**How to Edit a Special Issue of Regeneration: Environment, Art, Culture**

**Your Pitch:**

*Regeneration* likes to publish special issues. The environmental humanities are evolving quickly, and we hope the journal can be a venue for collaborative thinking, new knowledge, and emerging scholarship. We welcome pitches for special issues based on successful working groups, pedagogical experiments, symposia, and conference panels.

When you make a pitch to us for a special issue, we would like to see an abstract that is between one and two single-spaced pages. Here you should discuss the topic of the issue, its importance, and its contributions to the field. We would also like a list of people you have invited to contribute. Please include titles of their essays (even though these might well change), as well as the institutional affiliations and emails of all participants, including yourself.

If you don’t have a full list, we’ll ask you to consider three options: to consider essays for your issue that are drawn from our general submissions if those essays seem to fit; to consider running a CFP, which you can post to your scholarly communities, and that we will also post on the various *Regeneration* platforms; to consider inviting scholars whose work you already know.

Your special issue pitch will go more smoothly if you have about half of your contributors (say around 3) already committed to the project. *Regeneration* can print any number of photographs or images you provide, as well as audio files, videos, and clips.

We’d also like you to think about the following issues as you make invitations, select essays from your CFP, and imagine a table of contents.

**Diversity**

Aim for a diversity of disciplines, nation/period categories within a field, scholars in underrepresented categories of gender/race/ethnicity/nationality, and scholars of various academic ranks (or outside academe).

**Your “A” list**

People will want to know who else you have solicited, so begin with your surer bets. Alternately, begin with the more sought-after scholars, as far in advance as possible

**In-demand categories**

Scholars working in early periods, extremely famous scholars, and those working in U.S. ethnic or postcolonial studies are in high demand; have “Plan B’s” for these categories and give people lots of lead time.

**Getting a balance of essays**

Ask authors you are soliciting what they might want to work on, so you can weigh in early about questions of fit. You don’t want to make solicited authors compete with one another or with unsolicited abstracts; you do want to be sure that the abstracts you will be getting will produce a balanced issue.

Once we receive your pitch, we’ll discuss it and get back to you within two weeks. If we’d like to go forward, here are some things you might want to know.

**Timeline**:

Plan for about a year and a half for your part of the work.

Plan for *at least* two years from invitation to journal coming out. *Regeneration* comes out 3 times a year, and during the year and a half you are working, we will already have about five issues queued up.

**Step 1:** Plan for about a month on this step:

* + - Query the journal about a possible special issue
    - Generate list of authors to solicit and/or write Call for Papers

**Step 2**:

* + - Solicit abstracts for essays or gather abstracts from your symposium or panel
      * A 3-month deadline works for abstracts for solicited essays.
      * You can do a 1-2 month deadline for unsolicited abstracts.

**Step 3:**

* + - * Deadline for abstracts

It’s helpful if you send a reminder to solicited authors a week in advance

**Step 4:** You’re at about month 4 or 5 here.

* + - * Get any straggling abstracts
      * Select from any unsolicited abstracts
      * If necessary, solicit additional abstracts to round out the issue.
      * When you contact authors approving their abstract:

Inform authors of due date for manuscript (see “Issues” below)

Inform authors of word count limit

Ask them to let you know as soon as possible if the essay they will be submitting departs substantially in topic from the abstract they sent

**Issues to be aware of in creating deadlines for your authors:**

**Time needed for drafting**

6 months (a deadline of Month 13, Day 1) is a decent amount of time to produce a first draft if it includes some summer months: if you can give your authors more time and still keep to our production schedule, by all means do.

If your deadline is at the end of a semester/quarter, or if the time that the author is expected to write the essay includes fewer than two summer months, give them 7 months (a deadline of Month 14, Day 1)

**Wiggle room on your end**

Realistically, you will get a few essays 1-2 months late, so give yourself that much wiggle room. You could say 6 months and assume it will take 8, or 7 months and assume it will take 9.

**Issues to be aware of:**

**Disappearing authors**

This stage is where some authors seem to disappear. Keep after them, and enlist us to help if need be. The wiggle room you’ve built in will help, but you don’t want one essay to slow down the production schedule.

**Step 5:**

We hope to have all of the essays for the issue by this point. All essays for *Regeneration* are peer-reviewed by two readers, but it’s up to you how you would like this to proceed. You can choose:

1. The standard model of reviewing. Let the journal handle the entire process of choosing two anonymous readers, soliciting reports, bundling them when they come in, and sending them to you and to the authors.
2. A hybrid model of reviewing. You write the first report on the essay anonymously, and we solicit a review ourselves. In this case, we will ask you to give us your reviews, so we can bundle them and send them to the authors (and cc you)
3. The standard model with your input. The journal takes care of the review process, but you supply us with possible reviewers for essays in case we cannot get enough of our own readers. This usually works best for essays that are important for your issue and the field, but which are in fields or on topics that might not yet have received a lot of scholarly attention. We’ll contact the reviewers and cc you when we bundle the reports and send them to the authors.

We should say here that most special issue editors tend to choose option 2, though we have had success with option 3 as well. When we send essays out for review, we propose a 4 week turn around in the email. We also include in the body of the email the abstract of the essay, and we attach to the email a copy of the essay itself, as well as a standard *Regeneration* review form. This saves a few steps of back and forth with potential reviewers, and streamlines the whole process. We prefer to query reviewers ourselves because it is much easier for us to keep track of the reviewers, and we can take on the task of nudging them if they are late. And they will be. You should build in double the time we suggest for reviews.

