Volume 24 Issue 38
Originally issued as A6

Global Journal of Human-Social Science: A
Arts & Humanities - Psychology
Volume 24 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2024
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Lynching and the Sacred in Latin America. Regarding "The part of Crimes" in 2666 of Roberto Bolaño

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GJHSS-A Classification: LCC: HN110.5.V5

LYNCHINGANDTHESACREDINLATINAMERICAREGARDINGTHEPARTOFCRIMESIN2666OFROBERTOBOLAO

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Lynching and the Sacred in Latin America. Regarding "The Part of Crimes" in 2666 of Roberto Bolaño

Juan Sebastian Ballen Rodriguez [α] & David Saenz Guerrero [σ]

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> This happened in 1993. In January 1993. After this first corpse, the murders of women began to be counted. But it's likely that there were others before. The name of the first victim was Esperanza Gómez Saldaña and she was thirteen years old. But it is probable that she was not the first victim. Perhaps for convenience, because she was the first dead in 1993, she was the first in the list. Although, surely others died in 1992. Others were left off the list or never found, buried in unmarked graves in the desert or scattered their ashes in the middle of the night, when not even the person scattering them knew where he was, what place he had come to.
>
> *Bolaño, 2004*

I. Mimetic Desire as Affective Interruption

By affective interruption we will understand a set of feelings that conspire against empathy, sincerity, and trust. Literature is the medium that best shows the dynamics of a desire that privileges rivalry and lies as strategies for the social positioning of people.

This is why, in the intellectual journey of René Girard, dialogues and interjections achieved with studious of literary criticism were remarkable. One of these decisive approaches occurs in the writing of *Romantic Lie and Novel Truth*, which took place with the father of modern stylistics Leo Spitzer, who teaches Girard the phenomenological works carried out by Max Scheler, mainly the one dedicated to *Resentment in Morality*[1] (1938).

From Nietzschean inspiration[2], takes up the approach outlined by his moral vitalism and considers

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[1] Max Scheler in his research *Resentment in Morality*, (highlights that one of the aspects that stand out in the phenomenological analysis of resentment has to do with hostility in the feeling of rivalry towards the other. Rancor will be the closest way to define the moral burden of resentment: "«Resentment» is, in fact, that retained anger, independent of the activity of the ego, which crosses the soul darkly, and ends up forming when feelings of hate or other hostile emotions are repeatedly revived; it does not yet contain any specific hostile design, but it nourishes with its blood all possible designs of this kind" (Scheler, 1938, p. 11). In another part of the same book, the Munich philosopher links the resentment with an abnormality effect in the mind that connects with revenge, perfidy, envy, and in general, with a rivalry feeling that points to the submission of the other as a strange and hostile being: "Resentment is a psychic self-intoxication, with well-defined causes and consequences. It is a permanent psychic attitude, which arises from systematically repressing the discharge of certain emotions and affections, which are in themselves normal and belong to the bottom of human nature; it has as a consequence the production of evaluative deceptions and corresponding or reciprocal value judgments. The emotions and affections that we must consider in the first place are: the feeling and impulse of revenge, hate, malice, envy, dislike, perfidy. The most important starting point in the formation of resentment is the impulse of revenge. The word «resentment» indicates, as has been said, that the emotions referred to here are based on the previous apprehension of the feelings of others; that is, that they are reactions motivated by the strangeness produced by the other. The reactive impulse that stands out is that of revenge, as opposed to the active and aggressive impulses, of unfriendly or hostile direction." (Scheler, 1938, p. 15).

[2] A Phenomenology of moral sentiment was a discovery in Nietzsche's philosophy, particularly under his repeated allusions to a history of moral sentiments that stands out in works such as "The Genealogy of Morals", *Human Too Human* or in *Aurora*. In this last work, it is worth highlighting aphorism 34, where mimetic behavior is proposed as the origin of these feelings, which, contrary to moral concepts, suggests a distancing from morality based on rational principles related to autonomy, the following of duty, etc.: "Moral feelings and moral concepts. It is evident that moral feelings are transmitted when children perceive in adults' strong propensities and aversions facing certain actions, and like monkeys, imitate propensities and aversions. In their subsequent life, where they are full of these learned and well-practiced affections, they consider the ultimate why a matter of decency, a kind of foundation that these propensities and aversions are justified, but in them these «foundations» have nothing to do with either the origin or the degree of feeling: one merely conforms to the

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that resentment in its negative perspective is defined as desire of hostility and revenge (Tomelleri, 2015, p. 9). For Nietzsche,[3] resentment is an irremediable experience of failure and is a reiterative aspect in the personality of the victims of the history of the hegemonic processes of cultural domination. Behind this intuition, a good part of moral philosophy travels throughout the twentieth century.

