

From the Editor . . .

“Covid comes to *Nineteenth-Century Prose*.” Although the current issue is the normal size of around 250 pages, we had to include every essay on hand to get there. As a result, we do not have a backlog of essays for a Fall 2021 issue, which necessitated calling this volume a double issue. The second essay below, on Gosse, was originally planned for the lead article for a Fall 2021 issue, but over the past year our submissions dropped precipitously, leaving us with no prospects for a normal-size issue in the fall. Rather than produce two ‘thin’ issues, I decided to combine all essays on hand and to designate the present volume as a double issue. In this way I sought to avoid a long-term late production schedule. I attribute the drop in submissions to the pandemic, which has left many academics struggling to deliver on-line lectures. And as a result, although I am unhappy that my second career at Fatih University Istanbul evaporated when the Turkish State closed my institution in the wake of the 2016 coup, I am no longer unhappy to be out of an academia where I might be required to deliver on-line courses.

The Spring/Fall 2021 issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* is quite diverse, as usual: it leads off with six articles that are heavily freighted with cultural studies and historical background, before concluding with a more traditional literary-philosophical essay on Ralph Waldo Emerson. The lead article is Ryan Burt’s long essay on Charles Eastman (1858-1939), an indigenous Dakota who grew up under the ideology and administration of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Burt describes Eastman’s early indigenous acculturation, followed by his successful Anglo-American acculturation, followed much later by his ‘taking stock’ of his contradictory experiences described in the 1916 autobiography, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*. Eastman became something of a poster boy for the ideology of ‘saving’ indigenous ‘savages’ and ‘raising’ them to the level of modern ‘civilization.’ The ironies of my last sentence suggest the fluid attitudes toward indigenous peoples then and now, as well as Eastman’s changing views over many decades. He was taught English, and with the help

of friends and supporters in the Northeast, he eventually attended Dartmouth College and medical school at Boston University. He served as a doctor for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and ministered to Lakota victims of the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Burt describes Eastman's influence on the developing fields of ethnography and anthropology, and he provides us with a nuanced view of the cultural complexities of Eastman's life as described in *From the Deep Woods*.

Ryan Burt's Eastman essay is followed by Douglas Wertheimer's long and meticulously detailed essay on Edmund Gosse, who has received little notice in *Nineteenth-Century Prose* over the preceding decades. While Gosse claimed to be faithful to the historical record and to his own experience in his "memoir of becoming," *Father and Son* (1907), Wertheimer closely examines Gosse's sources to evaluate the writer's claims of accuracy in his memoir. To do so required painstaking study and skill, which yield a full view of Gosse's many divergencies from written sources.

The third essay below is from Douglass Madison Furrh, who previously, in the Spring 2018 issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, provided us with the economic and political discourses that are part of the historical background of Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener." In the current issue, Furrh provides historical background of Know-Nothing Party politics during the 1850s to shed light on Melville's late fiction. The nativist and white supremacist features of the Know-Nothing supporters during the 1850s shed light not only on Melville's *Moby Dick*, *Benito Cereno*, and "The Piazza," but also in passing might suggest that our own historical moment is hardly unique, but rather disturbingly familiar—alas.

The next two essays provide divergent examples of cultural influence. First, Lindsay Katzir's essay on Anglo-Jewish theologian Grace Aguilar (1816-47) describes how Aguilar's writings sought to change Jewish cultural attitudes toward Jewish women in order to counter contemporary

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Christian drives to convert Jews to Christianity. Aguilar sought to educate Jewish women so that they would be less vulnerable to conversion since their lack of education generally made them more easily subject to conversion because they were generally less knowledgeable than their men about Jewish theology. A very different kind of cultural influence—this time narrowly personal—is provided by Jingjing Zhao’s essay on Emily Brontë’s school essay, “The Palace of Death,” which shows the author’s early ruminations on the ancient topic of “Nature versus Culture,” which eventually forms such an important foundation for *Wuthering Heights*.

Finally, a more traditional essay is Colleen Shuching Wu’s exploration of Emerson’s paradoxical views of language, especially in relation to Nature and meaning. Unsurprisingly, the slippery Emerson appears in the guise of his inveterate shape-shifter self.

The current issue is rounded off with a review essay by the editor (How could we not review a collection of essays on non-fiction prose of “the long nineteenth century”?), and nine reviews on works that are evenly balanced between British and American topics and that, as usual, run chronologically from early to late, and from broad perspectives to more focused works on writers and topics.

For 2022 we look forward to special issues on Marx, and on Matthew Arnold (to mark the bicentennial of Arnold’s birth). Until then, be safe and stay well.

Barry Charles Tharaud