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| ***Transatlantica* Special Issue**  **American Women Writers Abroad**  **Call for Papers** |

Be they explorers, adventurers, travelers, exiles or expatriates, scores of women have broken free from the domestic sphere to which a male-dominated society would have them bound and recorded their impressions of the wider world in their writings (letters, diaries, travelogues) or used them as artistic material. For a long time, though, British Victorian women’s literature remained the almost exclusive focus of critical scholarship while American women writers’ contribution to this field was largely neglected. Travel literature has been the focus of much critical attention over the last decades in the wake of postcolonial studies, but only a handful of scholars have investigated the way in which American women writers have specifically addressed questions of selfhood and nationhood.

# This special issue aims at bringing to light specific paradigms of female mobility in a US context, building on previous studies by established scholars like Mary Suzanne Schriber (*Writing Home : American Women Abroad, 1830-1920*, 1997), Cheryl Fish (*Black and White Women’s Travel Narratives: Antebellum Explorations*, 2004) and Susan L. Robertson (*Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road: American Mobilities*, 2011). Most of the existing scholarship understandably addresses the question within the time frame of the long 19th century, when the U.S. was struggling to assert its difference from European superpowers and establish itself as a full-fledged nation. Although studies exploring this time period are most welcome, we would like to widen the scope of examination by including essays dealing with American women’s travel experiences from colonial times to the late 20th century.

Contributors are invited to explore such questions as:

* How have American women travelers approached the question of otherness?
* How has their travel experience contributed to reshaping their identities? How has it helped them negotiate gender expectations?
* What sort of travel books did they rely on when visiting foreign countries? What do these reveal about the formation of the American female traveler’s mind?
* How does American women’s travel experience complicate men’s official narratives of expansion, adventure, or colonization?
* Can we identify recurrent motifs, stylistic traits or concerns in their travel literature?
* What role has American women writers’ experience of mobility played in the construction of the nation?
* Can travelling be regarded more as an escape from confrontation with oneself or as a path to self-knowledge?
* In what ways can gendered and geographical borders interact? Can the transgression of geographical borders allow for more gender fluidity?
* What role did travelling play in the constitution of activist networks (abolition, woman’s suffrage)?
* To what extent did European travels allow African American women to break free from the genre of the slave narrative?
* Can we identify a transatlantic tradition of women’s writing that undermined the nation-building rhetoric of the U.S. as well as conventional constructions of race and citizenship?
* How did American women’s war writing in Europe contribute to destabilizing national assumptions?
* What vision of the self and of the world outside national borders has been conveyed by children’s and young adults’ literature featuring travel experiences since the 19th century?
* How have these women appropriated the codes of typically male genres such as the colonial novel and the novel of adventure?

Proposals dealing with any of these themes and offering innovative and/or challenging perspectives on American women writers’ travel experiences will be most welcome.

Authors should submit full-length essays and a short CV to Stéphanie Durrans ([stephanie.durrans@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr](mailto:stephanie.durrans@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr)) by April 30, 2018. Papers should not exceed 45,000 signs, inclusive of footnotes and spaces, and authors should follow the formatting guidelines to be found online: <http://transatlantica.revues.org/5220?lang=en>. The editor will pre-select up to 9 proposals to make sure the issue reflects a broad variety of angles, methodologies and concerns. These essays will then be submitted to the approval of the editorial committee of *Transatlantica* after being peer-reviewed.

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