PAOLA GEMME

An American Jeremiah in Rome: A Study of Margaret Fuller's *Tribune* Dispatches

"I go to behold the wonders of art, and the temples of old religion", declared Margaret Fuller to the readers of her literary column in the *New-York Daily Tribune* at the eve of her departure for Europe in August 1846. "But I shall not see", she added with reassuring nationalistic pride, "no [sic] form of beauty and majesty beyond what my Country is capable of producing in a myriad variety if she has but the soul to will it."[1] As she traveled through England and France and eventually settled in Italy, however, Fuller was to see and report about much more than the masterpieces of European art. She was in Rome when the newly-elected reformist pope Pius IX refused to go to war against Austria and thereby lost the support of his subjects, who had hoped he would assume the role of moral leader of the political reform of Italy. She witnessed the people's growing opposition to papal rule, which culminated in the murder of conservative prime minister Pellegrino Rossi and the assault on Pius IX's own residence to demand the appointment of a liberal ministry. She remained in Rome after the pope fled the city and a Constitutional Assembly elected by universal male suffrage proclaimed the end of the temporal rule of the popes and the establishment of a republic of the people. And she stayed on throughout Rome's brief republican interlude from February to July 1849, when the French army that had come to the aid of the pope succeeded in conquering the city despite the tenacious resistance put up by the Romans and liberal volunteers from all over Italy.[2] As she described these events in her dispatches to the *Tribune*, Fuller deviated from the nationalist position she had adopted in 1846.

While she had then believed that the presence of democracy rendered America superior to Europe in spite of the latter's cultural patrimony, in revolutionary Rome she reversed the comparison to elevate Italy over America. By April 1848, she was writing to her readers that she could not be persuaded to return home because "My country is at present ... stupid with the lust of gain [and] soiled by crime in its willing perpetuation of Slavery", whereas in Rome, "amid the teachings of adversity a nobler spirit is struggling—a spirit which cheers and animates mine."[3] Italy had seemingly become in her mind freer than America.

These statements, coupled with Fuller's praise of the conduct of the Roman revolutionists against allegations that the city had fallen into anarchy, her censure of the French military intervention, and her repeated calls for American expressions of sympathy towards the new republic—not to mention her own participation in the defense of Rome as the director of one of the city's hospitals for the wounded—have led critics to read Fuller's account of the Roman republic as an anomaly among American recreations of mid-nineteenth-century Italy. According to the accepted interpretation of the *Tribune* dispatches, while her compatriots either ignored the Risorgimento altogether and continued to perceive Italy in a purely aestheticized manner, or described it negatively and with the purpose of celebrating America's political exceptionalism, Fuller not only made contemporary Italy the focus of her narrative, but exalted Italian republicanism over American democracy.[4] Bell Gale Chevigny best expresses this critical consensus when she argues that Fuller was "radically apart" from those American travelers in Italy who "came to confirm their sense of national superiority" and "refurbish their sense of special destiny."[5] On the contrary, writes Chevigny, "Fuller denied the specialness and autonomy of American destiny [and] offered the actual struggle of a foreign people as a guide to completing the American Revolution."[6]

This essay offers a different interpretation of Fuller's encounter with Italy. Instead of reading her negative comparison between democracy in Italy and America in isolation, I situate it within the broader context of American oratorical practices. I argue that, far from being an exceptional and unprecedented statement,

Fuller's critique of America lies within the tradition of the jeremiad, a lament over the nation's failure to live up to its original promise, which, I underscore, reaffirms national dreams while deploring the failure of will to pursue them.[7] I find confirmation of Fuller's adherence to the ideology of American republican exceptionalism in the comparison between the public discourse of the dispatches and the private text of her correspondence and personal journal. While the public dispatches mostly offer a celebratory image of revolutionary Rome, one intended to shame America into redressing her wrongs, the private letters, which do not have that purpose, often express doubts about the Italians' readiness for republicanism and at times contrast sharply with the positive evaluations of the dispatches.[8] Even the dispatches, moreover, are occasionally characterized by an aestheticized approach to the Roman revolution which betrays Fuller's inability to escape nationalistic ideology in spite of her insights elsewhere into the identity of discourses of power which intend to marginalize non-dominant groups, including the very patriarchal rhetoric she had critiqued in her feminist writings.

The Critic as Jeremiah

By the time she left for Europe to report on popular revolts against extreme political and economic stratification in England. France, and Italy, Fuller had become an outspoken critic of America's own deviations from the principle of human equality. She had denounced patriarchal restrictions on women's right to the development and expression of their natures in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century.* She had censured racial prejudice against Native Americans in *Summer on the Lakes in* 1843, an account of a trip west which allowed her to witness the devastating effects of American imperialism upon the original inhabitants of the land. Encouraged by Horace Greeley, the liberal editor of the *New-York Daily Tribune* who had hired her as the lead columnist in 1844 moreover, she had written a series of biting articles ranging from condemnations of the war against Mexico, which she read as a

means to preserve slavery, to exposures of the growing levels of abject poverty in developing urban communities.[9]

