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Автори опублікованих матеріалів несуть повну відповідальність за підбір, точність наведених фактів, цитат, економіко-статистичних даних, власних імен та інших відомостей. Редколегія залишає за собою право скорочувати й редагувати подані матеріали. Рукописи не повертаються.

їхніх наслідків. Вона зазнає семантичного зсуву в бік навмисних терористичних акцій агресора, направлених проти цивільного населення. Тим самим війна перетворюється на різновид абсурду. Все-таки варто погодитись зі слухними зауваженнями М. Бердяєва, який стверджував: "...війна не має смислу, не може бути явищем смислу, війна є безглуздою, є наругою над смислом, в ній діють ірраціональні та фатальні сили. Єдиною метою війни є перемога над ворогом" [1, с. 14].

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ON THE (IN)COMPATIBILITY OF THE CONCEPTS OF RELIGION AND WAR

This text needs to start with an apology of its insufficiency: while it will try to examine the (in)compatibility of the notions of *war* and *religion*, it is a piece utterly unknowledgeable about war, and only vaguely applicable to the relationship between religion and war. It is a highly personal take – another academic fault – but how can one impersonally and dispassionately speak of matters concerning the very essence of humanness, when it is being systematically threatened? One cannot and should not resign to indifference in the face of moral, physical and metaphysical evil.

The evil that is hard to comprehend, absolutely unmediated and thoroughly relentless – as conceived, constructed, executed in the form of an unprovoked war, surely seems to have very little to do with religion, if religion is to be understood in its most common (etymology-based) sense: like the (re-)connection with something or someone holy, divine, supreme; or the careful dedicated care given to something or someone (or a mutual relationship of giving and receiving).

If religion is the phenomenon of believing in, relating to, and communicating with something (someone) sacred, in a clear sacred-profane division of reality and understanding of realms, again, war has very little to do with the concept. Of course, so-called holy wars are fought, and in such instances, some competing religious worldviews are at stake, some divine command is acknowledged, and some religious purposes (or objectives) are established. Just because something is said to be done in the name of religion, or to be sanctioned by some holy power, does not mean that it is essentially sacred itself. Wars that have been labeled as religious often had other motivations, such as political, social, economic, or ethnic reasons and triggers for the start and the prolongation of the conflict. It can be claimed that the arguments on religion and violence serve the Western ideas of the broader Enlightenment narrative in which the religious-secular dichotomy functions. In this sense, the religious is irrational, impulsive and dangerous, as opposed to the rational, secular forms of power, the violence in whose name is, thus, proper and laudable

[Cavanaugh, 2009, 4-5]; while a certain type of violence is deplored, another type of violence is legitimized [op. cit., 16].

However, it can be claimed that religion and violence are necessarily connected, especially in Girard's theory on violence and the sacred. For Girard violence is at the heart of the sacred. At the core of Girard's mimetic theory is the idea that people are led by a (mimetic) desire for something either possessed by someone else, or coveted by someone else. This triangularity (subject-object-mediator relation) is a prolific source of violence. The mimetic conflict is contagious – the desire to possess that which is desired by another develops not because of the thing (object, quality), but because of the threat by the other, which transforms the mimetic conflict into general antagonism. Furthermore, the antagonists do not mimic the desires of the other, but the antagonism: the desire for the possession of the same thing, turns into a desire to destroy a common enemy. A surge of violence is directed towards a mutually acceptable (random) victim, a designated "culprit" towards which the mimetically intensifying hatred (or at least antipathy) is felt. The removal of this victim temporarily appeases the desire for violence, and the conflict is resolved [Girard, 1978: 128, pass; on Girard's scapegoat mechanism, see Todorovska, 2017, 54-60]. Simply put, when problems and tensions build up, the scapegoat serves to reconcile the parties involved; its removal from the community temporarily solves the problems, before the cycle begins again.

The scapegoat mechanism relies on the status and the role of a chosen (surrogate) victim, onto which evil, guilt, problems and failings are transferred, so it can serve as a vehicle and remove them from the collective in which they had accumulated, thus becoming the "saviour" of the community. The phenomena that involve the perpetuation (through commemoration and repetition) of group coherence by ways of disposal (through murder or banishment) of a surrogate victim are essentially sacred, or religious. Religious conflict, following Girard's ideas of triangularity of desire, tension and release through the scapegoat mechanism, deflects intragroup violence onto a third party, an external (common) enemy. This intergroup

violence serves to deflate and appease the conflict among the former enemies by providing a new focus for the tension. The function of sacrifice, insists Girard, is to appease violence and prevent the escalation of conflicts [Girard, 1972: 30]. While these ideas on the socio-psychological aspects of the emergence and treatment of conflict shed light on some important religious, cultural and anthropological mechanisms, it would be unsuitable and unjustified to apply them to the waging of an unprovoked full-scale war. The desires for something which someone else possesses are only one part of the motivation (and goals), when the stakes are clearly and cruelly higher, and directed towards the obliteration of the essence of being, of identity, of self-determination.

