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## Margaret Fuller The Reformer: A Transcendentalist In The Era Of Reform

## Margaret Fuller the Reformer: A Transcendentalist in the Era

Gina Tangorra

Margaret Fuller was a fascinating, complicated, brilliant, and often irritating woman. Her opinions, writings, criticisms, and even her conduct confused contemporaries and subsequent biographers to the point that portrayals of her contradict each other; they are harshly critical or are whitewashed versions of her. Contemporary accounts of her are colored by the author's personal feelings about her character instead of being based on her merit as a writer, thinker, and activist. Until more recent scholarship, many historians have marginalized and largely ignored her involvement with the Transcendentalists. In spite of this omission, Fuller was an integral part of the Transcendental community. Her writings and interactions with other Transcendentalists, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Henry Channing, and Nathaniel Hawthorne had an important influence on their own beliefs and writings.<sup>1</sup> One could infer that Fuller has long been treated as separate from the Transcendentalist movement because she resists the confinement of Transcendentalist interpretation.<sup>2</sup> That she also does not fit the mold of the "reformer" is what makes her so fascinating. As a proponent of woman's rights, a literary critic, a revolutionary, and overall, a Transcendentalist, Margaret Fuller was a "virtuoso."<sup>3</sup> A virtuoso, like the conductor of an orchestra, is able to direct a specific section as well as envisioning the entire

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, Orestes Brownson, who was by no means an admirer of Fuller, called her the "high-priestess of American Transcendentalism;" inadvertently acknowledging her importance and influence within the Transcendental community. Orestes A. Brownson, "Review of *Summer of the Lakes*" (October 1844), in *Critical Essays on Margaret Fuller*, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co, 1980), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Anne C. Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement: 1830-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), x. Rose's revisionist history of Transcendentalism does consider Margaret Fuller an important Transcendentalist. This just reinforces my point, however, as Rose is not only reinterpreting Transcendentalism but also pointing out that "every historian has compiled a different listing of leading members of the movement...." Also, see page 60, where Rose articulates that "Among authors of major studies of Transcendentalism, only O. B. Frothingham devotes a chapter to Margaret Fuller."

<sup>3</sup> I am adapting the term "virtuoso" for my own purposes; Fuller's individualist, very personal sense of religion does not exactly fit with the Abzug's Christian evangelical "religious virtuosos." Nevertheless, Abzug's ideas about the *kairos* are a very useful model for interpreting reform. Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4-5.

symphony. Fuller had a significant immediate impact on her world. As she was able to envision the larger world around her, she was also able to have an impact on society as a whole. An evaluation of Fuller's legacy is important, as her legacy reveals her effectiveness as a virtuoso. She was molded by the larger reform movement in the American republic as well as by being an active contributor towards reform. She was conscious, perhaps to a greater extent than other Transcendentalists including Emerson, that she had a destiny to fulfill in the unfolding drama of the nineteenth century. As she struggled, along with America, to define her role among the political, social, and ideological changes around her, her own sense of Transcendentalism morphed and adapted. The development of Margaret Fuller's intellectual ideas and social conscience can be traced through her "Conversations," her work as editor of the *Dial* and contributor to *The New York Tribune*, and culminate with her revolutionary experiences in Italy.

Sarah Margaret Fuller was born on May 23, 1810, the oldest of eight children.<sup>4</sup> Her father, disappointed that his first child was a girl, determined that Margaret should receive a boy's education. Margaret Fuller's education formed and defined her in ways that fundamentally affected the course of her life. She began learning Latin at age six, and then moved on to what Higginson called an "intellectual forcing process."<sup>5</sup> He describes how at the age of fifteen, she rose before five in summer, walked an hour, practiced an hour on the piano, breakfasted at seven, read Sismondi's 'European Literature' in French till eight, then Brown's 'Philosophy' till half past nine, then went to school for Greek at twelve, then practiced again till dinner. After...she read two hours in Italian, then walked or rode; and in the evening played, sang, and retired at eleven to write in the diary.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossoli* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1884), 20. I make use of Thomas Higginson's meticulous work for most of the biographical details of Fuller's life. Higginson writes, "If my view of Margaret Fuller differs a little from that of previous biographers, [referring here to the authors of the *Memoirs* and Julia Ward Howe] it is due to the study of these original sources" (4). Higginson had access to the diaries of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Alcott, along with Fuller's travel diaries, journals and notebooks, and the bulky Fuller correspondence. He also includes contemporaries' recollections of her. While some of these primary sources have been published, many still remain in private collections or archives. Even Hudspeth, who has published the only comprehensive collection of Fuller's correspondence, relies on Higginson's biography for certain letters. Despite the passage of time, Higginson's biography remains one of the best accounts of Fuller's life.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 23-24.

It seems safe to say that her father was a perfectionist who expected great things from his eldest child. Fuller later revealed how she felt that this intense, rigid education irreparably damaged her. The early constant “overwork” made her a victim to “nightmare, and somnambulism,...continual headache, weakness and nervous affections,...and will bring me,...to a premature grave.”<sup>7</sup> She viewed the intellectual part of herself as masculine and felt that this needed to be balanced with a softer, more feminine aspect. The struggle to reconcile what she saw as two disparate parts continued through most of her life. Fuller’s attitude towards her education manifests itself in the fact that she burned all of her childhood diaries which she had conscientiously labored over.<sup>8</sup> Her destruction of her diaries reveals, perhaps, a latent anger with her father, but more overtly illustrates her own dissatisfaction with her work. This sense of dissatisfaction and fear that her work would “seem desultory and ineffectual” is present, and commented on by Higginson, in her later journals.<sup>9</sup> While biographers have emphasized the negative impact of Fuller’s early education,<sup>10</sup> I would argue that Fuller may have been ambivalent. The highly regimented and strict routine that her father insisted on actually shaped her later work ethic and her ability to comprehend complex philosophical thought, such as the works of Goethe, master several languages, and critically analyze literary works. Margaret Fuller received a higher education which was atypical for a girl, but was typical for boys in “Enlightenment-minded Unitarian Boston and Cambridge.”<sup>11</sup> Her education, which included an emphasis on ancient Rome, would have a profound effect on

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<sup>7</sup>Margaret Fuller, *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, eds. R. W. Emerson, W. H. Channing, and J. F. Clarke (1852; reprint, New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), 1:15.

<sup>8</sup>Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, 28.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 195. This is one example Higginson includes. It is from an excerpt from her diary in 1844, the period when she was proofing her first book, *Summer on the Lakes*. She wrote, “I begin to be so tired of my book! It will be through next Thursday, but I’m afraid I shall feel no better then, because dissatisfied with this last part.” *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Higginson, in particular, seems to have been critical of her father’s methods. Mr. Fuller controlled everything about Margaret, the result being that in her upbringing, the “whole punctuation was masculine.” *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>11</sup>Charles Capper, *The Private Years*, volume 1 of *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 31. Capper also thinks Fuller exaggerated the negative results of her education. Capper’s excellent biography is the most comprehensive work done on Margaret Fuller. He is especially useful in providing a modern perspective that benefits from the distance of time. He is highly conscious of previous work done on Fuller and provides broader context to Fuller’s life, death, and legacy.

her imagination and her later identification with the Italian Revolution.<sup>12</sup> Fuller was conscious of her higher education and believed that this signified that she was destined for a higher calling.<sup>13</sup>

Besides contributing to the view that she had a greater destiny to fulfill, Margaret Fuller's "Enlightenment-minded" "masculine" education allowed her to move in the same sphere as contemporary male intellectuals and to eventually earn their respect. This penetration into what was seen as the masculine intellectual sphere also is a sign of the times. In what other era could a woman have accomplished this feat? For individuals sensitive to the subtle and not-so-subtle shifts in society, the push for reform of alcohol imbibition, religious institutions, the practice of slavery, and gender relations, must have felt like a reworking of the world order on a large scale. Robert H. Abzug argues that the reform movements of this period indicated that the "cosmos" was crumbling. If that indeed was the case, then Margaret Fuller's association with the male intellectuals of New England shows the uncertainty felt about what would be left after the dust settled. The tension between their initial reluctance to accept Fuller and their eventual capitulation and respect emphasizes this sense of change, and their unease about change. Emerson, Hawthorne, James Lowell and other influential New Englanders' critical opinion of Margaret Fuller is what has largely affected Fuller's legacy. Hawthorne, writing of her years in Italy and her death, grudgingly admits her (few) good qualities. He sees her marriage to the "clownish" Ossoli as an "awful joke," and concludes "On the whole, I do not know but I like her the better for it; because she proved herself a very woman after all..."<sup>14</sup> James Lowell's 1848 *A Fable for Critics* famously skewered Fuller and presented her as self-important and boorish.<sup>15</sup> Emerson wrote that he was initially "repelled" by Fuller.<sup>16</sup> Despite

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<sup>12</sup>Higginson begins his biography with a discussion of Fuller's "Roman" character and later comments on her fascination with Brutus.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 84. For example, Higginson notes that Fuller "did not accept this as her life-work." She wanted to do more than teach a limited number of students.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted in Julian Hawthorne, Extract from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Roman Journal*, in *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife: A biography* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1884), 1:261.