For Fuller, who had been trained by her Harvard-educated lawyer and congressman father in the political and rhetorical tradition of the revolution,[10] the emergence of inequality in America on the multiple axes of gender, race, and class stood in sharp contrast with the egalitarian principles upon which the country had been founded. It is precisely as a breach of democratic promise that Fuller constantly depicts the corruption of republicanism that accompanied national geographical and economic growth. Commenting on the news of a U.S. victory in the struggle with Mexico over Texas, a conflict caused to a large extent by the Anglo-American colonists' determination to employ slave labor in defiance of the Mexican government, she writes, "Vain have been the hopes that the victories of this country would be over wrong and ignorance, not mere conquest of the bodies of other men to obtain their possessions or guard our own." That the "wolves of war", as Fuller describes her country's aggressive militarism, should "rage abroad without the slightest excuse from hunger", was all the more reprehensible precisely because "all omens marked out [this country] as the dominion where the hopes of the Prince of Peace might be realized".[11]

Fuller's condemnation of national policies as a failure to live up to the expectation that a country established upon the declaration that all men are equal would achieve a most perfect state of democracy is by no means idiosyncratic. On the contrary, it is a text-book example of the rhetorical genre that Sacvan Bercovitch calls the "American jeremiad." First produced among seventeenth-century Puritans as a form of ritualistic complaint because of the apparent failure of Puritan society to fulfill its task of religious self-perfection and world redemption, the jeremiad survived the demise of Puritan theocracy to become central to American political rhetoric. In the secular version of the jeremiad adopted by Fuller and her contemporaries, America's mission had been reinterpreted as a political one, namely the realization of a model democratic society and the spreading of the blessings of democracy world-wide.[12]

While the sphere of action of the jeremiad shifted from

religion to politics, its basic elements remained the same. According to Bercovitch, all jeremiads cite the promise that the new nation would realize a democratic ideal and contrast it with the present state of decline, whether it be represented by the endurance of slavery or the emergence of an indigent industrial working class. The measure of the failure of America to fulfill its destiny lies in the obvious disparity between expectations and actuality. The examination of Fuller's jeremiads, however, suggests that the comparison between revolutionary idealism and present corruption was often supplemented by an additional comparison between nineteenth-century America and other coeval or past civilizations, and that Bercovitch's model may need to be elaborated in new ways. In the article reviewing the successful U.S. military campaign in Texas mentioned above, for instance, Fuller equated American foreign policy to the aggressive imperialism of the Roman empire. In her words, "Our Stars have lighted us only to the ancient heathen—the vulgar path of national aggrandizement; and our Eagle, like the Roman, loves better to snatch its prey from the field than to soar to the purer regions near the source of light".[13] Given that American political thought had traditionally imputed Rome's decline from republicanism to absolutism and the fall of the empire itself to the city's territorial expansion, Fuller's comparison functioned both as an index of America's political malaise and an omen of worse to come.

In two articles for the *Tribune* composed on the occasion of the new year in 1845 and 1846, Fuller used analogies with other nations extensively to illustrate the decline of American democracy. In her 1845 "New Year's Day", an invective against the toleration of slavery by the people who had been placed "in charge ... [of] the arc of human hopes", she compared America and ancient Rome once more, this time to declare Christian America inferior to pagan Rome. While the ancients celebrated the new year by "enfranchis[ing] [their] slaves, to show that devotion to the Gods induced a sympathy with men", Americans were "busy in contriving measures that may best rivet the fetters of those now chained, and forge them strongest for millions yet unborn"—possibly a reference to debates in congress over the extension of slavery in territories to be

acquired from Mexico or to the production of a vast body of proslavery literature in the 1840s. America, Fuller concluded, had become worse than Austria: the most conservative of all European powers would at least appeal only to the "legitimacy of blood", the absolute power of the aristocracy over the commoners, to justify the oppression of its subjects, but the United States dared appeal to "legitimacy as seen from a moral point of view",[14] and pretend that colonialism and the slave-trade were righteous enterprises. A year afterwards, in "1st January, 1846", Fuller deplored that, with the annexation of Texas as a slave state and the religious persecution of the Mormons in Illinois, her country had further abased itself and "laid aside the glorious office, assigned her by Fate, of Herald of Freedom, Light of Peace to the civilized world." Instead, America had become like Russia, a nation renowned for its aggressive foreign policy in Eastern Europe, retrograde feudal social structure, and discrimination against its Jewish minority. America now defended its actions "on the true Russian grounds: 'We (the stronger) know what you (the weaker) ought to do and be, and it *shall* be so."[15] Whatever the term of comparison in the examples above, the parallel drawn between the American republic and empires or despotisms past and present always functions to give a dramatic gauge of the state of corruption of American republicanism, a corruption with which Fuller wants to confront her too complacent readers.

As a traveler in Italy at a time of social unrest, Fuller found new options for her comparative indictments of American republicanism. In her New Year's day article for 1848, for instance, she argued that the ideal of equality was cherished and pursued to a further extent in Italy, where despotic sovereigns were resolute to fight it, than in the United States, where it had always had the opportunity to find full realization. In her words, in spite of Austrian and Russian tyranny, "Europe toils and struggles with her idea, and, at this moment, all things bode and declare a new outbreak of fire, to destroy old palaces of crime". America, which had been called to be "champion of the rights of men", had instead been corrupted by "a boundless lust of gain", and turned into "a robber and a jailer; ... her eyes fixed, not on the stars, but on the

possession of other men."[16] A few months later, in the aftermath of the pope's flight from Rome, Fuller returned to the idea that the seat of democracy had moved from a corrupted America to a regenerated Italy in the often quoted passage which has led readers of the *Tribune* dispatches to consider them an exception among U.S. narratives of the Italian revolutions. To friends who urged her to return home by praising America to her as "the land of the Future", she would reply that "it is so, but that spirit which made America all it is of value in my eyes, which gave all of hope with which I can sympathize for that Future, is more alive here at present than in America."[17]

