Teaching the Transatlantic Eighteenth Century

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Edited by

Jennifer Frangos and Cristobal Silva

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INTRODUCTION

REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING THE TRANSATLANTIC

JENNIFER FRANGOS AND CRISTOBAL SILVA

The conversations that led to this collection on teaching the transatlantic eighteenth century began in the summer of 2003, when the two of us were just embarking on our first jobs as Assistant Professors at Texas Tech University. Although we were both trained—and hired—under traditional nation-based models of our respective fields (eighteenth-century British and early American literature), we could not help but ask ourselves how transatlanticism fit within our new department's curriculum. Although there were no dedicated transatlantic literature courses on the books, senior colleagues throughout the department encouraged us to develop some for our students; in this, we suspect, our department was similar to any number of others throughout the country at the time. Indeed it had barely been a year since David Armitage declared that "we are all Atlanticists now,"[1] and judging by how often "Atlantic" appears as an organizing principle in calls for papers and conference presentation titles, in publications and dissertations, and in academic job listings, he was not far off the mark: interest in the circulation of ideas, goods, and people between Europe, Africa, and the Americas has pushed scholars to re-imagine disciplinary boundaries, and led to a large body of productive work across the academy. By placing Atlantic history and literature at the center, rather than the periphery of analysis, critics have repositioned our understanding of nationhood, of historical time periods, of literary and cultural production, economic and political developments, racial and gendered dynamics, the histories of medicine and science, as well as philosophical and aesthetic concerns. The list could—and does—go on.

Who Are "We"?

It's not that Armitage's "we are all Atlanticists" changed the profession in a fundamental way, so much as it gave voice to a shift that many of us had begun to recognize in our own research: the more closely one traced figures like Benjamin Franklin, Olaudah Equiano, and Phillis Wheatley, for example, the more difficult it was to isolate them from the transatlantic networks in which they circulated; periodicals like *The Spectator* and *Tatler* helped to form and refine the English national character and reading public, but, as Franklin indicates in his *Autobiography*, they were also central to the Atlantic World's emerging print culture; it became impossible to work on late eighteenth-century Philadelphia without also thinking about its relation to St. Domingo, France, and England; and as Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse had argued a decade earlier, even Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), the archetypal English novel, found its origins in the woods of New England.[2] Despite the exciting possibilities that a spatial reorganization of the period offered for our understanding of the long—and now wide—eighteenth century,[3] one aspect of Armitage's words remained unsettling: who, the two of us wondered, was to be counted amongst his "we"? Or, more to the point, how did "we" define ourselves as Atlanticists? The most direct answer to this question is that Armitage was writing to a community of researchers: scholars whose conversations occur primarily in conferences, as well as in articles, dissertations, and books. But as every scholar with an academic appointment knows, very few of us are "only" researchers, and our teaching responsibilities often seem in tension with the drive to publish. It therefore felt natural for us at the beginning of our academic careers to ask where our work as teachers fell into the equation. And while it is true that teaching and research often inform one another, and that professors can offer stand-alone transatlantic seminars for graduate students and advanced undergraduates, the fact remains that situating transatlanticism in the curriculum is not always an obvious task. Even with the broad support and goodwill of colleagues, curricular changes are rarely painless, given the competing interests that struggle over limited resources, not to mention institutional structures that complicate such innovations.[4]

This is the space out of which *Teaching the Transatlantic Eighteenth Century* evolved. The collection began to take shape at the 2006 American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference in Montreal, where we moderated a roundtable discussion entitled "Teaching the Transatlantic." We were interested in connecting with other scholars actively engaged in

the theoretical and pedagogical questions about syllabus design and teaching practices that we had recently faced ourselves. The discussion at ASECS proved to be extremely fruitful, and the audience interaction quickly demonstrated the manifold ways that the transatlantic is being imagined in college and university classrooms. Here we present expanded versions of a number of those roundtable papers, as well as essays by audience members who participated in the subsequent discussion, and others who have since joined the effort. The central axiom of this collection is that the classroom functions as a site for research and collaboration: not only as a space that reflects the research of individual scholars, but as a generative site to put ideas, theories, and methodologies into play. Whereas transatlanticism has altered research practices over the last decade and a half in important ways, our intention in preparing this collection is to expand the notion of *we Atlanticists* beyond the world of conference panels and scholarly publication in order to think about how—and where—the Atlantic fits in the classroom, and how the classroom continues to shape research practices.

Each of the contributors to this collection has joined us in this commitment, and they consider how inter- and intra-departmental collaborations reshape our approaches to teaching the eighteenth century, how and why Transatlantic Studies can function as an introduction to both college study and discipline-specific focus, and how it can help more advanced students revise their notions of nation, place, history, and identity. They have written essays that describe various thematic approaches, strategies, methodologies, roadblocks, connections, and insights related to their experience of teaching the transatlantic in a variety of settings (including small liberal arts colleges, two-year colleges, and large research universities), and to a broad range of students (from first-year undergraduates to doctoral students). These essays ultimately cohere around a central question about how the transatlantic can reshape our students' educational experiences and, in doing so, reconfigure our own relationship to the field. Thus, our aim is to broaden the phrase *we Atlanticists* to acknowledge *we teachers* explicitly, and to ask what it means to say "we are all Atlanticists" with our students in mind. In this introduction, we describe the discussions that informed our approach to designing an undergraduate transatlantic literature survey, and we interrogate the assumptions that we brought to the early stages of the process, underscoring the ways in which our students were deeply invested in—but also, at times, resistant to—Atlantic topics.

