

Violence as social integration in Judas' burning in Potrerito and La Cañada

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Abstract

This article describes how the use of violence channeled upon a victim can help regenerate social life in a community. Each Easter Sunday, many Venezuelan communities perform 'Judas' burning', a ritual in which a puppet representing Judas is symbolically executed. This ritual created a process of collective expiation that propitiates social peace. This article analyzes how these phenomena take place in Potrerito and La Cañada, two villages in Zulia State, Venezuela.

Key words: Violence, Burning of Judas, Potrerito, La Cañada, Zulia.

La Violencia como Integración Social en las Quemadas de Judas en Potrerito y La Cañada

Resumen

Este trabajo describe cómo el uso de la violencia canalizada sobre una víctima puede ayudar a regenerar la vida social de una comunidad. Cada Domingo de Pascua, muchas comunidades venezolanas asisten a la 'quemada de Judas, ritual en el que un muñeco que representa a Judas es simbólicamente ejecutado. Este ritual crea un proceso de expiación colectiva que propicia la paz social. El siguiente artículo analiza cómo ocurren estos fenómenos en dos poblaciones del Estado Zulia en Venezuela: Potrerito y La Cañada.

Palabras clave: Violencia Quemada de Judas, Potrerito, La Cañada, Zulia.

INTRODUCTION

In many parts of Latin America, there is a ritual tradition where, each year, a puppet representing Judas suffers revengeful violence for having betrayed Jesus. Very much as many of the punishments recommended by Dante in his *Inferno*, Judas is consumed by fire in what is popularly known as the 'burning of Judas'. What follows is an ethnographic description of Judas' burning in two villages located in Zulia State, Venezuela: Potrerito and La Cañada. Through this ritual, these societies go through a symbolic dynamic that soon go beyond the Biblical story.

The 'burning of Judas' is a ritual practice inherited from Spanish Catholicism. Very much as in Spain, Venezuela is a space of great cultural diversity, where, from one corner of premodern society we quickly move to another corner of postmodern society. Thus, the burning of Judas is not found throughout all of Venezuela. It is found especially in rural areas (the Andes, and the Central-Eastern region), and in the poor neighbourhoods of urban centres. However, in those spaces where the ritual does indeed take place, the burning of Judas has great meaning, to which we turn.

1. THE PREPARATION

The 'burning of Judas' takes place every Easter Sunday. However, as in every ritual celebration, there is a series of preparations that take place before the day of the ritual. During the Holy Week, any visitor to the villages of La Cañada and Potrerito (geographically very close to each other) will find puppets made out of clothes, exhibited in the neighbourhoods. These puppets are dressed in a very particular manner, and they usually have the size of an adult, although in certain occasions they are a bit smaller than a normal man.

It is not frequent to find puppets exhibited in houses that are located next to each other. Instead, there is a puppet in every corner or neighbourhood, in such a manner that the houses that exhibit the puppets are at a fair distance from each other. This distance may vary, from a few blocks to several kilometres.

The participants of the ritual inform that the puppet as a representation of Judas, who is to be burned on Easter Sunday, as the Holy Week comes to an end. But, the puppet is exhibited as soon as Holy Thursday,

the day that, according to Christian tradition, Judas betrayed Jesus. Judas remains seated for three or four days, awaiting his execution. The puppet is to be publicly exhibited a few days before Sunday. That is why the puppet is placed upon a chair; so it can be seen by those who walk by. However, not every puppet is on a chair. In Potrerito, we found a puppet tied to a wall, over the ceiling of a house. Thus, it was exposed to the sun.

Potrero is a town with poor economic conditions. Most of its inhabitants are fishers. The increasing pollution of the Lake of Maracaibo has affected the natural resources of these fishers; thus, they have been economically harmed. Qualified workers abandon their homes to work in more populated areas, such as La Cañada or Maracaibo, where there are more work opportunities. Thus, those who stay in Potrerito do not enjoy a high socio-economic status. This is quite evident in the deterioration of housing materials, automobiles and clothes, among others.

However, it caught our attention the fact that the house where Judas was exhibited over the ceiling was notoriously luxurious, surrounded by houses in terrible conditions. The owner of the luxurious house allowed us to go into his home, and we could corroborate the luxury that was evident from the outside.

This man ordered his butlers to bring the puppet so he could show it to us, and surrounded by some friends, he began to talk. It soon became evident that this man was a prominent character in the neighbourhood. During the conversation, this man revealed he was a local politician, who belonged to a party that was once very influential in Venezuela, but it was going through a declining phase.

