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On the Pedagogical Benefits of Using John Woo's The Killer as a Model of René Girard's Theory on Religion and Violence

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Abstract

When asked for their views on the relation between religion and violence in John Woo's *The Killer*, students in our religion and film class typically deny that such relations exist. Using René Girard's work on mimesis and sacrifice, we have argued that it is possible to see that religion and violence in Woo's film are virtually inextricable from one another. Because Girard's theories can clearly be criticized on their own account, and because their application to *The Killer* is not without problems, we have also used discussions of the film to raise general questions about the use of theory and the meaning of interpretation.

On the Pedagogical Benefits of Using John Woo's The Killer as a Model of René Girard's Theory on Religion and Violence[1]

Every year, as part of a course on religion and film at the University of Toronto, we have asked students to submit informal written responses to a question on each week's movie. For John Woo's *The Killer* (1989)[2] we elicit opinions on what relations exist in the movie between religion and violence. The reaction is virtually unequivocal: students typically see the violence as at best separate from the religious elements, at worst opposed to them. The first time we received this response a couple of years ago, we realized that here was an opportunity not to be missed. Having done some research into the work of René Girard, we decided - in the highest interests of pedagogy, of course - that his views provided a way in which to convince students that their understanding of the movie was completely wrong. Which is simply (and less facetiously) to say that, using Girard's theories, we have been able to get students to question their hermeneutical and philosophical assumptions by providing them with a way to make some sense of two apparently incongruent phenomena. Just as significantly, however, Girard's model does not completely or consistently explain Woo's film; we have thus also been able to emphasize the limits of theory itself and so encourage a further degree of critical doubt.[3]

René Girard

René Girard has stressed perhaps more than any other commentator the relation between religion and violence. He has said, in fact, that the two are inextricable, that "violence is the heart and secret soul of the sacred,"[4] and even that "the operations of violence and the sacred are ultimately the same process."[5] This process centers on two principle concepts, mimetic desire and the scapegoat mechanism.[6] The former refers to Girard's belief that human desire is not original to individuals but always arises from the imitation of others: we desire because others desire, and we desire what others desire.[7] A triangular relation is thus established between the object of desire, the model of desire, and the imitator of desire.[8] This relation is ultimately conflictual, as the model and the imitator become rivals for the same object; the model thus becomes both adored and hated by the imitator, as one who is worthy of imitation and yet simultaneously (and paradoxically) an obstacle to the fulfillment of this imitation.[9]

As the rivalry between model and imitator increases, the potential for violence also increases even as the differences between the two diminish. The rivals become ever more hostile and ever more alike,[10] transforming into what Girard calls "monstrous doubles."[11] The scale of this conflict can vary immensely: according to Girard, violence is highly contagious (i.e., it is itself a mimetic process), and so any localized antagonism may potentially destroy an entire community.[12] This would be brought about by a collapse of the social order,

engendered by the extreme loss of differentiation between members of the group, as well as by the uncontrollable outbreak of retributive violence.[13] Typically, there are only two possible outcomes to such a situation: the warring factions destroy one another, or else they sacrifice a scapegoat.

For the latter to occur, the disordered community must isolate a person or persons and project upon them the blame for the violence that threatens the group. This act itself initiates the end of the conflict, as it unites the factions in a common cause.[14] With the sacrifice (i.e., destruction or exile) of those believed responsible for the social upheaval, order is restored. Girard maintains, however, that this process ironically transforms the victim into the community's savior. Consequently, the sacrifice of a scapegoat establishes an ambivalence towards the victim, as they come to be viewed as the cause of both violence and peace.[15] These feelings are so powerful, according to Girard, that the scapegoat often becomes deified in memory.[16]

This deification is obviously one of the links in Girard's model between religion and violence. Generally speaking, religion is implicated in the process of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating in two ways, as the initial sacrifice comes to generate both sacred rituals and myths. This happens principally because scapegoating is not an actual solution to the problem of mimetic rivalry but only a temporary salve; it must therefore be continuously repeated in symbolic, ritualized

forms in order for the community to survive.[17] Myths in turn keep the memory of the original sacrifice alive for the community, but in such a way that the scapegoat mechanism itself remains obscured.[18] That is, these narratives are told from the perspective of those who believed that the scapegoat was in fact responsible for the community's crisis. Both rituals and myths require bureaucratic support as well as cultural legitimization, which are provided by the institutions that have come to be designated as "religious." Religions, in Girard's view, thus come into existence precisely in order to perpetuate originary human violence.[19]

All of which brings us to John Woo's The Killer.

