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## Call for Papers

The Chair of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Prof. Dr. Walter Schweidler) in collaboration with the Institute of Systematic Theology at the University of Innsbruck (Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Palaver) will sponsor the 2014 meeting of COV&R in the context of the conference

"Battling to the End" 1914-2014  
The Escalation of Violence and Victimization  
René Girard and Jean-Luc Marion  
Freising, Germany, 21-24 July, 2014

### *Submission of proposals*

Proposals for papers are due March 15, 2014.

They should include contact information, a title, and an abstract of 300 words sent to the conference organizers by e-mail at the address: [girard2014@ku.de](mailto:girard2014@ku.de)

From February 3 onwards, further information pertaining to the Conference, in particular regarding the registration of its participants, can be found at <http://www.girard2014.de>

### *Registration*

Registration to the Conference will be possible at <http://www.girard2014.de> from March 3 onwards.

COV&R member € 100 (after 1 June 2014, € 125)  
COV&R student member € 50 (after 1 June 2014, € 75)  
Non-member € 150 (after 1 June 2014, € 200)  
Non-member student € 75 (after 1 June 2014 € 100)

Cancellations are possible until July 1, 2014 (a cancellation fee of € 25 will be incurred).

***Raymund Schwager, S.J., Student Memorial Essay Contest***

To honor the memory of Raymund Schwager, S. J. († 2004), the Colloquium on Violence and Religion is offering an award of \$1,500 shared by up to three persons for the three best papers given by graduate students at the COV&R 2014 meeting. Students presenting papers at the conference are invited to apply for the Raymund Schwager Memorial Award by sending a letter to this effect and the full text of their paper (in English, maximum length: 10 pages) in an e-mail attachment to [Ann.W.Astell.1@nd.edu](mailto:Ann.W.Astell.1@nd.edu) (subject: Raymund Schwager Memorial Essay Contest). The date for submission is May 1, 2014. Winners will be announced in the Conference program. Prize-winning essay(s) should reflect an engagement with mimetic theory; they will be presented in a plenary session and be considered for publication in *Contagion*.

Paper proposals on other topics related to mimetic theory are also welcome. Participants at previous COV&R conferences have explored a wide range of themes. Please see previous conference websites for examples of paper topics that previously have been of interest to conference participants:

<http://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/cover/archives/conferences.html>

The central theme of this COV&R conference concerns the significance of the First World War.

## **BATTLING TO THE END 1914-2014 THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION**

### ***100 years World War I***

The memory of the outbreak of the First World War a hundred years ago raises far-reaching questions concerning the source and course of violent confrontation. This can be seen in recent publications about the subject such as: Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers* (2012), Ernst Piper's *Nacht über Europa* (2013) and Herfried Münkler's *Der große Krieg* (2013), among others. The nature and proportions of the First World War led some theoreticians to define it as a breach in human history and as the great seminal catastrophe of the 20th century. Such an event calls for a wide-ranging analysis of the different aspects of the war itself, something that Herfried Münkler carried out with unprecedented detail and rigor in his monumental book about the Great War. Never before had the relationship of attack to defense implied such an escalation towards the total deployment of antagonist forces on a global level. However, it is not only the trans-European character of the conflict or the brutality of trench warfare that raises significant questions about this singular event, but the transformative character and the dissemination of violence that can be located before and after the war itself: on the one hand, the Napoleonic and the Franco-Prussian wars in the 19th century; on the other hand, the Russian, Chinese and Spanish civil wars and the rise of totalitarianism in the 20th century. In this sense, the First World War can be seen as a crystallization point of what René Girard – against the Hegelian understanding of history – has called “the law of human relations”: an escalation of violence even at the risk of total destruction.

