

Letter from the Editors

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by Bernice Mittertreiner Neal**

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Thom Bryce, Kate Siklosi, Nemanja Protic

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Welcome to the second issue of *Pivot*, a multidisciplinary journal published out of the Graduate Programme in English at York University in Toronto, Ontario. Arising from the papers and ideas generated at the annual colloquium organized by the English Graduate Students' Association, this issue examines the sociopolitical ramifications of "bawdiness" as it resonates in literary and cultural

texts. While many of the papers included in this issue take literary texts as the basis of their study, *Pivot* encourages

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the analysis of any literary or cultural text that allows for an innovative and original engagement with the topic at hand, including and not limited to film, television, music, historical documents, comics, theoretical and philosophical texts, and advertisements.

Pivot was founded by members of the Graduate Programme in English with the generous intellectual and financial support of the Department of English. The impetus behind creating the journal stemmed from two complementary impulses: 1) the desire to provide a forum for publishing the innovative interdisciplinary work that York University is known for, and 2) the recognition of a need to create more spaces for academic and graduate student collaboration as well as graduate student professionalization.

Since our inaugural issue last year, *Pivot* has had significant success. Our articles have been downloaded over 100 times per month. Moreover, we have recently partnered with EBSCOhost™ research database system, which is widely used in academic libraries around the world. This partnership will greatly expand our areas of readership and help us accomplish our mandate of showcasing scholarly work by graduate students and working academics. By expanding our publishing and dissemination

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capabilities, it will also provide the authors who publish with us greater visibility in academic circles across disciplinary boundaries.

York University has a reputation both in and outside of Canada as an institution built on its interdisciplinary approach to learning. The title of the journal encapsulates our approach to ideas of what interdisciplinarity is and what we hope it can accomplish. While *Pivot* encourages the publication of papers that are grounded in a traditional understanding of interdisciplinarity—the integration of the topics and/or critical perspectives of two or more disciplines within one paper—we find multidisciplinary an equally useful term to describe our aims for the journal. Each issue encourages scholars from a wide range of fields to engage with a focused but multifaceted central topic, bringing into conversation their various disciplinary perspectives. While each of the papers published in this issue pivots around different aspects of bawdiness, the multiple critical lenses offered by the articles provides an interdisciplinary venue for the exploration and encouragement of a variety of ideas and discursive approaches to literary and cultural texts. By juxtaposing viewpoints and theoretical approaches that may otherwise remain disparate, *Pivot* creates a space in which readers can explore the intersections between various fields and modes of thought.

The issue introduces a variety of approaches to the concept of bawdiness, including the ideas brought forth by Sasha Von Bon Bon in her keynote address to the conference that inspired the theme of this issue. Arguing that “thinking hard” gets scholars hard, she provided a provocative critique of the exploitation of sex workers in academic literature.

Bernice Mittertreiner Neal argues that the domestic tragedy *Arden of Faversham* employs what she calls the Corpus Christi affect, a phenomenon from the outlawed medieval theatre, to play a trick on its staring and startled audience.

Lacey Ann Conley examines the intersections of abstract theory and personal experience in the observations and beliefs of Theodor Adorno and the poetry of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, specifically as they are expressed in ideas about sex, pleasure, and love.

Brandon Moores analyses the humorous and bawdy underpinnings of the epigrams of Latin poet Marcus Valerius Martialis (c.40-104 CE) in order to theorize humour as the satisfaction of a pattern or expectation, often in unusual or surprising ways.

David Milman reads the practice and theory of Language Writing, as illuminated in Bruce Andrews's *I Don't Have Any Paper*, through the lens of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque in order to suggest interesting intersections between the two theories.

Katherine Owens proposes that the dominant image of Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* is that of the female as prey or commodity, and that this image can also be understood as the female as burlesque performer.

Judith Mintz explores the structural and political devices of postmodern historiographic metafiction and the use of humorous fiction in Ami McKay's *The Birth House* in order to theorize childbirth and midwifery as counter-historical practices.

Matthew Risling applies a psychoanalytic framework to Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, demonstrating how Jude's academic and sexual ambitions are simply two manifestations of a single antisocial fantasy.

Sara Swain examines the critical response to Jenny McCarthy's 2005 girly gross-out comedy *Dirty Love*, arguing that the movie's subversive power is overshadowed by a culturally imposed limit of humour that prohibits women from participating in the demystification and debasement of their own bodies.

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The title of our third and forthcoming issue is “The Rest Is Silence.” It will examine innovative approaches to ideas surrounding silence, including (but not limited to) conceptualizations of silence as absence of sound or communication, issues of religion, or censorship. Please see our website for future calls for papers. Now strip away your inhibitions and get ready to undress the bawdy! ☺