HARVARD REVIEW  Book Review Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to write a book review for Harvard Review Online. The following guidelines are intended to answer the most common questions about form, content, and the editorial process. Please feel free to contact us if you have additional questions or concerns.

Review Head:  This heading must appear at the top of your review in the format below.

Title of Book(s) Being Reviewed by Author, translated by Translator [if applicable] Publisher, Year, $price [paper or cloth], ISBN 978## [no dashes] reviewed by Your Name

Length: 750 Words

Title of Book(s) Being Reviewed by Author, translated by Translator [if applicable]:
The Aeneid by Vergil, translated by Sarah Ruden

Publisher, Year, $price [paper or cloth], ISBN 978## [no dashes]:

Delivery:

1.) Email your review to harvrev@fas.harvard.edu as an attached Word document (.doc) or text file (.rtf). Please do not send the text of the review in the body of your email, as this can cause problems with formatting.

2.) Please also send photocopies or scanned images of any pages of the book from which you are quoting. This is especially important for poetry books because we need to double check the original formatting.

Content:

Before beginning the review, think about the reader. What should the reader of the review know? What does he or she need to be told? Reviewers should also think about the purpose of the review: e.g., to introduce a new author, genre or form, to discuss patterns in the field or genre of which the book is an example. The minimum requirements for a review are:

1.) Information about the author/editor (other works, nationality, recent prizes, etc.); some reference to the genre (fiction, non-fiction, criticism, poetry); the field (natural science, history, etc.) if appropriate.

2.) A sentence or two that describes the main theme, plot or organizing principle (see, for example, the brief descriptions of books that appear in the NY Times Book Review called “And Bear in Mind”).

3.) A statement about the place of the book in a wider field—other books of the same genre, other books by the same author—and explanation of the points of similarity or difference.

4.) An analysis of the book’s strengths and weaknesses with examples of each.

5.) A conclusion that brings together the main points of the review but is more than a summary or a recapitulation of what has been said.

Some things reviewers should avoid: quotations that do not clearly illustrate a specific critical issue; long quotations; references to works or authors not generally known to most readers; anecdotes or details about the reviewers themselves, unless these are directly relevant to the argument of the review; biographical details about the author that do not bear directly on the book.

Process:

Your review will be edited by Christina Thompson. It will then be emailed to you as a Word document, for you to correct and return. PLEASE NOTE: There may be additional editing after that in order to fit the review into the space available.

You will be contacted by email when the review is posted online and will have an opportunity to check the work for typographical errors before we send the newsletter announcing the new issue.