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**NATIONS UNFORMED: THE
AESTHETICS OF EXTRA-NATIONAL LITERATURE
1832-1910**

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English
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Abstract

“Nations UnFormed: The Aesthetics of Extra-National Literature 1832-1910”

Employing texts from a range of genres engaged with issues of politics, art, and social practice—including popular novels, poems, short fiction, philosophical meditations, travel narratives, periodicals and newspapers—I argue for an understanding of Italy and the United States as more intimately connected than has previously been recognized in the body of scholarly literature. The flexible, fantastical character of U.S. – Italian intimacy is a common, and commonly overlooked, element of this transnational relation. Attending to supple types of fantastical attachment, the chapters of this study employ the language of aesthetics to characterize and explore politicized intimate connection. Instead of viewing formalist analysis as a supplement to political historiography, I argue that aesthetic projects directly impact socio-political histories. Refusing the traditional dismissal of imaginative work as “merely aesthetic,” I affirm the importance, indeed the centrality, of aesthetic attention, exchange, and innovation for understanding transnational relations as well as national literatures. Invoking the vocabulary and interpretive conventions of aesthetics, I highlight the ways that aesthetic objects (here, texts) offer modes of cultural association and pleasure not necessarily constrained by material or historical conditions.

Instead of using imaginative texts to uncover historical or political reality, I bring interpretive categories associated with literary aesthetics (genre distinctions, theories of form, discussions of stylistic flourish) to bear on a body of writing by turns concrete and dreamlike. In the nineteenth-century writing from and about Italy featured in this dissertation, imagination and politics mingle; indeed, the former is deliberately imported as a means to articulate the latter. Analyses are thus positioned between transnational and new formalist approaches and partake of

elements from both critical discourses. Taking up of necessity questions of national affiliation or comparison, I imagine socio-political identifications as distinct forms of collective meaning-making, subject to (and productive of) vacillations of style, genre, and language. Attention to aesthetic qualities allows my analysis to dwell in the world of imagination, of extravagant attachment, as languages of aesthetic inquiry are often descriptive and aggregative instead of declaratively conclusive.

As the chapters of this dissertation shift focus across modes of representation and oscillations of form, so too do the imaginative attachments between American writers and Italian citizens demonstrate distinct values and associations. Although an American love of Italy did have what we could call “a politics,” my analyses do not offer political revelation as a consistent end goal; they attend instead to the intimate and extravagant character of the cultural connections explored in this study. The following chapters suggest that imagining oneself to be in love with Italy was an undercurrent of American thought and literature running below diverse historical meditations. How this enamored undercurrent has shaped nineteenth-century notions of extra-national identity, artistic endeavor, and cultural allegiance is the subject of this dissertation.

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Introduction

On the eve of his re-election, at the Civil War's apex, Abraham Lincoln related a surprising story to his biographer. Keeping Lincoln company as they awaited election returns, Noah Brooks was regaled with the details of Lincoln's encounter with his own ghost.

It was just after my election in 1860, when the news had been coming thick and fast all day. . . . I was well tired out, and went home to rest. . . . Opposite where I lay was a bureau with a swinging glass upon it. . . and looking into that glass I saw myself reflected. . . but my face, I noticed, had two separate and distinct images. . . I noticed that one of the faces was a little paler—say five shades—than the other. I got up, and the thing melted away.¹

In Brooks's telling, the longest existent version of this presidential legend, Lincoln navigates between observational detail and a sense of mystery. Carefully recording the “five shades” of complexion difference, forgetting the experience in “the excitement of the hour,” Lincoln is nevertheless unable to shake the uncanny vision: “the thing would once in a while come up, and give me a little pang as if something uncomfortable had happened” (220). Given the ways this particular anecdote, one with obvious poetical appeal, has virtually vanished from the historical record², it seems “something uncomfortable” has indeed happened: Lincoln narrates a moment of imaginative power with little discernable relation to the practical worlds of politics, history, and empirical experience with which he is often associated.³ In this dissertation, I too am interested in recording and exploring moments of imaginative fascination that demonstrate an uneasy relation to political and cultural histories, moments that encourage identification with a world of relations beyond geopolitical social history.

After the election of 1860, several Southern states seceded from the Union, initiating a war that, like Lincoln himself, had its own pale double.⁴ This double of the American Civil War, the Italian Risorgimento, manifested across an ocean instead of a Presidential sitting room. The

extended Italian battle for a unified independent nation lasted for approximately fifty years of localized revolutions and civic unrest, from the early 1820s until the final declaration of a Roman capitol in 1871. Understanding the Risorgimento as a civil war is a kind of imaginative act. Unlike the American Civil War, which involved the legal succession of Southern States and the declaration of official war, the half-century Risorgimento was made up of a series of smaller-scale uprisings, proclamations, and setbacks that were understood to be conceptually and politically related. Despite a loose consensus about the goals of these various military and diplomatic skirmishes, the Risorgimento was not a systematized national event. Instead, Risorgimento allegiances and interventions were connected through a shifting sense of collective imagination and effort, a belief in Italy's independent destiny as articulated by artists, politicians, religious radicals, and ordinary citizens.

The Italian struggle for independence, followed with great interest by Americans, offered a dramatic, but not a singular, example of political sympathy between two young nations. Fascination with things Italian is a cultural commonplace traceable to foundational moments of U.S. political existence. John Adams's 1786 political treatise *Defence of the Constitution of Government of the United States of America* [sic], for example, makes consistent and sustained use of Machiavelli's political theories. According to Adams, the Florentine rouse is "the first who revived the ancient politics,"⁵ offering practical theories of republicanism, and an appealing sense of cultural independence, to thinkers bold enough to see beyond Machiavelli's unsavory reputation.⁶ Most studies of U.S. - Italian interaction have, like Adams, paid sustained attention mostly to political trajectories and historical influences.

The tendency to understand Italy, and American reactions to it, through the languages of nationalism is a common one for both contemporary scholars and nineteenth-century U.S. writers. In part, this is because the history of an Italian-American fascination begins with moments of

political upheaval. Adams, for example, is first drawn to Machiavelli's political history of Rome (*Discourses on Livy*) because the American statesman sees in Machiavelli's circular historical philosophy a compelling model for American political greatness. Although the chapters of the present study are concerned to demonstrate the inadequacy of strictly nationalist interpretations of the cultural influences between Italy and the United States, students of Italy's history have long been unable to resist such language.

For the most part, nationalist fervor in Italy and the U.S. (and much of the nationalist rhetoric that circulated between the two) was textually mediated. In 1796, after the triumph of Napoleon's army over Piedmontese and Austrian troops in northern Italy, the French government sponsored a local essay contest. According to Christopher Duggan, participants were invited to respond—in Italian, French, or Latin—to the question “Which form of free government is the most conducive to the happiness of Italy?” (*FD* 9) As Duggan summarizes, respondents (there were 57 of them) most often argued for a unified republic on the new French model. The winning essay, submitted from the northern city of Piacenza, sounded a soon-to-be-familiar refrain: the great benefit of Melchiorre Gioia's proposed republic would be the cross-regional bonds it initiated, its structural participation in altering collective perception. According to Gioia, residents would no longer see themselves as “Sicilians, Florentines, and Turinenses, but Italians and men” (*FD* 9). As we shall see throughout the course of this study, the desire for a recognizable national identity beyond the divisions of region was quite common among Italians, even though regional identity remained an especially stubborn allegiance to think beyond.

In the meantime, plenty of American visitors to Italy were ready and willing to help Italians remedy their perceived failure of national imagination, as was Napoleon Bonaparte. Reflecting on Italian history in 1857, Henry Tuckerman described Napoleon's era as an essential moment of national imaginative progress: “the Emperor's rule was despotic, but he was then abreast with the

spirit of the age. . . he promoted social progress and national feeling in the beautiful land which his victories had won from a score of bigoted and narrow rulers.”⁷ Unfortunately, Napoleonic rule, despotic but unifying as it might be, proved short lived. With most of Europe united against him, Napoleon (and Italy) lost all during the Congress of Vienna debates: the much-resented Hapsburgs regained almost complete control of a re-fragmented Italy. Howells offers a pointed gloss on this history in 1887: “after 1815 came the Holy Alliance with its consecrated contrivances for fettering mankind. Lombardy, with all Venetia, was given to Austria; the dukes of Parma, of Modena, and Tuscany were brought back and propped up on their thrones again. The Bourbons returned to Naples, and the Pope’s temporal glory and power were restored” (*MIP* 6). According to David Gilmore, “the ‘Restoration’ has traditionally been seen as the Dark Age of modern Italy.”⁸

From this Dark moment onward, those living on the Italian peninsula perceived themselves to be united by a common sense of Italian-ness (*italianità*) and a shared resentment of their common enemies. Although it would take almost 50 years, this combination allowed local citizens and international observers to imagine, and eventually bring into being, a parliamentary monarchy that united the northern and southern regions into one Italy. This dissertation explores moments of that history through material written about Italy throughout the century. I do not attempt to offer a comprehensive account of Italian political and social history⁹; instead, I gather related texts from particular moments of the Italian nineteenth century. Although these moments often index political change (the newspaper dispatches of Margaret Fuller and Henry Adams are written during moments of militaristic action; the stories and essays of Henry James and Constance Fenimore Woolson depict post-unification Italy), I am interested in how these historical examples balance political and aesthetic concerns.

Although the strong language of national comparison and nationalist sentiment often grounds initial American depictions of Italy, such a focus proves ultimately misleading and limiting.

Instead of attending only to the rhetoric of nationalism, which tends to employ an oppositional logic, the present study, by contrast, employs a dialectical model for tracing the shifting cultural influences and recognitions in this history of exchange.¹⁰ Instead of delineating a progressive political trajectory, I develop an alternative vision of transnational relation, one distinct from those focused on institutional operations and nationalist comparison.¹¹

For this study, aesthetics offers an interpretive rubric able to understand and describe differently the long, fruitful transnational relationship between Italy and the United States. Invoking the vocabulary and interpretive conventions of aesthetics, I highlight the ways that aesthetic objects (here, texts) offer modes of cultural association and pleasure not necessarily constrained by material or historical conditions; hence the utility of a concept like fascination, which suggests associations with fantasy, inexpressibility, and intimacy. This dissertation's chapters explore operations of cultural fascination as developed through U.S. and Italian cultural relations during the nineteenth century.

Often in Americanist criticism today, the category of the aesthetic is invoked in explorations of imaginative attachment, alternative social imaginings, or the “not-yet-real.”¹² As this study will demonstrate, questions of attachment, of social alternatives to nationalism, and of the status of a “not-yet-real” underwrite many writings about and experiences in Italy. How can one person feel so attached to a location, attached to “Italy” as a durable cultural object with no stable linguistic referent? What might Italy's “not-yet-real” unification look like? What will its social benefits be for Italians? How might Americans participate in these compelling historical developments? Such questions animate American texts about Italy from Henry Tuckerman to Henry James.

Employing texts from a range of genres engaged with issues of politics, art, and social practice—including popular novels, poems, short fiction, philosophical meditations, travel

narratives, periodicals and newspapers—I argue for an understanding of these two nations as more intimately connected than has previously been recognized in the body of scholarly literature. Such intimacy was, however, imagined by many of this study’s authors. As James Russell Lowell claims in *Fireside Travels*, “there is, perhaps, no country with which we are more intimate as with Italy, — none of which we are always so willing to hear more.”¹³ Lowell invokes an insatiable hunger for Italian scenes and discussions, a hunger differently but powerfully felt by a range of observers; he continues, “while one finds nothing but loveliness in [Italy], another shudders at her fatal fascination” (150). The flexible, fantastical character of U.S. – Italian intimacy is a common, and commonly overlooked, element of this transnational relation. Attending to supple types of fantastical attachment, the chapters of this study employ the language of aesthetics to characterize and explore politicized intimate connection.

Instead of using imaginative texts to uncover historical or political reality, I bring interpretive categories associated with literary aesthetics (genre distinctions, theories of form, discussions of stylistic flourish) to bear on a body of writing by turns concrete and dreamlike. In the writing from and about Italy featured in this dissertation, imagination and politics mingle; indeed, the former is deliberately imported as a means to articulate the latter. Analyses are thus positioned between transnational and new formalist approaches and partake of elements from both critical discourses. Taking up of necessity questions of national affiliation or comparison, I imagine socio-political identifications as distinct forms of collective meaning-making, subject to (and productive of) vacillations of style, genre, and language. Attention to aesthetic qualities allows my analysis to dwell in the world of imagination, of extravagant attachment, as languages of aesthetic inquiry are often descriptive and aggregative instead of declaratively conclusive.¹⁴ As Italy could generate and sustain so many distinct personal attachments, could leave so many powerful

impressions on centuries of its admirers, so do my analyses here proliferate possibilities instead of foreclosing them.

If perceptions of culture are, as Oscar Wilde has argued, “work[s] of art,” the specific vocabularies of art, the language of stylistics and form, will help to theorize the cross-cultural attraction so compulsively expressed in U.S writing about Italy and Italian reactions to the United States. This study does not ignore the political discussions and cultural comparisons of the time; given the sheer amount of writing about Italy that depends upon such material, avoiding it would be well nigh impossible. Nor do I focus solely on ekphrastic writing or aesthetic meditations, another highly conventional way for authors to describe and explore their Italian experiences.

The texts collected here fall broadly into two main groups: literary writing and expository writing. The former term includes writing that has distinctly and intentionally literary/aesthetic features: lyric poems, the late-century work of Henry James and Gabrielle D’Annunzio, short magazine fiction. Expository writing, by contrast, comprises the informative, descriptive elements of travelogues, letters home, and newspaper content of all sorts. Despite these differences, the formalist approach provides analytic language and methods that remain consistent across a body of texts with distinct goals, modes of address, and contexts. Moreover, such a critical vocabulary allows this study to point up the stylistic or linguistic aspects of all manner of texts, even (perhaps especially) those that have at first glance distinctly politicized purposes.

Of necessity, this study engages with only a small portion of writing about and from Italy produced during the nineteenth century.¹⁵ In part, this collection of texts represents the singular vision of their collector. However, the connections that bring together this particular group are likewise identifiable across a much broader range of material than this dissertation can encompass. The works discussed here share a broad set of themes: the role of individual character in negotiations of collective potential; the role of historical continuity in cultural upheavals; the

possibility of language to unify (or alienate) disparate peoples. Additionally, texts share an attribute more readily characterized as style or form, insofar as such a nomination emphasizes the representational qualities associated with an inexpressibility or elusiveness of articulation. The texts explored in this study are linked, finally, through the very representational difficulty they articulate: over and over in texts about Italy, writers dramatize an expressive impasse, a sense of powerful attachment that defies coherent description.

Although authors draw explicit attention to this quandary, they rarely offer a stable solution. Instead, the act of expressing and exploring their difficulty becomes an element of their Italian topic. In his introduction to 1838's *Gleanings in Europe: Italy*, James Fenimore Cooper confesses, "if the author were required to give a reason why he has written on a country so well-known as Italy, he might be puzzled to give any other reason than that he loved the subject."¹⁶ Cooper offers a familiar disclaimer: despite Italy's cultural prominence, despite the proliferation of writing about Italy already available in 1838, Cooper can't help undertaking what seems like a necessarily frustrating endeavor. Unable to resist the impulse to pen his own love song to Italy, Cooper examines his own special attachment to a place many others have sought, and found, for their own pleasure.¹⁷ Elsewhere, he confesses that Italy "haunts my dreams and clings to my ribs."¹⁸ Despite Italy's status as well known, Cooper implies that it yet solicits his special attention; he admits that he "had been indulging" in recollection (*GI*xlvii). Like many other visitors, Cooper imagines his version of Italy to be at once unique and broadly appealing. Each individual's Italy is distinct by virtue of its capacious solicitation of individual attachment. This is an element of Italy's appeal I have referred to as "intimate," a connection recalled by Cooper's description of Italy as a private indulgence. Meanwhile, an awareness of its collective attraction yet remains: Cooper ends his preface by suggesting that, despite "this beaten road" of Italian scenes, "some may be glad to go over [it] again" (xlvii).