<sup>15</sup>James Russell Lowell, Excerpt from *A Fable for Critics* (1848), in *Critical Essays*, 64. "With an I-turn-the-crank-of-the-Universe air/And a tone which, at least to my fancy appears/Not so much to be entering as boxing your ears,/Is unfolding a tale (of herself, I surmise)."

<sup>16</sup>Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Memoirs*, 1:202. He continues, "The men thought she carried too many guns, and the women did not like one who despised them." The *Memoirs*, while a very thorough work, unfortunately was edited in such a way that the unsavory or questionable aspects about Fuller's life

what I am tempted to call their misogynist interpretations, especially in the case of Hawthorne, these men respected her.<sup>17</sup> Evidence for this is the voluminous correspondence between Fuller and Emerson, Fuller and William Henry Channing, and Fuller and Hawthorne. On August 28, 1842, Hawthorne wrote to Fuller that “There is nobody to whom I would more willingly speak my mind, because I can be certain of being thoroughly understood.”<sup>18</sup> Higginson describes how he was able to see the progress of Emerson and Fuller’s relationship through their unpublished letters. He writes, “How much Mr. Emerson valued them is plain from the fact that in some cases where a letter is missing there is substituted a copy in his handwriting” and he saved every one.<sup>19</sup> Fuller’s life was in part defined by her close relationships with men like Emerson, Hawthorne, and William Henry Channing. Cambridge, Massachusetts was a close-knit community which Higginson refers to adroitly as a “nest.” While the Cambridge and New England communities were small, they were certainly not provincial. Higginson succinctly describes the importance of Cambridge, which was “intellectually metropolitan” and contained many important European thinkers displaced by political unrest.<sup>20</sup> Fuller herself refers to New England as the “chief mental focus to the New World.”<sup>21</sup> It is as if New England was a pressure cooker of ideas and creative energy that exploded with extraordinary results. Fuller was certainly affected by the mass of ideas, European influences, and progressive movements that centered in New England.

Her friendship with these New England intellectuals affected not only her intellectual development, but her emotional one as well. Besides maintaining correspondence, Fuller also spent time living in the homes of these

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and writings were removed. I am conscious of this problem, and thus have tried to use the *Memoirs* as a way to show how Fuller’s contemporaries and her friends interpreted her. However, when the original source was unavailable, and when Hudspeth used the *Memoirs* as his source for certain letters, I have resorted to using the *Memoirs*.

<sup>17</sup>Compare the attitude towards Fuller of the “enlightened” Hawthorne and Emerson with that of William J. Pabodie. Pabodie, commenting on Fuller’s work for the *Dial*, superiorly asserted that “Her mind is chiefly valuable as a repository” and “we regret to say we have no respect” for her opinions. William J. Pabodie, “The Dial” (27 July 1840), in *Critical Essays*, 1. His opinion reflects the mindset of many other male critics of the time.

<sup>18</sup>Quoted in Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, 1:255-256.

<sup>19</sup>Higginson, 68.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>21</sup>Margaret Fuller Ossoli, “Emerson’s Essays” (1844), in *Life Without and Life Within: or Reviews, Narratives, Essays and Poems*, ed. Arthur B. Fuller (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1874), 193.

men and their wives. While her close association with these men indicates that they accepted her, their relationships remained on a purely intellectual level. As hard as she tried, Fuller could never achieve emotional closeness with the emotionally closed-off Emerson. Her relationships with the New England men further reveal her internal division that would last until her experiences in Italy. Her affection for, and the joy she derived from, Una, the Hawthornes' baby, and Ellen, the Emersons' baby, shows the more feminine and maternal side that she was unable, to her great frustration, to blend with her intellectual side.<sup>22</sup> In November of 1835, Fuller wrote in her diary, "I have always thought that I would not, that I would keep all that behind the curtain, that I would not write, like a woman, of love and hope and disappointment, but like a man, of the world of intellect and action."<sup>23</sup>

In 1836 when Transcendentalism officially came into being, Margaret Fuller was already an important member of this first "indigenous" American movement.<sup>24</sup> A movement that focused on internal reflection and urged individual reform seems counterintuitive to the concept of social reform. In fact, Transcendentalism, which formed out of the Second Awakening, was critical of the leading reform movements of the day. Emerson's skeptical view of reformers is very evident in his sketch of the gathering in Boston of the "Convention of Friends of Universal Reform." He notes:

a great deal of confusion, eccentricity, and freak appeared, as well as zeal and enthusiasm. If the assembly was disorderly, it was picturesque. Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-outers, Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh-day-Baptists, Quakers, Abolitionists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Philosophers—all came successively to the top, and seized their moment, if not their *hour*, wherein to chide, or pray, or preach, or protest.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>For example, Fuller, journal entry Wednesday, July 17th 1844, in "The Impulses of Human Nature": Margaret Fuller's Journal from June through October 1844," eds. Martha L. Berg and Alice de V. Perry, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 102 (1990): 89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25081019> (accessed October 26, 2009). Una "looks into my eyes, & I into hers. This act gives me singular pleasure...It indicates I think great purity of mind." and Higginson, 67.

<sup>23</sup>Fuller diary entry Groton, November 1835. Quoted in Higginson, 188.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>25</sup>Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Chardon Street and Bible Conventions," *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion* 13 (July 1842): 101. Higginson, remarking on this sketch, clarifies the "men with beards" comment. Apparently, "Charles Burleigh was charged with blasphemy, because his flowing locks and handsome untrimmed beard was thought to resemble...the



However, while the Transcendentalists, including Fuller, were wary of the popular reform movements, they did not criticize what they stood for. For Fuller and the Transcendentalists, the focus was different. In order to affect change, it must first come from within the individual. Change on the level of society would occur when society was composed of reformed individuals. Part of becoming an informed and reformed individual was through the expansion of the mind and opposing what Transcendentalists saw as the parochial view of the world. In his speech entitled "Man the Reformer" Emerson articulated the idea that "every man should be open to ecstasy, or a divine illumination, and his daily walk elevated by intercourse with the spiritual world."<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the Transcendentalists focused on Nature and the lessons to be learned from Nature, and rejected the materialistic world.<sup>27</sup> In actuality, Transcendentalism does fit with the agenda of reform, and in a broader sense, corresponds with the idea of "cosmos crumbling." The Transcendentalists reworked the entire concept of the world order and were very conscious of this. Margaret Fuller and the other editors of the transcendental *Dial* asserted that "No one can converse much with different classes of society in New England, without remarking the progress of a revolution."<sup>28</sup>

While Transcendentalists advocated reform, they were suspicious of reformers, whom Margaret Fuller tended to view as "rabid" and "so narrow."<sup>29</sup> This is why Fuller's opinions on abolition and the women's movement appear ambivalent in this period. Instead, Margaret Fuller and other Transcendentalists focused on comprehending human nature. She believed that understanding human nature was the key to bringing about social reform. Through her writings, Fuller articulated the unique Transcendental approach of interpreting the world and belief in bettering the condition of humankind through the use of Enlightenment ideas of progress and Humanist ideas of the importance of Man. This mentality indicates a frustration with Calvinist doctrine. Transcendentalists rejected Calvinism and the concept of original sin

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pictures of Jesus Christ; and...Lowell was thought to have formally announced a daring impulse of radicalism, after he, too, had eschewed the razor." Higginson, 176.

<sup>26</sup>Emerson, "Man the Reformer," in *Essays Orations and Lectures* (London: William Tegg and Co., 1848), 132.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>28</sup>Fuller, Emerson, and Ripley, "Editors to the Reader," *The Dial* 1, no.1 (July 1840): 2.

<sup>29</sup>Fuller, Undated, "Dispatch 18: New and Old World Democracy," in *"These Sad But Glorious Days": Dispatches from Europe, 1846-1850*, eds. Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 165.

and embraced a more optimistic view of human nature that elevated Man from his previous crushed state under the weight of Calvinist doctrine. As Emerson wrote, "The power, which at once is the spring and regulator in all efforts of reform, is faith in Man, the conviction that there is an infinite worthiness in him which will appear at the call of worth."<sup>30</sup> Transcendentalists believed that they were "raising man to the level of nature."<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, Fuller grappled with this concept. Her struggle to understand human nature showed in her ongoing frustration with herself and others. In 1838 she wrote to Emerson, "At present I am not at all Zelterian in my mood but very somber and sullen. I have shut the door for a few days and tried to do some-thing...And I see no divine person. I myself am more divine than any I see—."<sup>32</sup> It is easy to see why, as Higginson says, the authors of the *Memoirs* painted Fuller as arrogant. However, another interpretation of this letter is that Fuller was clearly frustrated with her work and due to debilitating headaches, was a "martyr to ill-health."<sup>33</sup> She does not see herself as "divine," for she is failing to accomplish anything. Her statement that she is "more divine than any I see" then becomes more ironic, instead of arrogant, and emphasizes her frustration. This letter also shows the tension between the optimistic, idealistic Transcendental ideology with the realities Fuller experienced. Overall, Transcendentalism and its tenants are very useful in showing how Margaret Fuller understood the world and responded to the profound changes around her.

While Margaret Fuller embraced Transcendentalism, she did express some dissatisfaction with what she saw as a lack of progress. This sense of dissatisfaction and her "longing for action" led her to seek other avenues of expression, and in 1839 the *Conversations* were born.<sup>34</sup> Fuller was conscious of the differences between how society viewed men and how society viewed women. The purpose of the *Conversations* was to provide women with "some of the same intellectual benefits that the sphere of public activity denied to them supposedly conferred."<sup>35</sup> Moreover, she wanted to improve the

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<sup>30</sup>Emerson, "Man the Reformer," in *Essays Orations and Lectures*, 145.

