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Radical Innocence: Margaret Fuller's Utopian Rome

Leslie Elizabeth Eckel

- 1 As her Transcendentalist contemporaries in Boston and Concord built utopian “castles in the air” (Alcott, 543), some resulting in tangible social experiments at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and Walden Pond, Margaret Fuller gave the impression of detachment from such endeavors. Not for her were the waves of philosophical enthusiasm that characterized the early 1840s in New England, whose landscape was peopled by Shakers, Fourierists, proto-environmentalists, and other lovable bands of eccentrics. Profoundly skeptical, even superior in her view of social reform, Fuller told her friend William Henry Channing, “... I do not believe in Society” (Fuller to Channing, 29 March 1841, in *Letters* 2: 205). By the time Fuller arrived in Italy in 1847, after a two-year stint in New York as a journalist, literary editor, and feminist intellectual, she had begun to think and to write in precisely those utopian terms she once disdained.
- 2 This essay seeks to discern what changed in Fuller, and what her transatlantic journey did to ignite that transformation. How could she travel from a space of local experience, in which she freely laughed when the dreams of her colleagues went up in smoke, to a world of radical innocence, where she invested her energies in the ephemeral Roman Republic, a utopian experiment that she felt held the key to the future of humanity as a whole? In transit, Fuller passes through the Atlantic, which in itself is a utopian space that is literally “no-place,” without terrestrial topography of its own but held in solution by the continents that give it form. The Atlantic generates a series of utopian projections from Thomas More’s fictional island onward, and at the same time destroys those ideals, unleashing the violence that in Paul Gilroy’s theory produces the “fractal patterns” of the black Atlantic (15). As Fuller moves from experience to innocence, her language bears witness to her growing radicalism, and her thought ripens into the tantalizing yet often “invisible harvest” (Alcott, 547) in which we share as practitioners of transatlantic studies. I argue that for Fuller, this journey toward radical innocence involves not only a turn away from the skepticism with which she initially viewed Transcendentalist utopias, but also a deliberate

reinvention of the authoritarian Rome of her childhood as a space of invigorating Romantic possibility.

Utopianism in Doubt

- 3 Transcendentalist utopias themselves were products of transatlantic collaborations, echoing in part such Romantic projections as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey's never-realized plans for "Pantisocratic" community, a "Sublime of Hope" that beckoned them "O'er the ocean swell" to the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania (Coleridge, 14).¹ Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands, an agrarian, vegan commune formed in Harvard, Massachusetts in 1843 and dissolved several months later, was co-founded by Englishman Charles Lane, whom Alcott had met in a small village near Richmond, Surrey, while visiting Alcott House, the experimental school named in his honor. Brook Farm, a larger and more ambitious community that was the brainchild of Transcendental Club member George Ripley, refashioned itself as the Brook Farm Phalanx in 1845, in keeping with the socialist principles of French reformer Charles Fourier. Even Henry David Thoreau's Walden, although defiantly local on the one hand, seemed to Thoreau like a project of global, even cosmic scope, for as he settles in for his two years by the pond, he writes, "I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe" (Thoreau, 88). However grounded these utopias may have seemed on U.S. soil, they were still networked into the wider Atlantic world, in person, in theory, and in imagination. In fact, I would argue, their very identity as utopias depends on their pursuit of what Bronson's daughter Louisa May Alcott would identify as the broader cause of "human freedom" (Alcott, 539).
- 4 Fuller cast a skeptical eye on such grand plans. As her colleagues plotted their course for Brook Farm, she took more pleasure in observing their characteristic behavior in company than in contemplating their philosophical principles. Ripley, a co-editor of the Transcendentalist journal *The Dial*, appears to her "too sanguine, and does not take time to let things ripen in his mind, yet his aim is worthy, and with his courage and clear mind his experiment will not, I think, to him at least be a failure" (Fuller to Channing, 25 and 28 October 1840, in *Letters* 2: 174). In Fuller's opinion, his naïveté speaks to a certain greenness, or "unripeness" of thought, yet she admires him for his "courage and clear mind." Emerson did the same, even as he refused to participate in Ripley's community, damning him with faint praise as he comments, "of all philanthropic projects of which I have heard yours is the most pleasing to me" (Emerson qtd. in Fuller, *Letters* 2: 195).
- 5 It is important to note that at this point, what mattered more to Fuller than Ripley's specific intentions for Brook Farm was his willingness to fail in his attempt to create utopia. She tells her friend William Henry Channing that Ripley "will not say, however, that he considers his plan as a mere experiment, and is willing to fail, or can well bear to fail. I tell him that he is not ready till he can say that" (Fuller to Channing, 13 December 1840, in *Letters* 2: 194). Before Ripley even settles into the contours of his utopia, Fuller's pessimism predicts his failure, or at least enlivens the possibility of it. As she does so, Fuller allows us to glimpse one of the essential paradoxes of utopian thinking: in the place that in More's invented term means "no-place," and in the "no-place" that is also the happiest place imaginable, or "eutopia" with the Latin prefix

