

Our Earth Matters: Pathways to a Better Common Environmental Future

edited by **Bharat H. DESAI**. Amsterdam/Berlin/Washington, DC: **IOS Press, 2021. xii + 228 pp. Softcover: €121.00/US\$149.00/£110.00. doi: unknown.**

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The world witnessed again the historic “Stockholm Moment” at the 50th anniversary (2–3 June 2022) of the 1972 United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm). Notwithstanding the marathon global environmental regulatory processes; instruments and institutions; the global environmental crisis propelled the UN Secretary-General to raise alarm bells, especially for the “triple planetary crises” of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss which threaten our planet, peace, and prosperity in the Anthropocene epoch. It is in this context that the book, *Our Earth Matters*, edited by Professor Bharat H. Desai of Jawaharlal Nehru University, provides a pathbreaking, cutting-edge scholarly understanding of the predicament of human progress at this critical juncture.

The book contains twenty-one chapters by twenty-three outstanding scholars and practitioners from around the world. It explores a range of issues comprising international lawmaking processes, intergenerational equity, an earth system approach, and common prospects for a better common environmental future amidst the existential planetary crisis. The exemplary work, zest, and vision of the editor are reflected in the sheer range of issues, the organization of the book, and efforts to provide a futuristic gaze.

The work is organized into four parts: prognoses, processes, *problematique*, and prospects. In its first part, four chapters provide a prognosis of the planetary trust for present and future generations; an evolving earth system law with an Earth-centric approach, and suggestions for a new ecological law to face the current socio-ecological crisis. The four chapters in the second part scan the global regulatory process concerning the usage of the global conferencing technique in international environmental lawmaking; the possible reframing of environmental law with allocative efficiency through social-economic processes; the renewed role of the UN General Assembly for global environmental conferencing; and the proposal for a “new environmental charter”. The third part covers seven chapters that comprise variable issues of the global *problematique* in the realms of climate change, biodiversity, natural resources, marine resources, water resources, environmental crimes, armed conflict, and the environment. The last part of the book takes a look ahead into the future in five chapters with Palme’s vision for the global environment, with a new look at international environmental governance: a revival with a new mandate for the environment and global commons for the UN Trusteeship Council; the elevation of the UN Environment Programme into a “specialized agency”; and the role of international courts and tribunals as new environmental sentinels, including the creation of an international environmental court.

Desai, an outstanding international law scholar from the Global South, has curated this remarkable volume with a robust message that *Our Earth Matters*. The book provides a strong futuristic and ideational echo in the class of the 1972 classic *Only One Earth* (by Barbara Ward and René Dubos). The work holds significance in placing the

instrumentality of international law at the forefront to provide solutions for global environmental problems. Because of the sheer depth and high quality of scholarly contributions and suggestions for a better common future, this book would be an excellent tool for international law scholars, governmental decision-makers, the UN system, and other international organizations engaged in the future of life on planet Earth in the 21st century and beyond.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

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To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth: Legal Imagination and International Power 1300–1870

by Marti KOSKENNIEMI. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xviii + 1,124 pp. Hardcover: AUD\$283.95; Soft Cover: AUD\$141.95; eBook: US\$99.99. doi: 10.1017/9781139019774

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The first impression that might strike a general reader glancing at Koskenniemi's laborious work *To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth: Legal Imagination and International Power 1300–1870* is to call it a book narrating the dubious history of international law. Yet, such an impression is refuted by reading the whole work in depth, albeit in its vastness. As the overarching objectives of Koskenniemi's work are rooted in seeking out how legal imaginations pervaded Europe in the past and their connectivity with the use of power, Koskenniemi describes his book as a work devoted to the study of the history of the legal imagination.

The book opens with two chapters that establish its overall framework. The first chapter unleashes how Christianity played an indispensable role in the early development of statehood in medieval Europe under French monarchs. A special emphasis is given to a discussion on the reconciliation between jurisdiction and property rights, and Koskenniemi specifies the contribution made by French-Italian jurists from medieval universities such as Paris and Bologna to the early development of the legal profession. The next chapter titled "The Political Theology of *Ius Gentium*" unfolds the rise of Spanish legal imagination during its heyday as a global empire.

The legal imagination that Koskenniemi presents is avowedly an account rooted in its intrinsic political and institutional foundations. In this context, the onus is on the historian's hand to understand the political conflicts to grasp the legal development. Koskenniemi has borrowed Levi-Strauss' phrase "bricolage" to examine how legal writers produced their legal imagination based on the domestic legal training they acquired, which ultimately paved the path for a diverse scholarship in international law. In his mammoth task of tracing the legal imagination from Spanish, French, English, and German perspectives, Koskenniemi denotes how each narrative appeared to take a different outlook as those approaches were embedded in domestic discourses and practices.

It is not an exaggeration to state that Koskenniemi is known as a pivotal legal historian and his previous works are undoubtedly regarded as canonical texts in the study of the history of