

CLEARY, James
Universidad Finis Terrae (Chile)

@ jcleary@uft.cl

■ Recibido / Received
2 de noviembre de 2022

■ Aceptado / Accepted
30 de junio de 2023

The mechanism of the populist backlash according to Girard, Sandel and Haidt

El mecanismo de la reacción populista según Girard, Sandel y Haidt

Michael Sandel and Jonathan Haidt have proposed complementary ways of understanding the mechanisms of the populist backlash phenomenon. This article will seek to briefly present these proposals and then link these with another proposal, that of Girard's mimetic theory. The article aims to show how the mimetic theory explains the scapegoat mechanism underlying the rejection of meritocracy as well as tribalism. This mechanism could be said to have generated the current situation in Western society.

KEY WORDS: Sandel, meritocracy, tribalism, Haidt, Girard, mimetic theory, scapegoat mechanism.

Michael Sandel y Jonathan Haidt han propuesto maneras complementarias de entender los mecanismos de la reacción populista de hoy en día. Este artículo intentará presentar sintéticamente sus propuestas y vincularlas con la propuesta de la teoría mimética de René Girard. Se propone la teoría mimética y el mecanismo del chivo expiatorio como aquello que subyace al rechazo de la meritocracia y el tribalismo. Este mecanismo sería la raíz de la situación actual de mundo occidental.

PALABRAS CLAVE: meritocracia, tribalismo, teoría mimética, mecanismo del chivo expiatorio.

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding today's cultural polarization and the populist backlash is no easy feat. This article does not intend to explain this social phenomenon entirely. However, renowned thinkers have addressed the unrest and attempted to explain the mechanisms behind the changes we see. Michael Sandel and Jonathan Haidt explain contemporaneously some of these. However, this article maintains that the French philosopher René Girard already addressed the underlying mechanisms.

Why does one only now see this backlash? Perhaps, as John Gray posits, we are in the post-enlightenment era. This observation is fundamental as, with the current changes, structures have collapsed, modern thought has failed, and different cosmovisions have collided:



We live today amid the dim ruins of the Enlightenment project, which was the ruling project of the modern period. If, as I believe, the Enlightenment project has proved to be self-destructing, then that fact signals the close of the modern period, of which we are the heirs. Our patrimony is the disenchantment which the Enlightenment has bequeathed to us—a disenchantment all the more profound since it encompasses the central illusions of the Enlightenment itself. Contrary to the hopes which buoyed up Enlightenment thinkers throughout the modern period, we find at the close of the modern age a renaissance of particularisms, ethnic and religious. In the post-communist world, where the disintegration of the Soviet state has inaugurated a period of upheaval and convulsion fully comparable with that which followed the fall of the Roman Empire, the collapse of the Enlightenment ideology of Marxism has not, as Western triumphalist conservatives and liberals supposed, issued in a globalization of Western civil society, but instead in a recurrence to pre-communist traditions, with all their historic enmities, and in varieties of anarchy and tyranny. (Gray, 2007, pp. 216-217)

There is a tremendous cultural shift afoot. According to Grey, the Enlightenment's aim of freeing reason from the realms of religion to create equality has failed. Grotius's «*etsi Deus non daretur*» and Descartes's «*cogito ergo sum*» —both emblematic modern statements— have led to a rationalism that then turned into idealism. Positivism and analytic philosophy responded to Hegel's idealism, but they, in turn, emptied any existential meaning from meaningful discourse. Some philosophers, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, believe that the West can return to its roots. Others, such as Gray, think that we stand before a new system which is developing. Deconstructionism has tried to deconstruct society and its superstructures. But what is to be rebuilt in its stead is no easy question. Gray holds that a certain nihilism is the next stage.

