

Thesis and Scope of Study

ACTS OF VIOLENCE CULMINATING in human death pepper the stories found in the Deuteronomistic History. Particularly gruesome outbreaks of violence mar the book of Judges. The violence includes warfare between tribal groups, nations on the battlefield, regicide within the king's inner chamber, child sacrifice, arson, rape, fratricide, and dismemberment. The violence in Judges and early in 1 Samuel set the stage for configuring the monarchy within ancient Israel. In this study I will argue that these outbreaks of violence are not arbitrarily narrated events. These stories of violence connect with one another to establish sanctioned violence in kingship. That this violence is "sanctioned" does not make it any less violent. That is, there is a means by which a "permitted" violence curbs chaotic outbreaks of violence. Girardian theory will help us to see the function of this violence which, stemming from mimetic rivalry, culminates in the scapegoating mechanism. Girardian theory will also help us to see how one form of this institutionalized scapegoating mechanism might result in "sacral kingship."¹ In the local King Abimelech, in the Levite stories associated with the dismemberment of a concubine, and in the first act of Saul as king, monarchy is more than a political institution to be "like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:20); monarchy is a form of sacred violence, perpetuated for the sake of dissipating outbreaks of violence. The violence associated with monarchy that dissipates violence is the crucial hermeneutic this study will attempt to demonstrate. George Pattison writes about this in relation to warfare texts in Joshua; "maleficent violence is replaced by beneficent violence, violence drives out violence, and the victim who was initially blamed for

1. Girard, *Things Hidden*. The work of Simon Simonse in this century with regard to monarchy and kingship in Africa certainly applies here. Simonse, *Kings of Disaster*.

the violence is now hailed as the one who delivers the community from its own self-destructive tendencies.”²

The escalating violence in the book of Judges sets the foundation for a new societal organization established through the monarchy in 1 and 2 Samuel. This story of emergent societal identity, integral to the “sacred” story of the Bible, operates in what appears to be categorically profane ways.³ Why do “sacred” narratives tell such a story? In this study we will demonstrate that in the storied movement toward monarchy, the chaotic violence becomes controlled violence that prevents its further escalation. Through the monarch, violence is transformed into an event that, while violent, reconciles conflict that might otherwise lead to chaos, dissolution, or anarchy. This transformation of violence and conflict into an event of resolution and unification makes it sacred, because violence that does not dissolve communities and instead unites them is sacred. The full scope of this study will explicate this process. “The sacred is the sum of human assumptions resulting from collective transferences focused on a reconciliatory victim at the conclusion of a mimetic crisis.”⁴

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Using a close reading of the literary construction of this text as my primary methodology, I will argue in this study that there is a literary connection between Judg 8:29—9:56; Judg 17:1—21:25; and 1 Sam 9:1—11:15. This literary reading will be informed by the work of René Girard and his unique understanding of the textual interplay of desire, mimesis, rivalry, and scapegoating.

Girardian theory emerged out of literature studies that moved towards anthropological understanding. Girard himself was first a scholar of history, then literature, and finally of culture/anthropology. These three passages are part of a larger textual story referred to by scholars as the Deuteronomistic History. This history tells the story of the development of Israel from the end of her wilderness wandering to the Exile in Babylon. The Deuteronomistic History, according to Martin Noth,

2. Pattison, “Violence,” 136.

3. I do not intend to use the categories of sacred and profane as found, for example, in the works of Mircea Eliade, Mary Douglas, et al. I use the categories here only in so far as they set the stage for understanding the kind of hermeneutic that a Girardian informed literary reading will provide.

4. Girard, *Things Hidden*, 42.

was believed to be the work of one author who redacted stories into a composite whole, from Joshua to the end of 2 Kings. Scholarly opinion of Noth's analysis has led to different conceptions and interpretations of Joshua through 2 Kings, but the idea of a coherent literary work across these now separate books remains.⁵