In the eyes of Paul Dumouchel (2015), Max Scheler y Peter Strawson, will be the philosophers who will assimilate and enhance in phenomenological key the view of moral resentment in Nietzsche. For example, Strawson, in his essay *Freedom and Resentment* (1962), considers that the sources of morality do not emanate from the confrontation between determinism or decisionism, voluntarism or autonomy, but from the real experiences of people subject to more immediate experiences with others. Moral experiences that allude to attitudes and emotions where a reactive or violent predisposition is present, which oscillates between gratitude and resentment:

> We should think that there are many different types of relationships that we can have with other people: as participants in a common interest; as members of the same family, as colleagues, friends, lovers; as fortuitous parts of a huge range of transactions and encounters. We should then think, in regard to each of these respects, as well as others, of the kind of importance we give to the attitudes and intentions towards ourselves of those with whom we associate, and of the kinds of attitudes and feelings to which we are prone *in reaction to them*. In general, we demand some degree of goodwill or respect from those who maintain such relationships with us, although the forms we ask it to take may vary widely from case to case. The range and intensity of the attitudes we adopt as a *reaction* to goodwill, its absence or its opposite do not vary less. I mentioned, specifically, resentment and gratitude: these are a couple of attitudes that are usefully opposed. But of course, there is a continuum of reactive attitudes and feelings that extend to both sides of them and—what happens to be the most comfortable area—between the two (Strawson, 1995, p. 43).

In this sense, resentment is part of an inter-subjective moral theory where mimetic experiences of praise, punishment, indignation or indifference take place. Resentment is a negative moral disposition; it is a bad predisposition that arises in rivalry generated in the relationship with others. For Strawson 1995, resentment is an experience of negativity (conflict) created interindividually. The resentful person is a subject who experiences the feeling of harm under the aspect of a certain egocentric attitude, which ends up pointing to others as the perpetrators of unjustified violence:

> Indignation and disapproval, as well as resentment, tend to inhibit, at least to limit, our goodwill towards the object of these attitudes; they tend to promote a suspension of goodwill, at least partially or temporarily. They do so in proportion to their strength; and its force results generally proportionate to the feeling of magnitude of the offense and to the degree to which the will of the agent is identified with it or indifferent to it (Strawson, 1995, p. 63).

Strawson agrees in these terms with Nietzsche and Scheler, for whom resentment is shown under the aspect of frustration. For these philosophers, resentment is part of a moral language that is carried out in the daily life that people live, and which, far from disappearing momentarily, permeates until it settles in long-lasting vengeful experiences, which are forces accumulated in a collective feeling of hate and discomfort, which tend to manifest themselves over time in social revenges and experiences related to collective panic and lynchings, motivational inputs for what will be a possible persecution of scapegoats (Doumouchel, 2015, pp. 15-26).

In this order of ideas, for Girard, the reading of resentment that comes from Nietzsche and passes through Scheler, mentions that the origin of the moral judgment is found in the mimetic desire, that is, in the experiences of resentment, indignation or even revenge.

Resentment is not an intrinsic property of the victims, but, as Girard has shown in *Romantic Lie*, the course of the mimetic desires of jealousy, envy and vanity affect without distinction the totality of the models of humanity represented by the fictional characters of the main modern novels. Of tracing the phenomenology

rule that, as a rational being, must have reasons for and against, and in particular adducible and acceptable reasons. For example, the history of moral feelings is very different to the moral concepts. The first one act before the action; the latter, only after the action, in view of the need of expressed on itself" (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 94).

[3] Criticism made by Nietzsche against Christian moral are constant, which has by root in the point that any system of values that promotes altruism or humility as purified expressions of a universalist morality hides resentment and hate towards those who declare themselves masters of themselves. For example, in Human, All Too Human, we find arguments such as the following: "17. Moral, considered as an autonomy of human beings. A good writer who puts his heart into what he/she writes wishes that another would come and reduce him/her to nothing, expounding the same matter more clearly and giving a definitive answer to all the problems that agitate him/her. The young woman in love wants to correspond with her fidelity to her lover´s infidelity. The soldier wishes to fall on the battlefield for the victory of his country, for in the triumph of the country he finds his own supreme triumph. The mother gives her child what she denies herself: sleep, food, in certain circumstances, her health and her fortune. But are all of these altruistic soul states? This moral acts with "miracles" because, according to the Schopenhauer's expression, are "impossible and, however, reals"? It is not clear that in these four cases, human beings feel more love for "something of himself/herself", for an idea, for a desire, for a creature, than for "something else of himself/herself", and that, therefore, he/she "sections" his/her being and makes one part sacrifice to the other? Is it something "essentially" different when a bad head says, "I'd rather be knocked down than give this man an inch of the way"? "The inclination to something" (desire, instinct) is found in each of these four cases, and yielding to this inclination, with all its consequences, is not, in any case, an "altruistic" action. In morality, human being is not treated as an "*individuum*", but as a "*dividuum*" (Nietzsche, pp. 1953, 49-50).

