The American Review of History and Politics

The success of the British quarterly reviews in the early nineteenth century, particularly of the Edinburgh Review, established in 1802, and the Quarterly Review, founded in 1809, encouraged attempts to launch similar journals on this side of the Atlantic. Among the more substantial productions in different sections of America were Boston’s North American Review (1815-1940), first edited by William Tudor; Philadelphia’s American Quarterly Review (1827-1837), founded and edited by Robert Walsh; and the Charleston Southern Review (1828-1832), conducted by the two Stephen Eliots, father and son, and Hugh Swinton Legaré. In length of life, extent of literary influence, sustained circulation, and prominence of contributors, the North American unquestionably stands at the head of early American quarterly reviews. However, a few years before this illustrious periodical began its long reign over others of its kind, the quarterly American Review of History and Politics (1811-1812) had been successfully conducted in Philadelphia by Robert Walsh. Since the American Review stands at the head of American quarterlies patterned after British reviews, its chronological primacy and its position in the history of literary journalism invite more attention than it has been given heretofore by literary and journal historians.¹

Though young in years, Walsh brought a vast amount of journalistic experience to the establishment of the American Review in 1811. From 1803 to 1812 he was a respected protégé of Joseph Dennie and

a frequent contributor to the *Port Folio.* While traveling abroad during the years 1806 to 1809, he spent a great deal of time in the company of the celebrated Scottish reviewers. He formed a particularly close friendship with Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review,* and won acclaim as the contributor of two articles to the eminent Scot’s journal. Back in America in the summer of 1809, Walsh lost little time in resuming his connections with the literati of Philadelphia, and when Charles Brockden Brown, editor of the *American Register,* died early in 1810, Walsh accepted the publisher’s offer to edit the Register’s two final numbers. By autumn, 1810, Walsh, afire to edit his own publication, had completed plans and drawn up publication proposals for a journal patterned on the British model.

In January, 1811, a little more than two months after the adoption of the plan, Farrand and Nicholas, well-known Philadelphia publishers, issued the first number of Walsh’s journal under the title of *The American Review of History and Politics, and General Repository of Literature and State Papers.* The “Conditions” were stipulated in the first number: “I. This work will be well printed, on a good paper, in octavo, and will consist of four numbers annually, of at least two hundred pages each, to be issued quarterly. II. The first number will be issued on the 1st of January, 1811. III. Price of subscription, six dollars per annum, to be paid on the delivery of the second number of every year. IV. Distant subscribers are expected to pay in advance, or on the delivery of the first number.” The list of booksellers who were engaged to handle the *American Review* was large and impressive.

2 For a full account of Walsh’s connections with Dennie and the *Port Folio,* see Guy R. Woodall, “The Relationship of Robert Walsh, Jr., to the *Port Folio* and the Dennie Circle: 1803-1812,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* XCII (1968), 195-219.  
3 Walsh’s articles were “Code de la Conscription” and “Biographie Moderne” in the January and April, 1809, numbers of the *Edinburgh Review.* After reading these articles Robert Southey wrote on July 6, 1809, to his friend C. W. Williams: “I thought those articles on the Conscription and the Revolutionary Biography could not come from any ordinary writer in that journal: they were in a wholesomer stream of thought and feeling, and accordingly said to be the work of an American by name Walsh.” John Wood Warter, ed., *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey* (London, 1856), II, 151.  
4 “Conditions,” *The American Review of History and Politics, and General Repository of Literature and State Papers,* I, No.1 (January, 1811), xi. This journal hereinafter will be cited as *ARHP.*
The "Prospectus" disclosed at the outset the scope and nationalistic orientation of the undertaking:

This work will be conducted under adequate management, and modelled upon a plan calculated to render it extensively and permanently useful. It will embrace a review of the public occurrences of Europe, and of our own relations with that quarter of the globe,—an examination of the parliamentary history and domestic policy of this country,—an inquiry into the merits of foreign and native productions—particularly of such as profess to delineate our own condition and character;—original essays, and selections in every department of literature;—an application of the principles of political economy to the peculiar circumstances of the United States,—and a collection of state papers, in the form of an appendix—fitted to illustrate and to confirm the facts and opinions advanced in the historical and political articles.⁵

Walsh further spelled out carefully the purpose of the undertaking:

