

Law and Humanities

ISSN: 1752-1483 (Print) 1752-1491 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rlah20

Editorial

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To cite this article: David Gurnham, Elena Cooper & Matteo Nicolini (2026) Editorial, Law and Humanities, 20:2, 227-231, DOI: 10.1080/17521483.2026.2741964

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17521483.2026.2741964

Published online: 29 Oct 2026.

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LAW AND HUMANITIES
2026, VOL. 20, NO. 2, 227–231
https://doi.org/10.1080/17521483.2026.2741964

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

EDITORIAL

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Welcome to *Law and Humanities*, issue 20(2). The six articles published here are all constellated around notions of seeing (and not seeing) and of hearing, and the importance of these senses for law and legal thought. The issue opens with 'Listening as hospitality: justice for foreigners on trial' by Tianai Song, which considers the ethical responsibility on a host to treat the stranger with 'hospitality', including one who is accused of a crime. For Song, that responsibility is not discharged merely by such a person being granted a 'hearing'. She must also be listened to actively and carefully to overcome difficulties presented by her multiple strangenesses: strangenesses of language, habits, beliefs, and so on. The ethical relation of a host towards their guest is one that gained prominence through Derrida's *Of Hospitality* (1997), but it is also a very ancient one. Its etymologies connect 'hospitality', 'hospital' and 'hostage' and are reflected in historical legal codes that have been the subject of articles in previous issues of this journal (for example, Catherine MacMillan's 'Welcoming the enemy within?: hospitality, autoimmunity and the blood feud in Ismail Kadare's *Broken April*' (2021) 15(2), 279); as 'Zeus's Law' it has recently also featured prominently as a theme of Christopher Nolan's blockbuster adaptation of Homer's *The Odyssey* (2026). Song, too, takes cinema as her route into the question, and her analysis of this ethical relation focuses on the films *Saint Omer* (2022) and *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023) – i.e. two recent depictions of the vulnerabilities and particularities that are lost in translation when a person finds they must defend themselves in a foreign court.

If listening is the sense central to Song's article, it is seeing for Mark Neocleous and Deniz Turker's 'Spooks'. In it, the authors make an arresting discovery of something which, like all the best discoveries, has been hiding in plain sight for many years. It concerns the odd separateness of, on the one hand, the proliferation of 'hauntology' and 'spectralities' scholarship precipitated by Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1993), and on the other, the commonplace identification of security agencies as 'spooks' and the targets in the West's war on terror as 'ghosts' – a nomenclature that has not previously attracted attention from 'spectralities' scholars. Why nobody should have seen fit to join these two ghostly parts together is all the more mysterious, Neocleous and Turker surmise, because in their *Communist Manifesto* (1848) Marx and Engels themselves refer to 'police-spies' as a key part of the 'holy alliance [organised] to exorcise this spectre' immediately after the very frequently quoted opening announcement that 'A spectre is haunting Europe'. Neocleous and Turker take this second sentence – and its spies that have apparently escaped observation previously – as their intellectual starting

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point with the aim of considering the implications of our popular understanding of security agents as 'spooks' and 'spectres'.

In whichever form it appears, the haunting figure of the spectre depends in large part on the genre codes of supernatural fictions, an important feature of which is the desire for judgment on those who are thought to have escaped justice for past wrongs. Genre and judgment are themes also combined in Dion Georgiou's ''Shall James K. Hardy be renominated for District Judge?': classical jurisprudence, politics, and patriarchy in *A Family Affair*'. Georgiou examines Hollywood's response to Roosevelt's New Deal economic policies in the 1930s by turning debate at that time over the relative futures of classical jurisprudence and legal realism into conventions for an emerging genre of law films. Although *A Family Affair* (1937, dir. George B. Seitz) is ostensibly a comedy (although not to be confused with the romantic comedy of the same name of 2024!), Georgiou's focus is on aspects that it shares with more 'serious' depictions of legal figures and issues. Foremost of these is a lead character who is the doggedly principled upholder of the law, family patriarch and lodestar in troubled times, an aspect which, a generation later, would produce the most famous of its kind (albeit featuring a lawyer rather than a judge), namely, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962, dir. Robert Mulligan). *A Family Affair* depicts, as Georgiou puts it, 'a higher, primordial law enforced by a hero-judge [of] righteous intention and impeccable proceduralism' – an almost spiritual juridical ideal that stands as corrective (at least in the popular imaginary) to potentially damaging political ambition.

