



Grand Collège des Rites Ecossais

SUPRÊME CONSEIL DU 33^È DEGRÉ
EN FRANCE
1764-1804
GODF

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The regional meeting open to master masons held in Lille on March 25th dealt with violence and the sacred. Collective violence has been at work in the world, ever since the Neanderthals were exterminated, until the wars of the 21st century; individual violence manifests itself in everyone's day to day life. That is our common experience.

Freemasonry is no exception. Only consider some of our rituals : death threats, daggers, ropes around necks, slashed throats, Hiram's murder, revenge, some beheadings, some disembowelling, some mass murders - one for a mere faulty pronunciation (how must one say Shibboleth ?) - , all those are evidence enough.

René Girard derived his concept of mimetic rivalry from his study of literary narrative (Shakespeare, Stendhal, Proust, and Dostoevsky) because, like freemasonry, literature is an analysis of human relations which can only be discussed if there are no less than three characters.

The only means of escape from the mother-child binary relationship, the triangular relationship, is logically expressed in the following perspective:

X desires Y, whether a subject or an object, only because Z, whom he has chosen as a model, also owns or desires it. This can be expressed in plainer lacanian terms:

I desire YOU because HE desires YOU. HE is the Other whom I admire and imitate.

Advertising, which is an immoderate manifestation of an equally capitalistic and narcissist consumer society, rests exclusively on such a triangulation.

Freemasonry as a social group has integrated in its practices the fact that between the sacred and the profane, there is a difference of degree, not a difference of nature.

It seems, today, that to emphasize mimetic rivalry and violence as well as the sacred and the progressive nature of initiation in the Scottish Further Degrees, could bring significant benefits.

An act of recognition of the Other, in his similarity to us as well as in his difference, is repeated at each advancement ceremony. It is intrinsic to a decrease of violence through the practice of rituals which restrain violence as much as they contain it, resulting in a dialogue between violence and the sacred.

Freemasonry as a whole and more particularly the Masonry of Scottish Higher Degrees, has wrought violence on violence itself ever since its origins. That is why it is a liberating force: it allows self-excellence to emerge

Acknowledging excellence, our own and that of others, takes us beyond that barbaric savagery which makes us suffer in our minds and in our hearts.

In Br. : Goethe's words (1831):

"In what does barbarism consist, if not in the failure to appreciate what is excellent?"

Jacques OREFICE, 33rd
Sovereign Grand Commander

Translated by JPGNT