Mimetic Desire and Gentile Rabbis

− Luther's Hebraism from a Girardian Perspective −

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Abstract

This paper applies the theories of Rene Girard, known as mimetic theory, to the scholarly and polemical work of Martin Luther.　It will demonstrate how Martin Luther's theory of hermeneutics (=textual interpretation) was both informed and distorted by a combination of imitation and rivalry with other Hebraists, both gentile and Jewish.　Although the painful contradiction exhibited by Martin Luther's Hebraism/anti−Judaism is a staple of modern scholarship, mimetic theory allows us to place it in a wider framework than one which evokes either approval or condemnation of the personal attitudes expressed in Luther's rhetoric.　Thus mimetic theory, by placing the duality of Luther in a larger sociological context, allows us to make a less biased approach to the substance of his theology.　The investigation of Luther's *memisis* begins by acknowledging that the duality in Luther is a reflection of the ego/alterego doubling which Girard draws attention to.　It goes on to show how the object of Luther's spiritual and intellectual life was mediated by models, first patristic and then rabbinical.　A distinction is noted between the attitude of other Christian Hebraists and Luther, a distinction which is characterized more by acquisition of knowledge than rivalry on the part of the former scholars.　In mimetic theory the movement to full−fledged rivalry is characterized by scarcity or exclusivity of the object.　Luther provides this exclusivity by insisting on unequivocal meaning in scripture, in contrast to the multi−layered hermeneutic of the kabbalists, both Jewish and Christian.　Exclusivity engenders the "mimetic crisis" in which the subject must move to expel the model from possession of the object.　In Luther's case the mimetic crisis is expressed in his hermeneutic *Treatise On the Last Words of David*, where he seeks to displace the interpretive rules of the rabbis with his own.　Although this *Treatise* is a deeply flawed work, mimetic theory reveals to us the forces which deformed its content, thus allowing us to separate its vulgar rhetoric from whatever may be of lasting value in its dialectical arguementation.

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I. The usefulness of Girardian thought in distinguishing the content of Luther's thought from its exposition

> There will be great confusion [in the future]. Nobody
> will want to conform with another man's opinions or
> submit to his authority. Everybody will want to be his
> own rabbi, as Osiander and Agricola do now, and the
> greatest offenses and divisions will arise from this.
> -Luther *Table Talk* [1]

The thesis of this paper is that the thought of reformer Martin Luther(1483-1546) was distorted by mimetic rivalry with certain of his mentors, notably Hebraists [2]. In this context "mimetic rivalry" will be understood according to the theories of Rene Girard (b. 1923) a thinker who has been acclaimed in some quarters as "the Darwin of the human sciences."[3]. There are any number of points on which it might be interesting to look at Luther's thought from a Girardian mimetic perspective, however this paper will restrict itself to one narrow, albeit crucial problem in the contemporary appreciation of Luther[4]. Modern researches into the truth-claims of Luther are hindered by the necessity of dealing with the polemical and even vitriolic way in which he presented his views. Such rhetoric tends to evoke either uncritical assent or dissent, that is, Luther's angry speaking and writing is seen as either justified indignation or unjustified bigotry. Such assent or dissent at the rhetorical level tends to preempt if not preclude a critical assessment of the core ideas at the heart of Luther's theology, such as the primacy of grace in Christian faith. The aim of this paper is to show how we can analyze Luther's work into two components, a rhetorical component and a dialectical component, the first being distorted by mimetic forces arising from Luther's psychology and historical situation, while the latter remain valid as pure theological hypotheses.

However it will be shown how the exposition of those doctrines was impaired by a vulgar rhetoric which was provoked by intellectual competition with his sources.

There is an aptness in applying Girard's theories to separate the gems from the dross in Luther. Unlike most modern sociological and anthropological thought, Girard's mimetic theory (referred to subsequently as MT) sees religion as playing a foundational role in the development of human culture. This is not to say that MT is an extension of theology[5],Girard doesn't engage in apologetics, rather he points out the salience of religion in generating cultural institutions, both for good and for bad.

Apart from the general applicability of Girard's ideas to religious phenomena, the first thing which would suggest the application of a mimetic approach to Luther, at least to a person familiar with MT, would be the ubiquity of doubles in Luther's life and character. Girard sees the phenomenon of the double as a fundamental key to the development of human nature[6]. For Girard the distinction between human and animal mentalities is generated from MT, and this is not just a premise of developmental psychology. Although Luther has been famously the subject of psychobiography, the mimetic double is a sociological concept, and as such is not intended to explain the unique characteristics of a particular individual, in this case Luther, but to show the importance of mimetic forces in the development of significant turning points in the development of culture. These are developments in which individual human beings are the agents, but not so much as acting egos as acting alter egos. Therefore MT is able to describe social evolution without reducing historical innovation to the psychological peculiarities of "great men." None the less we can see that the great men and women are often bold exemplifications of historically significant mimetic conflicts.

Girard's concept of a "mimetic triangle" is best

approached through the much more familiar notion of a romantic triangle, the latter being in fact a variety of the former. The mimetic triangle consists of a subject, an object, and a model. In the case of the romantic triangle two people (generally of the same sex) are in love with a third person (generally of the opposite sex). The two lovers are A subject, and B model···while the beloved is C object. The novel aspect of MT consists in showing that the desire of A for C is depended on A's imitation of B's desire for C. This goes against the common sense idea that desire is evoked by some quality of C which is intrinsically desirable. Another easily understood instance is sibling rivalry. Here the younger child generally hasn't reasoned out why the fought over object is valuable, she or he only knows that the older child has appropriated it, and therefore it must be worth having. The salient point about MT is that human beings don't just imitate behaviors or appearances, but the desires which motivate these phenomena. For the basic graphical representation of the mimetic triangle see the following figure.
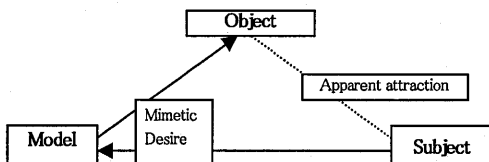

Figure 1   General Mimetic Situation

MT isn't bifurcated into a theory of social solidarity and social conflict. Essentially the same forces account for what we consider both the harmonious and conflicting aspects of civilization, but permutated according to different conditions and states of development. Appropriative mimesis only becomes rivalry when the desired object is scarce or exclusive, as in the case of the exclusive lover, political office, or unique good. The most extreme case is when the object becomes identified with the personality of the model itself, to such an extent that only the removal of

the model (as in assassination) could satisfy the craving of the subject for unique identification with the model-object. In Girard's social anthropology, the collective expression of mimetic desire unites society through mimicked purposes and values, which in turn become scarce as they are universally shared. This scarcity is then blamed, logically enough, on those who are the model exemplars of what is desired, the "best" people. Thus through an inversion/diversion process which Girard calls "scapegoating"[7], these models who have hitherto been idolized now become demonized and are expelled from society. The final stages leading up to this expulsion are termed in MT the "mimetic crisis." In this logic of human sacrifice, originally as actual ritual murder, but later deflected and sublimated in various ways, Girard sees the driving mechanism of human cultural evolution.