Film is a relatively recent form of media through which law may be visualized, but the pairing of law and the visual is, as we know, a topic that bears deeper analysis. Mauro Balestrieri's two articles 'The theatre metaphor in renaissance legal thought: law, power, and space' and 'Baroque spectacle and the legal imaginary: authority, performance, and the visual' amplify Georgiou's theme of the *staging* of law and take it into new and rich intellectual (or 'theatrological') territory. Across the two pieces, Balestrieri traces practices of law and authority in the Renaissance and Baroque through its stagings, symbols, emblems and ocular metaphors. Balestrieri begins with the common association in Western thought of intellectual advancement with sight and light, and with the common root of 'theatre' and 'theory' that is the Greek *théa* (vision). From there he painstakingly reveals the close historical connections between law and spectacle and the centrality of the motif of *theatrum* in the development of early modern legal thought.

On the subject of the association of justice with 'seeing', our final research article '*Markers of justice*: making visible Nazi Era dispute resolution in museum texts' by Charlotte Woodhead addresses the increasingly fraught matter of what members of the public expect to find when visiting museums whose collections may include objects with a tainted (or potentially tainted) past. Woodhead has elsewhere addressed her arguments about the ethics of care for communities that should guide the handling of objects, the presence of which in a museum may be explainable by acts of force or coercion, including the most well-known case of the Parthenon Marbles in the British Museum (*Caring for Cultural Heritage*, CUP 2023). Her analytical perspective in the present article is different, however, in being focused on the narrative, aesthetic and quasi-juridical qualities

of supplementary 'paratexts' added to a display that purport to situate the relevant object, to explain the object's provenance or to commemorate a former owner forcefully parted from it. Arguably more problematically, paratexts may also (or instead) be used to justify the museum's continued possession of the object by emphasizing the ostensible lack of violence in its acquisition.

Turning to our Arts section, this issue features this journal's first arts piece to review recent music. An interdisciplinary essay by the human rights lawyer Ekaterina Yahyaoui Krivenko, the musician Niamh Glenat and the musician and human rights law doctoral candidate Honour Tuohy, provides scholarly reflection on two musical compositions by Max Richter: *Voices* (2020) and *Voices 2* (2021). Richter, a leading figure in classical music, is well-known both for complex musical works about the human condition (e.g. his protest against the 2003 invasion of Iraq in *The Blue Notebooks*, 2004) as well as for his film music (e.g. *Hamnet*, 2025). In *Voices* and *Voices 2* Richter uses innovative orchestration – an 'upside down' orchestra, where the bass performers outnumber the treble – to create a rich musical space for contemplating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, readings of which are incorporated into the musical soundscape: opening with an extract from the historic reading by Eleanor Roosevelt, a key figure in the Declaration's adoption in 1948, the music later incorporates readings in different languages by members of the public today, from all over the world, obtained by Richter through crowd sourcing.

As musical works of scale inspired by the Declaration, *Voices* and *Voices 2* are unique in the cultural canon, but our reviewers reflect on the music's significance to law: is Richter's music, in situating the essence of the Declaration within 'our song, our music' and therefore our deepest sense of what it means to be human, 'the revolution that international law has been waiting for'? (at 10) Our co-authors' initial unison in unfolding this question, soon breaks into a polyvocal response, with three contrasting answers provided: each co-author engages differently with the relation between music, sound and words, and the relevance of time – 1948 and today – in encountering and interpreting Richter's musical setting of the readings.

Speaking in 1948, Eleanor Roosevelt presented the Declaration as an 'international Magna Carta' and this historical comparison provides a fitting conceptual link to this issue's second arts piece: legal scholar Ruth Houghton reviews the art installation *The Words That Bind Us* by Nicola Anthony, as experienced as part of Durham Cathedral's exhibition *Magna Carta and the North* (2025). Durham Cathedral holds one of only four surviving copies of the 1225 Charter, based on the original Magna Carta of 1215; Anthony's art-work used lights to project moving words from these original constitutional texts – today widely understood as key to the development of the rule of law – onto the nave of the Cathedral. Like Richter's crowd sourced readings of the Declaration, Anthony's art-work also created space for the 'voices' of members of the public: through an interactive touch-screen, visitors were able to select new words which would be incorporated into the installation, thereby contributing to the art-work as a dynamic 'digital manifesto'. For Houghton, *The Words that Bind Us*, through its momentary, ephemeral and non-binding artistic form, confronts 'constitutional scholarship …

