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Nota di contenuto	I. Introduction: Frames and Claims 1 -- 1.1. Travel Writing 1770 to 1830 2 -- 1.2. Nation-building and Literary Nationalism 13 -- 1.3. Fluid Boundaries: The Categories of Domestic and Abroad 19 -- 1.4. Cosmopolitanism and Imperialism 23 -- II. Early American Travel Writing: History and Concepts 31 -- 2.1. Travel Writing as Genre and Discourse 31 -- 2.2. The Genre in History: From Colonial to Creole Voice 36 -- 2.3. The National Imagination: New Boundaries, New Authorship 49 -- 2.4. Early American Travel Writing: Critical Approaches 58 -- III. Creolizing America 75 -- 3.1. Natural History and the Dispute of the New World 75 -- 3.2. Jonathan Carver's Transatlantic Affiliations 85 -- 3.3. John Bartram and William Bartram: Toward Domestic Imagination 95 -- IV. Framing the Expanding Nation 131 -- 4.1. Thomas Jefferson: Imperial Cosmopolitanism 132 -- 4.2. John Filson: The National Narrative 142 -- 4.3. Gilbert Imlay: Western Territory and Transatlantic Comparison 153 -- 4.4. Anne Newport Royall: Domesticated Vistas 159 -- V. Fundamental Entanglements: Africa and the New Nation 167 -- 5.1. America and Circum-Atlantic Mobility 167 -- 5.2. Olaudah Equiano and Transatlantic Imagination 173 -- 5.3. Literary Nationalism and Proto-Imperialism: Royall Tyler, Joseph Hawkins, and Benjamin Stout 185 -- VI. The Hemispheric Frame: The Early Nineteenth-Century Traveler in Latin America 197 -- 6.1. The Idea of the Western Hemisphere 198 -- 6.2. Zebulon Pike: Military Exploration 207 -- 6.3. Henry Ker: The Hemisphere as Space of

Captivity and Liberation 209 -- 6.4. Henry Marie Brackenridge: Diplomatic Travel Writing 222 -- 6.5. William Duane: Democracy, Trade, and Race 231 -- VII. Conclusion: Continuities of Early Frames and Claims 241 -- 7.1. Foundations: Nationalism, Expansionism, and Imperialism in the Making 242 -- 7.2. Reverberations 246 -- Bibliography 257 -- Index (names and subjects) 297.

Sommario/riassunto

Travel reports have shaped the emergence of early U.S. culture and its "geographical imagination" (David Harvey). *Framing the Nation, Claiming the Hemisphere* examines the trans-national imagination in travel reports by American authors written between 1770 and 1830. Its range is from John and William Bartram's pre-revolutionary travelogues and Jonathan Carver's exploratory report on his journey in the Great Lakes region (1778), to Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* (1789), to early nineteenth-century reports, such as Anne Newport Royall's *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States* (1826) and William Duane's *A Visit to Colombia* (1826). The chapters of the monograph concentrate on writing about journeys to the North American 'interior', the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa. The primary sources were written between the beginning of the struggle against British rule, following the end of the French and Indian War, and the beginning of Andrew Jackson's presidency. The decades between 1770 and 1830 were times of shifting colonial boundaries, nation-building, and emergent discourses of collective identification in North America. The study reads travel writing in the context of the identity-generating discourses of nation-building, imperialism, anti-colonialism, and cosmopolitanism. In contrast to scholarship that engages a notion of Americanness based primarily on 'domestic' outlooks and experiences such as westward expansion (the frontier), the study highlights the function of categories such as the outside world, neighboring nations, and colonial empires in the emergence of U.S. national literary imagination. How does a shift in focus from a discursive 'domestication' of North American space to an interest in the Othering of what lies beyond national borders affect the understanding of the emergent national self? These are the kind of questions that begin by seeing the transnational as a fundamental element of national emergence. The monograph ultimately works to demonstrate how travel writing - with very few exceptions - supports and affirms processes of nation-building. Thus, the national narrative evolves from representations of contact scenarios in North America, in the transatlantic world, and around the globe. Without ignoring the roles of national mythology, the analysis concentrates on the continual co-existence of fluid notions of both 'home' and 'abroad' in times of shifting geographical borders. From such a perspective, travel writing not only contributes to shaping the national imagination and its conceptions of superiority but is also complicit in territorial expansionism and its subjugation of conquered peoples and their respective cultural histories. The present study emphasizes the significance of accounts of non-voluntary movement that embrace captivity narratives, slave narratives, sailor narratives, and reports by individuals who had access to neither publishing nor public culture. Accounts by such authors have often been published posthumously, promoted by printers, professional authors, or scholars. The central focus of analysis, however, examines how American self-fashioning and self-positioning in the world appear in the travel writing of the period. The trans-national imagination engages in a symbolic construction both of the collective national 'Self' and of the outside world as the nation's 'Other.' Travel writing functions as a tool in the nation-building process of the United States: a tool that reflects the

mindset of the time, a tool that imagines a national community, and a tool that shapes the mindset of a people. The study maintains that travel writing, as a literary format, negotiates the triangular relationship between American post-revolutionary nation-building, continued European colonial expansion in the Americas, and the ongoing existence of indigenous nations. Underlying each of the readings is a common thesis that travel writing defines and negotiates borders, limits, and territorial expansion, and that it does so within the parameters of nation-building.