“eu,” utopian success is bound up with failure. Fátima Vieira observes that utopias are “simultaneously constituted by a movement of affirmation and denial,” dissolved even as they are built, like John Winthrop’s American “city upon a hill,” where he predicts for his audience of transatlantic pilgrims, “we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it” (Vieira, 4; Winthrop, 158).

- 6 Despite these warnings, Fuller does not take Transcendental utopianism seriously. She tells Channing of a river excursion with her friend Caroline Sturgis, fancifully recasting that adventure as the foundation of a utopian community. She asks, “But, truly, why has such a thing never been? One of these valleys so immediately suggests an image of the fair company that might fill it, and live so easily, so naturally, so wisely. Can we not people the banks of some such affectionate little stream? I distrust ambitious plans, such as Phalansterian organizations!” (Fuller to Channing, 31 October 1840, in *Letters* 2: 179-80). Utopia is a matter of play for Fuller, an “affectionate,” romantic amusement unlikely to come to fruition. Her “easy” speculations make Coleridge and Southey’s “Sublime of Hope” seem in deadly earnest. Although Fuller shared her initial “distrust” with him, Channing himself was a committed Associationist who would launch his own utopian journal called *The Present* in 1843. David M. Robinson has commented on the degree to which their correspondence and their friendship gradually helped politicize Fuller’s thinking, which took a definitive turn toward social activism in her *Dial* essay “The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men, Woman versus Women” (1843) and her manifesto *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) (95-96).² In the meantime, however, in keeping with her lighthearted approach, Fuller treated Brook Farm as a country retreat in the years that followed its establishment in 1841: occasionally seeking “stillness and solitude” there for her own writing, and leading for the benefit of community members the kind of educational conversations that she was directing for Boston women as a professional venture (Fuller to Emerson, 10 August 1842, in *Letters* 3 :83; Fuller to Emerson, 16 October 1842, in *Letters* 3 :97).³
- 7 Fuller’s playfulness with utopian possibilities suggests her unexpected kinship with Transcendentalist daughter Louisa May Alcott, who published a lightly fictionalized account of her childhood experience at the Fruitlands commune in the generous-spirited satire “Transcendental Wild Oats” in 1873. In this story, the characters “Abel Lamb” (Bronson Alcott) and “Timon Lion” (Charles Lane) “desired to plant a Paradise, where Beauty, Virtue, Justice, and Love might live happily together, without the possibility of a serpent entering in” (Alcott, 539). The serpent that undermines these philosophical abstractions turns out to be “Lion,” or Lane himself, who is as tyrannical as he is ineffective. Yet Bronson Alcott himself believed in the power of such utopian principles, lifted above the sentence in his daughter’s text by capitalization, symbols of ideals difficult to define and therefore to realize in practice. These were precisely the kind of ideals of which Fuller was skeptical and that led her to anticipate the failure of such experiments. In a letter to Emerson, Fuller expressed her suspicion that Alcott’s “truth [would] be left unembodied as far as depends on him” (Fuller to Emerson, 8 March 1842, in *Letters* 3 :50).⁴ When Fruitlands collapsed just months after its founding, she wrote to Lane, challenging him to account for her “disappoint[ment]” (Fuller to Lane, 17 July 1844, in *Letters* 3 :212). On another occasion, she admitted to Emerson that “the letter from Fruitlands [published in *The Dial*] made me laugh till I cried,” proving that she, like Louisa May Alcott decades later, saw Fruitlands primarily as comic relief,

not as the proving ground for her best hopes (Fuller to Emerson, 4 August 1843, in *Letters* 3 :137).

