

Women's Reports of Transatlantic Travel

For the next two weeks, we'll be focused on narratives closely associated with travel, a subject which has already been addressed earlier in the term in such sessions as our first meeting's look at Dickens as a lecturer on tour in the US. For this meeting, we'll be paying particular attention to how gendered identities intersect with the role of transatlantic traveler.

One figure whose experiences we'll explore is Anna Jameson, whose 1838 travel book usefully builds upon the reports just given by Adam and Jay Jay by bringing Canada and "First Nations" peoples (the preferred Canadian term for "Indians") into the conversation. Simultaneously, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* looks back to our earlier discussions of transatlantic women's rights and looks forward to transatlantic networks. The Jameson excerpts and secondary scholarship (both available on eCollege) are listed below.

Anna Jameson *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, 3 vols. (London: Saunders & Otley, 1838), 3:183-201, 210-21, 298-312. (PDF available on e-college) (sections on Indian women and their relation to European women); see also sketches of Canada by Jameson: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/43021516@N06/sets/72157627204341076/> (see also portrait of Jameson at <http://www.torontoartsfoundation.org/First-Impressions-hidden-pages/Anna-Jameson>)



Secondary scholarship:

Linda K. Hughes, "Anna Jameson and Female Affective Cosmopolitanism," essay accepted for *Cosmopolitanism at Home and Abroad*, ed. James Hewitson and Yvonne Pelletier

We suggest that you begin with the Hughes essay because it will provide background on Jameson (most likely a little-known figure to most of you) and context for the excerpts from *Winter Studies*. The essay is primarily concerned with developing an argument about female

cosmopolitanism, asserting that Jameson's first effort to enter another culture quite different from her own, in Germany, shaped her disposition and (relative) ability to do so again when she encountered Chippewa Indians in Canada. Feel free to skim past some of the German studies discussion (pp. 11ff.), focusing on the larger point of the intersection of transatlanticism with transnationality, and Jameson's complicated, problematic representation of racial difference in Mrs. Johnston and her two daughters. Also note Jameson's attempt to network women and women's rights causes across national and racial boundaries. The figure of Mrs. Schoolcraft, a biracial woman, will also provide us with a bridge from Jameson to *The Woman of Colour*.

To learn more about the poetess Schoolcraft and her relations both to Native/First Nations culture and her author-husband, an excellent source is the introduction to a recent well-researched edition of her poetry: *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft*, prepared by Robert Dale Parker, who provides extensive analysis of the "métis" culture during the Schoolcrafts' day in the liminal space between parts of what's now Michigan and Canada.



***The Woman of Colour: A Tale*, edited by Lyndon J. Dominique, Broadview edition:**

As we noted when reading the anti-slavery text produced via the three-way collaborative authorship by Prince, Pringle, and Strickland, many instances of blacks' transatlantic travel were linked to opposing the power of slave culture. For instance, William and Ellen Craft, who first lived in Canada after escaping from a Georgia plantation, later (1853) made their way to England, where they sought support for the American abolitionist movement among the anti-slavery social networks that had already succeeded in securing abolitionist legislation in England. As Alan Rice's essay for *Teaching Transatlanticism* points out, however, Britain had

its own dark history of involvement in slave culture, particularly in connection with the longstanding use of enslaved workers on Caribbean plantations—a practice whose complex legacies continue to resonate in literary terms well after the official end of slavery in the colonies, including in now-familiar texts like Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847).

In this context, *The Woman of Colour* is just one of a number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century narratives reflecting British fascination with the Caribbean as a site of complex social relations shaped by cross-race contact and race-mixing. The heroine of the novel, in fact, is cast as one example of the moral, political, and economic challenges that the offspring of such relationships posed to British society.

The novel also provides a striking example of how what’s often termed “recovery” in literary studies can generate questions that may never be fully answered. In this case, our inability (so far?) to identify the identity of the book’s author may create an appealing sense of mystery for us as readers today, but it is likely also be one factor behind what, up to now, has been a very limited output of scholarship on the text. In our own discussion, accordingly, we’ll want to ask ourselves whether, how, and why a more substantial body scholarship on this text might emerge if its creator were definitely identified as a Caribbean black—female or male.