Undeniably, Fuller was pronouncing Italy superior to America. Still, the critic's evaluation of the anti-nationalistic import of Fuller's statements should be tempered by the observation that they occur within the boundaries of the jeremiad, which mandated that the lament over the corruption of American democracy be expressed by means of a comparison between promise and actuality. Fuller had employed such a rhetorical ritual on several occasions before coming to Europe, often combining the prescribed comparison between the revolutionary era and the disappointing present with an additional one comparing America and other nations. Whether the term of comparison be, as in the early articles, Russia or ancient Rome, or, as in the late ones, contemporary Italy, such comparisons were not intended to have referential so much as argumentative value. In other words, their purpose was not to describe accurately the relative state of democracy in the United States and other countries, but rather to paint such a bleak picture of republicanism in America as to induce its citizens to take action and redress the situation. Thus, like the Puritan sermon from which it descended, Fuller's secular jeremiad condemned in order to bring about political regeneration.

As Bercovitch has demonstrated, in fact, the essence of the jeremiad is celebration rather than censure. Although it strenuously denounces social misdeeds, the jeremiad unerringly ends by predicting America's imminent fulfillment of the original democratic promise. Fuller's lamentations over mid-nineteenth-century America's aggressive materialism in the *Tribune* dispatches are no exceptions.

America may have "betrayed" its "high commission" as "advance-guard of Humanity" and "herald of all Progress", but it is destined to resume it. There are still in the United States, writes Fuller after having declared that enslaved Italy reveres the idea of equality better than democratic America, those, although "a small minority", who "earnestly meditate on what is wanted for their country,—for mankind,—for our cause is, indeed, the cause of all mankind. Could we succeed, really succeed, combine a deep religious love with practical development ..., we might believe Man has now reached a commanding point in his ascent, and would stumble and faint no more."[18] And again, the spirit of democracy may be more alive in Italy than in America, but "it will not be so long." America "is not dead"; she simply "sleepeth",[19] and it is Fuller's intent to wake her. Thus, Fuller's jeremiads, which open on the pejorative comparison between reborn Italy and fallen America, close on an optimistic vision of America regenerated by the confrontation with its political sins. The *Tribune* dispatches differ only in form from other strongly nationalistic American narratives of the Risorgimento. While other commentators exalted American democracy directly through the negative portrayal of Italian republicanism, Fuller exalted it indirectly through a positive assessment of foreign revolutions. The path may have been oblique, but the destination was the same.

Fuller's critique of America, moreover, lies wholly within the pale of nationalistic ideology. In the *Tribune* dispatches America is found guilty of having abdicated its role of universal political model and active advocate of democracy worldwide, i.e., of failing to live up to exalted images of national identity. Fuller wishes she could encourage the Italian revolutionists by telling them about her country, but she must instead "stammer and blush" and remain silent about "many things"—from political corruption to discrimination against women and human bondage.[20] She repeatedly asks for an "expression of sympathy" from her country towards the Italians, for a cannon "to be called AMERICA" which the newly established Roman Civic Guard could use "for salutes on festive occasions, if they should be so happy as to have no more serious need".[21] She pleads that the American diplomatic representative to the Papal States,

Lewis Cass, be empowered to give official recognition to the republic of the people, since that government "stands on the same basis as ourselves".[22] Unable to have any of her demands fulfilled, she warns her country to beware lest she may "perish, like the old dominions, from the leprosy of selfishness".[23] Underlying these alternating appeals and accusations is the assumption that America has been ordained to be, as Fuller would put it in one of her last reports from Italy, "the star of hope to the enslaved nations", and that "bitter indeed were the night if that star were hid from sight by foul vapors".[24] For all her critique of America's political declension, Fuller thus upholds the notion that the United States is the epicenter of republicanism, that democratic experiments abroad are inspired by the American model, and that such experiments require the support of the United States to survive.

Nationalism in the Private Sphere

The interpretation of Fuller's negative comparison between America and Italy along nationalistic lines is confirmed by an examination of the description of Italian republicanism in texts other than the dispatches. While critics have privileged the history of the Roman republic she wrote for the *Tribune,* Fuller also recounted the events of 1848-9 in her correspondence and a brief journal which was rescued from the shipwreck that killed her and her family off the American Atlantic coast.[25] These alternative versions of the revolutions of mid-century differ considerably in the evaluation of Italian liberalism, which is praised in the dispatches but criticized—at times harshly—in the more private texts, a fact that can be ascribed to Fuller's differing rhetorical purposes in the public dispatches and the private letters and journal. Fuller's private account of the Roman Republic resembles instead the vast majority of American narratives of the Italian revolutions, with which it shares the contention that Italy's democratic experiments were bound to fail, at least for the time being, because of the Italians' civic deficiencies. Despite their seemingly antithetical nature, however, Fuller's private and public histories are fundamentally

alike in that they both, in different ways, embrace a nationalistic mythology.