Resistance may be too strong a word in this case, because our students were actively—and enthusiastically—engaged in the courses; though they

complained, at times, that the reading load was too heavy (though no more so than in our traditional classes), they felt that it was a valuable class, and that they would recommend it to their friends in the future; indeed we later offered a second version of the undergraduate class and a transatlantic graduate seminar, and both proved to be quite popular. What we are trying to get at might better be described as our own miscalculation about the assumptions that students brought with them to the class. For example, one of the first goals that we articulated when contemplating the course was to make students question their relationship to the English major in fundamental ways. Perhaps because of our own training and theoretical engagement with transatlanticism, we had assumed that our undergraduate students were well versed in the national paradigms that shape most English Literature curricula (that they were used to thinking about British and American literature in parallel tracks, and to understanding literary history in terms of nationhood), and were therefore ready to interrogate—if not rebel against—them. It was our intention to introduce transatlanticism as a way to play off of our students' impulses to read texts in a nation-based framework, or, as the syllabus put it: "one of our central aims will be to think about how this dual approach to literary history changes our understanding of both Early America and Eighteenth-century Britain." To our surprise, however, this goal proved to be far more elusive than we had anticipated—and not for the reasons we expected.

It wasn't that the concept of transatlantic networks was inherently difficult for them, but rather that many of our students did not have a clear sense that national paradigms shaped literary history in the first place.[5] Even as it was our intention to question and unravel nationalist trajectories of literary history, we found ourselves having to build them up (or make students aware of them) in the first place; we had to introduce our students to thinking about the relationship between literature and national history, and to suggest what's at stake in locating a text within a specific national tradition. Indeed, one of the interesting things we encountered was that we had to convince them that what they were doing was remarkable in any way: many had not taken another literature class in these or adjacent time periods; most, in fact, did not have a strong sense of the "traditional" trajectories of British and American literatures; and, for a significant number of them, this was their first English class that was not classified according to genre ("Poetry," "Short Story," "The Novel"). So where we had expected to work against a fixed notion that texts were either "American" or "British," and would have to make the case that any given text could be both (or neither), we found instead a group of students whose investments lay elsewhere: they were capable readers of the fluid identities

and transatlantic dimensions of the texts and contexts we were dealing with—even if they were not always sure of the various ways in which the transatlantic could signify.

Nevertheless, the upshot is that students began to think increasingly in terms of nation for a good part of the semester—the opposite of our intended goal. In retrospect, we realize that this may have had to do with the structure of the class and the fact that we were team teaching, as students often identified a text as "English" or "American" based on which professor they saw at the front of the room on any given day; even then, our presence was not always a reliable indicator, and there was always the risk that students would conclude, say, that Wheatley was a "British" writer, or that Daniel Defoe had written an "American novel" based on who was leading discussion. Early in the semester, for example, the students didn't bat an eye when Cristobal, the "Americanist" professor, led discussion about John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, though they did register surprise when he mentioned that Locke had never been to the North American colonies. Though the theoretical discussions these assumptions could produce were interesting, the motivations were problematic in our minds, and made us far more aware of the impact of our physical presence in the classroom. We began to pay closer attention to the spatial relation between ourselves and the rest of the class, and settled on a strategy to displace the traditional focus of attention away from the front of the room and toward networks of conversations between students, texts, and ourselves. When the material called for one of us to lecture, the other would sit among the students, and ask questions to prompt discussion. To the extent that this movement was disorienting for our students, we felt that it paid off in a number of ways, and helped to schematize the class's shifting spatial and intellectual relation to the transatlantic.[6]

By the end of the semester, this confusion became a talking point in and of itself, as students accustomed themselves to articulating the very types of questions that had previously gone unanswered in their minds: What does it mean to organize texts according to national categories, and what does it mean to disrupt those categories? How do texts signify in inter- and trans-national contexts—or what do inter- and trans-national contexts even look like? In retrospect, it is hardly surprising that our undergraduate students were not prepared for such questions when they registered for the class; indeed it was we who were unprepared for the kinds of experiences, questions, and perspectives the students brought to us, and for the kinds of things we would *not* have to ask them to do. Our initial goal, we realized, had far more to say about our training than theirs.

These realizations helped us to reframe the course materials and objectives as we prepared to revise the survey before teaching it a second time.

Our reflections on teaching the transatlantic survey made us question what initially appeared to be our students' ambivalence toward the transformative impact of transatlanticism on literary studies. This, we began to surmise, was instead a mark of how much they were *already* members of transatlantic communities—even in the decidedly non-Atlantic space of West Texas: family background, diet, music, movies, the internet, and television are only a few of the vectors along which our students encountered and participated in Atlantic networks and culture on a daily basis. Though these Atlantic networks are often obscured by more contemporary analogues like globalism (as they would be for Pacific networks), some of the better known examples include popular TV shows like *The Office* and reality programs like *Survivor*, *American Idol*, *America's Got Talent*, and *Hell's Kitchen*, whose production trajectories carried them from European originals to American adaptations. Perhaps the case is most over-determined with shows like *American Idol* and *America's Got Talent*, which rely on acerbic British judges to serve as arbiters of popular American tastes—transatlanticism, indeed! The upshot is that students came to the class already adept at negotiating matters of influence, movement, translation, and identity-construction in their day-to-day lives, so our task in teaching the transatlantic was to harness their familiarity with de-centered and fluid subject-positions, and to coordinate these with the kinds of concerns that lie at the heart of literary and historiographic methodologies. The point of teaching the transatlantic, then, was not so much to make Atlanticists out of our students, as it was to help them recognize the extent to which they already were.

