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### **An Anxious Undertaking: Colonial and Migrational Anxiety on the Nineteenth-Century Pioneer Trails**

**Abstract:** This article examines the concepts of colonial and migrational anxiety by discussing North American accounts of experiences on wagon trains in the mid-nineteenth century. The focus is on the personal accounts of emigrants across the plains contained in travel diaries and private correspondence. This study aims to identify markers of anxiety identified in a hitherto unexplored primary corpus by discussing these signifiers in terms of discourses which were constructed to mask the realities of the migrational process. The study will draw on the theoretical basis of colonial anxiety in South Asia, discussed by scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Edward Saïd and Ranajit Guha in order to draw parallels between the two contexts. Through the examination of North American wagon train experiences in this way, it will be argued that their role was both colonial and migrational, and should thus be seen as a point of intersection for colonial and migrational anxiety.

**Keywords:** colonial anxiety, colonial discourses, migrational anxiety, pioneer trails, spatial anxiety