

# Why We Should Teach *Woman of Colour* alongside “Sanditon”

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ASECS 2022

# Teaching Long C18 Transatlantic Women Travelers

Upper-level undergrad course at UMF final readings:

- ◆ *Woman of Colour* (Anonymous, 1808)
- ◆ Jane Austen's "Sanditon" (unfinished, 1817)

"Roundtable on *The Woman of Colour* (1808): Pedagogic and Critical Approaches," 2021 issue of *Studies in Religion and Enlightenment* organized by Kerry Sinanan; includes essays by Rebecca Anne Barr, J. Ereck Jarvis, Misty Krueger, Sinanan, and Mariam Wassif.

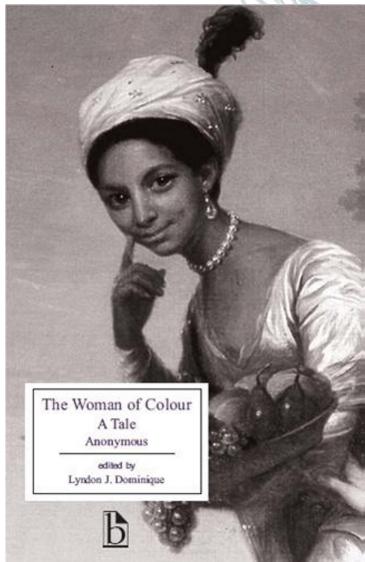
# *Why Teach “Sanditon” in a Transatlantic Women Course?*

- ◆ Finding an unexpected place for Austen.
- ◆ Showing how English novelists broach transatlanticism, the slave trade, and its abolition, as well as biracialism and cultural hybridity, without fully commenting (or at all) on the subjects.

# *Teaching The Woman of Colour*

- ◆ **Olivia Fairfield: free woman of color; biracial heiress**
  - Father = white plantation owner; mother = enslaved woman of color on Fairfield's plantation
  - Both deceased
- ◆ **Two-way transatlantic travel**
  - Jamaica to England and back to Jamaica
  - Supposed to be one-way travel to marry white cousin who will gain her inheritance

- ◆ **Olivia's critique of racism and white English society**
- ◆ **Racism conveyed by Olivia's parroting of Dido's dialect**
  - **Dido: a woman of color; a servant with a darker skin tone than Olivia's olive hue**
- ◆ **Reading Olivia in comparison to her servant and the historical Dido Elizabeth Belle (1761-1804). See cover of the Broadview ed. →**



# *From WoC to “Sanditon” and Sanditon*

WoC = palimpsest for Austen's tale and Masterpiece series

- ◆ Without WoC, students lack context for Austen's character(s)
- ◆ With WoC, students see Olivia as Miss Lambe's potential and a prototype for Georgiana Lambe

# *3 Heroines*

- 1. Olivia: fully developed character with depth**
- 2. Georgiana Lambe: character with depth and open to development as series progresses**
- 3. Miss Lambe: flat character, incomplete storyline**

# *Intersectional Identity Categories*

- ◆ ***Race***: skin color, ancestry, culture, biraciality, hybridity
- ◆ ***Class***: enslavement, servitude, wealth, piracy
- ◆ ***Nation***: African, American, British, European, “West Indian”
- ◆ ***Religion***: Christian, Muslim, “pagan”
- ◆ ***Gender***: femininity, challenging femininity, masculinity
- ◆ ***Sexuality***: heterosexuality, queerness
- ◆ ***Marital status***: single, married, widowed

# *Austen's Lambe: Young, Rich, & Sickly?*

“Miss Lambe has an immense fortune, richer than all the rest, and very delicate health.” – Diana Parker, repeated three times

“Miss Lambe was beyond comparison the most important and precious [under Mrs. Griffith's care], as she paid in proportion to her fortune. She was about seventeen, half mulatto, chilly and tender, had a maid of her own, was to have the best room in the lodgings, and was always of the first consequence in every plan of Mrs. Griffiths.” – the narrator

"And if we could but get a young heiress to Sanditon! But heiresses are monstrous scarce! I do not think we have had an heiress here or even a co-heiress since Sanditon has been a public place....Now if we could get a young heiress to be sent here for her health and if she was ordered to drink asses' milk I could supply her and, as soon as she got well, have her fall in love with Sir Edward!" – Lady Denham

"In Miss Lambe, here was the very young lady, sickly and rich, whom [Lady Denham] had been asking for; and she made the acquaintance for Sir Edward's sake and the sake of her milch asses." – narrator

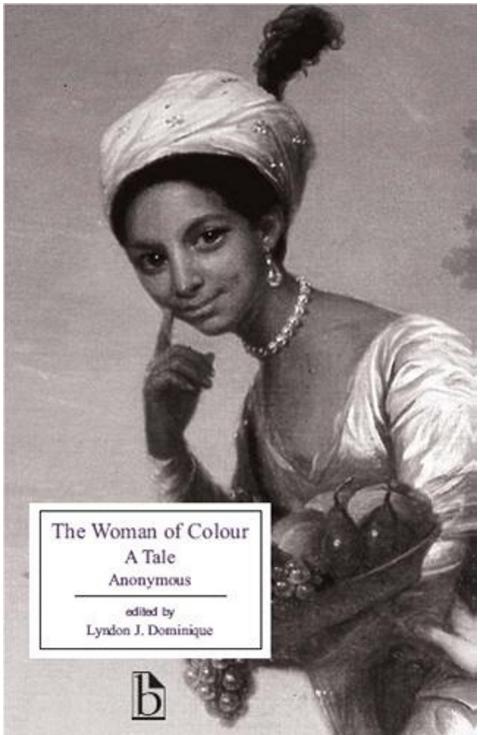
“But in five minutes I must be at Mrs. Griffiths', to encourage Miss Lambe in taking her first dip. She is so frightened, poor thing, that I promised to come and keep up her spirits, and go in the machine with her if she wished it.” – Diana

*That's it for Miss Lambe!*

- ◆ Did she go sea-bathing? Was it chilly?
- ◆ Did her health improve?
- ◆ Did she marry Edward? If so, how did he treat her?
- ◆ How did the people of Sanditon treat her?