II. Luther: The Mimetic Subject

> Enough! For I did not begin writing in order to reply to that man, who is not worth replying to, but in order to bring the truth of the matter into the open. —Luther, writing against the early church father Cyprian[8]

If there was ever a non-imitative person, it would certainly be Luther, who always claimed to eschew human authorities in preference to a "pipeline to the truth." Were it not for the generally suspicious modern attitude, and Girard's theory in particular, it is unlikely that anyone would consider him susceptible to mimesis. But we have here not just the first (patristic) mimesis, as evidenced by the excessive passion with which he rejects Cyprian in the quote above, but a second tension with the Hebraists. Yet the laws of social cohesion/conflict do not suspend themselves for original minds.

Luther spent the years of his maturity working on his colossal *Commentary on Genisis*, as well as several

smaller treatments of Hebrew books, the most hermenutically relevant of which was his *Treatise on The Last Words of David*, a commentary on *2 Samuel* ch. 23, vv. 1–7 which purports to reveals the rule according to which Hebrew texts should be interpreted. Although Luther was a pioneer of the reformation, in terms of humanistic and even Hebraic studies he already stood on the shoulders of giants. Indeed, by that time, if we date the Renaissance from the fall of Constantinople in 1453, there had been nearly a century of humanistic scholarship, most of it devoted to Latin and Greek, but with an accelerating interest in Hebrew literature. During this time many non–Jewish scholars not only studied the Hebrew text of what was called by Christians the Old Testament, and "Tanach" (תנך =*TA*–Torah+ *NA* Prophets+ *CH* Writings) by the rabbis, but also such extra–cannonical texts as the Talmud and the various works on kabbalistic mysticism. Luther himself, through the influence of his early scholastic education would have been familiar with the Aristotelian distinction between dialectic (what today we would call the substance of an argument) and rhetoric⋯this latter being in turn divided into a noble rhetoric which appeals to the finer aspirations of the reader/auditor, and a vulgar rhetoric which appeals to prejudice. In the context of his time Luther was a brilliant rhetorician, and his vulgar appeals[9], while making his more cultured contemporaries wince, were quite effective in driving his points home to the intended audiences. However these appeals are no longer acceptable to modern sensibilities, and as a result a work such the *Treatise on the Last Words of David*, which is of fundamental importance for the understanding of both Luther's hermenutics and the development of Christian Hebraism, is rendered practically unreadable.

According to the commonly accepted criteria of scholarship one would be expected to exclude from serious consideration any treatise which was motivated purely by prejudice, subjectivity, or rivalry. However this critical standard would have to be substantially modified if it could be shown that virtually all human culture were the result of rivalry as in MT. In the case of Martin Luther, MT opens up an avenue for engagement with his thought which eludes the opposing alternatives of dismissal or exculpation. In the *Treatise* we can observe Luther engaged in a process of mimicking rabbinical thought in the area of Hebraism, while at the same time engaging in a campaign of character assassination against these, his erstwhile teachers. This double movement of thought is precisely what MT would expect us to find in such a case.

One major advantage of analysing the development of Luther's hermenutics through the prism of MT is that it allows us to distinguish Luther's vulgar rhetoric from later racially based anti–semitism as two distinct species of thought within the larger category of mimetic rivalry. This is not to say that Luther's popular works, apart from the *Treatise*, did not influence later movements in a destructive way. Furthermore, it is not to exculpate Luther's rivalry with the rabbis simply because it is rivalry over a noematic rather than a material object. Indeed, one can imagine a moral standard in which rivalries over ideal or spiritual objects are more productive of evil than rivalry over mundane objects of desire. Rather, it is that once we are able to specify the peculiar motivations of Luther's vulgar rhetoric, we are in a much better position to bracket out the rhetorical component of his writings and proceed to a critical appreciation of their dialectical substance.

If we read the opening passages of the *Treatise on the Last Works of David* with a view to its intended meaning we will see only vulgar rhetoric which his sympathetic readers would have interpreted as righteous indignation, but which our contemporary sensibility sees as bigotry. However in the opening

lines this work Luther presents, behind his rhetoric, his purpose of developing a new hermeneutic which will surpass both that of the rabbis and the Christian fathers[10].

Viewed with proper suspicion and a knowledge of MT, it would seem that Luther has rather disingenuously revealed his own motives, whether or not he is correct in his critical assessment of the rabbinical hermenutics. Luther unwittingly reveals that the source of his anti-rabbinism is grounded in envy more than contempt. Even while he rails at competitors in the field he has newly opened up, it is impossible to forget that Luther was the very man who shattered the religious consensus of Christendom and began the process of multiplying interpretations and Bibles. Furthermore there are many other ways, not alluded to in the *Treatise*, in which Luther has adapted the model of the rabbinate to his own desires. After all the rabbinate is a non-celibate fraternity of religious peers, beholden to no "pope"···at least since the destruction of the temple priesthood in the first Christian century. Add to this the rabbinical right of owning property, of canvassing for clients in the context of the *posek* system[12], and independent judicial authority, and one has something close to the protestant clergy, the latter being a professional category which was still, in the mid-16th century, in a state of emergence. Finally, on top of all this there is the crowning glory of the rabbinate's intimate nexus with the Hebrew scriptures. Thus the category "pastor" in its Protestant sense can be seen as a mimetic acquisition based on the category "rabbi" and mediated through the crucible of Luther's own mind.

Yet once having decisively wrested the *magisterium,* (i.e. dogma making and enforcing authority) from Rome and lodged it in his own conscience Luther finds himself embedded inside a new mimetic triangle. In his mature years he begins to refer to himself and similar Protestant divines, only half ironically, as

"rabbis." This oxymoronic category of the "gentile rabbi" was not, it seems to me, initially stimulated by a sense of mimetic rivalry with real rabbis. Rather, it wells up from Luther's prophetic intuition that he has pried the lid off of the Pandora's box of Christian disunity. Luther can see quite well that in lieu of strong state sanction, the relationship between the newly emergent Protestant ministry and their congregations will gravitate towards a vendor-client relationship. While this vendor-client relationship is antithetical to the hierarchical order of previous churches, it bears a close relationship to the clientele system in which Jews voluntarily choose a rabbi as a legal and moral authority. The Protestant divines were, at least for the next two centuries, saved from this fate by princes and jurists motivated by state-establishmentarian principles of their own convenience.

III. Luther, Rashi, Reuchelin and the common object of desire

> The love of God does not find its object but creates it. Human love starts with the object.
> ——Luther [11]

We may describe both Luther and the rabbis as in love with the Word of God, thus forming a mimetic triangle. Initially it might be hard to understand how a rivalry could develop over what phenomenologists call a *noematic object,* i.e., a thought-form which is the object of human intentions. The Hebrew scriptures are essentially a noematic object or objects since we are not talking about physical books or even variant translations, all of which may be considered things rather than ideas. Generally speaking, ideas are not subject to scarcity···for example no one seeks to maintain exclusive possession of the Pythagorian theorem···at least since the demise of the

Pythagorians.