Whatever is in store for Western culture, it is true that there is perhaps a culture of 'against' rather than 'for'. In 2016, the referenda of Brexit, the Italian Constitution, and the Colombian Peace plebiscite, as well as the 2020 elections of Biden, were votes 'against', not 'for': against the European Union, against a proposed change in the Italian constitution —one which many agreed was necessary—, and against the specific peace agreement —although the large majority of Colombians were in favor of a peace agreement. Indeed, the Washington Post published an article, «Why U.S. elections are all about voting against something» (Philips, 2015). As A.W. Geiger wrote for the Pew Research Center, «another dynamic in the 2016 presidential election is the significant share of voters who say their vote is based more on which candidate they are against rather than which one they are for» (Geiger, 2020). She compares the 2016 elections with earlier US elections: «This stands in contrast to recent elections in years without an incumbent presidential candidate. In both 2008 and 2000, half or more of each candidate's supporters said their vote was more a vote for their candidate than a vote against the opposing party's candidate» (Geiger, 2020).

Michael Sandel attempts to explain the growing discontent and the fracturing of society —partly due to pluralism— based on an idea that stratifies citizens according to what society holds to be valuable, namely meritocracy. Jonathan Haidt points to polarization, which arises from humankind's tribal instincts. These two factors lead society to accentuate the differences creating a mechanism of violence which René Girard had already delineated years earlier.

CLEARY, James. «The mechanism of the populist backlash according to Girard, Sandel and Haidt». XG. 2023, nº 6, pp. 53-63

2. SANDEL'S THEORY OF THE MERITOCRATIC HUBRIS AT THE ROOT OF THE POPULIST REVOLT

The «[d]eepening racial, cultural, and ideological divides within the American electorate and the dramatic increase in negative affect toward the opposing party and its leaders» (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2018, p. 139) were factors that led to the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States in 2016. In *The Tyranny of Merit* (2020), Michael Sandel attempts to address the sources of the silent majority's discontent, which lead, in part, to the election of Donald Trump. «Trump was elected by tapping a wellspring of anxieties, frustrations, and legitimate grievances to which the mainstream parties had no compelling answer». (2020, p. 17). Sandel points to the feeling that they are victims or strangers in their own land: victims of meritocracy, of equality of outcomes, of positive discrimination, of intellectualism and globalism. Abramowitz and McCoy back up this claim:

Six years later, the reaction to the growing racial, ethnic, religious, and gender diversity of the American electorate produced a surprising win for Donald Trump, whose campaign rhetoric was starkly polarizing and anti-establishment, dividing the country between «Us»—the «real» Americans who hungered for a return to an idealized past when industrial jobs provided for upward mobility and white males were in charge in the workplace and the family, and «Them»—the immigrants, minorities, and liberal elites who had wrought an «American carnage». (2018, pp. 138-139)

Donald Trump's very meritocratic speech of winners and losers resonated with many voters. They wanted to believe in the possibility of rising, of living the American dream. They wanted the chance to succeed and felt that an elite held them back.

The idea of social mobility and personal effort resonates with the Western individualistic conception of the human person. Politicians have adopted these concepts. An example is market triumphalism which originated in the 1980s free-market conservatism of Reagan and Thatcher, and was adopted in the 1990s by the center-Left. A welfare state was limited to helping only those who 'through no fault of their own' were unable to care for themselves. If there exists equality of opportunities, the only one to blame is the person who is left behind if there is no rising.

John Rawls's welfare-state liberalism recognized that by itself equality of opportunities would not lead automatically to equality of outcomes. Noting that natural talents varied, he added nuance by considering the natural talents of persons and so posited the 'difference principle. The naturally gifted have a duty towards the community as their talents are a shared asset. His theory of justice does not seek to reward virtue or merit since there is no agreement as to what is virtuous or deserving of merit in a pluralist society.

Sandel posits that without wanting to, «free-market liberalism [Hayek] and welfare state liberalism [Rawls] open the way to meritocratic understandings of success that they officially reject» (Sandel, 2020, p. 134). Hayek tried to distinguish value and merit; Rawls, moral desert and what he calls 'entitlements to legitimate expectations.' Yet, entitlement still leads to some forms of inequality of income and power. In fact, «[e]ntitlements to legitimate expectations may



be as potent a source of meritocratic hubris and working-class resentment as claims based on merit, virtue, or desert» (Sandel, 2020, p. 144).