John Woo's *The Killer*[20]

The title character of Woo's film is a hired assassin ("The Killer") who, during the course of completing the assignment he is given during the film's opening credits, accidentally blinds a young female singer named Jenny. This leads him to decide to give up his trade, but he needs to do one last job so that he can pay for Jenny's cornea operation. The Killer is hired by a mob boss to murder an international businessman and gangster who is being protected by the police, among whom is the movie's other protagonist, the Cop. When the Killer completes his mission, then, the Cop is assigned to bring him in. Meanwhile, the mob boss has decided that he doesn't trust the Killer, and so makes arrangements to get rid of

him. Just as the Cop finally confronts the Killer, dozens of assassins arrive to destroy him. This situation unites the two adversaries against a common enemy; they escape for the moment, but by the end find themselves in a final, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid showdown, trapped and surrounded by what seem to be hundreds of brutal, if somewhat inept, assassins.

The first and most obvious connection between Girard's theories and The Killer involves the mimetic rivalry between the two main characters. Their mutual antagonism runs throughout the movie, as the Cop obsessively hunts down The Killer, who in turn does everything he can to obstruct the officer's intentions. The mimetic nature of their relationship is established immediately: both men are introduced in the film planning a job with their friend. The Killer eliminates his target and in the process hurts an innocent victim; the Cop similarly kills the criminal he is after, but causes a bystander to suffer a heart attack. The Cop is severely reprimanded for this incident, while The Killer becomes hunted by the man who hired him because, in the course of completing his assignment, he allowed himself to be seen by the police. The Killer thus spends most of the movie trying to escape his fellow assassins, while the Cop is increasingly alienated by the police force up to the point at the end when he is actually arrested by them for shooting the mob boss in cold blood.

Their respective estrangements highlight another similarity between the two men, that both are loners by nature. The film makes it clear that they live by codes of behaviour that set them apart from, and often in conflict with, their respective communities. These codes require doing what one thinks is right regardless of personal risk, of what others think or say or do.[21] The Killer maintains that he only kills "bad" guys, and so puts himself in great danger helping innocents who are hurt along the way. The Cop in turn is willing to jeopardize both his career and the immediate safety of others to make sure that his quarry does not go free to kill again in the future. One result of their attitude is that they consistently are not trusted by others: the Cop's chief sees him as a loose cannon, while the mob boss cannot be sure that the Killer won't betray his identity if arrested. And yet these men are not completely alienated: each has one close friend, a person in whom they place absolute trust, but both close friends are killed during the course of the movie.

The mimetic connection between the protagonists is also made visually in several scenes. The most obvious of these is also the most famous, and (ironically) the most imitated: the moment when both Killer and Cop have their guns at one another's heads. This scene is prefigured by one in which The Cop, in the course of his investigations, finds The Killer's apartment and reclines in his chair. The camera follows him from outside the building; as it tracks from one window to the next, we alternately see The Cop and The Killer in the same position, head cocked

thoughtfully to one side while holding a cigarette in the left hand and a gun in the right. And just in case we have managed to miss the point, the men enjoy one final moment of aiming firearms at one another before they team up.[22] In the end, we are led to a final mimetic image from the showdown in the church, just before all hell breaks loose.

For this mimetic rivalry to be fully comprehensible in Girardian terms, it must be generated by mutual desire for an object of some kind. At first glance this would seem to be unlikely, as the protagonists' conflict appears to result simply from the circumstances of each man performing the duties of his vocation. However, they have a crucial conversation after teaming up, in which The Cop expresses an explicit desire for something that he thinks The Killer possesses: "Sometimes I really envy you your freedom. It's something I don't have." The Cop apparently covets his new ally's ability to kill with impunity, unbound by bureaucracies and petty moralisms. As it happens The Killer is not as free as The Cop imagines but is himself also after a kind of liberty, both from his life as a contract murderer and from the negative consequences of his past. This desire provides the impetus for most of his actions throughout the film, but it is consistently thwarted; and so during his last moment of peace, just before the church is besieged, The Killer sighs, "I wish I could start all over again. It's a pity . . ."

