

Violence And The Sacred

Violence and the Sacred is René Girard's landmark study of human evil. Here Girard explores violence as it is represented and occurs throughout history, literature and myth. Girard's forceful and thought-provoking analyses of Biblical narrative, Greek tragedy and the lynchings and pogroms propagated by contemporary states illustrate his central argument that violence belongs to everyone and is at the heart of the sacred.

René Girard (1923-) was Professor of French Language, Literature and Civilization at Stanford University from 1981 until his retirement in 1995. Violence and the Sacred is Girard's brilliant study of human evil. Girard explores violence as it is represented and occurs throughout history, literature and myth. Girard's forceful and thought-provoking analyses of Biblical narrative, Greek tragedy and the lynchings and pogroms propagated by contemporary states illustrate his central argument that violence belongs to everyone and is at the heart of the sacred. Translated by Patrick Gregory>

Employs the sectarian battles which divided African Christians in late antiquity to explore the nature of violence in religious conflicts.

This book uses the theory of social movements and first-hand interviews to create a new analysis of religiously motivated political violence in the modern world. Examining the movement to restore Sharia law to a dominant place in the Egyptian government, the movement to make abortion illegal in the United States, and the religious effort to secure territory in Israel, the author contends that religion becomes violent not because of ideology or political context alone, but because of the constantly evolving relationship between them. The ebb and flow of opportunities for political access ensures that secularization and religion, although polar opposites, depend on each other to define themselves. As a result, while their respective degrees of influence will inevitably undulate over time, both will remain a part of the political process for some time. Thus, a full understanding of both is critical to a meaningful understanding of the political process. Much work has been done to understand secular social movements as part of the political process, and consequentially researchers now know a great deal about the motivations, resources and timing of secular social movements. Considerably less research has been done in the field of religious social movements and this book fills that gap in the literature. This book will be of great interest to students of political violence, religion, sociology, and Politics and International Relations in general. Jennifer Jefferis is Assistant Professor in the Department of Government, Regent University, USA, and has a PhD in Political Science from Boston University.

Sacred Violence and Religious Violence examines the place that ideology or political religion plays in legitimizing violence to bring about a purer world. In particular, the book examines Islamism and the western secular, liberal democratic responses to it. Continental and postmodern thinking has misidentified the source of violence as originating from Western metaphysics. It has further failed to acknowledge the Judeo-Christian source of its ethic—the ethic of concern for victims. In this volume Duane Armitage attempts a critique of continental philosophy and postmodernism through the lens of René Girard's mimetic theory. This critique is directed primarily at the philosophies of Nietzsche and Heidegger, both among the foremost representatives of continental and postmodern thought. Armitage argues that Girard's engagement with Heidegger and Nietzsche radically alters many of the axioms of current postmodern continental philosophy, in particular the overcoming of metaphysics on the theoretical level and continental philosophy's tacit commitments to (neo-)Marxism on the practical level. Detailed attention to the implications of Girard's philosophical thought results in a paradigm shift that deals perhaps a deadly blow to continental and postmodern thinking. Armitage further argues that Girard's thinking solves the very problems that continental and postmodern thinking sought (but failed) to solve, namely the problems of violence and victimization, particularly within the context of the aftermath of the Second World War. Ultimately, this volume shows that at the heart of postmodern thinking lies an entanglement with the violent sacred.

One of the critical issues in interreligious relations today is the connection, both actual and perceived, between sacred sources and the justification of violent acts as divinely mandated. Fighting Words makes solid text-based scholarship accessible to the general public, beginning with the premise that a balanced approach to religious pluralism in our world must build on a measured, well-informed response to the increasingly publicized and sensationalized association of terrorism and large-scale violence with religion. In his introduction, Renard provides background on the major scriptures of seven religious traditions--Jewish, Christian (including both the Old and New Testaments), Islamic, Baha'i, Zoroastrian, Hindu, and Sikh. Eight chapters then explore the interpretation of select facets of these scriptures, focusing on those texts so often claimed, both historically and more recently, as inspiration and justification for every kind of violence, from individual assassination to mass murder. With its nuanced consideration of a complex topic, this book is not merely about the religious sanctioning of violence but also about diverse ways of reading sacred textual sources.

