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"Composting Feminisms and Environmental Humanities"

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Composting is a material labor whereby old scraps are transformed—through practices of care and attention—into nutrient-rich new soil. In this provocation, we develop "composting" as a material metaphor to tell a particular story about the environmental humanities. Building on Donna Haraway's work, we insist "it matters what compostables make compost." Our argument is twofold. First, we contend that certain feminist concepts and commitments are foundational to the environmental humanities' contemporary emergence. Second, we advocate for more inclusive feminist composting for the future of our field.

We begin with a critical cartography of some of the field's origin stories. While we discover that feminism is named or not named in several different ways, what most interests us here is a particular trend we observe, whereby key feminist scholars or concepts may be mentioned, but their feminist investments are not incorporated as such. Following this cartography, we dig into the stakes of these missed opportunities. A failure to acknowledge the feminist context that grows some of our field's foundational concepts neutralizes their feminist politics and undermines the potential for environmental humanities to build alternative worlds. To conclude, we propose feminist composting as a methodology to be taken up further. We call for an inclusive feminist composting that insists on feminism's imbrication with social justice projects of all kinds, at the same time as we insist that future composting be done with care. Sometimes paying attention to the feminist scraps that feed the pile means responding to feminism's own potential assimilations and disavowals, particularly in relation to decolonization.

Like both the energy-saving domestic practice and the earlier social justice struggles that inspire it, composting feminism and environmental humanities involves messy and undervalued work. We maintain, however, that it is a mode of scholarship necessary for growing different kinds of worlds. (Text from authors' abstract)

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