This idea of entitlement creates social esteem. Indeed, compensating the disadvantaged could be demeaning. The contemporary effort to reduce sexual and racial injustices can never overcome another injustice which is patronizing: the difference between smart and dumb (Nagel, 1979, p. 104). Effort is not everything because intelligence —and being ‘credentialed’— is key to success in the technologized world.

Globalism compounded this inequality. Despite comparable effort, blue-collar work depended on the labor conditions of each country. The labor laws of certain countries permitted Western workers to face layoffs since their products and jobs could be outsourced. This predicament led to what was thought to be the solution to this inequality: stressing higher social mobility through qualifications. Higher education, therefore, was the answer to inequality. Perhaps the globalized world could bring about equality by mobility.

Education was viewed to be the key to success. Yet this too was monopolized by the advantaged. The learned were smart. Those without degrees were dumb and should listen. This view led to a technocratization of politics and a natural segregation in politics which marginalized the non-learned. «Tone-deaf to the mounting resentments of those who had not shared in the bounty of globalization, they missed the mood of discontent. The populist backlash caught them by surprise. They did not see the insult implicit in the meritocratic society they were offering». (Sandel, 2020, p. 154).

3. JONATHAN HAIDT AND THE SACRED THINKING OF GROUPS

Jonathan Haidt summarizes this process of meritocratic thinking when he writes:

We sometimes look back on the 1970s as the «me decade». That term was first applied to the growing individualism of American society, but it describes a broad set of changes in the social sciences as well. The idea of people as Homo economicus spread far and wide. In social psychology, for example, the leading explanation of fairness (known as «equity theory») was based on four axioms, the first of which was «Individuals will try to maximize their outcomes». The authors then noted that «even the most contentious scientist would find it difficult to challenge our first proposition. Theories in a wide variety of disciplines rest on the assumption that ‘man is selfish.’». All acts of apparent altruism, cooperation, and even simple fairness had to be explained, ultimately, as covert forms of self-interest. (Haidt, 2013, p. 197)

Liberalism, marked by values of «individualism, egalitarianism, universalism and meliorism» (Gray, 1995, p. 200) led to a pluralism of views. However, as Gray points out, this value-liberalism of Rawls is contrary to true plurality (Gray, 1995, p. 211). Postmodernism thought does not allow for unity in projects. While nature and its teleology were the sources of unity till modern times, this is no longer the case. The «mimetic view regards the world as having a given order and a given meaning and thus sees human being as as required to discover that

CLEARY, James. «The mechanism of the populist backlash according to Girard, Sandel and Haidt». XG. 2023, nº 6, pp. 53-63

meaning and conform themselves to it». (Trueman, 2020, p. 39). Society now holds a poetic view where individuals create purpose, meaning, and identity for themselves. (Trueman, 2020, p. 42). In this perspective, philosophers such as Foucault view language as power since it constructs meaning. Therefore, any language that is contrary to the accepted 'tolerant' discourse is heterodox and is an act of violence towards the weaker.

This can be found in Haidt's remarks on Robert Putnam's research. Focus on diversity or pluralism effectively weakens groups, diminishing both *bridging* and *bonding* capital. «Bridging capital refers to trust between groups, between people who have different values and identities, while bonding capital refers to trust within groups. Putnam found that diversity reduced both kinds of social capital». (Haidt, 2013, p. 308). Without wanting to, pluralism isolates persons and creates a 'hunkering down'. This 'turtling' or withdrawing in a shell is the opposite of the group mentality or 'hiving' as Haidt puts it. Yet the person naturally is tribal, and this hunkering down leads the person to find allies. Hiving is a way of defending against the diverse: one seeks clans in order to defend and protect the idea that one holds. Any other view is seen as a threat to the clan and must be defeated.