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of mimetic desire that Girard proposes as philosophical analytic to modern literature, studies on resentment in Nietzsche and Max Scheler would have to consider. In both philosophical bets, resentment is presupposed by mimetic rivalry.

On the other hand, the deployment of feelings analogous to the possession of goods or persons only becomes possible in the dynamics of conflict. The life of democratic societies, which, under the plane of secularization, usually frames the social existence of people in function of an ideal of equality, freedom and fraternity, sees its promise of social justice truncated on account of resentment.

Scheler and Nietzsche agrees on a definition of resentment from the perspective of mimetic violence: and this is so because of violence of the mimetic desire in resentment is based on a self-inflicted hate that tends to be transferred to the accuser (Pintor Ramos, 1978, pp. 262-263).

The interindividual conflict of resentment is proven in the displacement of the self-hate towards a hate directed at the other. This dynamic of individual and social violence is practiced indistinctly by fictional characters studied by Girard in *Romantic Lie*. For the Spanish philosopher Antonio Pintor Ramos (1978), who comments on the contributions made by the aforementioned philosophers (Scheler and Nietzsche), he describes in the following way the reactive nucleus that defines resentment as follows:

> A psychic *self-poisoning* that develops from certain affections, in themselves natural -envy and revenge, mainly-, which, when *repressed* externally by a feeling of impotence, act inwards and create a perennial infectious focus; this leads to an essentially reactive and passive behavior that leads to a distortion of the image of the world, to a mood of hate against values and, finally, to a falsification of the right axiological scale in favor of a subjective scale based on our particular interests (Pintor Ramos, 1978, p. 262).

As it can be seen in the aforementioned comment, the resentful person in certain way is a victim of the plague of self-disdain that contaminates the character, infesting in others the virus of this violence where self-inflicted hate and its mimetic topologies of envy and revenge predominate. The axiology of a resentful person deconstructs all the values of equality and justice that have been defended by the liberal models in the social order. For example, for Tomelleri (2015), democratic institutions and their secular aspirations of valuating neutrality or secularization are inhabited by the experiences of resentment, a mimetic desire that reveals human being's inability to abandon his/her particular selfishness to assume a general will where order, correction or justice prevail.

Nietzsche is the one who describes resentment in a negative perspective. He defines it as the disease of the weak. The resentful person is so on account of his/her own inferiority. The use of social values such as forgiveness or mercy are disguises for vengeful behavior that hides the true intentions of the social revanchist; the resentful person is the one who takes advantage of disdain and even tolerance for the weakest as an opportunity for social recognition, a situation that makes him/her think that through deception it is possible to shorten the gap between the victims and the victimizers, the weak and the strong.

The resentful person is not a free human being, but lives in codependence with the violence of the aggressor who has despised his moral being, based on a kind of ethical egocentrism (individualism, myth of autonomy, idolatry or narcissism we would say with Girard). The philanthropy that is breathed in liberal or republican humanitarianism is not resolved in favor of solidarity with the victims, but is shown as failed resentments.

As can be seen in the analysis of the crimes in the novel 2666, the motivating power that explains resentment as a simulacrum of equality or humanitarianism, is the mimetic desire, or the psychic and moral tendency to see the other as a rival[4]. This false behavior that disguises resentment has two ways of showing itself according to the aforementioned philosophical stakes: for Nietzsche, resentment is a moral quality of the Christian, which turns weakness into a strength; for Scheler it is in bourgeois life that resentment acquires the aspects of lies and hypocrisy[5]. In this sense, Girardo's bet is inscribed in the perspective of sociological, moral and phenomenological analysis proposed by the Munich philosopher for whom the life of the bourgeois man, as described in *Romantic Lie*, obeys the mimetic conflict and its manifestation in the topologies of desire. These experiences of mimetic desire are identifiable in the dramas of the characters of modern novels when they go through the typically bourgeois violence of jealously, vanity, unfolding, dandyism, hypocrisy, etc. (Dumouchel, 2015, pp. 22-26).

