

From the Editor . . .

The present *Nineteenth-Century Prose* Special Issue on Religion and Prose, guest-edited by John Powell, is something of a homecoming: twenty years ago, John guest-edited a Special Issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* on Victorian Political Prose, which at that time ran to the unheard-of total of 179 pages. In those days we had just recently begun publication under the auspices of the University Press of Colorado, which was trying to hold us to a limit of around 125 pages. But John's Special Issue went way over budget – even with no leading between the lines. (Shortly after that time, the editor (me) went back to publishing *Nineteenth-Century Prose* in order to exercise full control over size and format of the journal.) How times have changed! Later, the size of the journal kept increasing until it stabilized at around 250 pages per issue or 500 pages per double issue. But now John has done it again: the size of the present issue is a whopping 556 pages of text – once again a record for *Nineteenth-Century Prose*. And throughout John has been constant and reliable – continually furnishing schedules for the arrival of each article and sharing in many of the editorial tasks that are necessary to complete a project of this magnitude. One couldn't ask for a better guest editor in a cooperative task such as the present undertaking.

At the time John Powell guest-edited his Special Issue on Victorian Political Prose in the Fall 1992 (19/3) issue, he was no stranger to our journal. He had previously published two articles in *Nineteenth-Century Prose* on Matthew Arnold – in the Winter 1988 (16/1) and Summer 1989 (16/2) issues, as well as an article on his more enduring research interest, Gladstone, in the Winter 1989/1990 (17/1) issue. And subsequent to his own Special Issue he contributed a review on the publication of the Papers of James Madison in the Fall 1993 (20/2) issue and then went on to contribute an article on Lytton Strachey to a Special Issue on Victorian Biography in the Fall 1995 (22/2) issue. And then, silence for nearly two decades!

But it was worth the wait. John has done himself proud with the current issue, which is an ‘embarrassment of riches’ in length as well as depth and breadth. The issue ranges from past and contemporary debates about secularization theory, to the fascinating background of Gladstone’s personal and public religious life, to the literary and cultural and social status of Victorian sermons and biblical commentary, to the writings of a German millennialist, the politics of English Nonconformity and anti-Catholicism, the politics of Orthodox and Reform Judaism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and much more. I found two essays in this collection especially compelling. The first is Sharin Schroeder’s “The *Iliad* and the Articles: Francis William Newman’s Reply to Matthew Arnold” (pages 323-352 below), which creates a surprising new perspective on Matthew Arnold’s famous *On Translating Homer* by providing the contemporary religious context. And second, Rowland Weston’s “William Godwin and the Puritan Legacy” (pages 411-442 below), which gives a fascinating account of Godwin’s intellectual development and the place of his Nonconformist background in that development. But all the essays contribute to a clearer understanding and assessment of Religion and Prose – which is one of the most defining and enduring aspects of the ‘long nineteenth century.’

Barry Tharaud
Fatih University, İstanbul