- 8 Fuller's utopian perspective began to change under what Judith Mattson Bean and Joel Myerson note was the "reformist" mentorship of Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New-York Tribune* who employed her first as staff critic in New York and then as foreign correspondent in Europe (Fuller, 2000, xviii). Fuller reviewed socialist novels by French writers Eugene Sue and George Sand, asserting that their ideas of "Association, in its grander forms, will have fair play in America" (Fuller, 2000, 62). Her utopian thinking becomes more and more euchronic, that is, she anticipates that utopia "will have fair play" and will be achieved in the future tense rather than tested in the present moment, as Alcott, Ripley, and Thoreau believed. Vieira suggests that euchronia is the most common mode of utopianism in the nineteenth century, shared by transnational community builders Robert Owen, founder of New Lanark in Scotland and New Harmony in Indiana, and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, whose *Communist Manifesto* (1848) proved a foundational "utopian" document (Vieira, 12-14).⁵ While these thinkers seek rebirth, they do not imagine that it is happening here and now, as William Wordsworth did at the apex of the eighteenth century in the wake of the French Revolution, when he found "human nature seeming born again" (Wordsworth, 226).
- 9 Fuller endorses Sue's vision that "the heart of mankind may be made to beat with one great hope, one love," beginning to imagine the kind of intentional, principled community that inspired Alcott in his search for an earthly "Paradise" (Fuller, 2000, 62).⁶ She works to persuade her readers that "something of universal importance" is about to happen, and the near total vagueness of that event is another sign of its utopian potential. "Else what avail magnetic telegraphs, steamers and rail cars traversing every road of land and ocean," Fuller speculates. "Surely there would not be all this pomp of preparation as to the means of communication, unless there were like to be something worthy to be communicated" (Fuller, 2000, 329). Here, she perceives the transatlantic means, but not the ends of utopia, as she has not yet formulated those philosophical goals that motivated her peers : the "Beauty, Virtue, Justice, and Love" of Alcott or the utopian infinitives of Thoreau, who created his retreat "to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life" (Thoreau, 90).

Utopian Rome

- 10 Fuller's European venture began in August 1846, more than halfway through Thoreau's solo experiment at Walden, and she speaks eagerly of her first "nine days of wonder in England" (Fuller, 1991, 39). Fuller is one of the first American writers to reverse the transatlantic dynamic generated by European thinkers such as More and Winthrop, who saw the western New World as the utopian space in which their desires would be fulfilled. Although Fuller finds much that intrigues her in both Britain and France, it is Italy, and more specifically Rome, where she lays the groundwork for her own utopian experiment. Upon arrival in Italy, she explains to her *Tribune* readers, "... I could not realize that I had actually touched those shores to which I had looked forward all my life, where it seemed that the heart would expand, and the whole nature be turned to delight" (Fuller, 1991, 129). Fuller embraces this state of emotional expectation, pursuing a youthful "delight" that leads her both forward and backward into radical innocence. She begins to speak in those naïve terms that she deemed "useless" in

Transcendental utopianism, noting the utopian behavior of the Italian people and their leaders, particularly Pope Pius IX, who seems to her “a man of noble and good aspect, who, it is easy to see, has set his heart upon doing something for the benefit of Man” (Fuller to Caroline Sturgis, October 1840, in *Letters* 2: 163; Fuller, 1991, 36). Although as Elizabeth Fenton has shown, Fuller’s initial optimism about Pius IX’s potential “to stand for the people” soon devolves into the “anti-Catholic” “suspicion and disdain” that haunted U.S. political discourse at the time, Fuller admires such moral ambition.⁷ First, she praises this spiritual leader, and then hails the triumphant return to Rome of political exile Giuseppe Mazzini, who admits that his own “hopes for Italy” are “Utopian” ones (Fuller, 1991, 264). Her perception of the “childlike joy and trust” of Italians themselves, initially the sort of nineteenth-century stereotype that makes us cringe, ripens into an ideal of prophetic innocence that prompts Fuller to ask of Europe more broadly, “Where is the genuine Democracy to which the rights of all men are holy? where the child-like wisdom learning all through life more and more the will of God?” (Fuller, 1991, 155, 163-4). This Romantic regression is at once surprising given Fuller’s initial level of skepticism and indicative of her growing political sophistication during her years abroad, in which she develops the “child-like wisdom” that enables her to see the ironies of the transatlantic pursuit of “Democracy.”