<sup>31</sup>Fuller, Emerson, and Ripley, "Editors to the Reader" *The Dial* 1, no. 1 (July 1840): 4. See also, "The Unitarian Movement in New England" *The Dial* 1, no. IV (April 184): 409-443.

<sup>32</sup>Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Providence, 1st March 1838, in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller, 1839-1841*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 2:327.

<sup>33</sup>Higginson, 89.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>35</sup>Charles Capper, "Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer: The *Conversations* in Boston," *American Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 515,

education of women and give them opportunities that they normally would not have. Part of this desire came through her experiences as a teacher and tutor and from educating her younger siblings.<sup>36</sup> She assumed the role of the breadwinner after her father's death, which prevented her from being able to go to Europe as she had planned with Harriet Martineau in 1836. While she disliked teaching and believed it limited her in some way,<sup>37</sup> her earlier experiences teaching could be seen as a training of sorts for the Conversations. However, there were disagreements over the motivations behind and effectiveness of the Conversations. Emerson was under the opinion that they were simply Margaret Fuller "monologues."<sup>38</sup> Harriet Martineau in her autobiography criticizes Margaret Fuller and her "adult pupils." While they "sat 'gorgeously dressed,' talking about Mars and Venus, Plato and Göthe, and fancying themselves the elect of the earth in intellect and refinement, the liberties of the republic were running out as fast as they could go."<sup>39</sup> In other words, the Conversations ignored the realities of the immediate social problems; they were too much talk and not enough action.

Higginson points to the list of Conversation members to refute Martineau's criticism. He argued that the Conversations were important because a large percentage of the women became integrally involved in the abolition and women's movements, such as Lydia Maria Child.<sup>40</sup> It is difficult for the modern scholar to come to a conclusion about the Conversations because no actual transcripts of the Conversations survived. We only have contemporaries' remembrances and interpretations of the Conversations.<sup>41</sup>

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2713122> (accessed October 26, 2009). This is an excellent, detailed history and analysis of the Conversations.

<sup>36</sup>Capper in particular sees Alcott's ideas about education as an important influence on Fuller's Conversations.

<sup>37</sup>Perhaps it did as Higginson points out that "For a young American woman who wishes to support herself and educate her younger brothers and sisters, the natural refuge is still the desk of a school-teacher. In Margaret Fuller's time this was even more true than now." Higginson, 75.

<sup>38</sup>Elizabeth Peabody, who took notes on the Conversations, wrote that "Miss Fuller's fifth conversation was pretty much a monologue of her own." Quoted in *Memoirs*, 1:340.

<sup>39</sup>Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography*, ed. Linda H. Peterson (1855; reprint, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 378.

<sup>40</sup>Higginson, 128-129. He noted that the 'spoiled' women of Margaret's classes were the very women who were fighting Miss Martineau's battles." 128.

<sup>41</sup>Granville Hicks published "A Conversation in Boston," an imaginative work, which describes a Conversation from the point of view of Dr. Nathaniel Peabody. Granville Hicks, "A Conversation in Boston," *Sewanee Review* 39(April-June 1931), 129-143.

However, the Conversations are important because they reveal important aspects of Fuller's character and her ideas about reform, especially in male-female relations. She believed that the Conversations would help women "To ascertain what pursuits are best suited to us in our time and state of society, and how we may make best use of our means for building up the life of thought upon the life of action."<sup>42</sup> The Conversations, whether or not they were prototypes of feminist "Conscious Raisings," fit with overall Transcendentalist ideas about broadening one's mind.<sup>43</sup> Importantly, the Conversations used the medium of the spoken word instead of written words. Articulating ideas through speech was an easier, more natural, way of expressing herself. In 1832, Fuller explained, "Conversation is my natural element."<sup>44</sup> In Amos Bronson Alcott's words, "She was greatest when she dropped her pen. She spoke best what others essayed to say, and what women speak best."<sup>45</sup> Support of this is in Margaret Fuller's writings themselves. Even the most sympathetic admirer of Fuller, such as Thomas Higginson, admitted that many of her writings were difficult to read. Emerson asserted that "In her writing she was prone to spin her sentences without a sure guidance, and beyond the sympathy of the reader."<sup>46</sup> Her earlier writings are often composed of jumbled, confusing, and meandering thoughts, which may explain the often cited charges of pedantry.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Conversations allowed women, like Margaret Fuller, to express themselves in a way previously closed to them. Many of the women who participated in the Conversations would not have had the formal training that their masculine contemporaries would have had, and in this way, the Conversations are a method in which to reconcile the female domain of conversation with the masculine intellectual domain.

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<sup>42</sup>Margaret Fuller to Sophia Ripley, Jamaica Plain, 27th August, 1839, in *The Letters*, 2:87.

<sup>43</sup>It is difficult to label Fuller as a "proto-Feminist" in this period because she would not have considered herself an activist of woman's rights; she was a Transcendentalist who rejected the "popular" reform movements.

<sup>44</sup>Margaret Fuller, reprinted in *Memoirs*, 1:107.

<sup>45</sup>Amos Bronson Alcott, Excerpt from *Concord Days* (1872), in *Critical Essays*, 110.

<sup>46</sup>Emerson, *Memoirs*, 1:337.

<sup>47</sup> See for example, Caleb Stetson, "Review of *Summer on the Lakes*" (September 1844), in *Critical Essays*, 4. Similarly, Lydia Maria Child's review of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* while admiring, admits that "its meaning is not always sufficiently clear. This does not arise from affectation, or pedantic elaboration..." Lydia Maria Child, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" (15 February 1845), in *Critical Essays*, 7. See also Huntington's comments: "Of pedantry, indeed perhaps here is no an entire absence." Frederic Dan Huntington, "Review of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*" (May 1845), in *Critical Essays*, 26.

Another manner in which Margaret was able to bridge the gap between the male and female spheres was her work as editor of the *Dial*, the Transcendentalist mouthpiece and the “first thoroughly American literary enterprise.”<sup>48</sup> Her appointment as editor in 1840 shows the respect the Transcendentalist community had for her.<sup>49</sup> It was, in Fuller’s favored expression, the “sign of the times” that she was a woman and held the position of editor. The name of the journal is significant because, like a dial, the journal indicated and marked the progress of society. The editors stated that it “will be such a Dial, not as the dead face of a clock,...but rather such a Dial as is the Garden itself, in whose leaves and flowers and fruits the suddenly awakened sleeper is instantly apprised not what part of dead time, but what state of life and growth is now arrived and arriving.”<sup>50</sup> This also has cosmological implications as the editors asserted that the journal “has the step of Fate, and it goes on existing like an oak or a river because it must.”<sup>51</sup> The editors wrote that the journal was produced in a sacred “new spirit” which will “make new demands on literature, and to reprobate that rigor of our conventions of religion and education which is turning us to stone...”<sup>52</sup>

The *Dial* was also significant because of the theoretical essays published during its years of operation. It served as an important medium for articulating Fuller’s unique point of view on male-female relations, the role of women in society, and above all, human nature. Fuller’s essay entitled “The Great Lawsuit. Man versus Men: Woman versus Women” speaks of the “liberation” of the sexes from society-imposed separation of spheres. Following Transcendentalist beliefs about reform, Fuller “radically relocated the polarity of masculine and feminine not between the sexes but within the individual.”<sup>53</sup> “The Great Lawsuit” concluded with the question, “And will she not soon appear? The woman who shall vindicate their birthright for all women; who shall teach them what to claim, and how to use what they

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<sup>48</sup>Higginson, 130.

<sup>49</sup>Another possible explanation for why Fuller was given the job was that no one else wanted it; after she resigned, Emerson took over with the greatest of reluctance. Higginson, 167-171. Speaking of the Transcendentalists as reformers, and Fuller’s difficult role as editor, Higginson asserts, “Reformers are like Esquimaux dogs, which must be hitched to the sledge, each by a separate thong; if put in one common harness, they turn and eat each other up.” Ibid., 140.

<sup>50</sup>Fuller, Emerson, Ripley, “Editors to the Reader,” 4.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>53</sup>Ellen DuBois, “Margaret Fuller in Italy,” *Women’s Writing; the Elizabethan to Victorian Period* 10, no. 2 (2003): 288.

obtain?”<sup>54</sup> The immediacy of Fuller’s vision echoes the overall reformatory spirit of this period. Moreover, the importance of her criticism during the *Dial* period is reflected in the “Essay on Critics” and the statement that the *Dial* will be the “antidote to all narrowness” through the “higher tone of criticism.”<sup>55</sup> It is hard to imagine that the *Dial* and Transcendental philosophical writings were read by the average person. However, Margaret Fuller theorized about the universal appeal of *Hamlet*, which could be understood on various levels and connect with people across social, gender, and cultural boundaries. Perhaps, Fuller hoped that her writings would reach people in a similar manner.<sup>56</sup>

During the height of Transcendentalist vitality and coinciding with the years of the *Dial*’s publication, the communal Brook Farm experiment was undertaken. While Fuller did not participate in this venture, her opinion about Brook Farm is interesting. While Higginson asserts that “It was one of the best—probably the best—incarnation of the ardent and wide-reaching reformatory spirit of that day,” she had no patience for what she saw as a “forced” movement.<sup>57</sup> She saw Brook Farm as a retreat and an interesting, but not useful, social experiment.<sup>58</sup> Instead, Fuller concentrated on the *Dial*. She

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<sup>54</sup>Margaret Fuller, “The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men. Woman versus Women,” *The Dial* 4, no. 1 (July 1843):47.