One of the core issues involved in the early dispute over Noth's theory had to do with the reason for writing this history. That is, was it composed from a "pessimistic" or "optimistic" perspective, and what was the view of the monarchy that was so central to this entire history? A close reading of texts within the Deuteronomistic History suggests that there might be sources that favored monarchy (pro-monarchial texts) and others that denounced monarchy (anti-monarchial texts).⁶ The fact that, since Noth, opinion has not settled on this issue of pro-monarchial set against anti-monarchial texts is important for this study. I will argue that textual ambivalence with regard to monarchy is decisive in the final form of the literary text. These texts remain ambivalent to kingship regardless of its social acceptance or practice in the history of Israel. A literary reading of these texts will demonstrate that the specific texts under review function within the larger Deuteronomistic History to make the reader uneasy and unsettled about the positive or negative import of monarchy. The story is unsettled about the monarchy because monarchy participates in the same enactment of violence that could lead to dissolution of the community.⁷

It should be obvious that it is not only in these biblical texts that we encounter the idea of monarchy in Israel. Canonically speaking, the biblical texts are aware of the idea of kingship as a system of government in the texts of Genesis. Again, canonically speaking, it is clear that the ways of monarchy are introduced in Deuteronomy. And, certainly the

5. A presentation of the variant views of authorship for the Deuteronomistic History is not the focus here, but majority opinions separate along what might be called the Cross and Smend schools. Brief review of these issues can be found in multiple works. A single, accessible review was published by Campbell, "Martin Noth," 31–62.

6. The work of scholars related to this pro versus anti-monarchial source-critical method will be detailed in the opening section of the study.

7. In this study we will begin with Abimelech, noting how violence metes out rivalry and death, but we will end with Saul, noting how violence is redistributed such that rivalry is unraveled and death is impeded. With Antony Campbell we note that between the stories of Abimelech and Saul we have the first stories of monarchy in Israel. "As an institution, monarchy was new in Israel. The one previous attempt had been a failure, Abimelech (Judg 9)." Campbell, *1 Samuel*, 85.

texts that extend into 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings deal explicitly with issues of kingship. The rationale for the reading of the texts proposed in this study apart from other texts that deal with the idea or institution of monarchy is twofold.

This study will demonstrate that these particular texts connect with issues of kingship in several unique ways. First, the presentation of Abimelech, whose name uses the idea of kingship in a story that immediately follows his father's refusal to become a king, will narrate explicit monarchical themes in the book of Judges. Second, because the texts found between Judges 17 and Judges 21 have the explicit references to kingship in the biblical text that "there was no king in Israel," we are dealing with explicit monarchical themes. Third, while the focus of our reading will proceed as a close literary reading, it is also within the frame of the uniquely Girardian reading of this literature that the aim of this study will make proposals regarding the historical reality of the start of kingship in Israel. Of importance to us, then, is the opinion of some scholars that within these chapters on the start of kingship in Israel we have the oldest strata of historical record.⁸ Fourth, since the time of Martin Noth it has become characteristic of scholarship to note the editorial insertions and speeches of the Deuteronomist.⁹ Therefore, 1 Samuel 9–11 form part of the corpus of material about the start of kingship in Israel specifically with Israel's first king, Saul. Additionally, 1 Samuel 9–11 are framed by two chapters, 1 Samuel 8 and 1 Samuel 12, that have been recognized as being the work of the Deuteronomist's anti-monarchical hand in both chapters,¹⁰ And finally, this study will nar-

8. It should be noted that that does not necessarily mean that all scholars view all of the material from this period to have been old, and certainly it is the case within redactional studies of this material that scholars have argued for various strands of traditions. The redactional layers of this material will be reviewed in chapter 2 of this study. The claim of this statement notes that within this section we have genuinely old historical material. With respect to 1 Samuel 9 specifically, Isaac Mendelsohn demonstrated a historical strata for this material in the comparative literature with Alalakh and Ugarit from as early as the eighteenth to thirteenth centuries BCE. Mendelsohn, "Samuel's Denunciation," 17–22. With respect to 1 Samuel 11 and the Ammonite incident, Klein writes that this is "usually considered to be one of the oldest and most authentic about Saul." Klein, *1 Samuel*, 104.

9. The work of Martin Noth will be more fully explained and detailed in the history of scholarship that will be presented in chapter 2 of this study.