- 11 Fuller’s embrace of a utopian Italy also marks a significant turn in her personal relation to the Mediterranean world of antiquity. As a child, Fuller experienced Rome as a profoundly anti-utopian, even dystopian intellectual environment. She explains in her “Autobiographical Romance” (1840) that her father Timothy drilled her in Latin and English simultaneously, and that she began immersing herself in classical texts from the age of six onward (Fuller, 1992, 27-28). Born in 1778, Timothy modeled himself after his “political hero” Thomas Jefferson, who also gave his daughters an intensive classical education (Matteson, 19). His “generation,” which as Matteson notes was “plagued by the anxious fear that it could never live up to the courage and deeds of its Revolutionary fathers” (3), inherited the habits of what Meyer Reinhold identifies as a “cult of antiquity” from those predecessors (24). Jefferson, John Adams, and those who helped them author the founding documents of the republic turned to classical figures as mentors in rational thinking; their writing held “practical value in promoting moral and political wisdom” (Reinhold, 25). In his study of ancient Rome’s impact on the formation of a distinctly American historical consciousness, Eran Shalev argues that these participants in “a modern revolution” actually envisioned themselves as “ancient republicans,” creating conditions of imaginative simultaneity between revolutionary America and classical Rome (2). As I will observe later on, Fuller also sought a confluence between Rome and the United States, but by 1848, her transatlantic republics occupied the same historical moment.
- 12 To cultivate republican virtues, reading Virgil was essential for college-bound young men in the eighteenth century, but they were seldom taught to appreciate the literary merits of the *Aeneid*, as it was used instead “for drilling grammar, for construing and parsing Latin, and for scanning verses” (Reinhold, 222). Like her male peers, Fuller encountered Virgil’s *Aeneid* unprepared for its complexities, but she was less bored than disturbed. These literary encounters gave her nightmarish visions of “horses trampling over her” and “as she had just read in her Virgil, of being among trees that dripped with blood, where she walked and walked and could not get out, while the blood became a pool and plashed over her feet, and rose higher and higher, till soon

she dreamed it would reach her lips" (Fuller, 1992, 27). Virgil's Rome is for Fuller bloody, violent, and apocalyptic: opposed to both Jefferson and Adams' rational domain and the region of "delight" that she discovers in Italy later in life. Classical learning figuratively suffocates her and overwhelms her body, putting her health at risk and curtailing her innocence to the point where she declares, "I had no natural childhood!" (Fuller, 1992, 27)

- 13 In Fuller's purgative "romance," which draws on her journals, the classical drama of her childhood home becomes the site not only of "gendered... struggle" between an overbearing father figure and a sensitive daughter, as both Robinson and Phyllis Cole have observed, but also, I would add, the crucible of Fuller's Romantic imagination (Robinson, 83; Cole, 25). Her father recreates ancient Rome as a world of intellectual stringency, martial "precision," and declarative authority. His classical obsessions clash with what Fuller identifies as her own preference for "imagination and feeling." As she reads the stories of the "great Romans," Fuller reflects, "[e]verything turns your attention to what a man can become, not by yielding himself freely to impressions, not by letting nature play freely through him, but by a single thought, an earnest purpose, an indomitable will, by hardihood, self-command, and force of expression" (Fuller, 1992, 28, 30). Even as she absorbs the "indomitable" Roman model of self-determination, therefore, Fuller is developing a countercultural vocabulary of "yielding... to impressions" and "letting nature play freely" that she can use to write her own "Autobiographical Romance." Fuller's Dionysian opposition to an Apollonian force of will surely draws as well on Emerson's experience of the sublime in *Nature* (1836), whose most memorable episode of self-discovery celebrates how "[t]he currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God" (Emerson, 1 : 10). In this experience of "yielding," rather than asserting the self, Fuller stands with Emerson against the stern Roman values that dominated her upbringing.
- 14 Still, Fuller expresses ambivalence about her ancient Roman models, which both constrain and support her imaginative efforts. More powerfully drawn to Greek mythology and its "shifting shows of nature," which she took as the subject of her first "Conversations" series for Boston women in 1839, she nonetheless counts her father's Rome as an essential part of her intellectual identity. She explains, "I steadily loved this ideal in my childhood, and this is the cause, probably, why I have always felt that man must know how to stand firm on the ground, before he can fly" (Fuller, 1992, 30). Her preference for concrete, "ground[ed]" action may help account for her belated adoption of utopian thinking—that vision of "the flying Perfect" (Emerson, 2: 179) that Emerson captured in writing, but never in fact—and for her skeptical attitude toward such decidedly imperfect social experiments as Brook Farm and Fruitlands. "Hope" and "desire," the two engines of utopian thinking identified by Ernst Bloch and Ruth Levitas, would be too ethereal for an intellectual such as Fuller, who was accustomed to the "firm" foundations of classical learning (Levitas, 7).
- 15 Yet, Fuller's discovery of Rome in 1847 was a decidedly Romantic event, merging the geography of her past ("those shores to which I had looked forward all my life") with the emotional immediacy of a revolutionary present ("where it seemed that the heart would expand, and the whole nature be turned to delight") (Fuller, 1991, 129). Fuller's Romantic Rome developed in dialogue not only with the academic Rome of her childhood but also with the cities she inhabited in her mature adulthood, especially New York and Paris. In New York, Fuller expanded her work beyond the pages of the

