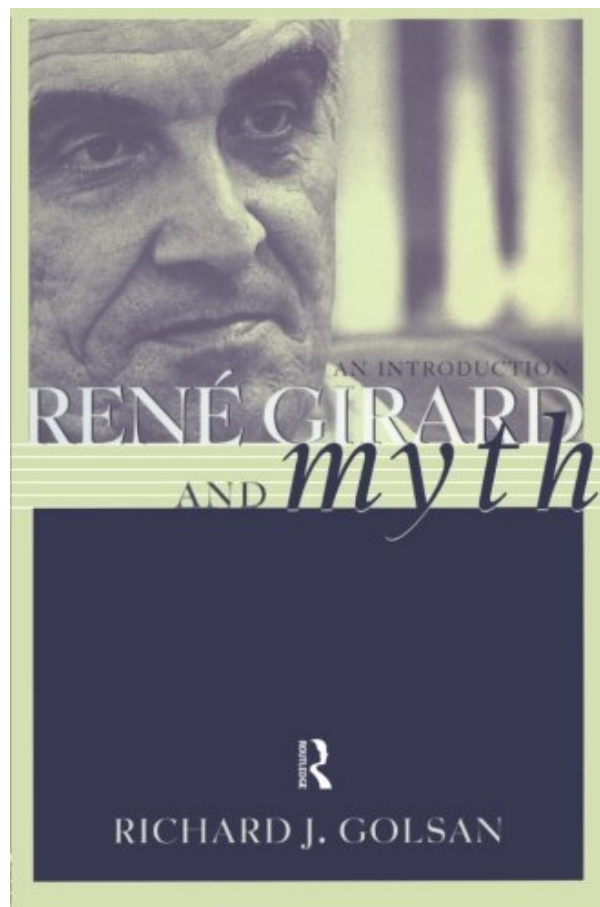
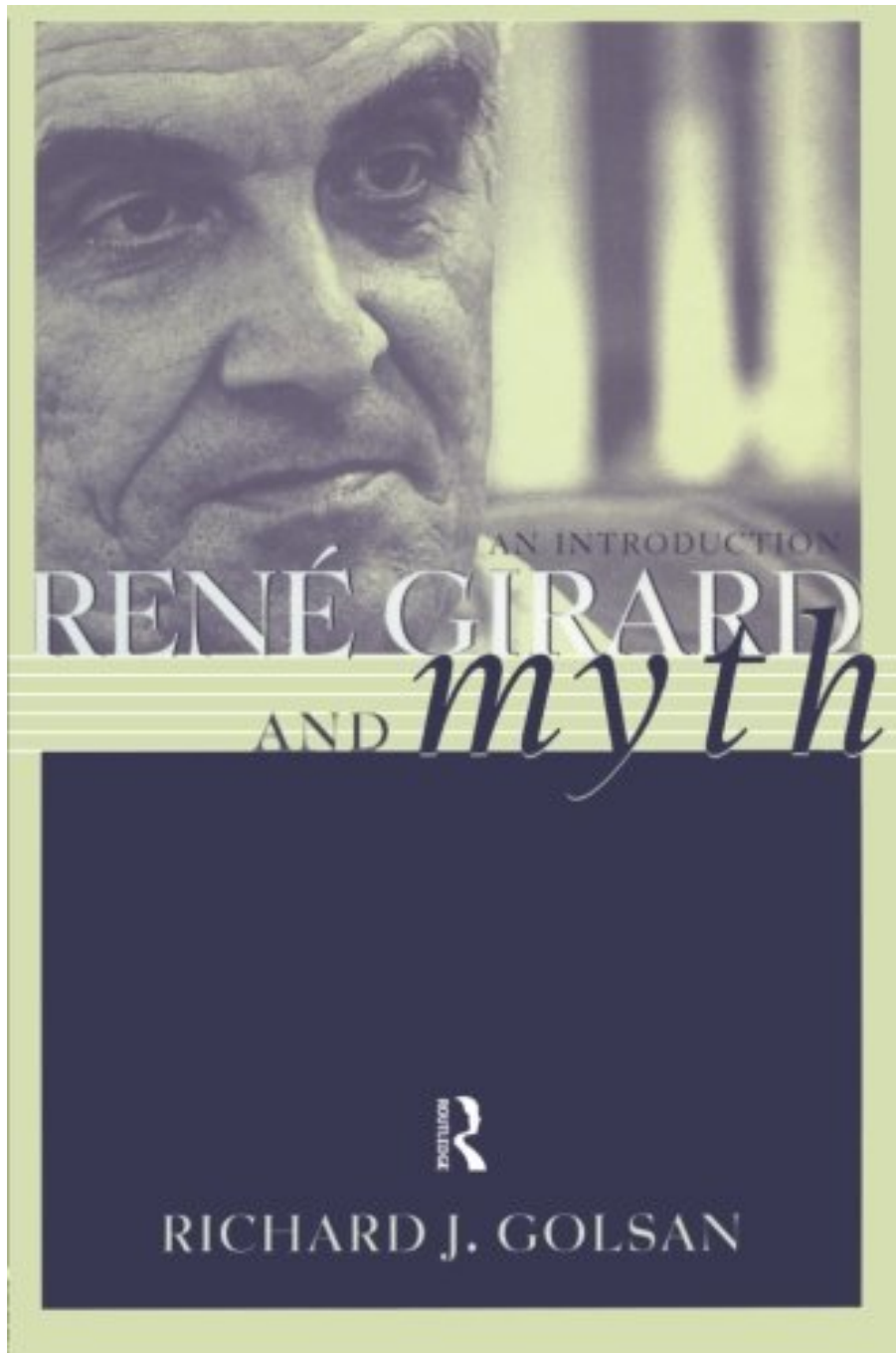


