



For René Girard: Essays in Friendship and in Truth (Studies in Violence, Mimesis, & Culture)

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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*.

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