According to this man, his wife bears the responsibility of making the puppet, a pattern that is repeated through out the other houses that exhibit Judas. While men work, women take on a very important ritual role in the puppet's preparation for Easter Sunday. They are assigned the task of dressing the puppet, and placing him in exhibition. In a strange twist, the local politician's wife had dressed Judas as if he were his husband's political opponent.

In La Cañada, women also are assigned the task of preparing the puppet that represents Judas. According to some informants, neighbours and relatives also cooperate in the puppet's preparation. As opposed to the puppets found in Potrerito, the puppets in La Cañada only represent Judas, they bear no political representation. Every puppet that we found

in la Cañada was seated. This allows us to infer that, to sit Judas is the rule, and not the exception. Usually, Judas is seated while he holds a liquor bottle in his hand.

In one of the houses located in La Cañada, some men insisted that we take pictures of them skating next to Judas. When we were about to take the picture, one of the men took out of his pocket a genital fragment and placed it upon the puppet; this, it looked as if Judas had pulled out his penis and showed it to all those who walked by. In an amusing atmosphere, many kids manipulated Judas' genitals and made fun of each other, mutually accusing themselves of being homosexuals. One of them sat on Judas' lap and caressed him as if he were his lover. In the midst of laughter, many others came to touch Judas' genitals.

2. THE DAY OF THE BURNING

On Easter Sunday afternoon, Judas is scheduled to be burned. In the rich politician's home, a large group of people had gathered. They came from all corners of Potrerito; because, apparently, this was the only home that had prepared the puppet for the burning.

Many of those who came to the ritual turned out to be relatives of the politician. It was never exactly clear what was their kinship. But, nevertheless, many people affirmed they were the local politician's relatives, mentioning they were his 'cousins'. A few could specify their kinship relationship, while others insisted they were his distant cousin, but cousin nevertheless, while admitting that they did not know well their genealogical relationship.

Keeping this in mind, it is convenient to consider that this politician is a connection axis among members of the community, and this connection is expressed in kinship terms, even though, in many instances, this kinship is clearly fictional. This politician is a 'cousin' of many of those who attend the ritual; thus, he is the vertex of a social group that articulates its solidarity through the kinship with this character.

The politician took out of his garage one of his luxurious automobiles. Around the automobile were many of those who attended the ritual and of them took Judas down from the house's ceiling and placed it on the automobile's ceiling. At a very slow pace, the politician drove through the street, and the rest of the people followed him walking. With loud joyful popular music, began a procession that took Judas, seated on

top of the automobile, to the town's square and back to the politician's house. It is a relatively short trajectory, but, given the slow pace of the procession, it lasted for about an hour.

During the trajectory, those who attended the ritual were very joyful. The presence of alcohol became notable among most men and some women. They shouted along the way: "We are taking Judas! We are going to burn him!", as the music played. Some of the neighbours that did not go to the politician's house to watch the burning took a glimpse in their yards to watch as the caravan went through, they greeted those attended the ceremony and a few insulted Judas.

After returning to the politician's house, there was a great gathering around the automobile that was carrying Judas. They disputed who was going to have the privilege of taking down the puppet and placing him upon a chair. Finally, the politician gave his permission to a young man, so that it could be him the one who would take the puppet and bring him to the middle of the street.

There, a chair was waiting for Judas, and as in the rest of the houses during the preparations for the ritual, they sat Judas. A woman told us that she offered her house to keep Judas, but, in her words, "not even if they pay me, will I do it again". She insisted that Judas should be seated when he is burned, because some years ago, she had burned Judas while he was standing up, and later a tragedy fell upon the family. That is why she preferred not to be Judas' host. Apparently, burning Judas while he is standing brings disastrous consequences.

This time, Judas was much more adorned than during the days before Easter Sunday. In those days, he had been dressed with clothes representing the politician's rival, but, on Easter Sunday, Judas was dressed with a shirt, a hat and pants. He also had sunglasses on, and the neighbours had put a beard on his face.

A circle of people congregated around the puppet. A woman approached the puppet and from his shirt, she took out a piece of paper. She read aloud this piece of paper, as people, in the mist of laughter, listened.