Of course, preparing an affordable and accessible edition of a text like *The Woman of Colour* is always an essential first step toward a fuller recovery process. Our Broadview Press edition thus represents one of the tasks of transatlantic scholarship that is still very much incomplete—finding materials appropriate for study (in the classroom and beyond) and then generating scholarly editions. Significantly, this edition is cast, in a number of ways, as an eighteenth-century British text, even though it was originally published in the early nineteenth century and even though it clearly depends on a Caribbean geographic framework at least as much as an English one. Along those lines, please take note of the various “markers” in paratexts and packaging that locate *The Woman of Colour* in interpretive frameworks other than transatlantic, and then consider how that positioning impacts your own reading.

To give you a sense of how scholars have responded to this edition, we’ve selected two reviews for you to read, both available online through the TCU library (or go to the Project Muse and Sage Premier databases):

- a) Sara Salih, “*The Woman of Colour. A Tale. Anonymous* (1808): review.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 21.3 (Spring 2009): 448-50.
- b) “Review of *The Woman of Colour: A Tale*.” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 43.2 (2008): 167.

We’d also ask that you read, in the Broadview edition, Appendix F, which provides a window into a number of early nineteenth-century reviews.

While you are reading the primary text itself, look for elements within the narrative that, in a different edition you might prepare yourself, could be used/highlighted as a counterpoint the tendency (so far) to situate *The Woman of Colour* within a heritage of black (women’s?) writing (linked to the UK’s 18th-century literary history) more than as a 19th-century *transatlantic* narrative. That is, try to identify specific aspects of the novel that could feed into a scholarly re-positioning of the book in a more explicitly transatlantic framework. In doing so, you might think of yourself as doing a *historicized* close reading—one placing the text in its own nexus of time and space. Elements we may want to highlight and collaboratively analyze in class, then, could include these: colour, the body, animals, marriage, mapping, and social class intersecting with racial identity.

We are pairing *The Woman of Colour* with two allied poems, one a formal address “by a Mulatto Woman” to a departing “brother” missionary, published in 1794, and a narrative poem by Caroline Norton (1808-1877) entitled “The Creole Girl; or. The Physician’s Story” (be sure to review Lyndon Dominique’s comments on the term “Creole” in *The Woman of Colour*, pp. 22-23). The first poem adopts highly educated diction and conventions of eighteenth-century verse; so does the African American poet Phillis Wheatley in, e.g., “To His Excellency, General Washington.” If you know the Wheatley poem, you might consider how the “Mulatto Woman” speaker situates herself relative to others in **her** society compared to Wheatley’s positioning vis-a-vis Washington. How can we read this tacit positioning in relation to race and self-concept?

You may note that Jameson mentions Norton, author of “The Creole Girl,” in *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*. Norton was a popular novelist and poet, as well as the granddaughter of the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Norton also has a place in feminist history because she was the moving force behind the Infant Custody Act of 1839, which circumscribed for the first time men’s absolute ownership of their children, since it enabled women separated from their husbands and in good moral standing to petition for custody of children under 7.

In “The Creole Girl” Norton turns to the sentimental narrative, eliciting readers’ affective response as a means of social critique. As we find out in Part II, the narrator is not the expected “poetess” but a male physician. This may remind us a bit of the overlay visited upon the narrative of Mary Prince by Pringle. As you read the tale, consider to what degree this 1840 narrative parallels or diverges from the narrative of *Woman of Colour*. We also invite you to consider the racial discourse of the novel in relation to Norton’s representation of race in “The Creole Girl.” The most obvious cause of the Creole girl’s suffering is her illegitimacy. To what degree is she also racially marked? And what social commentary does Norton’s poem suggest as a whole?

N.B. In the preface to the second edition of *Dreams, and Other Poems*, 1841, Norton sarcastically complains about the reprinting of her work in America and of American printings of poems attributed to her that she did not write. (If you’re curious, you can look at this on the copy digitized and made available on Internet Archive.)

Translation of the French epigraph to “The Creole Girl” (compliments of Sharon Fairchild, Chair, Department of Modern Foreign Languages): “the rose, being of this world, where the most beautiful things have the worst destiny — she lives the life of a rose — in the space of one morning!”

