



Symposium Call:

Revisionist Ontologies for Law and Human Rights in the Anthropocene

Friday, 28 October 2016
University of Strathclyde

Jointly organised by [Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance \(SCELG\)](#), the [Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law \(CSHRL\)](#) and the [Global Network for the Study of Human Rights and the Environment \(GNHRE\)](#)

The symposium is designed to allow in-depth engagement with its theme in a highly interactive setting over one day. Our symposia are always intellectually stimulating and highly enjoyable. Early expressions of interest are warmly encouraged, because numbers tend to be restricted in order to ensure a useful depth of engagement in a meaningful, extended conversation.

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This year's theme invites engagement with the central question of the ontology "law and human rights in the Anthropocene". Scientists suggest that we are entering a new human-dominated geological epoch called the Anthropocene, which will amplify demands on our ailing regulatory institutions, including law and its constructs—such as human rights. Juridical institutions are significantly complicit in the genesis of the Anthropocene and ironically also those regulatory institutions charged with addressing Anthropocene exigencies. The failures and deficiencies of law and human rights are implicated by their continuity with the deep assumptions and ideological foundations of the Anthropocene's human-induced signatures. In this light, certain scholars have loosely characterized law as being: not compatible with (or adequate to) Earth system complexities; unresponsive to Earth system changes; inflexible and insufficiently reflexive; and state-centered in a way that preserves sovereignty by shutting out alternative modes of ecological care. Collectively these factors are thought to legitimize and reinforce the type of human behavior that is causing the Anthropocene while further exacerbating environmental destruction, gender and class inequalities, growing inter and intra-species hierarchies, human rights abuses, and socio-economic and ecological injustices.

The time has come to re-envision law and human rights and their ontological orientations and to re-imagine the ways in which law and human rights could deal with the human-environment interface in the Anthropocene.

This intensive one-day event calls for papers on a range of thematic areas expressed as guiding questions below:

- What are the value and methods of legal ontologies and potential new concepts and fields of enquiry in the Anthropocene?
- What might an ontology of law and human rights mean in the Anthropocene?

- How can reflecting on the ontology of law and human rights help in understanding or experiencing the Anthropocene and provide momentum for the urgency of legal reform?
- How can law and human rights 'learn' from ontological turns in other disciplines such as the arts, anthropology and literature?
- What could a revitalized materialist ontological understanding of law and human rights mean for the development of critical environmental law in the Anthropocene?

Papers offered can take a focused or an intersectional approach, and organisers of the event warmly welcome theoretical, doctrinal and praxis-orientated contributions.

Abstracts should be submitted by **Friday 16 September 2016**. After that time, invitations to attend will be warmly issued. Please send abstracts for consideration to Louis.Kotze@nwu.ac.za. All queries could be directed to Louis Kotzé at the foregoing address or to Saskia Vermeulen at saskia.vermeulen@strath.ac.uk.

Please see for other useful links:

Global Network for the Study of Human Rights and the Environment: www.gnhre.org

Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance www.strath.ac.uk/scelg

Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/research/centreforthestudyofhumanrightslaw/researchandknowledgeexchange

Journal of Human Rights and the Environment: www.elgaronline.com/jhre

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