"The chief ends of this miscellany, to which the most indefatigable attention will be given, and for which ample resources will be provided,—are the propagation of sound political doctrines, and the direction and improvement of the literary taste of the American people."⁶ What Walsh meant by "sound political doctrines" was Federalist political doctrines, and what he meant by "direction and improvement of literary taste" was direction and improvement according to neoclassical and Scottish Common Sense literary criteria. Two considerations of secondary importance which prompted Walsh to found the American Review were his convictions, first, that a domestic journal was needed to present an unbiased and truthful account of American politics and literature, which had not been given by the English reviews, and, second, that a journal was needed to promote the literary fame of America. Of the latter reason he wrote: "If the foundation [of a platform for literary fame] were once settled, there remains no doubt but that with the scaffolding of English literature, a fabric of literary reputation might be ere long erected, of materials which both for their variety and excellence would delight and surprise the nations of Europe."⁷

Walsh had high hopes that American writers would avail themselves of the opportunity to make their political and literary ideas

⁵ Ibid., i.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid., iv–v.
known in the *American Review*. He wrote in the “Advertisement”: “It is a principal object of this undertaking, that men of talents and knowledge, in every part of the United States, should be encouraged, by the possession of a suitable channel for the communication of their ideas, to follow the example set them in Europe, and to dedicate some portion of their time to such political and literary speculations, as may essentially promote the interests of good government, and of letters, in this country.” Among those from whom he solicited contributions was an old friend, Robert Goodloe Harper, the celebrated Baltimore lawyer. A letter to Harper on January 5, 1811, was probably typical of others sent to prospective contributors:

The first number of the Quarterly work which I have undertaken to superintend, was issued two or three days ago in this city. You will probably have it in Baltimore in the commencement of next week. It will, I hope, receive your approbation. I am extremely desirous that you should be tempted to give me a few pages for my next number. You would, by so doing, not only render a very valuable service to the Conductor but a most material one to an undertaking which, under good auspices, may be productive of substantial benefit to the country. I scarcely dare, however, give you a hint on this subject when I call to mind the engagements of business in which you are involved.

About the time that Walsh requested a contribution from Harper, he also asked Richard Rush, a friend and occasional writer for the *Port Folio*, to contribute. As was the case with Harper, he appealed to Rush for a contribution on behalf of public instruction: “I beg you to be assured that anything from your pen will be highly acceptable to me, & that I hail with great satisfaction the prospect of obtaining your assistance. Speculations from one who maintains so high & merited a rank in the world of science & of letters, as yourself, cannot fail to promote the interest of my Review, & to answer important ends of public utility.”

There was no indication that either Harper or Rush ever contributed to the *American Review*. Their failure, as well as that of others, to contribute was probably due to lack of time. If this were the case, Walsh’s inability to secure contributions readily was not a

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8 Ibid., xiii.
10 Walsh to Rush, Mar. 5, [1811], Walsh Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
problem peculiar to him, for there were few writers in America who
devoted their full time to the pen, and, since most depended upon
some other profession, such as law or medicine for a livelihood, their
contributions to public journals were sporadic. Magazine editors
also had difficulty in securing contributions because they had not
yet won recognition.\textsuperscript{11}

John Neal, of \textit{Portico} fame, never one too kindly disposed toward
Walsh, accused him and the publishers of the \textit{American Review} of
making continual use of contributors, causing them much trouble,
and paying them nothing.\textsuperscript{12} The fact is that, though “liberally prom-
ised,” many contributions did not materialize and Walsh had to write
most of the original matter in the \textit{American Review} himself.\textsuperscript{13} When,
at the beginning of the second year, the \textit{American Review} had not
attracted contributors in the numbers that he had originally antici-
pated, Walsh announced in disappointment: “Were the list of literary
contributors such as it might be, or any way proportionate to that of
subscribers, nothing would be wanting, to insure the accomplishment
of the important purposes, for which the work was instituted.”\textsuperscript{14}

Neal’s citing the failure of Walsh and his publishers to pay con-
tributors should not be taken as either unusual or condemnatory, for
during this period most contributors did not expect to receive re-
muneration for their literary labors. Payment for magazine articles
was hardly known before 1819, when the \textit{Christian Spectator} allowed
its contributors one dollar a page.\textsuperscript{15} It is interesting to note that the
London publisher who issued Walsh’s pamphlet \textit{An Inquiry Into
Past and Present Relations of France and the United States}, printed
first as the lead article of the first number of the \textit{American Review},
sent him as a payment Alexander Chalmers’ edition of the \textit{English
Poets}, which Walsh valued at about fifty guineas.\textsuperscript{16} Walsh, inci-
dentally, was well aware that American authors asked to write \textit{pro
bono publico} would not be too responsive. He concurred with Samuel