Poem “written by a Mulatto Woman” (1794), Broadview text, pp. 212-14.

Caroline Norton, “The Creole Girl” (poem, 1840), available at <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/vwwp/view?docId=VAB7052&chunk.id=d1e6622&brand=vwwp&doc.view=0&anchor.id=>

Susanna Moodie's Record of Settlement in Canadian America

Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush*, ed. Michael Peterman (New York: Norton Critical Edition, 2007).

While Susanna Moodie has not been a major figure in traditional survey courses for U.S. literature, she has drawn increasing attention in curriculum defining “American literature” more broadly (i.e., literatures of the Americas), and she’s been a key influence on a number of Canadian women writers (including, as noted in our Norton edition and referenced in more detail below, Margaret Atwood). Linked to a productive literary family in England, Susanna Strickland Moodie also merits attention, as we found earlier in the semester, for being the original editor (and mediator) of *The History of Mary Prince: a West Indian Slave*. Thus, what we might term Moodie’s personal geographic reach embraces the British Isles, North America, and the Caribbean, making her one of the most useful figures for transatlantic cultural mapping in nineteenth century studies.

Like Susanna Rowson, whom we read earlier in the term, and like Fanny Kemble, Moodie is transatlantic in a literal sense by virtue of immigration to North America. Several features of her life story and writings set her apart from Rowson and Kemble, however, including her settlement in Canada rather than the United States and her focus on the difficulties of life “in the bush.” The U.S. writer with whom she’s most often compared is Caroline Kirkland, author of *A New Home, Who’ll Follow?* Like Moodie, Kirkland originally published a number of her book’s chapters in periodicals; like Moodie, Kirkland drew angry responses from some of her neighbors for her biting, satirical portraits of their class-based behaviors; like Moodie, Kirkland rose to increased prominence in studies of American women writers as part of the canonical intervention and recovery work that began in the 1970s. However, Moodie had always held a more secure place in Canadian literary history than Kirkland had in the U.S., and Moodie is now attracting increased attention as a transatlantic figure, whereas scholarship on Kirkland tends to position her either as a “woman writer” or a “writer focused on the American West” (when the “West” was Michigan!). If you’d like to pursue connections between Kirkland and Moodie, see Michael Peterman’s essay, “Roughing It in Michigan and Upper Canada: Caroline Kirkland and Susanna Moodie,” in our Norton Critical Edition, pages 512-21.)

We’ve found it painful, we confess, to pare down our reading of Moodie’s own sketches, but we’re aware that your revisions of the editing project are due on October 23 as well. Therefore, for our current class engagement with Moodie’s narrative, we’ve selected chapters to discuss that most clearly situate her as a transatlantic author writing on a transatlantic experience. We hope you’ll return to Moodie in the future, especially since she’s such an accessible topic for undergraduate teaching—for instance, by pairing some of Atwood’s poems with some of the sketches; further, partly with Moodie’s prominence in studies of Canadian women writers in mind, and in a year when the Nobel prize has just been claimed by another Canadian woman author, we’ll be reading an essay by Kate Flint for Teaching Transatlanticism later this term—one that puts Moodie’s authorial identity in conversation with that of Native writer Pauline Johnson.

For now, in what will likely be a first encounter with Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* sketches for most of you, here are some questions to consider as you read:

- How does Moodie position herself in relation to her homeland? Her new home? In what ways is that self-positioning shifting at times throughout the text?
- In particular, what role do social class differences play in Moodie's text? How and why?
- How does Moodie interact with and depict others that she encounters in "the bush," and why? (One point to consider, of course, is the various potential audiences Moodie is imagining for her work.)
- What questions and observations come to mind for you in the places where Moodie depicts Indians? How would you position these encounters in relation to those of Jameson in *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*?
- Among other tools, Moodie uses a rhetoric of affiliation and one of distancing. Look for various points in the text when she uses these differing stances and consider why.
- Who are the memorable individual "characters" we meet in Moodie's writing, and what makes them memorable? In this regard, keep in mind that a number of the chapters were originally published as magazine sketches, and ask yourself how such a venue might have shaped her writing.
- How is "Canada" depicted in Moodie's text?
- What contributions (if any) do Moodie's poems make to the book? (Note that some U.S. editions excised the poetry.)