Fuller's references to the revolutionary army led by general Giuseppe Garibaldi in her writing for the *Tribune* and in her correspondence respectively offer a dramatic illustration of the distance separating her public narrative of Italian republicanism from her private one. In the articles for Greeley, Fuller extolled the volunteers who defended Rome against the French siege. She found them "noble men", "true priests of a higher hope",[26] who "had weighed life and all its material advantages against Liberty, and made their election, ... turned not back, nor flinched at this bitter crisis".[27] In fact, she defended them against the accusations of those Americans who thought them mercenaries of the worst kind. "Gentlemen who perform their 'duties' to society by buying for themselves handsome clothes and furniture with the interest of their money", she writes, "speak of Garibaldi and his men as 'brigands' and 'vagabonds'." "Such they are, doubtless", she continues in seeming agreement, only to proceed on to radical denial, "in the same sense as Jesus, Aeneas and Moses were".[28] While such men controlled Rome, she insisted against allegation that the city had fallen into anarchy, she felt so secure as to walk outdoors unaccompanied, and, she added, "I never saw an act of violence."[29] In her letters, however, her comments on Garibaldi and his soldiers are strongly negative. Writing to her friend Caroline Sturgis Tappan from Rieti, to which she had retired to hide her pregnancy from the American community in Rome, Fuller expressed her apprehension at the presence of volunteer troops around her in terms analogous to those whose accuracy she questioned in the dispatches. Garibaldi's followers are now "desperadoes" who, she suggests, would not refrain from rape. "In case of conflict", she confides to Tappan, "I should fear for the nurse of Angelino, the loveliest young woman there".[30] They metamorphose, as she writes to her lover Giovanni Angelo Ossoli, into dangerous men suspected of having murdered "a friar [and] two citizens", so threatening, she confesses in a complete reversal of her assertions in the *Tribune,* that "I surely do not have courage to go out alone".[31] The vision of a heroic revolution painted in the

dispatches is thus tainted by anarchic overtones in the letters, where the pursuit of liberty degenerates into gratuitous explosions of violence against not only the representative of the old clerical government, but also the very people in whose name the revolution has been fought. And the implication of this description in terms of Fuller's evaluation of the Italians' civic virtue is utterly negative: their republican efforts, she suggests, lead to the destruction rather than the reconfiguration of the social system.

Fuller's public and private histories of the Roman republic further diverge in her assessment of the military prowess of the volunteer army. While in the dispatches Fuller was adamant in proclaiming the Italians' courage against other foreign observers who disparagingly declared that "this people would not fight",[32] privately she herself expressed doubts about whether the Romans would be willing and able to resist the French. About a month after her first defense of the Romans' valor in the *Tribune,* on 28 April 1849, Fuller asked herself in the pages of her journal, "Will the Romans fight? Outwardly they express great order. The chamber of deputies has warmly and unanimously voted to resist. At the review of the civic guard yesterday they gave great promise, yet somewhere I doubt them all. From my window I see now where they are bringing boards. I suppose to make a support for cannon and it seems to be such play for men and boys alike."[33] The people whose "nobler spirit" she had celebrated in her jeremiads become here ineffectual revolutionists ready with words but not with deeds, unconscious of the import of their actions, more like boys playing at war than men fighting it. And this private characterization of the Romans as braggarts signals, once more, Fuller's skepticism concerning the Italians' capacity for self-government. Nineteenth-century Americans had, in fact, a martial conception of republican citizenship. Gallantry in war was interpreted as a sign of political fitness and lack thereof as a symptom of civic deficiency. To be judged a coward was therefore equivalent to be deemed unfit for democracy.[34] As the syntactic proximity of grown "men" and immature "boys" suggests, in expressing uncertainty on whether the Romans would move from words to acts to defend their republic, Fuller was implying that they were not quite ready for it yet.

Indeed, the conviction that the Italians were not ready to face the responsibilities of democracy pervades the private history of the Roman republic throughout. In a letter to Costanza Arconati Visconti in which she defended republicanism against her moderate friend's preference for constitutional monarchy, Fuller acknowledged that "Italy may not be ready for it yet."[35] Her statements to the leader of the democratic party Giuseppe Mazzini, who had returned to Italy from his exile in London during Rome's brief republican interlude, also reveal her doubts about the Italians' fitness for participatory democracy. In reply to his melancholy assertion that he had come back to die in his country after not being able to live in it, she wrote reassuringly, "You do not return to sleep under the sod of Italy, but to see your thought springing up all over her soil." Still she admitted, extending the natural metaphor, that "the gardeners seem to me, in point of instinctive wisdom or deep thought, mostly incompetent to the care of the garden."[36] Fuller's negative evaluation of the Italians' political capacity, however, is invariably accompanied by the assurance that democracy would eventually prevail. In her letter to Visconti she also wrote, "I am no bigoted Republican, yet I think that form of government will eventually pervade of the civilized world." Italy, she was certain, "would not find peace earlier."[37] She similarly counteracted her critique of the Italian patriots in her letter to Mazzini, where she added that his republican ideal "will be able to use any implements, it is to be hoped will educate the men, by making them work."[38] It is precisely this combination of refutation (Italians are unfit for republicanism) and assertion (Italy will—one day—be republican) that reveals Fuller's adherence to nationalist ideology. Such combination, in fact, resolves the inevitable tension between two powerful and equally important tenets of mid-nineteenth-century American nationalism, the vision of the United States as "redeemer nation" destined to democratize the world by example and thereby transform other countries in its image, and the equally appealing notion of the United States as "exceptional", forever different from and superior to other nations.[39] By portraying Italians as unsuccessful revolutionists, Fuller was contributing to the fabrication of an exalted image of America as the only extant

realization of democratic ideals. By asserting that Italy would eventually be democratic too, she was advancing the myth of America's political evangelism. Ultimately, the America of Fuller's private chronicle of Roman republicanism is both emulated and unequaled, very much the same America one finds in those allegedly different, "other" accounts of the Risorgimento which, to echo Chevigny's characterization, asserted national superiority and special destiny.

