Review of: "The Age of the Algorithmic Society — A Girardian Analysis of Mimesis, Rivalry, and Identity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence"

Patrick Imbert[1]

1 University of Ottawa

Excellent article which clearly establishes the basic paradigms of René Girard's theory and its links with the algoritmic society and AGI, and particularly with the recursive feedback loop and the black box situation. Good choice of examples illustrating the scapegoat dynamic. In this stimulating context, I have a few questions which the article helped me raise.

1/ What is the difference between the black box situation and the fact that before the algorithmic society, most people apart from Girard and his followers, were unable to discover the basis of the mimetic dynamic and the scapegoating process and its sacred resolution. By "before the algorithmic society", I mean everything which has prevented people from understanding this mimetic mechanism, that is ideological domination through media monopolies, stereotyping groups, dissemination of accepted narratives reinforcing national coherence and "purity" for instance or presenting Indigenous groups negatively.

2/ At the end of the article, a sentence has challenged my understanding: "The profane…is the content that is overlooked or marginalized". I think the reader would need an example. What is marginalized? How is the black box able to marginalize a content if the recursive feedback loop recontextualizes all the content which we feed in the algorithm by participating in its numerous activities?

3/ I finally would like to quote the following sentence: " Genuine human experience and creativity". I understand very well that the algorithmic society accelerates a process of conformity oriented towards mimetic appropriation and rivalry and possible genocide. However, this process of rivalry seems to be inherent in any social dynamic as demonstrated by René Girard, hence as he says, universal. This process of rivalry and conformity (everybody fights for the same object) is based on shared cultural content, sterotyping, narrative learning or ideological coercion. What is then genuine human experience and creativity? Could it be a struggle to understand a cultural and semiotic system and its anthropological basis, an ability to set oneself in between systems and by this activity, to try to create a more peaceful world?