<sup>55</sup>Fuller, Emerson and Ripley, “Editors to the Reader,” 3. This is significant, as Higginson (among others) discusses the literary criticism tradition of basically “mud-slinging.” If a critic did not like a work they were reviewing, they would trash not only the work but the author’s character as well. In contrast to this, Fuller wrote criticism based on the merits of the work themselves. Those she was critical of, such as Lowell and Brownson, returned the favor and wrote scathing reviews of her works and generally attempted to undermine the public’s perception of her character, with (arguable) success. See especially Myerson, ed. *Critical Essays on Margaret Fuller*.

<sup>56</sup>Fuller, “Dialogue Containing Sundry Glosses on Poetic Texts”, in part 1 of *Papers on Literature and Art*, (1846; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1972), 163. She writes, “In the streets, saloons, and lecture rooms, we continually hear comments so stupid, insolent, and shallow on great and beautiful works, that we are tempted to think that there is no Public for anything good; that a work of genius can appeal only to the fewest minds in any one age... yet on reading Hamlet, his greatest work, we find there is not a pregnant sentence, scarce a word that men have not appreciated, have not used in myriad ways.”

<sup>57</sup>Higginson, 174, 180.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 179. There is some discrepancy over Margaret Fuller and Brook Farm in terms of Hawthorne’s *Blithedale Romance*. Modern historians, and contemporary critics, identified the character of “Zenobia” as Margaret Fuller. Even though his prediction that Zenobia “will be identified with her while the

held the position of editor of the *Dial* for two volumes, and then citing exhaustion and ill-health, resigned. However, she continued to be an important contributor to the struggling *Dial* until its final publication in 1844. While only producing four volumes, as an attempt to articulate Transcendental reform of intellectual thought and an expression of the larger reform movements, the *Dial* was a significant stage in Margaret Fuller's development as a reformer.

Horace Greeley certainly recognized Margaret Fuller's potential and respected her abilities as a literary critic. In 1844 Greeley offered Fuller the position of literary editor of the newly established *New York Tribune*, the "closest thing that America had... to a genuine national newspaper," and she accepted.<sup>59</sup> The new job included a move from the rural Jamaica Plain to the metropolis of New York City. Just as the experience she gained editing and writing for the *Dial* prepared her for the task of literary critic of a larger circulating periodical, *The New York Tribune* literally opened up a new world for Fuller. Her move to the thriving, teeming city from the closed Transcendental community allowed her the opportunity to experience things she never otherwise would have experienced. Fuller's "cosmopolitanization" profoundly impacted her writings, beliefs, and her attitude to her fellow Transcendentalists. In this period of her life, we find her criticisms of Emerson. While her review of Emerson's essays is on the whole admiring, her frustration with Emerson still noticeably creeps past such effusive praises as "The words uttered in those tones floated a while above us, then took root in the memory like a winged seed."<sup>60</sup> She writes that "Here is, undoubtedly, the man of ideas; but we want the ideal man also—;"<sup>61</sup> echoing her earlier criticism that Emerson's "taste" was "far too narrow in its range."<sup>62</sup>

The physical distance between New York City and Cambridge seems to have allowed Fuller to see the gulf between theoretical speculations about reform and active participation in reform. The world of Emerson was too closed-minded, too closed off from the realities of the rank slums and unignorable signs of poverty in New York City. The growing separation between Margaret Fuller and Emerson can be seen by comparing Emerson's remarks in "Man the Reformer" with Fuller's comments on reform. He

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literature of English language is read" has so far been proven correct, Higginson insisted that this was a false association. *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>59</sup>Charles Capper, "Getting From Here to There," in *Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*, eds. Charles Capper and Cristina Giorcelli (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>60</sup>Fuller, "Emerson's Essays," in *Life Without*, 195.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>62</sup>Fuller to Emerson, Cambridge, 12th November, 1843, reprinted in Higginson, 166.

continued to assert that if you “Once waken in him a divine thought, and he flees into a solitary garden or garret to enjoy it,” that Man “is richer with that dream than the fee of a county could make him.”<sup>63</sup> As she increasingly advocated action, Emerson spoke of reform coming from within the individual and “subverted the classic concept of a calling by absolving the intellectual of any immediate social responsibility.”<sup>64</sup> While some scholars have cited this period as Margaret Fuller’s break from Emerson and the Transcendentalists,<sup>65</sup> I would argue instead that this is the moment in which she broke from *Emersonian* Transcendentalism.<sup>66</sup> Fuller never ceased to be a Transcendentalist. On the contrary, she became more open-minded, and increasingly believed in the rightness of action and importance of enacting a larger sphere of influence. Her Transcendentalist faith in the inherent goodness of humankind is evident in her belief that humans could progress towards a more ideal state, one devoid of social evils and one which had complete equality. She consistently adapted to the influx of new ideas and experienced first hand the significance of her life’s work. Fuller outpaced and outgrew Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau, whose lifestyle limited them in this sense. Her beliefs were still consistent with Transcendental ideology of expansion of one’s mind, reform, and understanding of human nature.

Moreover, in the cosmopolitan city of New York, Margaret Fuller witnessed first-hand poverty, the working conditions of men and women, hospitals, insane asylums, and the prisons of Sing-Sing and Blackwell’s Island. Her time spent in New York also introduced her to and made her familiar with labor interests. While by no means did Fuller ignore the more unpleasant aspects of life and exist “in the clouds” when she lived in New England, New York City forced her to take a stand on these issues. Just as the Texas Annexation in 1844 caused her to speak definitively in favor of abolition and

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<sup>63</sup>Emerson, “Man the Reformer,” 142.

<sup>64</sup>Rose, *Transcendentalism*, 116.

<sup>65</sup>Larry J. Reynolds, for example.

<sup>66</sup>Adam Max-Tuchinsky argues instead that “Fuller’s institutional reorientation in New York fulfilled Emersonian Transcendentalism’s latent democratic aspirations by directing her literary radicalism toward culturally prophetic ends.” Adam Max-Tuchinsky, “‘Her Cause Against Herself’: Margaret Fuller, Emersonian Democracy, and the Nineteenth-Century Public Intellectual,” *American Nineteenth-Century History* 5, no.1 (Spring 2004): 67, <http://search.ebscohost.com/proxy.iwu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=13884113&site=ehost-live&scope=site> (accessed September 29, 2009). However, I think it is significant that Emerson never fully comprehended what Fuller was doing in New York and, later, in Europe. He tended to scoff at Fuller’s “romantic” ideas about the Italian Revolution.



expound on the righteousness of the cause, her visits to slums, hospitals, prisons, and factories caused her to argue in favor of more humane conditions and to see the need for immediate reform. In 1844 she wrote, "I have never felt that I had any call to take part in public affairs before; but this is a great moral question...."<sup>67</sup> Here, Fuller for the first time began to speak of a national democracy which would include equality for all people regardless of race, class, or gender.<sup>68</sup>

The critical essays she wrote for the newspaper in this period reflect her evolving mindset. There is a change in tone in her writings. Horace Greeley, commenting on her writing for the *Tribune*, remarked, "I think most of her contributions to the Tribune...were characterized by a directness, terseness, and practicality, which are wanting in some of her earlier productions...her reviews in the Tribune are far better adapted to win the favor and sway the judgment of the great majority of readers."<sup>69</sup> Fuller's experiences in New York City shaped her ideas not only about institutional reform, but also her ideas of men and women, capital punishment, and slavery. Her short story, "Mariana," reveals her conception of the nature of men and women. "Mariana" chronicles the tragic story of Mariana, "a very intellectual being," who falls in love with Sylvain, a man not compatible with her.<sup>70</sup> Their marriage is "unequal" and both become more and more miserable until Mariana's death.<sup>71</sup> The story is a cautionary tale, advocating intellectual, emotional, and spiritual equality in marriage. Love and full-hearted passion are not enough. In February of 1845 Fuller published her second book, *Woman in the Nineteenth-Century*, an expansion of her earlier essay "The Great Lawsuit."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Fuller, *Memoirs*, 2:141. See also Fuller, "Thanksgiving" (1846), in *Life Without*, 248. Speaking of prison reform and insane asylum reform, she stated that the "time was evidently ripe for this movement." In this article she explains her, and others, efforts to humanize these institutions through musical performances.

<sup>68</sup>Capper, "Getting from Here to There," 15.

<sup>69</sup>Horace Greeley, in *Memoirs*, 2:157-158.

<sup>70</sup>Margaret Fuller Ossoli, "Mariana" (1843), in *Life Without*, 269.

Mariana is also a very thinly veiled autobiographical representation of Fuller.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 270-272.