In terms of our students' academic engagement, we also learned to expand our notion of how transatlanticism structures educational experiences, especially at large public institutions. Our initial vision was based on the naive assumption that students followed a progression of classes that was historically and geographically coherent—how soon we forget our own experiences. The truth is, however, that they were rarely guided by a strategic vision of coursework beyond the list of requirements they needed to check off before completing the major. More often than not, our students registered for classes based on a set of concerns that included work schedules, teacher preferences, exam times, and open sections. Thus, we found that the students in our "junior-level" survey ranged from early sophomores to graduating seniors. But tempting as it may be to interpret these registration patterns as a sign of disengagement or alienation, we take it at face value, as a symptom of the modern college

experience. Read this way, our students' drifting through the curriculum becomes a form of collegiate or intellectual transatlanticism, where students embody the very transhistorical, transnational, and transdisciplinary values that inform current (transatlantic) scholarship: they are used to negotiating Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* alongside Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and Elizabeth Bishop next to John Milton—even if they've never been asked to theorize the structure of their reading habits; the fact that we replicated these habits in our class was hardly surprising to them—and far less so than walking into a room with two professors. Granted, it may seem like a stretch to equate the familiar process of coursework with transatlanticism, but this link allows us to rethink the relationship between our students and our subject matter, and to see that the intellectual space they inhabit is always already transatlantic, as it were. Thus, teaching the transatlantic was for us less about breaking down the hegemony of national models of literary historiography for our students than we had expected it to be, and more of a method (or strategy) for uncovering the networks and coherences that permeate daily academic encounters, giving voice to those networks, and creating a space for students to examine and integrate the connections that they are used to overwriting.[7]

This realization came from recognizing that our initial approach to the transatlantic survey was perhaps too programmatic, insofar as it depended on a specific reading of our students. By the same token, we can't help but note that there's something of the uncanny in identifying the transatlantic within our students, as we discovered that our preconceptions about them reflected instead our own relationship to the field. To push further on this notion, our desire to de-center the classroom space via the transatlantic had broader consequences for the way that we approach our teaching than we had at first imagined. And much as transatlanticism asks us to de-center nation-based models of historiography, "de-centering"—whether we consider it in terms of authority, subject matter, or method—serves as a powerful trope in transatlantic pedagogy.[8]

Some Practical Concerns

We now turn briefly to some concrete details about the transatlantic courses that we taught, and point to a few moments when we were actively engaged in de-centering the classroom—or being de-centered in the process. One of the first obstacles to the transatlantic course we proposed was the fact that our department did not have mechanisms for team-teaching in place. Our way around this structural problem was for each of us to offer one junior-level period survey ("England and the New World,"

under the eighteenth-century British course number, and "America and the Old World," under the early American course number) which were scheduled to meet at the same time in a room that could accommodate the two classes together.[9] The first surprise we encountered is that we had anticipated the course approval process to take anywhere from 12 to 18 months, but instead we were scheduled to teach this class within weeks of raising the question with our Chair and Associate Chair; barely halfway through our first semester on campus, we were scrambling to design a new syllabus, submit book orders, and assemble course packets. We agreed early on that we would keep writing and discussion as a central component of the course, despite its size, but constructing the rest of the syllabus required a leap of faith on both our parts. We were each invested in certain texts that we felt ought to be included in any survey of the period, but had to negotiate in the hopes that our final reading list would hold together. There were obvious choices like Mary Rowlandson, Aphra Behn, Joseph Addison's *Spectator* essay on Inkle and Yarico, and Phillis Wheatley that made it to the syllabus, as well as less obvious selections like Margaret Cavendish, Jonathan Edwards, Alexander Pope's *Windsor-Forrest*, and Mary Wollstonecraft. And although there were a few rough patches mainly having to do with jarring formal or thematic transitions, we had purposely constructed the syllabus around a number of helpful symmetries. Thus, the course began with Theodor DeBry's copper engravings that accompanied Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590), and ended with William Blake's illustrated *America, A Prophecy* (1793). Likewise, we worked outward from the core of the class, which contained a cluster of three texts: Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), Franklin's *Autobiography* (1793), and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789). These texts raised important issues about the relation between fiction and non-fiction, about representation, and about the circulation of capital in the Atlantic World, and they served as an important pivot in the middle of the semester, as all three were formally, compositionally, and thematically invested in the transatlantic. The issues they raised in combination with one another picked up on a number of the anxieties students observed in seventeenth-century texts, and served as a platform to jump into the age of revolution.[10]

Our second take on the class, three years later, used a more streamlined approach to the syllabus: instead of struggling to provide minimal coverage of both surveys, we were much more concerned with specific issues that could highlight the concept of transatlanticism as a critical framework. Thus transatlanticism in this case became less a description of specific movements and circulations, than it was an opportunity to frame

narratives in multiple networks. We wanted our students to think of what it meant, for example, to consider Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) explicitly as an English text, an American text, and a transatlantic text; what it meant to consider Anne Bradstreet an American poet, an English poet, and a transatlantic poet; and, to paraphrase Equiano's own ambiguous relation to identity, expressed at the beginning of his *Interesting Narrative*, what it means to consider him "an European," an African, and a citizen of the transatlantic.[11]