II. The Crowd and Sacrifice: About Lynching

Resentment, hate and in general the set of sad passions that derive from the violent mimesis are the

[4] This can be seen in the novel we are analyzing, particularly in the attitude of the parishioners when they learned that the temple was being sacrilege by the demon-possessed penitent, while the successive crimes against women are axiologically neglected.

[5] This is what happens, for example, in the part of the story where the body of an Afro woman is found, whose dead body lies in a garbage dump near a television factory, and those who find the body do not feel affected by the desacralization of a female human body, but because it represents a nuisance that must be disposed of. These descriptions correspond to the feelings of hypocrisy and cynicism to which the philosopher Max Scheler refers with regard to the affective lifestyle in bourgeois societies.

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fuel that feeds the sacrificial dynamic. Lynching is that process where the crowd chooses a scapegoat and, in some way, founds a new social order. The crowd and lynching are part of a pact that question the theory of the political animal that rides in republican thought, as well as on the Greek and Roman formulations that have laid the foundations of the legal and political thought of Western civilization on the banners of public deliberation and the election of political representatives.

An emblematic philosopher such as Jean Jacques Rousseau placed within a set of civil values that explained the origin of the State in categories such as social contract, equality, justice or sovereignty of the people. Contrary to this political theory, Girard puts before the power of violent unanimity, which is established in society through a type of madness that blinds and reproduces the social logic of revenge: we speak of the establishing power of crowd. For our thinker, political authority is not properly the sovereignty of the people, much less the civil religion that constitutes the political power of the social contract, but the madness of unanimous violence that is expressed in the religious category of the 'crowd' (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 29).

Girard chooses his examples from the Gospel. Take for example the stories of King Herod who intended to save John the Baptist or Pilate wanting to save Jesus; however, the pressure of the crowd is stronger and it is the masses, blinded by the thirst for compensation and sacrifice, who order King Herod to give the head of John the Baptist, and it is the popular force that demands that Pilate hand over Jesus and not Barabbas. As our thinker states in *La voix mécconnue du réel* (2002): "The two political leaders end up giving in to the mimetic pressure; now they are part the crowd"[6] (Girard, 2002, p. 186. *The translation is ours*).

The political representatives of these societies surrender to the dictates of the crowd, and all are infected by the one-dimensional power of violence. This perspective that thinks of the social order in direct relation to the unanimity of violence (which is tragic and undifferentiated) questions at the root the critical tendencies coming from Marxism and that consecrate social justice to a kind of general will or unanimous consent that acts as the foundation of the State (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 29). Popular consent is not aimed at political emancipation, but on the contrary, it is a violent force that infects everyone, including their political representatives.

In this sense, it is illuminating to locate the foundation of society in the death of the scapegoat. Above all, to distinguish the one-dimensional power that dominates in popular sentiment that demands sacrifice as a kind of violence that enters into the dynamics of religious belief, as a political form of common sense. The link with the law is given from the unanimous violence and the celebration of the death of the scapegoat. Now, in the diverse set of authors who are part of the history of modern contractualism and in which the mimetic theory maintains a special relationship, the links with the conception of the werewolf animal by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) are highlighted. In fact, for the English thinker, the social contract arises in the violent transition that occurs between the state of nature and the political state. As Girard distinguishes in the *Origins of culture* (2006):

> When the mimetic attraction of the rival grows, the object that is at the origin of the conflict tends progressively to fade (...), it breaks, it is destroyed, in the midst of the colossal of all those who compete for it (...) When this happens, doubles proliferate, and the mimetic crisis spreads and intensifies more and more. This is the phenomenon observed by the great English political scientist Hobbes, «who called it the struggle of all against all» (Girard, 2006, p. 62).

Hobbes is the political thinker who considers the mimetic crisis as a foundational element of the State. Taking a deeper look at this analysis, it is discovered that in the struggle of all against all, fear emerges as a social fact that moves the choice of the scapegoat. According to Dubouchet (2016), violence prevails in the state of nature. Violence is the principle of chaos that serves as an element prior to the principle of the political order that prefigures the appearance of a state social system. Also in Hobbes' political thought is the 'pact of association-submission' which gives rise to the 'pact of representation'; this translated into the language of the scapegoat is nothing more than the fear of the crowd that transfers authority to a fictitious person who represents it and who is nothing more than the State, the *Leviathan*, symbol of monstrous unanimity (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 31).