<sup>72</sup>In the "Preface" of the book, Fuller explains her decision to expand the essay. She wishes that the "truth" about Man will be revealed, and "By Man I mean both man and woman: these are the two halves of one thought...I believe that the development of the one cannot be effected without that of the other." Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), in *Margaret Fuller: Essays on America Life and Letters*, ed. Joel Myerson (Schenectady, NY: College & University Press, 1978), 83.

Here she also articulated her ideas about gender relations and revealed her views on marriage and equality. Fuller envisioned a fluidity in terms of what was the proper role of a man and the proper role of a woman. She writes, "Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism...There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman."<sup>73</sup> Unlike other women of the day, such as Lydia Maria Child and Catherine Beecher, who argued that women were more moral than men, Fuller discounted this theory and instead argued that men and women were both capable of being equally moral.<sup>74</sup> Having seen men and women in perhaps the most degrading situations, and as a Transcendentalist who believed in the inherent goodness in human nature, it seems logical that Fuller would arrive at the conclusion that men and women were equally capable of moral action. Fuller also argued against the idea that a woman "holds an exalted position. She is...often the guardian angel of the man."<sup>75</sup> Instead, Fuller (radically) envisioned a world in which women and men could unequivocally be anything. Girls could one day become senators or sea-captains, and there is no reason why boys could not grow up to be milliners.<sup>76</sup> Fuller saw the concept of separate spheres as "arbitrary barriers" which prevented true equality.<sup>77</sup> A woman's highest aspiration in life was not, as Charles F. Biggs claimed, to be a wife and a mother.<sup>78</sup> In fact, Fuller argued against marriage if a woman could not find a partner who would treat her as an equal. She argues that "no married woman can represent the female world, for she belongs to her husband. The idea of woman must be represented by a virgin."<sup>79</sup> *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* reveals Fuller's unique views on men and women and reflects the tension that existed in this period between the sexes. Why else

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<sup>73</sup>Fuller, *Woman*, 161.

<sup>74</sup>Fuller rejected the idea that a woman's "mission" was to prevent the "flock from using any chance to go astray." *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>75</sup>"Review of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*" (April 1845), in *Critical Essays*, 17. The same author's statement, "To send woman out into the arena, where she may declaim...before a yelling mob, destroys this sentiment and injures her influence" corresponds with Fuller's statement about the "aversion" felt towards women, like Angelina Grimké, who exercise their "moral power" and "who speak in public." *Ibid.*, 18 and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 157-158.

<sup>76</sup>Fuller, *Woman*, 189, 204. Higginson also includes an interesting anecdote about this passage. He notes that after Fuller visited a French man-of-war anchored in Narragansett Bay in 1837, she indicated her desire to "command such a vessel." Higginson, 88.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>78</sup>"Woman is nothing but as a wife." Charles F. Biggs, "Review of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*" (March 1845), in *Critical Essays*, 10.

<sup>79</sup>Fuller, *Woman*, 206.

would critics such as Biggs argue so defensively about the proper role of a woman if women were not resistant to the idea of “restraints which Nature has imposed”?<sup>80</sup>

Fuller’s other literary criticisms likewise critiqued accepted and conventional ideas about society. Her critical review of “A Defence of Capital Punishment” reveals her rejection of original sin and her belief in the redemption of humankind. Arguing against the author’s support of capital punishment, Fuller wrote that “Man is not born totally evil; he is born capable both of good and evil.”<sup>81</sup> She chastised the author for his narrow vision of the world and for his decision to “cling to the past, than to seek progress for the future.”<sup>82</sup> Fuller concluded optimistically that the “tide of progress rolls onward.”<sup>83</sup> Fuller’s review of Frederick Douglass is also revealing as it marks her change in attitude towards emancipation and her articulated sympathy with slaves. Noting the relative lack of progress, she lamented that “The world ought to get on a little faster than this” and warned that “the Avenger will not fail yet to demand, ‘Where is thy brother?’” Fuller’s “First of January” article of 1846 continues the jeremiad theme with her assertion that “The time of the prophets is over, and the era they prophesized must be at hand...Our country will be playing a ruling part” in the spread of democracy throughout the world.<sup>84</sup> While this seems to correspond with Abzug’s ideas about America’s sense of destiny, it is significant that Fuller then expands her discussion of America.<sup>85</sup> She continues, “At present she has scarce achieved a Roman nobleness, a Roman liberty; and whether her eagle is less like the vulture, and more like the Phoenix, than was the fierce Roman bird, we dare not say.”<sup>86</sup> In an essay written in the same year entitled “Fourth of July,” Fuller passionately argues that “The country needs to be born again.”<sup>87</sup> The “First of January” and “Fourth of July” essays are important because they show the burgeoning signs of Fuller’s later realized revolutionary and radical beliefs. She felt a sense of immediacy, but it is interesting that this immediacy is not limited to the destiny of America. Instead, it is more of a transatlantic, international sense. Finally, Charles Capper notes that seventy of the nearly one-hundred twenty five

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<sup>80</sup> Biggs, “Review of *Woman*,” 12.

<sup>81</sup> Fuller Ossoli, “Capital Punishment” (1846), in *Life Without and Life Within*, 200.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 201, 203.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>84</sup> Fuller Ossoli, “First of January” (1846), in *Life*, 218.

<sup>85</sup> See for example, Abzug, 28. Here, Abzug writes that ministers and their churches “saw the conversion of the world as the instrument of American destiny.”

<sup>86</sup> Ossoli, “First of January,” 218.

<sup>87</sup> Ossoli, “Fourth of July,” in *Life*, 235.

*Tribune* articles and reviews Fuller wrote during this period were on European authors and books.<sup>88</sup> Her familiarity with these European writings, as well as her developing concept of reform, prepared her for the physical and ideological leap between America and Europe.

On August 1, 1846 Margaret Fuller at last was on her way to Europe, a trip that had long been delayed due to the death of her father. Her travel companions were Marcus and Rebecca Spring, reform-minded individuals, who agreed to defer her expenses in return for her tutoring of their son, Edward. Horace Greeley, the owner of the *New York Tribune*, allowed Fuller to continue as a foreign correspondent during her travels in Europe. She was, in fact, the first American female foreign correspondent.<sup>89</sup> Her job as foreign correspondent is significant because it required her to analyze and process what she saw and experienced. Her dispatches from Europe signal in a clear manner her development as a reformer. Instead of being abstract, they were, as were her *Tribune* articles, more direct and to the point. This change shows an increase of focus and emphasizes how profoundly she was affected by her experience in Europe. Higginson had access to her (still) unpublished notebooks and compares this with the dispatches.<sup>90</sup> Her initial thoughts on Mary, Queen of Scots are revealing and interesting for they differ from what was later printed in the *Tribune*. She notes that it is the

Singular misery of the lot of a woman with whom all men were dying in love, except her two last husbands; and with the first, a poor sickly child, she had no happiness. A woman the object of desire to so many, yet never suffered to become the parent of more than two children, and from those separated in so brief a space after birth, and never permitted to take the least comfort in them afterwards.<sup>91</sup>

We can see how her conception Mary, Queen of Scots is in terms of her own feelings about women and how men view women, along with her sympathy, as a childless woman herself, for the woman who was “never permitted to take the least comfort in” her children. Her thoughts on Mary, Queen of Scots also reveal how Fuller was constantly reevaluating her ideas in terms of what she experienced.

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<sup>88</sup>Capper, “Getting from Here to There,” 13.

<sup>89</sup>DuBois, 288.

<sup>90</sup>Higginson, 221-228. He notes that “it is really of more value to know what struck a traveler at the outset than what was afterwards added to his knowledge.” Ibid., 221.

<sup>91</sup>Note-book entry for September, 1846, “Holyrood.” Quoted in Higginson, 227. Compare with the published dispatch in “*These Sad But Glorious Days*” which focuses more on Queen Mary’s imprisonment. “Dispatch 5: Lost on Ben Lomond,” 70.

While in England, Fuller visited mill towns, interviewed mill workers, toured hospitals, and spoke with prostitutes. Her dispatches articulate her beliefs about reform and her rising socialism. Her criticism of Wordsworth reflects her earlier criticism of Emerson, but in a stronger, more forceful vein. She discussed the Corn Laws with Wordsworth, and noted that his neighbors

lament that his habits of seclusion keep him much ignorant of the real wants of England and the world, living in this region, which is cultivated by small proprietors, where there is little poverty, vice or misery, he hears not the voice which cries so loudly from other parts of England, and will not be stilled by sweet poetic suasion or philosophy, for it is the cry of men in the jaws of destruction.<sup>92</sup>

Clearly, Fuller did hear this cry, and planned to answer it. New York had prepared her for the different beliefs and ideologies that she encountered in Europe. Without becoming more cosmopolitan, she would not have been able to share Giuseppe Mazzini's radical vision of Italy, or been open to the advice of Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, or appreciated the George Sand's "liberal" ideas on womanhood. The influence of these important European writers and thinkers on Margaret Fuller expanded her horizons even more and contributed to her developing world view. In London, Fuller began a close friendship with the revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini who planted the seeds of Fuller's interest in the Italian cause. In a dispatch entitled "Sights and Celebrities," Fuller describes the international importance of Mazzini:

The name of Joseph Mazzini is well known to those among us who take an interest in the cause of human freedom, who...look with anxious interest on the suffering nations who are preparing for a similar struggle. Those who are not, like the brutes that perish...cannot forget that the family is one....They know that there can be no genuine happiness, no salvation for any, unless the same be secured for all.<sup>93</sup>

In Paris, she discussed with George Sand the issue of woman's role in society. She concluded that Sand "needs no defence, but only to be understood, for she has bravely acted out her nature."<sup>94</sup> Another important influence on Fuller in this period was Adam Mickiewicz. Mickiewicz advised her

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<sup>92</sup> Fuller, Ambleside, Westmoreland, 27th Aug. 1846, "Dispatch 2: From Chester to the Lake Country," in *These Sad But Glorious Days*, 57.