This reading is what the participants of the ritual call 'Judas' testament'. According to some informants, this represents the moment when Judas leaves his belongings to various members of the community. The woman began reading the testament, which was redacted as if Judas himself had written it. In the testament, Judas confesses he sold Christ for

thirty silver coins that “are no good now”, and before he dies, he desires to leave his belongings. Thus, through the testament, Judas leaves his clothes, his sunglasses, his coins and his liquor bottle to various persons in the village. All these belongings have been provided by the local politician and his woman; that is to say, by the owners of the house where Judas is exhibited.

After the testament was read, various men took the liquor and poured it upon the puppet. Afterwards, gas was poured upon Judas. During those instants, the people had moved away from the puppet. One of the men lighted a match and threw on the puppet, as it began to burn.

As the fire flamed, the assistants to the ritual once again were joyful, and some even clapped. Many contemplated that the puppet was being burned as they drank alcohol and talked. As the puppet was torn apart by the flames, and only ashes remained, people eventually retreated back to their homes, as the fire eventually lost strength and, when the fire was completely off, few people remained.

In La Cañada, the burning went along similar lines, with a few singularities that are worth mentioning. In La Cañada, relationships among neighbours are quite cordial, but there is some rivalry among the houses that exhibit Judas. These houses’ owners make an effort to offer the best representation of Judas to the community, and they hope neighbours and relatives go to their burning, and not to another one.

In La Cañada there was no procession as in Potrerito. The number of gatherers was not as high as in Potrerito, perhaps because there were more houses burning Judas in La Cañada. As in Potrerito, in La Cañada Judas’ testament was read. The puppets were adorned with clothes provided by the owners of the houses that exhibited the puppet. There is no major variation in the clothing of the puppets: a hat, a shirt and pants, some have beards and moustaches on their faces.

The testament’s redaction was also done in first person, so that the person that read the document did it as if Judas himself pronounced such words. Once again, he confessed his crime, and he mentioned the persons that would receive his belongings.

As the testament was read, the objects were assigned to people that, apparently, kept a relationship with the object. One of the houses’ owners was a hair-dresser. Thus, in the testament, Judas left his wig to this woman.

Judas left his jacket to the tailor, his glasses to a blind man, and his liquor bottle to the 'village's drunkard', a man that apparently drank heavily.

Every time that a belonging was assigned to a person, the participants applauded. Finally, the time came to deliver Judas' genitals. Let us remember that, in La Cañada, many of the youngsters manipulated Judas' genitals and mocked each other. When the genitals were delivered, there was great expectation, because, apparently, no one was sure who the recipient would be. A man asked: "Who is going to receive these?" Another man answered in the mist of laughter: "The village's whore". All of a sudden, they named a woman, and people laughed even more.

The woman that was called was very attractive and had been a very young mother. Far from taking her postulation as an insult, she was filled with pride and knelt before the puppet, as if she were going to perform oral sex on Judas. She took the genitals as the rest of the people applauded.

As in the burning in Potrerito, once the reading of the testament was finished, a great circle was formed around the puppet, waiting its burning. The 'village's drunkard' poured some alcohol on Judas, and other men added gas on the puppet. Fire was lit and Judas burned. Those who attended the ritual did not expect the house's owner to place explosives inside the puppet, so these explosives lighted and people were surprised.

Due to the explosives, the flames that burned this puppet took longer to extinguish than the flames of the other puppets. People still did not retreat from the scene, because they were expecting something else. Thus, a young man arrived on a motorcycle and tied a string to Judas' head. The other side of the string was tied to the motorcycle, and he dragged Judas' head through the street, going back and forth, as people applauded.

In one of the houses, as Judas burned, kids simulated they were shooting Judas and threw rocks at him. When the flames were finally off and only ashes remained, people go back to their homes and wait until next year when the ritual will take place again.

3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS: A SACRIFICIAL RITUAL

We could well consider that Judas' burning is a sacrificial ritual, where a puppet is burned by a collectivity. But, this may not be entirely so. We need to make a brief outline of ethnological theory on sacrifice ritual in order to determine up to what point Judas' burning is a sacrifice.

Tylor was one of the first anthropological theorists of sacrifice. Departing from his animist theory of religion, he believed a 'sacrifice' was a form of ritual where offers were delivered to the spirits as a gift, in order to ask for something, to be grateful, or to offer tribute.

