



Editorial

ONE of the pleasures of assembling an issue of the *New England Quarterly* is the opportunity to meet old friends in new, unexpected ways. When we received Taylor Kraayenbrink's "A Monster of iniquity in my self: Queer Sacramental Temporality in Thomas Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth," I was reminded of reading Shepard on Readex microprint cards for a graduate seminar. Recalling, for me, the technological limitations of that distant era and demonstrating the significant leaps in scholarly discourse since, Kraayenbrink offers a queer analysis of the preparation for the Eucharist by Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth. His analyses of Shepard's pastoral and devotional style and Wigglesworth's relationship to Communion complicate our understanding of puritanism's approach to the sacraments and sanctification. Kraayenbrink explores their homoerotic behavior in relation to a sense of temporality that was not predominantly linear, progressive, and modern, but queer, cyclical, and ritualistic.

In 1780, John Adams wrote Abigail that he studied war and politics so his sons could study mathematics, philosophy, geography, and agriculture, that in turn would enable his grandsons to contemplate the fine arts, painting, poetry, and music. The irony of Adams's thoughts, the progression from a kind of republican practicality to the study of luxuries, implied an optimism about America's potential that contrasted with the despair of his great-grandsons, especially that of Henry, who returned to the study of politics only to become an acerbic critic and author of theories of decline. In his essay, "The Aesthetics of Doom: Nature, Science, and Art in Henry Adams's Dynamic Theory of History," Robert F. Sommer begins with

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a comparison of two coincidental images of doom separated by nearly a century—Henry’s graph of the course of history from his “The Rule of Phase Applied to History” and Al Gore’s atmospheric projection of the cataclysmic impact of climate change—to examine Henry’s criticism of the use of science in historical writing. While Adams’s thoughts on the writing of history have been a frequent subject of scholars, Sommer explores how Adams’s late work is marked by the dramatic recognition that everything—technology, knowledge, social relations, and the understanding of the natural world—had changed for the worse, and, in so doing, challenged science’s implied theme of progress and led him to develop a more holistic aesthetic theory in writing history.

Reading Charles Dickens’s *American Notes for General Circulation* for the first time, I found—in addition to his descriptions of the American fondness for spitting—the pun in the title amusing: the purpose of his tour of the United States and subsequent book was to recoup lost income by taking advantage of the popularity of the widely pirated editions of his work. In our Memoranda and Documents essay, “Transatlantic Exchanges and the Shifting ‘Geography of the Word’: Two New Letters from Emerson to Carlyle,” Tim Sommer complements Dickens’s antebellum visit with another window into the world of publishing in the early nineteenth-century English-speaking Atlantic community. Bringing to light two letters from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Thomas Carlyle he discovered in the Scottish National Archives, Sommer lays bare a rich correspondence between two nineteenth-century intellectual giants brought together in mutual assistance to publish, and profit from, their work. In the process, Sommer reveals the more practical attributes of the interchange of literary communities, their social and fiscal interaction in a larger transatlantic context.

The end of our most unusual academic year has also led to significant changes at the *Quarterly*. Three members of the Board of Editors, Lynn Rhoads, Neil Harris, and Robert Middlekauff, have assumed emeriti status. We are exceedingly grateful to each for their long service to the journal. Lynn

especially guided it as its editor while it resided at Northeastern, helped its transition to the University of Massachusetts Boston, and continued to be a source of counsel over the past five years. Professors Harris and Middlekauff have provided critical advice and encouragement that remind the staff how dependent we are on scholars in this enterprise. We were deeply saddened to hear of Professor Middlekauff's death in March as this issue was being assembled. Newly appointed to the Board of Editors are Katherine Grandjean, a distinguished scholar of early American and Indigenous history at Wellesley College, and Kerri Greenidge, the director of the American Studies Program at Tufts University. Professor Greenidge is currently working with Associate Editor Holly Jackson on an upcoming special issue tentatively titled "Blackness in New England: From Crispus Attacks to Ayanna Pressley."

This issue will mark the last for Daniel O'Hara, our senior editorial assistant. Danny has been of stout heart and apparently strong constitution in these challenging times on campus. Once we were allowed access to our offices, he braved both Covid-19 and campus confusion to help process things that could only be done onsite, and for that we are deeply grateful.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge those who continue to support us in these especially difficult times by responding to requests for reviews of manuscripts, writing book reviews, submitting articles, and contributing to the Annual Appeal.

—Jonathan M. Chu