Still invested in exploring the function of classroom spaces, this second incarnation of the course modeled discussions even more closely on notions of circulation and triangulation. As with the de-centering trope, we incorporated these figures into our teaching strategies: because the class was held in a large lecture hall, when either one of us acted as a fixed point on stage to introduce the material, the other circulated throughout the room, giving voice to discussion in a way that forced students to reorient themselves constantly; our movement increased the sense that comments, questions, or answers came from, and were directed toward, different parts of the room. Second, we were far more eager to challenge one another to alternate primary responsibility for texts in a way that we had not done the first time around. Thus, if the "non-specialist" took the lead in presenting material and guiding conversation on a given day, the "expert" became a voice from the gallery. We also triangulated discussion from time to time, with both of us remaining on the stage, facing students, batting ideas back and forth and out toward them. Although this was unnerving for students early in the semester, they adapted quickly, and increasingly became aware of their own positioning (physically as well as intellectually) with respect to the conversation. Though we had 59 students registered for this course, discussions were lively, and students took more notice of each other as they turned in their seats to address either one of us. Because these methodologies required less grounding in a national tradition and fewer assumptions about our students' preconceptions, we spent less time building up a pair of opposed national traditions, and felt that this version of the course was more fluid in its transatlantic engagement. Perhaps not coincidentally (as we had both by then been on campus for three years), a number of students enrolled in this course had previously taken either one or both of our stand-alone Early American and Eighteenth-Century British surveys. It was our experience that these students willingly engaged the materials from multiple perspectives without feeling obliged to label the texts "American" or "British," and provided good foils as they tried to negotiate a shift in their understanding of the material.

That same semester, we also offered a graduate-level transatlantic seminar. Institutionally, the arrangements were the same as at the undergraduate level: we each listed a seminar under a separate course number that met at a common time, and arranged to meet both classes in the same room. (The cap was lowered on each course to limit the total enrollment to 16.[12]) We each commented on all presentations and written work, and produced final grades together at the end of the semester. The syllabus followed a similar trajectory to the undergraduate survey, and took as its purpose a more explicit engagement with the same questions and ideas; we generally worked with fewer authors, but read their works more deeply in order to highlight or expand on particular issues and themes—for example, we read all of Bradstreet's and Wheatley's extant poetry, rather than the selected poems assigned to the undergraduates. We also added a healthy dose of secondary readings from both historians and literary critics in order to help our students recognize and situate themselves within the community of Atlantic scholars.[13] In the graduate classroom, our pedagogical presence involved far less lecture and discussion-leading by one professor or the other, focusing instead on self-consciously modeling academic exchange between the professors and encouraging the students to participate at that level. Students made several structured presentations: a close reading of a short passage from a primary text, an overview of a secondary source, and a conference-style paper—each of which involved subsequently leading a portion of class discussion or taking questions from everyone at the seminar table. As in the undergraduate courses, one of our on-going concerns was what a transatlantic methodology allowed us to do or see or think or ask that was not readily available in a more "traditional," nation-based literary seminar. The final projects for this class included work on problems of location and African identity in James Grainger's georgic poem, "The Sugar Cane" (1764); money, goods, and credit in *Moll Flanders*; nostalgia, narcissism, and national identity in Equiano's *Narrative*; and New World–Old World dynamics in the circulation and adaptations of the Inkle and Yarico stories.

As might be expected, these graduate students were more invested in national traditions than the undergraduates, many of them having both completed undergraduate degree programs that emphasized distinct national literatures and recently declared a focus in the literatures of one country or the other. Nevertheless, like their undergraduate peers, they demonstrated a facility in moving between and among different transatlantic networks. And because Texas Tech began subscribing to *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (*ECCO*) during the interval between our course offerings, the database became integral to our teaching.

Students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels were responsible for tracking down primary texts and observing transatlantic publication patterns first-hand; these arrangements added an important component to the class and helped students expand the scope of their final term papers.

On-Going Conversations

Though our own research was already being inflected by the field's shift toward transatlanticism, we were surprised by the number of ways in which the transatlantic figured in our classroom, and delighted at the conversations we have been able to join in various academic and professional contexts. Though our early approaches were a mix of trial and error, we hope that this collection can serve a range of readers, from the teacher looking to incorporate transatlantic material or perspectives into a traditionally defined classroom for the first time, or the faculty member interested in developing a team-taught course, to the seasoned transatlanticist eager to see how others approach the work of teaching. Recent years have produced a number of excellent anthologies of transatlantic material—Lance Newman, Joel Pace, and Chris Koenig-Woodyard's *Transatlantic Romanticism*, and Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner's *The English Literatures of America*, for example.[14] Even the major nation-based literature anthologies—the Heath, the Norton, the Longman—now include works and excerpts that explicitly engage transatlantic issues, such that there are now many places to go to get ideas about *what* to teach; in *Teaching the Transatlantic Eighteenth Century*, we aim to explore *why* and *how* we teach it. Essays in this collection not only theorize the relevance of transatlantic content and focus in all levels of college or university instruction and explore methods of arranging and implementing units or courses, but further suggest the ways that classroom encounters transform research practices through collaboration and generation of ideas, questions, and methodologies. Rather than simply providing reading lists or a collection of anecdotes about lesson plans, then, *Teaching the Transatlantic Eighteenth Century* emphasizes theorizing critical engagements with, interdisciplinary focus on, and the transformative potential of Transatlantic Studies—for students and teachers alike.