10. "The redaction of the chapter [1 Samuel 8] is to be attributed to Dtr. Note the historian's characteristic vocabulary: 'reject,' v 7; 'abandon,' 'worshipping other gods,' v 8;

row the focus on kinship to the 1 Samuel 9–11 that are part of a section broadly accepted to narrate the start of kingship. That is, a review of the literature of 1 Samuel demonstrates that since the time of Wellhausen scholars have understood the narrative section between 1 Samuel 7 and 1 Samuel 15 to form a cohesive unit about the beginning of kingship in the person of Saul.¹¹ As has been recently noted by David Howard, “The usual starting point for studies on biblical attitudes toward Israelite kingship is in 1 Samuel 7–12.”¹² About these texts in 1 Samuel, Bruce Birch stated, “Scholars have long recognized that the Book of 1 Samuel is crucial for our understanding of the development of the Israelite kingship. It is virtually our only written source for the transition period from tribal league to monarchy . . . This is especially true of those chapters dealing directly with the establishment of Saul as the first king of Israel (7–15). It is here that the greatest historical and theological interest has focused, and it is here that scholars have most often searched for the key to the composition of the book.”¹³

‘cry out,’ ‘you chose,’ and ‘Yahweh will not answer,’ v 18. In addition there are a number of close ties to such passages as . . . 1 Sam 12 . . . whose ascription to the historian is generally conceded.” Klein, *1 Samuel*, 74. See also Birch, *The Rise*, 26–27. See also Veijola, *Das Königtum*, 84–91. This position is not without its detractors. With respect to 1 Samuel 12 Klein writes, “This chapter was used by the Deuteronomistic historian to sum up his interpretation of the rise of kingship” (114). Steven L. McKenzie postulates a position that maintains the integrity of 1 Samuel 8 through 12, and that rejects the work of those who see chapters 8 and 12 as later editorial redactions. McKenzie, “The Trouble,” 301–7.

11. The contribution of Wellhausen includes Wellhausen, *Der Text*. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*.

12. Howard, “The Case,” 103. Howard’s article provides a solid review of the work of Gerald Gerbrandt’s dissertation and later book titled *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History*. Howard also notes that references to kingship occur in 1 Samuel prior to chapter 9, which is the starting point for this study. He writes, “The first reference in Samuel to kinship occurs in the Song of Hannah. Here, in 2:10—as well as in words of the man of God in 2:35—YHWH’s king and anointed one are referred to. Their occurrence here reinforces the view that kingship is viewed positively in the Deuteronomistic History. They function proleptically, since there was still no king at this juncture in the book, and they serve to signal at the outset the book’s interest in the chosen king” (111). This reference to kingship, then, is important in the scope of the entire story of kingship found in 1 Samuel, and, as Howard notes, in 1 and 2 Samuel taken together. That these references point to the kingship is sure, but they will not frame the focus of this study for the reasons detailed in this chapter. See also the work of Gerbrandt that will be detailed in this study (Gerbrandt, *Kingship*).

13. Birch, *The Rise*, xi.

It is granted that scholars have varied opinions on these chapters, and the focus and the work of these scholars will be incorporated throughout this study.¹⁴ The principal reason for narrowing the focus of this study to 1 Samuel chapters 9–11 within the larger narrative unit dealing with the start of kingship in Israel has to do with the fact that chapters 9–11 exclusively and uniquely treat the introduction and acclamation and inauguration of Saul as king principally apart from the activity of Samuel.¹⁵ Further, in the three chapters—9, 10, and 11—scholars have characterized a threefold pattern of introducing us to Saul in private (principally in chapter 9), in public (principally in chapter 10), and in a public re-affirmation or renewal (principally in chapter 11).¹⁶ The argument of this study will demonstrate that the first two private and public acknowledgements of Saul's kingship only point to his status as "prince" and set the stage for but not the reality of inauguration of kingship, which only occurs in chapter 11.

It has been stated that the rationale for the reading of the texts proposed in this study, separate from other texts that deal with the idea or

14. Two examples, supplementary to that of Bruce Birch, who hold to 1 Samuel 7–15 as forming a cohesive unit are demonstrated in the following works. Hertzberg, *1 & 2 Samuel*. Also, Klein, *1 Samuel*, 62ff. Hertzberg writes, "With ch. 7 we begin a new complex of the Books of Samuel, which, while not having the relative compactness of such sections as I. 1–3 and 4–6, nevertheless shows a certain unity of subject. It describes the rise of the first king and his achievements" (Hertzberg, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 65). An example of a scholar who works with these same chapters with regard to their import for kingship, but delimits the chapters to 1 Samuel 7–12, see Campbell, *1 Samuel*. At focus in Campbell's study of these chapters is the role of Samuel as the "kingmaker," which, we will suggest in this study, is not the principal focus, particularly in chapters 9–11. We note here the work of Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt, who has contributed a significant and unique study on kingship insofar he specifically does not begin with these chapters to study the issue of kingship, but comes back to them only after having studied more uniquely 2 Kings 18–23. Gerbrandt notes the focus of his study is an "*attempt to describe the Deuteronomist's view of kingship as reflected in the whole Deuteronomistic History*," (Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 38; italics original).