Dial and the circles of her Conversations series to embrace direct experiences with the city's poor, the mentally ill, and the incarcerated. These encounters fed the social conscience of her writing, both in the cultural commentary she contributed to the *New-York Tribune* and in her treatise on *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Robert Hudspeth finds in Fuller's writing about Rome and other cities a particular kind of "urban innocence," or a capacity to see these places with fresh eyes as proving grounds for social reform (Hudspeth, 199). On her way to Rome, Fuller experienced her own "French Revolution," and her excitement was just as high as Wordsworth's, for as Larry J. Reynolds notes, "to her it marked the dawn of a new era, a socialist-republican era" (Reynolds, 65). In Paris, Fuller solidified her connections with such "revolutionary" thinkers as George Sand, Adam Mickiewicz, and Victor Considerant (Reynolds, 60-61).⁸ Considerant, like Coleridge, projected his utopian energies westward to a Fourierist community in Texas in 1855 (Robinson, 98). Together with Mazzini, these leaders persuaded Fuller that utopia was no fiction, but rather an ongoing pursuit in which she could take part. As More himself did in his *Utopia*, Fuller adapted her knowledge of classical Rome to suit her present purposes. In its opening verses, More's *Utopia* "claim[s] / To match, or beat" Plato's *Republic* "at its own game," and likewise, the potential energy of Fuller's Roman Republic surpasses the visions of ancient Rome that shaped her childhood (More, 5).

Fuller's Radical Innocence

- 16 In keeping with her spirit of innocence, Fuller fixates on the "radical" nature of European revolution, first in France, where she writes of "the need of some radical measures of reform," and then throughout her time in Italy, where she joins the fight for "peaceful though radical revolution" (Fuller, 1991, 119, 320). Etymologically, radicalism speaks of transformation from the ground up, of first things at the roots of knowledge and growth. Transatlantically, radicalism's roots also remind us of Paul Gilroy's central homonym "routes": a pairing that underscores both the territorial quality of utopia, its need for a place of origin, and the migratory element of its pursuit, which means it has no place at all (Gilroy, 3, 19). Fuller brings this metaphorical network into play as she describes her ideal traveler as "The thinking American—a man who, recognizing the immense advantage of being born to a new world and on a virgin soil, yet does not wish one seed from the Past to be lost. He is anxious to gather and carry back with him all that will bear a new climate and new culture" (Fuller, 1991, 163). This utopian thinker is a farmer of sorts, "anxious[ly]" radical, focused on rerouting seeds through the Atlantic world and giving them new roots. This transplanter of growing ideas is also Fuller herself.
- 17 The Transcendental utopias Fuller knew from her time in Concord were deliberately agricultural in their orientation; greater engagement with manual labor was intended to balance the intellectual pursuits in which the Transcendentalists excelled. Brook Farm residents were assigned specific tasks, but Fruitlands adherents were encouraged to follow their inclinations, which led to little actual productivity. Only Thoreau in his bean field at Walden Pond managed to cultivate a successful utopian crop, but even his harvest was more figurative than literal, for he planted "only for the sake of tropes and expression, to serve a parable-maker one day" (Thoreau, 162).⁹ In Italy, Fuller's vision of the fields of reform echoes Thoreau's, as it is entirely metaphorical. Like Bronson

