (55), especially those comments concerning "the false start of Christendom, with its theological triumphalism and cultural antisemitism. . . ."

blind mimetic rivalry persists even in places that are more or less *judenrein*, as occurred during certain periods in the Middle Ages, for example, and as occurs today in post-Holocaust Poland and elsewhere. Indeed, like the clerics who literally played the roles of the Jews in *Adam*, antisemitic Christians continue unconsciously to play the role of the hated Jew, whose anti-Jewish hermeneutics they themselves either invent or appropriate from fellow antisemitic Christians. With respect to Christian antisemitism, if not also to both the conception and the inception of Christianity itself, one wonders if an understanding of this complex display of projected and enacted Christian self-hatred would afford new meaning to Jesus's comments concerning persons' doing (or not doing) unto him what has been done (or not done) to the least of his brethren (cf. *Matt.* 25:31-46).

Surely, Jews and others must both sympathize with and encourage those good-faith, profoundly believing Christians who are trying to avoid being contaminated by the disease of antisemitism that continues to spread, sometimes in epidemic proportions, throughout Christendom. But given that the "origins of antisemitism are not to be sought in Jews but in antisemites" (Nicholls xviii), and considering how often Christian celebration has occurred in the context of so much Jewish pain, good-faith Christians interested in understanding the roots of their own faith and in having a respectful, meaningful, mutually validating dialogue with Jews certainly have their work cut out for them. If Christians can approach Jews with the desire to understand and learn from them rather than with the desire to convert them, and if they can accept Judaism as a spiritual tradition whose agenda is separate from but as equally valid as theirs rather than trying to subsume Judaism under Christianity, then maybe there is a chance for meaningful, long-term Jewish-Christian dialogue to occur. For now, though, it seems that, as Jacob Neusner has written, "while Jews and Christians have much to say to one another and plenty to learn from one another, Judaism and Christianity can conduct no dialogue at all... [because of] the incapacity of either group to make sense of the other" (Greeley and Neusner 269). Though this state of affairs need not be permanent, as yet it more often than not bespeaks the status quo in Jewish-Christian relations.

Neusner seems equally on target when he describes "the relationship between the two great religious traditions of the West" as "a family quarrel." "Only brothers can hate so deeply," he explains, "yet accept and tolerate so impassively, as have Judaic and Christian brethren both hated, yet taken for granted, each other's presence" (*ibid.*). Using the same metaphor, Yehuda Bauer argues that incipient Christological anti-Judaism became a prominent feature of Christianity *per se*: "Christian theological antisemitism," Bauer

writes, "developed . . . originally as a family quarrel between two warring interpretations of Judaism, and then as a major element in the development of the new religion" (16). Following the lead of these scholars, we might say that *Adam* dramatizes intra-familial violence of the worst sort, in the process demonstrating the validity of ideas for which Girard has been arguing for years: namely, that just as scapegoating always reflects upon the diseased state of the community rather than upon the real guilt or innocence of the victim, so, in general, the victimizers' feelings of hatred for and acts of violence against the victim are always internal, always self-directed, self-reflective, finally self-defeating.

If good-faith Christians familiar with Jesus's teachings on peace and love can accept a Girardian understanding of hatred and violence rather easily, then they ought to be able to recognize—though perhaps with more difficulty—the mimetic base of Christian antisemitism, too. In particular, they ought to be able to recognize the extent to which mimetically appropriated self-hatred, such as that dramatized in *Adam*, underlies a form of antisemitism endemic to Christianity, one that marks Christian antisemitism as Christian self-hatred. Of course, in their more *generalized* forms, the mechanisms and underlying structures at stake here are *not* endemic to Christianity. Instead, they are collective, if not also universal, as the following passage subtly but painfully indicates. Written by a Holocaust survivor who has gained international recognition for his efforts to combat Holocaust denial, this passage sheds some needed light on the urgency with which all of us must recognize the full and frightening dimensions of our own real or imagined mimetic culpability. The passage concerns the author's having participated in the burning of Jewish texts on the orders of a Nazi overlord nicknamed "the Demon": "'Why do I feel so guilty?' [the author] wondered. 'Why not he, the Demon?' Did I, in my young mind, begin to perceive the truth? I felt guilty, because *he* didn't. There was heavy, painful guilt hovering in the air, and it had to find a resting place. Guilt is a phenomenon that must find a body" (Mermelstein 81; author's italics).*

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