### ***René Girard***

In his discussion with Benoît Chantre on the escalation of violence originally published under the title *Achever Clausewitz* (English translation *Battling to the End*, German translation *Im Angesicht der Apokalypse. Clausewitz zu Ende denken*), René Girard draws on the resources of mimetic theory to analyze the problematic of the "escalation to the extremes", or more specifically: the inability of politics to contain the reciprocal intensification of violence, the transformation in the nature of warfare from the 18th to the 20th century and the implications of the French-German conflict (from the Franco-Prussian war to the battle of Verdun) with regard to the new forms of world-wide violence in the 21st century. Girard's book *Battling to the End* offers as coordinates three axes of reflection which situate the thematic nucleus of this conference: sacrifice and the modalities of the sacred (from the "archaic" to the "corrupted" sacred); the nature and implications of warfare; and the transformation of violence on a global scale. These thematic questions articulate a complex field of research and pose challenging questions to Girard's sense of mimetic theory. Is Christian revelation the only possibility of identifying the ultimate injustice of sacrificial mechanisms, and, if so, is it doomed to failure by its very elimination of sacrifice as the means to temporary and partial pacification? Do we live in a world in which political institutions can no longer provide a counterweight to the disseminating and ever increasing violence perpetuated by humans? Does the Girardian use of the term "absolute war" apply to our contemporary reality, despite the decentered character of warfare after the collapse of states? These questions call for discourse among different disciplines – like philosophy, theology and anthropology, as well as political and social sciences – in order to shed light on the problematic of the escalation of violence and victimization. They also show the challenges of modern Western culture in reflecting upon the role of peace in educational contexts and how important Girard's mimetic insights into desire and rivalry are in this respect.

### **Jean-Luc Marion**

Girard declares in his book the necessity of producing "a quite different kind of rationality" (*Battling to the End*, p. 2) in order to grasp the radical nature of violence. Accordingly, the conference will seek to compare the contribution of mimetic theory with the insights of other theories and disciplines. The phenomenology of "donation" developed by Jean-Luc Marion points to important aspects in this context. Marion's approach to the problem of evil and vengeance in *Prolegomena to Charity* runs parallel to several lines of the Girardian analysis of the scapegoat mechanism, not only in the relationship between aggression and victimization, but also in the role of charity as providing the only escape from a subjectivity imprisoned by the destructive mechanisms of rivalrous desire. In order to think beyond this "logic of evil", Marion seeks to develop what Girard declared a cultural desideratum: an alternative type of rationality. That is in the broad sense the purpose of Marion's "third reduction", a reduction no longer to the appearance of objectivity (Husserl) or to the beingness of being (Heidegger), but to *donation* itself. The implications of this step beyond the purview of phenomenology lead *inter alia* to quite another view of sacrifice, related to the very coming-over that delivers the gift from any kind of conditioning: sacrifice as something that does not require destruction, exchange or even contract, but a radical approach to the infinite – a line of thought prominent also in the works of Emmanuel Levinas and Jan Patočka.

### Preliminary formal conference schedule

*Venue:* Bildungszentrum Kardinal-Döpfner-Haus, Freising (15 minutes by taxi or bus from Munich International Airport)

*For further information see:* <http://www.bildungszentrum-freising.de/>

#### Monday, July 21

09:00 – 14:00 *COV&R meeting*  
14:00 – 15:45 Registration  
16:00 – 16:45 Official opening of the conference (welcome speech)  
16:45 – 18:30 Raymund Schwager Memorial Lecture (speaker: Jean-Luc Marion)  
18:30 – 18:45 Coffee break  
18:45 – 20:30 Book presentation – German translation of *Achever Clausewitz*  
20:30 Dinner

#### Tuesday, July 22

09:00 – 12:00 Keynote lecture (speaker: Herfried Münkler)  
12:00 – 13:30 Lunch  
13:30 – 15:45 Parallel sessions  
15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break  
16:00 – 18:15 Parallel sessions  
18:30 – 20:00 Plenary session  
20:00 Dinner

#### Wednesday, July 23

08:30 – 10:00 Raymund Schwager Student Essay Contest  
10:00 – 10:15 Coffee break  
10:15 – 12:00 Panel discussion  
12:00 – 13:30 Lunch  
13:30 -15:45 Parallel sessions  
15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break  
16:00 – 18:15 Plenary session  
18:15 – 19:30 Dinner  
19:30 – 21:00 Panel discussion

#### Thursday, July 24

08:30 – 10:45 Parallel sessions  
10:45 – 11:00 Coffee break  
11:00 – 14:15 Two plenary sessions  
14:45 – 15:00 Coffee break  
14:30 – 15:00 Closing remarks  
15:00 – 16:00 *COV&R business meeting*

*Participants who were already invited and have agreed to take part in the Conference:* Jean-Luc Marion (Chicago), Herfried Münkler (Berlin), Benoît Chantre (Paris), Walter Schweidler (Eichstätt), Wolfgang Palaver (Innsbruck), Ulrich Bartosch (Eichstätt), Émilie Tardivel-Schick (Paris), Peter Trawny (Wuppertal), Michael Staudigl (Vienna), Ann Astell (Indiana), Martha Reineke (Iowa), Jeremiah Alberg (Tokyo), Richard Schenk (Eichstätt).