

Aesthetic Seminar

Karen-Margrethe Simonsen

A Cry in the Desert! Slavery and the Forensic Theatricality of Human Rights in Atrocity Tales, Stories and Plays from the Spanish Empire

How do you speak about rights when you have none? How do you speak about rights, when you are oppressed, in the midst of ongoing atrocities, on the brink of dying, or you are socially dead? Taking my point of departure in forensic aesthetics (Eyal Weizman, Thomas Keenan, Matthew Fuller), and recent theatrical jurisprudence (Marett Leiboff), I will argue that forensic theatricality plays a contested but significant role in making rights claims both in literary and non-literary texts. I distinguish between five forms of theatricality: allegorical, carnivalesque, tragicomic, melodramatic and tragic. The Spanish context is particularly interesting because of its early and radical tradition of human rights thinking in the Salamanca School (especially Bartolomé de Las Casas), – more radical than later liberal human rights thinking, and because of its long history (400 years) of double enslavement of both Africans and indigenous people in America. The talk will present and discuss a couple of examples from the beginning and the end of the Spanish empire, taken from my recent book about this topic (see bio-note).

Torsdag den 21. marts 2024, Kl. 14:15

Kasernen

Bygning 1584, lokale 112

Alle er velkomne/All are welcome