Besides discussing the book itself, with emphasis on the questions above, we'll want to consider the varying forms Moodie's text has taken in different editions, the varying responses it has evoked from different readers in different places and historical moments, and the potential for future transatlantic scholarship on Moodie.



Contexts and Text Preparation:

- 1) Prefaces--Please read the advertisements and prefaces from the various editions as laid out in the Norton:
pages 343-51

- 2) Editorial decision-making—The editor of our Norton edition outlines his decision-making process on pages 333-336.
- 3) Illustrations—337-42 –What do these add to the edition, and how?

Chapters from *Roughing It in the Bush*:

Advertisement and Introduction: 8-12

A Visit to Grosse Isle—14-23

Our First Settlement, and the Borrowing System: 58-76 (top)

The Wilderness, and Our Indian Friends: 182-203

The Fire 261-273

A Change in Our Prospects 314-322

Adieu to the Woods 322-330

Recommended additional chapters for the heartiest readers:

Tom Wilson's Immigration: 42 ff

John Monaghan 96 ff

Brian, the Still-Hunter: 115-128 [one of the most frequently anthologized Moodie texts]

The Charivari: 128-143

Our Logging Bee 209 ff

Disappointed Hopes 236-45

The Outbreak 273-89

Responses to Susanna Moodie:

A) *Everyone should read these reviews of Moodie's book from the Norton critical edition:*

- 1) Hardmann, "Forest Life in Canada West," 401-04.
- 2) Anonymous, "The Backwoods of Canada," 404.
- 3) Lyndsay, "Misrepresentation," 405-07.
- 4) Anonymous, "Roughing It in the Bush," 407-413. [two reviews, each attributed to anonymous authors]

Note: As you read through the reviews above, select several specific phrases that "mark" the reviewers' assessments not just of Moodie's text but also of Canada and of the relationship between that still-emerging literary culture and its British ancestor. Were you to prepare a paper on the British reception of Moodie's book, what would be some potential themes to address?

B) Poems from Margaret Atwood, *The Journals of Susanna Moodie: Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). [Representative poems from the collection are included in the Norton critical edition of Moodie's text. Read those and Atwood's "Afterword," 417-19.]

Query: What fascinated Atwood about Moodie? What role does Atwood seem to be assigning to Moodie in Canadian literary history, and why?

Secondary criticism on Moodie from our Norton edition:

While we'd love to have all of you read every one of the essays included in our edition, we want to be time-efficient, given your other work for this week. Thus, we've set up three groups whose members will read one essay apiece, and we'll take some time in class to, first synthesize your responses and then share them with other class members in a "jigsaw" exercise.

Group One: Jay Jay, Matt, Ariel, and Kaleigh

Read Gerson, 522-38

Group Two: Adam, Heidi, and Meta

Read Bentley--Read the introduction plus section III—i.e., pages 442-52 and 459-72.

Group Three: Chris, Amanda, and Samantha

Read Buss, 571-582 (Given Buss's highlighting of the "Brian" chapter in Moodie's text, you might want to skim that sketch, if you have time; see above for page numbers).

Recommended Supplemental Reading

For a helpful article on the complex challenge of interpreting Moodie's role in the creation of Prince's biographical narrative, see A. M. Rauwerda, "Naming, Agency, and 'A Tissue of Falsehoods' in *The History of Mary Prince*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 29.2 (2001), pp. 397-411.

For a highly appreciative reading of Margaret Atwood's poetry collection that was inspired by study of Moodie's writing, see this online essay, which dubs Atwood's salute to Moodie "possibly Margaret Atwood's finest collection of poetry," due in part to "its cumulative effect, from the close inter-connection and inter-weaving of poems as Atwood presents her modernized version of Susanna Moodie's experience."

<http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry/cpjrn/vol102/bilan.htm>

A related essay by Susan Johnston focuses on Moodie's own aesthetics as they connect with Atwood's poetry: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry/cpjrn/vol31/johnston.htm>

See also this interesting essay by a Polish scholar addressing the same topic:

<http://www.ptbk.org.pl/userfiles/file/laskowska04.pdf>

And here, on YouTube, Atwood and the original illustrator of the poetry collection comment on their collaboration: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVuXzHXZYdQ>