Editorial Profile

“The most serious literary publication in the world, independent, resistant to every pressure, to every clique, publishing leading articles on literary fiction as often as on ideas, written by renowned authors and essayists.”

—Le Monde

The New York Review of Books began during the long news blackout of the New York publishing strike in 1963. A group of friends, including the editors, Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein, decided to create a new kind of magazine—one in which the most interesting and lively minds they could find would discuss current books and issues in depth, and with all the authority and knowledge they possessed. The result was what The New Yorker called “the best first issue of any magazine ever.” Launched with no capital except the support of book publishers’ advertisements, The New York Review won instant and astonished acclaim with issues that included articles by W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Hardwick, Hannah Arendt, Edmund Wilson, Susan Sontag, Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal, Saul Bellow, Robert Lowell, Truman Capote, William Styron, Jason Epstein, and Mary McCarthy. The magazine was “of more cultural import than the opening of Lincoln Center,” announced The New Statesman, while the great English art historian Kenneth Clark observed, “I have never known such a high standard of reviewing.”

Since then, every two weeks for five decades The New York Review has continued to pose the central issues of American life and culture. It has explained the latest discoveries in science, and it has brought a remarkable freshness, clarity, and vision to current politics and the living dramas of the past. No wonder that it has established itself as the “preeminent intellectual newspaper in English” and “a powerful and combative actor on the political scene.”

“The Review was created to fill a need in the country for a journal of ideas, a mission that it has fulfilled since becoming a must read to many loyal readers.”

—The Los Angeles Times
1,042 issues
7,759 contributors
10,601 book reviews
7,079 essays
4,077 letters
659 poems
203 film reviews
231 exhibition reviews
104 catalog reviews
58 theater reviews
26 musical reviews
5 dance reviews
21 performance reviews
17 television reviews
67 lectures
95 excerpts
547 exchanges
68 interviews
33 special supplements
3,471 Levine caricatures
11,266 reviews
56,634,347 words

The New York Review of Books
50 Years
The New York Review has published articles on music by those who know music best, the musicians themselves, including Alfred Brendel, Charles Rosen, and Robert Craft. John Richardson, John Golding, John Updike, and Julian Bell have been among the Review’s writers on art. From the great films of Kurosawa to Mad Men, movies and TV programs are regularly discussed in the Review’s pages. It has published poems by Robert Lowell, W. H. Auden, James Merrill, John Ashbery, Derek Walcott, and Wisława Szymborska. Writers such as Ian Buruma, Geoffrey O’Brien, Darryl Pinckney, Luc Sante, Samantha Power, Tim Judah, Daniel Mendelsohn, Helen Epstein, Charles Simic, Sarah Kerr, and Patricia Storace have all made their reputations in the Review’s pages. Now, as it approaches its sixth decade, is it any wonder that The New York Review is considered the premier journal of culture, politics, and ideas, not only in the US, but also the world?

“An attention to editing has accounted for a large part of the success of The New York Review of Books. . . . But even with less respect for language and logic, the magazine would have been remarkable. . . . The first issue, which included articles by W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Hardwick, Mary McCarthy, Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal and Robert Penn Warren, pointed towards what was to come: a continuous stream of essays, usually discussing a book or books, and usually written by someone recognized as a writer, scholar or thinker of distinction. The list of contributors is formidable. . . . Although it has something in common with the Edinburgh, Westminster and Fortnightly Reviews, its 19th-century forerunners in Britain, it was a new creation for America: an intelligent, intelligible publication that got the best minds to explore the world of ideas, bringing thought and weight to bear on the great issues of the moment.”

—The Economist
Subscriber Profile

➢ CIRCULATION†
132,976

➢ DEMOGRAPHICS
64  average age
70%  male
30%  female

➢ EDUCATION
95%  graduated college or more
73%  postgraduate study with degree
28%  masters
18%  other (MD, LLB, etc.)

➢ INCOME AND NET WORTH
$93,000  median IEI
$149,000  average IEI
$119,000  median HHI
$185,000  average HHI
$860,000  median net worth
$1,420,000  average net worth
43%  net worth of $1,000,000+

➢ READER INVOLVEMENT
11+ years  average length of subscription
80%  read four out of the past four issues
2.5 hours  average time spent reading the last issue
94%  say it is one of their favorite magazines

➢ ACTION TAKEN AS A RESULT OF READING
THE NEW YORK REVIEW in the past twelve months
86%  discussed an article or referred someone to it
77%  visited a bookstore/ordered a book online that
was advertised or reviewed
25%  attended an exhibit, cultural event and/or movie discussed
in a review
10%  gave a gift subscription of The New York Review of Books

➢ POLITICAL AFFILIATION
65%  Liberal/ Progressive Democrat
14%  Moderate Democrat
9%  Independent
4%  Moderate Republican
Influence in the past twelve months:

- 91% voted in state or local elections
- 88% donated to a charitable cause
- 57% made a political contribution
- 39% actively worked as a volunteer (nonpolitical)
- 34% wrote or called a politician at the local, state, or national level
- 29% wrote something that has been published
- 29% have been an active member of a group that tried to influence public policy or government
- 28% took an active role in a fund-raising effort
- 25% wrote to the editor of a magazine or newspaper or called a live radio show to express an opinion
- 22% participated in environmental groups/causes

New York Review of Books Profile Study, Readex Research

Audit Bureau of Circulations June 30, 2012  Adds to more than 100% owing to multiple responses

...The genius of the NYRB is that you don’t have to read much of it to feel good about yourself. Indeed, I feel edified and elevated, if racked by low-level guilt, just watching the issues pile up on my bookshelf. The NYRB is the rare periodical that never goes out of date. It’s Christmas, New Year’s and the Fourth of July all rolled into one for the life of the mind."