The crowd and sacrifice are the persecutory representation that founds social unity and generates the illusion of a social contract. This social fact reveals the original violence that goes back to the fratricide between Abel and Cain, which is the same violence that is unleashed between Eteocles and Polynices for the conquest of the Theban people and the same rupture that is identified between Romulus and Remus for the domination of the Roman people. The great difference that Girard discovers between the sacrificial story told in the Bible and that narrated by the myths and tragedies of Greek and Roman histories, is that while in the former violence is denounced, in the latter it is not only approved, but is exalted as a conquest that the virtuous boast of experiencing, the men of caste, that is, the victimizers (Dubouchet, 2016, pp. 34.-35).

The social contract is the designation of a scapegoat that seeks to put an end to mimesis by

[6] "*Les deux chefs finissent donc par céder à la pression mimétique; ils font désormais partie de la foule*" (Girard, 2002, p. 186).

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appropriation, thereby establishing the mimesis of reconciliation that must be prolonged as long as possible for its perpetuation in the rite. Modern visions that place the origin of the State from the ignorance of the foundation of communities linked to the sacrificial rite omit from the evidence of ethnology, according to which ancient societies practiced the political establishment of a sacred kingdom whose origin is related to the model of a primordial legislator (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 35).

What does this model of the primordial legislator consist of? All research related to the immolation of political leaders in African cultures are a study assimilated by Girard in *Violence and the Sacred*, a work in which the French thinker gives an account of a good number of proofs from ethnography, which indicate that the axiomatic basis of societies in their primitive origins connects with a sacrificial practice that reveals for religious anthropology even for anthropology itself (Dubouchet, 2016, pp. 36-37). For Girard, and as has been proven in this second chapter of the investigation, all human institutions have made an effort to reproduce a "reconciling lynching" that, looking for new victims, is satisfied with one that would be the original one. This original victim embodies the twofold requirement of a good sacrifice: it is sacred because it claims to be the last victim of violence, thereby ensuring an end to the reproduction of mass violence of all against all, and catalyzing social reconciliation.

The principal of political and religious sovereignty is discovered when the sacrificial represents the political leader or king. The monarch is neither more nor less than the good conductor of sacrifice, the 'sovereign victim'. For Dubouchet (2016), this discovery of ethnology is revealing for political theology, because it turns sovereignty into an exemplary sacrificial rite, that is, it motivates the replacement of intense violence with unanimous reconciliation. In the opinion of the French interpreter:

> What confirms the origin of the monarchy's sacrifice are the humiliations and ignominy to which the king is subjected before his enthronement: there are all kinds of mistreatment, such as scourge, which makes him swallow dirty food, being more symptomatic to make him commit incest that takes on a ritual value. Girard recalls that María Antoinette was accused of incest before being taken to the guillotine[7] (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 37).

The models of violent unanimity and that have the death of the monarch as their most distinguished sacrificial form, are related to other forms of sacrifice that are narrated in the Gospels, such as those related to death by stoning, which is the case of the adulterous woman proscribed by the Mosaic law, or that of Christ crucified. In both types of immolation, it stands out as a proven fact that the 'primordial legislation' has to do with an execution where the unanimity of the participants has been added to a collective determination that aims at the lynching of the scapegoat (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 39).

With this sacrificial vision of political power comes a vision of evil in the world where it is noted that the divine operates in the history of men by subtraction of matter or absence. As evoked by the French philosopher André Comte-Sponville (2009), with regard to the vision of evil as a way of proving the existence of God in the lives of human beings, the vision of the mystic and activist Simone Weil stands out, which is condensed in her notebooks (*Cahiers*, 1941-1943), a work that serves as a philosophical testament. The philosopher's thoughts are very similar to Girard's conception of violence, primarily on the theme of the crowd and the solicitude of sacrifice. In a clear evocation of the Gospel of St. John, for the poet and philosopher, the immolation of the lamb is proof of God's withdrawal from the creation of the world, a sacrificial situation that testifies not only to the existence of evil in history, but also a criticism of a vision of divinity as a stimulus for the development and moral and social progress of human society. The God who sacrifices himself is the God of subtraction, diminution or amputation. In this way his retreat has allowed evil to operate in the world:

> The Creation, writes Simone Weil, is not on God's part an act of expansion of himself, but of subtraction and renunciation. God and all creatures are less than God alone. God has accepted this diminution. Emptiness of oneself, a part of being. In this act, he emptied himself of his divinity. That is why St. John says that the lamb was beheaded.

From the very moment of the constitution of the world (Comte-Sponville, 2009, p. 123).

