

*Samson is about power and domination. Samson is about sex and betrayal. Samson is about God and how he is utilized to justify revenge. 3500 years after the apologue of Samson was written, nothing has really changed: Treachery is so common that we have lost sense of its indignity. Power and domination are still the engines of our so-called civilisation and to kill —hiding behind a mask of faith— sadly seems to be as fashionable as it has always been.*

Samson is not a “saint” just because he is a biblical character. Neither is he a prophet or —even if born under (“suspiciously”) similar circumstances to Christ— someone who “gives the other cheek”...

Today, we know who the biblical characters were and what their purpose was, but at a time in which the people of Israel were awaiting the Messiah, Samson could have perfectly fit such description. It is his “saving through Violence and not through Love”, what makes him a fraud, in comparison to the True Savior who was about to come. Samson is a revolutionary, one who kills in order to fulfill his personal definition of “redemption”, justifying his actions as “wanted by God”. A biblical “kamikaze” —not unlike what we perceive a modern terrorist to be.

But, if we are willing to “understand” such contradictions in the actions of the people who lived 3500 years ago, as well as being able to understand similar attitudes transcribed in the Old Testament and other religious books of any Credo —as they were written for and by the people of that time—, we are unable to accept that, what was supposed to be a “fairy tale” to teach those naïve intellects, is still at the core of many 21st century actions.

My interpretation of the piece, is ***an attempt to prove that nothing has changed and that, until we do not start loving without ruling such feeling through the laws of fanaticism but only through the purity of innocence, the “real revolution” will never happen.***

All of the above, bring me to the children... Children are letters that we post to a future we will probably not be able to witness. What is written in those letters, is our responsibility as adults: messages of love or hate and revenge. The choice is up to us... That’s why I have included children in my show. Kids from both sides who just want to play together and be happy, until the poison of their relatives pollutes them: «Don’t mix yourself with “those”; they are the enemy...». The Philistine children, sons of the dominating group, save their comrades who are standing in front of the gun of the High Priest and later on, the Hebrew kids save them back when Samson, now winner of his revolution and therefore the dominating figure, treats them violently upon his return from war. Another sad lesson we have learned from history: those who were dominated can be as naughty as their dominators when they in turn are in charge... In the 3rd act, the Hebrew kids hopelessly embrace their captive parents. The Philistines have regained power due to Samson’s moral weakness and, during the Bacchanal, all of “Samson followers” are killed. The Philistine children sneak into the scene to bring some consolation to their friends. At the end of the show, when everybody is about to die, Samson send the kids away: «Save yourself and start the new world from scratch». Among the children, a teenager, full of admiration for his “hero”, loses his respect for him when he “sells his soul” to Dalila. This youngster, at the end of the opera, is the one who takes the kids away as their new guide.

Oil is one of the principal reasons for nowadays armed conflicts. What metaphor for a decadent temple could be stronger than using an abandoned oil camp as a place for captivity? We could be everywhere and nowhere. No association with the Middle-east conflicts should be done - falling into the temptation of thinking that an oil camp could only be found in those territories. The story of Samson, from the book of Judges in the Old Testament —read under a modern light—, is timeless and “region-less”: a story of domination, as old as man and, sadly, as new as always. Forget for a moment the specifications of the libretto —in terms of the nationality of the two groups of people involved—, and replace them by any analog situation in history...

A “key” figure is the Old Hebrew: Respected due to his age and wisdom, he embodies the image of God in his tribe’s collective mind. He is killed by using the same violence he invites his people to have: “Stand up and march to the war!”. A strong statement, indeed, **that is** this Old Testament concept of a God of violence and revenge.

Dalila’s first appearance is staged as a “mirage”: she and the maiden at her service, walk in bathed in surreal lighting, a sort of dream/nightmare, for Samson and his warriors. Dalila sexually provokes Samson and leaves the stage: «If you want more, you know where to find me». The way she undermines Samson’s will, in order to obtain his secret, is a “treaty” of how the power of female manipulation can win over a weak male nature. Freud smiles... I have staged the famous “love duet” (which is about everything but love...), by using a gigantic veil as a metaphor of Dalila’s “spider web”, a web in which she wants to trap Samson as soon as he arrives, and from which he escapes (like in the Bible) until himself, suffocated by sexual desire, voluntarily enters the trap.

But, as much as Samson and Dalila are the most important singing characters in Saint-Saens opera, the High Priest is the real “leading factor”: the image of those who, from the shadows, handle the driving wheel of the world... The War Lord; he whose only interest is to keep conflict going on forever... ¿Sounds familiar? I am fully convinced that, had Samson been the only one dying and had the Philistine survived, the High Priest would have sent somebody to assassinate Dalila: She knew too much...

The story of Samson, judge of the people of Israel 1200 years BC, was written as a pedagogic apologue to teach about the dangers of falling in the trap of carnal desire. By also teaching about the dangers of using God, ANY GOD as an excuse for our behavior it has, sadly, won the first prize as one of the most modern opera plots of all times.

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