\textsuperscript{11} Mott, 192–193.
\textsuperscript{12} John Neal, “American Writers. No. II,” \textit{Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine}, XVI (October,
1824), 422n.
\textsuperscript{13} “Advertisement,” \textit{ARHP}, I, No. 1 (January, 1811), xiii.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, V, No. 1 (January, 1812), [iii].
\textsuperscript{15} Mott, 197.
\textsuperscript{16} Richard B. Davis, ed., \textit{Jeffersonian America: Notes on the United States . . . by Sir
Augustus John Foster} (San Marino, 1954), 265.
Johnson that economic necessity was the only effective force that motivated composition.\textsuperscript{17}

Failure to secure contributions for the \textit{American Review} in the numbers that he had hoped for did not deter Walsh from publishing his journal, but from all accounts the dearth of contributors placed a heavy load upon him. He wrote in an "Advertisement" on May 2, 1812, that he would not give up the \textit{American Review} while it was likely to contribute to the public good. Obviously feeling the pressure of having to do most of the writing, he explained why he thought others should help with their pen: "Although a single individual might not find it too oppressive a task, to furnish alone the materials of the work upon the present plan,—this mode of proceeding would defeat one of the principal objects for which it was instituted, and prove fatiguing for the public, who require not only a variety in the choice of topics, but that kind of variety, which results from the division of labour among several hands. The literary men of the country are therefore requested to contribute their aid, particularly by the discussion of subjects of general and permanent interest."\textsuperscript{18}

Bits of testimony gleaned from here and there indicate that not too much help was ever given the editor. Sir Augustus John Foster, who had been intimately associated with Walsh and his literary friends in Philadelphia in 1811–1812, wrote of the editor of the \textit{American Review} in his \textit{Notes on the United States} that "He assured me that he was in the habit of working every quarter of a year for five weeks for eight hours each day, giving up the rest of his time to reading and amusement. He had no assistance in writing for his \textit{Review} excepting the article on Fisher Ames' life which was written by a gentleman of Baltimore."\textsuperscript{19} Rufus Griswold credited Walsh with writing nearly all the articles in the first two numbers.\textsuperscript{20} Walsh's obituarist in the \textit{Historical Magazine} in 1859 also reported that nearly all the contents of the \textit{American Review} were Walsh's.\textsuperscript{21} Though the articles were not signed, only a few, indeed, seem to have come from a pen

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textsuperscript{17} & \textit{ARHP}, I, No. 2 (April, 1811), 303. \\
\textsuperscript{18} & \textit{Ibid.}, III, No. 2 (April, 1812), iii. \\
\textsuperscript{19} & Davis, 265. \\
\textsuperscript{20} & Griswold, 197. \\
\textsuperscript{21} & "Obituary," \textit{The Historical Magazine, and Notes and Queries Concerning the Antiquities, History and Biography of America}, III (May, 1859), 160.
\end{tabular}
other than his own. The Abbé Corrêa da Serra wrote an article entitled "General Consideration Upon the Past and Future State of Europe" for the October, 1812, issue. The Abbé's article bore the editorial identity of "a Portuguese gentleman, now among us, the most eminent of the literati of his country." A friend, writing under the name of "Stillingsford," contributed the "Letter on Domestic Manufactures" to the same number. Peter S. Du Ponceau, the Philadelphia lawyer, historian, and philologist, who lent Walsh French journals and papers from time to time, wrote certain articles for the October, 1811, number. Du Ponceau's articles cannot be identified with certainty, but Walsh considered his accuracy so highly that he felt that it was not necessary to read the author's proof sheets. References to the "State Papers" in Du Ponceau's possession in the Walsh-Du Ponceau letters might indicate that Du Ponceau contributed material to them in the appendix. Weighty "State Papers" in the second number might have been what Walsh had in mind when he wrote to Virgil Maxcy that that number would "contain much solid, but little amusing matter."