This dissertation explores individual records of what Cooper calls haunting and Lowell classifies as intimacy: the feeling of connection that defies linguistic description (is it really “love” that Cooper feels?) and connection to a concrete object (what does Cooper love after all: an aesthetic fantasy of Italy? The Italian population? Or does he love Italy’s cultural cache, its very status as a fascinating, distant, sensual, escapist locale?). Cooper’s interpretive impasse—his puzzlement about what, beyond love, might account for the need to write Italy—suggests the utility of an aesthetic approach to questions of attraction and representation. If this haunting remains ultimately more messy than standardized, if it proves resistant to descriptive uniformity, so much the better; such affiliative or representational fluidity is, after all, where fantasy gains its power.¹⁹

By using a concept of cultural fascination to describe and analyze this particular transnational relationship, I am making two related claims. First, that traditional historical accounts and political comparisons prove insufficient for interpreting the intimate connections Americans felt (and continue to feel) for Italy. This is a claim about the role of form and style in representations of Italy: one cannot understand the history of American interest in Italy without sustained attention to the formal admixtures and interconnections that permeate this particular body of writing. Ultimately, this study offers a selective historical narrative routed through explorations of genre, style, and literary form, which offer a distinctly, and productively, defamiliarized version of Italian-American history. In addition to the explanatory apparatus of history, this study attends to unwieldy moments of impulse and attraction (“fascination”) in order to highlight the personal, ineffable responses that saturate writing from and about Italy.²⁰ Thus, the second claim made by this study is that formal analysis itself can show us how attraction is produced and circulated culturally. By paying careful attention to the distinctly textual or linguistic elements of historical representation, this fragmented historical inquiry is more attuned to

arresting, fleeting moments of cultural attachment than to smoothly schematized progression, thereby offering an expanded sense of cultural relation and imaginative affiliation.

Since the cultural objects available for transnational study are so varied, analytic awareness about the relations between interpretive field of inquiry and methodological approach proves important, whether communicated implicitly or explicitly. Antonio Benítez-Rojo opens *The Repeating Island* with just such a meditation. Defined by “its fragmentation, its instability. . . its cultural heterogeneity, its lack of historiography and historical continuity,” the Caribbean demands an interpretive method “whose end is not to find results, but processes, dynamics, and rhythms that show themselves within the marginal. . . the incoherent, the heterogeneous.”²¹ In a similar vein, this study’s emphasis on collapsing distinctions between political and aesthetic interpretations has been suggested by the form and content of U.S and Italian cultural interactions. The specific contours of the Italian–U.S. relation—the tendency to swerve from cultural reportage to intimate fantasizing, the powerful sense of attachment so often narrated, the constant overflow of imaginative fancy into everyday life—offers a particular vision of transnational connection that routinely sublimates political concerns into aesthetic creations.²² In this study, the formal elements of texts operate in the manner suggested by Lloyd Pratt, who recommends formalism as “a doing rather than a being.”²³ Imagining the tools of formal analysis as a broad method “that unfolds objects and approaches anew,” Pratt’s naming of form as a process instead of an object of study allows us to “think of formalism as an engine rather than an enemy of history” (431).

Examining political struggles for cultural coherence and independence on a scale more often associated with interpersonal intimacy, analyses tend to view history as a series of personalized moments. According to D.A. Miller’s formulation, style can both imagine and transcend cultural history. As a literary feature that often refuses to articulate its (personal) investments, style for Miller is able to “achiev[e] what we might call cultural *valence*: an ability not

just to attract marginal or malformed subjects who need to take shelter in an image of universality and absoluteness, but also to combine with central ideological elements of a culture invested in such an image of itself. Always being defeated, always being remanded to social hell, Style nonetheless remains invincible.”²⁴ Miller’s sense of style’s contradictory nature—its abject yet invincible status, its position beyond and within history or ideology, its conflicted cultural meanings—offers a productive model for this study, with its interest in simultaneously articulating and collapsing distinctions between individual and collective, form and content, history and aesthetics.

As in the writing about Italy collected here, the political and aesthetic realms are for Jacques Rancière inextricable. In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Rancière claims that “the arts can be perceived and thought of as forms of art *and* as forms that inscribe a sense of community.”²⁵ Elsewhere, Rancière argues that the concept of aesthetics is itself unthinkable without this operational contradiction between singular works of art and the community to which they are addressed.²⁶ Rancière’s concept of politics is likewise doubly constituted: “If there is something ‘proper’ to politics, it consists entirely in this relationship, which is not a relationship between subjects, but between two contradictory terms that define a subject.”²⁷ Like Rancière, I am here interested in productive doublings that prove ultimately inextricable, such as distinctions between American and Italian allegiances, between political histories and personal ones, even the distinction Rancière’s work seeks both to articulate and to undermine, the split between aesthetics on one pole and politics on another. Attention to language and form suggests a politics of intimate attachment, a version that enables individuals to connect, in intimate, aesthetic terms, to abstract and unstable national ideals, generating a distinct “sense of community” that collapses the definitional imperative for differentiation Rancière highlights.

We can understand struggles for speech, recognition, and representation among collectivities (what Rancière defines most broadly as “politics”), then, in terms other than geopolitical ones. The chapters that follow highlight the perceived personal attachments and irrefutable fascinations that underlie distinct representational experiences. In so doing, this study analyzes the aesthetic forms and genres that gave expression to and were in turn changed by such fascination, foregoing the abstraction of national identity in favor of felt cultural intimacy. In this way, the intimate politics presented here are associated with the fascinated affects and operations of aesthetics. Engaging in explicitly formal or aesthetic terms with a collection of historical artifacts, I follow the work of those who have elsewhere theorized the connections between national or political order and language, particularly as concerns the imagination. The title of Benedict Anderson’s landmark *Imagined Communities* suggests the utility and appropriateness of this analytic approach. Unlike Anderson, however, I use imagination, and the specific analytic categories of style and literary form, to describe recognitions and affiliations that are not necessarily, or not always, national in character. In *The Anatomy of National Fantasy*, Lauren Berlant uses the term “National Symbolic” to name what she describes as “the order of discursive practices whose reign within a national space produces, and also refers to, the ‘law’ . . . Its traditional icons, its metaphors, its heroes, its rituals, and its narratives provide an alphabet for a collective consciousness or national subjectivity.”²⁸ Berlant offers an expansive description of the imaginative categories available for identification, listing a series of figures (national heroes, rituals, and metaphors) that organize abstracted communities around a shared recognition and appreciation of such figures. I am interested, instead, in figures and aesthetic characteristics that allow more intimate connections or identifications; as Hamilton argues, “the very idea of ‘intimacy’ as a possible model of political relationship provocatively highlights the abstraction which permits . . . violations of nationalist aspirations” (*RP* 23).

While Berlant narrates a process of historical familiarization (in which widely circulated national fantasies are used and re-used in distinct textual contexts), this study often highlights a more ambiguous process. Writing for the *New York Tribune* in 1848, Margaret Fuller narrates her impressions of Rome as both a deeply familiar and an impenetrable location with which she feels an overwhelming sympathetic connection. “Like others, I went through the painful process of sight-seeing, so unnatural everywhere. . . . You rise in the morning knowing there are all around you a great number of objects worth knowing. . . . You feel, probably, in seeing them, the inadequacy of your preparation.”²⁹ As Fuller describes it, overcoming cultural distance requires systematic immersion in the unfamiliar and unnatural. At the same time, since the agreed upon sights of Italian cultural identification are overdetermined by the history of international tourism and hundreds of mediated versions, encountering Italy proves both familiar and alienating.

In her journalistic prose, Fuller describes the typical touristic activities as inadequate to her cultural goals of knowledge and appreciation. However, she shortly finds herself on chummier ground: “I begin to see and feel the real Rome. She reveals herself, she tells me some of her life” (*SGD* 168). The scene of exchange Fuller narrates is an intimate one; this description suggests a kind of boudoir revelation where secrets might be whispered. In her language, we see already the collapse of distance and intimacy, abstraction and familiarity. This passage describes one individual’s experiences in an ancient city for a large and anonymous group of distant readers. Using personal pronouns and direct address—to the readers, Fuller’s “you”; about Rome, Fuller’s ladylike companion—Fuller turns tourist commonplaces into rewarding personal connections. This amicable relation between American visitor and ancient city is one example of the paradoxically personalized affection between individuals and abstractions (wherein generalized “Rome” stands as a synecdoche for abstracted “Italian Nation”) that I am interested in describing and analyzing throughout this study.

Mine is certainly not the first transnational study to explore cross-cultural interactions through attention to specific genres. In *Ambassadors of Culture*, Kirsten Silva Gruesz undertakes an analysis of lyric poetry published in what she calls “fugitive periodicals,” those published in Spanish in the U.S.-Mexican “borderlands.”³⁰ Silva Gruesz turns to this archive for generic reasons as well as political ones: “because of its brevity, mobility, association with the voice, and status as a prestige genre” (xii), lyric poetry is an especially useful textual artifact for her study, which proposes to “consider [poetry’s] role in shaping larger ideological formations as well as influencing the ways individual readers and writers mapped their lives” (6). While the borderland relations that interest Silva Gruesz have long gone unrecognized, those between U.S. and Italian nationalisms have been pressed into ideological service for centuries: Italian voices and theories have been used to buttress political goals and organize ideological argument at least since John Adams. In contrast to a received transnational history, I seek out genres that present Italy in terms other than ideologically useful ones. In fact, these representations do not serve the practical function of mapping lives Silva Gruesz describes. Instead, they more often provide momentary escape from the daily abstractions³¹ that characterize cross-cultural interactions wherein a social category such as “American” becomes a highly self-conscious means with which individuals navigate extra-national experience.

In part, this dissertation describes attachments for which we have no appropriate categories or language. In *Intimacy in America*, Peter Coviello posits an understanding of national identity (for him, legible through the notion of race) as “a state of being-in-relation, a way of being attached.”³² For Coviello, these “*dreams of affiliation*” (4), occurring between white men in antebellum America, represent “a particular model of the nation. . . a dream of an intimate nationality” (9). In this study, I am interested in what happens when something like “a dream of an intimate nationality” is imagined not as an abstracted affective relation between particular citizens and a nation, but as a dream shared intensely, and in deeply interpersonal terms, between an

individual and a cultural concept, like that of “Italy.” Further, what if this dream is not strictly national but is instead trans- or inter-national? Because it crosses national boundaries as well as more localized American ones, might a transnational pair like United States and Italy show us something different about communal connection? When Fuller imagines herself walking with “the real Rome,” when she fantasizes about the revelations this companion might offer, with whom (or what) is she constructing a relation? It is my contention that because of a complex and contested history, because of a long cultural tradition that consistently and carefully blends aesthetics and politics, because of its aesthetic domination despite a paucity of political power, Italy represents a special affiliative case for its American intimates; Italy is an especially appealing companion for U.S. citizens, for many reasons. I am not suggesting that this particular transnational relationship is fundamentally more meaningful, or more sustained, than other cross-cultural connections of the nineteenth century.³³ However, a perception that the relation between U.S. and Italian culture was an unusually informative and rewarding one was widespread.

Theories of lack and gratification have long been considered useful for speculating about why Americans flocked to Italy to immerse themselves in Italian artistic history or how the Italian unification movement was inspired by and inspiring to American political communities. Although such an interpretive framework helps to define the socio-political stakes of a transnational relation, and can help account for the initial appeal of Italy or of the United States, imagining cultural or political fulfillment as a stable result of these interactions is both functionally difficult and conceptually undesirable. This approach is insufficient for many of the reasons articulated in the preceding pages. Since Cooper is unable even to describe his love for Italy, how could he perceive a response to it that would be appropriate or satisfying? Moreover, from where would such a response come: from individual Italians? From an abstracted national imaginary? Often, when the authors examined in this study discuss lack, disappointment, or yearning, they do so in allusive,

figurative terms. The tendency to express shifting, unstable expectations or rewards for transnational experience surfaces across the formal distinctions and historical developments of my textual archive.

The cultural intimacy I explore develops, at the most general national level, from a long history of dialectical interaction, the negotiation of perceived collective strengths and the concomitant compensation for differences.³⁴ Writers and citizens of the two places trade a fantasy of cultural wholeness back and forth at distinct moments: encountering the other, cultural imagination in each nation tends to emphasize lack and surplus in an inverted paradigm. The appeal of Machiavelli's practical (if occasionally mercenary) republicanism for American Founding Fathers stems from the philosopher-soldier's theorizing of a form of government Americans were struggling then to define and to inaugurate.

A few decades later, American observers of antebellum Italy often observed that what was perceived as the superior governmental model of the United States, partially inspired by Italy's republican tradition, had become a new model from which the proposed Italian nation might learn.³⁵ Eerily anticipating Lincoln's historical moment, Cooper's 1838 travelogue claims that "the study of Italy is profitable to an American. One of the greatest, indeed the only serious, obstacle to consolidation of all the Italian States, arises from the hereditary hatreds and distrust of the people. . . . Such would soon be our own condition were the bond of union that now unites us severed" (298). Cooper imagines a singular model for unification: given similar circumstances, the troubles of Italy could easily be those of the United States. Fuller appeals to conceptual similarities as well in her dispatches for *The New York Tribune*, declaiming in no uncertain terms that Italy's battle for unification should expect support from American sources: "this cause is OURS, above all others. . . In many ways [Italy] is of kin to us; she is the country of Columbus, of Amerigo, of Cabot"(160-61). This appeal to kinship is, perhaps, the single most common theme across U.S.

writing about Italy.³⁶ Columbus himself was a consistent symbol of coherent community connection between U.S. and Italian subjects.³⁷ That is to say, Fuller was neither the first nor the last to imagine and articulate the same potent symbols of political or cultural connection for U.S. and Italian citizens. This repetition is one effect of the representational impulse Lowell and Cooper are aware of yet unable to resist.

At the same time that perceived political inadequacies were being addressed by Americans, an awareness of American aesthetic lack (theorized perhaps most famously by Nathaniel Hawthorne) permeated discussions of Italian artistic sights and touristic pleasures. In the preface to *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne declares that, as the site of Romance, Italy “afford[s] a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon, as they are, and must needs be, in America.”³⁸ Hawthorne, among others, situates Italy directly in the space of the “not-yet-real,” the fantastical, the possible (all terms used to describe aesthetic endeavors in current theoretical parlance), and America most assuredly not.

Discussions of lack represent but a single way to view the cross-cultural appeal of Italy for Americans and of the U.S. for Italians. Following Rancière’s productive argument about the inextricability of political and aesthetic traditions, I treat the transnational relationship explored here as one of dialectical exchange instead of imaging isolated areas of information transfer. In an argument of the latter sort, one might trace how political strategy moves from ancient Rome to Machiavelli to John Adams, only to be taken up anew by Giuseppe Mazzini. Instead, the following chapters imagine the political and the aesthetic to be interrelated concepts by tracing how distinct elements from each realm get traded, supplemented, and recognized across the histories of both countries. As this study will demonstrate, the conceptual exchanges and supplementations occurring within the texts explored here are likewise evident in their forms; throughout my examples, genres prove as mutable, transmittable, and flexible as the perceptions of Italy they

index. Dialectical exchanges across political and aesthetic concepts, between citizens, between genres, between literary styles, are this study's objects of inquiry. Each chapter begins with an apparent distinction that collapses productively over the course of the analysis.³⁹

For many nineteenth-century Americans writers of Italy, a dialectical method has long been useful. Lowell imagines the two—political potential and imaginative extravagance—to be closely aligned with operations of sovereignty. Discussing the passion of Italians, Lowell claims that “it is ill for a nation when the cerebrum sucks the cerebellum dry, for it cannot live by intellect alone” (*FT* 200-201). Howells too sees the political potential in acts of imagination, using his translations in *Modern Italian Poets* as a springboard for literary and historical theories. Certainly, his observation that “the enjoyment of patriotic poetry” serves both political and artistic agendas is nothing new; more original is Howells's refusal to feature explicitly political poetry in his translated edition, insisting instead on the political power of “vast meadows of green baize enamelled with artificial flowers. . . . tumbling floods and signing groves. . . . nymphs and swains, [where] the chief business of life is to be in love and not to be in love.”⁴⁰ Here in the dreams of “Arcady,” Italy expresses a longing for freedom no less than in the political satires and poems of a more recognizable nationalist tradition. It is likewise the business of this study to explore what it means “to be in love” with the nation of Italy, with its political spectacle and its aesthetic tradition.

