

From the Editor . . .

The current issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* is mainly the product of our indefatigable Book Review Editor and former Editor-in-Chief, Larry Mazzeno, who along with Chris Louttit has assembled a fine sampling of articles on Dickens' nonfiction prose, including his letters, journalism, travel writing, and history. For those who know Dickens only through his novels, the current issue provides a helpful introduction. And on the heels of the articles on Dickens' nonfiction prose, there is a nicely balanced pair of review essays on a representative English writer and a representative American writer: John Stuart Mill, and Henry David Thoreau.

The present issue is especially rich in reviews. Our Fall 2018 issue on Marx's speeches weighed in at 330 pages, which exceeded the normal limit by 80 pages – despite the fact that the appendices were in 10-point font instead of 11-point. As a result of the lengthy essays on Marx, there was no room for the sizeable collection of reviews that had accumulated, which is reflected in the large and diverse collection of reviews in the present issue. Because of the unusual diversity of the reviews, it was difficult to arrange some of them in a meaningful order. I usually try to organize reviews chronologically – from early to late – and by focus – from broad to more specific – so that, for example, in the current issue a review on a study of American Transcendentalism precedes a review on a contextualization of Henry David Thoreau, which in turn precedes a study of Thoreau's relation to rivers and the local topography associated with him. Easy enough. But then there is the balancing of works on British literature and culture versus American literature and culture, as well as occasional works on Continental literature and culture. (We used to have regular reviews on works by and about Nietzsche back in the 1990s and early 2000s when the late George Stack was active in the journal, and Rosemary Lloyd did a special issue on Continental literature and culture some years ago.) In any case, I often enjoy reviews on historical and cultural topics more than reviews of literary criticism in the old-fashion sense. Changing times, changing tastes. . . . There is probably a pithy Roman epigram that says as much, if I could only remember it. In the

present collection, although I very much enjoyed Ann Beebe's review of Robert Thorson's book on Thoreau's "river years," my favorite reviews were Helen Blythe's review of Éadaoin Agnew's *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India*, Susan Keen's review of Rachel Ablow's brilliant *Victorian Pain*, and Emer Vaughn's review of *The Missouri River Journals of John James Audubon*, edited by Daniel Patterson. This last, includes the fascinating story of how Maria Audubon, who edited her grandfather's journals, inserted her own material in order to memorialize a "visionary conservationist" (as well as "a refined and cultured gentleman") – another example, if we needed one, of clandestine influences in history and culture. It reminds one – if one needs reminding – of Nietzsche's sister's refashioning of her brother's works....



Those of you who pay attention to the masthead of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* will have noticed that there is a new member of the editorial team: Margaret Sönmez came out of Oxford University and Durham University, and she serves as an associate professor on the staff of Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. METU has a long reputation of exporting engineering graduates around the Mediterranean and beyond, and it also has a reputation for its fine Department of English Literature, which hosts a yearly conference on English novelists. Margaret has already proven herself in her assistance with the copy editing of the present issue. Her joining the journal staff marks the beginning of a plan to reorganize the *Nineteenth-Century Prose* Editorial Board over the next few years, and to gradually introduce new members from the next generation of teachers and scholars.

Finally, in recent weeks Lindsay Ellis, writing in *The Chronical for Higher Education*, has been surveying the struggles over "open access" in scholarly publishing. Just today, as I'm writing this on 28 February 2019, the University of California announced that it has decided to drop the Elsevier subscription service for scholarly articles for the University of California libraries, as a step toward implementing open access to scholarly research, whereby scholarly publications will be available to all, without expense. Open Access research has increasingly become accepted in the scholarly world outside the United States. In recent years I have asked scholars from Europe

to New Zealand and Hong Kong who have published their articles and reviews in *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, to refrain from posting their publications on-line. There's an important reason for our policy: quite some time ago we contracted with Gale Publications to provide our articles and reviews to libraries for a fee, and the fees from Gale enable us to publish our journal at an extremely reasonable cost – \$20 per year for two issues that each average around 250 pages. If scholarly publishing in the United States becomes open access, it remains to be seen whether *Nineteenth-Century Prose* can survive as a hard copy publication. The current trend toward open access and on-line publishing appears to be the beginning of the end of traditional scholarly publishing. Over the last five years or so, our subscription list has been shrinking as a result of researchers' getting scholarly articles on-line through library subscription services rather than directly through a hard copy journal. The take away? It appears to me that this is the beginning of the end for print journals in the humanities. Already there are viable journals in the humanities that are free on-line, such as *Aeon*. Of course there are differences between humanities and scientific journals, but if we were to lose the fees that Gale Publications pays for the use of articles and reviews from *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, it would force us either to go on-line or to close-up shop. During the last 25 years that I have served as editor and publisher of *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, and several years before that when I served as Book Review Editor, I have taken on tasks to save money in order to keep the journal afloat. At one point we worked to expand subscriptions so that we could qualify for bulk mailing rates with the U.S. Postal Service. Before that, in the 1980s we used to pay five dollars a page for compositing the journal – back when five dollars was a good deal more money than it is today. I took on that task to save money and keep the journal going as costs steadily rose. Today, only the dwindling subscriptions and the fees that Gale provides have kept us going. Is there a difference between a physical journal and a virtual journal? I think there is, both real and symbolic – just as there's a difference between having library access through an on-line catalogue, and being able to actually browse the shelves.

I was recently reminded of what scholarly publishing used to be, and especially of the prestige that used to be accorded scholarly journal

publication. A month or so ago I found among my papers a publication from my early days as a student at Kenyon College. It was an old memorial volume -- a Supplement to Volume LXXXX, No. 7 (1964) from *The Kenyon College Collegian*, a student publication that was every bit as professional as a scholarly journal -- in celebration of the 75th birthday of John Crowe Ransom and the 25th birthday of the journal that he founded, *The Kenyon Review*. The Supplement is titled, *John Crowe Ransom: Gentleman, Teacher, Poet, Editor, Founder of the Kenyon Review: A Tribute from the Community of Letters*. Within its 56 pages one can find tributes from not only the faculty and students of Kenyon College, but virtually all the important critics of the era -- Arthur Mizener, Leslie Fiedler, René Wellek, Northrop Frye, Malcolm Cowley, R.P. Blackmur, Alan Tate, Cleanth Brooks, Eric Bentley, Mark Schorer, William Empson, R.S. Crane, Jacques Barzun, Stanley Edgar Hyman, Austin Warren, Robie Macauley, Louis Untermeyer -- a virtual “who’s who” of critics both inside and outside the academy. In addition, it also contains poems and comments by many of the leading poets of the era -- Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Richard Eberhart, Robert Penn Warren, Marianne Moore, Stephen Spender, W.D. Snodgrass, Delmore Schwartz, W.H. Auden, and of course John Crowe Ransom. The founding of *The Kenyon Review*, originally a carefully planned project supported by the President of Kenyon College, was accompanied by a scholarship program and a summer institute that hosted famous critics such as Herbert Read, Yvor Winters, and F.O. Matthiessen. We won’t see such an event again. The community of letters that was reflected by the *Kenyon Review* no longer exists, and the more leisurely world of scholarship from those days has given way to a world in which scholars cannot afford time away from the pressures of ‘publish or perish’ to work on a scholarly journal.

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