To their credit, The Killer and The Cop do not end their rivalry by scapegoating. It might at first appear that they do in fact scapegoat the mob boss and his assassins, since they are initially united by the need to defend themselves against these enemies. However, a scapegoat must by definition be innocent of the accusation that he or she is the cause of violence; clearly, the assassins are far from innocent. And yet their intervention does make possible the actual solution to the mimetic conflict as it forces their targets for a moment to trust one another, first evidenced as The Killer throws The Cop his car keys to escape with Jenny. It is this trust, which is so lacking in every other aspect of these men's lives, that in the end brings them together.[23]

A reliance on scapegoating and sacrifice is evident elsewhere in the film, however, appearing consistently as a failed attempt to bring peace. While the protagonists may not solve their problems with one another in this manner, for example, each nevertheless adheres to a general belief that eliminating "bad guys" will in some way benefit both themselves and others; such oppositional division of the world into "us and them" is of course fundamental to the perpetuation of scapegoating.[24] The destructive circularity of this viewpoint is suggested by the fact that just as these men scapegoat others, they are themselves scapegoated in turn. As noted above they are both ostracized from their respective communities, whose leaders have identified them as untrustworthy and so deserving of sacrifice.[25] The

Cop is thus removed from his investigation into The Killer and is, in the end, arrested by his fellow officers. The mob boss in turn believes that The Killer might compromise his identity, and so orders his death. That this lack of trust is unmerited[26] does not diminish the boss' belief that he will only gain peace through The Killer's destruction, a goal he pursues obsessively until he does in fact succeed. His success, however, brings in the end nothing but chaos and death.[27]

These failed attempts at gaining peace suggest in turn a possible explanation for The Killer's dominant, yet ambiguous, religious symbol, the church that literally frames the movie. The opening sequence presents The Killer's friend walking down the aisle to arrange a contract with him; as they meet in the pews the friend asks, "Do you believe in God?" The Killer responds, "No, but I enjoy the tranquility here." This remark establishes the irony of the final shootout, as the church is no longer able to provide the peace that The Killer seeks. It is itself torn apart, its most prominent icons - Madonna, cross, candles, priest - systematically destroyed. The church is also linked to violence through the direct association of The Killer with Jesus. This connection appears immediately after The Killer completes his first mission of the film, during which he is shot and seriously wounded. The bullet is extracted in a church, with The Killer gazing up at the crucifix in agony. Right before the film's final scene The Killer is shown again under this same cross, wondering if he will be betrayed. Adhering to our Girardian framework, we can see

the church as implicitly emblematic of those institutions which bring only false, fragile peace, won through (external) rituals of scapegoating and sacrifice rather than legitimate (internal) transformations requiring the hard work of trust and forgiveness.

Woo's film also implicates a more traditionally Eastern belief system, the Confucian virtue of yi, in perpetuating cycles of violence. In keeping with the film's mimetic framework, this critique is established by connecting The Cop, like The Killer, to a central religious figure. Right at the end of his first mission, The Cop's face dissolves into that of a statue of Guan Yunchang (or Guanyu), such that for a moment the two faces are superimposed on one another. In a later scene, The Cop sits in a room with this statue surrounded by lit candles as at an altar. A famed 3rd century CE general, Guan has become in China "an object of national veneration" for embodying the principles of yi.[28] Loosely translated as "righteousness," yi refers as well to an ethic of extreme loyalty and honour. Stephen Teo posits generally that a "major part of Woo's success lies in his reexamination of this concept," and specifically that yi represents the "code" which alienates both Cop and Killer from their respective societies and which in turn helps to bind them to one another in the end.[29] As such it is also the value system that enables both men to hunt down their victims mercilessly, in the secure belief that they have no right to live. And so in regards to Woo's heroes, Teo observes that "[k]illing and violence are so much a

part of their characters that they must make something meaningful out of them. In Woo's films, it is the code of yi which helps to confer meaning and moral justification."[30] The fully Girardian nature of such scapegoating - its connections to mimesis and cultural disintegration - is further suggested by C.T. Hsia's comment that "in its disregard of the laws and bonds of society, ... [yi] encourages a gang morality which is the reverse of altruism."[31]