The chapters that follow move in chronological order through nineteenth-century history, albeit in a fragmented fashion. For each of the formal and stylistic stories told in these chapters, political or cultural context situates the discussion. In each example, analyses contract from broad contexts to the imaginative density and particularity of the texts treated, what D.A. Miller calls “the activist *materialization* of insignificance” (17): that is, style.⁴¹ Though organizing my analyses loosely around wide-ranging historical trends (the desire for unification felt by Italians between 1830 and

1860 or the disillusionment following unification that marked the century's final three decades), my didactical method shifts between general historical patterns and crystalized textual components.

Processes of defamiliarization and recognition were common experiences for American citizens in Italy, and likewise were unavoidable elements of the naturalization practices for Italian immigrants to the United States. I too defamiliarize the well-worn story of Americans in Italy. My four chapters trace the history of Italian unification through writing from both figures in a cultural pair; each begins with a historical condition that acts as organizing principle for the cultural exchange I explore. In every chapter, questions of representation—What will the Italian nation look like? How to describe the Roman Republic? How will unification change Italy? How should Italian immigrants interpret the U.S.?—result from moments of historical transformation.

In the growth of the Italian independence movement, Henry Tuckerman finds an easily imaginable political progression from oppression to revolution. It is here that my own project begins. Chapter One, “Reader, Everybody Has a World’: The Italian Lyric Nation,” examines American writing from pre-unification Italy and the memoir of Silvio Pellico, “The Italian Martyr,” who served almost 20 years in an Austrian prison for anti-imperial plotting. In these early decades, Italy was a conquered, fractured peninsula with national aspirations. U.S. writers documenting their Italian experiences took seriously those aspirations, meditating in travelogues about national potential and drawing comparisons between an imagined, unified Italy and their fondly mythologized revolutionary America. The opening chapter collects conventional travel narratives and lyric poetry written by Tuckerman, James Russell Lowell, and Julia Ward Howe. For all three writers, generic conventions dictate the content and the tenor of observations; further, generic limits condition the character of individual attachment to place. This chapter contrasts a linear, narrative Italy to an intimate, more flexible lyric version. In exploring these distinct Italies, I suggest

that a model of *lyric nationhood* offers a more capacious sense of Italy for identification while also illuminating more clearly some elements of Italy's own historical imagination.

Early in 1848, Italy's revolutionary uprisings began in earnest. Across Europe, in countries like France, Hungary, and Germany, populist armies battled their established sovereigns in a series of liberal, nationalist revolutions.⁴² Italy was no exception: secret intellectual societies from the Italian North, like the Carbonari and Mazzini's "Young Italy," found themselves aligned with Garibaldi's peasant armies and Southern Italy's impoverished tenant farmers. By December 1848 the Pope had fled Rome, leaving the soldier Garibaldi and the intellectual Mazzini to establish the transitory but widely celebrated Roman Republic. In 1849, Fuller reports on the revolutionary progress: "An immense crowd of people surrounded the *Palazzo della Cancelleria* . . . while the debate was going on within. At one o'clock in the morning of the 9th of February, the Republic was resolved upon and the crowd rushed away to ring all the bells" (*SGD* 256). From 1849 until 1861, Italy sought and lost, pursued and wrecked and pursued again, a dream of independence and national unity. Chapter Two, "I Regret to Learn You Are Enjoying a Civil War at Home," looks at newspaper dispatches written from two Italian fronts: Fuller's Rome in 1848-49 and 1861 Sicily, where a young Henry Adams encountered Garibaldi himself on the eve of national unification. Using these reports, I claim that Italy operates as an international celebrity in moments of historical rupture and revolution. In characterizing the celebrity as a figure of perpetual public fascination, recent theories of fame offer a model for understanding the larger cultural attraction to Italy beyond the apparent appeal of burgeoning political sovereignty. Exploring moments of national trauma as narrated by American observers, my analysis uses the figure of the celebrity icon to imagine historical upheaval as an interpersonal phenomenon.

Chapter Three, "Scratching at the Surface: Unified Italy and the Comforts of Style," examines the results of these dramatic nationalist moments. In an analysis of highly wrought and

ornamental literary styles, I explore the dissatisfaction and confusion of post-unification Italy, the clash between a projected “not-yet-real” and Italy’s new social conditions. As a unified Italy moved toward industrial modernity—overhauling social and political institutions like pensions, national schools, and trade alliances, undertaking railroad building and urban construction projects—visitors and Italian residents confronted the possibility that the arrival of modern Italy represented a distinct loss for Italian art, history, and culture. Disillusioned with the new nation, unsure about the appeal of industrial progress, authors like Henry James, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Gabriele D’Annunzio side-stepped political or historical meditations in favor of highly ornamental writing set in a timeless Italy. In doing so, these authors suggest that the reality of modern Italy does not satisfy the hopes of its dreamers.

Part of the disappointment with the newly unified Italian nation had to do with its reliance on old patterns of exploitation and regional inequality. In the most common historical accounting, post-unification disparities launched the mass migration of Southern Italians to the United States. Certainly, the number of Italians migrating to the U.S. rose sharply in the final decades of the nineteenth century, peaking between 1890 and 1910. However, as the final chapter demonstrates, Italians were coming to the U.S. and working to develop Italian-American collectives for decades before the era of mass migration. In Chapter Four, “A Hero and His Newspapers; or, A Romance of Italian America,” I present a single narrative of ethnic development and national affiliation as told by Italians in the United States.⁴³ This story is drawn from my work with Italian-language newspapers published from in the United States between 1849 and 1890.⁴⁴ Mashing together the realist conventions of newspaper writing with the romantic abstraction of national feeling, I use the newspaper archive to develop a romance of ethnic identity, a story of Italian America often overlooked in histories attending to the mass migration of the fin-de-siècle era. I characterize this chapter’s particular notion of Italian-Americanness as a *mezzo-identity*, using the Italian word for

“half” to delineate the flexibility and capaciousness of that association. Finally, I imagine *mezzo-identity* as an affiliation that blends real ethnic distinction with romanticized identificatory fantasy, an aesthetic condition developed through the very generic confusion I trace across the newspapers.

In *Anglophilia*, Elisa Tamarkin declares her interest in “the politics of what nations love.”⁴⁵

I am interested also in expressions of cultural or national love. Unlike Tamarkin’s examination of *Anglophilia*, in which attention is focused on the political implications of love for all things British,⁴⁶ this dissertation begins with the affective contours of transnational love, exploring collective affiliations beyond the political. Although an American love of Italy did have what we could call “a politics,” my analyses do not offer political revelation as a consistent end goal; they attend instead to the intimate and extravagant character of these loves. The following chapters suggest that imagining oneself to be in love with Italy was an undercurrent of American thought and literature running below diverse historical meditations. The ways this enamored undercurrent has shaped U.S. notions of communal identity, artistic endeavor, and cultural allegiance is the subject of this dissertation.

Chapter One

“Reader, Everybody Has a World”: The Italian Lyric Nation

Midway through Henry Tuckerman’s travel-novel *Isabel: Or, Sicily. A Pilgrimage*, the narrator directs a dramatic apostrophe to the spirit of international travel. “Urged by thee, we dare the perils of the sea, and go from the serene safety of home to the hazardous highway of the world. We abjure the familiar, the well-tried, and the well-known . . . and we go forth to begin life, as it were, anew. To make ourselves homes abroad, to commune with foreign lands and customs.”¹ Writing in the late 1830s, the early days of American travel in Europe, Tuckerman helped promulgate a particularly rosy view of travel as philosophical good. “We study the great volume of the world and of creation,” *Isabel’s* narrator continues, “not according to some narrow and local interpretation, but as cosmopolites, as humanitarians” (183). Despite Tuckerman’s best efforts, the history of American travel writing is often constrained by narrow interpretation, although the context for such narrowness is not the local but, instead, the national subject.

American writings about international travel offer a productive archive for exploring the generic implications of national identity,² since the existence of travel writing as a recognizable form depended on the genre’s presentations of diversities and commonalities between the United States and other nations. Indeed, travel writing has long been associated with the operations of nationalist power or control.³ While American texts about European locations did not narrate exploratory imperialist projects, they usually conveyed a belief in U.S. superiority that should certainly be understood as ideological: the productive contrast between Old World decadence and New World innovation was a common theme.

In literary study, particular associations between textual genre and socio-political ordering have become commonplace. At least since Benedict Anderson, the proliferation of print culture has long been linked to the development of national identity. While the rise of the novel is routinely associated with the development of European imperialism, certain kinds of poetry—especially epic and other narrative forms—have long been read as records of collective identity. The articulation of collective identity through the narrative record of a single individual (one of the most common features of American travel writing) brought together political and personal elements of national identity in ways consistent with the emergent American nationalism of the period, which was being ostentatiously developed through textual productions such as periodicals, novels, and some types of poetry. However, what works for Americans in constructing national identity may not apply in the same way to other locations with different patterns of development.⁴ What constitutes successful novel-writing does not necessarily carry over to successful poetry writing; perhaps we should look at national models for self-identification in similar terms.

In the analysis that follows, I imagine identities and the particular contexts in which they circulate in much the same way that generic change over time is often understood through attention to historical and publication contexts of circulation.⁵ That is, I explore in this chapter two distinct genres for international affiliation: one, a narrative model built around the conventions of the travelogue; the second, a lyric model articulated in poetry set in foreign places. Our generally received understanding of national identity depends on the under-examined privileging of certain textual genres, such as narratives and periodicals,⁶ thus limiting our ability to recognize and articulate different modes for understanding how individuals build or understand a personal connection to national collectivities. Travel writing is a broad genre whose purpose is to describe and define distant or different places through a method of illuminating contrast; as such, American

antebellum travel writing dramatizes the relation between genre and subjectivity that this chapter explores.

This chapter examines several Italian travelogues written by Americans alongside their poetry about Italy, arguing that the typical narrative arc of such texts, which offer up “Italy as American lesson,” is too rigid to describe effectively the varied and powerful personal responses of many American travelers to the peninsula. Although Julia Ward Howe, James Russell Lowell, and Henry Tuckerman all demonstrate different investments and learn diverse lessons from their Italian experiences, the conventional, pedagogical travel narrative as a form for understanding Italy seems insufficiently personalized or immediate, hence each author’s lyric poetry about Italy. The Italian lyrics of Howe and Lowell appeared before their travelogues, suggesting that they might offer more proximate visions of Italian experience. Ultimately, Italian lyrics allow writers to escape the increasingly restricted national identities of mid-century; certainly, many Italian lyrics were less stringently ordered by historical progression, and thus, less subject to nationalist sentiment, than travelogues.

As Tuckerman suggests, the experience of travel could be disorienting and unsettling, particularly in a place with as many local borders, regional distinctions, and institutional complexities as Italy. While lyrics often celebrated this disorientation (Howe’s poetry is especially concerned with documenting unsettling navigations between fantasy and reality), the travelogues explored below establish an order and unity for Italian travel through the imposition of plot. By contrast, the shifting status of lyric address and identification, in which a speaker may cycle among loosely connected, imaginatively constituted positions and identifications, presents alternatives to national identities built around a relatively stable sense of cultural continuity and political sovereignty; that is, alternatives to a plot-driven identity.⁷

By attending to generic or formal differences in articulating cultural relations, this chapter highlights the variability and even contingency of national development and attends to the affiliative potential of alternative forms of collective representation. In the United States, American nationalism was often explored and expressed through literary productions⁸; in pre-unification Italy described by travelogues of the period, Italian subjects and American visitors were seeking and weighing different modes for nationalist expression, and ruminating about the best version of national organization for Italy. Thus, this chapter offers a sustained and explicit exploration of nationalist sentiment as articulated through distinct genres, a focus impelled by the historical context of its evidentiary archive.

As the lyric form authorizes a productive (or disconcerting) multiplicity, the travelogue's limitations as an educational and descriptive tool are likewise linked to form; as I will be suggesting, narrative itself is ultimately too linear, too invested in historical continuity, and too dependent upon comparative structures for meaning to adequately depict the Italian experiences and deep attachment to Italian places of this chapter's authors.⁹ These limitations are unavoidable features of a genre that depend on articulating and categorizing international experience through the subjective lens of a national citizen. Even an author like Tuckerman, with his overwhelming humanist values, is unable to escape fully the structural limitations of narrative—which encouraged the descriptive similarity across time and space we will soon explore in depictions of Italy—and the resulting presentation of an American identity understood narratively.

Since travel narratives employed a conventional sense of narrative subjectivity as stable and temporally ordered, their presentation of cultural difference and descriptions of local sights were filtered through a single narrative persona presented as an exemplary American type. By contrast, the fluidity of lyric identity—the volume of possibilities for personae and contexts to structure a lyric reverie—allowed authors to experiment with alternative visions, relations, and communities. As we

shall see in later sections of this chapter, lyric alternatives did not require the consistency across poems or perspectives that narrative assumed. While American writers often demonstrate an investment in confirming their political or cultural superiority through representations of Italy, the travelogue exacerbates this tendency. Attention to only travel *narratives* within a larger archive of writing about travel makes it appear as though this predilection for flattering comparison is the only way Americans responded textually to Italian journeys. My study of lyric Italy suggests that understanding all travel writing as solely nationalist and comparative is an over-simplification, one that may overemphasize the role of literary nationalism in international interactions, thus erasing or subsuming other productive models for affiliation—like Lowell’s vigorous artist—built on similarity and shared experience instead of contrast and hierarchy.

I.

Antebellum American travel writing was, in part, creating the very categorical differences—between desirable and undesirable national types, between successful and unsuccessful national models—that would come to seem self-evident in the texts themselves. Written in 1838, James Fenimore Cooper’s cartoonish national descriptions convey a sense of incontrovertible character: Italians are “more gracious than the English, and more sincere than the French, and infinitely more refined than the Germans.”¹⁰ In American travel writing, the use of explicit comparison to define national character was widespread; the genre was often characterized by its attention to difference and comparison, a descriptive feature prevalent in many antebellum national conversations.¹¹

By the mid-1860s, the United States was awash in travel narratives both foreign and domestic. In addition to impressive publication statistics, a constellation of literary lights published travelogues, ensuring the relevance and popular success of the genre: in addition to Tuckerman’s

narratives, James Fenimore Cooper's *Gleanings in Europe* series (1836-38) offered early examples, while later decades saw travel texts written by William Cullen Bryant, Henry David Thoreau, James Russell Lowell, Julia Ward Howe, Margaret Fuller, Catherine Sedgwick, Caroline Kirkland, and others less well-known today.¹² Alongside personal-narrative travelogues, guidebooks also enjoyed much market success as Americans traveled—by steamer and ferry, railcar and carriage—in growing numbers, impelled by increasingly disposable incomes, broader cultural awareness, and the growth of a recognizable tourist industry.¹³

In the antebellum period, several political and rhetorical circumstances—the sense of a personal relation to political institutions, the discursive hardening of national character traits, a subsequent feeling that such traits were a stable part of individual identity¹⁴—came together to establish parameters for the travelogue genre. Such narratives were enormously popular in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ In part, travelogues created and institutionalized national characters, of which “American” was one among many; striking similarities across authorial perspectives and national lessons often result from adherence to conventional structures of narrative and the development of American identity as a textual, especially a narrativized, identity.¹⁶

The tendency to compare and contrast national identities and predilections proved particularly expedient for U.S. writers of Italy. Both countries struggled with the complexities of unification during the nineteenth century; despite decades, even centuries, of unificatory desire and imperial control, Italy was not organized into a unified nation until 1871, six years after the American Civil War ended with the reunification of North and South into one nation “indivisible.” Understanding Italian national character—and how that character contributed to or impeded the process of unification—was useful for helping American readers (and writers) of travel narratives develop their own investments in democratic republicanism and cultural improvement. Moreover, early experiences with international travel were often dangerous, disordered, and variable. As

Isabel's narrator laments, “just as a home-feeling steals over [the traveler], he must renew his pilgrimage . . . at the moment his heart has made unto itself glad fellowship, he must become again a wayfarer! This, to the true-hearted and the grateful, is the greatest sacrifice which travel demands of its votaries” (184). During what Tuckerman’s novel portrays as the constantly unsettling experience of travel, supporting a stable sense of personal identity through national character may very well have seemed appealing for authors and readers of conventional travel narratives.