According to Tylor's scheme, any material offer ritual to a supernatural entity is a sacrifice. Tylor is typical representative of the old ethnological school that pretended to exaggerate differences between primitives and moderns. To him, sacrifice is confined to primitive religious life that tries to find explanations to phenomena by attributing them animistic concepts. In his rigid scheme, there is no possibility that a sacrificial ritual is present among both primitives and moderns: because we moderns no longer offer cults to spirits, we have no sacrificial institutions.

Tylor does away with a central element of sacrificial ritual: violence. Being concerned with the offering much more than with the victim's death, he omits a great quantity of rituals that we could well call 'sacrifices'. Furthermore, his definition depends upon the supernatural; thus, only superstitious peoples carry on sacrifices. The same can be said of Frazer, for whom sacrificial practices were vestiges of a past time that, eventually, would be overcome by science (1).

Probably, Tylor would not consider Judas' burning a sacrifice. Those who participate in this ritual do not believe in spirits, the victim is not offered to any supernatural entity, and Judas is not conceived as a gift.

Robertson Smith's contributions changed the theoretical panorama about this matter (2). For this author, sacrifice was a gastronomic feast where once a year a sacred victim was eaten, protected during the rest of the year by prohibitions. By eating the victim, the participants of the sacrifice hoped for a mystical communion with the totemic spirit that resided inside the animal.

Smith incorporates violence as a central element of sacrifice. In order to eat the animal, it must be killed. It is not offered to any god, be-

cause the animal itself is divine. Even if he does not do away with supernatural elements entirely, Smith allows for a greater flexibility than Tylor, and he opens a spectrum of ethnographic possibilities to the contemporary world. Sacrifice is a great gastronomic feast where participants become closer by sharing the flesh of the totemic animal that represents them as a social unit. Nevertheless, it is difficult to think that Smith would have conceived Judas' burning as a sacrificial ritual. The participants of the burning do not worship Judas; quite the opposite, they consider him an anti-god.

Durkheim rescued many of Smith's viewpoints and contributed with a sociological approach to the interpretation of sacrificial ritual (3). Any form of ritual, including sacrifice, is a form to consolidate social links among participants. When a collectivity is conformed, one enters into a sacred space that, in the end, is its own representation. Sacrifice is a collective form of worshipping the collectivity itself. Thus, Durkheim probably would have considered Judas' burning a sacrifice.

All these considerations do have some validity, as they rescue some important elements in sacrificial practices, but they fail when it comes to highlight what is truly essential; that is why they can not fully account for Judas' burnings.

Rene Girard's work is much more satisfactory in its definition of sacrifice. Retaking Durkheim's tradition, Girard postulates that sacrifice is, above all, a sort of social representation where members of a collectivity draw closer to each other.

According to Girard, there must be two essential elements for a ritual practice to be called 'sacrifice': 1) a victim must suffer violence; 2) this violence must be executed collectively. Very much as Hobbes, Girard estimates that human beings are naturally conflictive, and the quarrels among the members of a community must be solved in the collective participation of violence.

Contrary to what Durkheim suggested, Girard believes that it is not enough to collectively participate in a religious activity. This activity, religious or not, must be violent. Violence that develops among members of a community must be channelled towards a surrogate agent that, upon dying, gathers all communal evils. Many conflicting parties will make peace if the mutually participate in violence against a victim. Solidarity is achieved in expense of violence. If, as Durkheim argued, solidarity is

the axis of the sacred; Girard goes back further and postulates that, in as much as violence is the origin of solidarity, then this very violence must be the origin of the sacred. Thus, violence is anterior to the sacred.

Thus, for Girard, sacrifice, in its minimal definition, is not strictly a religious institution. It may very well be any instance of collective violence executed upon a particular victim. According to Girard, the foundation of society is the mechanism where conflicting parties come together and inflict violence upon a victim. Sacrificial ritual is only a formalization and representation of a principle that is present in most spheres of social life.

In such a manner, according to Girard, there is no major difference between, say, the execution of Louis XVI, the rituals of dying kings documented by Frazer, and sacrifice as it has been traditionally understood by ethnologists. In all these examples, members of a collectivity come together in as much as they assemble a single violent effort.

For Girard, then, Judas' burning would indeed be a sacrifice. Even in the absence of gods, even without a sacred space clearly delimited, the ritual is about a collectivity that executes violence against a victim (regardless of whether it is animal, vegetal, human or its representation) and brings people together as they all participate in this mechanism. Taking these into consideration, let us now analyze every element and situations observed during this ritual.