22 ARHP, IV, No. 2 (October, 1812), 354. The "Portuguese gentleman" was the Abbé José Francisco Corrêa da Serra. See Richard Beale Davis, The Abbé Corrêa in America, 1812-1820 .... in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, XLV, Part 2 (May, 1955), 98. The Abbé was an eminent botanist, author, statesman, and political liberal who came to America in 1812. Walsh probably met him at a Wistar Party in Philadelphia that year. For the exceedingly close relationship between the two men from 1812 to 1818, see Davis, 97-98.
23 Ibid., 367.
24 Walsh to Du Ponceau, Oct. 9 and 15, 1811, Walsh Collection.
25 Walsh to Virgil Maxcy, Oct. 14, 1811, Miscellaneous Papers (Walsh Folder), New York Public Library.
Minister of Foreign Affairs,” “An Inquiry into Various Systems of Political Economy, by Charles Ganihl, Advocate,” “English and Irish Budget,” and “General Consideration upon the Past and Future State of Europe.” After looking at Walsh’s first number, Henry Brevoort wrote Washington Irving on January 19, 1811, that he doubted the work would serve a useful purpose because foreign productions had already been so masterfully reviewed in England. Brevoort further commented that the reviews of the first number were deficient because Walsh did not analyze them.\textsuperscript{26} Walsh himself would not have disagreed with Brevoort, for he, too, thought that since books were so well reviewed abroad he had little need to analyze them at length. As for Irving, he thought the article in the second number of the American Review on Hamilton’s works was “masterly” and that the whole number would do Walsh great credit.\textsuperscript{27} The typical review consisted of about one or two pages of original matter and the remainder of lengthy extracts from foreign criticism and excerpts from the work under consideration.

Among essays and reviews of American books were “The Character of Fisher Ames,” “Review of the Works of Alexander Hamilton,” “Mr. Emott’s Speech on the Nonintercourse,” “Memoir of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture,” “Review of an Address of Members of the House of Representatives of the United States,” and “Memoirs of the War of the Southern Department of the United States, by Henry Lee.” In addition to the essays and reviews, each number had an appendix which consisted of about a hundred pages of current domestic and foreign political intelligence, state papers, statistics and miscellanea.

Very little attention has been paid to the literary character of the American Review, except to note that not much space was devoted to belles-lettres and only one article to contemporaneous American literature.\textsuperscript{28} However, belles-lettres were fairly well discussed in its pages. Among the belletristic articles were those on Sir Walter Scott’s “The Lady of the Lake,” Margaret Holford’s “Wallace, or the Fight

\textsuperscript{26} George S. Hellman, ed., \textit{Letters of Henry Brevoort to Washington Irving} (New York, 1918), 4-5.


\textsuperscript{28} Mott, 272; Sr. M. Frederick Lochemes, \textit{Robert Walsh: His Story} (New York, 1941), 70.

The *American Review* not only served as an apology for the literary taste of the American upper class but as an organ for refining the literary taste of all Americans. Walsh smarted under the impression which the English held that Americans were a "tilling and shopkeeping race," and he lost few opportunities to correct the impression. He believed that he had startled the credulity of Scots with whom he talked in Edinburgh by telling them that Burns, Beattie, and Scott were read and understood more in America than they were in England. Walsh boasted that

The diffusion of English literature throughout the United States can be credible only to those, who have opportunities of personal observation. The sterling poets of England, such as Milton, Shakespeare, Pope and Cowper are read and admired here, by that class of society which in Europe, scarcely aspires to the rudiments of letters. The great English historians are to be found in our huts and farmhouses, and editions of them are multiplied without number. Almost every work of merit, on subjects of general literature, now produced in England, is received here, within the space of two or three months, and reprinted without delay. Nor do we wait for the opinion of British critics before we read and admire.29

This hyperbolic statement, similar to many in the *American Review*, was, of course, intended to impress upon the British that America was not without a sizeable literature-reading public. On the other hand, the visiting Englishman Sir Augustus John Foster observed that he found literature to be a rather "sickly plant," although the citizens felt hurt if one said so. He conjectured that there would be those who subscribed to Walsh's journal to prove that literature thrived and was appreciated.30

