

Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, and Radical Christianity in the Argentine Dirty War (Thematic Studies in Latin America)

Frank Graziano



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Providing an account of political repression in Argentina, this book takes as its theme the intersection of religion, violence and psychosexuality as they relate to the desire for power and to the myths and rituals manifesting that desire. Graziano's inquiry into the source of political violence is culturally grounded, focusing on psychological, historical, anthropological and religious phenomena often dismissed as "insignificant peculiarities" in traditional investigations. The author traces the messianic mythology ratifying the Junta's "dirty war" to the medieval Christian paradigm upon which it is based, providing an historical and ideological context for understanding contemporary perceptions of torture and execution as necessary, holy acts. The study also explores the relation of Argentine political atrocity to rituals of human sacrifice in Aztec and other pre-industrial cultures, to medieval and early-modern practices of torture, to 18th-century public executions in Europe and to sexual murders. "Disappearance" and torture as political strategies, the social roles imposed by repressive regimes, and symbolic constructs of the "invisible enemy", are also treated in depth. The book is based on analysis of victim testimony, formal and informal military discourse, trial transcripts, detention centre vernacular, and torture statements, substantiated by secondary literature.

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