This is backed up by studies based on the social dynamics of the 2016 elections in the United States.

American voters in the 21st century are much more likely to hold strongly negative views of the opposing party than in the past. A growing proportion of Americans dislike the opposing party more than they like their own party. The rise of negative partisanship in the American electorate has contributed to the highest rates of party loyalty and straight-ticket voting in the past sixty years. (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016, p. 21).

Abramowitz and Webster go on to point out that representation is understood as partisan representation rather than of the entire electorate. Unfortunately, there is no incentive for senators or members of the house of representatives to consider their entire electorate because they must pander to their voters in order to be reelected and to stay in power. «For the most part, Republican members are only interested in the views of Republican voters, and Democratic members are only interested in the views of Democratic voters» (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016, pp. 21-22).

This leads to what the authors call the new normal in Washington. There is no need to reach across the aisle to work with members of the other party. As a consequence, bipartisan legislation will be increasingly rare. Thus, confrontation in politics is the new manner of acting as the representatives must back and defend their party. And unfortunately, this is a reinforcing cycle.

The rise of negative partisanship in the American electorate appears to be part of a vicious cycle of mutually reinforcing elite and mass behavior. Confrontational politics in Washington and in many state capitols is causing Democratic and Republican voters to develop increasingly negative views of the opposing party and to vote along party lines from the top of the ticket to the bottom. Negative views of the opposing party among voters, in turn, encourage political elites to adopt a confrontational approach to governing. Given these mutually reinforcing patterns of elite and mass behavior,



negative partisanship is likely to remain an important feature of American politics for the foreseeable future. (Abramowitz & Webster 2016, p. 22).

The very tolerant discourse of liberalism turns into a discourse that promotes division rather than unity.

This is the direct result of liberalism. As Haidt writes: «Liberals stand up for victims of oppression and exclusion. They fight to break down arbitrary barriers (such as those based on race, and more recently on sexual orientation)». (Haidt, 2013, p. 309) All this is laudable. Yet there is a flip side. In their zeal to help victims, liberals often «push for changes that weaken groups, traditions, institutions, and moral capital». (Haidt, 2013, p. 309). Additionally, liberals failed to note the bind in which they placed the white working class.

Ironically, the search to help the subsets of the society or the 'hive' leads to damaging society in general. «Emphasizing differences makes many people more racist, not less» (Haidt 2013, p. 309). In fact, seeking to help the victims of society, those less fortunate or more isolated may hurt the very people they seek to help. The reason for this is that when differences are accentuated—according to the minimal group paradigm—the person bands together with members of the associated group. The difference of 'us' versus 'them' is instinctual even if the criteria be arbitrary. In perceived moments of conflict, our tribal instincts kick in. «Any kind of intergroup conflict (real or perceived) immediately turns tribalism up, making people highly attentive to signs that reveal which team another person is on. Traitors are punished, and fraternizing with the enemy is, too» (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018, p. 58). When there is peace and prosperity, the tribal switch is turned down.

The current status quo is not considered to be a moment of peace and prosperity. In part, this can be attributed to the advent of the mass media. Continually they present the common suffering (*pathos*) of the anormal—to use Foucault's concept that the anormal is what defines the normal— or the incomprehension of the normal from a distance: Lawtoo points to Tarde's concept of 'imitative contagion' which explains the experience of how the affective *pathos* is acquired by the majority—mimetic subjects— over the inquiring *logos*:

While distanced in space, then, the members of a public share the same pathos in time. And it is the unconscious assurance that their pathos is a shared pathos (i.e., a sym-pathos) that, for Tarde, is responsible for modern subjects' capitulation to mass opinion, ideological indoctrination, and a general consensus (from Latin, consentire, to feel together). (2013, p. 105).

