



**REGENERATION:**  
Environment, Art, Culture

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## Introducing *Regeneration: Environment, Art, Culture*

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*Regeneration* is motivated by the desire to lean into three things that we feel are absolutely vital to sustaining the environmental humanities as they continue to proliferate and expand: open access publishing, multimedia capacity, and collaboration.

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The drowned rollercoaster on *Regeneration's* masthead is a by-now-familiar image. It depicts the Star Jet, the roller coaster that stood at the end of Casino Pier in Seaside Heights, New Jersey, which was dumped into the ocean when Hurricane Sandy demolished the pier in October of 2012. The image has come to exemplify the way human-caused climate change is destroying the structures we cherish. But it is also a reminder that it is our own way of life that has brought about this crisis. For environmental humanists, the loop of the rollercoaster evokes the spiraling imbrication of the most innocuous choices: a day at the seaside, a ride at an amusement park on a summer afternoon. All of these, we now know, are implicated in startlingly wide-ranging climatic effects. Indeed, the submerged Star Jet appears as cause and effect, pleasure and tragedy, infrastructure and ruin, mobility and stagnation all at once.

For scholars in the field, the whirlwind expansion of the environmental humanities in the past decade or so might feel something like the rapid acceleration of a rollercoaster. As we wrote elsewhere, “the field is growing more rapidly than anyone can keep up with, splintering into distinct areas of inquiry like energy humanities, posthumanism, blue humanities, ecomedia, waste studies and so on.”<sup>1</sup> Despite these proliferating foci, environmental humanists have managed to retain a strong sense of the goals and commitments that drive them. Instead of succumbing to the lure of institutional prestige, EH has remained connected to its activist origins and responsive to the multiple and intersecting crises that have fueled that acceleration.

But even as the environmental humanities have provided an intellectual and pedagogical home for an ever-growing number of scholars, even as the field proliferates books and fellowships and positions and journals, its expansion has not been strongly marked by the celebratory sense of success that other new fields enjoy upon their “arrival” to the academic mainstream. This is likely because its growth has been crisis-fueled. As Lawrence Buell has written, “How can one be enthusiastic about a train wreck that “we” have engineered yet seem powerless to stop? If...Anthropocene anxiety is more responsible than any other factor for mainstreaming environmental concerns in humanities research and teaching, how much satisfaction can be taken in that?”<sup>2</sup>

We don't want to overstate the absence of satisfaction in the growth of environmental humanities. Although we know that the immensity of global crisis is behind the explosion of the field, there is still much to appreciate. Our collaborations, our commitments, and our methods have been a source of optimism, even pleasure, for many.<sup>3</sup> Those collaborations have helped scholars and activists work together, have undermined business as usual in the conventions of academic debate, and have demanded that universities take seriously the voices of the people environmental degradation has most harmed. Indeed, the flourishing of decolonial environmental

thought, of Indigenous, Black, and Latinx environmentalisms tied into the deep histories of environmental justice movements, has fundamentally transformed the field. There is tremendous energy and liveliness in the attention to relationships between human and nonhuman worlds, and tremendous political force in the centering of structural inequalities as the site of environmental critique and action.

But the magnitude of the climate crisis, and the multiple environmental, material, and social crises with which it is entwined, continues to grow, doing profound, unevenly distributed, damage around the globe. Exhaustion, depression, and burnout among activists and scholars engaged with it seems inevitable. So in the face of this accelerating “train wreck,” how can we keep the field from going off the rails? And amidst the pressures of neoliberalism in the corporate university, how can we avoid being diminished by the downsizing of the humanities, on the one hand, or monetized by administrators who see the field as simply “value-added interdisciplinarity,” on the other?

We started *Regeneration* out of a desire to lean into three things that we feel are absolutely vital to sustaining the environmental humanities as they continue to proliferate and expand: open access publishing, multimedia capacity, and collaboration.

First, we believe that the so-called “crisis in the humanities,” brought about by the misguided priorities of the corporate university, has wrongly sequestered research and conversation about the climate crisis behind the (pay)walls of the academy, limiting access and reinscribing traditional models of scholarship and hierarchies about what kind of work “counts.” This sort of sequestering and hierarchization will drain the energy of the field, deadening its conversations and obstructing its connection to the worlds in which it is rooted and from which it draws its insights.

For this reason, *Regeneration* has embraced a completely open access publication format. Open access, we believe, is a necessity if we are to keep the environmental humanities vital, bringing new audiences into the conversation and preventing the hoarding of necessary knowledge. This openness is the only way to sustain the justice-centered conversations that stand at the heart of the field. Accordingly, we seek to remove knowledge production from the forces of the market, making environmental scholarship—in all its myriad forms—a freely-circulating public good. Open access, at its core, is an epistemic, political, and ethical project, in keeping with the transformative goals of the environmental humanities. We are fortunate to partner with the Open Library of Humanities, a network of scholars, librarians, programmers, and publishers founded in 2013 to platform humanities journals in OA form. OLH embodies the open-access ethos in its structure, emphasizing self-governance, mutuality, and horizontal

networks of labor. For *Regeneration*, OLH represents the opportunity to reinvigorate the values that lie at the heart of our field.