It is staggering how often formulations pertaining to, or stemming from (the general framework of) religious language are used to depict war experiences, as are the religious notions and categories, like apophatic language (no words to describe the Absolute, or God, and no words to describe the singular experience of being at war, of fighting against an unjust assailant, of being targeted, assaulted, tortured, obliterated). The ubiquitous likening of war to hell, or hell on earth (as hell is a concept much too broad and theologically layered to simply be thus used) serves to demonstrate how horrible war is, despite the innocent victims of war being completely different from the sinners punished in hell. Speaking of war as hell on earth diminishes both the (religious and theological) reality of hell and the gravity of war as the utmost targeted threat to life, well-being, dignity, and freedom on earth; the intensity of war and of hell; and the point (or lack thereof) of war, and the purpose of hell. If hell is understood as a place, war is conceived as some sort of transposition of this hellish topos on earth, and if hell is a state, then war can be conceived as a manifestation of this state in some earthly circumstances, which downplays the severity of war and presupposes an (uninvited) overlapping of theological conceptions. War should not be explained away as some insane unleashed horror in an attempt to destroy as much as possible, either, for it is planned, meticulously ordered and executed in the suffering it inflicts, the losses it causes, the destruction it brings. War is never banal (loss of life and happiness should never be reduced to banality), although its inception might be an example of the banality, or of the fickleness, of evil.

The millennia old (*Poem of Erra*) tells the story of the slumbering Erra (most often considered a god of mayhem and pestilence, a warrior in this case), who is prompted to go on a campaign of terror and destruction by his hellish companions, the Seven demons (Sebettu/Sibitti, warriors without a rival), who are restless, having long neglected their weapons and the practicing of their wicked skills [I, 87-90], but are also, simply and banally, bored. They convince Erra, once horribly threatening, to abandon his cozy rest, and return to the wilderness, to the austere but invigorating conditions of weapon-wielding, creature-striking, environment-decimating, godly fear-inducing, and the prestige of battle [I, 43-59]. Erra has an agenda to take over Marduk's throne, by using deception and by pretending that he only wants it temporarily, and that he has the world's best interests at heart (people have stopped respecting the gods, so Erra will make Marduk leave his dwelling, and will execute the punishment which humanity deserves [I, 119-123]. While Marduk warns about the last time he had

abandoned the throne, when it brought upon an end of the world as it was known, Erra pushes with his plans: a whirlwind of violence and atrocities commences, and spirals into greater chaos, where no social or moral rules apply, and a rampage of indiscriminate killing ensues. After a myriad of self-aggrandizing statements, and cursing tantrums by Erra, and a careful intervention of convincing him to stop with the violence by Ishum (the only one capable of exerting control over the Seven) [V, 40-60], the story shows a placated Erra, who withdraws together with the Seven (demons). The world is saved, albeit decimated. Erra is frustratingly relevant now, as is the understanding that when non-violence has failed in preventing violence, violence will grow more atrocious, as unpunished evil stays (or returns) intensified.

The unspeakable terror and the ineffability of suffering in war are often framed in (apophatic) terms of privations, negations, and abstractions, typical for referring to the unspeakable nature of God in negative theology. Only, the suffering of people subject to the horrors of war and genocide, is not about ineffable greatness and super-excellence and hyper-being, like in philosophy of religion. It is the small impossible expressions, the failed speech, the (un)exclamations with(out) sound, for how can it be expressed how it feels to be systematically targeted for simply being who you are and living independently; how can it be explained how it truly feels to experience fear that it is going to be you to be brutally killed or mangled next, or your loved ones; and gratitude when it is not the case (this time); and remorse for feeling relieved, along with the horror that it is inevitably someone else; the righteous anger and motivation for dignified resistance; the longing for the ones away and the ones gone forever; the nostalgia for the normalcy that will never return as it once was. The ineffable language of war is raw, cruel, gut-wrenching, heart-sinking, tears-inducing. It is sheer pain and pure feistiness, blood and light.

Another religious category mentioned often in the context of war is forgiveness. However, to even begin to consider the conditions for forgiveness, the offending party should acknowledge its role, and try to repent.

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