<sup>93</sup> Fuller, "Dispatch 9: Sights and Celebrations," in *These Sad but Glorious Days*, 98.

<sup>94</sup> Fuller to Elizabeth Hoar, Paris, Jan. 18, 1847, in *Memoirs*, 2:197. Acting out one's nature was high praise indeed from the Transcendentalist Fuller.

to consummate her love for the Marchese Ossoli and act out her feminine nature. He urged, "You have pleaded the freedom of women in a masculine and frank style. Live and act as you write."<sup>95</sup> Away from the shores of America, she achieved liberation from the restrictive society and stifling New England community. However, Fuller did get a sense of how the world was shrinking. To her surprise, she "encountered at Liverpool and Manchester a set of devout readers of the readers of the *Dial* in England."<sup>96</sup> While Abzug concentrates on the reform movement in America and the cosmological implications of this reform movement, I would argue that Abzug's theory can apply in the larger drama that was playing out in the western world, one in which Fuller was highly conscious of. When Fuller reached Europe in 1846 she was exposed to Europeans ideas, values and concepts that differed from those she was familiar with in America. She saw evidence of the stirrings of revolution all across Europe. What could be a better example of "cosmos crumbling" than the literal crumbling of governments and societies? Moreover, Bell Gale Chevigny views Fuller's travels in Europe as "reinterpreting herself as a committed and activist intellectual."<sup>97</sup> America has long been conceptualized as the New World and Europe as the Old World. For Margaret Fuller, however, Europe was the New World.

In 1848, while the leading activists in the women's movement were gathered in New York for the Seneca Falls Convention, Margaret Fuller was four thousand miles away in Rome.<sup>98</sup> Rome, the spark of the Italian Revolution, represented the culmination of her life's work and was the place where Fuller finally felt complete. She must have felt the significance of her journey to Rome as ancient Rome had been such an integral part of her early education. Higginson recognizes this period in Rome as her life coming full circle, and

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<sup>95</sup>Quoted in Chevigny, *The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings*, (New York: The Feminist Press, 1976), 374. The letter is a translation from the Italian original included in Emma Detti's 1942 biography of Fuller in 1942. Mickiewicz's advice is even more socially radical if Fuller never intended to marry Ossoli.

<sup>96</sup>Higginson, 172. This also reinforces the importance of the *Dial*.

<sup>97</sup>Bell Gale Chevigny, "Mutual Interpretation," in *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings*, 104.

<sup>98</sup>In 1848 Italy was under the power of the Austrian and French governments. The new Pope, Pious IX, was initially viewed by Italian revolutionaries as a sign of hope, but this soon turned to disillusion. On November 24, 1848 the Pope fled Rome. The Roman Republic came into being on February 9, 1849. Thorough information and context for the Revolution of 1848 in Italy can be found in *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*, eds. Charles Capper and Cristina Giorcelli (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

begins his biography with the description of her noble “Roman” character.<sup>99</sup> Of all the European places she visited, Fuller was drawn to Rome and to unfolding “great drama” of Italy. She writes to William Henry Channing from Rome on May 7, 1847:

I take interest in the state of the people, their manners, the state of the race in them. I see a future dawning; it is in important aspects Fourier’s future. But I like no Fourierites; they are terribly wearisome here in Europe; the tide of things does not wash through them as violently as with us, and they have time to run in the tread-mill system. Still, they serve this great future which I shall not live to see I must be born again.<sup>100</sup>

Here was something that Fuller could dedicate herself fully to, and which her persuasive and critical skills could aid. Fuller notes in her diary the simple, but significant words: “Republic declared the 8th of Feb. 1849 on Friday.”<sup>101</sup> The Italian Revolution stood for the fulfillment of the American Revolution. It reflected the Romantic ideals of a national identity, a rejection of foreign rule, and the empowerment of the common man. It certainly reflects the overall reform movement in the sense that Fuller viewed the Italians as having to fulfill their part of a larger destiny. Margaret Fuller’s writings reveal the evolution of her ideological beliefs. In terms of the expansion of social conscience and reform, Fuller’s revolutionary activities in Rome reflect Transcendental ideology. Expressing a Transcendental mindset, she wrote that the best minds in Italy, “through depth of spiritual experience and the beauty of form in which it is expressed, belong not only to Italy, but to the world.”<sup>102</sup> In the Italian Revolution, Fuller saw something full of beauty, something that signaled progress and had the potential of creating an impact on the world. Revolution is the ultimate expression of reform. It is the complete change in the way people think, a transfer from *ancien regime* to a new, different value

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<sup>99</sup>Higginson, 8.

<sup>100</sup> Margaret Fuller to William Henry Channing, Rome, May 7, 1847, reprinted in *Memoirs*, 2:209.

<sup>101</sup> Fuller, “Margaret Fuller’s Roman Diary,” ed. Leona Rostenberg, *The Journal of Modern History* 12 no. 2 (June 1940): 217. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1874897> (accessed November 2, 2009). Her diary of 1849 is important because it marked the progress of the Italian struggle for liberation, and was most likely used as the source for her manuscript on the revolution. As this manuscript is somewhere on the bottom of the ocean, the diary gives us vital clues as to what the manuscript would have contained.

<sup>102</sup> Fuller, Rome, October 1847, “Dispatch 16: The Italian Lakes and the Coming Storm,” in *These Sad But Glorious Days*, 147.

system. The Italian Revolution marked in Margaret Fuller her own personal revolution, from inner individual reform to outward social change.

In this sense, her personal revolution was a fulfillment of the premises of Transcendental reform. The period spent in Italy also solidified her socialistic views. In America, theoretically there was no class conflict for there was equality under the law. In Europe, however, class conflict was more obvious and more immediate. European intellectuals had developed ideas about class and the need to reform class systems. Fuller was exposed to these ideas, and combined with first-hand knowledge of the conditions of slums, hospitals, insane asylum, and work places, she developed socialistic sympathies. This change can be marked in both the dispatches and her diary. Writing on the "Springtime Revolutions of '48," Fuller urged the American public to understand a "true Democracy," and to "in time learn to reverence...the only really noble—the LABORING CLASSES."<sup>103</sup> In her diary, Fuller mentioned a suggestion posed by the French "Credit," a newspaper, "which really marks the advanced thought at work in society."<sup>104</sup> The proposal entails using the forts in Paris that are now unoccupied for housing for the poor. Fuller's approval, and notation, of this socialistic plan, further emphasizes her increasing identification with socialism. Her attraction to socialism, a theoretical fulfillment of egalitarian goals, agrees with Transcendentalism's emphasis on the importance of equality.

Another important radicalization that her dispatches and letters reveal is her attitude toward American slavery and her sense of this injustice. It is impossible to separate Fuller's attitude towards the Revolution and her attitude toward American slavery. The clear parallels she saw between the African slaves and the Romans can be seen in a letter to William Henry Channing. Disappointed in the outcome of the Revolution, Fuller writes, "You felt so oppressed in the slave-states; imagine what I felt at seeing all the noblest youth, all the genius of this dear land, again enslaved."<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, Larry Reynolds points out her attitude towards what he terms "righteous violence."<sup>106</sup> He argues that Fuller had a "sense of divine mission" and that "she assumed the title of seeress in her dispatches and created a vision of righteous violence and destruction that echoes Isaiah and the coming era of

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<sup>103</sup>Fuller, Rome, 29th March, 1848, "Dispatch 13: The Springtime Revolutions of '48," in *These Sad*, 211.

<sup>104</sup>Fuller, under heading of "Tuscany," "Margaret Fuller's Roman Diary," 218.

<sup>105</sup>Fuller to William Henry Channing, Rieti, Aug. 28, 1849, in *Memoirs*, 2: 269.

<sup>106</sup>Larry J. Reynolds, "Righteous Violence: The Roman Republic and Margaret Fuller's Revolutionary Example," in *Transatlantic Crossings*, 173.



Emmanuel.”<sup>107</sup> An example of this is located in Fuller’s 1849 diary. In the entry on February 30th 1849, Fuller described the assassination of Rossi, a French ambassador supported by the Pope.<sup>108</sup> She believed this act was justified, and also compared the act of assassination to Brutus’s, who is the “ideal patriot.”<sup>109</sup> Along these same lines, Bell Gale Chevigny argues that the radicalization Fuller underwent in Italy corresponded with the belief that there would be a Civil War, and that the moral issues of the day, such as the emancipation of the slaves and the emancipation of the Italians, would have to be determined by the violent and bloody action of soldiers.<sup>110</sup> Speaking of the “cancer of Slavery” in America, Fuller wrote, “I listen to the same arguments against the emancipation of Italy, that are used against the emancipation of our blacks...—and lo! my Country the darkest offender, because with the least excuse, foresworn to the high calling with which she was called.”<sup>111</sup> Fuller had certainly come a long way from her comment that abolitionists were “low and disagreeable.”<sup>112</sup>

It is significant that Margaret Fuller actively participated in the revolution instead of simply theorizing about revolution on an intellectual level. She assumed nursing duties, continued informing the American public about the revolution, and on April 20, 1849 became the director of the Fate-Bene Fratelli Hospital.<sup>113</sup> Here, Fuller encountered resistance from men who believed that women did not have a place in the Revolution.<sup>114</sup> This eerily paralleled the attitude of reformers in America, such as William Lloyd Garrison, who were resistant to the idea of allowing women to be involved in reform movements.<sup>115</sup> Even though Fuller thought she had escaped this restrictive behavior, the evidence that it still existed even in the midst of a revolution shows the difficulties of being a woman and trying to be involved in these

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 172. This interpretation echoes Abzug’s discussion of the jeremiad.