However that the Bible does have the kind of singularity which provokes rivalry is tacitly referred to in the title of Jaroslav Pelikan's history of the Bible's role in inter-communal relations *Who's Bible Is It?* This story of communal rivalry over scripture begins long before Luther and continues after him, none the less the Humanist-Reformation era represents an epochal transition[12] in these relations. It began as a movement of appropriative memisis on the part of Christian scholars, a memisis which did not turn rivalrous until Luther. In his book Pelikan gives a summary account of how humanist scholars were being inspired by and helped by rabbinical sources, and how this created the Christian Hebraism of Reuchelin and others.[13]

It is ironical how, against the background of this cultural enlightenment, a struggle developed between Luther and the rabbis over scripture, as to whether the former would be able to appropriate it as his "Bible" or the rabbis retain it as "Torah." Had Luther restricted himself to New Testament studies there would have been no grounds of conflict. Likewise, had he followed normative Christian practice up to his own day and appropriated his Bible through the mediation of patristic hermeneutics he would have had no cause to quarrel with the rabbis. A refusal to accept this latter form of appropriation was, in retrospect, the mimetic conflict of Luther's youth, between the *magesterium* of the church and the *magesterium* of Luther's own conscience, a conflict which was decisively won, in Luther's view, by the initiation of the Protestant reformation.

If Luther had been content to get his Bible from the Vulgate he would have have owed neither a debt to, or a quarrel to pick with the rabbis but, desiring to trump the efforts of Jerome, Origin and other early Christian Hebraists, he wants to revise the scriptures according to a more literal understanding, and this necessitates

reversion to the earliest text possible. However even the earliest text does not transmit itself but is mediated through some sort of hermenutic interpretive apparatus either Jewish or Christian. Luther begins by relying on the commentary of Nicolas of Lyra, a Franciscan monk who was less allegorical in his interpretation of texts than others. Luther has been criticizing the Christian mystics for making the texts obscure, and for this he appeals to the plain sense of the Hebrew original. But who will tell him or Lyra the plain truth of the Hebrew original? Luther wrote that he felt Lyra was at his best when he was being original but tended to be biased by his rabbinical sources.

One would think that Luther is praising Lyra for being an anti-mystic, and that this Rabbi Solomon is some sort of infatuated kabbalist who has turned Lyra astray in an allegorical direction. However this Rabbi Solomon is none other than Rashi (Ashkenazi, 11th century), who is no kabbalist but the recognized master of Jewish fundamental education. If anything it is likely that the common sense grammar and lexicon of Rashi had turned Lyra further in the direction of literalism[14].

It is more true to say that Rashi and Luther are doubles, both of them insisting that the basic meaning of scripture be kept uncorrupted from dubious mystical speculation. Rashi is the master of the *peshat* or plain meaning of the Hebrew texts, and this is why his works have provided the foundation of Jewish religious education from the middle ages until today[15]. Moreover Rashi represents an important turning point in the development of Judasim, a point at which hope for the coming of a messiah fades and an inward sense of Jewish self-identity rises in reaction to the pogroms precipitated by the crusades of the 11th Christian century. It is likely that it is not allegory but literal mindedness which bothers Luther about Rashi. For instance Rashi doesn't think there is much to say that is wonderful or meaningful about the creation story.

Rather it serves to substantiate the concept that God has eminent domain over all the Earth, and hence the justice of Palestine being allocated to the Jewish people.

Both Luther and Rashi are scholarly but populist thinkers. Rashi wants to disseminate the rudiments of Torah to new generations of an ever threatened chosen people. Luther is busy building up a new *ethnos*, a still–hypothetical German protestant people. Both are capable of hair–splitting scholarly distinctions, but in neither case is this an end in itself, but rather the intellectual armor of a mass movement. Thus, as exemplified by Rashi and Luther, rabbi/preacher is a literalist double, much as kabbalist/monk is a mystical double. But the rabbi/preacher double tends toward a much more violent rivalry than its kabbalist/monk counterpart. It is a question of Rashi's literalism colliding with Luther's literalism.

If we apply the insights of MT regarding doubles to the pairing of Rashi and Luther, we can surmise that Rashi is not only the antagonist of Luther but his model as well. Or rather, Rashi is Luther's antagonist precisely because he is his model, albeit a model mediated through several centuries of transmission by other writers, notably Lyra. Unlike the Christian kabbalists he does not go on to deeper forms of wisdom, but tries to flatten out the already plain meaning of Rashi–Lyra. From an anti–mystical point of view this is nothing more than the restoration of common sense. But this singular "sense", precisely because it is "common"···that is having an unequivocal meaning which must be agreed upon, evokes rivalry rather than specialization and cooperation.

As evidenced by the *Treatise*, Luther cannot allow the rabbis to keep the Bible precisely because he views it as a single noematic object which, in his opinion, can only have a single interpretation. The consistency of Luther's thought drives him towards rivalry.

Throughout the middle ages although Christian/Jewish relations may have been less than ideal, Christian ignorance of Hebrew as well as a strong allegorizing tradition ensured that scripture remained as much a source dialogue and reconciliation as conflict. Maimonides (1135–1204), for example, could write *A Guide for the Perplexed* a book on Biblical hermeneutics in philosophical guise which intrigued Christian scholastics even more than rabbis.

With the advent of the Renaissance, Christian ignorance of Hebrew began to dissipate, but the allegorizing tradition continued to be dominant until Luther. Christian Hebraists such as Reuchelin and Agrippa of Nettleheim managed to thrive as odd fish swimming in the sea of rabbinical learning. For such men not only Tanach, but midrash, Talmud, and kabbalah were legitimate areas of humanistic research. Rumor aside, few if any of these researchers ever contemplated conversion to Judaism, and most were fairly orthodox Christians. Perhaps the major enabling factor in sustaining such a humanist–Hebraism was the well accepted principle of multiple levels of interpretation embedded in scripture, a principle which only turned into a minority view with the rise of Luther's literalism.

Before broaching the literalist presuppositions of Luther's hermeneutics, it is important to note how reduction of scripture to unequivocal meanings increased tensions between different hermeneutic views by reducing the latitude available for compromise. Both the rabbinical view, as elaborated in the kabbalah, and the classical Christian hermeneutic posited four levels of interpretation for each passage of scripture. Not only did this express a bare numerical agreement, but it was also possible that the very fuzzyness of the more mystical and allegorical levels meant that people were talking about essentially the same thing in different words. It was on this basis that Reuchelin and Agrippa started out, no doubt

hoping to find faint evidences of Christ in Jewish writings as obscure as midrash and kabbalah. Indeed, there was a strong enough parallelism between kabbalah and Christian theology that certain anti-kabbalistic authorities have maintained that works such as the *Zohar* were frauds perpetrated by Christians to covert Jews to the gospel.