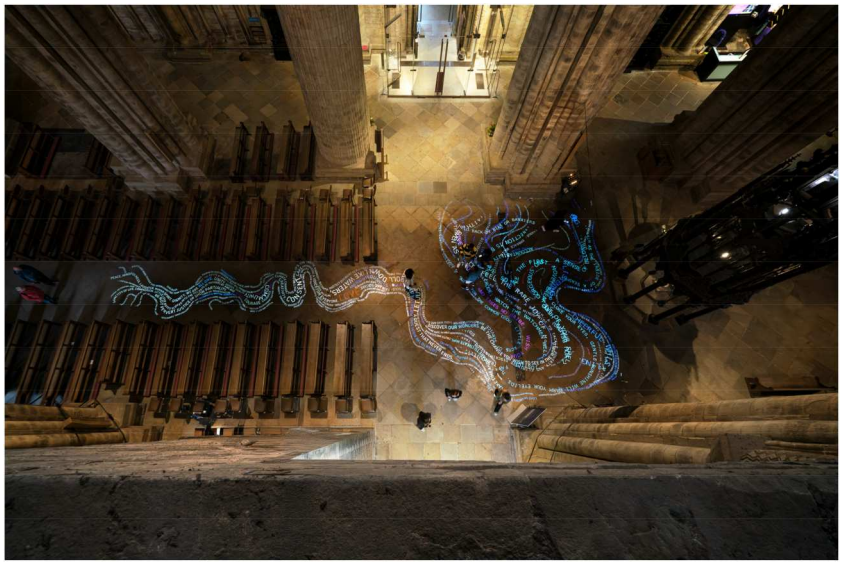


Figure 1. Photograph by Simon Williams of the *The Words That Bind Us* by Nicola Anthony, Durham Cathedral, 2025.

with a series of questions about what it means to do constitutional law *differently*' (at 6, emphasis original) and she offers thoughtful answers through engagement with ideas by the philosophers Miguel Abensour, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Frederic Jameson and others.

We are delighted to feature an image of Anthony's *The Words that Bind Us* by the photographer Simon Williams in this editorial (Figure 1) and as our social media Bluesky banner.[1] Taken from an aerial viewpoint, Williams' photograph powerfully communicates the spatial context of Durham Cathedral for Anthony's innovative constitution-making through art. In capturing the river-like quality of the words flowing down the nave, the photograph illustrates an important linkage made by Houghton to Wittgenstein's distinction between 'the movement of the waters on the riverbed' (here, the constitution's content) and 'the riverbed itself' (here, the constitution's underlying assumptions and ontology) (at 4). As Houghton explores in the review: is the promise of utopian constitution-making offered by the 'waters' of *The Words that Bind Us*, in fact compromised by conservative constitutional assumptions of its 'riverbed'?

This year is the 25th anniversary year of the tragic events of September 11th 2001 (involving two hijacked planes hitting the twin towers of the World Trade Center, New York City) and, in our third arts piece, Matt Dyson, an expert in tort and criminal law, reviews the film *Worth* (2020, directed by Sara Colangelo) which dramatizes the human stories relating to the US legal process for determining the compensation to be paid to victims of those attacks. *Worth* is, without

[1]The journal's Bluesky presence is at https://bsky.app/profile/law-and-humanities.bsky.social.

question, an American film (about 'our national tragedy') made for a mainstream audience (it is currently streaming on Netflix); unlike the more usual Hollywood court-room dramas, though, it chooses legal subject matter which did not involve a court case: *Worth* concerns the consequences of US legislation *barring* court action against airlines for their role, if any, in failing to avert the attacks. Instead, as Dyson explains, 'an avowedly capitalist country turned to state handouts' (at 5): victims could claim from a state-backed compensation fund run by a 'special master', the lawyer Kenneth R. Feinberg (played by Michael Keaton). Feinberg had wide powers to make and apply the rules on eligibility and quantum of claims and the film follows the human character arcs of Feinberg and a key claimant (played by Stanley Tucci) in addressing a number of questions: how can the value of human life be equated to dollars and cents, what social injustices does such a process fail to correct, and how could a lawyer ensure that non-lawyer claimants could 'trust the system' (at 6)?

Finally, and by no means least, this issue offers reviews of three fascinating books in the legal humanities: Peter Goodrich reviews Maksymilian Del Mar's *Neil MacCormick: A Life in Politics, Philosophy and Law* (CUP, 2025), Dale Mitchell reviews *The Law in Graphic Narratives: Legal Perspectives on Comics, Manga and Anime*, edited by Giuseppe Martinico and Gianpaolo Maria Ruotolo (de Gruyter, 2024), and Felicitas Benzigas reviews *Laws of Transgression: The Return of Judge Schreber* (UTP, 2022) edited by Peter Goodrich and Katrin Trüstedt.

We sign off this editorial with a reiteration of our perennial hope that the material presented in these pages proves stimulating for colleagues and friends in law and humanities communities where-ever you are. We continue to be delighted and moved by the ever expanding range new approaches, perspectives, and insights continually being opened up, not least at the events we have been involved in during the summer: the *Law and Humanities Roundtable 2026* at Trinity College Dublin in June hosted by Róisín Á Costello and the Irish Legal Humanities Working Group, and the *Four Nations Law and the Humanities Forums* in Glasgow, Belfast, Cardiff and Warwick that were initiated by the Law and the Humanities Hub (LH*ub*) at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. As ever, we are happy to hear from legal humanities scholars and organizations who may be interested in working with us on future events, or (of course!) in submitting work for publication.

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