Conclusions

In general, applying Girard's theory to The Killer reveals a film that posits very strong connections between religion and violence. In particular, the film apparently presents us with four very different sets of beliefs and institutions - yi, the Catholic Church, the police and the mob - that all function religiously to promote violence. As noted above, this conclusion directly contradicts the view that virtually all of our students have expressed about The Killer. Consequently, performing a Girardian analysis on the film has proved useful in getting students to seriously consider an interpretation that they find alien or even distasteful. Most critically, a number of students - convinced by the interpretation offered in class - have confessed that their original refusal to see connections between religion and violence in *The Killer* may have been caused by their refusal to believe that such connections are possible: by definition, according to such a view, no "genuine" religion promotes or directly participates in violence. These confessions of course

open the door very nicely to a consideration of how subjective the interpretive process can be.

One of the dangers, however, in making this point in this way - i.e., undermining students' views by using Girard's - is that students may be misled into thinking that interpretations are more legitimate, less "subjective," when they result from the authoritative application of "objective" theory. Girard's theories prove very useful in addressing this danger, however, because several critical objections to his work can, and have, been raised.[32] These tend to center around the notion that his model essentially comprises an androcentric Christian apologetic; as such it is tautological, highly unscientific, and discriminates against people and viewpoints that do not share, very simply, a heterosexual Christian male's understanding of the world.[33] Related to such criticisms is one of the most recurring complaints against Girard's work, that it is "totalizing" in nature.[34] For Girard, as we have noted, all of human culture originates with scapegoating, while all myths and all rituals have only one possible meaning, which is simultaneously the concealment and perpetuation of this process. One of the obvious problems, then, with applying Girard's theory to any cultural product is that it will always yield the same results. All of which hardly makes it an ideal interpretive tool, to say the least.

These general methodological problems with Girard's theory are supplemented by evidence that undermines its specific application to The Killer.

To start, the similarities between The Cop and The Killer are evident before either learns of the other's existence; in Girard's model, by contrast, mimesis is always caused by the rivalry itself. This rivalry is also problematic on its own, in the sense that the only person who is genuinely involved in it is The Cop. The Killer appears completely uninterested in dueling with his antagonist, and so simply does what he can to avoid him. Finally, while The Killer clearly is scapegoated by the mob, The Cop's situation is more ambiguous. Which is to say that he is in fact a loose cannon: he is reprimanded for endangering civilians and he is not only guilty of this act but is self-righteously unremorseful. He is also arrested in the end for a crime he actually does commit, deliberately and again without remorse or regret.

Our Girardian interpretation also conflicts directly with John Woo's own stated intentions in making this film, which are, interestingly, more closely in line with our students' views.[35] According to Woo, for example, the Church sincerely represents a place of peace, symbolizing "all the beauty, the truth ... the loveliness ... and the holiness" in the world. The Virgin Mary similarly "represents peace and love, the truth and the beauty and the love of God." Woo has said that the destruction of her likeness in the film makes him "sad," and compares it to the Statue of Liberty being crushed by tanks in Tianenmen Square. The church's demolition overall signifies how "war between people ... always turns heaven to hell."

Woo also has no intention of showing yi in a negative light; he in fact regards this value so highly that he passionately laments what he sees as its disappearance from modern societies, and regards those who still adhere to it as kindred to "ancient Chinese knights."[36] In this regard Teo considers *The Killer* "an elegy to the past, filled with the sort of ethical norms that Woo clearly feels have no modern-day substitutes."[37] The Killer and the Cop thus merit Woo's praise, not his censure, because they stubbornly hold on to old-fashioned notions of honour and trust which have no place in contemporary life. They are willing to sacrifice themselves for their beliefs and so become "tragic heroes" for Woo. He in fact fashioned his film as "a romantic poem" to such heroes, centrally concerned with depicting the beauty of a life which is so fragile that it may disappear in an instant, "like a cloud."[38]

