Abstract
Women who wrote amid their transnational travels in the Caribbean and Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century were uncommon. Yet there they were, traveling and contributing through their actions and words to multilayered webs of transnational networks and discourses. This dissertation asks what can be learned when we survey the corpus of extant diaries of traveling North Atlantic women to the circum-Caribbean, considering them as a type of imperial writing. It privileges women's experiences and women's writing. First and foremost a work of women's history, this study explores traveling women's experiences in an interconnected, transnational framework. While the analysis provided in this study presents patterns in the ways in which North Atlantic women contributed to the colonial project, "Imperial Counterparts" argues that traveling women were transmitters of a racialized, gendered hierarchy, enacted in their daily household management and deployed in their articulations of the surrounding culture. However, these transmissions were never unidirectional, nor did they operate the same way in different local contexts. Thus, historicizing the body of North Atlantic women's travel writings is critical in unveiling evolving Euro-American ideas about economic-, diplomatic-, and touristic-related travels in this region and how women transmitted and experienced corresponding racialized and gendered hierarchies. This study argues that women's travel played a role in colonial and imperial processes, negotiated not just through policy but also through relationships "on the ground" less commonly documented throughout history. It excavates the writings of twenty-one women travelers, highlighting the private writings of Margaret Curson, Margaret Morton Quincy Green, Mary Gardner Lowell, and Sophia Amelia Peabody (Hawthorne) to Spanish Cuba, (Lady) Maria Nugent to British Jamaica, Frances Erskine Inglis Calderón de la Barca to Mexico, and Susan Shelby Magoffin and Anna Marie Jackson de Camp Morris to northern Mexico at the moment of its transition to United States territory. It crosses boundaries and borders to place these women's travelogues in dialogue with each other in order to seek insight into the gendered processes of empire. A key contribution of this project is the way it engages interdisciplinary scholarship in the production of a transnational, historical study for a time period less developed in women's history. After introducing the women travelers and situating their travels in historical context, the study proceeds to explore the themes about which the women travelers wrote. These themes include household management, especially the creation and maintenance of hierarchical relationships within the home; the family, exploring the women's travel experiences vis-à-vis their positionality within the family and challenging a static understanding of gender oppression in colonial settings; and health and climate, placing the traveling women within the context of a growing "health tourism" in the circum-Caribbean, one that was built on word-of-mouth and centered especially on Cuba. By centering these texts, this project allows for a fuller understanding of interconnections in the Americas, the role of women as travelers, observers, and writers and the degrees to which constructions of gender and race sculpted the experiences of women under colonialism and imperialism in the first half of the nineteenth century.
Irish emigration across the Atlantic began long before 1800. In the 1600s, approximately 25,000 Irish Catholics left – some were forced to move, others left voluntarily – for the Caribbean and Virginia, while from the 1680s onwards Irish Quakers and Protestant Dissenters began to depart for the New World. Considerable Presbyterian emigration from Ireland’s northern province of Ulster took place from the 1710s onward, alongside smaller Anglican Protestants. Females travelled in roughly equal numbers across the Atlantic – a pattern that was closely mirrored by Swedish emigration. After 1900, Italian women did begin to travel in larger numbers; nonetheless, they remained in the minority until after 1913, when they began to outnumber men.

The reception of migrants. When independent Mexico dropped imperial Spain’s rigid barriers to foreign trade and immigration, however, both the populations and the economies of Texas and New Mexico began to rise dramatically. ‘In the span of a few years,’ writes Reséndez, ‘the frontier made the transition from economic backwater to dynamic crossroad of exchange’ (pp. 4–5). Given the weaknesses of the fledgling Mexican nation-state in the face of these challenges from the indios and the norteamericanos, how could stronger links between the Far North and the rest of the country be forged? In his second chapter, Reséndez skillfully compares the contrasting networks of patronage and power that emerged in Texas and New Mexico.

Only a small portion of the enslaved - less than half a million - were sent to North America. The majority went to South America and the Caribbean. In the mid-1600s, Africans outnumbered Europeans in nascent cities such as Mexico City, Havana and Lima. A terrible trade. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is called a Triangular Trade for its three-legged route that began and ended in Europe. European vessels took goods to Africa, where they were exchanged for slaves. The ships then sailed to the Americas to trade slaves for agricultural products - extracted by slave labor - which were sold in Europ