



Inaugural Environmental Humanities Best Article Prize

*E*nvironmental Humanities, published by Duke University Press, has established a Best Article Prize to be given annually to an article published in the pages of *Environmental Humanities* during the preceding calendar year. The award identifies and encourages innovative and well-written research in the broad field of environmental humanities, including both theoretical and applied contributions. The winner is chosen by the editorial team in collaboration with the journal's scholarly oversight committee.

The 2022 Best Article Prize has been awarded to Lauren Fugate, previously a graduate student in the MA program in literary and cultural studies at Carnegie Mellon University, and John MacNeill Miller, assistant professor of English at Allegheny College, for "Shakespeare's Starlings: Literary History and the Fictions of Invasiveness," which appeared in *Environmental Humanities* in November 2021 (vol. 13, no. 2).

The tale of Eugene Schieffelin introducing all the birds mentioned in Shakespeare to the United States in the late nineteenth century and how it goes awry when the starling becomes invasive has been so oft repeated that it has gone unquestioned. In "Shakespeare's Starlings: Literary History and the Fictions of Invasiveness," Lauren Fugate and John MacNeill Miller offer an impressive literary investigation that explains how the myth came to be authoritative.

First, Fugate and Miller demonstrate that while Schieffelin did introduce starlings to North America, he was far from the first to do so. Examining reports of earlier introductions and sightings, the authors convincingly argue that the birds had already become established prior to Schieffelin's project. Second, they trace how ornithology built the starling myth based on one account by a key figure, Frank Michler Chapman, and how his subsequent writing portrayed the starling introduction as misguided. Finally, they reveal the influence of this literature on framing the starling as an invasive pest.

Tracing the literary references to the starling, and the invented link between starlings and Shakespeare, Fugate and Miller question the previously unquestionable. In doing so, they demonstrate how environmental humanities approaches are valuable tools for investigating both historical and contemporary human-environment narratives. Their investigation will rewrite the standard starling tale—the *New York Times* covered their findings in an article on April 12, 2022, which ran in the New York edition

with the headline “The Starling and A Tall Tale” and online with the headline “The Shakespearean Tall Tale That Shaped How We See Starlings.” The editorial team of *Environmental Humanities* is delighted to award this groundbreaking article our first Best Article Prize.