

Thinking about *Zeteo* Reviews

Loose guidelines prepared by William Eaton, *Zeteo* Editorial Adviser and Executive Editor
(with help from Walter Cummins, Stuart Johnson and other *Zeteo* Reviewers)

Version 1.0, August 2012

As the *Zeteo* Reviews initiative proceeds (and quite well indeed!), I am beginning to get a clearer sense of what we are trying to do with these reviews, and I have wanted to sketch out some guidelines for reviewers.

- (1) Welcome to the brave new world of “open access” publishing (a.k.a., e-publishing). Among other things, this means that reviews do not disappear into archives shortly after they are published. They remain accessible, Google-able. This suggests an approach to reviewing for the longer term, with content (observations) that have some staying power.
- (2) For the moment (in *Zeteo*’s fledgling stage) no one is looking to *Zeteo* to tell them whether to buy a book or not, or to tell them whether a book is good or not. (Although the very fact of our reviewing a book promotes it, and we are reviewing books that may not get many reviews elsewhere.)
- (3) What *Zeteo* reviewers can contribute are ideas, reflections, explorations inspired either by a book’s good qualities or by its bad ones. As an interdisciplinary publication for “generalist” readers and thinkers, we have an interest in tracing connections between the particular subject and assertions of a book and the wider world.
- (4) In the midst of offering such ideas, etc., the reviews should also offer do some of the basic work of reviewing: provide an overview of the book’s contents and assertions, and a sentence or two about the author(s)—credentials and affiliations, nationality, previous publications, etc.
- (5) Repeat reviewers might develop areas of specialty, and thus develop a cluster of ideas over the course of a series of reviews. I can look for new books that are similar to ones we have reviewed.
- (6) We are hardly against “review essays” (reviewing several books on a common theme), but in general those would seem to belong in one of the regular issues of *Zeteo*.
- (7) One of the signature phrases of *Zeteo* is that we are interested in works that combine the personal, political and intellectual. When appropriate this may apply to our reviews as well. Cummins’s review “[Seeking Creatural Diversity](#)” provides one example of bringing personal experience into a review, and my own review “[Sutra as Power Play](#)” provides an example of bringing one’s own politics into a review. Please note that interventions of this nature are not required, and they can lead a reviewer astray. Sticking more closely to the text at hand is generally easier, if not always as rich and engaging.

- (8) As contributors to *Zeteo* and to the colonization of cyberspace more generally, we are also involved in exploring the proper rhetoric(s) for writing that readers will first encounter in an electronic format, on a screen. How to engage readers or ease them into such a piece, and particularly if the piece is of an intellectual nature? How to encourage readers to print a piece so they can read it at their non-electronic leisure? A great thing about Web publishing is that it is so easy to pass pieces along to other readers, and to stumble upon works by accident, but relatively new Web publications also have a lot to prove. Readers are not going to bring the same confidence and patience to a *Zeteo* review that they bring to such a piece in the *New Yorker* or *New York Review of Books*.

There is much to explore and reflect on here as we go along, and these guidelines will be revised as the learning process proceeds.

Some notes on procedures

- (a) When a reviewer receives a book s/he should first give it a quick look to make sure it is an appropriate book for her or him to review. Except in rare instances it will not make sense to spend time reviewing a book that seems just plain weak or that does not reach the particular reviewer to which it has been assigned. There is no shame in returning the book unreviewed and asking for another one.
- (b) The reviewer sets his or her own deadline, and then the editor (me) gently holds them to this deadline, sending out a reminder if it is missed. Two months is probably a good maximum for a deadline.
- (c) Length is about 750-1,500 words.
- (d) Reviewers are asked to supply a one-sentence bio to appear at the bottom of the reviews.
- (e) In general, after a draft text is submitted some revisions are requested and then there is a second, light copy-editing phase. Copy edits are done in “track changes” (Word) so writer can see the proposed changes.
- (f) Writers have final say on the text although they are quite strongly urged to adapt themselves to the *Zeteo* style, as per the [Zeteo Style Guide](#). (It is not necessary for writers to become expert in *Zeteo* style, but just to be respectful of their editor’s efforts to apply this style to their text.)
- (g) We welcome any ideas writers may have for images—either to appear in the text or to appear as the promo image on the website. If there seems to be a need to obtain permission to use an image, we ask that writers seek this permission and forward any relevant correspondence (e.g., e-mails) to us. If an image is to appear in the text, we ask that the writer place it herself or himself (easy to do in Word), and to add any caption s/he may desire.

Layout and Typography

The editor can take charge of applying the style to the text, but here it is (slightly revised from the style used in previous reviews):

- Text of reviews are in Garamond 12 pt, 1.5 spaces between lines, right and left margins set at 1.5, top and bottom at 1.
- The very top of the first page has a “custom page border”, a ½ pt triple line, only on the top of the first page, with 6 pt top margin and 24 pt for the other margins. Measure from text. No surrounding of header or footer. No extra space between the three lines at the top and the label:

Zeteo: The Journal of Interdisciplinary Writing

The “Z” is a capital letter, 18 pt, Lucida Calligraphy. The “eteo:” is Garamond 18pt. The whole “Zeteo” is in Roman. “The Journal...” is Garamond 12pt, italics.

- Headline is in 24 pt bold. Subhead is 18pt italicized and bold. Byline is 14 pt bold. Initial caps may be used at the beginning of the piece and at the beginnings of new sections. Drop caps are 2 lines deep, with a 0.1” space before text. Footers are different on odd and even pages, with author’s name flush left on the odd pages and Zeteo Reviews flush right on the even pages. Initial letter is Lucida Calligraphy 18pt CAP; subsequent text in Garamond 12 pt; page numbers flush right. Page numbers and initial letter are Roman; other text in italics. Example:

Odd pages: *J*ohnson 3

Even pages: *Z*eteo *Reviews* 3

The End.