This idea of the amputated divinity, which is identified in the figure of the immolation of the king in analogy to the sacrifice of the lamb, in addition to subtracting the existence of the scapegoat from the violence of a lynching marked by the cruelty and disdain of the crowd, accounts for an idea of God as weakness and, in the last analysis, as a renunciation of the project of a perfect and finished creation. The fragile existence of the divine that is manifested in the atonement is analogous to the frailty of the scapegoat when he gives himself up to the lynching of the crowd. We will say that finitude is one of the characteristic notes of this sacrificial anthropology of the religious that shows us metaphorically that the human universal as well as the divine are vulnerable existences. Not surprisingly, all literary records, such as ethnographic ones, that describe the deficient and defective personality of the

[7] "*Ce qui confirme l'origine sacrificielle de la monarchie, ce sont les humiliations et ignominies q'on fait subir au roi Avant son intronisation: il s'agit de toutes sortes de sévices tels que le flageller, lui faire ingurgiter des nourritures immondes, le plus symptomatique étant de lui faire commette l'incest qui prend une valeur rituelle. Ainsi Girard rapelle que Marie-Antoinette fut accusée d'inceste Avant d'être conduite à la guillotine*" (Dubouchet, 2016, p. 37. The translation is ours).

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scapegoat, show his labile and violence-laden existence. This is how Girard describes it in an essay entitled *There are not only interpretations, but there are also facts*:

> In order for my thesis on the scapegoat to be considered valid, it must not only confirm some mythological data, but all of them. (…) Some of the characteristics of mythological heroes indirectly confirm the founding role of the atoning persecution in the structure of mythology. (…). Many heroes have characteristics that are not specific to their individual «identity» since they appear in numerous myths, but they do indicate their identity as victims. They possess attributes that, in a primitive and closed community, single out certain individuals, giving them over to abuse and persecution. It is something banal and significant. Many mythical heroes are sick, disabled or afflicted with ailments and anomalies that, unfortunately, tend to unleash the hostility of others against them. A large number of mythical heroes limp or have lost an eye, an arm or a leg; others have characteristics that would still bother them today: they can, for example, smell tremendously bad. All this explain the fact that in the end are divinized, precisely because they have been victimized. Other heroes are so poor that they have nothing left but to beg. Others, extremely ugly or, on the contrary, so incredibly favored in terms of wealth, physical strength, personal charisma, etc., that they arouse an envy that can become the main cause of their reduction to scapegoats." (Girard, 2011, pp. 144-145).

III. Femicide and Lynching in the Part of the Crimes in 2666

One of the essential notes of Latin American literature, and in particular the one created by a writer like Roberto Bolaño in the mid-80s, alludes to its great mimetic and phenomenological potential by showing as if it were a forensic report the traces of a series of murders or femicides that occur in Mexico. In other words, Bolaño's literature shows a great capacity to manifest evil and the human way that frames it within the Latin and Central American idiosyncrasy, characterized by social contrasts and marked differences between men and women, economic inequalities and specifically by the sacrificial power exercised by violence in relation to the ways of inscribing torture on the victim's body, which unfortunately aims at the destruction of the woman's humanity.

All these analytical elements are part of the affective interruptions that make up the sacrificial process of a victim. For example, the story of the death of Esperanza Gómez Saldaña that occurs in 1993 and at the age of 13, is shocking because of its cruelty and the message of power and violence that the murderer inscribes on the victim's body: "Esperanza Gómez Saldaña had been strangled to death. She had bruises on her chin and left eye. Severe bruising on the legs and ribs. She had been raped vaginally and anally, probably more than once, as both ducts had tears and abrasions from which she had bled profusely. (Bolaño, 2004, p. 444).

Scandal is one of the variables that identifies sacrificial deaths of women in *The part of crimes* in 2666. The media use these deaths as if it were a media spectacle where the *modus operandi* used by the perpetrator takes on more prominence, as well as the identification of his place of origin (it is suspected that the femicide is Salvadoran or Guatemalan), than the destroyed humanity of the victim.

On the other hand, in the story about Isabel Urrea it is evident that the dynamics of the sacrificial scandal is accompanied by other analogous experiences such as disdain, indifference and in a terrifying way anonymity, which destroys the memory of the deceased, since the autopsy of her corpse is lost in the bureaucratic process between the courts:

> The murder of Isabel Urrea, aired for the first three days by her radio station and by her newspaper, was attributed to a frustrated robbery, the work of a madman or a drug addict who surely wanted to take over her car. The theory also circulated that the perpetrator of the crime could be a Central American, a Guatemalan or Salvadoran, a veteran of the wars in those countries, who collected money by any means before moving to the United States. There was no autopsy, in deference to his family, and the ballistic examination was never released and in some back and forth between the courts of Santa Teresa and Hermosillo he was definitively lost. (Bolaño, 2004, p. 447).