Unlike the lyric, which emphasizes personal reflection and intimate connection, travelogues about Italy very often resort to widely-circulating perceptual conventions when describing Italian scenes. Dipping into travelogues about the boot-shaped Mediterranean peninsula that would come to make up the Italian nation,¹⁷ one might net the following: “The gloomy aspect of this species of street architecture [in Bologna], is enhanced by the solitude that prevails in many parts of this extensive town” (Henry Theodore Tuckerman, 1835). “The place is walled, and the streets [of Calabria] are rather rapid and irregular. Most of the ancient castle has disappeared, though a few towers remain” (James Fenimore Cooper, 1838). “Many of the fine old palaces of Florence, you know, are built in a gloomy though grand style of architecture, of a dark-colored stone, massive and lofty, and overlooking narrow streets that lie almost in perpetual shade” (William Cullen Bryant, 1850). “Here stands the deserted Palazzo Barberini, in which is a fine old Roman mosaic pavement. It was a dreary old place. On the ceilings of some of the apartments were fading out the sprawling apotheoses of heroes of the family” (James Russell Lowell, 1864). “[Y]ou storm through the deserted street of [Naples] the ancient capital of seaside luxury . . . Ah, the broken columns! Stately did they stand around the mounted statues, that expected to ride in perpetual fame on their marble horses—now most famous because so long forgotten” (Julia Ward Howe, 1868).

These excerpts from a range of travelogues spanning several decades describe quotidian travels through the streets of five Italian cities in as many regions. The sense of “Italy” offered

therein is a relatively stable one: narrow streets and massive buildings, a pervading sense of sorrow and physical constraint, faded artworks commemorating faded glories, what appears to American travelers as a misplaced sense of grandeur and historical honor. Despite the range of styles and proclivities¹⁸, the Italian scene remains strikingly similar in tone and perspective. Taken together, these passages illustrate how similar the different regions of Italy (which had different rulers, laws, histories, festivals, and languages) appeared to American recorders.

Or, to cast the net again: “And who shall say to what extent these diversities [of national character] are attributable in the one nation to freedom and prosperity, and in the other to political depression, and that hopeless and anti-progressive state” (Tuckerman, 1839). “Foreigners would better appreciate the Italian character if they better understood the usages of this country. A nation divided like this, conquered as this has been, and lying, as it now does, notoriously at the mercy of any powerful invader, loses the estimation that is due. . . . The study of Italy is profitable to an American” (Cooper, 1838). “I think I shall return to America even a better patriot than when I left it. A citizen of the United States travelling on the continent of Europe, finds the contrast between a government of power and government of opinion forced upon him at every step” (Bryant, 1850). “We witness with our own eyes the action of those forces which govern the great migration of the peoples . . . of Europe; we can watch the action and reaction of different races, forms of government, and higher or lower civilizations” (Lowell, 1864). “[T]he Italian peasant asks a century or two of education towards modern ideas. All that can be said of his want of comprehension only makes it the more evident that the sooner we begin, the better” (Howe, 1868).

Once more, a striking similarity across years, locales, and authorial perspectives, as each author invokes something to be learned from Italy. Bryant and Cooper propose domestic appreciation: an Italian journey, they argue, is good for American political consciousness. For Howe, Lowell, or Tuckerman, awareness of Italian limitations leads to greater understanding of

what creates and sustains broader social or political difference. In all cases, Italy offers political and social lessons as well as the more typical aesthetic ones gleaned from famous museums and ruins.

Travelogues were intended to provide distinct perspectives based on individual experience and personal reflection.¹⁹ Why, then, do so many nineteenth-century travelogues about Italy offer such similar scenes and interpretations of those scenes? Most travelogues conform to what I term “the Italian travel plot,” a narrative saga of personal growth tied to an increasing awareness of national realities. Sojourners tell a similar story: the visitor, initially overwhelmed by the exoticism of Italian existence, gains aesthetic and philosophical awareness through extended tours in museums, ruins, churches, and small Italian towns, finally coming to appreciate American advantages like political independence, economic mobility and state-organized institutions even more strongly than before the journey. In many cases, such as that of Cooper, Tuckerman, or Lowell, the Italian travel plot narrativizes the creation of new knowledge, ending with a narrator who displays greater imaginative engagement in, and expresses a more nuanced sympathy for, cultural difference. Worth noting is the fact that the freshly-cosmopolitan American returns home at the narrative’s close; this new cultural awareness is, in the end, a domestic benefit that carried nationalist, patriotic force.

Through their presentations of contemplative travel, attention to cultural variance, and personal improvement, authors of travelogues sought to present themselves as active travelers and not passive tourists.²⁰ Lowell’s 1864 *Fireside Travels*, for example, is quite concerned to provide readers with a justification for the cultural and aesthetic theories it presents. Describing an American scene overwhelmed by compliant consumption, Lowell laments what he characterizes as “the Ready-made Age. . . . [Wherein] we all go to the slop-shop and come out uniformed, every mother’s son with habits of thinking and doing cut on one pattern” (114-15). Lowell’s “Ready-made” intellectual uniform is a patchwork of accepted information and perspective, a limitation

that active travel is intended to correct: “the wise man travels to discover himself; it is to find himself that he goes out of himself and his habitual associations, trying everything in turn” (10). Although part of the goal of a travelogue like Lowell’s was to demonstrate the salutary effects of active travel (as we shall see, Lowell is quite an active traveler), his participation in generic habits of thinking and doing—that is, the generic habits of narrative ordering and temporal development—results in a national uniform conforming more to the typical pattern than Lowell might have hoped. In fact, Lowell is himself developing a pattern for the Ready-made suit via his participation in the narrativized, comparatively-structured national ordering that travelogues performed. The distinction between traveler types was ultimately an unsustainable one. Despite a commitment to personal contemplation and the representation of diverse sights and sounds, travelogue authors could themselves act as passive consumers, and thoughtless re-producers, of American political and social values.

Poetry about international locales²¹ could provide an alternative to the collective national tutorials common in travel narratives. Often, American antebellum poetry had political or other social utility like creating national mythology, offering protest against American institutions such as slavery, or describing recognizable American types.²² Indeed, narrative poetry shared many rhetorical goals with prose narrative: each participated in the literary-nationalist endeavors of categorization, distinction, and creation of a coherent American identity across time. Recent work on antebellum poetry has sought to expand understandings of the lyric mode into the realm of politics, countering the typical isolationism associated with the form.²³ The travel lyrics I am interested in are productively associated with non-politicized understandings of lyric, those that emphasize the contemplative over the didactic, the personal over the political, and temporal disorder over chronological coherence.²⁴ The lyric poems explored here present very different accounts of Italy from the static version that emerges in travel narratives.

The most important difference between these generically-constituted representations of place is the lyric's refusal of both temporal continuity and the framing of information in nationally-comparative terms.²⁵ The poems I explore here escape these structures and present an Italy of productively diverse, even incoherent, experience. While lyrics about Italy dramatize the "glad fellowship" and highlight moments of "home-feeling" to which *Isabel* refers, they do so fleetingly and in contingent terms.

Lyric poetry, with a more rhizomatic²⁶ structure, provides isolated, unconnected moments and images with which readers can identify, building a space for imaginative identification with cultural, historical, or individual difference outside structures of national comparison and edification. In moments of what I am calling "lyric nationhood,"²⁷ Italy becomes a place where personal experience and imaginative attachment are not tied to one's status as an interpolated national subject. As I argue at this chapter's close, several aspects of Italian history and culture—including a deeply disjointed sense of history, the long-standing privileging of regional identities over national ones, and the fact that aesthetic heritage unified distant Italians more effectively than political history—disrupt national conceptions of unity and resist narrative's linear structure,²⁸ making Italy a useful example for exploring structures of national articulation as expressed through distinct forms of temporal ordering.

The narrative commitment to chronological order, and the nationalist hierarchies such commitments authorized, has an alternative in some theories of lyric. In *Queer Optimism*, Michael Snediker calls for greater critical attention to optimism that is "not promissory," not future-oriented, though the form of lyric personhood.²⁹ While this call to optimistic arms is relevant for understanding and countering the pessimism of Italy's self-conception³⁰, the analysis of this chapter imports the concept of lyric personhood onto an Italian national collective in order to emphasize several structuring aspects of Italian identity: those that are, counter-intuitively, most

disordered, non-synchronous, and multiple. For Snediker's lyric person, inherent contradictions represent constitutive conditions: coherence as a poetic figure depends on "the phenomenon of singularity and multiplicity not being incompatible or opposites" (137). Lyric status thus offers freedom from a narrativized subjectivity that would erase multiplicity in the service of creating a coherent and unified identity. The lyric subject is, by virtue of its constitutive aesthetic "fakeness," exempt from the need for subjective coherence understood chronologically.³¹ One can instead be understood as a creation made up of various loosely-related interpretations and identifications as described by Snediker, "[a] name. . . becomes synecdochical for a vast archive of narratively-rich and theoretically complicated material" (132). An awareness of an individual as a conceptual container for a "vast archive" of associations and imaginative creation mirrors the productive conceptual functioning of "Italy" for both visitors and residents of the Mediterranean peninsula.

Sharon Cameron also highlights a connection between form and temporal order, identifying flexibility and individuality in temporal conceptions as an essential element distinguishing the lyric from other forms of literary production.³² In Cameron's "lyric time," the lyric speaker "exchanges a diachronic or temporal order for a synchronic or simultaneous one" (206). Like Snediker, Cameron connects this loosening of temporal stricture directly to more multifaceted conceptions of identity when she argues, "the lyric is a departure not only from temporality but also from the finite constrictions of identity" (208). Thus, a conception of lyric nation allows us to imagine a collectivity, tied to recognizable limitations of geography, cultural similarity, and shared temporal experience, that balances between such recognizably "national" features and a looser collection of identifications,³³ the ones that remain untethered to national character or to comparisons that hinge on chronological progression. As we shall see in the conclusion, this version of nationhood is especially useful and appropriate for understanding Italy, whose regional diversity, cultural-temporal complexity, and imagined characterological consistency

make possible a contradictory blend of identification and disavowal for Americans as well as Italians.

As may be already evident, the efficacy of the Italian travel plot for illustrating national development depended on a stable sense of temporal progression³⁴ in two ways. Time moves forward in these narratives, as experiences occur and insights develop. Also implied in this type of narrative is an idea of progress as such: as time moves forward and the traveler with it, she is inevitably improved—as observer, as aesthetic appreciator, as thoughtful citizen. This conventional narrative of development and temporal progress allows readers and visitors to make meaning from the Italy they experience; as a point upon a line of national growth, Italy shows Americans how far they have come. Narratives of Italian travel may have made perfect sense for American readers, who moved through a world ostensibly ordered by time's straightforward progression. It therefore seemed no major intellectual stretch to imagine that other places, too, had the same relation to history and cultural development that Americans found amongst themselves and across their nation. Travel texts, and the historically-continuous nations they depicted, thus validated American understandings of progress, subjectivity, and history.

A lyric identity need not seek chronological consistency, a feature especially important to my discussion of narrative chronology and the imposition of a particular version of progress upon Italy by American travelogue writers. Indeed, understanding Italy as a lyric nation helps account for what Snediker calls the “non-chronological capaciousness” (158) of Italian experience as depicted through American lyric poetry. Although authors occasionally gesture to the timelessness or temporal excesses of Italy in narratives³⁵ (wherein a vast stretch of history is always already present and available, visible and imposing), poems about Italy are more easily able to register and convey the experience of a temporal folding-over or surplus.

In the following sections, I look briefly at travel texts by three authors: Henry Theodore Tuckerman's *The Italian Sketch Book* (1835) and *Isabel, or Sicily. A Pilgrimage* (1839), James Russell Lowell's *Fireside Travels* (1864), and Julia Ward Howe's *From the Oak to the Olive: A Plain Record of a Pleasant Journey* (1868). Exploring this archive, I move backward in time from Howe to Lowell to Tuckerman. As American nationalist tendencies increased (we might say, progressed) throughout the course of the nineteenth century, travelogues grew more invested in performing what was seen as productive national work. I begin with Howe in order to highlight an extreme version of the nationalist travelogue and move backward to Lowell and Tuckerman, both of whom make explicit claims about the alternative potential of narrative forms distinct from the travelogue. Our three authors perform nationalist work differently, providing distinct pedagogical approaches (sermonizing, entertaining, meditating) in line with the lessons they seek to convey. As we shall see, awareness of generic limitations prompts authorial efforts to transcend the travelogue form, so as to present alternatives to a comparative internationalism. Ultimately, however, narrative alternatives are less successful at providing perspectival diversity than a more radical generic shift from narrative to lyric.

II.

In 1868, following the publication of two books of poetry, the national success of her lyrics for "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and her ascent in Boston's philosophical and suffragist societies, Julia Ward Howe published *From the Oak to the Olive: A Plain Record of a Pleasant Journey*. Based on the experiences of her family's third European journey, Howe's travelogue is little known today, having been lost in the flood of travel narratives I've surveyed. Perhaps Howe's aggressive arguments about American superiority and her often unpleasant narrative persona

contribute as well to text's relative obscurity: we tend to appreciate recovered texts that affirm inclusion, not those positing prejudicial hierarchies.

Howe demonstrates an awareness of the generic conventions and the market pressures for travel texts when she announces of her plain record: "No individual editor, nor joint stock company, bespoke my emotions before my departure. I am, therefore, under no obligations to furnish for the market."³⁶ Howe's preface argues for the distinctiveness of her uninfluenced, unobligated approach, a distinction marked by pronoun choice: "*We* may represent a vague number of individuals, less inviting to, and safer from, the cowhide than the provoking *egoment ipse*³⁷ [sic]. . . . Yet *I*, at the present moment, incline to fall back upon my record of baptism, and to confront the white sheet, whose blankness *I* trust to overcome, in the character of an agent one and indivisible" (2). Howe's claim that she is under no obligation to "furnish for the market" is intended to free her narrative from travelogue conventions (like art descriptions) and to authorize her explicit generic criticisms.³⁸ Howe's pronoun defense³⁹ illuminates two narrative themes. First, her penchant for deeply religious or philosophical commentary; after positing that "*We* derives from the New Testament incorporation of devils," Howe links her pronoun decision to baptismal history. She also introduces what will become a constant undercurrent in her travelogue, her nationalist rhetoric and perspective, such as reflected in her description of "*I*'s" character as "one and indivisible," words commonly associated with the American national imaginary, particularly in the Civil War's aftermath.

