

Resistance is Fertile! On Being Sons and Daughters of Soil

With support from the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences and the National Research Foundation, and together with Vegkop Farm in the Phillippi Horticultural Area of Cape Town, Environmental Humanities South invites proposals for chapters for a book on people and soils in the African Anthropocene.

Book title: Resistance is Fertile! On Being Sons and Daughters of Soil

Eds. Lesley Green, Nikiwe Solomon and Virginia MacKenny

Environmental Humanities South, University of Cape Town, South Africa

What does it mean to be a son or a daughter of the soil, if the soil is damaged? When land restitution proceeds in South Africa, and as land struggles become more prominent amid climate change and water scarcity and pollution legacies across Africa, a key question is how small scale farmers will be able to work with polluted, damaged and fertiliser-addicted soils. The issue traverses both nature and society; the sciences, social sciences and humanities: If farmer-support is based on fertilisers, GM seeds and pesticides, new small scale farmers will be locked in to an agro-industrial food system, based on costly technoscientific efforts to force productivity from soil in ways that are all too often dependent on the petro-industrial complex. What alternatives are being envisioned and enacted?

What might it mean to work towards land restitution and a just food-system via a politics of care for soil, in a time when climate change makes food production more challenging? Where and how are emerging African farmers reclaiming relations between multiple species -- plants, insects, cows, birds, seeds, earthworms, microbes -- to exit an often punitive commercial food system, and replenish soils? What changes in policy, philosophy and imagination will make possible new initiatives? What struggles are new food producers facing?

Adventurous thinkers are invited from all academic disciplines, food activists and civil society organisations, to propose chapters for a book project on reclaiming what it means to be a son or a daughter of the soil on the African continent.

Short proposals are invited for submission in early August 2017. Successful proposals will be invited for presentation in a workshop in September 2017. A 9-month-long reading project will support new writing and thinking in this field, with several opportunities to present drafts in progress, and discuss emerging literature in the field from multiple disciplines. A final workshop will be held in Cape Town in July 2018.

As currently conceptualised, the volume will have three sections:

- **Extractive legacies and soil-water relations:** Coloniality, modernity, and apartheid inserted a rift between people and ecologies of soil. What are the legacies of that ecological rift? How does land restitution link to soil restitution?
- **Neoliberal markets and climate politics:** New forms of extractivism have re-instated colonial forms of land ownership and governance, resulting in slow violence to people, soils and water. This section aims to offer careful studies of contemporary forms of extractivism that are damaging soils.
- **Reclaiming relation with soil, water and food:** What emerging and historical practices of soil care attend to the replenishment of soil? What sciences do communities need to remedy the material legacy of coloniality and apartheid on soil structures? What partnerships with plants, water and diverse species enable farmers to craft ecologies that reclaim damaged land? What relations with land enable people to reclaim kinship with soil, as its sons and daughters?

Visual arts (visual essays, photographs and artworks), creative writing and research-based contributions of 4000-5000 words are invited from all disciplines, with a strong preference for reflection and study of African situations and case studies. Contributions may be from historical and archival studies; literature and poetry; film and the visual arts; social sciences; journalism; chemical engineering; molecular biology; soil science; decolonial thought; ecology and agro-ecology, organic farming and environmental jurisprudence -- all are welcome to participate in a supportive transdisciplinary learning process spanning just over a year. Reading materials and resources will be made available to participants online.

Subject to available funds, participants' travel and workshop costs will be supported with funding from the National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences catalytic grant to Environmental Humanities South, titled "The Humanities in the African Anthropocene".

Limited funds will be available to support writers and artists with field research costs and technical or laboratory assistance, from the National Research Foundation grant to Environmental Humanities South, titled "The Making of Environmental Publics."

Workplan

By 5 August 2017, please send a title and concept for a proposed chapter (approx 300-400 words / one page) to nikiwe.solomon@uct.ac.za and lesley.green@uct.ac.za , **or proposed visual artworks or photo essays** to virginia.mackenny@uct.ac.za.

Notification of acceptance: 15 August 2017

Workshop: Presentation of concept papers, 22-24 September 2017

Development of online resources and discussion groups, with work-in-progress presentations, Oct 2017-June 2018.

First drafts to the editors: 31 January 2017

Final papers will be presented in a workshop in Cape Town July 2018.

Submission to Publisher: September 2018

Note, the invitation to submit a full paper is not a guarantee that the paper will be accepted for publication. Full articles will be accepted subject to a peer review process.