4. ANALYSIS OF A SACRIFICIAL RITUAL

What first comes across to an observer of Judas' burnings is the fact that the victim, namely, the puppet, is exhibited for various days before Easter Sunday. This is characteristic that is not frequently found in the ethnographic descriptions of other sacrificial rituals.

This fact becomes clearer if we understand that one of the main goals of the burning is expiation. For Catholicism, a tradition utterly concerned with sin and morality, expiation is a way to repent and erase sins previously committed. Upon sinning, the relationship between God and mortal is perjured, and sacrificial expiation attempts to redeem previous faults, so that moral purity is regenerated and the relationship with God is reinforced. Thus, sacrifice is many times thought as an individual practice here the believer delivers some part of himself as a way to redeem is/her faults.

However, Catholic expiation is an exception, and not a rule, in sacrifice among non-Western peoples. Sacrificial victims are usually called 'scapegoats'. This name goes back to Leviticus 16: 15-16, where, in sacrificial preparations, it is ordered to take a he-goat to be sacrificed *for the sins of the people*. In such a manner, the scapegoat is an expiatory animal that redeems collective faults, much more than individual ones.

Judas is exhibited the days before its burning, because it is necessary for the whole community to participate in its execution. He is at everyone's sight for a while, so that the whole community channels its sins to this victim that, upon dying, will take all sins and evils that have been placed upon it. Judas shall receive every impure element of those who go near him.

These 'sins' are not exclusively moral faults, as understood by Catholicism. They are actually collective sins, namely, conflicts that come up among members of the community. They are sins in as much as they are evil, because conflict threatens the community's very existence. 'Evil' in this case, is communal conflict.

Judas is there to be insulted, beat and mutilated. Instead of killing each other, it is more beneficial to channel violence to a victim that is despised by everyone. Judas as an expiatory victim does not only prevent against internal conflict in the community; it also allows for community members to draw closer, in as much as they participate in the same violence.

If, as Durkheim and his tradition argued, ritual solidarity is the matrix of the sacred, and then Judas must retain certain vestiges of a sacred being, even if they are not entirely visible. In as much as he is a victim, Judas is, to a certain extent, a sacred being. Even in the absence of gods and ghosts, Judas' burning delineates a sacred space. Judas' burning propitiates the social. If we were to follow Durkheim, this would be enough to argue that we are partially in sacred ground.

When the day of the burning comes, Judas is taken in a ceremony through out the village. This is a trait that is found in many sacrificial rituals. It is in procession where sacrifices manifest its ambiguity, alternating between the sacred and the profane. Judas is a traitor, but, what kind of traitor deserves to be placed upon a luxurious car and lead a procession through the village, coming to close to being a god? If Judas were solely a traitor, his execution would be much simpler, as traitors and prisoners are usually executed in warfare, namely, in virtual anonymity, with no solemnity.

Once again, Judas is central for the feast; without him, there would be no sacrifice and no community. Thanks to Judas, communal life is born. Thanks to his treason, community can easily and legitimately execute expiatory violence and, when Judas dies, he will take with himself all the evils and peace and social life will be regenerated.

In the end, Judas itself is a representation of the community. Around him everyone is congregated, and his burning represents collective sacrificial violence that propitiates social life. Let us again take Durkheim in consideration: in Judas a sacred space is created because Judas itself represents the collectivity. For a brief period, Judas becomes a sacred being.

Judas is taken in a ceremony around the village because, very much as in his exhibition, the community pretends to assure collective expiation in the ritual. *Every member* of the collectivity must participate in the ritual. Even those who are not able to be physically present at the moment of the burning must participate in the expiation. The procession gathers the symbolic participation of those who will not be present when Judas is burned. Whoever burns Judas does so in the name of the whole community.

After the procession, the community reads the testament. We have already mentioned that the testament is written in first person, as if Judas himself admitted his fault and presents no objection to his punishment. When sacrificial violence is executed upon a victim, the ritual must represent the situation *from the point of view of the collectivity*, and never from the point of view of the victim. Precisely in order to conform the organic unity of the community, there must be a consensus regarding the violent action. There can be no disagreements because, if so, the ritual would not achieve its integrating function.

That is why the community must project many accusations upon the victim so that, among members of the community, there will be no doubt that the punishment received by the victim is legitimate. By accepting his own culpability in the testament, Judas is legitimatizing his own execution.