This book is an original exploration of the significance of sacrifice in human culture.

Sacred Violence in Early America offers a sweeping reinterpretation of the violence endemic to seventeenth-century English colonization by reexamining some of the key moments of cultural and religious encounter in North America. Susan Juster explores different forms of sacred violence—blood sacrifice, holy war, malediction, and iconoclasm—to uncover how European traditions of ritual violence developed during the wars of the Reformation were introduced and ultimately transformed in the New World.

Juster's central argument concerns the rethinking of the relationship between the material and the spiritual worlds that began with the Reformation and reached perhaps its fullest expression on the margins of empire. The Reformation transformed the Christian landscape from an environment rich in sounds, smells, images, and tactile encounters, both divine and human, to an austere space of scriptural contemplation and prayer. When English colonists encountered the gods and rituals of the New World, they were forced to confront the unresolved tensions between the material and spiritual within their own religious practice. Accounts of native cannibalism, for instance, prompted uneasy comparisons with the ongoing debate among Reformers about whether Christ was bodily present in the communion wafer. Sacred Violence in Early America reveals the Old World antecedents of the burning of native bodies and texts during the seventeenth-century wars of extermination, the prosecution of heretics and blasphemers in colonial courts, and the destruction of chapels and mission towns up and down the North American seaboard. At the heart of the book is an analysis of "theologies of violence" that gave conceptual and emotional shape to English colonists' efforts to construct a New World sanctuary in the face of enemies both familiar and strange: blood sacrifice, sacramentalism, legal and philosophical notions of just and holy war, malediction, the contest between "living" and "dead" images in Christian ideology, and iconoclasm.

Studies into religion and violence often put religion first. René Girard started with violence in his book *Violence and the Sacred* and used the Durkheimian term 'sacred' as its correlate in his study of early religions. During the unfolding of his theory, he more and more distinguished the sacred from saintliness to address the break that the biblical revelation represented in comparison to early religions. This distinction between the sacred and saintliness resembles Henri Bergson's complementing Emile Durkheim's identification of the sacred and society with a dynamic religion that relies on individual mystics. Girard's distinction also relates to the insights of thinkers like Jacques Maritain, Simone Weil, and Emmanuel Levinas. This element explores some of Girard's main features of saintliness. Girard pleaded for the transformation of the sacred into holy, not their separation.

State of the art interpretations of Rene Girard's theory and its relation to fields as diverse as politics, national literature, pastoral care and peace-making

This book is primarily for researchers and students in the archaeology of the Ancient Near East. The volume results from intense interaction between archaeologists at these sites and a group of theorists studying the scholarship of René Girard.

How is symbolic violence related to the real acts of religious violence around the modern world? The authors of this book, first published in 1992, explore this question with reference to some of the most volatile religious and political conflicts of the day: Hezbollah in Lebanon, Sikhs in India, militant Jewish groups in Israel, and Muslim movements from the Middle East to Indonesia. In addition to providing valuable insights into these important incidents, the authors - social scientists and historians of comparative religion - are responding to the theoretical issues articulated by René Girard in *Violence and the Sacred* (1977). The present volume is the first book of essays to test Girard's theories about the social significance of religious symbols of violence against real, rather than symbolic, acts. In some cases his theories are found to be applicable; in other cases, the authors provide alternative theories of their own. In a concluding essay, co-authored by Mark Anspach, Girard provides a response.

"Why is there so much violence in our midst?" René Girard asks. "No question is more debated today. And none produces more disappointing answers." In Girard's mimetic theory it is the imitation of someone else's desire that gives rise to conflict whenever the desired object cannot be shared. This mimetic rivalry, Girard argues, is responsible for the frequency and escalating intensity of human conflict. For Girard, human conflict comes not from the loss of reciprocity between humans but from the transition, imperceptible at first but then ever more rapid, from good to bad reciprocity. In this landmark text, Girard continues his study of violence in light of geopolitical competition, focusing on the roots and outcomes of violence across societies latent in the process of globalization. The volume concludes in a wide-ranging interview with the Sicilian cultural theorist Maria Stella Barberi, where Girard's twenty-first century emphases on the continuity of all religions, global conflict, and the necessity of apocalyptic thinking emerge.