# *What Could Have Happened to Miss Lambe?*

*Woman of Colour*  
and Masterpiece  
*Sanditon* offer  
interesting  
possibilities.



# *Lessons from WoC's Olivia Fairfield*

1. Confront racism in “polite,” white English society. Ex.
  - Mrs. Merton (Augustus’s sis-in-law) serves Olivia rice because she is from Jamaica.
  - Little George says Dido is dirty because of skin color.
2. Marry an Englishman who gains your wealth because of his status as male heir because it is the “right” thing to do. (Dead father decreed. Too bad Augustus has a secret wife!)
3. Live your life unmarried and return home. Grieve, fashion yourself a widow, and return to Jamaica.

# *Lessons from Masterpiece's Georgiana Lambe*

*Georgiana Lambe is more like the spunky Olivia Fairfield than Austen's timid Miss Lambe.*

1. Confront racism in “polite,” white English society.
  - ◆ Lady Denham serves a (rotten) pineapple at a dinner in Georgiana’s honor because she is from Antigua. Symbol!
2. Marry someone you love, and when that doesn’t work out grieve (season 1).
3. Don’t marry so that you can hold on to your power (season 2).

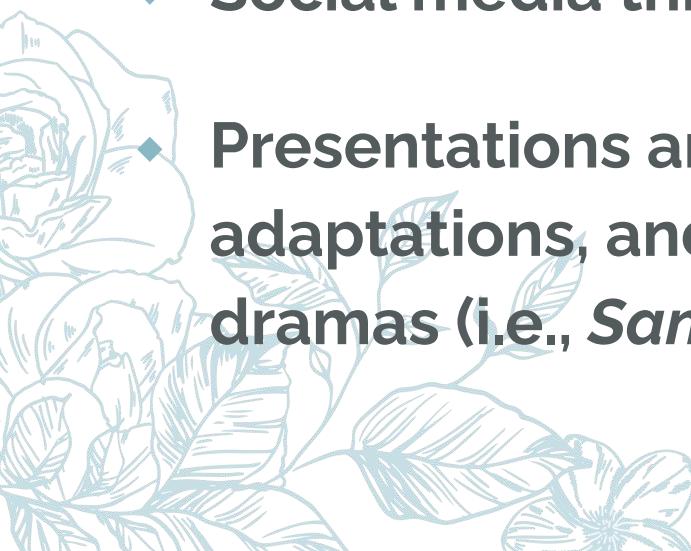
# *Why Teach WoC before “Sanditon”:* *3 Takeaway Points*

1. Exploring a conversation about Austen and race.
2. Imagining what Austen would have done with a heroine of color had she completed the novel.
3. Discussing the connection to the Masterpiece *Sanditon* and how it handles Miss Lambe and represents her class, race, gender, nationality, etc.

# *Where Conversations about Austen and Race Are Happening Today*



- ◆ Classroom discussions and assignments
- ◆ Social media threads (Twitter, Fb, and Ig)
- ◆ Presentations and scholarship on Austen's works, adaptations, and popular serialized Regency dramas (i.e., *Sanditon* & *Bridgerton*)



# *ABO Articles (Vol. 11.2, Fall 2021)*



## **Race and Racism in Austen Spaces: Notes On A Scandal: Sanditon Fandom's Ongoing Racism And The Danger Of Ignoring Austen Discourse On Social Media**

Amanda-Rae Prescott

*Freelance Journalist, amandarae.prescott@gmail.com*

← Brilliant handling of the  
pineapple scene and  
racism in Austen fandom!

## **Race and Racism in Austen Spaces: National Trust in Jane Austen's Empires of Sugar**

Tré Ventour-Griffiths

*Independent Scholar, treventourcreative@outlook.com*

# *ABO Articles (Vol. 11.2, Fall 2021)*



## **Race and Racism in Austen Spaces: Eroticizing Men of Empire in Austen**

Kerry Sinanan

*University of Texas at San Antonio*, [kerry.sinanan@utsa.edu](mailto:kerry.sinanan@utsa.edu)

## **Race and Racism in Austen Spaces: Jane Austen and Regency Romance's Racist Legacy**

Bianca Hernandez-Knight

*freelance journalist*, [bhernandezfilm@gmail.com](mailto:bhernandezfilm@gmail.com)

# *Exposing Racism in Austen Fandom*

Amanda-Rae Prescott's and Tré Ventour-Griffiths's articles ↓

- ◆ Misogynoir (prejudice against Black women: intersection of sexism and racism)
- ◆ White defense and gatekeeping (“historical accuracy”; keeping Austen white) ← *particularly expressed on social media in relation to adaptations*
- ◆ Microaggressions against women of color and white women policing Black women

# A Call to Action:

**“BIPOC Austen fans deserve  
a ‘safe space’ just as much as  
white fans expect and demand  
from fandom spaces”**  
**(Prescott 12).**



# Thank you!

Check out my blog at  
[mistykrueger.com](http://mistykrueger.com)  
for this presentation  
and *Sanditon* posts!