

# Sacred fury essay example

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



## Understanding Violence

1. Summarize the central themes, theses, issues, or arguments of the reading assignment.

The main theme of the reading is that humans are violent and aggressive by nature and that they use religion as an outlet or a justification for their violent behavior.

However, the reading also indicated that while people use religion as a way to express violence, religion also serves to provide people with guidelines for remaining civilized and for keeping peace and order in the society. As Girard stated (Selengut, 2003, p. 57-58), “ religion provides myths, stories, liturgy, and rituals that help society express violent sensations symbolically so that actual violence need not occur.” This is affirmed by Sigmund Freud (Selengut, 2003, p. 50) who also said that, “ the measure of social order we do enjoy is made possible by the fierce demands of civilization, as seen in religious teachings, family socialization, schools, and the workplace.”

2. Summarize at least four key points made by the authors. In the case of multiple authors, indicate which author you are referring to for each point.

According to Selengut (2003), religious battles do not pertain to or concern religion. Instead, they are psychological dilemmas and issues that take a religious form. From a psychological perspective, religious violence is a way for a certain group of people to deal with their frustration, anger, and envy, as its accumulation may lead to the group’s destruction due to rivalry and internal conflict.

Selengut supports his claims by citing the views of other experts in the field. One is by Freud who says that human biology, brain activity, and social relations are intrinsically linked to violence and aggression and that whatever order exists in society is brought about by civilization.

Selengut also discussed the view of Rene Girard who states that religious institutions play an important role in maintaining the well-being of society as it defuses the aggression and anger that is likely to develop among people through rituals that serve as a way for people to express their anger and fury.

Leon Festinger, on the other hand, attributes religious violence on cognitive dissonance, that is, the inconsistency of two beliefs or opinions - for example, when people's religious beliefs come in conflict with their experiences in modern society.

Finally, John Mack asserts that religious violence is a result of perceived humiliation and inferiority, that is, the people who engage in such see the act of violence as a liberating force.

3. Raise at least two or more questions, critical or informational, related to the reading.

While the reading raises a lot of good points as to how religion plays into acts of violence, one question that can be raised is if the same logic or psychological processes would apply to atheists. It is well known that most of the people of today have denounced their religions, and it is also well known that a lot of the violence that happens in our society is caused by non-

secular persons or atheists. Is it then possible that for these people, their non-belief in religious matters serve as justification for their violent activities?

Another question is that, with religion being used as an outlet for anger and aggression, which can lead to the point of fanaticism, would the world be in a better place without religion? Would there be less violence without religion?

4. In a paragraph, characterize your critical reflections on the ideas presented in this reading assignment.

The points raised in the reading about how humans use religion as an “excuse” for violence made a lot of sense and are hard to refute based on the examples provided in the discussion. However, I think that to state that humans are angry and aggressive by nature would be too harsh, especially since there have been countless occasions where humans have shown kindness and unconditional love towards each other – even under circumstances where these won’t be expected. In addition, religious fanaticism doesn’t result for every person who practices religion. As such, I think that experts should try to investigate the relation of religious violence not only with the religion and the corresponding religious group but also with the individual’s psychological profile, which may also play a part on how the individual’s religion affects his or her tendencies towards violence.

## References

Selengut, C. (2003). Sacred fury: Understanding religious violence. Lanham, MD:

Rowman Altamira

<https://assignbuster.com/sacred-fury-essay-example/>