Never before translated in English, this 1973 discussion between René Girard (1923–2015) and other prominent scholars represents one of the most significant breakthroughs in mimetic theory. Organized by the French journal *Esprit*, the conversation was an opportunity for Girard to debate with his interlocutors the theories he expounded in *Violence and the Sacred* (1972). These scholars prompted him to reconsider the book's strictly sociological interpretation of religion, highlighting the misrecognition of violent scapegoating at its origins and in its myths and ritual practices, by addressing the relation between his critique of primitive or archaic religion and the role of Judeo-Christianity. The ensuing discussion opened up an entirely new and admittedly startling phase of his thinking, where he deployed an epistemology rooted in Biblical revelation, which he viewed as an ongoing deconstruction of sacrificial practices. In this text, he vindicates for the very first time the anthropological relevance of Judeo-Christian scriptures. The 1973 discussion thus marks a new and decisive step in Girard's intellectual journey, making this volume a critical document for understanding the transition period between *Violence and the Sacred* and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1978).

"His fascinating and ambitious book provides a fully developed theory of violence as the 'heart and secret soul' of the sacred. Girard's fertile, combative mind links myth to prophetic writing, primitive religions to classical tragedy."--Victor Brombert, *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

This book represents the first comprehensive application to the whole Bible of René Girard's theories on violence, civilization, and religion.

The interdisciplinary French-American thinker René Girard (1923-2015) has been one of the towering figures of the humanities in the last half-century. The title of René Girard's first book offered his own thesis in summary form: romantic lie and novelistic truth [mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque]. And yet, for a thinker whose career began by an engagement with literature, it came as a shock to some that, in *La Conversion de l'art*, Girard asserted that the novel may be an "outmoded" form for revealing humans to themselves. However, Girard never specified what, if anything, might take the place of the novel. This collection of essays is one attempt at answering this question, by offering a series of analyses of films that aims to test mimetic theory in an area in which relatively little has so far been offered. Does it make any sense to talk of vérité filmique? In addition, *Mimetic Theory and Film* is a response to the widespread objection that there is no viable "Girardian aesthetics." One of the main questions that this collection considers is: can we develop a genre-specific mimetic analysis (of film), and are we able to develop anything approaching a "Girardian aesthetic"? Each of the contributors addresses these questions through the analysis of a film.

From ISIS attacks to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, *Sacred Fury* explores the connections between faith and violence in world religions. Author Charles Selengut looks at religion as both a force for peace and for violence, and he asks key questions such as how "religious" is this violence and what drives the faithful to attack in the names of their beliefs? Revised throughout, the third edition features new material on violence in Buddhism and Hinduism, the rise of ISIS, "lone wolf terrorists," and more. This up-to-date edition draws on a variety of disciplines to comprehend forms of religious violence both historically and in the present day. The third edition of *Sacred Fury* is an essential resource for understanding the connections between faith and violence.

In *Sacred Violence*, the distinguished political and legal theorist Paul W. Kahn investigates the reasons for the resort to violence characteristic of premodern states. In a startling argument, he contends that law will never offer an adequate account of political violence. Instead, we must turn to political theology, which reveals that torture and terror are, essentially, forms of sacrifice. Kahn forces us to acknowledge what we don't want to see: that we remain deeply committed to a violent politics beyond law. Paul W. Kahn is Robert W. Winner Professor of Law and the Humanities at Yale Law School and Director of the Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights. Cover Illustration: "Abu Ghraib 67, 2005" by Fernando Botero. Courtesy of the artist and the American University Museum.

This book traces the trajectory of militant jihadism to show how violence is more intentionally embraced as the centre of worship,

social order and ideology. Undertaking an in-depth analysis of militant jihadist groups and utilising the work of René Girard, Joel Hodge argues that the extreme violence of militant jihadists is a response to modernity in two ways that have not been sufficiently explored by the existing literature. Firstly, it is a manifestation of the unrestrained and escalating state of desire and rivalry in modernity, which militant jihadists seek to counter with extreme violence. Secondly, it is a response to the unveiling and discrediting of sacred violence, which militant jihadists seek to reverse by more purposefully valorising sacred violence in what they believe to be jihad. Relevant to anyone interested in Islam, philosophy of religion, theology, and terrorism, *Violence in the Name of God* imagines new ways of thinking about militancy in the name of Islam in the twenty-first century.

