



ICS SEMINAR SERIES

Narrative and Aesthetic in the Making of Human Rights

SEBASTIÁN MARTÍN VALDEZ

DATE

Thursday 1 September

TIME

11.30am – 1pm

VENUE

EE.G.36, Parramatta Campus (South)

NEXT SEMINAR

8 September

Jessica Whyte

*The 'Dangerous Concept of the Just War':
Third Worldism and the Laws of War*

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for the latest details.

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the circulation of stories, images and performances that fuel human rights imaginaries in Argentina. The general assumption guiding the analysis is that medial forms – such as testimonies, life stories, memorials, photographs – do not merely reflect social figurations of human rights; on the contrary, they actively 'shape how the social order and its subjects are imagined, articulated and effected' (Slaughter, 2009, p. 11). Through the circulation of these various cultural forms, human rights become legible and publicly shared.

Paying attention to the aesthetic and affective dimensions of human rights discourse helps to understand how it is re-appropriated and transformed in specific contexts. Sally Merry (2006) has brought attention to the importance of examining the processes of 'vernacularisation' of human rights, emphasising in particular the role of legal experts and brokers in "translating" the international language of human rights in "local" contexts. In this paper I reflect on how aesthetic representations also take on a role in making human rights legible and culturally shared.

The paper is based on my ongoing doctoral dissertation in which I explore the imbrication of human rights discourse in the debates around media policies in Argentina.

BIOGRAPHY

Sebastián Martín obtained his honours degree in Anthropology at National University of Rosario (Argentina) and he is currently enrolled as a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University (Australia). His research interests involve: human rights, political anthropology, Latin American studies and media anthropology.