The framing by those who accentuate the differences—not just by the mass media but also by politicians and anyone who can influence the public discourse— makes whoever is powerful be regarded as naturally oppressive. This cannot be tolerated. Yet this tolerance is not an indiscriminate tolerance. As Haidt (2013) points out, Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse claimed indiscriminate tolerance as repressive. Marcuse posited that discriminatory tolerance was needed, one that subjugated the strong and favored the weak. This liberating tolerance would be intolerant against the Right—seen to be powerful— so as to allow the repressed majority—students, intellectuals, and minorities— to rise up and take their place. This idea influenced the 1960s and 1970s.

CLEARY, James. «The mechanism of the populist backlash according to Girard, Sandel and Haidt». XG. 2023, nº 6, pp. 53-63



Similarly, in 1989 Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw promoted an approach called *intersectionality*. This model tries to show the intersectionality of various power struggles. One cannot reduce the scheme of privilege and domination to just one aspect of life. Rather there are intersecting lines of opposites of privilege and oppression: able-bodied or disabled, white or non/white, male or female, heterosexual or gay/lesbian, fertile or infertile, European or non-European, credentialed or non-literate and so forth. The first terms of these opposites are privileges, and the second terms are oppressions. The privileges, defined as the capacity to dominate, compound over time as do the oppressions.

This mindset could easily be summarized by the victim-oppressor scheme. In this Foucauldian view, words are instruments of power. Therefore, for victims, words are violence received if they question the person's identity. As self-defense, verbal but also physical violence is justified.

There are many examples of this. Haidt points to Professor Stanger who was physically assaulted at a talk at Middlebury College. She wrote that what shocked her was that those who wanted to hear the talk looked at her in the eyes, the ones who did not, averted their gaze. «They couldn't look at me directly, because if they had, they would have seen another human being» (Stanger, 2013). The tribal instincts of the mob who attacked her could only see an aggressor, an 'other' and failed to recognize their common humanity.

The mechanism of becoming weak in order to become strong is analyzed by Paul Bruckner. In *The Temptation of Innocence* (2000), he writes:

But the war against discrimination must be waged under the principle that the law applies to everyone, with the same rights and the same restrictions. If it establishes as a precondition that certain groups, because they are disadvantaged, are entitled to special treatment, then everyone else will be tempted to band together in new feudalities of the oppressed.

If all it takes to win is to be recognized as a victim, then everyone will fight for this gratifying position (pp. 140-141).

Ironically, the new privilege is being oppressed or discriminated against, according to Bruckner. Rights are acquired, and special treatment is given to those who are weak. Therefore, there is a type of inverted meritocracy.

The wokeness, without wanting to, has sparked a populist backlash. In the eternal cycle of victim and oppressor, the tables turn. Sandel and Haidt both point to the roots of the causes of the populist revolt against the generally liberal political and university models. The status quo was challenged by the election of Donald Trump in the United States, the Yellow Jacket movement in France, Brexit and the anti-European Union sentiment in the United Kingdom, the Anti-Immigration Cinque Stelle nationalist movement in Italy, Black Lives Matter after the tragic death of George Floyd.

As Connolly (2017, p. 180) points out, the Left failed to make a place for the white working class which was «was caught in a pincer movement between corporate capital and the pluralizing Left». Before the danger of pushing this working class to the Right, Connolly states that he himself «called upon the Left [...] to infuse its support of pluralization in the domains of gender, sexual practice, and race —which we also supported actively— with a more active



class dimension». The wokeness that excluded the 'unwoke' needed to be truly pluralist. Otherwise, it would lead to a movement towards the Right:

There would thus be a class dimension to affirmative action, state support for workers having a hard time making ends meet, changes in the infrastructure of consumption to reduce inequality, and so on. So you can see that we did not treat the «subject position» of the working class as settled. This call to the Left failed, and a turn to the Right was indeed consolidated in a large section of the white working class. (Connolly, 2017, p. 180).

On the flipside, in Latin American countries where a conservative neoliberal model was the status quo, the success of the oppressed discourse flamed the young persons' uprising in Chile in 2019 and in Colombia in 2020 and led to the Left obtaining the political advantage.