Declaring allegiance to her own "indivisible" perspective, Howe is in fact partaking of a distinguishing travelogue feature: the genre's insistence on the singular perspective of an author. Writing thirty years earlier, James Fenimore Cooper justifies his version of Italy by stressing his interpretive particularity as a traveler, affirming that "he hopes some may be glad to go over again, even this beaten road, in his company" (*GI*xlvii). In a similar vein, Howe advocates for her

narrative's special temporal understanding as well as its exceptional, indivisible perspective. "I feel myself enabled to look around me at every step I shall take on paper, and to represent . . . the three dimensions of time, instead of the flat disc of the present" (1). As we shall see, Howe cannot quite live up to either of these bold prefatory declarations despite her efforts to articulate her narrative's distinctiveness and market-freedom.⁴⁰

From the Oak to the Olive undercuts in practice the formal and content-based idiosyncrasy Howe theorizes in the preface. The travelogue constantly performs a confusing cultural blend: avowed appreciation for American intellectual freedom and the imposition of a rigid perspective on every Italian tourist experience. Howe's narrative is striking for its complete absence of interactions with Italian persons, a circumstance that intensifies her severe position on Italian inferiority. Although Howe presents her text as an unsolicited alternative to what she sees as a "Ready-Made" genre with limiting conventions, she is utterly unable to escape, even for a moment, her narrowly-nationalist habits of thought.

This contradiction is traceable to the stated goal for Howe's Italian narrative, which is to teach through example and explication. In a moment of "confession," Howe admits, "I must confess that, after so many intense and vivid pages of life, this visit to Rome, once a theme of fervent and solemn desire, becomes a mere page of embellishment in a serious and instructive volume. So, while my countrymen and women . . . hang intent upon the pages of a picture book, let me resume my graver argument" (45). Howe condenses into a few sentences almost all of her narrative's distinctive features: investment in instruction, disdain for aesthetic appreciation, the sense of Italy as "mere embellishment" to more serious religious and philosophical work (performed, obviously, by Americans), and a version of personal history that is fundamentally progressive and aggregative.

In a fairly typical (and frankly unsympathetic) fashion, Howe's disclaimer offers herself up as an exemplary American observer of Rome: unfettered by "desire" for Italian scenes (which has passed after "many intense and vivid pages"), the stolid Howe understands Rome's proper function as "mere embellishment" to other, more serious, content. Moreover, this seasoned, reasoned perspective results from temporal and moral development; Howe's ability to resist Italian aesthetic distraction has been tested by past moments of intensity and vividness, leading naturally to a grave and instructive position. She is, in fact, attending more assiduously to the "three dimensions of time" than to the present's "flat disc." However, Howe misunderstands the extent to which travelogues as such conform to the progressive history she also articulates; claiming that her narrative's novelty lies in its philosophical gravity, she misrecognizes her sense of history as likewise novel. Although Howe sets up the text as outside travelogue-market influence and thus an alternative to conventional forms, *From the Oak to the Olive* proves ultimately conservative, following several well-established conventions of the travel narrative, including locational description, ethnography, and aesthetic commentary.

For Howe, the recognition and perpetuation of America's favored national position becomes the point of the narrative. Far from being surprised or unsettled by Italian character—and her own misconceptions about it—upon actual contact, Howe finds Italians to be animalistic, grasping, lying, dirty, and overwhelming. At an Easter service in Rome, she describes seeing "black dresses and veils, with what should be women underneath them." But as these creatures push like battering-rams, and caper like he-goats, we shall prefer to adjourn the question of their humanity, and to give it the benefit of a doubt. We must except, however, our country-women from dear Boston, who were not seen otherwise than decently and in order" (50). In Rome, the seat of Catholicism, on the holiest day of Catholic worship, at an audience *with the Pope*, Howe complains that excitement renders the worshippers inhuman: they are creatures, goats, deeply

questionable as members of the human family. The exception is, of course, the dear, decent Bostonian women who happen also to be there.

These excessively nationalist moments highlight a conceptual incongruity within the narrative. In particular, her tendency to cast social and even aesthetic criticism in religious terms makes her analyses of Italian faith, or other Italian practices, seem at once understandable (as a fervent professor of American Protestant tradition, she has no sympathy for Catholic worship) and extremely rigid (perhaps even hypocritical, as the American Constitution advocates freedom of religion). Investment in her particularly American religion often prefaces or otherwise informs Howe's negative portrayals of Italy. In fact, Howe's religious affiliation and her sense of progressive history are linked;⁴¹ this connection is especially clear when Howe discusses Italian art, long understood to be one of Italy's absolute and inarguable riches.

As Howe tries to puzzle out a satisfying answer to the question "what do my countrymen who consent to pass their lives here gain?" (46), she posits three general reasons to undertake an Italian residence: "art, health, and official duty"; of these, the latter two "admit of no argument" (62). Voicing her objections to art as a valid reason to sever "the sacred tie of country" (62), Howe's spiritual argument about art's historical function valorizes American religious tradition. In a long section filled with religious language,⁴² Howe argues that Italian art developed as a primitive illustration of holy lessons. "In ruder times, heavenly fancies could only be illustrated on the one hand, received on the other, through the mediation of a personal embodiment" (63). This explains both the sheer volume of Italian art-treasures and their representational character. Since American Protestant tradition has moved far beyond the "relative importance of sculptural and pictorial art . . . [for] smaller cultures" (63), it is difficult for Howe to understand the appeal of even this most universally-recognized and lauded Italian resource. Howe goes on to explicate with the following:

Modern religious thought [Howe's American Protestantism] gets far beyond this. . . . The wide spaces of the new continent allow room for the most precious practical experimentation; and speculative and theoretical liberty keep pace with liberty of action. . . . Faith needs not to digest whole side-walls of saints and Madonna, who once stood for something, no one knows what. . . . The Prometheus of the present day is needed rather to animate statues than to make them (63-64).

This is a shocking dismissal for readers with a conventional understanding of Italy as aesthetic pleasure-center,⁴³ and does, in fact, offer a dramatic break from travel-text orthodoxy about Italy; however, this rejection of Italian treasures is consistent with other perceptions of Catholicism and Italian culture more broadly as primitive, backward, or arrested.

As Howe explains, Italian art suffers from the philosophical limitations of its retrograde historical status. The excerpt begins with an evocation of modern religious thought, and continues in the language of progress, as Howe describes American experimentation that “keeps pace with” freedom, the visitor's confrontation with art that “once stood for something,” the need for a savoir of “the present day.” The entire logic of her objection is centered on a naturalized conception of progressive time, and Howe's judgment is ultimately that historical fixity is an encumbrance to Italy's aesthetic as well as moral development.

But Howe's rigid positions on national progress and historical continuity (we might call this her commitment to “the three dimensions of time”) are not the only elements that condition her conventional narrative; they are only the most personal ones. Since Howe does, finally, hope to sell her tablets and “receive her penny” in an American market, she must also, somehow, tell a recognizable story of travel through Italy, replete with requisite visits to Roman churches and ruins, Neapolitan archeological sites, Florentine museums, and the like. The need to narrativize her journey, to fit it into a pre-existing generic frame, exacerbates the text's imbalance between its stated unconventionality and the deeply conventional American exceptionalist position it presents. Into what is essentially a nationalist religious and philosophical history, Howe must insert

entertaining details from the by-now-familiar tour of Italian sights and artifacts; she is, after all, furnishing for a market she well understands.

Immediately following the passages we have been examining on the spiritual futility and international distraction of canonical Italian artworks, we find this bracing shift: “Impotent am I, indeed, to describe the riches of this Roman world, —its treasures, its pleasures, its flatteries, its lessons. Of so much that one receives, one can give again but the smallest shred, —a leaf of each flower, a scrap of each garment, a proverb for a sermon, a stave for a song” (65). Of Roman lessons, enough has been said already. Of its treasures, pleasures, and flatteries, too few of each are offered for the reader. The reportorial conventions of the travelogue genre forces Howe to vacillate wildly between what it seems she wants to say (her “confession”) and what she is compelled to include (descriptions of “Roman riches”). Unbending in her national and spiritual commitments, Howe cannot manage both personal perspective and genre expectations with consistency. It seems here as though powerful Italian enjoyments occasionally interfere with Howe’s ability to convey her national moral: confronted with the overwhelmingly immediate character of Roman sensory pleasures and aesthetic treasures, to which Howe cannot give sufficient space, she loses the thread of her philosophical message. This becomes a moment more appropriate for the dream-like rendering of personal emotion facilitated by lyric poetry.

A productive example of poetry’s fluid potential for representing Italian experience can be found in Howe’s poem “Santa Susanna,” from 1855’s *Passion-flowers*.⁴⁴ In nine stanzas of four lines each, Howe details a moment of Catholic worship that looks very different from her horrifying Easter experience among the Italian “creatures.” Although, like Howe’s travelogue, the poem does not present Italian persons with whom the speaker might interact or identify, she finds solidarity in the trappings of faith.⁴⁵ Instead of the offensive human crush narrated in *From the Oak to the Olive*, Howe describes a solitary twilight communion. “A silent longing drew me towards the

church— / Not in an hour when votaries throng its aisles, / When tinkling mass-bells teach us kneeling-time, / And prayers that boast despair are breath'd with smiles" (1-4). This opening stanza helps illuminate possible objections to Catholic worship by presenting a longing for its alternative. Without the thronging crowd, the regulated schedule of "kneeling-time," and an atmosphere of self-satisfaction in spiritual "despair," Howe's poetic speaker experiences the joy of religious transcendence. "I knelt to pray, then, flinging far away / Life's garden weeds, that throng our footsteps free, / Choking the seed by angels strewn" (17-19). The repetition of "throng" is striking; a strange word to speak aloud, with the rounded *th*- at the start and the abrupt *-ng* at the close, "throng" seems an aptly crushed-together word for the phenomenon of crowded pressure in a busy Italian church. Both the laity and the "weeds" of life are described by it, suggesting an undifferentiated mass of persons and perspectives, a contradictory single entity made up of a multitude.

Against this distasteful thronging of collective existence, Howe posits a deeply solitary religion, one she associates with twilight, melancholy, and quiet. "Then, silence—then the touch of angel's wings / Winnowed away that bitter grief and doubt; / And then, I left my twilight thoughts within, / And with me bore Faith's earnest twilight out" (33-36). The repetition of "then" in the poem's final stanza opens a space for the building comfort Howe's speaker feels. In presenting the poem's final sequence in progressive terms, this lyric demonstrates the particular relation to time described by Cameron: "The contradiction between social and personal time is the lyric's generating impulse, for the lyric both rejects the limitations of social and objective time, those strictures that drive hard lines between past, present, and future, and must make use of them" (206). In the progression from one "then" to the next, subjective twilight holds sway over "objective" time; not much of the latter is actually passing. The stanzas also resist progression more formally. Each is built of four lines, with rhyming second and fourth lines, and non-rhyming first

and third lines that have no rhyme-based or metrical relation to previous or following stanzas. Each stanza stands alone in terms of its rhyme, not formally related to other stanzas in the poem. Of course, the content creates a connection between them, but they do not do so by virtue of poetic convention.

The temporal contradictions illustrated here will be useful for understanding how time passes, or doesn't, in lyrics about Italy. I do not claim that the poems explored herein do away entirely with temporal order. Instead, I am arguing that time's movements in Italian lyric—the way it folds over on itself, the way it extends without passing, the way it layers the past onto the present—are markedly different from the forward march seen in narratives that adhere to the Italian travel plot.

The final point I wish to make about Howe's poem is the ambiguity of its spiritual reward. It is difficult to articulate what Howe's speaker is leaving and what she is receiving in the final stanza: both are "twilight," though the "twilight thoughts" are associated with "grief and doubt" while "Faith's twilight" is "earnest." Perhaps the refusal to set up a recognizable distinction between what is left and what is taken from the experience is part of the point. Instead of a temporally-coherent comparison, like that between a twilight of doubt and a dawning of faith, Howe suggests a trade between two like conditions; the difference is perhaps one of emotional gradation, not one of emotional kind. That is, the speaker trades one version of twilight for another, one earnest, one sorrowful, but both carrying a sense of lingering darkness and obscurity. She might not *learn* anything from the moment she describes, but the speaker *gains* something nevertheless. This moment of religious comfort is enabled by the lyricism of the encounter: she is alone, engaged in a quiet "breathing after God" (21), receiving in return a silent blessing that subtly shifts her subjective experience of what remains essentially the same objective situation: that of twilight. The poem presents a scene of ambiguous insight that the speaker need not analyze or otherwise explain in

order for it to exert its softly melancholy effect. It is thus utterly unlike the “instructional volume,” with its nation-centered Americanism, Howe would publish thirteen years later. Indeed, this poem posits religious comfort as a site of temporally-arrested communal potential; alone in the church, the speaker engages with specifically-Catholic trappings like Holy Water (“In lustral water I imbued my hands,” 13) without the impulse to contrast an American religion against Catholicism’s failures.

From the Oak to the Olive depends on cultural comparison to shore up Howe’s hardening national perspective, as descriptions of Italian people, places, and practices are pressed into service as foils for their more “decent” American versions. Travel offers an opportunity for education and improvement at the national level. Howe does not alter her personal perspectives so much as use her international experiences to test and retest already-existent philosophical and ideological positions. In a text like Lowell’s *Fireside Travels*, by contrast, the inevitable comparisons arising from narrativized travel instead become fodder for personal reflection and imaginative activity, Lowell’s most vociferously defended values. Consistent with Lowell’s insistence on imagination and intellectual creativity (recall his disgust at the “Ready-Made” man’s uniform), *Fireside Travels* defends the poet as one with a special kind of sight, who can interpret between past and present and maintain the element of wonder and imaginative engagement essential for appreciating the world. Lowell’s narrative offers an enthusiastic portrayal of travel exploits that develops a coherent theory of imaginative value and an ethical imperative to self-improvement through reflection and intellectual flexibility. Although Lowell also includes several comparisons between Italian and American characters, his investments in a kind of active, original thinking, and in the art such thinking engenders, allows him to develop an analysis of national character that chastises America’s over-emphasis on technological or economic progress at the expense of aesthetic or ethical progress, which are linked for Lowell.

III.

James Russell Lowell's *Fireside Travels* is an unusual travelogue; half of the narrative presents observations and meditations occasioned by travels through Lowell's memory of domestic scenes. This unorthodox approach is not a result of insufficient international experience or any lack of cosmopolitan ideas. The first half of the text is instead a direct application of a specific travel theory: "I held that a man should have travelled thoroughly round himself and the great *terra incognita* just outside and inside his own threshold, before he undertook journeys of discovery to other worlds" (4). Lowell's belief in travel as personal growth authorizes the narrative's local portions.

Lowell imagines his contemporaries as beholden to overly-docile and uniform habits of thought; thus, Lowell views an initial period of interiorized travel as intellectual training specifically for Americans. "To what end visit Europe," he asks in the text's opening sections, "if people carry with them, as most do, their old parochial horizon, going hardly as Americans even, much less as men? Have we not both seen persons abroad who put us in mind of parlor gold-fish in their vase, isolated in that little globe of their own element?" (10). This is the touristic version of travel Lowell laments, that passive consumption of pre-selected and approved sights, empty of reflection or other intellectual activity. Not only is this version of travel as boring as a goldfish, it is also indicative of a troublingly parochial view of the world, a position unseemly for "Americans even." Lowell invokes a continuum of social knowledge that begins with national identity and moves out to a broader universal one: one travels first as an American, but later, as a man. Lowell's philosophy is always already inflected by his sense of progressive history: in offering an alternative version of the values associated with such progress, however, he upends typical cultural hierarchies in the Italian portion of *Fireside Travels*.⁴⁶

Lowell's view of active imaginative effort (often associated with physically-demanding masculinity) is a response to his perception of an American overemphasis on science and "analysis." A certain kind of imaginative work, what Lowell calls "notes of the Possible" is celebrated in *Fireside Travels*, offering a passionate, aesthetic alternative to over-investment in practical, instrumentalized American innovation. Italy offers an alternative to the unimpeded, thoughtless commitment to technological progress Lowell sees in U.S. national development.