—The Wall Street Journal

“I’d be hard-pressed... to think of a publication more influential in making a place for serious criticism, in opening up our understanding of what a book review can do."

—The Los Angeles Times
Bookbuying & Leisure

- **AVERAGE NUMBERS OF BOOKS PURCHASED**
  *in the past twelve months*
  
  - 14 paperbacks
  - 11 hardcovers
  - 2 e-books
  - 1 audio book

- **WHERE SUBSCRIBERS BUY THEIR BOOKS**
  
  - 84% Internet
  - 68% chain bookstore
  - 57% independent bookstore
  - 7% book club
  - 7% mail order

- **TYPES OF BOOKS PURCHASED**
  *in the past twelve months*
  
  - 66% history
  - 64% literary fiction
  - 53% biography
  - 47% politics / current affairs
  - 45% classics
  - 41% philosophy / religion
  - 34% literary criticism
  - 33% mystery
  - 28% travel guides
  - 28% children's books
  - 27% art / photography
  - 26% poetry
  - 22% economics
  - 20% reference
  - 14% environmental issues

- **PURCHASED BOOKS AS GIFTS**
  
  - 98% purchased books in the last 12 months
  - 70% purchased books as gifts in the last 3 months

- **LEISURE**
  
  - 89% purchased or consumed wine in the past 6 months
  - 37% purchased wine by the case in the past 12 months
Cultural activities in the past twelve months:
- 86% visited a museum or gallery
- 77% attended a musical performance
- 75% viewed a documentary
- 75% viewed a foreign film
- 60% attended live theater
- 59% have been a member or donor of 2–5 museums or cultural institutions
- 45% have subscriptions for performing arts venues
- 34% attended the opera

Travel:
- 61% plan to take a trip abroad in the next 12 months

Types of trips that are of most interest to New York Review readers:
- 57% leisure
- 42% educational/cultural led by an expert
- 22% active adventure
- 17% educational/environmental led by an expert
- 12% cruise
- 11% culinary

*Adds to more than 100% owing to multiple responses

“The Review is more than a magazine, more than a collection of talented writers and editors; it’s a world of its own. The combative letters column; the bookish personals; the pages and pages of publishers’ ads; even the real-estate listings for country homes and flats, which define the geography of the Review’s sophisticated readership (Paris, London, Tuscany, New York, San Francisco, Boston): Combine these elements and you have a distinctive identity composed of idiosyncratic customs, habits, styles—in other words, a culture.”

—New York Magazine
Biographies

Robert Silvers, Editor

Robert Silvers was born in 1929 in Mineola, New York. Mr. Silvers graduated from the University of Chicago in 1947 and in 1950 worked as press secretary to Governor Chester Bowles of Connecticut. From 1952 to 1959 he lived in Paris, where he served with the US Army at SHAPE headquarters and attended the Sorbonne and the École des Sciences Politiques.

He joined the editorial board of The Paris Review in 1954 and became its Paris editor in 1956. From 1959 to 1963 he was an associate editor of Harper’s magazine and the editor of the book Writing in America. Mr. Silvers was one of the founders of The New York Review of Books in 1963. He was its co-editor for over forty years with Barbara Epstein and since 2006 has been its editor.

He is the co-editor of The First Anthology: Thirty Years of The New York Review of Books 1963–1993 and the editor of, among other books, the widely praised essay collection Hidden Histories of Science and Doing It, a collection of essays on the performing arts. He is the co-editor of two volumes of The Company They Kept: Writers on Unforgettable Friendships.

Mr. Silvers has been a Trustee of The New York Public Library since 1997 and is currently a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the board of directors of the American Ditchley Foundation as well as the Paris Review Foundation.

In 1988 Mr. Silvers was named Chevalier de l’Ordre Nationale du Mérite and in 1998 was named Chevalier de l’Ordre Nationale de la Légion d’Honneur. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1996 and in 2007 was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by Harvard University.

In 2006, together with co-editor Barbara Epstein, Mr. Silvers was recognized by the National Book Foundation with the Literarian Award for Outstanding Service to the American Literary Community. In 2012, he received The Paris Review’s Hadada Prize for his unique contribution to literature, and was also awarded an inaugural New York City Literary Honor by Mayor Michael Bloomberg for his contribution to the literary life of the city.

Barbara Epstein, Editor (1928–2006)

Barbara Epstein worked in book publishing and at Partisan Review before she helped to found The New York Review of Books in 1963. She was co-editor of the magazine with Robert Silvers for forty-three years. After graduating with honors in History and Literature from Radcliffe College, she began her publishing career at Doubleday & Company where she served as a junior editor, and edited the translation of Anne Frank’s The Diary of A Young Girl, as well as Theodore Roethke’s The Waking: Poems, 1933–1953.

As Andrew O’Hagan wrote in Barbara Epstein’s obituary in The Independent, “She was complete in her devotion to the art of editing—almost never writing herself, and forever lobbying her writers to do more and do better for the paper—but she found that the task required more energy and more outrage as she got older. She was proud of the magazine’s more recent position as the only mainstream American publication to speak out consistently against the war in Iraq. ‘I’m not interested in the public eye,’ she once said, ‘but I’m interested in the public ear, and I want our writers to fill it with brilliant sentences.’”

Rea Hederman, Publisher

Rea Hederman has been the publisher of The New York Review of Books since 1984. Mr. Hederman came to The New York Review after a distinguished career in journalism. From 1973 to 1982, he was executive editor of the Jackson, Mississippi, Clarion-Ledger. During that period, the newspaper won every major national award for journalism, including the Robert Kennedy, the Heywood Broun, the George Polk, and, in 1983, the Pulitzer Prize for public service for work published in 1982.

Mr. Hederman is a member of the board of the American Academy in Rome.