The mechanisms behind this way of viewing the world and one's own groups is explained by the philosopher René Girard in his mimetic theory in the following section.

4. RENÉ GIRARD AND THE MECHANISMS BEHIND THE POPULIST BACKLASH

René Girard studied the idea of oppression and violence. In fact, he would agree with Gray that we are now in a crisis. «With the dawn of modernity, [...] hierarchical differences collapsed, and the crisis of violence present at the foundation of civilization reemerged» (Palaver, 2013, p, 249). Girard agrees with the need to deconstruct the mechanisms of society. And contrary to MacIntyre's claim, a return to Pre-Socratism is insufficient (Palaver, 2013, p. 267). Society must advance conscious of the dangers inherent to globalism and liberalism.

Yet Girard also rejects nihilism as the Dionysian resolution of the crisis. There is a truth that is factual and meaningful. Thus, he also distances himself from deconstructionism. «In our days, the 'deconstructionists' reverse the positivist error. For them, only interpretation exists. They want to be more Nietzschean than Nietzsche. Instead of getting rid of problems of interpretation, they get rid of facts» (Girard, 2001, p. 214). Girard is a strong opponent of postmodernism. There is a 'fact' of the mimesis and the foundational violence.

In his mimetic theory, Girard finds a hermeneutical key to understanding society in desire and the mimetic crisis that results when the object that is desired is unable to be shared. With the aforementioned pluralism, a certain initial equality and non-differentiation of belonging to the same nation is transformed, and an acquisitive mimesis occurs. Society is naturally hierarchical, with honors and positions of power that cannot be equally shared. Therefore, the many different factions strive to attain power. This acquisitive mimesis polarizes society into different groups with an 'us' vs 'them' mentality.

This type of mimesis morphs into antagonistic mimesis whereby the object of desire disappears, replaced by reciprocal rivalry, leading to violence. There occur two simultaneous projections whereby the rivals view the others as monsters.

While it is easy to see the oppressed as monsters, how can the privileged be seen as monsters instead of heroes? Girard explains the following in *The Scapegoat*:

CLEARY, James. «The mechanism of the populist backlash according to Girard, Sandel and Haidt». XG. 2023, nº 6, pp. 53-63



The further one is from normal social status of whatever kind, the greater the risk of persecution. This is easy to see in relation to those at the bottom of the social ladder.... This is less obvious when we add another marginal group to the poor and outsiders—the marginal insider, the rich and the powerful. The monarch and his court are often reminiscent of the eye of the hurricane. This double marginality is indicative of a social organization in turmoil. In normal times the rich and powerful enjoy all sorts of protection and privileges which the disinherited lack. We are concerned here not with normal circumstances but with periods of crisis (1986, p. 18).

It may seem counter-intuitive to include the powerful and privileged as the marginalized, but the frenzied crowd is more likely to persecute the rich and powerful in a crisis. The scapegoat mentality—the otherness of the privileged is one of the factors for the sign of the victim—attributes to them the failure of maintaining the social order.

Like the king, they are not that far off from being made into the scapegoat. «The king reigns only by virtue of his future death; he is no more and no less than a victim awaiting sacrifice, a condemned man about to be executed» (Girard, 1979, p. 107). The king must preserve the community, resolve the conflicts, and keep rivalries of social hierarchies in check for «*salus populi suprema lex*», the well-being of the people is the supreme law. Otherwise, in a very Lockean manner, the monarch is no longer useful and must be stripped of his royal role. Civil obedience is dependent on the social protection offered by those in power.

Just as the kings used public enemies to extend their reign making scapegoats for failures during their rule, the same scapegoat cycle today includes politicians. Politicians use the concept of ‘enemy’ to unite people with the friend-enemy distinction; thus, internal rivalry is transferred outwards. When they are unable to fulfill the duty of preserving the social order, they are expelled as the embodiment of the failure of their project. In fact, the cycle of modern-day elections can be seen as a vote for the political death penalty of the incumbent politicians. This is a way of restoring order and ending society’s imbalance. In elections, the electors choose a representative to solve evil. Thus, there is the double transference of the culpable and the saviors for in as much as they are named guilty of the wrong, they are also the very saviors of the society assuming the wrong or injustice. For if there were no guilty person, the entire society would have to take a look at itself and recognize that in a sense, all are causes of the injustice.