Second, while we recognize the continued importance of formal, peer-reviewed scholarship, we believe that the conventional academic essay is not the only way to register a scholarly argument. The environmental humanities have inspired practitioners to explore new ways to make arguments and tell stories. Innovations in content have generated new experiments in form, especially by scholars who seek to excavate buried histories and create new collectivities.<sup>4</sup> But these innovations and experiments have too often had to exist apart from academic media—print and print-style online journals and monographs—created with traditional scholarly formats in mind. Sequestered behind paywalls, many print and print-style journals cannot even support live links; they are, in effect, cut off from the digital world in which they exist. In contrast, *Regeneration's* digital, open-access platform permits us to incorporate sound files and videos, images, interviews, and hyperlinks, expanding the kind of vision (and sound) that the scholarly journal can incorporate. As scholarship in the environmental humanities continues to experiment with form, we hope to engage this multimedia capacity to foster and support conversations between this work and more traditional forms of scholarship.

Third, sustaining the environmental humanities will require an intensification and further theorization of the multiple forms and practices of collaboration that already animate the field. *Regeneration* prioritizes work that is collaborative and dynamic, work that brings together unlikely perspectives. The academy prizes and values single-author scholarship, a practice increasingly out of reach for the majority of scholars who are precariously employed, who have increasingly heavy workloads, and who have lost their faith in the value of scholarship that seems isolated from in this political moment. The bias toward single authorship in the humanities—a marked contrast to other scholarly fields—developed in accordance with the individualist orientation of the Western academy; a field committed to undoing that orientation, to decolonizing the academy, will not automatically validate it.

To be clear, we are not refusing single-authored scholarship, any more than we are denying the continued value of the formal academic essay or monograph. Both will continue to hold an important place in this journal. But we well know that even single-authored scholarship is the product of dialogical conversations with others, and therefore always collaborative at heart. And we believe that a collaborative model encourages readers and contributors to recognize a more capacious intellectual genealogy for scholarly trajectories. Collaboration asks us to think about multiple sources and voices and multiple genealogies for our methods and practice. In addition, it calls for centralizing the voices of BIPOC, queer, feminist, and other marginalized

scholars, who have long understood collaboration as an intellectual, ethical, and structural necessity.

Accordingly, *Regeneration* seeks to put collaboration at the center of what it does, in multiple and evolving ways. Collaboration is not simply a format for *Regeneration*. It is a structure of thinking, a practice of considering multiple histories and futures, a method for seeing otherwise as we imagine our own work and its relationship to our fields and our daily lives. We invite our readers to propose new collaborations with us, including, but not limited to, guest-edited special issues. *Regeneration* has a number of guest-edited special issues forthcoming, including:

- *Nature Bites Back: The Anti-Pastoral Thesis in Queer and Trans Studies*, edited by Cameron Clark and E.L. McCallum (1.1–2, forthcoming August 2024)
- *Affects of Energy Transition*, edited by Firat Oruc, Trish Kahle, and Vicky Googasian (1.3, forthcoming April 2025)
- *On the Cold Edge: Creative Meditations on Svalbard*, edited by Hester Blum, Candace Jensen, and Jacinda Russell (2.1, forthcoming August 2025)
- *Radioactive Empires: The Nuclear Relations of Coloniality*, edited by Rebecca Macklin, Sonja Dobroski, Susanne Ferwerda, and Laura M. De Vos (2.2, forthcoming December 2025)
- *‘i agree with the leaves’: New Directions in the Arboreal Humanities*, edited by Jennifer James and Richard Grusin (2.3, forthcoming April 2026)

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As we grow, *Regeneration* will seek to exemplify and support the environmental humanities in form and function as well as content. We hope to provide a dialogic, innovative, and above all accessible platform suited to an outward-facing, ever-evolving field.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Stephanie Foote, Anthony Lioi, and Dana Luciano, "Belated Futures," *Resilience: A Journal of Environmental Humanities*, vol. 10, nos 1–2 (Winter 2022/Spring 2023), p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Laurence Buell, "Reflections on Anthropocene Futures," *Resilience: A Journal of Environmental Humanities*, vol. 10, nos 1–2 (Winter 2022/Spring 2023), p. 8.
- <sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Alenda Chang, "In Defense of Play," *Resilience: A Journal of Environmental Humanities*, vol. 10, nos 1–2 (Winter 2022/Spring 2023), pp. 15–24.
- <sup>4</sup> See, e.g., the [Dark Laboratory](#), a multidisciplinary collective that centers the study of race and ecologies through storytelling and immersive technologies, founded by *Regeneration* editorial board member Tao Leigh Goffe.

## Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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