



Considering the visionary is an ambitious task. When the editors of *Pivot* set out to engage with the idea, we pondered the ways in which philosophers, poets, and artists in every era have envisioned, re-
visioned, and reimagined the world as the inspiration for historical transformations. In the articles selected for publication, we have only just begun to explore that massive arena. Change is something always sought, managed, critiqued, lamented, ignored, or reinvented.

And, often,
change is
uncontainable,
despite the best
efforts to corral it
into an easy
sound bite or
straightforward

Letter from the Editors

Alex Ferrone and Geoff MacDonald

representation. The authors in this issue have demonstrated the variety, transhistoricity, and interdisciplinarity of the visionary. The articles in our fifth issue look to the past, to the future, to fiction, to psychoanalysis, to archival records, and across continents.

While *Pivot* always strives to honour the notion that culture must be theorized across various fields of inquiry, this issue reflects the literary roots of the editorial team. Most of the articles take up concerns of literary study and closely examine the role of the novel in relation to the visionary. And, yet, they do not occupy a stand-alone cavern of "literature": they reach out across fields to revitalize the

study of the text in a broader context. By doing so, they – in our opinion – enact a visionary role for the study of literary texts that remains relevant in spite of domination by social media and television, seeing the concert of art, politics, and philosophy as an arbiter of ethics, politics, and aesthetics.

A brief glance at our contemporary landscape all too readily reveals the cynicism and political fatigue that characterize this era dominated by global capital: elections result in bitter disappointment; movements fizzle out or become assimilated by the same type of state practices they once opposed. And, yet, within the ever-reaching and ever-struggling artistic text lie the propositions for a different vision. Art evokes analysis, it affects the heart and the mind, and it challenges notions of truth in order to offer its own possible alternatives to a singular worldview. The articles in our fifth issue tackle such engagements with these grand narratives.

Mario A. D’Agostino begins our issue by exploring the representation of the archivist in Don DeLillo’s *Libra*. Set against the backdrop of the JFK assassination, D’Agostino looks at the role of archives and the archivist in shaping and curating historical perspectives as well as collective visions and revisions of historical events.

Victoria Kennedy examines Philippa Gregory’s *The Other Boleyn Girl*, arguing that, while such bestselling historical novels by female authors “write back” to a history which has excluded women, they nevertheless continue to employ literary archetypes, tropes, and

conventional female roles that reinforce patriarchal ideology and social structure.

Morgan O'Neil shows how Fanny Price, the protagonist of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, wrests back her agency and power as a woman by recognizing the value of her own subjectivity, a kind of self-revision that rejects the mercenary ideology of marriage in favour of a relationship rooted in genuine affection and equality.

Tamie Dolny focuses on visions and visionaries within De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and *Suspiria de Profundis*. Invoking the work of Simone de Beauvoir, she argues that the female characters in these texts offer a proto-feminist challenge to classical and neoclassical mythologies about women.

MLA Chernoff attempts to resituate the boundaries of psychoanalytic theory by focusing on tensions between two of Freud's successors in the field: Jean Laplanche and Jacques Lacan. Exploring the potential function and purpose of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Chernoff posits that a more scientifically rigorous vision of psychoanalysis is possible.

Daniel Sander weaves Georges Bataille's theory of general economy with Patti Smith's early albums and William S. Burroughs' s *The Electronic Revolution* and *The Wild Boys* to show the ways in which linguistic excess can be used as a tool to overturn the sociolinguistic logic of identity. Connecting Burroughs's concepts of the word virus and wild boy to Patti Smith's performances, Sander considers how their aesthetic practices deconstruct and subvert traditional modes of identity formation.

Prathim-Maya Dora-Laskey analyzes linguistic resistance in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. By drawing our attention to Rushdie's code-mixing of English and Hindi/Urdu, she argues that the novel's lexical hybridity and many instances of wordplay function as sites of anti-colonial resistance.

Rochelle Spencer examines the cross-disciplinary impact of Afro-Surrealism in relation to Afro-Futurism. Comparing Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* to Colson Whitehead's *Zone One*, she demonstrates how the signification of these two contrasting yet related movements helps readers apprehend histories of trauma and transformation.

Mary Bosede Aiyetoro and **Elizabeth Olubukola Olaoye** explore the growing presence of science fiction in Nigerian literature. They argue that the novels of Nnedi Okorafor infuse traditional cultural stories with imaginative perspectives, producing a "convergence of pseudo-realistic visions" with applications to both local and global contexts.

Odile Heynders and **Sander Bax** consider two contemporary novels from continental Europe – Michel Houellebecq's *Submission* and Gonçalo M. Tavares's *Learning to Pray in the Age of Technique* – to theorize the "imaginary scenario," a (sur)realist vision of the future that ultimately works to interrogate the political conditions and perspectives of present-day Europe.

Finally, **Robert Pasquini** caps off our issue with a rigorous bibliographic examination of Thomas H. Huxley's *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*, focusing on the textual and visual elements of the

book as material object in order to better understand its vital contribution to the dissemination and acceptance of natural explanation in the Victorian consciousness.

Brought together, we hope these articles suggest the multiplicity of visions and visionaries linked to art, history, science, linguistics, and global power relations.

This year, the editorial team wishes a heavy-hearted farewell to Kate Siklosi. Kate took over the reins of *Pivot* when the entire editorial team graduated, leaving her to re-vision and rebuild on the hard work and scholarly rigour of those founders. She recruited a new team, and together we produced issues that honoured the legacy of *Pivot* while taking it in new and challenging interdisciplinary directions. We wish dear Kate nothing but the best and are certain she is on the precipice of making huge waves in the field of poetics. Her direction and wisdom will never be forgotten here at *Pivot*.

We also say a sorrowful goodbye to Jonathan Vandor, *Pivot's* Layout Editor. Jonathan brought style and flare to the issues he laid out, as well as his considerable taste and connections to the art and design world that helped make our issues not only sound scholarship but beautiful documents, too. As Jonathan moves into the field of education, we are grateful for the creative energy he put into *Pivot*.

Finally, we are happy to announce the promotion of Jacqueline Chia to the role of Editor, and we also welcome Benjamin Taylor as our new Layout Editor. Both are eminently qualified, and we are thrilled to have them join us. Their skill and energy will already be evident in this issue, upon which they got straight to work.

Our next issue will focus on all things “shattered” – that is, the ways in which fragmentation, refraction, dissolution, and resolution relate to how the world is understood and how its transformations are represented. For now, we wish you happy reading and hope you enjoy the visions we have laid out for you.

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