Luther, on the other hand, saw allegorizing as little more than delusion and equivocation, and his hermeneutic method involved replacing the fourfold division of scripture into a literal, tropical, allegorical, and mystical meaning with a twofold division into law and gospel[16]. Remarkably, his bias towards the simple and the mundane was so strong that he interpreted the *Song of Songs*‥which had always been taken as either a love story or an allegory of the marriage of Christ to the Church‥to be a treatise on political economy! If Luther had been a materialist (or in the language of the times an "Epicurean") his task would have been as simple as any skeptic reducing religious writings to the facts of everyday experience. But of course Luther was not only a Christian but an evangelist charged with the keeping of the deposit of faith. His first mimetic rivalry with reference to Hebraism is part and parcel of his early attempts at overcoming patristics, and Jerome in particular. As expressed in the first few lines of the Treatise wishes to imitate Jerome in his rivalry with the rabbis, but of course from the point of view of MT imitation always breeds a desire to expel the model, and Jerome frequently comes under harsh criticism from Luther. Just as Jerome wanted to get around to the Septuagint to the Hebrew, Luther wants to get around Jerome to a fresh and more literal understanding of the Hebrew. But no sooner has Luther disposed of one rival than he is confronted with another mimetic triangle. Figures #2 and #3 illustrate these triangles.
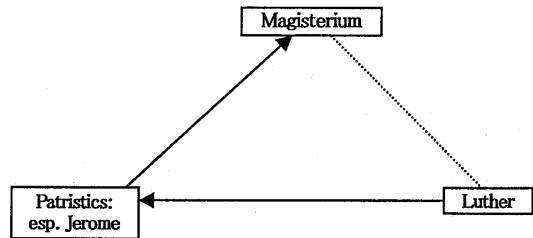

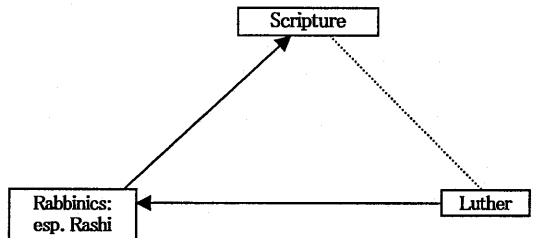Figure 2   Luther's first mimesis

Figure 3   Luther's second mimesis

His first "rabbinical" enemies are gentiles like Reuchelin and Agrippa whom he can counter through the deflation of allegory. But as he delves deeper into the heart of the argument he approaches what MT calls the "mimetic crisis"‥the point at which a life-or-death struggle must be conducted for the sole possession of the beloved object, in this case the exclusive right to interpret the Hebrew scriptures. In the early stages of Luther's career he can make good use of his acquired Hebraism to deflate the Christian mystics, humanistic and ecclesiastical. However a time comes when, at the height of his powers, he must settle his intellectual debts with the rabbis. It is then when the tables are turned and he must stand up for the allegorizing which supports the core doctrine of Christian faith, the belief in a Messiah who is both a man and God incarnate.

IV. The contest over hermenutics in Luther's Treatise on the Last Words of David

These are the last words of David,

The utterance of David the son of Jesse

The utterance of the man God raised up

Anointed of the God of Jacob

Favorite of the mighty of of Israel[17]

The *Treatise* can be seen as a hermeneutic *tour de force* enlisted in Luther's attempt to abolish, or at least personally disown, the emergent Humanist-Hebraist tradition, in the name of a more strictly Christian interpretation of the Hebrew cannon. Luther is quite explicit about his motives for writing a hermeneutic treatise i.e., one in which he will deal explicitly with his own rules for interpreting canonical texts, for he announces that "Whoever does not have or want to have this Man properly and truly who is called Jesus Christ, God's Son, who we Christians proclaim, must keep his hands off the Bible···The more he studies, the blinder and more stupid he will grow, be he a Jew, Tartar, Turk, Christian, or whatever he wants to call himself."[18]

The Treatise begins with a exordium in which Luther decrys the necessity of studying Hebrew texts, and admits that in fact they are not essential to Christian faith. He then goes on to do an exegesis of the passage in question. Luther interprets this verse and the six following according to his own criteria. Subsequently he relates this passage to another portion of scripture found in the book of *Chronicles* which also has to do with the eternal continuation of the Davidic dynasty. This kind of iteration between two texts is very common in both Jewish and Christian hermentutics.

In the end, after a long series of digressions which have little to do with the passage in *2 Samuel 23*, Luther reverts to it in a final recapitulation. Luther dealt with the same passage in his notorious book On the *Jews and Their Lies*, where he pointed out repeatedly that the notion of an eternal messiah, which he sees being asserted here and elsewhere in scripture, is inconsistent with the facts of Jewish history and the absence of a Jewish kingdom since New Testament times. He has no need to make this assertion in another treatise. Rather the *Treatise* is an experiment in hermeneutics where Luther is attempting to show what key he possesses which unlocks the meaning of scripture, a key which the rabbis lack.

Herein lies the core of Luther's mimetic crisis. The rabbis have been very helpful in helping Luther develop a hermeneutics distinctive from that of the Roman Catholic Church, but if he follows the rabbis all the way with their hermeneutic rules he risks having to accept their doctrinal conclusions as well, for example that "the messiah" refers to Solomon son of David, and not Jesus the descendant of David[19]. The possibility of using the same hermeneutic rules and coming up with radically different conclusions is disbarred. Although Aristotle is another mentor of Luther whom he has tried to assassinate, disowning scholasticism has not left him so demented that he has forgotten basic logical principles, such as the impossibility of generating opposed conclusions from identical premises.

Thus Luther must develop a new hermeneutic to free himself from the model of the rabbis. Although this is clearly the purpose of the *Treatise* the way in which Luther exposits his argument is extremely confusing to the point of being self-defeating. Thus the *Treatise*, rather than being a straightforward exposition, is in fact a mishmash of three lines of thought which emerge and vanish at seeming random throughout the body of the text. These three lines of thought are 1) vulgar rhetoric vilifying the rabbis and others who oppose Luther's thought, 2) an attempt to follow the lexicographical hermeneutic of the rabbis to substantiate Luther's own thesis, and finally 3) a demonstration of Luther's genuine hermeneutic method, the exposition of which remains tacit rather than explicit. I have already dealt at length with the

problems raised by Luther's vulgar rhetoric, so we shall proceed directly to the second and third lines of thought in the text.