Fuller, who had celebrated Italy over America in her public history of the Roman republic, adopted in her private history many of the conventions of American self-serving discourse on the political situation of mid-nineteenth-century Italy. While both histories are characterized by nationalistic ideology, the private account is no doubt more blatant in its proclamation of America's democratic superiority. This difference between the dispatches and the letters and journal can be accounted for in terms of their different rhetorical situations. As Cristina Zwarg and P. Joy Rouse have demonstrated, Fuller was well aware that the newspaper, as a mass medium, had an extraordinary capability to affect people's opinions, and that her job as a columnist for Greeley's *Tribune* offered her an unprecedented occasion to address a wide readership about the state of American democracy.[40] Fuller the social critic, in other words, found in the newspaper a powerful instrument for her plan to chastise America. Given this intent, it is no wonder that the public history of the Roman republic should elevate Italy over America. Fuller wanted to alert her country to its political declension and shame it into regeneration, not to indulge an already inflated sense of national superiority which risked making it blind to its own backsliding. Since America defined itself as republican model for all other countries, the celebration of Italian over American liberalism in the dispatches served as illustration of a national corruption from which it was imperative to recover. The detrimental portrayal of the Italian revolutionists that characterizes Fuller's letters and journal derives from the fact that these private accounts of the Roman republic did not have the civic, reformatory intent of their public counterpart. In different ways, however, both the public and the private history partook of

nationalist ideology: the former by inviting America to regain its position of republican paragon, and the latter by implying that America's preeminence was never challenged by the Italians' performance in the first place.

Aestheticizing the Revolution

Despite its accuracy, the dichotomy I have delineated above between a sympathetic public history of the Roman republic and a more critical private one would be reductive and oversimplifying without the additional exploration of how Fuller's public dispatches are themselves a conflicted, contradictory text, often characterized by less-than-celebratory approaches to Italian liberalism. Specifically, the *Tribune* articles repeatedly present the Italian revolutions not as historical events fraught with political significance, but as spectacles enacted for the entertainment of the American observer and her transatlantic readers. This aestheticization of Italian republicanism is often accompanied by a seemingly antithetical lament over Italy's loss of aesthetic value in the process of political modernization. Whether the revolution in Rome is seen as a charming pageant or, on the contrary, as a threat to the touristic pleasures offered by papal Rome, however, both views imply Fuller's failure to put Italian republicanism on a par with American democracy.

Upon her arrival in Rome in the spring of 1847, Fuller wrote to her socialist friend William Henry Channing that "art is not important to me now." Instead, she continued, "I take interest in the state of the people, their manners, the state of the race in them. I see the future dawning; it is in important aspects Fourier's future".[41] It was an unconventional declaration, since in the American imagination Italy had traditionally embodied artistic rather than political achievements, and represented temporal stagnation rather than historical evolution.[42] Fuller did write about Italy's revolutions instead of its monuments at a time when other major New England intellectuals like Emerson and Hawthorne largely ignored them. Still, her representation of the people in the act of making history often reduces them once more to apolitical

objects of aesthetic consumption. For instance, recounting the festivities that took place in Rome to celebrate the inauguration of a lay council that would collaborate with the pope in the administration of the state, Fuller observed that the "beautiful show of the evening was the Trasteverini dancing the Saltarello in their most brilliant costume. I saw them thus to much greater advantage than ever before; several were nobly handsome, and danced admirably." The recurrence in this passage of nouns and adjectives indicating visual appreciation suggests that the people's enthusiasm at the prospect of a more enlightened government, that is, a political statement, has only aesthetic value in the eyes of the American observer. Fuller's final comment that "it was really like Pinelli",[43] a reference to a well-known Italian engraver of the beginning of the century, confirms this interpretation. While the Trasteverini use dance as a form of political action, Fuller reads it solely in artistic terms and, significantly, equates it with a dead painter's pastoral scenes. The Romans' political present *in-fieri* becomes in Fuller's narrative a timeless and a-political Arcadia.

Similar aestheticizing renditions of the revolutions occur frequently in the dispatches. Fuller writes of a torch-bearing procession in honor of the pope's reform that "a stream of fire advanced slowly with a perpetual surge-like sound of voices" while "the torches flashed on the animated Italian faces", and remarks that she "ha[d] never seen anything finer".[44] She conveys the enthusiasm of the people of Florence at the liberal measures they had obtained from their sovereign by depicting "laborers of the lower class, marching home at night; keeping step as if they were the National Guard, filling the air and cheering the melancholy moon, by the patriotic hymns sung, with the mellow tone and the perfect time which belong to the Italians."[45] As with the Romans, Fuller comments that "all was done in that beautiful poetic manner peculiar to this artist people."[46] And, to cite one final example, when she watches the assembling of the Civic Guard from the Pincian hill, which she had climbed "to see better", Fuller observes that the Romans could not have chosen anywhere better for the ceremony. In her words, "There is no place so fine for anything of this kind as Piazza del Popolo; it is so full of light, so fair and

grand, the obelisk and fountain make so fine a center for all kind of groups".[47] The unifying factor among these passages about different episodes of the Italian popular insurrections of mid-century is their similar reduction of foreign liberalism into visual entertainment for the American spectator. In Fuller's account of the events, Italians are engaged not in the reorganization of the body politic, but in the making of themselves into art for the eyes of the *Tribune's* foreign correspondent and her New York readers. Fuller may have been trying, as one critic has observed, to reinsert Italy into the realm of historical becoming,[48] but her renditions of historical occurrences into picturesque tableaux vivants fail to do so.

