



Letter from the Editors

The *Pivot* Editorial Team



This future is unthinkable. Yet here we are, thinking it.

– Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology*

Over the past decade, the term “Anthropocene” – which identifies a geological age marked by global capitalism, nuclear development, rapid industrialization, urban sprawl and the digital revolution – has gained considerable traction in scientific and philosophical communities as a viable and arguably necessary framework for thinking through the imperatives of global economics and the long-lasting effects of our current anthropocentric worldview. Likewise, it has brought these often diffuse academic communities together in order to address a wide range of prescient social, political, and ecological issues.

For *Pivot*’s seventh issue, our editors sought to find work which critically addresses the Anthropocene as our current geological epoch, while at the same time engaging with pertinent questions concerning the social, political, theoretical, and ecological efficacy of ecocriticism as a framework counter-to the imperatives of anthropocentrism, the nation-state, colonialism, global capitalism, and so on. We have included in this issue a diverse array of critical work that transcends disciplinary borders in order to address the significance of our current geological epoch and, if possible, its decomposition.

Phillip Henderson begins our issue by trudging through brownfields in Owen Sound in order to uncover, in Richard-Yves Sitoski’s ‘autogeographic’ poems the presence of what Henderson describes as “settler fatalism in the face of the Anthropocene.” Turning from Sitoski’s wastelanded geography to the more generative poetic landscape of Liz Howard’s *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent* (2016), Henderson

questions the Anthropocene's status as a 'terminal epoch,' and in doing so, uncovers the terminus of settler fatalism itself.

Aaron Kreuter takes us from Owen Sound to Israeli-occupied Palestine in his exploration of David Grossman's 2008 novel *To the End of the Land* (trans. Jessica Cohen, 2010). In "A Meat Locker in Hebron": Meat Eating, Occupation, and Cruelty in *To the End of the Land*,

Kreuter follows the sinuous threads between "meat-eating, cruelty, and the Israel/Palestine crisis" to argue that Grossman's novel reveals to us how the Israeli nation-state's occupation of the Palestinian people mirrors "the same ideological construct that allows its citizens to consume the flesh to dead animals." In Kreuter's work, the dividing wall between consumption and occupation is deliberately blasted through, leaving us to sort through the wreckage.

Silvia Ruzzi migrates from the Israel/Palestine border to the "Mediterranean Borderscape" of Mounir Charfi's *Le Baiser de Lampedusa* (2011). In this article, Ruzzi pays particular attention to how the Mediterranean Sea is "rendered, modeled, and reflected as a b/order space in and through literary representation," to argue that the novel's deliberate undermining of narrative realism transforms the "geopolitical delimitations" of the Mediterranean Borderscape into something malleable, porous, and perhaps even arbitrary.

Kara Stone transports us from the porous borders of Charfi's Mediterranean Sea into the "intra-active" space of feminist post-humanism, new materialism, and game studies. In "What Can Play: The Potential of Non-Human Players," Stone argues for an understanding of 'play' as form of communication inherent to everything from humans, animals, insects, plants, bacteria, cyborgs, and even seemingly inert materials like metal. By moving beyond an anthropocentric conception of play as agential and material, Stone is able reconceptualize the videogame player as "an interspecies being, an assemblage of human and non-human bodies." The result is a thoughtful exploration of what it means to resist our anthropocentric foothold on the world, and to see ourselves within a network of kinship with 'play' as its nexus.

Amanda Zastrow is also committed to undoing anthropocentrism in her discussion of Marilynne Robinson's 1980 novel *Housekeeping*. Zastrow's focus is primarily set on the novel's main character, Sylvie, whose opposition to the "aggressive mannerisms" of Old Western men typifies what Zastrow describes as Sylvie's "New Western principles," aligned with the fundamental principles of ecofeminist thought. Through her actions, as Zastrow argues, Sylvie not only embodies these principles, but uncovers the inextricable link between the patriarchal and ecological violence associated with the Old West.

Renée Jackson-Harper also explores the relationships between colonial, patriarchal, and ecological violence in her exploration of Isabella Valancy Crawford's novel *Winona* (1873). Jackson-Harper pays particular attention to the novel's anxieties surrounding Canada's nascent formation of a national identity in the wake of Confederation. As Jackson-Harper argues, Crawford's novel transforms the domestic space into a "national family," and in doing so, relegates others to the fringes of the natural, or wilderness space, inciting what she describes as "the vexed relationship of a newly Confederated country with its 'native materials.'"

Shelby Ward ends our issue by unpacking Tariq Jazeel's theorizations about "geospatial" cosmopolitanism to consider the extent to which our Anthropocenic epoch "already operates within a cosmopolitan geospatial imaginary." The result, as Ward argues, is a constant refusal to fully acknowledge our shared culpability in the face of ecological demise. Our task, as Ward defines it, is to seriously examine the frameworks of cosmopolitanism and the nation-state so that we might recognize the limitations of their destructive ideological footprints.

As we wake to the clamour of our current epoch, we at *Pivot* are also coming to terms with some significant changes to our editorial team this year. It is with the utmost sadness, regret, but also illimitable joy, that we must say goodbye to *Pivot's* senior editor, Alex Ferrone, as he begins his post-doctoral fellowship at the prestigious Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Alex's editorial exactingness, outspokenness, and unrelenting political vision have made *Pivot* a distinct and critical

platform for both emergent and established scholarly work. Not only has Alex brought to *Pivot* the unbridled spirit of professionalism, he has demonstrated to us what it means to be truly collaborative as editors, surely, but more importantly *as people, as friends*. His contributions will be sorely missed, but not nearly as much as the person behind them. Thank you, Alex, for all you have given us!

Just as we must bid our goodbyes to Alex, we must also extend a warm welcome to Ben Taylor, who now joins us as one of *Pivot's* co-editors. For several past issues, Ben has brought to *Pivot* his exceptional talents as our layout designer and web administrator. Without Ben's artistic flair and aesthetic sensibility (not to mention his techno-wizardry), *Pivot* would likely cease to function at all. He is the veritable heart-and-soul of our operation, and while we are sad to lose his talents, we all know that he will bring every ounce of them, and more, to our editorial team. Welcome, Ben!

We would also like to give welcome and unending thanks to our new peer-review editor, Samantha Dawdy, our copyeditors Mitchell Gauvin and Dan Dufournaud, and the many exceptional people who came out to help us proof these equally exceptional articles. There is no mistaking how necessary your time and labour is to the successful functioning of this journal. Thank you for your ceaseless efforts, professionalism, and collaborative spirit.

Lastly, a thank you to you, our reader, for taking a moment to trudge through these waters with us. It is our hope that, in reading this issue, you find the silt beginning to finally settle, revealing the image of our unthinkable future in the wake of once muddied waters.



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