We considered several ways of organizing the essays that follow—thematic or topical groupings, pragmatic versus theoretical focus, methodological similarities—but, in the end, opted for this logic: the first two essays introduce what have emerged as the major foci of Transatlantic Studies as they are articulated across the collection, and the remainder of the essays are organized loosely by the level of course that they describe,

from first-year undergraduate courses through classes for majors to graduate seminars. We encourage our readers, however, to not limit themselves based on the level of students that they are planning for—teachers of undergraduate literature surveys will find much of interest in the informative discussions of graduate-level seminars by Vincent Carretta and Joseph Bartolomeo, and those working with advanced undergraduates or graduate students will take much away from Robert Dryden's and Jessica Hollis's observations about their transatlantic intro-level and general-education undergraduate courses.

Teaching the Transatlantic Eighteenth Century opens with Leonard von Morzé's essay on "Pitching Transatlanticism." Von Morzé's title offers a compelling trope for thinking about the multiple ways that the transatlantic signifies in post secondary education. Focusing on the trope's economic valence, von Morzé examines transatlanticism within the marketplace of the academy—that is, in the context of mounting financial pressures (especially at public institutions), positioning graduate students for the job market, and in terms of marketing (or pitching) courses to undergraduate students. He goes on to link this discussion to his course, which explores transatlantic economies. Thus, students begin with Joseph Addison's description of the Royal Exchange in *Spectator* No. 69. The concept of marketplace then opens further discussions of Daniel Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*), Olaudah Equiano, Phillis Wheatley, and Herman Melville (*Typee*), offering students the opportunity to read against the grain at each stage—or, in Wheatley's case, to approach her lesser-known work. Finally, von Morzé reflects on his endeavor to help his undergraduate students (many of whom are recent immigrants to the United States) reconceptualize "conditions of knowing, having, and being" both in the contemporary academy and in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World, and advocates for a transatlantic methodology to provide new approaches to eighteenth-century texts.

Jordana Rosenberg is explicitly invested in thinking about transatlantic methodology, which was central to the graduate seminar she describes. Addressing students' inclinations toward thematic readings of the transatlantic—that is, the tropes of water and fluidity that produce what she calls a "watery hermeneutic"—Rosenberg counters by describing her "material approach" to the seminar, which was "grounded in the history of capital accumulation." Rosenberg's commitment to examining a "problematic of transition" from feudalism to capitalist modes of production highlights a Marxist trajectory that helps her students to recognize a *terrestrial* or *dry* Atlantic—a narrative of Atlantic history that is not primarily (or thematically) invested in Atlantic crossings. She

describes her class's analysis of the Third Earl of Shaftesbury's letters concerning the management of his English estate, and demonstrates how a transatlantic methodology opens what appears, at first glance, to be a strictly "British" text to deeper investments in the Atlantic World. Not only does this move argue for a much broader vision of transatlantic networks, but it redirects the traditional east to west (Britain to America) narrative of transatlantic influence to account for America's varied influences on England.

Robert G. Dryden writes about a course on piracy and empire designed for students at a two-year gateway college preparing to move on from the Associate's Degree to a Bachelor of Arts. Because few of Dryden's students are English or History majors, the challenges he describes include helping them develop the skills they will need to succeed at a four-year college, familiarizing them with eighteenth-century texts, and teaching them how to recognize their own stake in the history of the Atlantic World. Recognizing that piracy looms so large in the popular imagination—from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise to contemporary accounts of international piracy on the high seas—Dryden explores the ways in which this modern cultural knowledge offers a logical starting point for testing students' assumptions and exploring the various forms of eighteenth-century Atlantic piracy: privateers, pirates, sea dogs, and buccaneers. Over the course of these explorations, Dryden describes students who learn to rethink the political, cultural, and economic impulses that might have compelled a common sailor to become a pirate. He argues that investigating the reasons behind these transitions (from sailor to pirate) allows students to gain important insights into the "rise of capitalism, exploitation of labor, and the construction of empire." Finally, by identifying piracy's centrality to the eighteenth-century Atlantic World, Dryden helps his students recognize the ways in which various pirates functioned as the pawns of empire and the ways that empires behave piratically.

Jessica L. Hollis combines critiques and perspectives offered by recent debates in geography with eighteenth-century transatlantic culture in a lower-division undergraduate literature course geared toward non-literature majors. The "scale debate," as conducted in recent issues of *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* and *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, "reflects on scalar imaginaries employed to elucidate how disparate and distant parts of the world are related," and thus lends itself well to a transatlantic approach to literature and culture. As an alternate to modes of analysis influenced by hierarchy, some geographers have proposed "flatness," a paradigm that allows Hollis the

opportunity to expand her students' understanding of the Atlantic World through focus on travel—especially the movement of people, things, and ideas across the Atlantic. The second section of the course shifts, but only slightly, using many of the same primary texts to explore "the contingencies that both enable and impede transatlantic movement," including racialized, gendered, and economic circumstance as well as moments of fixity, such as shipwreck and place-based English utopian ideals (as found, for example, in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*). A final paper assignment asks students to apply the methodologies and insights of the course to a text or issue relevant to their major—a gesture that Hollis intends to help students reconceptualize their sense of the university as an academic space, the interconnectedness of the various disciplines within that space, and the nature and benefit of general education requirements.

Juliet Shields works to de-center her classroom through a course devoted to gender, Anglo-colonial relations, and British and American literature between 1770 and 1830; early in the semester, Shields invites her students "to consider how the traditional classroom structure—which positions the instructor as center of power and arbiter of truth, and students as peripheral and often passive receptacles of knowledge—mimics these [colonial] relationships, and how we might re-envision this traditional structure to position students as active participants in their own education." Working from Benedict Anderson's concept of a nation imagined through print culture, and complicated by Ania Loomba's comment that "that imagining is profoundly gendered," the course covers novels by Frances Burney, Felicia Hemans, Susanna Rowson, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, Maria Edgeworth, and Sidney Owenson, juxtaposing Anglo-Irish and American texts and reading in the context of political union and nation-building on both sides of the Atlantic, with attention to the gendered tropes so common in such processes. Research projects, online forums, and carefully designed writing assignments enable students to teach themselves and each other, and—though the teacher, inescapably, retains the "power of the grade book," and students admit to liking it when she lectures—Shields finds that the potential dynamic of tyranny and resistance in the classroom can be replaced with a model of conversation and cooperation.