After admitting to his faults, Judas delivers his belongings. Once again, we insist upon a Durkheimian interpretation of religion, by suggesting that Judas has a sacred profile because, thanks to his execution community is formed. In Judas' body, society is represented.

According to Mary Douglas, “the body is the image of society and therefore, there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not imply at the same time a social dimension” (4). The delivery of Judas’ belongings comes to be a way to proclaim an organic segmentation of society.

Durkheim conceived society as an organic but segmented whole. That is to say, the social body is fragmented in different sections, but, far from being isolated among them, they interact with each other as they conform solidarity in such a manner that, together, they form something larger than the sum of its parts. Segmentation is a principle widely documented by ethnologists. Levi-Strauss highlighted it in totemism: each anatomic part of the totemic animal (feet, head, etc.) represents a social segment, so that they are separated among each other, but at the same time they are conscious that they all belong to a larger organic unit.

Meyer Fortes (5) and Evans-Pritchard (6) also documented segmentation in African kinship systems.

Judas’ body represents this segmentation principle. In its totality, the puppet is an image of society. But, even if society is an organic whole, it is also segmented. The same can be said of Judas’ body. The puppet itself is an organic unit, but it can be decomposed in every one of its parts: feet, hair, head, etc., as well as its belongings: bottle, jacket, glasses, etc.

By reading the testament, the belongings and parts of the body are distributed. In such a manner, Judas’ body is segmented in every one of the belongings that are distributed among the members of the community: tailors, drunkards, hairdressers, etc. The bottle is not given to that drunkard in particular, but to a representation of *all* drunkards in the village. As society, Judas’ body is divided into segments. But, when the nose, head, bottle, jacket, etc. come together, a superior organic unity is achieved. Thus, Judas’ body becomes a metaphor of society, as it is segmented but united when its parts come together.

Judas’ most ambiguous belongings are, of course, its genitals. Not only did the youths manipulated the puppet’s genitals in the days prior to Easter Sunday, but there is also a great expectation as to who will take the genitals after reading the testament.

The manipulation of a sacrificial victim’s genitals is a well documented fact in ethnographic descriptions. The Greek sacrificial ritual, *sparagmos*, insisted upon genital mutilation. Evans-Pritchard and Godfrey

Liendhardt have also documented these practices among the Nuer and the Dinka, respectively.

We could well approach this phenomenon insisting upon the fact that, for the ritual to accomplish its integrating function, it must achieve unanimity, so that *every* member of the community participates in sacrificial violence. To achieve this, the victim must be profiled as evil enough in order to legitimize the eerie punishment that is about to receive.

The community needs to distort the victim, so that it is represented as an evil being that deserves to be executed. By representing Judas as a drunkard, the bases for such a distortion are set. But, above all, sexual faults are the most common tools for this distortion.

Being an adulterer, rapist, homosexual and incestuous are only some of the most well known accusations that contribute to the character's monstrosity. At all costs they deserve a punishment for having improperly used their genitals. Furthermore, because the fault is a sexual one, punishment is concerned with the manipulation and mutilation of the genitals.

On Judas this sexual monstrosity is projected. It is not enough to be a drunkard or a traitor, the distortion needs to be completed through genital prominence. With such a distortion, there will remain no doubts that this character deserves to die, and the violence executed upon him will be legitimate.

Judas is finally executed through the use of fire. But even after his death, Judas is still good as an agent for the collective expiation of the community. Consumed by the flames, his body is dragged by a motorcycle that takes him on a post mortem procession.

This characteristic is also found in other sacrificial rituals of Hispanic culture. In bullfights, mules drag the dead bull and they perform a brief procession around the bull ring. Even, after death, the sacrificial victim retains the sacred profile that never lost. As in the procession, the victim comes close to a sacred space. During the procession, all members of the community participate in the victim's death. By dragging the victim's body, it is expected that all members of the community may benefit from this fact, so that communal moral is strengthened.

Thus, the community has been regenerated after the burning of Judas, an ambiguous character. On the one hand, he has been a traitor that deserves to be burned; but on the other hand, he is an expiatory agent

that, upon the reception of violence concentrated in a single execution, gives rise to social organism and therefore becomes partially sacred. Through out the whole year, tensions and conflicts come up, endangering the social organic unit. Easter Sunday is the day when all these conflicts will be channeled into a character that will be defended by no one, and whose death will propitiate communal life, which cyclically, will be corrupted once again, and they will have to wait until next year in order to regenerate it once again.

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