29 *ARHP*, I, No. 1 (January, 1811), 166-167.
30 Davis, 265.
While Walsh served the cause of literary nationalism by insisting upon the presence of a large literary class in America, he did not brag about the merits of indigenous literature. There were few complimentary statements on American writers and their works in the pages of the *American Review*. Walsh regretted that America had not produced a great volume of poetry, and he indicted American poets for having not lived up to their pretensions of poetic genius, which was grievous since they had at their disposal the best models of Europe. Of the little American poetry mentioned in the *American Review*, he wrote off John Trumbull's *McFingal* as "a subordinate species of poetry" and Joel Barlow's *Columbiad" as a work best forgotten." Walsh likened Barlow to Dryden's Doeg, the "heroically mad" dull versifier in *Absalom and Achitophel*. The poetry of Lucius Sargent, author of *Hubert and Ellen, with Other Poems*, Walsh thought would fall into "a decent mediocrity" if it were compared to the mass of British poetry.

On American novelists the *American Review* was silent. The editor's slighting the novel is not strange, because as a genre it had not yet won respectability. Throughout his career Walsh possessed the coolness of his Scottish mentors to romances and novels. He also had little to say about literary criticism, though he was persuaded that the time was not far distant "when this country may begin to exercise a formidable censorship over the productions of the British press." Walsh thought that the gazettes which controlled the judgment of a considerable number of the day were "poor umpires of taste" in literary matters, because they reflected only local opinion. While English and French dramas were commented upon extensively in them, nothing much was said about native plays or the theater. Walsh deplored the complete absence of dramatic biography except that which was imported from England. Only in the field of historical biography did he have unqualified praise for an American author; he thought John Marshall's *Life of Washington* excellent.

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31 *ARHP*, IV, No. 2 (October, 1812), 245–246.
32 Ibid., 255.
33 Ibid., I, No. 1 (January, 1811), 168.
34 Ibid., IV, No. 2 (October, 1812), 246.
35 Ibid., III, No. 2 (April, 1812), 187–188.
36 Ibid., III, No. 1 (January, 1812), 35.
Walsh venerated Augustan authorities such as Dryden, Pope, Addison, Johnson, Sir William Jones, and James Thomas Mathias, whose names were ubiquitously cited as magistrates in literature. There is little doubt, however, that the philosophical and rhetorical basis of his literary criticism originated in the pronouncements of the Scottish Common Sense school. Thomas Reid, Lord Kames, Hugh Blair, Dugald Stewart, Francis Jeffrey—all were reverenced. By accepting Scottish Common Sense aesthetics and philosophy, Walsh allied himself with the prevailing literary opinion of his time.\(^{37}\) No critic or editor, in fact, demonstrated more interest in the thinking of the Scots than Walsh, and no journal of his time bore the imprint of the Scots more than the \textit{American Review}. Every number of it contained extensive excerpts from the \textit{Edinburgh Review}, whose contributors, Walsh maintained, demonstrated a "superiority over all their competitors, which they never fail to display, whenever their unrivaled powers of analysis are called forth by a theme of great interest or importance." In his comment on Scott's "The Lady of the Lake," he recommended the critique of the work which had appeared in the \textit{Edinburgh Review} because the Scottish critics had stated opinions that he entertained about the poem in "much stronger" language than he could employ.\(^{38}\) Deferring to the judgment of "our Scottish brethren" on the German and English romanticists, he noted that their faults "have been so fully exposed and satirized with such triumphant ability by the Edinburgh reviewers, that it would be alike superfluous and presumptuous in us, to discuss the same topics, whether for the purpose of reprehension or vindication."\(^{39}\)

The judicious doctrines held by the Scottish critics are commonplace in the \textit{American Review}. Their standard of morality, for example, is applied time and again to authors and works. Finding nothing more commendatory to say about Lucius Sargent and his poem "Hubert and Ellen," Walsh wrote that "Still, wherever the

\(^{37}\) For the pervasiveness of Scottish Common Sense thinking in America, see, for example, William Charvat, \textit{The Origins of Critical Thought in America: 1810-1835} (Philadelphia, 1936); Terence Martin, \textit{The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction} (Bloomington, 1936); Roy Harvey Pearce, \textit{The Savages of America . . .} (New York, 1953); and Benjamin T. Spenser, \textit{The Quest for Nationality} (New York, 1957).

\(^{38}\) \textit{ARHP}, I, No. 1 (January, 1811), 170.