Philip Simon and Mischelle Anthony write about an interdisciplinary undergraduate course they offer through the English Department and Music Program at their university. Despite institutional roadblocks that made it impossible to team-teach the class in the traditional way (two professors in one class), Anthony and Simon offer "interdisciplinarity, and a specifically transatlantic approach as a more focused awareness of how

gothic conventions developed across music and novels in the long eighteenth century for British and American audiences." In addition to studying the formal and thematic components of novels where sound plays a central role (like Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*), Anthony and Simon discuss cross-pollination between genres, focusing their attention on Franz Schubert's and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's versions of the *Erlkönig* story and Matthew Lewis's novel, *The Monk*. They outline a number of ways in which the literature and music courses intersected in productive ways to help students retain knowledge more holistically, drawing on music theory and history, the use of sound and music as a thematic element in literature, and the evolution of musical instruments that shaped programmatic music of the long eighteenth century. The payoff for Simon and Anthony evolved as students became more adept at talking about how compositional technique and "gothic themes in lyrics and instrumentation, melody, harmony, rhythm, and form" function in literary texts.

In her essay, Jennifer Snead argues that "Western Protestant evangelicalism was … a truly transatlantic phenomenon, made possible by the movement of individuals across, around, and through the Atlantic world, and the cross-pollination of religious traditions that resulted from that movement." Snead discusses her use in the literature classroom of George Whitefield's *Journal* and his highly publicized North American preaching tours of the 1740s and '50s, encouraging students to track his travels to and from England, and from Georgia to New England, as well as to consider his appearance in various texts of the period, including Samuel Foote's play, *The Minor*, Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, Phillis Wheatley's poetry, and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. A second section of Snead's essay explores the interconnections among literacy, religious belief, and the marketplace that feature prominently in the Atlantic World, finding particularly interesting confluences in both eighteenth-century conversion narratives and debates concerning the conversion and education of African slaves—as well as in the written expressions of educated and (usually) Christianized Africans themselves. Placing religion, and especially evangelical Methodism, at the center of the classroom therefore helps "to open up a space in the classroom for respectful, intelligent interrogations of faith-related notions of nation, place, and identity—three concepts that the idea of the transatlantic, by its very nature, inevitably calls into question."

Jennifer Thorn's reflections follow on more than a decade's worth of teaching the transatlantic, and describe the trajectory of her courses over that time in relation to her own "shifting ethical priorities" as a

transatlanticist. Having initially taught a transatlantic course centered on property and capital, Thorn's attention to her students' experiences in the classroom prompted her to revise her syllabus, and split it into two distinct classes: "Slaves and Sailors" and "Indians in Time," an interdisciplinary course that was designed to help support her college's minor in Indigenous Peoples. Each of these classes traced its own path through transatlantic studies, but both reflect Thorn's shift in "organizing [her] eighteenth-century classes in relation to the transatlantic movement of specific goods and bodies, rather than ideas." This shift produced a major change in her approach to the role of history in her literature classes, and speaks to ongoing conversations in Early American Studies about the relation between the two fields. As Thorn describes it in her essay, her turn to historical events and phenomena as an organizing principle has helped increase her openness to students' "often surprising" responses to reading—a provocative description of how transatlantic pedagogy can transform the classroom.

Zubeda Jalalzai also discusses a series of courses she has offered in the literature classroom, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at her liberal arts institution. Central to her discussion are the questions arising from the juxtaposition of early transatlantic literature and culture and a twenty-first-century mindset characterized by concepts of nationalism, exceptionalism, and isolation: Jalalzai's courses engage the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century roots of American national identity, literary study, and global politics—taking in overtly national discourses in Thomas Jefferson and Ralph Waldo Emerson, representations of America as a utopia, the "Great American Novel," and twenty-first-century debates about the War on Terror and immigration. Firmly rooting her theoretical perspective in the situatedness of American literary study in such globalizing and political contexts, Jalalzai interrogates her own process of course development and pedagogy as well as the benefits and drawbacks of a transatlantic methodology. Ultimately, she offers the provocative observation that, "If our goal has been to create engaged citizens of democratic nationalism, these same students may now be tasked with trying to understand not only their roles as citizens of the modern nation but also with trying to identify the territory that liberal democracy leaves uncharted."

In "Goya's Dogs," John Beusterien demonstrates that a painting is both "a natural counterpart for a study of America" and a means of bridging the perceived gap between the traditionally defined fields of English and Spanish in an essay that provides compelling context for the study of race in the eighteenth century through his consideration of art, colonial relations,

and national identity in the transatlantic Hispanic World. Francisco de Goya's 1786–87 painting known as *Niños con mastines* (*Boys with Mastiffs* or, as Beusterien rechristens it, *Boys with Alanos*) provides a jumping-off point for a range of issues—including differences between animals and humans, eighteenth-century terminology and taxonomical categories of (human) races and (animal) breeds, and comparative textual/literary and visual/artistic representations as tools for understanding historical cultures and contexts—that have productive applications in the classroom. Through his exploration of the role of dogs in the early Hispanic World, Beusterien articulates the powerful ways in which European and American notions of personhood and social hierarchy were intertwined and the way their influence is felt even today. Further, as his argument shows, the shared etymology of racialized terms such as *zambo*/sambo and *criollo*/creole calls attention to the transatlantic nature of eighteenth-century cultural exchange as well as the benefits of permeable boundaries between academic lines of inquiry.