Raising all of these issues, of course, does not provide a definitive, alternate interpretation to the one derived using Girard's work. In the end, this is the point of the whole exercise: to stimulate the independent use of analytical tools, largely by undermining various attempts to answer the question of what the film "really means." Woo's understanding of his own work holds no more hermeneutic authority than Girard's theories do, and yet there is enough evidence to suggest that each viewpoint has something to offer in understanding The Killer. In many ways this sounds like a simple idea, but it is a terribly difficult one to absorb in one's own

work, let alone teach to others. And it is made more so in this case by the fact that the viewpoints in question lead to contradictory interpretations: it is much more tempting to use one theory to derive a single, convincing meaning for the film than to struggle with multiple meanings that are mutually exclusive. In our discussion of *The Killer*, however, we are suggesting that no one theory either wholly "explains" a text or is even, on its own terms, unquestionable. If we can get students to seriously consider this proposition, whether in regards to their own viewpoints or to others or even to - dare we say it - ours, then we have accomplished a huge feat and likely made the rest of the term much more difficult for us in the process.

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[1] This paper was originally presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Francisco, 1997, as part of the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group. The present form of the paper would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of Henry Shiu from the Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto, who provided us with a number of critical insights into *The Killer* as well as translations from the film's original Cantonese.

[2] The Cantonese title of the film is *Diexue Shuangxiong*, a more accurate translation of which would be Two Men Covered in Spattering Blood.

[3] In this respect our paper represents pedagogical experiences and perspectives similar to those presented by Mara E. Donaldson in "Teaching Field of Dreams as Cosmogonic Myth" (*Journal of Religion & Film* 2.3 [1998]).

[4] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 31. Originally published as *La violence et le sacré* (Paris: Grasset, 1972).

[5] Girard, *Violence*, 258.

[6] These two concepts were first and most fully elaborated by Girard in, respectively, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961; translated by Yvonne Frecerro as *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965]) and *La violence et le sacré*. Excellent summaries of Girard's model in its entirety have been provided by Richard J. Golsan (*René Girard and Myth: An Introduction* [New York and

London: Garland, 1993]) and Robert Hamerton-Kelly ("Religion and the Thought of René Girard," in *Curing Violence*, ed. Theophus Smith and Mark Wallace [Sonoma: Polebridge, 1994] 3-24). Perhaps the most concise statement issued by Girard on his own theory is "Mimesis and Violence: Perspectives in Cultural Criticism," originally published in *Berkshire Review* 14 (1979), and reprinted in *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 9-19.

[7] Girard, *Deceit*, 14-16.

[8] Girard, *Deceit*, 2-3.

[9] Girard, *Deceit*, 10-11.

[10] Girard, "Mimesis," 12-13.

[11] Girard, *Violence*, 161.

[12] Girard, *Violence*, 30-31; "Mimesis," 12-13.

[13] Girard, *Violence*, 14-15, 91.

[14] Girard, *Violence*, 8; "Mimesis," 13.

[15] Girard, "Mimesis," 14.

[16] Girard, "The Anthropology of the Cross: A Conversation with René Girard," in *The Girard Reader*, 269-271. This deification is understood by Girard as the reason why the victims of ritual sacrifice are often kings, a practice which points to the ambivalence at the heart of the original act of scapegoating.

[17] Girard, *Violence*, 92.

[18] Girard, "Mimesis," 11; "Anthropology," 267.

[19]Although this violence, once again, is perpetuated in order to stave off the much greater destruction which would result if the scapegoat mechanism were not in place. Thus Girard defines religion "in its broadest sense" as "that obscurity that surrounds man's efforts to defend himself by curative or preventative means against his own violence" (*Violence*, 23).

Significantly, Girard's indictment of religion is not universal. With the publication of *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde* (Paris: Grasset, 1978; translated by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer as *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987]), he began to argue that Christianity alone provides a way out of the vicious circle of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating. It does this primarily through the New Testament gospels, which, Girard believes, are the only religious texts which facilitate awareness of these processes (*Things Hidden*, 144, 158-167). This is because they are actually written with the perspective of the scapegoat in mind, and so present the killing of Jesus as the destruction of an innocent victim (*Things Hidden*, 169-170, 208-209). Thus Girard argues that the New

Testament account of Jesus is not only unlike all other myths, but in fact is "the only text that can bring an end to all of mythology" (René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Frecerro [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986], 101). In other words, "Jesus dies, not as a sacrifice, but in order that there may be no more sacrifices" (*Things Hidden*, 210).

