



Letter from the Editors

The *Pivot* Editorial Team



History breaks down in images, not into stories.

– Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*

In “Shattered,” our sixth issue of *Pivot*, we were determined to address the multivalent properties of the term as verb, noun, and adjective – as activity or praxis, and as a state of being or set of conditions. To be “shattered” connotes a state of rupture and fragmentation, of being undone and unsettled. Its description tends not only to the realm of concepts – be they literary, philosophic, or otherwise – but also to the material conditions of a public and private life mediated by capital and marked by political disaffection. At the same time, to “shatter” evokes possibilities for social and political revolt, for change and revitalization. It means the breaking, or breaking down, of already-broken systems of power, of social thought and organization. Ultimately, though, “shattered” is gestural: it affords us the opportunity to uncover and reconstitute the flashing images of our oppressed past, much like Benjamin’s historical materialist thumbing the archive. It points to futurity, to sustained hope, and to a utopic impulse that ought never to be discounted but actualized.

For this issue, we strove to select articles that considered the concept of “shattering” in a variety of interdisciplinary contexts and media and urged authors to examine the productive possibilities that emerge from processes of fragmentation and reconstruction. It is our sincerest hope that, in encountering their words, you might discover what we need to shatter and what we must rebuild.

Adam Lovasz begins our issue by exploring the various manifestations of “shatteredness,” urging us to recontemplate ruined, wasted materiality in order to consider how it might help us to generate an ethics of hospitality and generosity.

Liat Steir-Livny constitutes our issue’s foray into cinema studies by comparing two Israeli films that share the same title – Herbert Kline’s *Beit Avi* [*My Father’s House*] (1947) and Dani Rosenberg’s *Beit Avi* [*Homeland*] (2008) – but offer vastly different representations of Holocaust survivors.

Six articles this year feature novels as their primary objects of study, foregrounding the “shattered” in their literary analyses of a wide range of international texts, from Zimbabwe and Botswana, to Lebanon, the United Kingdom, and the United States. **Tanaka Chidora** and **Sheunesu Mandizvidza** contrast Shimmer Chinodya’s *Harvest of Thorns* (1989) with Olley Maruma’s *Coming Home* (2007), two novels that differently engage with Zimbabwean nationalism, thus offering diverging representations of homecoming. **Elinor Rooks** applies a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading to Bessie Head’s *A Question of Power* (1973) to consider the novel’s deployment of psychosis as a subversive strategy for theorizing and critiquing power structures.

Our next three authors engage the “shattered” by examining literary representations of gender. **Rachel Willis** discusses Walter Percy’s *Lancelot* (1977) with an eye to the novel’s critique of hypermasculinity and patriarchal violence, while **Mireille Rebeiz** considers how patriarchal forces bring to bear on – and ultimately destroy – the private life and identity of Zarah in Hanan al-Shaykh’s *Hikayat Zahra* (1998). **Melanie Marotta** similarly traces the path of Violet, the protagonist of Toni Morrison’s *Jazz* (1992), vis-à-vis her relationships to important women in her life.

Matthew Duffus concludes this issue’s examination of novels by reconsidering the final section of Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* (2001), not as a metafictional plot twist but as confirmation of the novel’s status as a

Künstlerroman, invested more in Briony Tallis's development as a writer than in fact or historical accuracy.

The final three articles consider “shattering” in other forms of art and performance. **Melinda Mills** discusses music icon Rihanna and argues that the artist's celebrity status and post-2009 musical output has shattered the silence surrounding intimate partner violence. Engaging with a much earlier pop culture figure, **Elizabeth Lowry** profiles Lulu Hurst, a nineteenth-century performer famed for her demonstrations of strength, and considers how her performances troubled gender binaries while simultaneously upholding existing social hierarchies. Finally, **Anne Kristiina Kurjenoja** and **Emilia Ismael** conclude our issue by considering the ways in which the globalized culture industry has commodified and thus neutralized the dissent of street art in Puebla, Mexico.

As *Pivot* continues to grow and develop, to “shatter” old models of critical inquiry and cultivate new avenues for interdisciplinary thought, so too does its team of rigorous, incisive, and dedicated individuals who have consistently brought to its publication unparalleled levels of creative input and stamina.

This year, *Pivot's* editorial team bids the fondest of farewells to its senior editor, Geoffrey MacDonald. Geoff's outstanding direction and editorial commitment to “shattering” have helped make *Pivot* a deeply critical avenue for innovative, transhistoric, and interdisciplinary scholarship. Geoff brought to every issue a sincere attachment and reverence for postcolonial, Indigenous, and intersectional textualities, subjects that inform not only his ongoing research but his personal politics and non-academic life. As Geoff nears the completion of his dissertation and enters the precarious world of post-doctoral life, we wish him the utmost success in every endeavour, and we endeavour ourselves to sustain his work by always “shattering,” by constantly striving to make *Pivot* a space for real critical inquiry, interdisciplinary thought, and social/political change.

This year we also welcomed Jacob Bermel to *Pivot's* editorial team. Jacob cut his teeth on this issue as *Pivot's* Peer Review Editor and helped to facilitate the

peer-review process to ensure that every article received a fair and equitable assessment. In preparation for our seventh issue, Jacob will be assuming the role of our third co-editor. We feel confidently that Jacob will bring to *Pivot* a vital politics and a dedication to upholding the foundational work of its past and current members.

In our next issue, we will address the “Anthropocene” and pose pertinent questions concerning its efficacy as a social, political, theoretical, and ecological framework. But, until then, we urge you to consider what we have “shattered” and, in doing so, endeavour to cultivate something *better* – for all of us.



[RETURN TO CONTENTS \(LINK\)](#)