The Roman revolution, however, is not consistently viewed as aesthetically pleasing. On the contrary, Fuller oftentimes describes democracy as a threat to the cultural alterity that made Italy appealing to the American tourist. Reporting on the Roman carnival in December 1847, in the aftermath of the creation of the Civic Guard, for instance, Fuller observed that Rome lay in a liminal position between the absolutism of the past and the republicanism to be realized in the future. While she hailed the progressive changes introduced in the papal administration, she also hoped that "when the many uses and reasons of the new prevail, . . . what is poetical in the old will not be lost".[49] Returning to the same topic a year later, once Rome had declared itself a republic, she remarked that indeed freedom and equality had negatively affected this celebrated attraction of the Rome of the popes. "The Republican Carnival", she acknowledged, "has not been as splendid as the Papal; the absence of Dukes and Princes being felt in the way of coaches and rich dresses".[50] It is precisely this sense that progress may endanger Italy's aesthetic value that Fuller conveys in a letter urging Emelyn Story to return to Rome from Florence, where she had repaired with her family at the onset of the hostilities between the pope and his people. "My fear", she wrote to her friend, "is that Rome cannot hold together in her present form against innovation and that we are enjoying the last hour of her old solemn greatness. Will you not return then to see her once more!"[51]

In addition to threatening to eliminate old customs prized by the American travelers, the revolution, Fuller often suggests, was

imperiling Rome's physical survival itself. In her final dispatches, which report on the siege, she repeatedly lamented the destruction of ancient monuments caused by the war. "We all feel very sad", she told her readers in early May 1849, "because the idea of bombs thrown in, and street fight in Rome is peculiarly dreadful. Apart from all the blood and anguish inevitable at such times, the glories of Art may perish, and mankind be forever despoiled of the most beautiful inheritance."[52] By the end of the month she was able to describe the effects of the war on the city, whose trees all had to be felled to build barricades and prevent the enemy from finding concealment among them. "Rome", she wrote, "is shorn of the locks which lent grace to her venerable brow. She looks desolated, profaned".[53] This insistence on the havoc brought by the war returns in a letter to Emerson dated June 1849. Acknowledging she lacked the moral strength of men like Mazzini, who would sacrifice everything to their principles, Fuller lamented once more that "Rome is being destroyed: her glorious oaks; her Villas, haunts of sacred beauty, that seemed the possession of the world forever,—the villa of Raphael, the villa of Albani, home of Winkelmann, and the best expression of the ideal of modern Rome, and so many other sanctuaries of beauty,—all must perish, lest a foe should level his musket from their shelter. *I* could not, could not!"[54] The passages above all belie Fuller's repeated assertion in the dispatches about the identity of the Italian and the American revolutions. Rather, they imply the opposite notion that Italian democracy may be of lesser kind, not worth the struggle necessary to achieve it. In fact, they leave the contemporary reader with a nagging suspicion that Fuller half wished the revolution had never taken place, and Italy could be preserved as it best suited the American observer in search of curiosities—with all its picturesque customs and its monuments intact.

Fuller's ambivalence towards the modernizing effects of the revolution is the most forceful indication of her inability to distance herself from nationalistic ideology. When she expressed her apprehension that the success of the Risorgimento might lead to Italy's loss of aesthetic appeal, Fuller was repeating verbatim the arguments deployed against women's demand that they too be

active members of the body politic, namely, that women who stepped into the public sphere ceased to be true women and were thereby disqualified for marriage with middle class American men. Fuller's occasional objection to the rise of popular democracy in Italy because it might compromise its aesthetic value is thus a replica of the patriarchal justifications for the exclusion of women from politics which she had herself adamantly attacked in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century.* That Fuller the feminist should adopt the nationalistic vision of Italy as extraneous to historical progress despite its coincidence with the misogynist conception of women as naturally apolitical testifies to the exceptionally strong hold that nationalistic ideology had on her.

This contention is further reinforced by the fact that Fuller was aware that the rhetoric of domination was flexible and could be put to multiple uses. In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* she had argued that the subjection of women and the enslavement of blacks were similarly founded upon the negative evaluation of the intellectual capability of the oppressed, which in turn justified the control exercised over them by the oppressors. In her words, "there exists in the minds of men a tone of feeling toward women as toward slaves ... that the infinite soul can only work through them in already ascertained limits; that the gift of reason, Man's highest prerogative, is allotted to them in much lower degree, that they must be kept from mischief and melancholy by being constantly engaged in active labor, which is to be furnished and directed by those better able to think, &c., &c".[55] In the *Tribune* dispatches, Fuller similarly observed that Americans abroad expressed their reservations towards the Italians' struggle for national independence using the same arguments employed in the United States to object to any proposal for the emancipation of blacks. "Americans in Italy", she wrote, "talk about the corrupt and degenerate state of Italy as they do about that of our slaves at home."[56] Some, for instance, thought the Austrians wise and generous sovereigns who took good care of the physical needs of their subjects. "The Lombard peasant supping full of his polenta", they declared, "is *happy enough",*[57] and, like the allegedly contended southern slave, had no justification to rebel against the authority of the master.