Alcott's, her utopia promises uncertain results; in "Transcendental Wild Oats," Alcott's daughter Louisa May would call this an "invisible harvest." The seeds that Fuller plants sound familiar: ideals such as "truth" and "Genius," and philosophical principles such as "Virtue and Love" (Fuller, 1991, 164, 303). In what she believes is a "riper period in the world's history," Fuller trusts that these efforts to seed transatlantic change will bear fruit, reflecting, "I felt the calm of thought, the sublime hopes of the Future, Nature, Man – so great, though so little, so dear, though incomplete" (Fuller, 1991, 263, 216).

- 18 However abstract and "incomplete" her utopian projections might be, Fuller experiences Rome as a literal utopian community. Rome is her "City of the Soul," a neo-Platonic republic formed in February 1849 and dissolved through foreign intervention just a few months later, perhaps the shortest-lived of all Transcendental utopias (Fuller, 1991, 238). Rome has long stood at the center of human history, but this particular moment, Fuller feels, surpasses all the rest. She observes, "This week has been one nobler, sweeter feeling of a better hope and faith than Rome in her greatest days ever knew" (Fuller, 1991, 209). During these five months, the principles that she and others have sown actually spring into practice. In Rome, she explains, "I hear earnest words of pure faith and love. I see deeds of brotherhood" (Fuller, 1991, 230-1). Here, Bronson Alcott's promises of "Beauty, Virtue, Justice, and Love" are transmuted into a transatlantic victory, and Fuller lives in a "Paradise... already reestablished on earth." Yet this is no utopia in thought only, as Fuller becomes personally invested in its success: she enters into a utopian marriage with Roman revolutionary fighter Giovanni Ossoli, and serves the republican army as the superintendent of its Fatebenefratelli hospital. We can recognize Fuller's Rome as a utopia precisely because of its double-edged contours: at once imaginary and concrete, literary and historical, no-place and place.
- 19 The Roman Republic never looks more utopian, in fact, than when it is about to fall, surrounded by barricades, reminiscent of More's original Atlantic island and many other utopias that sustain themselves in geographical isolation. Fuller's theory of utopian failure is put to the test; she once cautioned Ripley that he should not establish his community until he was ready to fail, and now, Fuller values her own utopia even more as it collapses. In the final struggle between the dystopian energies of tyranny and the utopian hopes of democracy, Fuller's principles of "Virtue and Love" typographically rise above the lower energies of "egotism and brute force," and she finds that "yet Truth is not dead, Honor yet glows in many breasts, and Falsehood cannot destroy immortal verities by its corrupt use of their names" (Fuller, 1991, 303, 315). As she witnesses Rome's latest fall, Fuller enters the zone of "planetary" time theorized by Wai Chee Dimock (Dimock, 6). Fuller looks ahead into a euchronic future while turning her gaze westward to the newly promising territory of America. As she does so, she celebrates a synchronicity of "Joy to those born in this day: In America is open to them the easy chance of a noble, peaceful growth, in Europe of a combat grand in its motives, and its extent beyond what the world ever before so much as dreamed." Once wary of the "wide" scope of the Brook Farm enterprise, Fuller now broadens her utopian reach to the fullest "extent" possible. From transatlantic roots, she gives us a vision of global transformation (Fuller to William Henry Channing, 25 and 28 October 1840, in *Letters* 2: 174).

Conclusion

- 20 I began this essay by invoking the foundational Romantic polarities of William Blake's innocence and experience. How odd it seemed that Fuller would turn this familiar transit from hoping to knowing on its head, seeking radical innocence after so much Transcendental experience. I would like to suggest that within the framework of the Atlantic world, such reversals of terms should not be as surprising as they seem. Innocence and experience are perhaps flip sides of the same coin, but they are also parts of a perpetual cycle, elements that circulate within a system in which we can be led from experience to innocence and around again with the help of the ocean's currents. Vieira contends that utopia is ultimately "a strategy of creativity" (23). In conceptualizing utopianism as a distinctly Atlantic practice, I would argue that transatlanticism, or Atlantic thinking, is also a profoundly creative and hopeful process.
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NOTES

1. These phrases come from Coleridge's poem "Pantisocracy" (1794).
2. Sterling Delano has also discussed the extent to which Fuller's friendship with Channing drew her more closely into the Brook Farm circle, even to the point of expressing the "Hope" she initially distrusted in others (*Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia*, 138-9).