In *Fireside Travels*, we see Lowell connect passionate emotion, imaginative production, and national investment to argue for the aesthetic superiority of Italian culture and the cultural virtue an investment in aesthetics allows. "The hands that have grasped dominion and held it have been large and hard; those from which it slipped, delicate, and apt for the lyre and the pencil. Moreover, brain is always to be bought, but passion never comes to market" (201). Lowell objects to American over-investment in drily cerebral pursuits and commerce, and subsequently valorizing (Italian) artistic and imaginative passion.⁴⁷ For Lowell, essential national distinctions between America and Italy are most clearly viewed in clashes between the Actual and the Possible. The former is associated with commerce, science, and progressive time, while the latter becomes visible through the operations of craft, "passion," and productions of "the lyre and the pencil."

Lowell unites imaginative virtues to national identity through an implied value system in which Americans are overly invested in science, analysis, and the pursuit of superiority, an outlook Lowell characterizes as an over-commitment to "the Actual": "With every step of the recent traveller our inheritance of the wonderful is diminished. Those beautifully pictured notes of the Possible are redeemed at a ruinous discount in the hard and cumbrous coin of the Actual" (134). It seems Lowell is making a genre argument, assessing modes for representing, and subsequently encountering, the world. The "Possible" is beautiful, imaginative, and productive (this is what I take the idea of "redemption" to imply: the Possible creates something that must be redeemed

through the Actual). By contrast, the “Actual” is not just hard or cumbersome, but represents a ruinous markdown of imagination’s value.

Indeed, the American poet argues forcefully for imagination’s role in personal growth and worldly appreciation. Lowell’s argument is as follows:

I stick by the sea-serpent. . . . like the old Scandinavian snake, he binds together for us the two hemispheres of Past and Present, of Belief and Science. He is the link which knits us seaboard Yankees with our Norse progenitors, interpreting between the age of the dragon and that of the railroad. . . . I feel an undefined respect for the man who has seen the sea-serpent. He is to his brother-fishers what the poet is to his fellow-men (148-49).

Lowell points to the poet’s essential role in “interpreting between the age of the dragon and that of the railroad.” This is a process of active “belief” enabled by attentiveness and reflection: Lowell does not appear to be claiming a static relation between past and present, or between belief and science. The theory of history offered here is a flexible one—relieved from an over-scientific commitment to the Actual, the poet can continually interpret and imagine different associations to an historical Possible. By connecting the sea-serpent to poetic output, Lowell valorizes that which falls outside of ultimate analysis or ontological stability, outside a process-driven engagement with past, present, and future implied by Lowell’s references to “Science” and the railroad.

Nevertheless, Lowell does not altogether avoid the travelogue’s didactic tendencies. Comparatist moments accrue once Lowell has exhausted the appeal of rustic adventuring and returned to Rome to take in more traditional sights; thus, conventional tourist activities led Lowell to adopt a rhetoric of comparison that is more conventional for the travelogue form. The cultural conclusions Lowell draws about Italy and the United States are decidedly unconventional in their presentation of national hierarchies.

Lowell’s unusual theory of time, in which he argues for the relativity of time’s passage and asserts the importance of different cultural and national relations to time, helps explain why the values associated with Actual and Possible develop in inconsistent ways through the text. On the

first point, Lowell argues, “antiquity is a matter of comparison . . . one old thing is good only till we have seen an older. England is ancient til we go to Rome” (11). Writing about America, Lowell claims that this temporal relativity may paradoxically allow for more universalizable forms of knowledge: “you shall go back with me thirty years,” Lowell proposes to his companion, “which will bring you among things and persons as thoroughly preterite as Romulus or Numa. For so rapid are our changes in America that the transition from old to new . . . is as rapid almost as the passing in of one scene and the drawing out of another” (13). Lowell argues that perceptions of time’s passage, not actual duration, are of greater relevance in interpreting the temporal elements of national character.

For Lowell, general lessons about national development can be gleaned from what he describes as his travelogue’s “Roman mosaic,” the collection of assorted observations, “which will resemble more what one finds in his pockets after a walk” than they will take a “regular pattern” (226). These reflections are not presented as a result of the active imaginative production Lowell has been advocating: his metaphor of the “mosaic” invokes a haphazard collection of random artifacts in contradistinction to the “beautifully-pictured notes of the Possible,” the carefully-aestheticized imaginative assemblage that Lowell invokes early in the text. As such, the image of Lowell’s pocket mosaic does offer an alternative to both the progressive temporal order he images and to the beautiful craftedness of the Possible.

Meditating on the emotional passion so often displayed in Italian interactions leads Lowell to this insight about economic conditions and national character: “When I think of the versatile and accommodating habits of America, it seems to me a land without thunderstorms. In proportion as man grows commercial, does he also become dispassionate and incapable of electric emotions?” (200). Lowell claims that the necessity of smooth commercial function has led to an American habit of accommodation and the evacuation of powerful feeling.⁴⁸ A progressive logic

undergirds this observation, although Lowell's value system suggests that inevitable growth toward commercialism encompasses a necessary loss of electric emotion and passion—these latter are values Lowell implicitly associates with America's scientific, analytic character.

The American lack of emotional thunder is a serious national problem, as it limits artistic innovation: "it is ill with a nation when the cerebrum sucks the cerebellum dry, for it cannot live by intellect alone" (200-201). More damning, such intellectual practicality, commitment to the "hard and cumbrous coin of the Actual," might well obstruct personal interest in broader political debate, or worse, might limit imaginative potential to an ethically-damaging degree. Indeed, the poet confesses that he finds himself "surmising whether a people who, like the Americans, put up quietly with all sorts of petty personal impositions and injustices will not at length find it too great a bore to quarrel with great public wrongs" (201).

Against the commercial student clothed in a Ready-Made education, Lowell positions the woodsmen, sailors, and rural Italians he encounters throughout *Fireside Travels*. We might say that Lowell redeems a distinctly unscientific "Actual" (such as the reality of his mountainous adventures) through his pursuit of possible Italian experiences outside the typical tourist consumption of approved sights. Moreover, in his representations of religious and political discussions with Italian rustics, Lowell implies that belief in a political "Possible" is one way to understand the investments and hopes of actual Italian citizens. Unlike Howe, then, Lowell's actual Italy is populated with individuals who express future-driven political goals with which American readers can sympathize.

Lowell's narrated Italian experiences are deeply interpersonal; he quotes acquaintances and guides at length, often using their own words to present what political or cultural arguments he offers. At one point, Lowell describes an explicit attack on Catholicism from his friendly Italian guide: "Do you know how we shall treat the priests when we make our next revolution? We shall

treat them as they treat us, and that is after the fashion of the buffalo. For the buffalo is not content with getting a man down, but after he always gores him and thrusts him” (183). In such a moment, Lowell plays to an audience of American readers, developing his arguments about national difference alongside the often-implicit similarities he traces between contemporary America and ancient Rome, or American revolutionary history and Italian political desire.⁴⁹

Lowell’s investment in imagination—and his particular understanding of that term as active, masculine, and rural—helps account for his willingness to express national concern for American development. However, Lowell’s narrative remains, on balance, invested in comparison as a pedagogical device, as does Howe’s; the essential difference between the two is not of method, but of result. Since Lowell sees imaginative change as all-important for the self-made “wise man,” he is able to use Italian experiences to generate new, often iconoclastic, observations and characterizations about America. Lowell’s travelogue also expresses national lessons, but these display an inverted structure of national hierarchy.

In *Fireside Travels*, then, comparison also reveals shortcomings of national character. The difference between Howe’s national hierarchy and Lowell’s is related to how and why the latter values imagination and imaginative production. At one point, he claims for the poet “the divine faculty . . . to see what everybody can look at” (74). Such a capacity to see nuances overlooked by “everybody” finds especially clear expression in lyric reverie. Recall how, in Howe’s “Santa Susanna,” a moment of solitary worship enables the speaker to avoid completely the need for a nationalist religious comparison; instead, she sees solitary spiritual communion available to the seeking pilgrim. Instead of dramatized individual communion with spiritual collectives, Lowell’s lyric “Masaccio: In the Brancacci Chapel” explores a ruptured, lyric relation to historical experience.

Masaccio was mainly known to antebellum tourists for the frescos in Florence's Brancacci Chapel, of which the most recognizable may be "Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise." A very early Renaissance painter, an initial innovator of linear perspective, Masaccio is often described in chronologies of Italian art as "a self-teacher, *without an ancestor in the past.*"⁵⁰ Those works that have not been lost through disintegration or careless curating depict Catholic paradoxes of spiritual ecstasy and bodily suffering.

Lowell's "Masaccio" begins with a contextualizing narrative about the artist and the viewer that would not be out of place in a travelogue or guidebook:

He came to Florence long ago
 And painted here these walls, that shone
 For Raphael and for Angelo,
 With secrets deeper than his own,
 Then shrank into the dark again,
 And died, we know not how or when.

The shadows deepened, and I turned
 Half-sadly from the fresco grand;
 "And is this," mused I, "all ye earned,
 High-vaulted brain and cunning hand,
 That ye to greater men could teach
 The skill yourself could never reach?" (1-12)

These opening stanzas present a perspective that accords with several of the conventions I have been attributing to travel narrative. The speaker's historical context inserts Masaccio into an understanding of linear artistic progress, drawing a line of development from Masaccio (1420s) to Angelo (Michelangelo, 1490s) and Raphael (1500s). The second stanza registers a concern with comparison, as the viewer muses, "half-sadly," that Masaccio acted as teacher to the "greater men," who would go on to eclipse this artistic revolutionary in the received history of Renaissance art. Indeed, the speaker appears worried about the implications of this historical progression, which he seems to view as unfair. Is this all, he wonders, that an early innovator can hope for, this striving toward a new model with "high-vaulted brain and cunning hand" that can never be reached in the

historical moment? As we have seen in early excerpts from Italian travelogues, lamentations about Italy's noble but distant glory were a common rubric for American understandings of Italy. The speaker is participating in a kind of active identification with another (in this case, the historically distant painter Masaccio) that *Fireside Travels* might advocate.

The speaker goes on to contemplate the paradox of forgotten influence, reflecting on the disjointed way intellectual or artistic impact moves through time: “‘And who were they,’ I mused, ‘that wrought / Through pathless wilds, with labor long / The highways of our daily thought’” (13-15). An attention to science and progress—shared by *Fireside Travels*—is evident in the comparison of “pathless wilds” and “highways” of thought; the stanza contrasts a laborious clearing of pathways for subsequent artistic explorers (11-12) with the thoughtlessly smooth “highway” of everyday life. Later lines illustrate the speaker's sense of the present as a time of insufficient thought and careless acceptance of the status quo: “Thoughts great hearts once broke for, we/ breathe cheaply in the common air; / The dust we trample heedlessly / Throbbled once in saints and heroes rare” (25-28). We might recall here Lowell's disgust for the heedless intellectual inheritance of the Ready-made man.

The poem initially appears to dramatize the distance between past and present. The speaker's first impression upon entering the chapel is that one can never recapture the sense of “pathless wilds” while travelling the “highway of our daily thought.” In its lament for a distant past and its sorrow for the cheap heedlessness of contemporary “common air,” this poem seems invested in the kinds of chronological development I have been so far assigning to narrative: Lowell's imagined wilds, once pathless, become “highways” through sustained intellectual and artistic effort over time. As with the cultural and political arguments in *Fireside Travels*, Lowell inverts the more typical view of historical progression—from primitive to civilized—and instead

valorizes the past over the present. This, too, is in keeping with the arguments about science and imagination that organize middle sections of *Fireside Travels*.

However, a moment of historical disruption⁵¹ intervenes for visitors to the Florentine chapel housing Masaccio's famous works. In contrast to the speaker's preliminary perception of distinction between past and present, and a concurrently-stable aesthetic chronology, a moment of aural immediacy manages to bridge past and present. Instead of frescos or writings, church bells disrupt the stable sense of time's passage: "Out clanged the Ave Mary bells / And to my heart this message came: / Each clamorous throat among them tells / What strong-souled martyrs died in flame" (19-22). The strong consonants of "clang" and "clamorous" suggest the way church-bells cut through the reverie induced by fresco-contemplation, bringing the speaker/listener back to a present rendered more vibrant than dusty and commonplace. The message sent by the bells' intrusion into the speaker's historical musing is as strong as the sound-waves sent by the clanging clapper, disrupting a process of historical forgetting in which Masaccio "died, we know not how or when" and the speaker wonders, "And who were they," that participated in long-ago aesthetic innovation (6; 13). Instead, the bell's clang provides a brief interval of recognition with the spirit of historical heroes. Furthermore, the bells seem to introduce a moment of temporal disruption that alters the speaker's relation to the past more generally: from now on, he asserts, "when rings the health to those / Who live in story and in song" (31-32). The speaker can rest confident in both the epistemological safety of those who once were lost ("safe in Oblivion's chambers," 34) and in his own ability to maintain a connection to the previously forgotten through "One cup of recognition true" (35).

The poem's bells, around which pivot distinct versions of temporal progression, resemble a lyric poem: tied to a specific, and specifically Italian-Catholic, context (the Ave Maria), the bells act as a condensed, sensory reminder of that specificity while operating in the realm of the symbolic

and aesthetic. For viewers of the frescos who hear the bell's call, in a moment of strident sound and strong-souled ancestors, the past is not dead, nor even distant. This is a lyric moment in which distant, past, and contemporary experiences are linked through non-chronological identification, as "the rhizome connects any point to any other point" (Deleuze and Guattari, 23). Moreover, it is a moment of passive sensory experience in which the speaker takes in, via an auditory occurrence, a fully-formed message of remembrance and respect, with no analysis or interpretation required: "to my heart this message came" (20). As with Howe, this philosophical dispatch is occasioned by a recognizably-Italian religious ritual, a pattern suggesting that, despite often virulent objections, the emotional power of Catholic ritual was a powerful force for American visitors to Italy.⁵²

"Masaccio" productively highlights the interaction between Italian past and present, introducing values associated with each temporal category by the poem's speaker. Its inclusion in *Under the Willows*, which focuses on personal and collective history and international relations,⁵³ indicates Lowell's sense that the climactic moment of the poem—the intrusion of the bells into a contemplation of aesthetic tradition—might add something to the larger understanding of history explored in the collection. Too much thought, or too strict an allegiance to historical progress, acts as an impediment to the enjoyment and identificatory potential of sensory experience, long associated with aesthetic and imaginative pursuits. When the poem concludes with a toast to "those / who live in story and in song," Lowell proposes an alternative, through aesthetic objects and tangible pleasures, to the often-depressing study of political or social histories.

While *Fireside Travels* demonstrates that comparison can be used to radicalize accepted international hierarchies and to refute common characterizations of national character, it does not escape the narrative creation of a national order; in contrast, the artists, auditors, and cultural celebrants depicted in "Masaccio" are ultimately undistinguished by national identity or historical location. Although Lowell introduces a generic component to his brand of cultural comparison in

lauding the interpretive work of the poet and the implied ethical value of “the lyre and the pencil” (an ethics that organizes the revelations of Masaccio), Lowell’s narrative recourse to national comparison and hierarchies disturbs the default American superiority we have seen in Howe’s travelogue. How, then, might an author actually move beyond this framework and posit an alternative payoff for travel, one different from that of understanding which nation is “better” and why?

For Henry Tuckerman, the inevitable national comparisons enabled by an Italian journey make something quite different from their material. In a counter-intuitive iteration of the Italian travel plot, Tuckerman’s version progresses toward universal awareness and appreciation and away from national hierarchies. Despite Tuckerman’s investment in the universality, he does not dismiss national character as such; instead, his narrative attempts to think beyond nationalism as a means of organizing social relations. Tuckerman appears to be a successful version of Lowell’s intellectual tailor: the former creates his own generic pattern, distinct from Lowell’s travelogue “suit,” and in so doing, expands the focus of travel-text pedagogy from the national citizen to the universal human.

IV.

