

## The Colloquium

In recent years, we have witnessed an unprecedented opening up of the law towards a different consideration of non-humans. Animals, rivers, mountains, ecosystems, deities, gods, AIs, and robots have suddenly occupied a new place in our legal discussions and have been regarded as persons and subjects of rights in some jurisdictions. In addition, legislation and regulations ranging from the accountability of autonomous synthetic agents and their manufacturers to the status of genetically modified or laboratory-created organisms are multiplying in national and international settings.

There are perhaps three contextual reasons for this 'non-human turn' in the law. Firstly, climate change has called our attention to the importance of other forms of life and has questioned our modes and means of production and our understanding of the world and our role in it. If humans have become a geological or climatological force as some suggest, we need new frames of reference to measure the scope and impact of our actions. Secondly, the emergence of new technologies has also forced us to question humanity's porous boundaries and think of inhuman and more-than-human worlds. From biotechnology to geoengineering and robotics, techniques have opened up new possibilities and also ethical, political and legal challenges in a moment where human/non-human hybrid formations seem to be the norm. Finally, we cannot ignore that this legal turn seems to be part and symptomatic of a broader shift in the humanities and social sciences. From



Where:  
Colette Bowe  
Room, Queens'  
Building, Mile  
End Campus  
Queen Mary  
University of  
London

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19-20th of June 2023

# International Colloquium on the Non-Human Turn in Law

Queen Mary University of London

Organiser: Dr Alexis Alvarez-Nakagawa



the ontological turn in anthropology to new materialism, feminist posthumanism, science and technology studies, object-oriented ontology, actor-network theory, speculative realism, and other approaches informed by decolonial thinking, critical race studies, queer theory, deep ecology, animal studies, and affect theory, new sets of scholarship has started to bring non-humans multiple agencies to the fore, putting into question the binary dualisms that support human exceptionalism.

The Non-Human Turn in Law International Colloquium seeks to name, explain, and describe these recent developments in the law and also characterise, and therefore consolidate, a wide variety of current critical and interdisciplinary approaches to jurisprudence and legal theory engaged in decentring the human. While problematising the very subject of the Colloquium – from the notion of ‘non-human’ to the very idea of a legal ‘turn’ –, and drawing on different theoretical backgrounds and traditions, participants will wonder what political and institutional assemblages this new consideration of non-humans could bring about to the human and non-human worlds we inhabit.

## Event Programme

### Day 1 (19th June)

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#### 09:00-9.30 – Welcome

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09:30-10:30 – Sheila Jasanoff (Harvard)  
“Between Market and Personhood:  
Ontological Line-Drawing in US Law”

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10:30-11:30 – Kathleen Birrell (La Trobe)  
“An Inhuman Supplement: A Thought  
Experiment in Law”

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11:30-12:30 – Alain Pottage (Sciences Po)  
“Electric Nature”

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#### 12.30-13.30 – Lunch

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13:30-14:30 – John Adenitire (QMUL)  
“Are There Any Animal Rights?”

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14:30-15:30 – Maneesha Deckha (Victoria)  
“Conceptualizing a Decolonizing Rule of Law  
for Animals”

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#### 15.30-16.00 – Coffee break

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16:00-17:00 – Renisa Mawani (British  
Columbia/QMUL)  
“The Laws of the Sea and anti-Blackness”

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17:00-18:00 – Veronica Strang (Oxford)  
“From Legal Rights to Social and Material  
Sustainability in Human-Non-Human  
Relations”

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### Day 2 (20th June)

09:00-10:00 – Margaret Davies (Flinders)  
“‘Living in a Certain Way’: Law and Knowledge  
of Life”

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10:00-11:00 – Daniela Gandorfer (Westminster)  
“From Matterphorics to a Decentralized and  
Non-proprietary Right to Breathe”

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11:00-12:00 – Marilyn Strathern (Cambridge)  
In conversation with Alexis Alvarez-Nakagawa,  
Alain Pottage & Veronica Strang

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#### 12:00-13:00 – Lunch

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13:00-14:00 – Marie Petersmann (Tilburg) &  
Dimitri Van Den Meerssche (QMUL)  
“On Phantom Publics, Clusters and Collectives –  
Be(com)ing Subject in Algorithmic Times”

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14:00-15:00 – Mihnea Tanasescu (Mons)  
“Te Urewera: Adventures in Ontology”

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#### 15:00-15:30 – Coffee Break

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15:30-16:30 – Hans Lindahl (Tilburg  
University/QMUL)  
“Responding to Anthropocenic a-legalities”

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16:30-17:30 – Andreas Philippopoulos-  
Mihalopoulos (Westminster)  
“Hydrojustice” (Performance lecture)

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#### 17.30 - 19.00 – Wine reception

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