3. For more detailed investigation of women's roles and opportunities at Brook Farm, see Delano's article "'We have abolished domestic servitude': Women and Work at Brook Farm." Delano suggests that Fuller may have been inspired by the relative freedom women enjoyed at Brook Farm to imagine more fluid, expansive futures for women in her writings of this period (182).
4. Richard Francis comments on this letter as evidence of Fuller's "guarded" attitude toward Bronson Alcott in general, and specifically toward his utopian dreams (67).
5. Vieira places Marx and Engels within a utopian genealogy as she observes, "Although they claimed their theories to be scientific, the truth is that both Marx and Engels's thought was clearly utopian, in that it pointed to the future and offered promising images of freedom, stability and happiness" (13).
6. For more on "intentional communities," which are "initiated through deliberate effort in order to realize a set of specific goals," see Friesen and Friesen, 15.
7. Fenton, 83-84. See Fenton's thoughtful study for further discussion of Fuller's evolving view of Pius IX in relation to theologically inflected conceptions of representative democracy at home and abroad.
8. Reynolds calls Mickiewicz a "revolutionary," and I have extended the term to refer to others in this group as well.
9. In "The Bean-Field" chapter of *Walden*, as well as elsewhere in the book, Thoreau reveals that his utopian experiment is in part a classical fantasy. He imagines himself as "[a] very *agricola laboriosus*" in the eyes of passers-by and draws upon Roman writers Cato (*De Agri Cultura*) and Varro (*Rerum Rusticarum*) to support his argument for the "sacredness" of farming (Thoreau, 157, 163, 166). Reinhold points to the profound influence that "the rural values and moral exaltation of agriculture" contained in texts such as Virgil's *Georgics* exerted on the early American imagination (227).

ABSTRACTS

Transcendentalist New England was animated by utopian dreams throughout the 1840s, but even as she occupied its intellectual center, Margaret Fuller stood apart from these enthusiastic projections. Instead, she expressed skepticism of Brook Farm and Fruitlands, predicting empty rhetoric and certain failure. As she moved onward to New York and then to Europe, Fuller's thinking and writing became more and more utopian, fired by the revolutionary impulses at work in France and Italy in the years leading up to 1848. Ancient Rome, once a source of rigid discipline in Fuller's childhood, became a place of Romantic possibility as she advocated for the cause of the Roman Republic. Unexpectedly aligning herself with Henry David Thoreau's efforts to give utopianism new roots in his bean field at Walden Pond, Fuller embraced the radicalism of her own transatlantic experiment, hoping for a wider world of innocence born from Transcendental experience.

Au cours des années 1840, le mouvement transcendentaliste de Nouvelle-Angleterre fut animé par des rêves utopiques. Bien qu'elle en fût l'une des figures majeures, Margaret Fuller se tint à distance de ces visions enthousiastes; elle exprima au contraire un certain scepticisme à l'égard de projets tels que *Brook Farm* ou *Fruitlands*, qui ne pouvaient, selon elle, que se réduire à de beaux discours creux et se solder par un échec. Lorsque Fuller partit à New York, puis en Europe, sa pensée et son écriture se laissèrent progressivement gagner par un utopisme que les élans

révolutionnaires en France et en Italie nourrirent au cours des années qui précédèrent 1848. Alors que la Rome antique avait constitué un modèle rigide de discipline dans son enfance, elle devint pour Fuller un champ des possibles romantiques lorsque cette dernière soutint la cause de la République romaine. Rejoignant de manière inattendue les efforts de Henry David Thoreau, qui cherchait à offrir de nouvelles racines à l'utopisme dans son champ de haricots à *Walden Pond*, Fuller adopta le radicalisme qu'avait fait germer en elle sa propre expérience transatlantique, espérant ainsi voir advenir un monde d'innocence issu de l'expérience transcendante.

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