This is the mimetic crisis which Luther enters into when he writes the *Treatise on the Last Words of David.* Having used the rabbis to overcome both scholasticism and the Christian mystics, he must now fight them on the grounds where, in terms of his previously expressed hermeneutic principles, they should be at their strongest. Now Luther, the apostle of literalism, must wrest an allegory out of texts where the rabbis are more literal than he is. He chooses as his battleground the passage in *2 Samuel chapter 23* in which David is writing about his legacy to posterity, obviously a key proof text for testing divergent concepts of the messiah held by Judaism and Christianity. According to the most literal sense the passage is talking about a legacy which is to be inherited by a dynasty, beginning with Solomon. But since the expression eternal heritage is found there, it is philosophically suspicious that a particular bloodline could maintain itself integrally without end. This is the question at issue between Luther and the rabbis: is the inheritance in question a series of mortal men or a single messiah who is God incarnate?[20] The most that we can do for Luther here is to smile at him as a rhetorician and give him credit for an "inspired" translation. In so far as the rabbis were also masters of this "intersecting" technique, and had an inexaustable store of texts to appeal from (vis. Neusner) it is hardly surprising that Luther made little progress in coverting European Jewery to the gospel, or that, when the blatantly rhetorical nature of his noble arguments was discerned, he relapsed vulgar rhetoric which in effect was a confession of failure.

Luther's lexical exertions appear to be an exercise in mimicry, and an unsuccessful one at that, but this doesn't seem to bother their author, who claims to be operating from completely different hermeneutic

principles than the rabbis. Indeed, in his internal preface to the second and final exposition of the *Last Words,* Luther is supremely confident that he has overcome the rabbis using a hermeneutic rule which is far beyond their grasp[21].

The reader of the *Treatise* will search in vain for an explict statement of the "rule" alluded to in the above passage. Certainly we can agree with Luther that he has "digressed and meandered enough" and that 1) the digressions can be identified with Luther's vulgar rhetoric, directed mainly though by no means exclusively at Jews, and furthermore 2) the meanderings can be identified with Luther's rather unconvincing forays into rivalry with rabbinical lexicology. Luther assures us that these are secondary, and ultimately trivial, matters, and that the reader's attention should be fixed on the basic hermeneutic "rule" instead. From the context of the passage it would almost seem as if Luther were saying that "seek and find the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament" was the hermeneutic rule itself.

But of course "seek and find the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament" is not a rule but an exhortation. Indeed, it is an example of that noble rhetoric which is called *kerygmatic* by Christian pastors. But hermenutics is a branch of dialectic, not rhetoric, however noble. Thus a hermeneutic rule must have as its goal the discovery of truth, in this case true interpretation of a text, rather than persuasion, which is the function of rhetoric. Luther, with his solid, albeit despised, Aristotelian education was well aware of this distinction.

None the less it is clear that the goal of Luther's hermeneutic method is to reaffirm the traditional theology and economy of Christian doctrine. If this were simply asserted dogmatically, as seems to be the case in much of the *Treatise,* then the reader would be justified in dismissing the work as nothing more than a rhetorical showpiece...and for the most part a vulgar

one. But if that were the case why did Luther even go to the trouble of writing a treatise on hermenutics? After all, he had already vented his anger in the notorious *On the Jews and their Lies*. If the *Treatise* has no dialectical content then it seems to have been a monumentally stupid waste of effort.

The difficulty of grasping Luther's rule comes from the fact that it is nowhere explicitly stated but everywhere alluded to or exemplified. One would expect a treatise on hermenutics, as for example Augustine's *On Christian Dogma*, to provide a handy list of interpretive rules enumerated in tabular form. But Luther is talking about one overarching hermeneutic principle, not a set of distinguishable rules. Like a fish who cannot point to anything called "water" Luther is reduced to swimming in the sea of exemplification in order to make his point. The point is that there is a parallelism between the three persons of language and the three persons of the trinity. This is such an outrageous claim that it requires working with a multiplicity of texts before it starts to make any sense to the typical reader. Yet, whether it is true or false, it is a coherent dialectical thesis, not a rhetorical assertion. Luther handles the claim experimentally in the *Treatise*, goes as far as he can go to apologize for his crude exposition, and intimates that a kinder, gentler, and smarter posterity will take up the work which he has initiated.

The question of whether the parallelism between the three persons in language and the three persons of the Christian trinity is a valid hermeneutic principle is far beyond the scope of this paper. Here I have only tried to point out that Luther is acting in scholarly good faith when it comes to dialectical argumentation. This is an important point, and cannot be stressed enough, for here we run into another double···Luther as a reasoning anti-rationalist. "Reasoning" does not by any means imply "reasonable"···as I have tried to show by stressing the prevalence of vulgar rhetoric in

even a scholarly work like the *Treatise*. But on the other hand we cannot anachronistically transform Luther into a post-Nietzscheian irrationalist. Luther believed that there were such things as valid logical inferences, although as an anti-mystical mystic (another double) he felt that the data of revelation had to be accepted on faith and accepted as predicates for any arguments bearing on religion. Here again we can see how Luther's vulgar rhetoric must be "bracketed out" in order to get a fair approximation of what he really thought, in this case the anti-reason rhetoric (motivated by rivalry with scholasticism) tempting us to conflate his fideism with irrationalism, much as people habitually conflate his anti-Judaism (bad enough in its own way) with modern anti-Semitism.

None of this is to say that Luther was a "good man." Indeed, there is no point in engaging a thinker like Martin Luther if one is under the impression that there are such things as good men or, for that matter, good women. Luther's own confession on this point was a reassertion of traditional harmatology, that he was "a simple sinner." Less simple but more bold is mimetic theory's attempt to transpose this same insight into sociological terms. Thus Rene Girard and kindred thinkers have striven to develop an anthropology which upends that myth of pristine human innocence which was first enunciated by Jean Jacques Rousseau but which still forms the context of modern accusatory rhetoric. If Girard and his colleagues are right we should be able to sum up the social drives alluded to but unanalysed in Luther's self-confession.

V. Conclusion: Rhetoric on the way from Violence to Truth

···I wish that all my books were buried in perpetual oblivion, so that there might be room for better ones···but above all else, I beg the sincere reader, and I

beg for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, to read those things judiciously, yes, with great commiseration. May he be mindful of the fact that I was once a monk and a most enthusiastic papist when I began that cause. I was so drunk, yes, submerged in the pope's dogmas, that I would have been ready to murder all, if I could have, or to cooperate willingly with the murders of all who would take but one syllable from obedience to the pope.[20]

We have seen the theme of doubles play themselves out in the career of Martin Luther, none of them more acute than the oxymoronic status of "gentile rabbi"…or even more bluntly "anti-Jewish rabbi." If we adopt the second term it could be deduced that not only mimetic acquisition (as in the case of Reuchelin) but mimetic rivalry was at work in Luther's project of religious reformation. In the beginning Luther employed Hebraism and Humanism as weapons against the Roman magesterium in general, and scholasticism in particular. Once this project was reasonably secure, he faced the mimetic crisis of whether to assimilate or reject Hebraism, and elected decisively for rejection. The intellectual manifesto of this rejection is found in *The Treatise on the Last Words of David*. Whether intentionally or subconsciously this title actually expresses the "last words" of Luther to the rabbis, the former in effect saying to the latter: You go your way and I will go my way.