<sup>108</sup>Fuller, diary entry, in “Margaret Fuller’s Roman Diary,” 217-218.

<sup>109</sup>Reynolds, 180. Fuller, as Reynolds points out, had long been fascinated with Brutus.

<sup>110</sup>Chevigny, “Mutual Interpretation,” 115.

<sup>111</sup>Fuller, Undated, “Dispatch 18: New and Old World Democracy,” in *These Sad But Glorious Days*, 165.

<sup>112</sup>Although she still maintained that American abolitionists were “so tedious, often so narrow, always so rabid and exaggerated in their tone.” Ibid., 166.

<sup>113</sup>“Appendix,” *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*, 242.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 245-248.

<sup>115</sup>See Abzug, “The Woman Question,” in *Cosmos Crumbling*, 183-203.

movements. Margaret Fuller's active participation in the Italian Revolution is also a reflection of her belief that she had a destiny to fulfill. Finally, there is no trace of the frustration that dogged her throughout her life or evidence of debilitating headaches.<sup>116</sup> In a letter to her mother, Fuller wrote, "I have not been so well since I was a child, nor as happy ever as during the last six weeks."<sup>117</sup> Fuller also encouraged American's support of the Revolution and helped gain awareness about the cause. In the dispatch on "Italian Patriotism," Fuller urged Americans to "Take a good chance and do something; you have shown much good feeling toward the Old World in its physical difficulties—you ought to do so still more in its spiritual endeavor."<sup>118</sup> In true Transcendental form, Fuller envisioned the Italian and European Revolutions as a "spiritual" crusade that transcended political boundaries.

Besides Fuller's radicalization in Rome, evident in her dispatches and letters, Fuller also achieved "private liberation" and happiness in the unlikely personage of the Marchese Giovanni Ossoli.<sup>119</sup> As if it was destined to happen, Fuller met Ossoli by chance when she was lost at St. Peter's on April 1st, 1847. He gallantly escorted her back to her place of residence, and he then became a frequent member of the salons Fuller hosted. Eventually, he convinced her to marry him in 1848.<sup>120</sup> Ossoli was a member of an old Roman family. He was

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<sup>116</sup>This is not to imply that they disappeared for good. During her first trimester of pregnancy and later when the Ossolis left Rome for Rieti, the headaches reoccur. My point is that during the excitement of the revolution, and while she felt that she was finally accomplishing something, she writes that she is in the best health of her life, and she does not experience headaches.

<sup>117</sup>Fuller to Margaret Crane Fuller, Rome, Dec. 16, 1847, in *Memoirs*, 2:223.

<sup>118</sup>Fuller, Rome, October 18th, 1847, "Dispatch 17: Italian Patriotism," in *These Sad*, 160.

<sup>119</sup>DuBois, "Margaret Fuller in Italy," 301.

<sup>120</sup>The date of when (and if) they married is controversial.

Contemporaries, such as Higginson, second-wave feminists, such as Chevigny, and Capper all give different accounts and have different opinions on this issue. Higginson asserts, "In December, 1847, she had been secretly married; in September, 1848, her child had been born." Higginson, 231. Chevigny believes they never married, because this fits more with her feminist interpretation of Fuller. Reasons why they might not have married include the necessity of a papal dispensation since Fuller was not Catholic, and the fact that Ossoli would have lost his paternal inheritance for marrying a Catholic. Capper asserts that they did marry, and gives two possible dates (April 4, 1848 and late August-early September). He believes that she kept the marriage secret due to the ongoing suit of Ossoli over his inheritance, but that marriage was necessary because Fuller was pregnant. Capper, *The Public Years*, vol. 2 of *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*, (New York: Oxford University Press,

Catholic, minimally educated, and could not speak English. Fuller was Protestant, highly educated, and taught herself Italian. He was 26, she was 36.<sup>121</sup> Despite their differences, Fuller wrote to her mother that, "His love for me has been unswerving and most tender....In him I have found a home, and one that interferes with no tie."<sup>122</sup> Her relationship with Ossoli fulfilled her criteria for the ideal, compatible marriage. Fuller, acknowledging that this is "rarely done," stated that "The sexes should not only correspond to and appreciate, but prophesy to one another. In individual instances this happens. Two persons love in one another the future good which they aid one another to unfold."<sup>123</sup> Together, they made a more perfect whole. She convinced Ossoli to fulfill his democratic potential and definitively join the revolutionary cause as captain of the Civic Guard. He, in turn, was in large part responsible for her "softening." His devotion made her feel important not only on an intellectual level, but on the level of a woman as well. When she became a mother, her happiness seemed complete. She named her son "Angelo," a godsend to the 38 year-old Fuller who had once written in her journal, "the woman in me has so craved this experience, that it has seemed the want of it must paralyze me."<sup>124</sup> Now, she wrote to her mother, "In him I find satisfaction for the first time, to the deep wants of my heart."<sup>125</sup> Through her relationship with her husband, motherhood, and active participation in the Italian Revolution, she was able finally to achieve the long yearned for balance between her intellectual and more feminine side.

It is tempting to say that Margaret Fuller was very conscious of the importance of her years spent in Italy, and that she had already reached the pinnacle of her life. Where could she go from there? The Revolution of 1848

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2007), 365-367. I think, based especially on the letters between Fuller and Ossoli in which they address each other as "Caro Consorte" and "Cara Consorte" (husband and wife), and the fact that we can clearly see the development and progression of her ideas, that it would be incorrect to state that she never meant to remain with him nor marry him because she early advocated against the institution of marriage. What she actually stated was that if one was unable to find their perfect partner, one was better off remaining a virgin.

<sup>121</sup>I am using Capper's ascertainment. He has found proof of Ossoli's birth certificate. Higginson's understanding of Ossoli's age when they met was that he was 30 years old, most likely because that is what Mrs. Emelyn Story, an American friend living in Italy, stated in a letter. See Higginson, 243, 247. DuBois says that he was 24 years old, but this seems very unlikely. DuBois, 292.

<sup>122</sup>Fuller to Margaret Crane Fuller, Rieti, 1849, in *Memoirs*, 2:274.

<sup>123</sup>Fuller, *Woman*, 105-106.

<sup>124</sup>From a fragment in a journal that William Henry Channing had in his collection, in Higginson, 233.

<sup>125</sup>Fuller to Margaret Crane Fuller, Rieti 1849, in *Memoirs*, 2:275.

was unsuccessful in the immediate sense. The Roman Republic fell in late June 1849. In the long run, Italy was torn by revolution again in 1859 and eventually was united under one government in 1871. Arguably, the initial “Roman Revolution” and the charisma of Mazzini were important steps in the progress towards Italian liberation and unity, but Margaret Fuller would not have known that. Forced to leave Italy, Margaret, Giovanni, and Angelo (Niño) boarded the *Elizabeth* on May 17, 1850. As she and her family left her beloved Italy, it was with the knowledge that the revolutionaries had been defeated. Before the journey back to America, Fuller wrote of her dire predictions and ominous feelings about the journey. Niño had been very sick, and Fuller feared that he could not live. She dispiritedly wrote, “if he dies, I hope I shall, too. I was too fatigued before, and this last shipwreck of hopes would be more than I could bear.”<sup>126</sup> Her use of the word “shipwreck” would be prophetic, but also was very much on her mind. She wrote to her friend, the Marchioness Visconti Arconati, on April 6 of her fears about the voyage, and again on April 21 of transatlantic shipwrecks she had just read about in the newspaper.<sup>127</sup> The journey seemed to fulfill her sense of dread. First Captain Hasty contracted small pox and died, leaving the ship in inexperienced hands. Angelo also contracted small pox, but pulled through. Then, on July 19, during a sudden storm, the ship wrecked on Fire Island within sight of shore. Little Angelo’s body washed up on shore the next day, Fuller and Ossoli’s bodies were never found.<sup>128</sup> The only surviving belongings were a trunk full of letters, two daguerreotypes of Ossoli, and a lock of his hair. Fuller’s last legacy, the “History of the Late Revolutionary Movements in Italy,” was gone forever.

For most travelers, the journey is a circular one, comprising the departure and a return home again. In this way, Fuller’s journey was atypical as she was unable to return to America. Her death literally prevented this, but on a figurative level she would have found a return to New England nearly impossible. She had undergone change on a fundamental level and was very different from the woman who had left four years before. Not surprisingly, the

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<sup>126</sup>Fuller to Lewis Cass, Jr. Rieti, 19th of July, 1849, in Higginson, 268.