\(^{39}\) \textit{Ibid.}, IV, No. 1 (July, 1812), 173.
popular vote may place him, he will have the satisfaction of remembering, that he has written nothing, which offends against virtue and purity. . . . Hubert and Ellen . . . is the offspring of a mind full of amiable and generous feeling, and guided by an unbending morality.” Among prescriptions for writing better poetry made to M. Jens Immanuel Baggessen, author of “The Partheneid,” was that he needed to include “more of moral sentiment and moral painting.” Goethe’s *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* was objectionable in part because of its “immoral tendency” for hinting at a case of marital infidelity, though Walsh considered the work “powerfully attractive and from the pen of a master.” Prevalent in the *American Review* was Walsh’s opinion that English drama was inferior because it was immoral and that French drama was praiseworthy because it was moral.

Walsh employed the canons of realism and probability in judging all literary productions and by so doing placed his journal in the main stream of neoclassical and Scottish critical thought. Quoting Sir William Jones’ *Essay on the Imitative Arts* as an authority on the aesthetics of Realism, Walsh wrote that, since all art is an imitation and not a strict representation of nature, nothing more is required in any art than a “perceptible resemblance.” On another occasion he wrote: “In all compositions probability or fidelity or representation is to be aimed at, as far as it is consistent with their nature and peculiar design.” He objected to Southey’s “latest productions” (probably *Thalaba*, *Madoc*, and *The Curse of Kehama*) because they possessed “an action and character so remote from common life, and a machinery so grotesque, and, in many instances so monstrous.” Of Baggessen’s violation of probability in “The Partheneid,” he observed: “The employment of mythological machinery, and allegorical personages, as principal and constant actors, in a poem, of which the subject, is a love adventure, of two of our supposed contemporaries, humble inhabitants of Switzerland, is a violation of probability and

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40 *Ibid.*, IV, No. 2 (October, 1812), 255.
42 As early as 1804 Walsh used Lord Kames’ *Elements of Criticism* as an authority on matters of Realism in his *Port Folio* essays. See “The American Lounger,” *The Port Folio*, IV (May 26, 1804), 161–162. In the *ARHP* he continued the practice as in III, No. 2 (April, 1812), 212.
congruity, which no reasoning can justify, and no poetical excellence redeem.” Here Walsh was in agreement with Lord Kames, who held in his *Elements of Criticism* that allegorical personages can never be mixed with real ones to further or retard action in a poem. Walsh censured Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* because it was “replete with incongruities, with extravagant conceptions, and the most improbable incidents.”

Despite the faults of incongruities and improbabilities found in Goethe's novel, Walsh was far ahead of his time in perceiving that there was a quality of symbolism in the work which contributed to its excellence. He had an imperfect grasp of Goethe's use of symbols, referring to them as “superstitions,” but he was willing neither to condemn nor proscribe them because they did not conform to empirical realism, logic, or popular belief. Aware that Goethe's “superstitions” would not stand “the test of ridicule”—a favorite criterion of Lord Kames but not of Hugh Blair—for determining truth, Walsh justified their use on the grounds that they were morally elevating and interesting: “That a man of a contemplative cast of mind, should believe in the return and presence of departed friends, or multiply in any way the chain of invisible agencies, (superstitions which if they do not make him a greater, will probably make him a better man) is very excusable; and that he should make them the ground work of a novel, or introduce them incidentally is equally so. —That these superstitions are not able to stand the test of ridicule, is by no means a proof of their wanting interest.”

Walsh's reaction to German literature merits consideration. He shared the aversion of the Scottish critics to the excesses of the modern German romanticists, whom he called “a dangerous sect of metaphysic-sentimental poets and novelists.” The faults that he and the Edinburgh critics found generally among the German and English (“The School of Southey”) romanticists were “their wild ex-

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45 *ARHP*, III, No. 1 (January, 1812), 63.
46 Charvat, 163.
travagance of fancy, their mawkish affectation of simplicity, the puling niaserie of many of their descriptions, the revolting, and, in some instances, monstrous character of their machinery.” His objection to the metaphysics of Kant, so pervasive in the thinking of the German and English romanticists, was that its flexibility and obscurity made it difficult to interpret. Summoning Dugald Stewart as “the highest authority,” he objected to Kant’s unintelligibility and barbarism; one needed a fortune teller to divine Kant’s meaning.49