In another death of a woman, the narrator manages to describe the coldness of the men who assist a victim. In the dialogue between the nurse, the sharpener and the paletero, the death of the woman does not produce any kind of moral or religious consideration. The female body is a nuisance and the great problem of those who assist her has to do with their responsibility:

> An ambulance must be called, said the sharpener. This woman is dying. After a while, an ambulance from the hospital and the nurses wanted to know who was responsible for the transfer. The sharpener explained that he and the paletero had found her lying on the ground. I know, said the nurse, but what is interesting to know is who is responsible for her. How am I going to take responsibility for this woman if I don't even know her name? said the sharpener. Well, someone must have the responsibility, said the nurse. Have you become deaf, ox? said the sharpener as he took a huge carving knife from a drawer of his little cart. (Bolaño, 2004, pp. 447-448).

Violence against women is a type of sacrifice where the victim is not retaliated in any way. This is brought out in the story about the dead body of a woman of color, found with signs of strangulation and rape and pregnant in the garbage dump of a transnational television factory. The managers of the company, the first witnesses of the dead body found in the garbage dump of the factory and which is made up

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of Mexican and American men unanimously, present an undifferentiated violence, which despises the body of the deceased in a uniform way. One of these actually pays money to the police to accelerate the lifting process in face of the ambulance's delay:

> The notice about the finding of the dead woman was given by the foreman of one of the plants, Multizone-West, who worked in partnership with a transnational that manufactured televisions. The police who came to look for her found three executives of the maquila industry waiting for them next to the garbage dump. Two were Mexicans and the other was American. One of the Mexicans said that they preferred that the body was picked up as soon as possible. The policeman asked where the dead body was, while its partner called the ambulance. The three executives accompanied the policeman into the dump. The four of them held their noses, but when the American uncovered it, the Mexicans followed him. The dead woman was a woman with dark skin and straight black hair down below her shoulders. She was wearing a black sweatshirt and short pants. The four men stared at her. The American bent down and with a pen moved away hear hair from the neck. It is better that the gringo does not touch her, said the policeman. I don't touch her, said the American in Spanish, I just want to see her neck. The two Mexican executives bent down and observed the marks the dead woman had on her neck. Then, they raised and looked at the time. The ambulance is late, one of them said. It's just coming, said the policeman. Well, said one of the executives, you are in charge of everything, right? The policeman said yes, of course, and put the pair of bills that the other handed him in the pocket of his regulation trousers. That night the dead woman spent it in a refrigerated chamber of the Santa Teresa hospital and the next day one of the forensic surgeon's assistants performed an autopsy. She had been strangled. She had been raped. For both conduits, the forensic surgeon's assistant noted. And she was five months pregnant. (Bolaño, 2004, pp. 449-450).

The confusion increases when femicides in the region of Santa Teresa are stopped by a church profaner: the possessed penitent. This situation shows that public opinion is a crowd, and the way in which justice operates in this type of mimetic dynamics has lynching as a favorite mechanism where the violent reaction of a collective confirms total impunity, because from one moment to the next the cruelty of death against women is forgotten, to be replaced by the protagonism exercised by an ordinary man, persecuted and blamed for his immoral behavior against sacred places: "The attack on the churches of San Rafael and San Tadeo had a greater echo in the local press than the women murdered in the previous months" (Bolaño, 2004, p. 459)

It is clear that the power of the crowd is not only motivated by social resentment but also by the ignorance that promotes spectacle that determines us as a society mediated by a communicative instance that privileges the goat over the scapegoat:

> Two days later, the stranger entered the church of Santa Catalina, in the Lomas del Toro neighborhood, at a time when the enclosure was closed, and urinated and defecated on the altar, in addition to decapitating almost all the images he found in his path. The news this time came out in the national press and a journalist from La Voz de Sonora baptized the aggressor as the Possessed Penitent. (Bolaño, 2004, p. 460)

In the plane of the lynching of the crowd, this chooses a male victim who appears as a distracting agent or mediation of deception (it is the goat, which replaces the scapegoat, and serves as a deception or illusion), surpassing the femicide perpetrator and the remembrance of the true innocent victims of the crimes that occur in the territory. In other words, the murdered of women remains unpunished in such way that the aggressor is replaced by a church profaner.