**RENE GIRARD AND MYTH: AN
INTRODUCTION (THEORISTS OF MYTH) BY
RICHARD GOLSAN**



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Review

"For the student of myth the book marks a promising prospect for the future direction of myth studies; for the Girardian, it signals the move from marginal to mainstream of a theory that not only rocks the closed hierarchy of academic disciplines but may open the way to an eventual, even wider, interinstitutional dialogue."

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It is, indeed, an ambitious work that seeks to encompass various modern approaches to both myth and literature, most traditional types of myth, and most of the important developments in "mythification" in twentieth-century literature."

-Religious Studies Review

About the Author

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

a marvelous and accesible presentation of Rene Girard's work

By gabriel andrade

The most amazing thing about this book is not Rene Girard's powerful discoveries, but Richard Golsan's extraordinary ability to present them in such a fashion. Whether or not you agree with Girard's basic ideas, you will be impressed by Golsan's synthesizing techniques. Very few stuff from mimetic theory is left out in this book. I read this book after reading Girard's major works, and still found it helpful. It begins with a revision of mimetic theory's basic concepts, and then it turns to Girard's theory on myth and the Bible. I must say, however, that the book does not do much justice to its title. Myth is almost given the same attention as desire, ritual and revelation. The final interview with Girard himself is helpful, but deals very little with myth. This book is not for myth students, although it will offer an important perspective to consider. This book is for Girard's readers. If you have never read any of Girard's work, this is a good place to start. If you have read all of Girard's work, the book will still be useful because it might offer links between Girardian ideas that perhaps you never thought of before.

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

A man of one idea, and that idea enlightening.

By David Marshall

Having read Scapegoat, and leafed through a couple other of Girard's works, I found this book a readable and concise introduction to Girard's ideas. (Or idea, or complex of insights.) Readability helps, because frankly, I don't find Girard always that easy to follow, though worth the attempt. Golsan offers a somewhat chronological overview of mimetic theory, leading from Girard's observations of the nature of desire in literature, (chapter 1) following the bouncing ball into myth (chapter 3) and the history of sacrifice and scapegoating that supposedly undergirds it. (chapter 2) Chapter four is entitled "The Bible: Antidote to Violence," and clearly lays out perhaps the most controversial aspect of Girardian theory. Appropriately, given the questions these sections are bound to raise, the following chapter discusses "Girard's Critics and the Girardians." (In a pretty even-handed way.) Having outlined his topic, Golsan is clever at this point to break up the flow of exposition and end the main body of his book with a long, eloquent interview of his subject. A 28 page appendix then offers Girard's analysis of a South African snake myth, no doubt as a sample of goods on offer.

I found each of the main chapters illuminating, though I did not read much of the appendix. Girard's theory of human violence does, I think, shed valuable light on human history, literature, mythology, and the Gospels. I have found myself reading events -- such as the attempt to scapegoat the Jewish state after 9-11 -- in its light. I don't think Girard's theory should be spread too thin -- the Gospels help us "demystify sacrificial violence," it is true, but they also help us to many other things, and both share and diverge from myth in other ways as well. But this book helped me get an overview of a fascinating and most important theory. I also discovered, in the interview, that Girard is capable of both humility and a sly wit that I found delightful. His way of dealing with feminist critics is a hoot -- he must have been quite a ladies' man.

author, Jesus and the Religions of Man

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Good Introduction

By Ra

This is a good introduction to Girard but the Girard Reader may be better because it is Girard's own words and is organised to be an introduction. I agree with the other reviewer that this is not for myth students.

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