In spite of his strictures on German Romanticism, Walsh had an enthusiastic appreciation for German literature as a whole. He found a “thousand excellencies of execution” among German writers, and he maintained that the Germans could match a distinguished author with any that France and England could produce, naming Klopstock, Schiller, Goethe, Gessner, Wieland, and Kant as examples. He highly praised the works of German authors in “classical erudition, in antiquities, in ancient geography, and in history both profane and ecclesiastical.” By commending German literature to the American public Walsh established the American Review as one of the earliest vehicles for German criticism in America. Frank Luther Mott has recorded that Walsh’s article on Die Wahlverwandtschaften in 1812 was perhaps the most important article on German literature of the age. Scott M. Goodnight in his German Literature in America believes this article was “unsurpassed” by any of its time. On the subject of its genuineness Goodnight wrote, “Surely this writer had read, and read in the original, if imperfectly; surely he had felt what he ascribed—his strictures are the same which recur continually in almost all American criticism of Goethe.”50 Walsh’s complaints about German syntax and diction in the review would lead one to believe that he had read Goethe in the original, but other evidence makes this seem doubtful.51

The American Review was received favorably or unfavorably according to readers’ political views. Robert Goodloe Harper, Richard Rush, Virgil Maxcy, Timothy Pickering, and John Trumbull were

49 Ibid., IV, No. 1 (July, 1812), 173; I, No. 2 (April, 1811), 330-331n.
50 Ibid., No. 1 (January, 1812), 51-52, 64.
51 Mott, 192; Scott Holland Goodnight, German Literature in American Magazines Prior to 1846, Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, No. 188, IV (Madison, 1909), 68; ARHP, I, No. 2 (April, 1811), 330; III, No. 2 (April, 1812), 215.
political conservatives who spoke kindly of the undertaking because of its Federalist point of view.\textsuperscript{52} There were many, however, who considered the \textit{American Review} as subversive Federalist propaganda. John Quincy Adams, for example, who had disagreed with Walsh’s political sentiments in the \textit{Port Folio} some years earlier, was bitter about Walsh’s political opinions in the \textit{American Review}, though he praised Walsh’s abilities as an author and editor.\textsuperscript{53}

Henry Brevoort, too, admired Walsh’s abilities but like Adams lamented his political views: “I will commence with Mr. Walsh’s first number which has been circulated and pretty generally read; I know not the sentence of public opinion, but judging from my own I doubt whether it will be so favorable as his talents, (unquestionably of the first order) deserve. His \textit{politics are tinctured with such passionate prejudices against the institutions of his own country} that I should really lament that his opinions gain many votaries.”\textsuperscript{54}

What the general opinion of the British press was toward the \textit{American Review} is not known, but the London \textit{Monthly Review} reviewed favorably “An Inquiry into the Past and Present Relations of France and the United States,” the lead article in the first number of the \textit{American Review}. The reviewer called it “an eloquent production,” but wrote certain strictures on its style and tone: “In regard to its composition, we must make the same animadversions on this as on Mr. Walsh’s former publication [\textit{On the Genius and Dispositions of the French Government}]. It contains by far too large a portion of diffuse declamatory language, which obliges us, while we admire the spirit of the writer, to suspect the prevalence of exaggeration, not only in his comments, but in his representation of facts. A fondness for quotation is likewise carried by him to excess, and repetition is the material consequence of the haste with which he writes.”\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{52} The following letters indicate a favorable reception of the \textit{American Review}: Walsh to Richard Rush, n.d., Walsh, Collection; Walsh to Robert Goodloe Harper, Feb. 19 and 22, 1811, Robert Goodloe Harper Papers; Walsh to Timothy Pickering, Jan. 12, 1812, Massachusetts Historical Society. Dr. Osborn and John Trumbull were said by Henry Brevoort to have worked for the \textit{American Review}. Hellman, ed., \textit{Letters of Henry Brevoort}, 3; Lochemes, 17–72.


\textsuperscript{54} Hellman, ed., \textit{Letters of Henry Brevoort}, 4.

kind words the reviewer expressed were prompted by his agreement with the pro-English tone of the article. It is likely that most of the other British reviewers received the *American Review* favorably for the same reason.

While the *Review* lasted it was a financial success. Although John Neal's statement that Farrand and Nicholas paid Walsh $1,500 a number, or $6,000 per annum, has been called "obviously unreliable," nevertheless, Walsh fully expected to receive no less than $4,000 a year at the time that he was negotiating with the publishers. Then, too, according to Sir Augustus John Foster, Walsh might easily have obtained an annual salary of $6,000: "He had just begun to publish the *American Review* which brought 4,000 species M. into his pockets in the first year of its appearance, and was still to get more the second year, provided the sale admitted it."

