

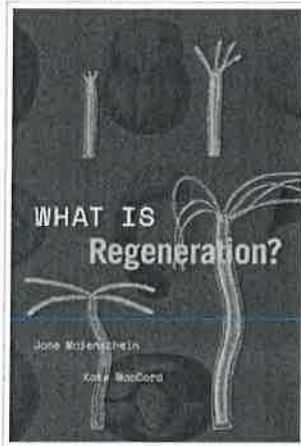
The Page 99 Test

"Open the book to page ninety-nine and read, and the quality of the whole will be revealed to you."
 -Ford Madox Ford

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

Jane Maienschein and Kate MacCord's "What Is Regeneration?"

Jane Maienschein is University Professor, Regents Professor, and President's Professor at Arizona State University, where she also directs the Center for Biology and Society. She also serves as fellow and director of the History and Philosophy of Science Project at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Kate MacCord is an instructor in the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University and the program administrator of the McDonnell Initiative at the Marine Biological Laboratory, where she also serves as the McDonnell Fellow.



They applied the [Page 99 Test](#) to their new book, [What Is Regeneration?](#), and reported the following:

The Page 99 Test is an intriguing way to approach a book, though it does rather plop us down in the middle of the story. Our page 99 ends a chapter and refers to earlier discussions that are now out of context. It reads in part:

Just as [Thomas Hunt] Morgan, [Jacques] Loeb, and [Charles Manning] Child felt, development must involve self-organization, driven by factors internal to the organism itself. [Developmental biologist Magdalena Zernicke-Goetz] shows the ways that the parts of the developing organism interact as a complex system to make regeneration possible and effective.

Further probing of the complex systems of cells, signaling, and positional effects occurs in work by Harvard biologist Mansi Srivastana and others. Drawing on extensive comparisons and probing of evolutionary adaptations has allowed them to interpret "the regulatory landscape of whole-body regeneration" in the order of small invertebrates called the acoels. Connecting development with evolution also raises questions about environmental factors influencing past adaptations and brings us to another view of intersecting scales of living systems. Study of regeneration more generally across all scales of living systems increased significantly as the twentieth century progressed and gave way to the twenty-first century.

After an intro and 2 chapters that have explored the history of studying regeneration in organisms, the book moves on to Chapter 4 and looking across different scales of life and different kinds of systems. Key words include "systems" since what regenerates in all cases is some level of system. "Living systems" gets at core ideas about what it means to be living. Asking what it is that can regenerate, and what that regeneration entails is a theme throughout.

Regeneration captures the idea of bringing back something, but not necessarily what was there before. Can ecosystems regenerate? Can our planet regenerate its climate in ways that will prove sustainable? We suggest that examining the history of



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studying regeneration in organisms, like the restoration of a salamander's tail or an earthworm's head can inform how we think about sustainability, resilience, medical regeneration of lost functions, and so much more.

So, as is true for much of life, page 99 captures some of that larger message, while missing context and history.

Visit [Kate MacCord's website](#) and [Jane Maienschein's faculty webpage](#).

--Marshal Zeringue

Posted by Marshal Zeringue at 8:05 AM



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