[20] Except where noted, we have used the original English subtitled version of the film, released in VHS format in 1991 by Circle Releasing. There are two English versions at present; one of the discrepancies between them is that in the original translation the Killer's name is Jeffrey—a reference to the main character of Jean-Pierre Melville's Le Samourai to which Woo has said that this film is an homage—while in the subsequent version he becomes John, apparently in reference to Woo himself in the sense that the character embodies ideals which Woo means to champion through his films (Woo, "Chinese Poetry in Motion," *Sight and Sound* 4.7 [July 1994] 61; see also Stephen Teo, "A Better Tomorrow—John Woo's Moral Dimension," *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* [London: British Film Institute, 1997] 177-178).

[21] A man who lives by such a code, according to Woo, "should be free to come and go as he pleases—he has no need for recognition from those around him because his actions are the most important thing" ("Poetry," 61).

[22] It is here that Jenny, a clearly (perhaps overly) gentle character, picks up a gun, points it at the Cop, and accidentally fires it; this would seem to bear out Girard's point that violence begets imitation, and spreads easily to unlikely places.

[23] Note that while this solution is not explicitly Christian by any means, it would still seem to broadly parallel Girard's sense that mimetic rivalry can only be genuinely extinguished by means of a positive act of faith.

[24] That the film is critical of such a position is suggested by The Killer's change of heart, and his confession to Jenny: "I thought the people I killed deserved to die. Now I believe everybody has the right to live."

[25] One further Girardian element of this sacrifice may be suggested by the scene in which both men are alternately shown in The Killer's chair. This chair somewhat suggests a throne, marking its occupants as kings who are about to be offered to the gods. Those who will make this offering are furthermore clearly lacking a significant degree of differentiation; this is most obviously apparent when the assassins are disguised as members of a sports team. In Girard's terms such wide-spread similarity signifies a group in a state of mimetic crisis, on the verge of self-destruction and in immediate need of a ritual victim.

[26] This becomes extremely clear after the protagonists have become friends: The Cop asks who is behind the assassination attempts on them but The Killer refuses to name names. In this way the film establishes The Killer as a true scapegoat, innocent of the accusations against him.

[27] Those who have seen the film will know that this is somewhat of an understatement.

[28] C.T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Program, 1996 [1968]), 40-41. For more information on Guan, particularly in the broader context of China's ancient military history, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Generals of the South: The Foundation*

and Early History of the Three Kingdoms State of Wu (Canberra: Australian National University, Faculty of Asian Studies, 1990).

[29] Teo, "Better Tomorrow," 175; 178-179. For commentary on the role of yi in traditional Chinese literature see Hsia, *Chinese Novel*, 86-87.

[30] Teo, "Better Tomorrow," 181.

[31] Hsia, *Chinese Novel*, 87.

[32] A number of these objections are recounted by Golsan in *René Girard*, 111-124.

[33] Girard marginalizes homosexuality, for example, by arguing that it derives from what amounts to a dysfunction of the (normative) mimetic process (see *Things Hidden*, 326-340; and "An Interview with René Girard" in Golsan, *René Girard*, 137-138). His treatment of women is similarly discriminatory: they almost never appear in his work either as victims of violence or as mimetic rivals, but only as the disputed "objects" of male desire.

[34] See, e.g., J.C. Heesterman, *The Broken World of Sacrifice: An Essay in Ancient Indian Ritual (*Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 8; Chris Shea, "Victims on Violence: 'Different Voices' and Girard," in *Curing Violence*, 257-9; Tod Swanson, "Colonial Violence and Inca Analogies to Christianity," in *Curing Violence*, 121; and Hayden White, "Ethnological 'Lie and Mythological 'Truth,'" *Diacritics* 8.1 (1978), 7.

[35] John Woo's commentary is taken from the laserdisc version of *The Killer* released by Criterion in November, 1995.

[36] Woo, "Chinese Poetry," 61.

[37] Teo, "Better Tomorrow," 178.

[38] Woo, "Chinese Poetry," 61.