



**Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel:
Expeditions and Tours in North America, 1760-
1840 (Ashgate Series in Nineteenth-Century
Transatlantic Studies)**

Robin Jarvis

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Why and how did people read literature on North America by explorers, travellers, emigrants, and tourists? This is the central question Robin Jarvis takes up as he addresses a significant gap in scholarship on travel writing: its contemporary reception. Referencing reviews in the periodical press, personal journals, letters, autobiographies, marginalia, and bibliographical evidence relating to the production, distribution, and reception of travel literature, Jarvis focuses especially on the ideas and perceptions of North America expressed by individuals who never visited the subcontinent. Among the issues Jarvis explores are what the British reception of North American travel narratives says about the ways in which the United States was imagined in the Romantic period; how poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Felicia Hemans, Robert Southey, and William Wordsworth, all voracious travel readers, incorporated their readings of travel books into their works; and the ways in which the reception of North American travel writing should be contextualized within the broader contours of British society and culture. Significantly, Jarvis differentiates between different communities of readers to show the extent to which class or professional status affected the way travel literature was read. Of equally crucial importance, he discusses the reception of travel literature on Canada and the Arctic as distinct from that on the United States. His book constitutes the most thorough exploration to date of the private reading experiences of travel literature during the Romantic period.

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