This text explains what religious terrorists and religious peacemakers share in common and what causes them to take different paths in fighting injustice.

His fascinating and ambitious book provides a fully developed theory of violence as the 'heart and secret soul' of the sacred. Girard's fertile, combative mind links myth to prophetic writing, primitive religions to classical tragedy.

Renowned medieval historian Jill N. Claster examines warfare between Christians and Muslims for control of the embattled city of Jerusalem.

Violence, Desire and the Sacred presents the most up-to-date inter-disciplinary work being developed with the groundbreaking insights of René Girard's mimetic theory. The collection showcases the work of outstanding scholars in mimetic theory and how they are applying and developing Girard's insights in a variety of fields. Girard's mimetic insight has provided a fruitful way for different disciplines, such as literature, anthropology, theology, religion studies, cultural studies, and philosophy, to engage on common anthropological ground, with a shared understanding of the human person. The aim of this edited collection is to present this interdisciplinary work and to illustrate how Girard's insights provide fertile ground for bringing together disparate disciplines in a shared purpose. As academic work on Girard's insights is growing, this collection would meet the need to show the critical, interdisciplinary applications of these insights.

How is symbolic violence related to the real acts of religious violence around the modern world? The authors of this book, first published in 1992, explore this question with reference to some of the most volatile religious and political conflicts of the day: Hezbollah in Lebanon, Sikhs in India, militant Jewish groups in Israel, and Muslim movements from the Middle East to Indonesia. In addition to providing valuable insights into these important incidents, the authors – social scientists and historians of comparative religion – are responding to the theoretical issues articulated by René Girard in *Violence and the Sacred* (1977). The present volume is the first book of essays to test Girard's theories about the social significance of religious symbols of violence against real, rather than symbolic, acts. In some cases his theories are found to be applicable; in other cases, the authors provide alternative theories of their own. In a concluding essay, co-authored by Mark Anspach, Girard provides a response.

This anthology brings together classic perspectives on violence, putting into productive conversation the thought of well-known theorists and activists, including Hannah Arendt, Karl Marx, G. W. F. Hegel, Osama bin Laden, Sigmund Freud, Frantz Fanon, Thomas Hobbes, and Pierre Bourdieu. The volume proceeds from the editors' contention that violence is always historically contingent; it must be contextualized to be understood. They argue that violence is a process rather than a discrete product. It is intrinsic to the human condition, an inescapable fact of life that can be channeled and reckoned with but never completely suppressed. Above all, they seek to illuminate the relationship between action and knowledge about violence, and to examine how one might speak about violence without replicating or perpetuating it. *On Violence* is divided into five sections. Underscoring the connection between violence and economic world orders, the first section explores the dialectical relationship between domination and subordination. The second section brings together pieces by political actors who spoke about the tension between violence and nonviolence—Gandhi, Hitler, and Malcolm X—and by critics who have commented on that tension. The third grouping examines institutional faces of violence—familial, legal, and religious—while the fourth reflects on state violence. With a focus on issues of representation, the final section includes pieces on the relationship between violence and art, stories, and the media. The editors' introduction to each section highlights the significant theoretical points raised and the interconnections between the essays. Brief introductions to individual selections provide information about the authors and their particular contributions to theories of violence. With selections by: Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Osama bin Laden, Pierre Bourdieu, André Breton, James Cone, Robert M. Cover, Gilles Deleuze, Friedrich Engels, Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, Sigmund Freud, Mohandas Gandhi, René Girard, Linda Gordon, Antonio Gramsci, Félix Guattari, G. W. F. Hegel, Adolf Hitler, Thomas Hobbes, Bruce B. Lawrence, Elliott Leyton, Catharine MacKinnon, Malcolm X, Dorothy Martin, Karl Marx, Chandra Muzaffar, James C. Scott, Kristine Stiles, Michael Taussig, Leon Trotsky, Simone Weil, Sharon Welch, Raymond Williams

Presenting an original global theory of culture, Girard explores the social function of violence and the mechanism of the social scapegoat. His vision is a challenge to conventional views of literature, anthropology, religion and psychoanalysis. René Girard is the Andrew B. Hammond Professor Emeritus of French Language, Literature and Civilization at Stanford University, USA.