Thus we can posit in Luther (or any other thinker-actor) a spectrum of violence-rhetoric-dialectic, where violence and dialectic are opposed and rhetoric operates as a middle term. Violence is the enemy of truth and vice versa. Unfortunately this is not a process of unilineal cultural evolution towards truth but one punctuated by advances and regressions. Luther himself is essentially "stuck" in his own epoch and spiritual condition, which in turn wavers back and forth according to events. Seen from the point of

view of modern sensibilities Luther's rhetoric seems deplorable, but in terms of objective human evolution his rhetoric, even at its most vulgar, represents a giant leap beyond violence. Luther is communicating rather than killing, he seeks to convert rather than exterminate. Time and again he calls his rivals to repentance, whether these be popes, Jews, Anabaptists or whoever. Whether he is wrong about either his theology or the moral condition of his rivals must be considered a moot point here. What is at issue is the flexibility and utility of rhetoric as a middle term between violence and dialectic.

Since Luther's rhetoric constantly wavers on the very cusp of nobility and vulgarity, it can, and has, gone both ways, but in general it is fair to say that he is not destructive in intent, for his god is Christ, not Dionysus. Alternatively we can say, in terms Luther would heartily agree with, that he is a murderer *manqué* who has been given 1543 years of moral credit to draw from. This is not enough to thwart the forces of mimetic rivalry, but it is enough to keep the rivalry from reaching the sacrificial climax which mimetic theory would predict in the absence of such an evolution.

In all fairness to Luther, we must also acknowledge that the further he gets from his vulgar rhetoric the closer he gets to the original intent of his writings, which was to exposit the truth in the light of his own discovery of faith. This is a discovery which he was not able to exposit in a detached philosophical fashion, but only in conjunction with intense mimetic rivalry, first against scholastics, and then against Hebraists both rabbis and gentiles. This doesn't imply an absence of well reasoned dialectic in Luther's writings, but it does mean that nobody can read a work like the *Treatise on the Last Words of David* who is not prepared to sift through a great deal of unrelated and offensive material. This material is not fortuitous, but neither does it necessarily invalidate Luther's project,

for it can be shown to be the residue of an intense mimetic struggle of the sort which not only went on in the mind of Martin Luther but also characterizes human existence generally.

Notes

1) from *Table Talk* entry #3900, transcribed by Lauterbach, here Luther is writing about his fears of religious fragmentation among the reform.   Note that Osiander and Agricola are Christian pastors, not actual rabbis.

2) In the course of this investigation I will be taking my Luther quotes largely from Jaroslav Pelikan's English edition of Luther's *Complete Works* especially Martin H. Bertram's translation of *The Last Words of David*.   In particular I will be focusing on mimetic elements in Luther's mature work on Hebraism and hermeneutics.   Regarding the work which was in some way represents Luther's own "last words" on these subjects, Pelikan writes,

> In June 1543 he [Luther] was reported by Johann Forster to be at work on a treatise entiltled *On the Divinity of Christ on the Basis of the Last Words of David*, and by August 18 of that year he was able to send it to the printers.   It was brought on by the need to defend the Christological exegesis of the Old Testament both against Jewish interpreters and against their Christian pupils.   Luther acknowledged that he himself had followed the lead of the rabbis too closely in his translation of the Hebrew Bible and even in his interpretation of it, and now he set out to vindicate the Christian explanation of its Messianic prophecies and confessions.   His own exegetical work on The Book of Genesis, with which he had begun on June of 1535, and his

continuing revision of the translation of the Old Testament gave him further concrete occasions to reconsider his understanding of many passages in the Old Testament.   Among these passages, the words of David in 2 Sam. 23:1–7 were especially important, and Luther found in them proof that the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures of Christ were already taught in the Old Testament.   In doing so he set forth not only his exegesis of this passage, but also the hermenutical principles which had guided him in the interpretation of the remainder of the Old Testament. (Pelikan, J.   LW15 p.xi)

3) The statement itself was made by Michel Serres, a contemporary scholar of Greco–Roman antiquity in his work *Atlas*.   Pierpalo Antonello and Joao Cezar de Castro Rocha state in *Evolution and Conversion* that

> ···we intended to show why it is not entirely hazardous to follow Michel Serres view and consider Girard the 'Darwin of the human sciences'.   Starting from the premises set out in *Violence and the Sacred* (1972) and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1978), Girard sketched a hypothesis, based on ethnological and ethological premises, which defines a base mechanism, and a possible ur–scenario of human cultural origins and development.

As explained in *Evolution and Conversion* Girard started to have a distinctive impact on the scholarly world with the publication of his 1972 work.   Prior to that time he was primarily associated with structural and post–structural literary criticism. The roots of the Girard's mimetic anthropology can already be found in the German philological tradition of Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer. Spitzer was a colleague of Girard when they were

both on the faculty of John Hopkins University during the 1960s. Regarding his indebtedness to Auerbach, Girard himself said,

> ···at the time I didn't realize that when an author like Auerbach is read carefully one sees that he is closer to the mimetic mechanism than he ever realized···everything Auerbach says about figural interpretation implies the mimetic content, and yet he doesn't see the actual role of mimesis as imitation.

Girard in his later scholarship has devoted more attention to history and ethnological studies than to literature and literary criticism. None the less, the fact that Girard's social science hypotheses have their origin in literary studies gives his anthropology a depth that it would otherwise not have. Note in the quote above that Girard sees Auerbach as limited in so far as he doesn't see literary mimesis as rooted in actual social interaction (imitation), but none the less gives him the credit for being the first to point out that mimesis can occur at a historical remove among non-contemporaries (the 'figural interpretation'). This will be of importance in the subject under study, since the rabbis whom Luther was in a mimetic relationship with were not necessarily his contemporaries (eg. Rashi).

4) An enterprising Protestant theologian might even make a case for Luther as a hero of the anti-sacrificial tendency of cultural evolution. That tendency could be extrapolated from the (non-) sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham to the passion of Christ and on to the reformer's insistence that the latter sacrifice could not be reenacted in the mass. It will be essential to keep in mind that we are not talking about the classic "scapegoating" scene here, since we are dealing with a late stage in human evolution. None the less the same forces are acting themselves out in the

career of someone such as Luther, albeit even in a context where desacrilization has reached an advanced stage, in such a way that there are certain elements in Luther's life and thought which lend themselves naturally to the interpretive framework provided by MT. While it may be true that Luther's relationships with Jews and gentile Hebraists is just one among many mimetic flash points in Luther's biography, from the retrospect of the holocaust, when large segments of European society reverted to paganism (in the bad sense) and bloody rites of extermination, Luther's stormy relations with Jews and students of Judaism is an "elephant in the living room" which needs to be addressed before any more positive assessment of Luther's evolutionary role can be addressed.