15. When Samuel is first introduced in these chapters, 9–11, he is an anonymous seer. After his being named, even Saul downplays the nature of what the seer had done for him in his conversation with his uncle. And, it is only after the fact of Saul's rescuing Jabesh Gilead in chapter 11 that Samuel shows up with Saul.

16. One scholar who builds upon the implication of the three separate narratives, but who discounts their historical importance, is Volkmar Fritz. Though this study will demonstrate that we disagree with his assessment, we state here where he writes, "none of the three narratives goes back to actual historical events, so I Sam 9–11 cannot serve as a source for the history of the origin of the monarchy." Fritz, "Die Deütungen," 362.

institution of monarchy is twofold. First, this study will demonstrate that the story line, characters, and characterization of persons and violence will share internal connections through a literary reading. Our literary reading of these texts will follow a synchronic approach similar to Robert Alter in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*.¹⁷ We will demonstrate by our close reading of these texts that they exhibit “intimate connections through motif and theme” and the function of the connections is to demonstrate “explicit parallels and contrasts” for the start of kingship in Israel’s history.¹⁸ Like Alter, we will discover in these stories correspondences of language and thematic matter in which an “intricately interconnected unity” coheres. We argue that this intricate interconnection operates to help us discern and explain the core roots of the emergence of monarchy in Israel’s history.¹⁹

Second, within this study, the literary reading of the specific texts mentioned above will be made with attention to the work of René Girard.²⁰ Girardian theory enables a reading that understands why institutionalized violence does not lead to social dissolution. Other theories of violence might be used to understand emerging monarchy and even rituals associated with sacrifice in Israel. Violence can and has been studied in several ways in Hebrew Bible texts, particularly institutionalized violence in ritual and sacrifice. Works by Catherine Bell, Clifford Geertz, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Victor Turner are important and could be cited, alongside others.²¹ The work of these scholars, however, does

17. Alter, *The Art*.

18. *Ibid.*, 3–11.

19. *Ibid.* Unlike Alter’s, our purpose will not simply be to examine the literary text for its interconnections, though that will be our first aim. We will also aim to see how these interconnections might point us to some narrated history for Israel which can be discerned in Girardian categories.

20. In order to be aware of the dialogue regarding the viability of a Girardian hermeneutic, one should note *Semeia* 33 (1985), the theme of which is “René Girard and Biblical Studies.” Girard’s theory has been applied in numerous ways to both the Old and New Testament texts. In fact, Girardian theorists have established new literary readings from the Deuteronomistic History within the last few years. Articles and books continue to be developed by René Girard and by those who use his hypothesis. Most proximate to my work are several articles published since 2000. See especially Swartley, *Violence Renounced*. Girard himself continues to write and maintain a dialogue with both those who embrace his positions and those who disagree with them. Girard gave a response to *Violence Renounced* that is published within the book.

21. Select representative works of these scholars include Golsan, *René Girard*; Bell, *Ritual*; Geertz, *The Interpretation*; Levi-Strauss, *Totemism*; Turner, *The Ritual Process*.

not emerge from and read *texts* in ways that directly contribute to a literary reading. For this study, the theory of René Girard helps explore violence in text and story, thereby enabling me to maintain a literary focus in my study. Other biblical scholars have used Girard's theory to examine the Deuteronomistic History,²² the book of Joshua,²³ and how desire, rivalry, and mimesis function in the Succession Narrative within the Deuteronomistic History.²⁴ Thus, Girard's unique understanding of violence and culture as "texted" and "storied" bolsters the focus of this study whose focus is on narratives about textured violence and emergent kingship.