IV. Conclusions

Definitely, when the monument profaner surpasses the story of the rapist, we can maintain that it is clear that evil operates by subtraction of matter, or absence of God, as Girard, Sponville and Simone Wille propose. Now, from the perspective of the narrator of the novel, the ideas of thinkers are dynamized as follows:

> In May, no other women died, except for those who died of natural death, that is, of illness, old age or childbirth. But at the end of the month the case of the church profaner began. One day an unknown guy entered the church of San Rafael, on Patriotas Mexicanos Street, in the center of Santa Teresa, at the time of the first mass. The church was almost empty, only a few blessed women were crowded into the first benches, and the priest was still locked in the confessional. The church smelled incense and cheap cleaning products. The stranger sat down in one of the last benches and knelt at once, his head buried in his hands as if he were heavy or sick. Some blessed women turned to look at him and whispered between them. An old woman came out of the confessional and stood motionless contemplating the stranger, while a young woman with indigenous features entered to confess. When the priest absolved the sins of the Indian, the mass would begin. But the old woman who had come out of the confessional stared at the stranger, quiet, although sometimes she rested her body on one leg and then on the other and this made her take a few dance steps. She immediately knew that something was not right with that man and wanted to approach the other old women to warn them. As he walked down the central aisle, she saw a liquid stain spreading on the floor from the bench occupied by the stranger and perceived the smell of urine. Then, instead of continuing to walk towards where the blessed women were crowd together, she retraces his path and returned to the confessional. With her hand she knocked several times on the priest's window. I'm busy daughter, he told her. Father, said the old lady, there is a man who is defiling the house of the Lord. Yes, my daughter, I will attend you in a moment, said the priest. Father, I don't like what's going on at all, do something, for the love of God. As she spoke, the old lady seemed to dance. In a moment daughter, a little of patient,

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> I'm busy, said the priest. Father, there is a man who is relieving himself in the church, said the old lady. The priest put his head out through the threadbare curtains and searched in the yellowish gloom for the stranger, and then he left the confessional and the woman with indigenous features also came out of the confessional and the three of them remained motionless looking at the stranger who moaned weakly and did not stop urinating, wetting his pants and causing a river of urine that ran into the atrium, confirming that the corridor, as the priest feared, had a worrying slope. Then he went to call the sacristan, who was drinking coffee sitting at the table and seemed tired, and both approached the stranger to reproach him for his behavior and proceed to throw him out of the church. The stranger saw their shadows and looked at them with tear-filled eyes and asked them to leave him alone. Almost immediately a knife appeared in his hand and while the blessed women in the first benches shouted, he stabbed the sacristan. (Bolaño, 2004, pp. 453-454)

Those who attack women – who are the real victims in Bolaño's story – are governed by the principle of mimetic desire, given that with the passage of time in Santa Teresa, the aggressors imitate the way in which murderers kill their victims: they imitate violence against women, they imitate the places where they throw their dead bodies. In short, they imitate a *modus operandi* where the woman's body is the place where sacrificial violence is inscribed, despite a sacrifice without transcendence.

To sum up, lynching is a type of sacrifice where the crowd is fed by the negative affections of resentment, hate and disdain. We could call these motivational inputs as the set of sad passions that make an affective interruption of a sacrificial process where peace and reconciliation do not take place.

Therefore, in order to analyze the relationship between lynching and the sacred in a more in-depth way, we have chosen to analyze a case study of Latin American literature: 2666 of Roberto Bolaño. It has been discovered that in the part of *The Crimes*, there is a character, called by the press and the people, the *Possessed Penitent*. This is entered into a Catholic temple while the locals pray, or sleep. First, he chooses the place of the assembly to urinate, days later, in other temples, he chooses the altar and other *sacred places*, to make stools. The citizens are outraged, to the point that, if they find the whereabouts of the *Penitent*, we infer that they would resort to lynching. This penitent is not just any penitent, is a possessed penitent. Having this characteristic, he needs to be the object of sacrifice, in other words, lynching.

However, in the city where these events occur, Santa Teresa (Mexico), the dead bodies of women who have been murdered, impaled, raped and tortured are found daily on the roads. Such a situation does not generate indignation in the citizenry, to the point that it can be interpreted that the people only want to find the *Possessed Penitent* to lynch him.

Likewise, it has been stated throughout the essay that, for the inhabitants of Santa Teresa, the sacred is not the lives of women, but the purity of the Catholic temple. Therefore, we appreciate there that lynching is one of the ways that Latin American culture has had to appease the anger that the violation of the sacred produces.

In the Colombian context, lynchings generally occur when there has been a theft, robbery, which allows us to say that, what is sacred in this context, is the violation of private property. Nor is there outrage over the violent deaths that have occurred in recent times.

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