5) as Sandor Goodhart has expressed it,

> Girard does not offer us—at least in my own view—either an ethics or a theology. His own personal beliefs about Christianity are separable from his professional articulation of an anthropological reading that he identifies with that Gospel scripture. One can be a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, or a Buddhist and still be a Girardian.(Goodman 2009, p. 94)

6) This is a foundational point in Girardian theory, which he defines as

> ···the ability to look at the other person, the mimetic *double*, as an *alter ego* and the matching capacity to establish a *double* inside oneself, through processes like reflection and consciousness.(Girard 1978, p. 284)

7) Since in this paper we will be dealing with the possibility that Luther "scapegoated" certain categories of people, it must be understood what this means in the precise Girardian sense in which

scapegoating is related to sacrifice rather than the polemical sense in which the term is often used. What are we to make of this from the vantage point of mimetic theory? Although there is a great deal of moral ambiguity in Luther, and much which is unambiguously bad in his rhetoric, in a historical sense he is an agent of desacrilization, which from a mimetic point of view is the primary force lifting humanity out of the indentification of violence and the sacred. According to Girard the mechanism of mimetic rivalry, once essential for the maintenance of the social order, is gradually loosing its power over humanity. The notion that killing a living being expiates sin is a quality of the archaic strata of the mind, one that has gradually lost its hold over the imagination. Luther himself would have probably rejected Girard's theories as incompatible with Christian theology, none the less we can see in the life and work of Luther that forces mitigating violence are striving with at least partial success against atavistic scapegoating mechanisms. For example Luther rejected the idea of a crusade or "holy war"···although he felt the Emperor and princes of Germany had the right to defend their lands in a secular cause. Of course this tension between atavistic and ameliorative forces is a ubiquitous situation, not at all unique to Luther, but the drama of the reformer's life and the candid nature of his polemics gives us striking examples of processes which in other, more discrete, thinkers would be rendered opaque.

8) Dillenberger 1961, p.263

9) Ironically, if it is possible to rescue Luther's theology from a mimetic critique of his thought one must revert to the neo-scholastic distinction between reason, as represented by dialectic, and the passions, as represented by rhetoric···rather than lumping these faculties together into the "whole man" as was the vogue of Renaissance humanism, a movement which Luther was sympathetic to. Richard Weaver, a modern representative of Aristotelian scholasticism explains the rhetoric/dialectic distinction as follows,

> This interest in [political, social etc.] actualization is a further distinction between pure dialectic and rhetoric. With its forecast of the actual possibility, rhetoric passes from mere scientific demonstration of an idea to its relation to prudential conduct. A dialectic must take place *in vacuo*, and the fact alone that it contains contraries leaves it an intellectual thing. Rhetoric, on the other hand, always espouses one of the contraries. This espousal is followed by some impingement upon actuality. That is why rhetoric, with its passion for the actual, is more complete than mere dialectic with its understanding...the complete man is the "lover" added to the scientist; the rhetorician to the dialectician.(Weaver 1985, p.21)

Although Luther was a "man of passion" par excellance he never claimed that his faith was without foundation in logic.

10) There Luther explains the essence of his project as follows:

> Saint Jerome reports that he was moved to translate the Bible from Hebrew to Latin by the sneering reproach of the enemies of Christ, the Jews, to the effect that Christians did not have the correct Bible in the version then in use throughout Christendom. The reason given was that a number of words and letters were faulty and altogether different from the Hebrew. Prior to this, others had been induced to translate the Bible for the same reason, for instance, Aquila, Theodoton, Origin, and others, until at that time

there were up to six translations, which they called Hexapla. And in our day, too, so many are busying themselves with translating that history may repeat itself and there may be so many Bibles in the course of time and so many wiseacres who claim a mastry of the Hebrew tongue that there will be no end to it.

That will inevitably happen if we pay attention to what the Jews say and think of our Bible. After all, they are not in agreement among themselves, and they expound Scripture arbitrarily and quote out of context with their grammar. If we were to heed them, we could never acquire a uniform Bible, since every rabbi claims to be superior to the other. (Pelikan LW15 p. 267)

11) *Heidelburg Disputation Thesis #28* (from Dillenberger 1961 p. 503)

12) Katchen speaks of the way in which Hebraism, although continuing the conversionary characteristics of the middle ages, broadened in the epoch leading up to the Renaissance.

None the less, even prior to the Renaissance that began in the fifteenth century and brought in its wake changing religious and humanistic currents, there had begun to appear a certain shift in the Christian stance toward rabbinic literature. By no means did attempts to disprove Jewish tenets and confute and convert the Jews diminish, to be sure···In short "the truth is not to be rejected wherever it may be found; nor from wherever [it may come]; but one must look to what is said···."

The Christian kabbalism of the Renaissance was a further manifestation of this attitude. It grew in part out of a renewed emphasis on spirituality in certain Christian quarters, new ways having been sought through which

Christianity might be validated or affirmed. (Katchen 1984, pp. 5–6)

13) At first Luther was an ally of Reuchlin and the gentile Hebraists, as related in Table Talk entry #3701 transcribed by Lauterbach,

In fact the Dominicans and Franciscans have been the chief auxiliaries of the pope···I think they made great fools of themselves in their controversy with Reuchelin. Against me [Luther] too, they engaged in many machinations, but not without injury to themselves.

Concerning Reuchlin and his importance in the revival of Hebraism Pelikan writes that,

Reuchelin's On the *Rudiments of Hebrew* became the instrument that the biblical humanists, and then the Protestant Reformers and translators, needed to go behind the Vulgate and even behind the Septuagint, to what Jerome had called "the truth of the Hebrew." This Christian return to the sources was facilitated by the presence (little known today except to rare book librarians and specialists in early Judaica) of several printed Jewish editions of the Tanakh in Hebrew, long before the Greek New Testament. In 1488 the Jewish press in Soncino, Italy, printed the Hewbrew Bible, followed by other such editions, which climaxed in the Daniel Bomberg Biblia Rabinica, which appeared first in 1516–17 and then in 1524–25. This elegant edition included the Targum and other traditional explanations. These publications incorporated the Massoretic tradition as it had been stabilized in the early Middle Ages, producing a fixed and printed text of the Hebrew that would serve as a basis for Jewish

and Christian exegetes as well as for generations of Christian translators into the various vernacular tongues. (Pelikan 2005, pp.152-3)

14) Thus in the treatise Luther writes,

Just consider that excellent man Lyra. He is a good Hebraist and a fine Christian. What good work he produces when he, in accord with the New Testament, opposes the Jewish concept. But whenever he follows his Rabbi Soloman how meaningless and unimpressive it sounds.(Pelikan LW15 p. 269)

15) "Rashi" is an acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki born in Troys France (1040-1105) Eliezer Cohen Writes in *The Jewish Magazine*

It is very difficult to mention any part of the Jewish Bible without mentioning the commentary of Rashi. No one person seems to have had such a deep impact on Jewish learning in the past thousand years as this man has had. In addition to the monumentous and basic commentary on the five books of Moses Rashi commented on most of the books of the Tanach, meaning the prophets and other biblical writings, plus most of the often-studied tractates of the Babylonian Talmud. His explanation is often the basis for all Jewish understanding of he scriptures and legal principles in Judaism.

