



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici

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The Violence of Remorse

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Abstract

A remorse that does not disclose the enjoyments, affiliations and excitements of the perpetrator in the execution of violence may be less helpful to victims. When the perpetrator denies or does not acknowledge their own enjoyments in the scene of violence, when a perpetrator only tells the clinical facts, this may be frustrating or even debilitating for the victim in assisting their re-integration into reality in the world. When the perpetrator tells only the facts then the affective witness no longer exists, where the perpetrator does not display who s/he was in the past, that is, where the perpetrator's story reflects very little of the victim's own experience, the re-externalising capacity witnessing is diminished and the agonizing between fantasy and reality for the victim may insist. In this talk I apply a psychoanalytic discussion of the Amnesty Hearings in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Jeffrey Benzien and Eric Taylor to consider whether a display of the enjoyments of the perpetrators may be an important part of full disclosure for the victims and may be considered a form of remorse, albeit an ugly one.