Girard's theory of mimesis is founded in his theory of myth, in which he argues that myths "reflect a contagious process of disorder that culminates with the death or expulsion of a victim."²⁵ Girard theorizes that it is the myths of culture that are the primary means by which mimesis is made evident in culture. As a result, while Girardian theory has much to say about how mimesis leads to scapegoating and resolution, his hypothesis for scapegoating and resolution is based in the literary analysis of texts that exemplify stereotypes of persecution and the scapegoat myth.²⁶ Girard has demonstrated that the myths of culture, through stories that are textured, are a means to understanding the social genesis of ritual, specifically rituals of sacrifice.

Girard's theory of institutionalized violence and how it leads to social stability is a central claim of this study. Many aspects of Girardian

22. Mabee, "Text as Peacemaker," 70–84.

23. Matties, "Can Girard," 85–102.

24. Jensen, "Desire," 39–59.

25. Golsan, *René Girard*, 151.

26. Girard is careful to note that his work is a "hypothesis." Further, while Girard's work has been used in a variety of disciplines, his hypothesis is not without its detractors. Girard speaks of his detractors in his published works, *Things Hidden*, and in numerous interviews. Scholars who employ Girard don't necessarily agree with everything his hypothesis embraces. For example, see Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 140–55. The central critique against Girard concerns the universality of his hypothesis. Essentially he is critiqued for too simply unifying a theory of culture and religion in the idea that the sacred is violence. All communities deny the horror of their fratricide by sacralizing cultural mechanisms that allow victimization, sacrifice, and scapegoating. See the comments of Jonathan Z. Smith, Walter Burkert, and René Girard, in Hammerton-Kelly, ed., *Violent Origins*, 136. These objections to the Girardian hypothesis are important but should not negate the contribution that Girard's hypothesis can make to this literary reading of these texts.

theory play into the development of this crisis, including mimesis and mimetic rivalry, the merging of boundaries (or) lack of distinctions, and enacted violence. *Mimesis* is Girard's preferred term for the imitative kinds of acts or desires that happen between persons. Girard argues that rivals imitate each other because they seek the same object, goal, or agenda. The imitation of each other escalates as mimetic rivalry between the persons grows. As the rivalry continues, there emerges a sense of oneness of opinion or desire mutually held by the rivals. The reality that both persons want the same goal, object, or agenda creates a loss of distinction between the persons. While they are clearly not the "same" person, their plans and perspectives are the same. This imitative rivalry, compounded by a sense of lost self to the other's goals, creates an irresolvable conflict. One or the other rival must be removed. Girard hypothesizes (based on the work of various cultural myths) that it is at the point of irresolvable conflict that an alternative emerges. The alternative does not "free" the tension of rivalry and conflict; it redirects it. The redirection of this violence is against a separate victim, the scapegoat. Violence is enacted against an outside entity, but not arbitrarily. Girard demonstrates that the violence perpetrated upon the victim/scapegoat brings a resolution to the rivalry through enacted violence. Further, the "achievement" of the scapegoat to appease the rivalrous conflict causes the victim to be perceived anew. While the scapegoat is still victim, the scapegoat becomes, in one and the same act, the "god" who rescues from the crisis. Girard's theory holds that the office of king emerged from the event of the victim/scapegoat newly seen as "god." The king is the community's scapegoat. Hence, Girardian theory calls kingship "sacral" because of the distinction it brings. Sacral kingship begins for a society as a result of the mimetic rivalry that leads to the sacrificial crisis.

Girard's theory informs the story we read in Judges 9 and 17–21, and in 1 Samuel 9–11. Emergent rivalries (particularly featuring characters like Abimelech) rise to the point of dissolution and chaotic sacrifice (the dismembered concubine) where kingship emerges to resolve the conflict (even when Saul enacts the same kinds of violence by dismembering a yoke of oxen.) It is precisely in the end of the narrative of Judges where kingship seems to be introduced as a necessary office (Judg 19:1; 21:25). And yet when it comes, the people (and God!) are ambivalent toward it, even while they respond to the sanctioned violence Saul uses to enact it. Girard notes that prior to monarchy, there are only spontane-

ous victims as a result of spontaneous crises. Monarchy becomes the institutionalized scapegoat to prevent crisis. The unsanctioned spontaneous sacrifice(s) that bring(s) resolution in the Abimelech and Levite's concubine narratives find sanction with the monarch. As a result, monarchy is viewed as sacred and good for what it brings, but it is also seen as victimized and despised.²⁷ This is the antipathy present in the story of emerging monarchy in Judges and 1 Samuel.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION

