



Welcome to the third issue of *Pivot*, a multidisciplinary journal published out of the Graduate Program in English at York University in Toronto, Ontario. Arising from the papers and ideas generated at the annual colloquium organized by the Graduate English Department of York University, this current issue examines the many facets of “silence” and its reverberations in literature and culture at large. While many of the papers included in this issue take literary texts as the basis of their

study, *Pivot* encourages the analysis of any literary or cultural text that allows for an innovative and

Letter from the Editors

**Kate Siklosi, Dani Spinoso,
Geoff MacDonald**

original engagement with the topic at hand, including and not limited to film, television, music, historical documents, comics, theoretical and philosophical texts, and advertisements.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 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 that is built on its interdisciplinary approach to learning. Indeed, the Graduate Program in English shares close ties with the departments of Humanities, Social and Political Thought, Canadian Studies, Translation Studies, Women’s Studies, History, and

Communication and Culture. Both the depth and breadth of our work as English scholars is enhanced by our association and collaboration with faculty in all of these departments, and it is this increase in knowledge and broadening of perspective possible through interdisciplinary collaboration that *Pivot* hopes to encourage and disseminate. *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.

Pivot comes into its third issue having experienced great success. We are pleased to announce that the journal is downloaded over 100 times per month by readers—a truly remarkable feat for a student-run journal. Moreover, we are partnered with EBSCOhost™ research database system, which is widely used in academic libraries around the world. As a result of this great success, the authors who publish with us enjoy greater visibility by academic scholars across disciplinary boundaries. *Pivot* has greatly expanded its areas of readership since the journal was founded, and this continual growth ensures that the journal will progress in its efforts of showcasing interdisciplinary scholarly work by graduate students and working academics.

Following Thoreau's famous statement that "Silence is the universal refuge," many of the artists and works taken up by the articles of this issue deal with the redemptive qualities of silence outside of its narrow definition as the mere absence of sound. Indeed, far from being a vacuous and empty, silence can be explored for its *expressive*

qualities as a signifier of power, oppression, and erasure, but also in its potential articulations of transcendence, resistance, and self-development. Moreover, in our contemporary world that is inundated with technological noise and the endless din of social media, the intervening influence of silence and its ever-increasing significance to contemporary life comes to the fore. As such, the papers herein engage with the many different facets of “silence” and its manifestations across various cultural mediums. The articles offer multiple critical lenses on literary and cultural texts that address the significant role that silence serves in our world, especially in its engagements with language, technology, race, and sexuality.

Walter Bosse focuses on a single scene in Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* where silence raises crucial issues of race, sexuality, and gender. By analyzing the lyrical and social history that informs an important moment for the novel’s protagonist, his lover, and a jazz player observing them dance, Bosse situates Hemingway’s elliptical avoidances within the cultural context that surrounds both the novel and the music incorporated into its setting.

Christopher Trogan analyses the general phenomenon of poetic silence and of two modern responses to it (those of Mallarmé and Rilke) to yield significant insights both into the idea of the “modern” as well as into the essence and inner machinations of modern poetry.

Ilka Brasch explores rhythm and noise in the wake of the “sound transition” in film. Taking Charlie Chaplin’s classic silent film *Modern Times* as her focus, she examines its incorporation of new sound technologies that render silence “impossible” in the modern filmic medium.

Eshe Mercer-James analyses violence in George Elliott Clarke’s *Execution Poems* as an inevitable result of historically-imposed silence on the black community, and specifically on the black male body.

Sean Braune considers the history of sound poetry, looking at sound poems by Raoul Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters, the sound-experiments of Diamanda Galás, performance in sound poetry, the influence of “primal therapy,” and the theological tradition of glossolalia, to demonstrate how the noisiness and non-sense of sound poetry offers a variety of forms of political engagement against hegemonic uses of sound and silence. He grounds this in a new theoretical concept of what he calls “arche-speech” or “arche-sound.”

Linda Camarasana compares Henry James’s discursive silences on sexuality in *The Bostonians* with his own sexual angst and repression. Using a diverse range of biographical studies and a thorough close reading of the fictional text, she constructs an important context for the linkages between life and art.

The theme of our fourth issue is “Picking Through the Trash,” which examines the multifaceted ways that “trash” infiltrates literature and

culture, especially in the wake of our current cultural milieu of eco-critical awareness and burgeoning environmental crises. The issue will examine multidisciplinary conceptualizations of “trash,” including (but not limited to) trash and its relations to re-appropriation and/or resistance, eco-critical and environmental interventions, consumerism and appetite, and trash talking and insult culture. Please see our website for future calls for papers. *Happy reading!* ©

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