Vincent Carretta's essay theorizes slavery, race, and terms like African, African-British, African-American in an eighteenth-century context. Through the pedagogical lens of an upper-division undergraduate or graduate literature course, Carretta discusses strategies for using students' prior knowledge as a place to begin the study of the history and practice of slavery, early Anglophone literature by and about African individuals and characters, and notions of identity, ethnicity, nationality, and authorship, arriving at a *transnational* approach to black writers as the most useful and productive means of engaging and appreciating this material. "An overtly transnational approach to the colonial period," he writes, "also encourages teachers on both sides of the factitious divide between Americanists and eighteenth-centuryists to try a bit harder to accept the notion that the Atlantic Ocean had two shores and several continents." Such an approach not only allows for a fuller, historicized consideration of writers like Olaudah Equiano, Ignatius Sancho, Phillis Wheatley, and Thomas Jefferson, but also makes room for lesser-known figures like Briton Hammon, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, David George, and Belinda—in courses devoted to both "British literature" and "American literature."

Joseph F. Bartolomeo writes about his interest in eighteenth-century transatlantic fiction through the lens of a graduate seminar on the transatlantic novel that interrogated the "origins and usefulness of boundaries between 'British' and 'American' literature" and underscored postcolonial encounters, "contact zones," and racial and national hybridity, which, he argues, are "vitally important to analyzing the period."

Bartolomeo describes the trajectory of his seminar by giving an overview both of the major texts and the common thematic elements that his students uncovered in the novels. Significantly, he also reflects on the ways in which his department has reorganized itself in recent years to offer students increasing opportunity to engage transatlantic work. Finally, Bartolomeo writes of the seminar's impact on his own scholarship, which includes more interactions with Early Americanists, a renewed approach to British fiction, and his recent editorial work, which culminated in the republication of Susanna Rowson's *Reuben and Rachel* by Broadview Press in 2009.

Notes

1. David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 11–27, 11.
2. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, "The American Origins of the English Novel," *American Literary History* 4, no. 2 (Autumn, 1992): 386–410, and *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
3. We would like to thank Dennis Moore for his emphasis on the trope of the *wide* eighteenth century in various conversations emphasizing the centrality of Early American Studies to work on the long eighteenth century.
4. See Zubeda Jalalzai's informal survey of leading English departments (n. 14 in her essay in this collection) for some of the pressures cited by departments interested in incorporating transatlantic materials and methodologies into their curricula. In the fall of 2007, the English Department at the University of Missouri–Kansas City entertained a proposal to replace three of the five undergraduate literature surveys required of English majors and minors—British Literature II and American Literature I and II—with three transatlantic surveys covering the same historical span of years. Although there was general agreement that the proposal reflected the research and interests of many of the faculty who regularly teach those courses, as well as national trends in literary and cultural studies, the proposal was rejected primarily because it was incompatible with curricula at other schools, and in particular because of the foreseeable problems that would be encountered by students transferring into or out of UMKC's program. Also, as Leonard von Morzé observes in this volume, there is a potential downside to the transatlantic/interdisciplinary trend, namely the suggestion that English Departments need only hire one person to cover periods for which they had traditionally employed two.
5. At the time, TTU's English Department offered period-based survey courses (in, for example, eighteenth-century British literature or early American literature) that could be repeated for credit when the topic or focus changed, rather than the kind of surveys in British and American literature that are commonly found in other

English curricula—e.g., British Literature I and II, American Literature before 1865, American Literature 1865 to the present. This might account for some of our students' lack of grounding in a "traditional," nation-based framework for literary studies, but, as we suggest below, we do not think that it accounts for its absence entirely. We now each teach in departments that require British and American surveys for English majors and minors, and have observed that, although the surveys are recommended as foundations for advanced literary studies, at least as many graduating seniors as sophomores enroll in these courses.

6. There was one striking moment, near the end of the semester, which demonstrated that expectations about literary proprietary had broken down when it came to gender: students were surprised to see Cristobal teaching excerpts from Judith Sargent Murray and Mary Wollstonecraft (whom many students identified as a British writer), and directed all of their questions to Jenni even though he had the more carefully formulated reading and application on this particular day.

7. Several of the essays in this collection discuss techniques and pedagogical strategies for foregrounding eighteenth-century transatlantic concerns as they relate directly to the lives of twenty-first-century American college students: see the essays by Vincent Carretta, Robert Dryden, Jessica Hollis, Zubeda Jalalzai, Jennifer Snead, and Leonard von Morzé.

8. For a particularly adept exploration of classroom dynamics and center–periphery tensions, see Juliet Shields's essay in this volume.

9. These surveys were usually capped at 30 students, so our combined class was capped at 60. Each class had its own room assignment, but we had arranged for one of those rooms to be large enough to accommodate both sections; on the first day of class, we went to the smaller classroom and announced the room change. For another way of offering affiliated courses in a context where team-teaching is not structurally available, see Philip Simon and Mischelle Anthony's essay in this collection—their combined courses required coordination across departmental divides (Music and English) as well.