This study will, using literary and Girardian theory, explain the ambivalence toward kingship in Judg 8:29—9:56; 17:1—21:25; and 1 Samuel 9:1—11:15.²⁸ This study will do a literary analysis of the texts associated with the character of Abimelech in Judges 9, the literary framing of Judges 17–21 with the note that “there was no king in Israel,” and the connections these two narratives have and continue with the establishment of Saul's kingship, specifically in 1 Samuel 11. In Judges 9 we are introduced for the first time in the Deuteronomistic History to kingship's arriving in Israel. The text will show us clearly that kingship is the issue. In Judges 17–21 we have stories that are clearly framed in the context of kingship, even though no king actually appears. While no agent acts as king, the narrative four times repeats the refrain that there is no king. This demonstrates the narrative presence of kingship as a repeated theme. The content of 1 Samuel 9–11 is sometimes viewed as three stories that culminate in Saul's kingship. Our analysis will demonstrate that there is only one inauguration scene of kingship. But the texts will clearly demonstrate the arrival of kingship in Israel. Obviously in our analysis we will be passing over texts between our chapters. The justification for passing over these texts is deliberate. The principal characters of Jephthah and Samson in Judges have nothing to do with kingship. And,

27. Girard writes specifically, “At first there is neither kingship nor any institution. There is only the spontaneous reconciliation over and against the victim who is a ‘true scapegoat’ . . . Like any human institution, monarchy is at first nothing but the will to reproduce the reconciliatory mechanism” (Girard, *Things Hidden*, 51).

28. The ambivalence associated with kingship is not only in these stories where kingship emerges in Israel. After kingship is established, David enacts, participates in, and is the victim of violence. The final words of the Deuteronomistic History regarding Jehoiachin, a possible king, are elusive about the future kingship. The office of King, it seems, is never “all good” or “all bad” in the entire presentation of the Deuteronomistic History.

while Hannah and Samuel and Eli's household are connected to issues of the priesthood in Israel, and while texts related to these figures do include references that point toward the future of the monarchy in Israel, the stories do not deal with a person in the office of the king. As David M. Howard notes with respect to these texts in the song of Hannah and the words of the man of God, "They function proleptically, since there was still no king at this juncture in the book, and they serve to signal at the outset the *book's interest* in the chosen king."²⁹ In 1 Samuel, the person of Samuel is designated as a judge and the anticipated person who will anoint the king but only Saul emerges as a king.

Further, our study will demonstrate significant intertextual connections in Judges 9 and 17–21, and 1 Samuel 9–11, demonstrating their thematic coherence and textual symmetry. These texts understand a crisis associated with desire, rivalry, and mimesis that culminates in kingship.³⁰ Girard's work allows us to see beyond source-critical assumptions and perceive a unique literary and anthropological dis-ease³¹ with kingship.

OUTLINE

Chapter 2: Composition and Kingship in the Deuteronomistic History

This section of the study will give me space to recognize the claims that have been made about texts related to kingship in ancient Israel. This section will include a review of some of the source critical works that make claims supporting pro-monarchial over against anti-monarchial texts within Judges and 1 Samuel. The purpose of this review will be to set the groundwork for viewing the strengths of a literary and anthropologically informed Girardian reading of these texts. By the end of this

29. Howard, "The Case," 111 (*italics mine*). In the framing of the larger story of 1 and 2 Samuel, this story of Hannah's prayer plays a larger role.

30. About the culmination of kingship in 1 Samuel 11 David Jobling writes, "In these chapters, kingship arrives in Israel. Indeed it arrives several times over, in the various anointings and kingmakings [*sic*]. . . it is a kingship nobody wants" (Jobling *1 Samuel*, 60). His analysis that nobody wants kingship is amiss in so far as the people do ask for it and do support it when it achieves a release from the kinds of violence that could break out in their midst apart from a king.

31. The hyphenated word is intentional. I intend by it to communicate the uneasiness or instability associated with kingship. I also use it to communicate the "sickness" of kingship that continues with it in spite of the seeming stability it might bring, at least for a time.

study, we will see that “pro-” versus “anti-” monarchical issues can be set aside as a result of this literary reading.