<sup>127</sup>Higginson, 274-275.

<sup>128</sup>The impression the *Memoirs* give is that Fuller deliberately and selfishly decided that they all perish together. Higginson points out that witnesses testify that she and Ossoli were attempting to go ashore on a raft, and points to the fact that there was an attempt to save Angelo; the proof is in the fact that he was found in the arms of one of the crew members who must have tried to swim to shore. He also questions the reliability of the commanding officer, who had left the ship before the passengers and crew members, and stated that Fuller explicitly stated that they would all perish together. Higginson, 277. Capper also goes into more detail about the aftermath of their death. Capper, *The Public Years*, 512-514.

New England Transcendentalists she had left behind did not seem able to cope with this change. On some level, they would have agreed with Hawthorne's callous statement that "tragic as her catastrophe was, Providence was, after all, kind in putting her and her clownish husband and their child on board that fated ship."<sup>129</sup> Many were embarrassed about her marriage to the younger, handsome Ossoli. It would have been difficult for Fuller to explain her relationship with Ossoli as he was so different from her friends and she had long criticized marriage as an institution that oppressed women. Capper theorizes that William Henry Channing believed that they were never married because of Fuller's cryptic attempts to describe their relationship. While she was trying to define her marriage as different from the unjust institution she critiqued, this led Channing to the conclusion that they had never wed.<sup>130</sup>

Despite the mystery, and possible scandal, surrounding Fuller's death, her New England friends deeply mourned her. Thoreau, showing his respect for her, came to the scene of the shipwreck. Others, such as Emerson, Channing, and Clarke, contributed to her memory by editing her *Memoirs*. While this work shows her importance in their lives and that they valued her, it is also interesting to note that she, unlike Harriet Martineau, was unable to control her legacy.<sup>131</sup> One contemporary reviewer of the *Memoirs* put it this way: "Each of these gentlemen, in his turn, turns Miss Fuller round and round until he gets her in certain lights familiar or propitious to himself."<sup>132</sup> Higginson's account is so useful because it is written from a distance, emotionally and spatially, that perhaps Emerson, Clarke, and Channing were unable to achieve. This inability to separate themselves from their personal opinions, disappointments over her final years, and failure to comprehend her actions, most likely contributed to the lasting impression that Margaret Fuller was a difficult, arrogant, emotionally stunted woman.<sup>133</sup> It may very well be that they were unable to present an accurate portrayal of a woman who had moved so far beyond their own experiences. That she was a woman was

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<sup>129</sup>Extract from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Roman Journal*, quoted in *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 1:261.

<sup>130</sup>Capper, *The Public Years*, 469.

<sup>131</sup>Martineau wrote her autobiography (thus directly controlling her legacy) while Fuller's *Memoirs* were compiled by Emerson, Channing and Clarke.

<sup>132</sup>"Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli" (April 1852), in *Critical Essays*, 73. The heavy editing of the *Memoirs* is well documented. It is still a valuable source, but one has to be aware of a slanted presentation of Fuller.

<sup>133</sup>See, for example Lowell's satirical portrayal of Fuller as a woman unable to understand emotion: "Thou never canst compute for her/The distance and diameter/Of any simple heart." Lowell, Excerpt from *Poems, Second Series* (1848), in *Critical Essays*, 67.

another factor contributing to the popular memory of Margaret Fuller. She was too radical for most American tastes. This is very evident in reviews of the *Memoirs*, which are horrified by Fuller's opinions about George Sand and readily believed that Fuller was so selfish that she condemned her family to drown.<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, Anna Scacchi notes that because the editors of the *Memoirs* "wanted to protect the reputation of the woman, whose scandalous Italian union continued to be a source of gossip and wild conjecture, the editors used scissors to suppress passages where Fuller probably appeared too unconventional for contemporary standards of feminine propriety."<sup>135</sup> In this sense, it is very true that all she accomplished was in spite of being a woman. She was the first editor of the *Dial*, the first literary editor of *The New York Tribune*, and the first female American foreign correspondent. It is very likely that the *Dial* could not and would not have existed without her dedication to the journal.<sup>136</sup>

Moreover, Fuller's life encompassed the major figures and major reform movements in both America and Europe. She was able to transcend certainly the gender boundaries, but also the ideological boundaries, of her day. "I have lived a life," she wrote, "if only in the music I have heard, and one development seemed to follow another therein, as if bound together by destiny."<sup>137</sup> In this way, she was truly a virtuoso; unique, unconventional and an important actor in the unfolding cosmological drama. William J. Pabodie's prediction that "her course lies not among the stars" was ultimately proven wrong.<sup>138</sup> The fact that a fascination with Margaret Fuller and her body of work has not faded since her death emphasizes her importance in life. Moreover, Margaret Fuller paved the way for others to follow. Helen Campbell, a writer for the *New York Tribune* in the late nineteenth-century, is one example of a woman who was inspired by the issue of women and labor. She interviewed a series of women who worked in New York City and wrote case studies about their lives and their occupations. She hoped that her book would teach "a circle yet unreached" that "the struggle and sorrow of the workers is the first

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<sup>134</sup> See for example, "Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli," 80.

<sup>135</sup> Ana Scacchi, "Margaret Fuller's Search for the Maternal," in *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings*, 70.

<sup>136</sup> I developed this idea from Higginson's remarks on the reluctance of the other contributors of the *Dial*, such as Emerson, to do the work necessary to edit the journal. Rose asserts that the Transcendental men rebelled against "routine, responsibility, even intellectual work." Rose, 102. Higginson, speaking of her work as editor of the *Dial*, asserts that she was the other Transcendentalists "organizer and their point of union." Higginson, 282.

<sup>137</sup> Fuller, *Memoirs*, 1:310.

<sup>138</sup> Pabodie, in *Critical Essays*, 1. He also snidely remarks that "in her way" she is a "great woman."

step toward any genuine help.”<sup>139</sup> Her purpose in writing echoes Fuller’s goal as a contributor to the *New York Tribune* of bringing awareness to the general public about social issues of the day. Fuller also influenced male and female thinkers and reformers through her essays and letters. As a woman, she was recognized as a leader of the woman’s rights cause. At the second national woman’s rights convention, Paulina Wright Davis claimed, “One great disappointment fell upon us. Margaret Fuller, toward whom many eyes turned as the future leader in this moment, was not with us.” Davis went on to speculate on whether or not Fuller would have accepted the charge of leadership, but concluded, “be that as it may, she was, and still is, a leader of thought; a position far more desirable than a leader of numbers.”<sup>140</sup> Even Emerson, as Higginson showed, respected her opinions on his works and followed her advice about his essays.<sup>141</sup> More recent scholarship on Emerson also points to Fuller’s influence on him.<sup>142</sup> Emerson’s remarks during a speech in 1855 reveal a never before expressed sense of the importance of social action. The man who once advocated internal, individual reform now claimed that “It is so delicious to act with great masses to great aims.”<sup>143</sup>

Furthermore, Fuller brought an immediacy to the moral issues of the day. Reynolds asserts that she “advanced the powerful idea, adopted by her fellow Transcendentalists, that oppression, when resistant to words and moral suasion, must be met with righteous violence.”<sup>144</sup> She advocated “Radical Reform” and predicted that all of Europe would, “at the end of the century, be

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<sup>139</sup>Helen Campbell, *Prisoners of Poverty: Women Wage-Workers, Their Trades, and Their Lives*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1887), ii.

<sup>140</sup>Paulina Wright Davis, “Speech of Paulina Wright Davis to the First National Woman’s Rights Convention, 1850,” in *History of Woman Suffrage*, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage (New York: Fowler and Wells, Publishers, 1881), 1:217.

<sup>141</sup>Higginson, 156-8. He compares a rough draft of “Thoughts on Modern Literature,” one of Emerson’s contributions to the *Dial*, to the comments Fuller made on the draft, and to the final copy of the work. See *The Dial*, “Thoughts on Modern Literature” 1, no. 2 (October 1840): 136-158.

<sup>142</sup>See Reynolds summary of these works. Reynolds, “Righteous Violence,” 188, footnote 17. Reynolds also discusses Fuller’s influence on Hawthorne’s writings. *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>143</sup>Emerson, “Lecture on Slavery” (25 January 1855), in *Emerson’s Antislavery Writings*, eds. Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson (New Haven, Conn: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 105. In a similar vein, Emerson stated, “While I insist on the doctrine of the independence and the inspiration of the individual, I do not cripple but exalt the social action.” *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>144</sup>Reynolds, “Righteous Violence,” 186.

under Republican form of Government.”<sup>145</sup> Overall, we must rate her success by her ability to disturb, agitate, and move people through her words and actions. Much has been debated over Margaret Fuller the dreamy, visionary idealist, and Margaret Fuller the pragmatic, active realist. Perhaps her greatest feat, then, was to strike a balance between both of these elements; living with her head in the clouds and her feet firmly planted on the ground. An awkward metaphor perhaps, but the woman who was able to define herself in terms of male and female, intellect and emotion, would have been able to accomplish both. She was, as Higginson notes, “many women in one.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Fuller, Rome, Aug. 31, 1849, “Dispatch 35: A Retrospect,” in *These Sad But Glorious Days*, 313.

<sup>146</sup>Higginson, 4.