10. An overview of the first incarnation of our course and syllabus can be found on the ASECS web site: Jennifer Frangos and Cristobal Silva, "Teaching the Transatlantic: England and the New World / America and the Old World," *Innovative Course Design Winning Proposals, 2004–2005*, ASECS Teaching Pamphlet series, June 2005: http:// asecs.press.jhu.edu/Frangos-Silva Web Paper 2005 final.htm.

11. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African: Written by Himself* [1789], in *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, ed. Carretta (New York: Penguin, 2003). The title page identifies Equiano as African, while the first chapter contains his statement that "did I consider myself an European, I might say my sufferings were great" (31); throughout the narrative, he refers to Europeans as "these new countrymen" (77) and England as the place "where my heart had always been" (147). As Carretta observes, he writes from a doubled perspective "on the boundary between African and British identities" ("Introduction," xix).

12. In addition to the several M.A. and Ph.D. students from literary studies, the course included one Ph.D. student from History (who had designated Atlantic

History as one of the fields for her qualifying exams that semester), and several M.A. and Ph.D. students in the English Department's creative writing program (who were required to take seminars in literature but were not required to specialize in terms of field, period, or genre).

13. Together, we only assigned two sections of the Armitage and Braddick anthology—Armitage's "Three Concepts of Atlantic History" and Joyce E. Chaplin's "Race" (154–72)—but in a transatlantic undergraduate seminar that Cristobal subsequently taught at Florida State University, the collection served as a guide throughout the semester, and proved quite helpful in getting students to think more critically about the history of the Atlantic World, as well as about the work of historiography.

14. Lance Newman, Joel Pace, and Chris Koenig-Woodyard, eds., *Transatlantic Romanticism: An Anthology of British, American, and Canadian Literature, 1767–1867* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006); Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, eds., *The English Literatures of America, 1500–1800* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

PITCHING TRANSATLANTICISM: COMMERCE, RACE, AND THE ACADEMIC MARKETPLACE

LEONARD VON MORZÉ

> **pitch**. *n.*[1] 1. A sticky, resinous, black or dark brown substance, … obtained as a residue from the distillation of wood tar or turpentine and used for caulking the seams of ships, etc. *n.*[2] I. 5b. An act of deciding or settling upon a thing or place. … 7a. A forward longitudinal plunge or downward motion of the bows of a ship. … 9b. Speech or other behaviour designed to persuade, influence, or cajole, esp. in order to sell goods or promote an idea; patter, spiel; an instance of this. … 17c. That part of a stock exchange, market, etc., where a particular commodity is traded. *v.*[1] To cover, coat, seal, or smear with pitch. … *v.*[2] 6a. To fix and erect for the purpose of encampment. … 8. To lay out (wares) in a fixed place for sale; (hence) to display for sale in a market or public place. … 15a. To tell, recount, or spin (a tale, esp. an untruthful or improbable one). … 15d. To try to sell (merchandise) by persuasion, esp. by drawing attention to specific attractions, advantages, etc.
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> *–Oxford English Dictionary*

Even a passing acquaintance with the campus where I teach would suffice to understand why we needed a new undergraduate course on transatlantic literature. Not only does the Atlantic conveniently serve as our campus's eastern boundary, but one third of our undergraduate population consists of immigrants for whom the ocean is no mere scenic accessory. Our immigrant students' journeys to the United States were motivated more often than not by economic necessity rather than by self-election to the American Dream; more than a few are refugees, for whom freedom means flight from their home countries. While other schools in the city host relatively larger numbers of international students, UMass–Boston tends to draw the students who cannot return, and for an extraordinary percentage of these, a college education coincides quite literally with the acquisition of citizenship.[1]

Prominent features of our geography and demographics, then, make the idea of an inaccessible homeland a powerful imaginative concept for students, and in turn provide faculty with ways of thinking about how an Atlantic course might be taught. The imaginative power of Africa for black Atlantic writers, for example, might take center stage in such a course. To focus only on diasporic identities would be, however, to miss that part of our situation which it shares with other state institutions, a situation in which social class figures centrally. UMass–Boston shares with other public universities a commitment to working-class education. The fact that over half of our graduates will be the first in their families to earn a college degree suggests that this is a promise on which we largely manage to deliver. It also shares with two-year and many other four-year institutions the fact of being nonresidential, which helps to make part-time students feel welcome while also meaning that attendance will fluctuate based on any number of factors outside our control. As faculty, we often find it difficult to anticipate the kind of classroom make-up we will face on any given day, let alone any given semester.

Compiling a transatlantic syllabus for a classroom situation where little can be predicted other than the geographical constant of the ocean, I must confess that my first conception of my transatlantic class resembled Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's well-known metaphor likening eighteenth-century Atlantic "commoners" to "a many-headed hydra," a loose "agglomeration" of people "that possess their own motility and [are] often independent of leadership from above."[2] Such reminders of the continued existence of an Atlantic working class naturally led me to energizing if anxious thoughts about the de-centering of the classroom. What difference would these institutional circumstances make in creating a course on eighteenth-century transatlantic literature? This essay relates my experience bringing our department's first class on this topic into the catalog. In showing how I drew on students' useful preconceptions about the material, I present that course design in light of how current scholarly conceptions of the Atlantic World can be both a help and a hindrance in an intercultural classroom environment.

As I have suggested, the situation of having a student body in which immigrants and the working class form a majority provided my first rationale for proposing a new transatlantic course to my department. But this course was also just one in a series of simultaneous curricular additions. These new courses, which included topics such as "Postcolonialism and Literature" and "Literature and Translation," were designed to satisfy our major's new requirement for a course in transnational literature, a requirement intended as a way to acknowledge the mobility of