While she had observed that the discourses of power are polyvalent, Fuller never explicitly drew the connection between nationalistic and patriarchal ideology, that is, between the discourse that declared Italians unfit for democracy and that which relegated women to the domestic sphere. Still, such a connection is obvious to the reader of her feminist and Italian writings, who finds her objecting to the same arguments whether she is defending a woman's right to live beyond the home or the Italians' right to independence from colonial powers. For instance, the passage quoted above as an example of how some Americans censured the Italian revolutions is also mentioned in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* to illustrate misogynist thought. In her feminist treatise Fuller has a slave-dealer complain that the abolitionists, who have already endangered the union and the prosperity of the nation, are now trying to lure his wife "away from the cradle and the kitchen-hearth to vote at polls, and preach from a pulpit." Like the Americans opposed to the Italians' insurrections against Austria, he too thinks his partner is "happy enough as she is", especially since, not unlike the Austrian empire, he is a generous despot. "She has more leisure than I have", he explains, "every means of improvement, every indulgence".[58] That Fuller should conflate the patriarch with the slave-holder is, of course, indicative of her insight that racism and sexism employ the same rhetorical tools. And although she never voiced it, the contention that these same tools also serve nationalistic ideology is undoubtedly latent in her writing.

In Italy, Margaret Fuller was thus on the verge of recognizing that the rhetoric of male superiority and American exceptionalism were one and the same. Yet, she never quite articulated that connection. That she could not do so and would instead proceed to express her concern that a free Italy might lose its charm testifies to the level to which she had internalized American nationalist ideology. Indeed, contrary to the current critical consensus on her Italian writings, Fuller's account of the Roman revolutions upholds the myth of America's political superiority throughout. The public dispatches do so in spite of appearances, since the jeremiad reaffirms nationalistic mythology even as it laments the nation's

backsliding. The private letters and the journal do so openly, through the explicit censure of Italian revolutionists. And, finally, even the seemingly sympathetic narrative of the dispatches is interrupted by a touristic approach to the Risorgimento which trivializes it and belies the limits of Fuller's identification with Italian republicanism.

1 Margaret Fuller, "Farewell", *New-York Daily Tribune,* 1 August 1846, in *The Essential Margaret Fuller,* ed. Jeffrey Steele (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers U.P., 1992), p. 404.

2 For an overview of the events of the Risorgimento, see Edgar Holt's *The Making of Italy, 1815-1870* (New York, Atheneum, 1971) and Stuart Woolf's *A History of Italy, 1700-1860. The Social Constraints of Political Change (New* York, Atheneum, 1979). For a more detailed account, see Giorgio Candeloro's eight-volume *Storia dell'Italia moderna* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1956-1978) and the multi-authored, six-volume *Storia dell'Italia dal settecento .all'unua* edited by Nino Valeri (Turin, Einaudi, 1972 -1976).

3 Fuller, "Noble Sentiment and the Loss of the Pope", *New York Daily Tribune,* 15 June 1848, in *"These Sad but Glorious Days is Dispatches from Europe, 1846-1850,* ed. Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith (New Haven, Conn., Yale U.P., 1991), p. 230.

4 By now two generations of readers of Fuller's dispatches have emphasized the distinctiveness of her approach to Italy. A. William Salomone first maintained in his influential "The Nineteenth-Century Discovery of Italy: An Essay in American Cultural History. Prolegomena to a Historiographic Problem" *(American Historical Review* 73 [1968], 1359-91) that while her contemporaries cherished Italy as a-historical and a-political Arcadia, Fuller was interested almost exclusively in the country's socio-political conditions. Ann Douglass similarly argued in "Margaret Fuller and the Search for History" *(Women's Studies* 4 [1976], pp. 37-86) that Fuller was unique in her efforts to depict Italy as affected by the forces of history in the present as well as in the classical past, a point most recently developed along interdisciplinary lines by Brigitte Bailey in her unpublished manuscript "Representing Italy: Fuller, History Painting, and the Popular Press". In "The Political and Social Criticism of Margaret Fuller" *(South Atlantic Quarterly 72* [1978], pp. 560-73), Margaret V. Allen has emphasized Fuller's involvement with the Italian revolutions that her compatriots either ignored or merely observed, and, along the same lines, Jeffrey Steele has suggested in his introduction to *The Essential Margaret Fuller* that Fuller was able in Italy to abandon the aesthetic mode of perception which would reduce Italians to touristic attractions for a sympathetic political involvement with them. Whether the emphasis is on the peculiarity of the subject of Fuller's letters from Italy or on the peculiarity of her

attitude towards her subject, however, the critical consensus among U.S. scholars, reiterated in William L. Vance's detailed study of Americans' reactions to the Risorgimento in *America's Rome* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale UP, 1989), 2, pp. 105-210, is that the *Tribune* dispatches differ considerably from other nineteenth-century recreations of Italy. Interestingly, the one dissenting voice is that of Italian scholar Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, who, in the introduction to her translation of the *Tribune* dispatches, argues that Fuller's account of Roman republic has "typically American traits", whether it be faith in American democracy or Protestant prejudice against the Catholic church *(Un Americana a Roma,* 1847-49 [Pordenone, Studio Tesi, 1986], p. xiii), While Mamoli Zorzi does not address the issue of Fuller's nationalism explicitly, her essay, like mine own, is an example of the analytical advantage conferred upon foreign scholars of American culture by their position of cultural marginality, which enables them to be aware of ideological systems often invisible to native scholars.

5 Bell Gale Chevigny, "To the Edges of Ideology: Margaret Fuller's Centrifugal Evolution", *American Quarterly* 38 (1986), p. 190.