We prefer that both reports go at once to the author, so if you are the first reader, we’ll ask you to send us your reports so we can bundle them with the second review for the authors. We will, in consultation with you, decide how to frame our letter to the authors, choosing what revisions we think are most important for the essay and for the issue overall.

**Step 6**:

Your authors should have reviews in their hands at this point, and will be working on final revisions. Usually we think that four weeks is enough time to do a revision on an essay; it’s enough time to put a little pressure on the author, but not enough time for the essay to get put on the back burner.

**Problematic revised manuscripts**

You may receive a revision that you think still needs some work, or more often a revision that is far over word count. Some authors will be receptive to another set of your edits – indeed, eager for another close read of their work. Others probably won’t. You can pose this question to them: “Would you prefer to see and review any editorial suggestions [or cuts] on this draft before it goes to a copyeditor, or would you like me to go ahead and pass the essay on with those edits [or cuts]? Most will choose the former. Do the editing/cutting as quickly as possible, turn it back around to the author, and agree on the soonest possible due date.

Once we have the essay revisions, we will send it to the anonymous reviewer who engaged most seriously with the essay and ask for a thumbs up or thumbs down. We give two weeks for that process, but that’s really just a cushion. It generally happens in a matter of days.

*Now is the time for you to begin thinking very seriously about your introduction to the special issue, as well as how you want to order the essays.*

*You should also gather the bios for your authors to send to us.*

**Issues to be aware of in ordering the essays and writing your Intro:**

**The first essay after your Intro**

Your lead essay should be the one that makes the reader want to get the issue. That could be the most famous name, something special like a roundtable discussing the topic, the essay that seems to set the terms for the conversation that unfolds among other essays, or an essay addressing something happening in current events (this can be hard to get right, given the long time frame of production, but you may get lucky and get a “right now” essay).

**The last essay in the volume (before the book review essay or other standard end-of-volume items)**

Ideally, your last essay will leave the reader with a sense of new questions, or be emotionally powerful, or seem incredibly timely given current events (as above, this can be hard to get right, given the long time frame of production, but again, you may get lucky and get a “right now” essay). But sometimes it’s just the one you couldn’t fit into the arc of the issue as a whole.

**Subtopics or narrative flow**

If you are lucky, your essays may suggest two or more subtopics, which will allow you to group them in the volume and in your introduction. Otherwise, think of your essays as a narrative or a museum exhibit: what story about the topic or the discipline as a whole is it telling? What threads link one essay to another? As you answer these questions in your intro, your order may shift around. Or, if you answer them through ordering essays, identifying the analytic or topical threads that justify a sequence of essays, your introduction will need to make those links and transitions explicit.

**Reader-friendliness in the Intro.**

You don’t want your Intro to be simple-minded, but you do want it to appeal to regular subscribers, casual browsers, etc., and not just to people invested in the topic of your special issue. Your introduction should be an introduction to the topic or theme of your issue, and not just to the issue itself. It should clarify why the topic is important, give some sense of its critical history and/or place in the larger field of the environmental humanities, and cite foundational and recent materials not included as essays. The Introduction should be something that an academic could teach or use to organize a syllabus, or a layperson could use to investigate your topic beyond your special issue.

**Step 7 (you are at around 18 months here):**

Now the real work begins. Your main focus should be on working with the author to submit a final manuscript that is as polished as possible. Authors must follow the Chicago Manual of Style, but keep in mind that the manuscript will receive detailed copyediting from the press and from us.

Manuscripts should not have any odd formatting (no extra lines between paragraphs, no differences in typeface and font size) and should be double-spaced, with left justification only.

*Your authors should also make sure they gather all of their necessary permissions and send them to you.*

**Art**

* + Electronic art files should be saved separately as TIFFs or JPEGs
* + Please include in your article or saved as a separate file a list of captions that

describe the content and contain credit lines

* + Numbering coincides with caption list and call-outs in the text
* + Call-outs (and ***NOT*** actual artwork) are inserted in the article

(e.g., <insert fig. 1 here>)

* + Photographs and figures that do not include text should be saved at no less than

300 dpi with a minimum size of 6 inches across the smallest dimension; artwork

that includes text meant to be legible should be saved at no less than 1200 dpi.

Here is a sample permissions request your authors can use:

[date]

[address]

Dear [name]:

I am writing to request permission to reprint the following material for which you control the rights:

[insert original publication information, reference numbers, descriptions of text or illustrations, etc.]

This material is to appear in the following work that the University of Nebraska Press, a nonprofit scholarly publisher, is now preparing for publication:

["Article Title"] in [*Journal Title*]*,* edited by [*Journal Editor Name*], volume [#], no. [#] ( [season/year] ).

[Other remarks]

I request nonexclusive world rights to include this material in the electronic and print (or print-on-demand) editions of this work for the lifetime of this article.

If you are the copyright holder, may I have your permission to reprint the above material? If you do not indicate otherwise, I will use the usual scholarly form of acknowledgment.

If you are not the copyright holder, please let me know whom I might contact for permission.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. A duplicate copy is enclosed for your records. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,

The above request is hereby approved on the understanding that full credit will be given to the copyright holder:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If necessary, please indicate a specific credit line: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Last step:**

If we are on schedule, we will be sending in the manuscript for copyedit and it will take the press roughly four months to do everything it does. Once we have the essays, we send them to the press for copyediting, and we read the essays ourselves again.

The press generally returns the first round of copyedits in two months, sending them to us to send out to authors. *This is the last time any substantial revisions can be made.*  Authors send their revisions to our managing editor, who bundles them and sends them to press. Roughly four weeks after that, we will receive galleys from the press and share them with you. Only errors can be corrected in galleys, and authors will have a very short window – at most a week – to return them. After that, the issue will be ready to go.