Girard proposes that Christianity reveals this scapegoat mechanism. This mechanism, when it is uncovered, unravels the ‘us’ vs ‘them’ tribal mentalities. Christians recognize that all are brothers and sisters. This comes back to the proposal of Sandel who proposes the overcoming of the false dichotomy of equality of opportunity or equality of results by presenting a third option: equality of condition. According to Christianity, all are of equal condition because all are created in the image and likeness of God and are sons and daughters of God. There is room for distinctions according to merit, and honor which is accorded to moral worth cannot be conflated with the intrinsic dignity of the person. Both meritocracy, which unwittingly links value with moral worth, and wokeness, which stresses the worth on one’s individuality and intrinsic dignity, insisting that one is accepted for who one is and not what one does or conformity with social mores, are insufficient.



5. CONCLUSION

This article has sought to add Sandel and Haidt's voices to the socio-political perspective of the mimetic theory. Both address the current crisis that the Western world faces and attempt to explain what causes the populist backlash using meritocracy and tribalism respectively to reveal the mechanisms of the phenomenon. However, these attempts perhaps need Girard's mimetic theory to complete their understanding. While the question of what to do in the face of this backlash is another question, nevertheless grappling with the dynamics that underlie the current strife can help to find the antidote to the venom. A false tolerance will lead society to victimization upon which no true justice can be founded. The future, if this scapegoat mechanism is overcome, is one not of fear or despair but rather one that points towards a brave new world. Girard holds that this future is hopeful as when the scapegoat mechanism is uncovered, it brings to a halt the cycle that creates victims and the ensuing injustices which in turn creates meritocracy and promotes tribalism.

6. REFERENCES

- Abramowitz, A. I., & Webster, S. (2016). The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of U.S. elections in the 21st century. *Electoral Studies*, 41, 12-22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2015.11.001>
- Abramowitz, A., & McCoy, J. (2018). United States: Racial Resentment, Negative Partisanship, and Polarization in Trump's America. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 681(1), 137-156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716218811309>
- Bruckner, P. (2000). *The Temptation of Innocence-Living in the Age of Entitlement* (1st ed.). Algora Publishing.
- Connolly, W. (2017). *Facing the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and the Politics of Swarming*. Duke University Press.
- Geiger, A. W. (2020, August 28). *For many voters, it's not which presidential candidate they're for but which they're against*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/02/for-many-voters-its-not-which-presidential-candidate-theyre-for-but-which-theyre-against/>
- Girard, R. (1979). *Violence and the Sacred* (P. Gregory, Trans.). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Girard, R. (1986). *The Scapegoat* (Y. Freccero, Trans.). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Girard, R. (2001). *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (J. G. Williams, Trans.; First Edition). Orbis.
- Gray, J. (2007). *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (Routledge Classics). Routledge.
- Haidt, J. (2013). *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (Illustrated ed.). Vintage.
- Lawtoo, N. (2013). *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious*. Michigan State University Press.
- Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2018). *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure*. Penguin Books.
- Nagel, T. (1979). *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press.

- Palaver, W. (2013). *René Girard's Mimetic Theory*. Michigan State University Press.
- Phillips, A. (2015, June 5). Why U.S. elections are all about voting against something. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/06/05/why-u-s-elections-are-all-about-voting-against-something-and-not-for-it/>
- Sandel, M. J. (2021). *Tyranny of Merit*. Picador Paper.
- Stanger, A. (2017, March 13). Understanding the angry mob at Middlebury that gave me a concussion. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/13/opinion/understanding-the-angry-mob-thatgave-me-a-concussion.html>.
- Trueman, C. (2020). *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. Crossway.

