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## D4B2KA - ASHTYN LEBLANC

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In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the work of Rene Girard, thought by many to be one of the most important, if controversial, cultural theorists of the twentieth century. Girard's work is extraordinarily innovative and wide-ranging, cutting across central concerns in philosophy, psychoanalysis, literary theory, anthropology, theology, and sociology. In this much-needed introduction, Chris Fleming traces the development of Girard's thought over forty years, describing the context in which he worked and his influence on a number of disciplines. He unpacks the hypotheses at the centre of Girard's thought - mimetic desire, surrogate victimage and scapegoating, myth, ritual, and the sacred - and provides an assessment of Girard's place in the contemporary academy. Comprehensive and clearly written, this book constitutes an excellent overview of Girard's work and is essential reading for students and researchers in continental philosophy, theology, literary studies, French studies, and cultural studies.

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*.

Susan Juster explores different forms of sacred violence—blood sacrifice, holy war, malediction, and iconoclasm—to un-

cover how European traditions of ritual violence developed during the Reformation were introduced and ultimately transformed in the New World.

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.

In *Transatlantic Fascism*, Federico Finchelstein traces the intellectual and cultural connections between Argentine and Italian fascisms, showing how fascism circulates transnationally. From the early 1920s well into the Second World War, Mussolini tried to export Italian fascism to Argentina, the “most Italian” country outside of Italy. (Nearly half the country’s population was of Italian descent.) Drawing on extensive archival research on both sides of the Atlantic, Finchelstein examines Italy’s efforts to promote fascism in Argentina by distributing bribes, sending emissaries, and disseminating propaganda through film, radio, and print. He investigates how Argentina’s political culture was in turn transformed as Italian fascism was appropriated, reinterpreted, and resisted by the state and the mainstream press, as well as by the Left, the Right, and the radical Right. As Finchelstein explains, *nacionalismo*, the right-wing ideology that developed in Argentina, was not the wholesale imitation of Italian fascism that Mussolini wished it to be. Argentine nationalists conflated Catholicism and fascism, making the bold claim that their movement had a central place in God’s designs for their country. Finchelstein explores the fraught efforts of nationalists to develop a “sacred” ideological doctrine and political program, and he scruti-

nizes their debates about Nazism, the Spanish Civil War, imperialism, anti-Semitism, and anticommunism. *Transatlantic Fascism* shows how right-wing groups constructed a distinctive Argentine fascism by appropriating some elements of the Italian model and rejecting others. It reveals the specifically local ways that a global ideology such as fascism crossed national borders.

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.

"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*.

Drawing on spiritual and legal sources, this book provides a novel perspective on how late medieval Christianity problematized parishioners' use of violence and how parishioners tried to reconcile the demands of their faith with cultural norms that honored violent conduct.

Presents inspirational insights into the Book of Exodus from medieval and modern biblical scholars, philosophers, and

historians.

Rene Girard, the author of groundbreaking scholarly books such as *Violence and the Sacred* and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, has long been an intellectual cause celebre in Europe. Although he has studied and taught in the United States since the 1940s, he is now -- in his 70's -- finding his lifework praised and taught in academic and religious circles throughout the country. The *Girard Reader* brings that work to a broader audience. It includes major excerpts from Girard's books and articles which cover all aspects of his theories on violence, religion, and culture. These views cut across theology, biblical studies, anthropology, psychology, and literature. The book concludes with a conversation between Rene Girard and editor James G. Williams that brings new focus to his Christian vision and breathtaking oeuvre.

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

*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 dis-

parate 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.

Conceived at the moment of Girard's death in November 2015, and written up in the period of strategic stock-taking 'after Girard', this book aims to suggest briefly and clearly to a wide English-speaking audience that: (i) Girard has in fact cracked the enigma of the obscurely 'foundational' complicity between violence and the sacred; (ii) that his 'mimetic theory' and his writings on biblical texts, when read as a fundamental 'anthropological argument' continuous with Darwin, bring formidable new light to a vast range of enigmas and problems: ter-

rorist violence, the new atheism, the function of world's oldest temple, the Good Friday Agreement... In counterpoint to this (largely) 'dark' matter, they illuminate superbly ('from below') the nature and ways of creation, revelation, redemption... and thus also of Reconciliation. Such insights provide a novel and exciting resource for scanning the knots, the black holes and the hidden 'sacrificial' logic that still secretly shapes cultural, social and political life today. The analytical tool-set Girard supplies can help shape the key dialogues needed to prepare delivering practices of reconciliation--and to avoid auto-generated 'apocalypses'-- in the world of tomorrow.

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.