Henry Tuckerman is not often studied as part of antebellum New York intellectual circles, but, as Dennis Berthold points out in *American Risorgimento*, Tuckerman was a member of New York’s vibrant community of “Italophiles, men and women who cared deeply about the current Italian situation and followed it closely,” a group that included Bryant, Fuller, Sedgwick, Horace Greeley, Nathaniel Parker Willis, and prominent Italian professor Felice E. Foresti (19). Essentially, Tuckerman was a cultural philosopher, as his many published works make clear. 1841’s *Rambles and Reveries*, for example, includes meditations inspired by Italian landscapes, critical essays on poets from Percy Shelley to Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Charles Lamb, and

cultural analyses of hair as an “eloquent emblem” and the human eye as a conveyance of “truthfulness surpassing speech.”⁵⁴

In an essay from 1835’s *Italian Sketch Book* called “The Amateur,” Tuckerman recasts the traveler as an “amateur,” claiming that “the student and admirer of the noblest human productions, who has become such from native sentiment and discriminating taste, is allied to his race⁵⁵ by a new and interesting bond; he may be said, with peculiar truth, to love in humanity, what is truly worthy of devoted affection—her capacity of exalted effort” (173). For Tuckerman, the philosophical effects of aesthetic contemplation are one of the most important features of an Italian journey for an American. Moreover, contemplative travel allows the amateur to align himself with the universal humanity that Tuckerman values most highly: “Perception and taste, in some form or another, are universal, and if uncorrupted . . . co-exist with a high and pure moral sense” (174). These early claims about aesthetic education omit national identity almost entirely, positing in its place a universal “perception” that Tuckerman associates with a desirable moral position.⁵⁶

We have seen already a dramatic recasting of Italian character and imaginative work in Lowell. Much of the nationalist material in *Fireside Travels* ultimately concerns national character (in the case of Americans, Lowell highlights actual or potential failures of character) in a way that Tuckerman’s appeal to universal artistic appreciation does not. Tuckerman’s entire body of Italian writing (*Isabel*, *The Sketch Book*, the Italian portions of *Rambles and Reveries*, and much of the poetry) is an effort to move from “the study of social circumstances,”—which for Tuckerman always involves American “egotism” and comparative judgment—to the more abstract contemplation of “humanity,” “taste and feeling.” For Tuckerman, better attention to the taste and feeling allows American observers to appreciate the sophistication of Italian art and social life, often otherwise overlooked because of a perception of Italians’ “primitivism” and their “general manners and morals [which] are, indeed, proverbially too loose” (201).

Having already published a more-or-less traditional travelogue (*The Italian Sketch Book*), Tuckerman sought an alternative outlet for his observations about human character, universal judgment, and the humanitarian ethics of the Tuckermanian “cosmopolite.” This section examines how, in a novelized attempt to get outside of national comparison and what Tuckerman refers to as “egotism,” Tuckerman navigates between the representational poles of universal abstraction and regional specificity, each of which can be understood as a conceptual and generic alternative to nationalist narrative.

One of Tuckerman’s main strategies for countering abstraction is regional detail and local history; Tuckerman demonstrates an awareness, albeit an unstable one, that the Italian peninsula is made up of distinct regions with diverse traditions and cultural investments. Commitment to humanitarian abstraction on the one hand and to hyper-local regional character on the other, sometimes impedes Tuckerman’s ethical imperative: occasionally, his universalist investments become too abstract to be of much use for individuals. Unevenly negotiating between universal and local character, Tuckerman has recourse to latent nationalist categories that suggest the growing power of that particular form of social organization. Indeed, Tuckerman’s failure to present a compelling, culturally-legible universal subject illustrates the growing historical importance of national identity in his own time.

Ostensibly a novel, *Isabel; or Sicily. A Pilgrimage* features three main characters and the barest outlines of a traditional plot.⁵⁷ Despite the ending’s nod to conventional action (the final act’s wedding between Isabel and an Italian nobleman, a family reunion), the novel most often resembles a travelogue: the company—Americans Uncle Fraizer and Isabel, the Sicilian Count Vittorio—travel around Sicily taking in sights and cultural events, conversing in mostly philosophical terms about government, aesthetics, and religion. The hybrid novel/travelogue form here authorizes another version of the Italian travel plot: in the final pages, Isabel and the Count

exchange marriage vows aboard a home-bound ship, as the “flutter of the [American] national banner might be distinctly heard” (229).

Isabel's prefatory remarks present an authorial persona and generic position that stands in direct contrast to Howe's one and indivisible “I.” Of his choice to novelize the Sicilian sojourn, Tuckerman explains, “the form in which these descriptions and thoughts suggested by a tour in Sicily are presented, was adopted for the purpose of avoiding that egotistical tone from which it is almost impossible to escape in a formal journal” (8). Recognizing the travelogue's failures as a cosmopolitan document, Tuckerman asserts that the egotistical tone he deplores is an unavoidable feature of the travelogue genre (that “formal journal”).

In *Isabel*, we occasionally encounter the first-person plural forms we saw Howe simultaneously disavow and employ; however, the narrator often uses instead a third-person perspective that allows access to an individual's thoughts and feelings. The narrative distance established by a third-person perspective introduces a distinct problem, that of narrative abstraction, which offers its own representational difficulties. That is, in rejecting national categorization so assiduously, the narrative loses a rhetorical potential for readerly edification. Since it is increasingly unclear to whom the narrative is addressed, and what values or moral positions it represents, the pedagogical imperative of the travel narrative is diffused without being replaced by an obvious alternative goal.

Tuckerman's presentation of *Isabel* as a novel impels some particular generic features; in early sections, the most noticeable fictional convention is that of character development. Of *Isabel*, the narrator muses, “The blighting breath of artificial life had not crept like a frost over the fair and flowery domain of her truthful spirit” (17). This stilted description suggests the stylistic potential of a “novel” as distinct from a travelogue. Here, the development of distinct, specific characters—and the novelistic convention that enables long passages of character description—allows Tuckerman to

experiment with alternative perspective that are not automatically linked to national character, focusing instead on interior experience.

Such moments are off-set by passages of straightforward, subjectively-broad exposition, like this suggestion about how to learn from an Italian journey: “It is on revisiting southern Europe, especially, that an American is best prepared, justly to estimate, and duly to feel, all that is peculiar in the two hemispheres. . . . With a calmer and more intelligent patriotism he recalls his native land” (14). Commentary of this type is much more common to travelogues, as we have seen, than to fictional narratives organized around specific characters; instead of presenting a range of individuated responses, we are told that these patriotic developments can happen to any American traveler. We are returned to the travelogue’s particular negotiation of subjective and collective identity; instead of an emotionally-particularized human being, we have the stand-in American native, poised to learn appropriate national lessons. More specifically, Tuckerman’s lesson is directed at Americans as a broad category. One of the benefits of travel, the narrative asserts, is a better-informed and implicitly more appealing version of patriotic feeling. Furthermore, this intelligent version of patriotism is explicitly enabled by cultural comparison that reveals “all that is peculiar” about two distinct “hemispheres.”

Tuckerman’s main goal in *Isabel* is to illustrate that “ours is a common nature” (48) and to affirm “the love that can find brotherhood in every human being” (183) through descriptions of artwork and the introduction of Count Vittorio. The agreement between the three travelers about many of the virtues, failings, and social implications of their Sicilian travel underwrite Tuckerman’s argument for the universal character of humanity. The traveling companions—Isabel, the “ardent and gifted idealist;” Uncle Frazier, “a great admirer of the institutions and manners of his country, and a thorough utilitarian” (17); and the cosmopolitan Count Vittorio, who unites “the engaging manners and enthusiasm of the South” with “talents of rare native power, greatly improved by

study and travel” (27)—compliment one another and together suggest that intelligent, compassionate persons will remain in general agreement because of what Tuckerman calls “our common nature.” Nevertheless, attentive readers will already notice the nationalized organization of the three travelers: Isabel’s idealism is of the privileged, democratic sort, Uncle Frazier could be one of Lowell’s Ready-made men, and the Count’s “rare native talents” are portrayed as unremittingly Italian: both artistic and bellicose, the Count is a consummate Italian exotic.

Although Tuckerman’s use of fictional characters introduces the potential for individual distinction, *Isabel* ultimately fails as a “novel” of character development. We might notice, for example, the paradoxical effect of generalization in his descriptions, the way descriptions of a particular character shift from interior specifics to generalities broad enough to register as caricature. Without the mediating rubric of nationalism (a legible, if reductive, conception for balancing personal particularity with universalized values), Tuckerman shifts uneasily between detail and abstraction. The description of Isabel above is hackneyed and, to employ a homonym, generic in its attempted portrayal of girlish specificity, as is something like this: “She possessed that depth of sentiment, that earnest sympathy . . . which gives to the gifts and graces of female character an angelic semblance” (17). Isabel, it turns out, could be any attractive, modest, well-educated girl encountered on an antebellum stroll or transatlantic steamer. Oddly, a bit more “egotism”—if by that Tuckerman means something like perspectival particularity—would serve this portrayal well. Likewise, the separation of Isabel, Uncle Fraizer, and Count Vittorio into obviously-national types (the nubile idealist, the practical American, the educated rustic) emphasizes the vacuity of these personae, their function as illustrations for certain rigidified perspectives.

The problem of characterological banality is related to the larger problem of Tuckerman’s “humanitarian cosmopolite,” which is that figure’s abstract nature, its functional emptiness as an attainable personal perspective. Such emptiness is evident in Tuckerman’s many discussions of

“common humanity” or the morally-important lessons of aesthetic appreciation. This is a problem for *The Italian Sketch Book* as well as for *Isabel*. In “The Amateur,” we recall, Tuckerman offers this instruction: “Perception and taste, in some form or another, are universal, and if uncorrupted . . . co-exist with a high and pure moral sense.” This is a highly, even painfully, abstract lesson. What are perception and taste? How are they developed or understood? What is it about an encounter with “the beautiful expressiveness of Raphael” (*Sketch Book* 172) that co-exists with a “high and pure moral sense”? Possible rejoinders to these questions remain unclear, even when Tuckerman acknowledges the imprecision of his aesthetic values: “The genuine amateur . . . gives himself to the study and enjoyment of the abstract and embodied principles of art” (172). Eventually, we find a claim that approaches the specific without ever quite arriving: “What we most admire in humanity’s greatest aesthetic representatives” is, according to the essay, “what is truly worthy of devoted affection—[humanity’s] capacity for exalted effort. And *however vague and ill-sustained such a feeling may be abstractly*, no regard can be more intelligent and vivid” (173, my emphasis). Tuckerman calls attention to the abstraction of his humanitarian ideal while simultaneously asserting its value, all without ever actually providing any specific tenets, goals, or ideas that might make up the moral purity of his imagined cosmopolite, aside from the latter’s willingness to look at famous works of art.

Tuckerman’s turns to a particular Italian context, a palliative for excessive abstraction, allows for greater clarity about moral rewards. The proffered details of Sicilian character, and its differences from other national characters, provide specific lessons for the “liberal mind.” In a long passage arguing for cultural nuance and refuting the too-easy conclusions of a broad comparative approach, Tuckerman explicitly advocates for a localized, individuated approach to character assessment, even at the national level.

There are, indeed, discrepancies of temperament and character between the two people [Italians and Americans] to account for, if not to justify some degree of such a feeling, and the want of education, and moral degradation too prevalent among the inhabitants of this island, is sufficient to explain the little favor they find in the eyes of one of the most enlightened nations of the earth. But this, like all other prejudices, is too indiscriminate, and therefore unworthy of being entertained by any liberal or philosophical mind (160-61).

Isabel's many local stories exist, in part, to counter the indiscriminant prejudice Tuckerman hopes to eradicate (and Howe is unable to escape).

In the particular character of Count Vittorio, Tuckerman is able to individualize the Sicilian character. Further, Tuckerman implies an awareness of the historical disorder prevalent in nascent Italian expressions of nationalism: the Count tells two historical stories that are, for him, inextricably related: the history of 1820s Sicilian political revolutions (130-39) as well as the Sicilian Vespers, a briefly successful independence movement from the 1200s (145-50).⁵⁸ There are also discussions of Sicilian literary history and local tales of cross-cultural attraction. Overall, Tuckerman provides a broad range of Sicilian contexts and a useful cultural history of the region; his investment in universal appreciation results, paradoxically, in more detailed consideration of the localized myths, histories, and particular aesthetic inheritances of Sicily. I would connect *Isabel's* unusually-Italian focus directly to its hybrid genre. Since the Count is one of three main characters, readers have significant exposure to his personal perspective and biography; the Italian travel plot helps this tendency for personal revelations from the Count, who is, after all, trying to educate his companions about the Sicilian location the three explore together.

Tuckerman's narratives are remarkable for their attention to diverse perspectives and for the space he gives to Italian ideas, folk tales, and history. In its attention to regional folklore and the detailed descriptions of small-town scenes and characters, *Isabel* is most effective at conveying quotidian Italian experience when it resembles regionalist fiction. Passages that most clearly demonstrate an ethical attention to Italian realities carry no overt aesthetic or political lessons,

instead presenting local sights and sounds. Upon entering Palermo, for example, the narrator lays out a local market scene:

The high stone walls of the edifices throw a gloomy shade over the broad flags. There is the gay uniform of the soldier, and the dark robe of the priest. At his side the mendicant urges his petition. Near yonder shrine a kneeling peasant prays. In the centre of the street a richly-dressed cavalier displays his exquisite horsemanship. Against the adjacent palace-wall, a poorly-clad old man urges his donkey, whose slender proportions are almost hidden beneath a towering load of vegetables. In the *café* opposite, groups are composedly discussing the merits of the new *prima donna*. . . . These half naked boys are gambling away, on the sunny curb-stone, the few grains which some passer has thrown them in charity. . . . From the overhanging balconies flaunts the wet linen hung out to dry; and the venders, with baskets of fish, pulse, and herbs, dexterously wend their way through the vehicles and loungers (95-96).

Although this passage begins with the “high stone walls” and “gloomy shade” so common to Italian travelogues, Tuckerman also presents a range of characters engaged in various pursuits: in addition to the usual priest, soldier, and beggar, Tuckerman includes a peasant, a cavalier, an old man, his donkey, and a group of opera aficionados. For the regionally-astute reader, several details register the Sicilian character of the scene: the cavalier, for example, was a common figure representative of the dangerous masculinity of Southern Italy (a common trope in Tuckerman’s regional tales), while the vendors selling pulse (a Middle and Far-Eastern legume) suggest the local culinary traditions of Sicily. This “heterogeneous assemblage” (96), representing a diversity unusual for travel books of the time, remains populated by stereotypical characters. Though Tuckerman’s list of typical Italians is expanded beyond the utter clichés of beggars and priests in most Italian travelogues³⁹, groups of gambling boys and opera fans do not represent radical individualism.

The more regionally-specific moments of Tuckerman’s travel texts gesture toward an unrealized potential for individual particularity to counter the narrative abstraction I have highlighted in Tuckerman’s Italian narratives and essays. Despite its efforts at regional detail, *Isabel’s* cast of characters remains stereotypical both at the particular level (Isabel and her male companions) and the more general (the assorted, expected citizens of Palermo). Thus, Tuckerman’s attempt to provide ethical universalism is not especially well-served by his refusal of

egotism in *Isabel*; in its place, we have a hodge-podge of broad cliché and insular anecdote. Instead, I want to posit the “egoistic” perspectival specificity of the lyric speaker⁶⁰ as a figure that allows Tuckerman effectively to blend his interest in Italian persons with his investments in artwork. In poems that take statuary as their subject, interactions between aesthetic objects and their appreciators take on an explicitly erotic charge, offering a relational model that avoids national comparison and posits a concrete (if imaginative) aesthetic intimacy. Indeed, the speakers and actors are not nationally-identified at all.

