

**René Noël Théophile Girard:** (1923-2015) *French historian, literary critic, and philosopher of social science whose work belongs to the tradition of anthropological philosophy. Girard was the author of nearly thirty books, with his writings spanning many academic domains*

In his book **Violence And The Sacred** (*Published in English: 1977, Publisher: Editions Bernard Grasset*

... with the rites of Carnival in mind

Rene Girard searches for an understanding of violence as it appears in myth, in Greek tragedy, in any sacrifice that restores order to society. Violence is at the heart of the sacred. Violence belongs to all and no person in particular. The function of the festival is no different from the function of other sacrificial rites, the assumption being that there is a direct link between the sacrificial crisis and its resolution.

Religious thinking on the relationship between the crisis and its conclusion can result in two divergent viewpoints

1. it is either the *continuity* between the crisis and conclusion that strikes the imagination, (the crisis is inseparable from its happy ending and becomes itself a cause for jubilation/festival) or
2. it is the *rupture* between the crisis and conclusion that is stressed in which case we have an Antifestival. Here the rites of sacrificial expulsion are not preceded by a period of frenzied anarchy but an extreme austerity when all cultural prohibitions are strongly reinforced.

Religious thinking tends to adopt one or the other of the two solutions and cling to it for dear life yet according to Girard each interpretation must be partially true and partially false.