Many people today wear the "tephilin of Rashi and a type setting in Hebrew is called Rashi script or font due to the popularity of his commentary that was written using it.

16) Luther's hermeneutic principles are explained succinctly in *Table Talk* #312 where he states

In translating the Holy Scriptures I follow two rules:

First, if some passage is obscure I consider whether wrath or forgiveness of sin [is contained in it], and with which of these it agrees better. By this procedure I have often understood the most obscure passages. Either law or the gospel has made them meaningful, for God divides his teaching into law and gospel. The law, moreover, has to do either with civil government or with economic life or with the church. The church is above the earth in heaven, where there is no further division but only a mathematical point, and so principles cannot fail there. This is (and Gerson said it is supreme wisdom) to reduce all things to the first principle, that is to the most general genus. In theology there is law and gospel, and it must be one or the other. Gerson calls this reduction to the most general genus. So every prophet either threatens and teaches, terrifies and judges things, or makes a promise. Everything ends with this, and this means that God is your gracious Lord. This is my first rule in translation.

Note that this first rule is established in the name of clarity and reason, however it also precludes the kind of compromise which more nuanced readings would encourage. Thus Luther has established an exclusivity of the object, as we can see in the fashion with which he continues his talk,

The second rule is that if the meaning is ambiguous I ask those who have a better knowledge of the language than I have whether the Hebrew words can bear this or that sense which seem sot me to be especially fitting. And that is most fitting which is closest in argument to the book. The Jews go astray so often in the Scriptures because they do not know the [true] contents of the books. But if one knows the contents, that sense ought to be chosen which is

closest to them.

17) NAB pp. 292–293

18) Pelikan LW 15, p.268

19) It is instructive to compare an example of a modern, but orthodox, rendition of the traditional Jewish interpretation of the passage on David's "last words" found in 2 Samuel, with that of Luther.

> The manner in which David conceived his own role and that of his songs is expressed in his "last words" which have been preserved for us in the Second Book of Samuel (23:1–7). Here he views the significance of his own gift as a singer and the part to be played by his descendents in the advancement of the universal salvation on earth which will come in the far distant future. In Verses 2 and 3 David declares the ultimate victory of the righteous and the fear of the Lord among mankind to be the main content of the message for the dissemination of which God had imbued his spirit and entrusted his words to his lips. It is a future which, as David states in Verse 4, will dawn as a pure and cloudless morning of the nations only when the seeds of salvation nestled within the soil of mankind will have been brought to maturity through the alternation of joy and sorrow even as the grain is ripened by means of alternating sunshine and rain. For (Verse 5) the importance of his dynasty, established and maintained by God, extends far beyond the immediate present. God has established with him a covenant belonging to eternity which remains ready and preserved at all times although David's salvation and that of all the others striving after God has not yet visibly sprouted forth in our own day. But everything that is base and evil (Verse 6–7) is as a rootless thorn which the wind can drive away and which, therefore, need not be plucked out by human hands. Of course, if a human power would have to fight against evil, that power would have to gird itself with spears and iron armor. But evil men will perish through the fire of God's rule, even though the Divine sovereignty seems to remain in repose and at rest. (Hirsch 1960, p. xv)

Both Luther and Hirsch emphasize futurity and an optimistic eschatology. However Luther would take great exception to the ultimate message of the "last words" as construed by Hirsch. Whereas for Hirsch, who may be taken as typical of Jewish messianism in general, the content of the message is "the victory of the righteous and the fear of the Lord" for Luther the Davidic dynasty ends with the execution of its last heir by the Roman Empire. Both Hirsch and Luther read the passage as being about something remote from David's generation but for Luther it is about an individual rather than a series of individuals.

20) Luther exposits a eschatological, rather than an immanent messianism in the Treatise, commenting on contradictions between the verses, "He shall build a house for me···and I will establish His kingdom forever" (1 Chronicles v. 12) and "You shall not build me a house to dwell in. For I have not dwelt in a house since I led up Israel to this day."(1 Chronicles vv. 4–5) in the immediately following passage from the Treatise,

> For these words cannot be spoken of Solomon, much less any other son of David. They must refer to the true, unique Son of David, who was to come after the reign of Judah was ended. (Pelikan LW pp. 280–281)

21) In this second internal preface he writes,

> I shall now come back to the last words of David, with which I began this booklet. In this way I shall bind the beginning and the end of this wreath together. I have digressed and meandered enough. Others can and will, I hope, improve on this and diligently seek and find the Lord Jesus in the Hebrew Old Testament; for He lets himself be found there very readily, especially in the Psalter and Isaiah. Try it according to the rule given above, and I am sure that you will agree with me and thank God.

22) Martin Luther *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings* 1545 (from Dillenberger 1961 p. 4)

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ミメーシス的欲望と非ユダヤのラバイ

―ジラール主義思考からルターヘブライ文化学論―

サンワル　マーク　R.[1]

要　　旨

　マルティン・ルターの学術的そして論争的なライフワークをミメーシス説で知られる、ルネ・ジラールの説で解き明かしていく。マルティン・ルターの解釈学説が、異邦とユダヤのヘブライ文化学者双方の同時模倣・競争を見せてきたかを明確にする。しかしながら、近代学説にまとめられているマルティン・ルターのヘブライ学と反ユダヤ教には、ひどい矛盾が見て取れる。ルターの雄弁な中に、彼個人の承認もしくは糾弾する態度を喚起するより、より広い枠組みの中にあるミメーシス論を認めてはどうだろう。ミメーシス論は、より大きな社会学の背景の中に、ルターの二元性ある説を存在させ、偏りを取り除き、ルターの神学の真実に近づけるだろう。

　ルターのミメーシスの研究は、ジラールの示した"ダブル"自我と他我のような反映を、ルターの二元性の中に認め始まった。ミメーシス論は、ルターの精神性と知識思想が、最初は教父をそしてラバイをモデルにしてつなげていくことを見せてくれるだろう。キリスト教ヘブライ学者とルターの態度には違いがある。キリスト教ヘブライ学者の一部には、競争より知識の習得を重視している。ミメーシス論の中で、進化する全面競争は、不足もしくは排他的な"目的"に対して起こり得る。ルターは、聖書の解釈に明白な意味を強いて、排他的な状況をもたらすため、ユダヤ人とキリスト教信者の、カバラ論の多様な解釈学と対照をなす。排他的考えは、"目的"の所有を他我から自我に移し、"ミメーシス危機"を引き起こす。ルターの著書"ダビデの遺言書"の中で、ラバイの解釈基準より彼自身の基準を主張し、解釈論に対する"ミメーシス危機"が見られるケースがある。しかし、これは大きな欠点を持った作品である。弁証法の議論の中に価値を見出し、下品な雄弁と切り離すことである。ミメーシス論には、内容の汚点を暴露する力を持つ。

　キーワード : ルネ・ジラール、マルティン・ルター、ミメーシス論、ヘブライ文化学

1）兵庫県立大学看護学部　外国語