At the heart of many religions are sacred texts that depict or even incite sexual violence. Most of this violence is directed against women and girls. *Sexual Violence and Sacred Texts* opens up an informed, passionate, interfaith dialogue for scholars and activists seeking to transform social problems that impact women and girls globally. Situated within struggles toward gender equity and widespread spiritual flourishing, these essays empower religious leaders, academics, and laypersons to confront and to creatively engage with sacred texts that re-inscribe sexual violence.

In his explorations of the relations between the sacred and violence, René Girard has hit upon the origin of culture—the way culture began, the way it continues to organize itself. The way communities of human beings structure themselves in a manner that is different from that of other species on the planet. Like Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Émile Durkheim, Martin Buber, or others who have changed the way we think in the humanities or in the human sciences, Girard has put forth a set of ideas that have

altered our perceptions of the world in which we function. We will never be able to think the same way again about mimetic desire, about the scapegoat mechanism, and about the role of Jewish and Christian scripture in explaining sacrifice, violence, and the crises from which our culture has been born. The contributions fall into roughly four areas of interpretive work: religion and religious study; literary study; the philosophy of social science; and psychological studies. The essays presented here are offered as "essays" in the older French sense of attempts (essayer) or trials of ideas, as indeed Girard has tried out ideas with us. With a conscious echo of Montaigne, then, this homage volume is titled *Essays in Friendship and in Truth*.

A systematic introduction into the mimetic theory of the French-American literary theorist and philosophical anthropologist René Girard, this essential text explains its three main pillars (mimetic desire, the scapegoat mechanism, and the Biblical "difference") with the help of examples from literature and philosophy. This book also offers an overview of René Girard's life and work, showing how much mimetic theory results from existential and spiritual insights into one's own mimetic entanglements.

Furthermore it examines the broader implications of Girard's theories, from the mimetic aspect of sovereignty and wars to the relationship between the scapegoat mechanism and the question of capital punishment. Mimetic theory is placed within the context of current cultural and political debates like the relationship between religion and modernity, terrorism, the death penalty, and gender issues. Drawing textual examples from European literature (Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kleist, Stendhal, Storm, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Proust) and philosophy (Plato, Camus, Sartre, Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, Vattimo), Palaver uses mimetic theory to explore the themes they present. A highly accessible book, this text is complemented by bibliographical references to Girard's widespread work and secondary literature on mimetic theory and its applications, comprising a valuable bibliographical archive that provides the reader with an overview of the development and discussion of mimetic theory until the present day.

Argues that the modern Western world's reductive understanding of sacrifice simplifies an enormously broad and dynamic cluster of religious activities, drawing on a comparative study of Vedic and Jewish sacrificial practices to demonstrate not only that sacrifice has no single, essential, identifying characteristic, but also that the elements most frequently attributed to such acts--death and violence--are not universal.

In *Battling to the End* René Girard engages Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), the Prussian military theoretician who wrote *On War*. Clausewitz, who has been critiqued by military strategists, political scientists, and philosophers, famously postulated that "War is the continuation of politics by other means." He also seemed to believe that governments could constrain war. Clausewitz, a firsthand witness to the Napoleonic Wars, understood the nature of modern warfare. Far from controlling violence, politics follows in war's wake: the means of war have become its ends. René Girard shows us a Clausewitz who is a fascinated witness of history's acceleration. Haunted by the French-German conflict, Clausewitz clarifies more than anyone else the development that would ravage Europe. *Battling to the End* pushes aside the taboo that prevents us from seeing that the apocalypse has begun. Human violence is escaping our control; today it threatens the entire planet.

This brilliant study of good and evil examines the presence of ritual violence in sacred ceremony.

This book provides a multidisciplinary commentary on a wide range of religious traditions and their relationship to acts of violence. Hate and violence occur at every level of human interaction, as do peace and compassion. Scholars of religion have a particular obligation to make sense out of this situation, tracing its history and variables, and drawing lessons for the future. From the formative periods of the religious traditions to their application in the contemporary world, the essays in this volume interrogate the views on violence found within the traditions and provide examples of religious practices that exacerbate or ameliorate situations of conflict.

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