



Welcome to the fourth issue of *Pivot*, where we facilitate a critical discussion of the social, theoretical, and political aspects of trash. Elizabeth Spelman's assertion that trash speaks "to us" and "of us" certainly rings true in the following pages. Our authors cross disciplinary boundaries and cultural contexts to explore what it means to produce, shun, laud, and excoriate the waste and trash that various societies generate.

Pivot is a multidisciplinary journal published out of the Graduate Program in English at York University in

Letter from the Editors

**Kate Siklosi, Dani Spinosa,
Geoff MacDonald, and Alex Ferrone**

Toronto, Canada. Much like the literary studies in which our editorial team is grounded, *Pivot* recognizes that culture must be theorized across fields of inquiry. In this issue, we bring you articles that examine drama, recycling, waste disposal, television, health promotion, literature, and climate change.

Even when claiming a love of trash culture, many of us take care to emphasize that this admiration happens at a distance. Phrases like "guilty pleasure" often accompany the admission, for we are aware we might be saying too much about ourselves or aligning ourselves too closely with something whose main attraction might be its ability

to be consumed easily, rapidly, and in large quantities. Yet designating someone or something as being trash or trashy reflects as much on the cultural commentators as on the given object. In this sense, “trash” is a political term, premised on notions of hierarchy and exclusion, even when we try to collapse these through kitsch or camp reclamations.

In this era of escalating environmental crises, our trash is creeping up on us: we are faced more and more with the problems of reducing, reusing, and recycling, and with the ever-political question of where exactly to pile our trash up—hence the explosion of discussions in urban planning, environmental studies, and other disciplines on how to restore balance to a world overwhelmed by the human ability to “trash” the planet.

Pivot was founded by members of the Graduate Program in English with the generous intellectual and financial support of the Department of English. York University has a reputation both in and outside of Canada as an institution built on an interdisciplinary approach to learning. *Pivot* represents and contributes to this integrative spirit by showcasing and bringing into conversation a vast array of critical approaches to analyzing literature and culture. This issue includes perspectives from environmental sciences, public policy, and popular culture.

In four exploratory theoretical gestures (appraise, dispose, hoard, and mediate), **Mél Hogan** proposes the “archive as dumpster” as a framework for returning to the physical conditions of memory, where

“picking through the trash” subverts traditional archival methodologies by insisting on the very material consequences of a culture inculcated in networked digital communications.

Blake Westerlund’s critical essay examines how, in the play *Kicking a Dead Horse*, playwright Sam Shepard discards traditional well known Western images and quests for identity while salvaging the significant and redemptive aspects of art through his use of a silent dancing muse and enduring music.

Derek S. Merrill examines popular practices of recycling that give insight into the subject’s position to capitalism, and questions to what degree recycling alters the capitalist mode of production. He argues that rather than expressing a desire to forgo participation in the market, as in one does not purchase new commodities and therefore avoids the ecologically destructive cycle of overconsumption and excessive accumulation of trash, recycling posits the subject as a connoisseur of trash.

Laura Moisi illuminates the political dimensions of modern waste disposal practices by comparing the representation of garbage, filth, hygiene, health, and efficiency during the emergence of the modern kitchen at the beginning of the 20th century with today’s discourse of ecology, recycling, and global responsibility.

We also wish to take this opportunity to announce some changes in our editorial team. This spring, Dani Spinosa successfully defended

her dissertation, *[generic pronoun] creates: Anarchism, Authorship, Experiment*. As a result of her graduation, she will be leaving the editorial team. Dani joined *Pivot* in 2013 and instantly contributed a keen eye for style and substance. She deftly handled much of our online activities and helpfully tempered some of our editorial zeal when offering feedback to authors and submitters. Her presence will be deeply missed and we wish her every success in what is sure to be a promising career.

We are pleased to announce the promotion of Alex Ferrone to the position of editor for *Pivot*, joining Kate Siklosi and Geoff MacDonald. From the field of contemporary drama, Alex started with us as a peer review editor and quickly took on the role of coordinating anonymous peer reviews between submissions and faculty members at York. Ever-persistent but gentle and solicitous, he managed to ensure that writers had effective, timely, and consistent feedback on their submissions. We are sure his sharp editing and incisive wit will continue to make an excellent contribution to our journal.

We are also pleased to announce that Jacqueline Chia will be joining our team as the new peer review editor. Her research interests include contemporary and continental theory and literature, memory studies, and digital humanities. She also has experience working in copyediting and literary publishing. We are thrilled she is on board and look forward to her sure hand on the peer review process.

Welcome, Jacqueline!

For its upcoming fifth issue, *Pivot* is calling for critical papers that consider all manner of visionary texts (literary, visual, musical, theatrical, filmic, and oral) and examine how they have changed—and continue to change—our world. We invite a consideration of these influential interventions and their inspired visions in a wide range of historical periods and subject areas including literature, fine arts, politics, religion/spirituality, science, and technology.

For now, we hope you enjoy “Picking through the Trash.” *Happy reading!* ☺

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