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 text explains what religious terrorists and religious peacemakers share in common and what causes them to

take different paths in fighting injustice. In *The Sacred Monstrous* author Wendy Hamblet traces the historical and social fact of violence through the work of Girard, Bloch, Lorenz and Burket. She takes up the charge advanced by social theorists, anthropologists and others that violence is steeped in our being; it pervades our generations and is imbedded in the ethos of our modern institutions. Hamblet's discussion of human history re-frames our understanding of how violence works in history and society. *The Sacred Monstrous* is a salient work of continentally informed philosophy that contributes significantly to any discussion of violence and conflict in the social sciences.

Jean-Pierre Dupuy, prophet of what he calls "enlightened doomsaying," has long warned that modern society is on a path to self-destruction. In this book, he pleads for a subversion of this crisis from within, arguing that it is our lopsided view of religion and reason that has set us on this course. In denial of our sacred origins and hubristically convinced of the powers of human reason, we cease to know our own limits: our disenchanting world leaves us defenseless against a headlong rush into the abyss of global warming, nuclear holocaust, and the other catastrophes that loom on our horizon. Reviving the religious anthropology of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Marcel Mauss and in dialogue with the work of René Girard, Dupuy shows that we must remember the world's sacredness in order to keep human violence in check. A metaphysical and theological detective, he tracks the sacred in the very fields where human reason considers itself most free from everything it judges irrational: science, technology, economics, political and strategic thought. In making such claims, *The*

*Mark of the Sacred* takes on religion bashers, secularists, and fundamentalists at once. Written by one of the deepest and most versatile thinkers of our time, it militates for a world where reason is no longer an enemy of faith.

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).

What is the relationship between the sacred and the political, transcendence and immanence, religion and violence? And how has this complex relation affected the history of Western political reason? In this volume an international



group of scholars explore these questions in light of mimetic theory as formulated by René Girard (1923-2015), one of the most original thinkers of our time. From Aristotle and his idea of tragedy, passing through Machiavelli and political modernity, up to contemporary biopolitics, this work provides an indispensable guide to those who want to assess the thorny interconnections of sacrality and politics in Western political thought and follow an unexplored yet critical path from ancient Greece to our post-secular condition. While looking at the past, this volume also seeks to illuminate the future relevance of the sacred/secular divide in the so-called 'age of globalization'.

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 six lucid chapters, the author displays a remarkable perspective on the inner workings of the Markan text. Taking the account of the cleansing of the Temple as his starting point, he describes the relation in Mark of the Sacred, violence, the scapegoat, and also the poetics of faith.

Are religions intrinsically violent (as is strenuously argued by the 'new atheist-s')? Or, as Girard argues, have they been functionally rational instruments developed to manage and cope with the intrinsically violent runaway dynamic that characterizes human social organization in all periods of human history? Is violence decreasing in this time of secular modernity post-Christendom (as argued by Steven Pinker and others)? Or are we, rather, at increased and even apocalyptic risk from our enhanced powers of action and our decreased socio-symbolic protections? René Girard's mimetic theory has been slowly but progressively recognized as one of the most striking breakthrough contributions to twentieth-century critical thinking in fundamental anthropology: in particular for its power to model and explain violent sacrality, ancient and modern. The present volume sets this power of explanation in an evolutionary and Darwinian frame. It asks: How far do cultural mechanisms of controlling violence, which allowed humankind to cross the threshold of hominization—i.e., to survive and develop in its evolutionary emergence—still represent today a default setting that threatens to destroy us? Can we transcend them and escape their field of gravity? Should we look to—or should we look beyond—Darwinian survival? What—and where (if anywhere)—is salvation?

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

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 psychoanaly-

sis. Rene Gerard is the Andrew B. Hammond Professor Emeritus of French Language, Literature and Civilization at Stanford University, USA.

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 first-hand 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.

*Sacrifice Imagined* is an original exploration of the idea of sacrifice by one of the world's preeminent philosophers of religion. Despisers of religion have poured scorn upon the idea of sacrifice as an index of the irrational and wicked in religious practice. Nor does its secularised form seem much more appealing. One need only think of the appalling cult of sacrifice in numerous totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. Yet sacrifice remains a part of our cultural and intellectual 'imaginary'. Hedley proposes good reasons to think that issues of global conflict and the ecological crisis highlight the continuing relevance of the topic of sacrifice for contemporary cul-

ture. The subject of sacrifice has been decisively influenced by two books: Girard's *The Violence and the Sacred* and Burkert's *Homo Necans*. Both of these are theories of sacrifice as violence. Hedley's book challenges both of these highly influential theories and presents a theory of sacrifice as renunciation of the will. His guiding influences in this are the much misunderstood Joseph de Maistre and the Cambridge Platonists.

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 >

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.

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.

"This book critiques the postmodernism and Continental philosophy of Heidegger and Nietzsche through the lens of the mimetic theory of René Girard"--

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.

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.

Showcases the application of René Girard's mimetic theory across a range of disciplines, including philosophy, religious studies, literature and cultural studies.