Whether or not Walsh ever received $6,000 a year, it seems quite certain that he was the highest paid editor of the time. As editor of the *Port Folio* Joseph Dennie received no more than $2,500 in 1808. As late as 1825 William Cullen Bryant received only $1,000 as editor of the *New-York Review*. Most professional editors depended on honoraria that "were both small and uncertain." A further indication that the *American Review* fared quite well financially was Walsh's rejection of a proposal in early 1811 made by Samuel Bradford to him and Nicholas Biddle to buy a half interest in the *Port Folio* for $9,000 contingent upon their becoming coeditors with Dennie. The *Port Folio* profits were estimated at $6,000 a year. Obviously Walsh's *American Review* editorship was so lucrative that he did not want to give it up for a one-third part of the *Port Folio* profits.

The extensive circulation of the *American Review* indicates that it was far more successful in its initial stages than most magazines of the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Walsh's biographer, Lochemes, doubts that the number ever reached Walsh's expectation of a 2,000 circulation, but, if Sir Augustus Foster was correct in his

57 Robert to Elizabeth Walsh, Oct. 24, 1810, Walsh Collection.
Notes on the United States, the circulation reached 3,000 at the end of the first year. Yet Henry Brevoort heard that there were only fifty names on the subscription list when the first number went to press. Either Brevoort's information was unreliable or the journal enjoyed a phenomenal growth to attain the circulation that Foster ascribed to it. If the American Review reached any number approximating Walsh's expectation or the number that Foster indicated, it was at least as successful as most magazines of its age. In 1801, the first year of operation, the Port Folio had a circulation of 2,000; the New York Missionary Magazine in 1801 had a circulation of 2,434; in 1805 the Boston Monthly Anthology had a circulation of 440. After five years of operation, in 1820, the North American Review had a circulation of only four or five hundred.

The eighth and final number of the American Review was issued in October, 1812. The reason for its demise was the bankruptcy of Farrand and Nicholas that year. Walsh, it has been recorded, was obliged to put out the final number at his own expense. Lochemes intimated that if Walsh did receive the $6,000 per annum, as Neal said, this large salary might have been a contributory cause to the publishers' bankruptcy. Other causes for the American Review's decline which have been suggested were the War of 1812, failure of writers to support the venture, the Federalist tone of Walsh's writings, and an insufficiently developed taste in America for the literary quality of the work. However, none of these seems convincing in the light of what has been noticed about the adequate or good circulation and Walsh's insistence that writing the whole journal himself would not be "too oppressive a task." It is certain that shortly before Farrand and Nicholas went bankrupt, Walsh seems not to have expected the journal to die. On January 12, 1812, he wrote to Timothy Pickering that he planned to continue the work. As late as May, 1812, he seemed optimistic enough about the future of the American Review

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61 Mott, 199–200.
to state publicly that it would not be given up as long as it was serving a useful purpose.\textsuperscript{63}

The insolvency of Farrand and Nicholas suspended but did not end Walsh's career as an editor of a quarterly review. In 1826, having long been successful as a newspaper editor, he assumed the editorship of the \textit{American Quarterly Review}, which was projected by Carey and Lea of Philadelphia as a rival to the \textit{North American Review}. By 1836, when Walsh gave up his editorship to retire, he was one of America's foremost journalists. Much of his fame had come as a result of his pioneering as a review editor. He never lost faith in the superiority of the review-type quarterly. When, in 1828, two Philadelphia newspapers jointly depreciated the \textit{American Quarterly Review} by suggesting that monthly journals were the most preferable of magazines, Walsh remonstrated: "It is certain, however, that the Quarterly Reviews obtain more favor and currency in the United States; that writers of the first order prefer them as vehicles for their compositions; and that they generally contain the most instructive and durable matter. They are, or should be, of more value in themselves."\textsuperscript{64} His \textit{raison d'être} for the quarterly review had not altered since he established the first one in 1811.

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\textsuperscript{63} Walsh to Timothy Pickering, Jan. 12, 1812, Timothy Pickering Papers; \textit{ARHP}, III, No. 2 (April, 1812), [iii].

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{National Gazette and Literary Register}, Aug. 23, 1828, p. 1, col. 2.