6 Chevigny, *The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings* (New York: Feminist P, 1976), 376.

7 Rosella Mamoli Zorzi and Larry J. Reynolds first observed that Fuller's use of the European scene to indict America could be called a jeremiad in, respectively, "II viaggio di un'americana in Italia: Margaret Fuller", in *Viaggio e scrittura. Le straniere nell'Italia dell' Ottocento.* ed. Liana Borghi, Nicoletta Livi Bacci and Uta Treder (Geneve, Slatkine, 1988), pp. 119-26 and *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance* (New Haven, Conn., Yale U.P., 1989), pp. 54-78. While my analysis is indebted to their description, it differs from it in that I stress the fundamentally celebratory and nationalistic nature of the jeremiad rather than its critical import.

8 Several readers have noticed the contrast between Fuller's public and private accounts of Italian liberalism, most recently Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith in their "Introduction" to the Yale U.P. edition of the *Tribune* dispatches, especially pp. 30-1. Unlike these critics, who have found Fuller's private censure of the Roman republicans incompatible with her public stance, I find her unpublished negative comments consistent with her public adoption of a mode of social criticism that reaffirms American republican exceptionalism.

9 As examples of Fuller's social criticism in the *New-York Daily Tribune,* see "New Year's Day" (1 January 184S); "Oneota; or, The Red Race in America ", by Henry R. Schoolcraft" (12 February 1845); "Our City Charities" (19 March 1845); "Prevalent Ideas that Politeness is Too Great a Luxury to be Given to the Poor" (31 May 1845); "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass" (10 June 1845); "Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts" (19 June 1845); "1st January 1846" (31 December 1845); "The Rich Man—An Ideal Sketch" (6 February 1846); "The Poor Man—An Ideal Sketch" (25 March 1846); "What Fits a Man to Be a Voter?" (31 March 1846); "Memoirs, Official and Personal, with Sketches of Travel among the Northern and Southern Indians ", by Thomas L. M'Kenney (8 July 1846); "Victory" (21 May 1846).

10 For a discussion of Fuller's familiarity with the political literature of the revolutionary era, see Ann Douglas's "Margaret Fuller and the Search for History" pp. 43-52. For other exhaustive overviews of her cultural formation, see the recent biography by Joan Von Mehren, *Minerva and the Muse* (Amherst, Mass., U. of Massachusetts P. 1994), and the first volume of Charles Capper's *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life* (New York, Oxford U.P., 1992).

11 Fuller, "Victory", *New-York Daily Tribune,* 21 May 1846.

12 See Sacvan Bercovitch's *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, Wisc., U. of Wisconsin P. 1978) and *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York, Routledge, 1993).

13 Fuller, "Victory".

14 Fuller, "New Year's Day", *New-York Daily Tribune,* 1 Jan. 1845.

15 Fuller, "1 January, 1846", *New-York Daily Tribune,* 31 Dec. 1845.

16 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* pp. 164-5.

17 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 230.

18 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* pp. 164-5.

19 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 230.

20 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 165.

21 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 161.

22 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 277.

23 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 284.

24 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 317.

25 The text of Fuller's journal is available in Leona Rostenberg's "Margaret Fuller's Roman Diary", *Journal of Modern History* 12 (1940), pp. 209-20.

26 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 300.

27 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 304.

28 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 305.

29 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 315.

30 Fuller to Caroline Sturgis Tappan, 16 March 1849, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller,* ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca, NY, Cornell U.P.,1988), 5, p. 209.

31 Fuller to Giovanni Angelo Ossoli, 4 April 1849, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller,* 5, p. 223.

32 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 213.

33 Rostenberg, 220.

34 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century martial ideal of republican citizenship, see Kristin L. Hoganson's *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Filippine-American Wars* (New Haven, Conn., Yale, 1999).

35 Fuller to Costanza Arconati Visconti, 22 June 1848, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller,* 5, p. 73.

36 Fuller to Giuseppe Mazzini, 3 March 1849, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller* 5, p. 196.

37 Fuller to Visconti, p. 73.

38 Fuller to Mazzini, p. 196.

39 On American political evangelism and exceptionalism, see Michael Kemmen's review essay, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration", *American Quarterly* 45 (1993), pp. 1-43.

40 See Cristina Zwarg's "Reading Before Marx: Margaret Fuller and the *New York Daily Tribune",* in *Readers in History: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Contexts* of *Response,* ed. James L. Machor (Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins D.P., 1993), 228-58, and P. Joy Rouse's "Margaret Fuller: A Rhetoric of Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century America", in *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Transformations in the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric,* ed. Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran (Carbondale, Ill., Southern Illinois U.P., 1993), pp. 110-36.

41 Fuller to William H. Channing, 7 May 1847, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller,* 4, p. 271.

42 See Brigitte Bailey's "The Protected Witness: Cole, Cooper, and the Tourist's View of the Italian Landscape", in *American Iconology. New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature,* ed. David C. Miller (New Haven, Conn., Yale DP, 1993), pp. 92-111.

43 Fuller, *"These Sad hut Glorious Days",* pp. 175-6.

44 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* pp. 137-8.

45 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 160.

46 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 158.

47 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 241.

48 That Fuller remakes Italy into a political entity for her American readers is the thesis of Bailey's unpublished manuscript.

49 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 180.

50 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 247.

51 Fuller to Emelyn Story, 28 November 1848, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller,* 5, p. 158.

52 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 276.

53 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 280.

54 Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 10 June 1849, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller,* 5, p. 240.

55 Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845; New York: Norton, 1971), pp. 33-4.

56 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 159.

57 Fuller, *"These Sad but Glorious Days",* p. 154.

58 Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century,* p. 9.