Chapter 3: Abimelech: Judges 8:29—9:56

I will apply literary criticism to discern how violence has functioned within the narrative structure of each set of texts. This particular text demonstrates an ambivalence toward kingship and the violence associated with Abimelech. A close reading will allow us to see how symbols function within the narrative and to see how violence inspired by desire and rivalry leads to the destruction of Shechem and Thebez.³² The main character himself—not truly a king, but recognized as a sort of local regent and with a curious name³³—will meet a violent death. As a result of this death, new order and peace is established. Abimelech’s relationship as insider-outsider to the family line of Gideon (Jerubbaal) and to the inhabitants of Shechem also lends itself to Girardian perspectives for interpretation.³⁴

Chapter 4: Micah, the Levite, and the Concubine: Judges 17–21

The full interplay of the story in Judges 17–21 extends beyond the scope of the individuals who begin this section; the Levite and the Levite’s concubine. This full story is framed by an important redacted statement regarding the violent reprisals that can happen in a time when “there is no king in Israel.” A close reading of these texts will demonstrate the complex workings of violence and sacrificial crisis that emerge when there is no king. Additionally, this section will review the fact that there are many persons who make up the story narrated in Judges 17–21, but their anonymity within the narrative will be demonstrated to be significant regarding the characterization of persons in a time when there is no

32. Wolfgang Richter notes with the incorporation of Thebez in the story of Abimelech we have material found in the narrative of important “historical interest,” (translation mine). Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche*, 273.

33. In Hebrew, Abimelech means “My Father (is) King.” Yet, his father, Gideon/Jerubbaal, is said to have refused kingship. But Gideon/Jerubbaal also set up a shrine and did not refuse a sort of worship directed toward his house/family name. Hence, even the name *Abimelech* suggests emergent kingship, without the full status of monarchy in Israel.

34. Girard suggests that the “marginal” role of persons is important for sacrificial victims who also bring/mediate peace/resolution. Girard writes, “This marginal quality is crucial to the proper functioning of sacrifice” (Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 269).

king in Israel. Rivalry between father-in-law and Levite, and the mimetic activity of the tribes of Israel will be detailed in a literary reading bolstered by Girardian perspectives.³⁵

Chapter 5: Saul and Kingship: 1 Samuel 9–11

This textual unit is not the first to introduce the specific office of king, nor is it the first to tell us about the person of Saul associated with kingship in Israel. However, this textual unit functions in the narrative to tell the event Saul accomplishes that inspires the people willingly to inaugurate him as king.³⁶ The rescue of Jabesh-Gilead is not simply important in the life of Saul, it connects in several important literary ways with the kind of kingship associated with Abimelech and most specifically with the place (Jabesh-Gilead) and kinds of activities that take place when a tribe is threatened in Israel. Here Saul, the acting regent, dismembers his oxen, sending the parts throughout the land in an imitative act of the Levite of Judges. Here, with the “king,” this “same” violence does not bring rivalrous fratricide, but achieves the people’s “unanimous” inauguration of the office of king!

Chapter 6: Assessing a Girardian Hermeneutic within this Study

I will summarize my work to argue that a literary reading of these texts demonstrates a deep rooted, textually intentional ambivalence toward the office of king or monarch. I will demonstrate that Girard helps us look at and understand the formation of kingship in Israel’s history, without necessarily telling us that this is definitively “the way” that kingship emerged in Israel’s history. While my work will be removed from the original purposes of Girard, I will show that Girard’s hypothesis can

35. About this text in particular Pattison suggests Girardian analysis when he writes, “In the resolution of this crisis, as we have seen, projection and substitution are everything. The key text that sums up this view of Early Israel must, of course, be Jdg 21:25: ‘In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes’” (Pattison, “Violence,” 137).

36. Diana Edelman notes, with reference to P. Dhorme, that it is only in 1 Samuel 11 that the Hebrew verb is used in association with “inauguration,” in verses 14–15. The translation for “inauguration” will be important as distinct from the “renewal” of kingship and will be detailed explicitly in this study. This study will demonstrate that in chapter 11, kingship begins and the acts of violence associated with its inauguration mirror and echo literary strategies in Judges 9 and 19–21 (Edelman, “Saul’s Rescue,” 199).

be applied in particular ways for interpretive value and meaning in the Deuteronomistic History.

Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusions

This chapter will assess the value of this study both in its close reading of the texts that have been examined and in its application of a Girardian perspective. I will offer some remarks on the fruitfulness of this study and how it might contribute to other readings of the Deuteronomistic History.

SAMPLE