Tuckerman’s poetry generally takes up mythology, human attachment and interaction, and the important role played by artists and artworks in organizing human responses to the world. The 1851 collection *Poems* offers a poeticized version of Tuckerman’s cultural curiosity wherein the poet shifts between subjects, styles, and national histories.⁶¹ The many Italian poems provide a sort of microcosm of Tuckerman’s varied pursuits: there are nature poems (“To a Cypress”), historical anecdotes, sonnets addressed to Pope Pius IX, poems celebrating Italian art and cities. Numerous non-Italian lyrics also refer to scenes or sights from the Mediterranean peninsula; even a poem about a highly specific United States location, “Northampton,” contains references to Italian places both urban (Fiesole) and rural (Val d’Arno).

Tuckerman’s “Apollo Belvidere” blends critical judgment with romantic fantasy, religious language with erotic attraction, and the realm of physical life with a sense of imaginative vitality. On a festival day, a “lovely maiden” (24) makes her way through the press of the Roman crowd and the aesthetic excess of the Vatican in order to hold communion with the statue Apollo Belvedere, long admired for its classically-masculine beauty. By Tuckerman’s time, admiration for the statue was increasingly overshadowed by the complaints of critics like John Ruskin and William Hazlitt; the former viewed Apollo as “disappointingly mortal,” while, in Hazlitt’s strong words, it was “positively bad. A theatrical coxcomb.”⁶² The poem’s first fifty-three lines eschew rhyme, although

they do demonstrate a lurching iambic meter as a narrator offers description that might have been lifted from a travelogue; indeed, the first section, undifferentiated by stanza breaks, is reminiscent of the Palermian city-scene from *Isabel*:

It was a day of festival in Rome,
And to the splendid temple of her saint,
Many a brilliant equipage swept on;
Brave cavaliers reined their impetuous steeds,
While dark-robed priests and bright-eyed peasants strolled,
Through groups of citizens, in gay attire.
The suppliant moan of the blind mendicant,
Blent with the huckster's cry, the urchin's shout,
The clash of harness, and the festive cheer (1-9).

Several of Tuckerman's Italian characters, including cavaliers, priests, peasants, and pilgrims, all appear in this poem, going about their daily business in the Roman square, much as in the Palermo described by *Isabel*. Like Lowell's "Masaccio," the early section of "Apollo Belvidere" enacts the representational difficulty of portraying travel locations without recourse to the clichés of travel narrative. Hence, for Tuckerman and Lowell both, the utility of specific characters (a certain painter, a certain art appreciator) to organize or filter their lyrics.

Tuckerman's "lovely maiden" moves through the crowd and past "the rich chambers of the Vatican" and "the many glories clustered there" (32, 34) on her way to the Apollo statue, an apparent shrine to romantic fantasy. As the maiden arrives bright-eyed and flushed at the statue, the poem shifts to metered and rhymed stanzas, eight lines each, in which she addresses Apollo. Despite the warning of more traditional art appreciators ("They tell me thou art stone / Stern, passionless, and chill / Dead to the glow of noble thought / And feeling's holy thrill," 54-57), the supplicant-maiden claims a willingness to sacrifice herself to a marble lover.

I dreamed, but yesternight,
That, gazing, e'en as now,
Rapt in a wild, admiring joy,
On thy majestic brow—
That thy strong arm was round me flung,

And drew me to thy side,
While thy proud lip uncurled in love,
And hailed me as a bride. . . . //

Still mute? Then must I yield:
This fire will scathe my breast;
This weary heart will throb itself
To an eternal rest. (70-77, 110-13)

After the poem's travelogue-esque opening section, the maiden's direct address to Apollo suggests the potential of aesthetic objects to offer a distinctly personalized interaction with visitors. The maiden is never identified in national terms: the appellation "pilgrim" as applied to the girl suggests only that she has traveled to the Vatican with certain purpose. Instead of universal lessons about human purpose or humanitarian capacity, the poem celebrates the statue's physical and imaginative power. The maiden and her lover, in the course of her lyric fantasy, escape even their material identities of stone and flesh, demonstrating an affiliative possibility outside stable identity enabled by eroticized aesthetic fantasy.⁶³

In celebrating the statue's "majestic brow," "strong arm," and "proud lip," as well as her own "scathe[d] breast" and a "weary heart" throbbing her to death, Tuckerman's maiden speaker describes a kind of masochistic surrender to the particular pleasures of this art work, which encompass physical desire and a simultaneous escape from the embodied world: "And then, methought, we sped / Like thine own arrow. . . . // And the hum of worlds boomed solemnly / Across our trackless way" (78-9, 88-9). Outside of cultural attachment and a geographically-organized world (the two speed over humming "worlds" in a "trackless" pattern), the speaker fantasizes about intense attachment in a universe of vast "mysteries" (95), an attachment in which the only obstacle is the minor one of physical possibility: "Thy marble-bosom heeding not / My passion-stricken heart" (104-05).

Formally, "Apollo Belvidere" performs in miniature the identificatory alternatives across genre I have been exploring thus far. The first unrhymed section portrays Italian characters like

those of Tuckerman's earlier narratives before moving on to traditional artistic sights: "the creations of the early dead— / Raphael. . . . Ancient sarcophagi, heroic forms/ Busts of the mighty conquerors of time" (37-41). Indeed, this section offers a descriptive narrative that sets the stage for the maid's appeal to her man of stone. Her address is yet another example of lyric rupture; unlike Lowell's portrayal of sensory effect in the intrusion of Ave Maria bells, this shift can be understood structurally and characterologically: the poem alters its very form as the speaker also changes from a vague third-person to a specific individual.

This formal change shift registers a dramatic movement from reportorial facticity to a free-floating lyric reverie spanning a universe of knowledge and ontological possibility. As Apollo and his bride speed through a "boundless sky" (81), they are buffeted with light, sounds, and mystical information: "Our way seemed walled with radiant gems // . . . Sphere-music, too, stole by // . . . Methought thou didst impart / the mysteries of earth . . . O'er Poetry's sublimest heights/ Exultingly we trod" (82- 99). These particulars are a far cry from the "vague and ill-sustained" abstraction felt by "The Amateur" of Tuckerman's *Sketch Book* essay. Instead of an undefined sense of humanity's "efforts" and "Art's glorious products" (*Sketch Book* 173), the maiden describes a range of sensory effects and even informational detail (as they fly above "the hum of worlds," the god tells the maiden "the tale / Of [his] celestial birth," 88-97), while her relation to "Poetry's sublimest heights" is dramatically physical. In this poeticized flight, the maiden escapes a generic Roman festival for a scattered, lyrical view of many worlds at once.

In his own critical output, Tuckerman himself viewed many worlds, exploring diverse national literatures and a promiscuous range of subjects. Essay collections include *Thoughts on the Poets* (1846), *Characteristics of Literature, Illustrated by the Genius of Distinguished Men* (1849), *Essays, Biographical and Critical; or, Studies of Character* (1856), *America and Her Commentators* (1864), *The Criterion: or, the Test of Talk about Familiar Things* (1865), *Book of*

the Artists: American Artistic Life (1867), *The Collector* (1868), and many more. Although some of these collections feature obviously American scenes and characters, others expand outward to British, French, and Italian authors⁶⁴; Tuckerman's sense of universal humanity compelled him to seek kindred spirits across an array of nations, time periods, and aesthetic forms. In Silvio Pellico, a prolific Italian author and an early martyr of the unification movement, Tuckerman saw—and presented to his American readers—a universal man, made so by virtue of his tragic national identity.

V.

After the fall of Napoleon, 1814's Congress of Vienna reinstated several of Italy's imperial rulers of Italy: the governing decisions of the Congress thus enabled the erasure or turning-back of time in Italy. While Napoleon was much lauded for the institutional development and practical modernization he had brought to Italy,⁶⁵ the reinstatement of fractured imperial rule reversed much of that progress. The Austrian Hapsburgs once again controlled Northern cities, including Milan, Turin, Venice, and surrounding areas, while the Bourbons retained control over Southern cities and regions such as Naples and Sicily. Amid armed Southern revolt and intellectual Northern politicizing, Italy in the early 1820s was invigorated with revolutionary feeling.⁶⁶ Eulogizing Pellico in 1856's *Essays Biographical and Critical*, Tuckerman conveys his deep sympathy for the Italian plight; his identification with the Italian revolutionaries is based in part on his Americanized sense of proper historical progression. Following the Congress's reinstatement of imperial rule, “a return to the old state of things from this vital and *progressive* experience was intolerable” (433, my emphasis). In the North, young intellectuals⁶⁷ were writing essays, editing revolutionary magazines and participating in underground Carbonari meetings (an early secret society of Italian independence seekers). Among these Northerners was Silvio Pellico, who would

become an international symbol of Italian patriotism and universal humanity. Arrested in Milan for his revolutionary association and imprisoned for a decade in the Austrian town of Spielberg, Pellico's prison memoir secured for him an international reputation.

In his defense of Pellico, Tuckerman highlights the literary accomplishments and pacifistic character of his "Italian martyr," absolving the former prisoner "for keeping aloof . . . from the controversies that divided even his own party" (436). Presenting Pellico as "a representative man" whose identification "with patriotism, with genius, and with suffering . . . win and . . . hold the love of mankind" (435; 428), Tuckerman's portrait holds national feeling and universal ethics in tandem. Indeed, in embodying a compromise between nationalist feeling and humanitarian ethics, Pellico is Tuckerman's ideal man, not simply a representative one.

Pellico's *Le Mie Prigioni* (*My Prisons*)⁶⁸ was published in Italian in 1830 and rapidly translated into several languages; the first English translation came out in 1836. Both Pellico and Tuckerman attribute the former's survival and his unwavering humanitarianism directly to his practice as a poet. Calling *My Prisons* a "prose-poem, which the world knows by heart" (*Essays* 432), Tuckerman connects Pellico's literary and cultural success to his style: "Pellico's record of his imprisonment . . . seemed to rise, by virtue of its own elevated and tender sentiment, to the view of Christendom" (435). In Pellico's narration, the occasional pleasures felt during his incarceration depend on the exercise of imagination and the universalizable experiences of aesthetic appreciation.

Early in the narrative, Pellico finds a little song written in pencil on his cell's wall. Beginning to sing the words in the favorite tune of a favorite friend, a voice joins Pellico's and the two finish as a duet. Upon the completion of this unusual interaction, Pellico initiates a conversation with the stranger next door. "When it was done, I cried out to him, 'Bravo!' He saluted me kindly, asking if

I was French. ‘No, I am Italian, and my name is Silvio Pellico.’ ‘The author of *Francesca da Rimini*?’ ‘Indeed.’”

The easy intimacy across national identification is typical for the non-object moments of Pellico’s memoir. While many terrible things happen to Pellico, he intersperses the narration with descriptions of kindness and intimacies between prisoners and even among prisoners and guards. Here, he sings along with a mysterious man claiming to be the ill-fated Duke of Normandy, son of Louis XVI. If this is true, we readers and Pellico never know. What we do know, and what Pellico knows as well, is that the famous author is “Italian”: he here refers to himself in the terms of a nation that does not exist in any official political or institutional sense.⁶⁹ This moment with a French pretender highlights a complexity of identification dependent upon shared imaginative tendencies: the men identify one another through the shared experience of singing, affirm identities based on imagination (in Pellico’s case, a national imagination; in the case of “the Pretender,” it is not clear if this imaginative identity is shared or recognized by others), and characterize each other by their literary efforts; as Pellico has written the well-known *Francesca*, “the Duke” has written the song in pencil on the cell wall.

The salutary effects of imaginative productions is a common theme of *My Prisons*. Incarcerated for a decade with a fairly consistent cast of Italian characters,⁷⁰ Pellico and his companions depend on their access to books to maintain a sense of humanity. “So long as we had books,” Pellico writes, “even books so often read as to be committed to memory, they were sweet nourishment for the imagination.”^b Maroncelli and Pellico often read poetry together, even developing a process of composition in prison that allows them both to continue writing. The two

^a “Come’ebbe finito, gli gridai <Bravo!> Ed egli salutò gentilmente, chiedendomi s’io era Francese. –No; sono Italiano, e mi chiamo Silvio Pellico. –L’autore della *Francesca da Rimini*? –Appunto.” (Pellico, 44. This and all subsequent translation mine)]

^b “Finchè avemmo libri, benchè ormai tanto riletti da saperli a memoria, eran dolce pascolo alla mente” (127).

men recite their creations over and over again to one another, committing original works to memory as they do with other texts in their cherished prison library. “I too composed and recited poems to him [Maroncelli]. And thus we trained our memories and held on to all of that poetry. Wonderful was the capacity we gained to write extensive works by memory, to refine them and return and polish them again, an infinite number of times.”^c

Pellico’s memoir could be read as an extended defense of the imagination: the kindness and recognition of others depends on their awareness of Pellico’s literary productions; imaginative creations open a space for identification and friendship among prisoners; Pellico and his companions sustain themselves almost solely through their cobbled-together prison library and an increasingly memory-dependent archive of original creations. Pellico and Maroncelli compose mostly epic and lyric poems, although Pellico also develops an entire poetic drama, the tragedy *Leoniero da Dertona*, while in prison. While the compositional tendencies of the two poets offers some support for my suggestion about the importance of poetry as a particularly productive and compelling genre for Italian authors working towards a sustainable articulation and organization of collective identity, the poems Pellico describes could also be seen to intervene in a specifically temporal conception of imaginative function. The creative process of the two poets seems to have little to do with the progressive passage of time: Pellico writes that they could return to their creations “an infinite number of times,” and refers to a seemingly infinite number of poems held in memory: Maroncelli, Pellico claims, “thus composed, bit by bit . . . a few thousand lyric and epic verses.”^d Pellico’s description calls to mind a vast series of pages, held in the same mental container all the time, at the same time.

^c “To pure ne componeva a li recitava. E la nostra memoria esercitavasi a ritenere tutto ciò. Mirabile fu la capacità che acquistammo di poetare lunghe produzione a memoria, limarle e tornarle a limare infinite volte” (128).

^d “Maroncelli compose così, a poco a poco . . . parecchie migliaia di versi lirici ed eipici” (128).

There is some suggestion that Pellico views national identity similarly. Pellico's prison experiences suggest that, while there are subjective categories of national affiliation (his knowledge of himself as "Italian," for example), all are united under the same umbrella of universal humanity that Tuckerman labors to describe. Describing his long journey home from prison, Pellico asserts, "I love, passionately, my homeland, but do not hate any other nation. Civilization, abundance, power, and glory are distinct across different nations, but all nations begin with a spirit obedient to humanitarian inclinations of love and compassion and beneficence."^e National identity necessarily takes different forms, claims Pellico, but all grow from the same soil of universal humanity.

If poetry offers an alternative to linear, narrativized constructions of identity, why not view America too as a lyric nation; that is, why not import Tuckerman or Pellico's capacious lyric identity onto an American context in addition to recognizing its utility for describing Italian national character? As I have been suggesting, the cultural and political history of American national identity is a narrative history, invested in a progressive relation to the past and a sense of straightforward, undeviating advancement. This is the case in founding documents like the Declaration of Independence, which posits a linearity of revolution.⁷¹ America's sense of its own Manifest Destiny, a geographically-ordered expansion of U.S. territory, affirmed the cultural currency of discourses of progress and linear development from colonial backwater to vibrant young nation to international power. Of course, these are the very fantasies of progress and "science" that Lowell rejects: in some ways, commitment to technological improvement is always also a commitment to linearity.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that much of the poetry written by Americans during the antebellum period was also invested in presenting national narratives, portraying culture

^e "Io amo appassionatamente la mia patria, ma non odio alcun'altra nazione. La civiltà, la ricchezza, la potenza, la gloria sono diverse nelle diverse nazioni; ma in tutte havvi anime obbedienti alla gran vocazione dell'uomo, di amare e compiangere, e giovane" (159).

and history as singular and consistent. Virginia Jackson describes such poetry in terms that differentiate it from lyric expression: “other poetic genres (epics, poems on affairs of state, verse epistles, epigraph, elegy, satire) may remain embedded in specific historical occasions or narratives” (7). Such is the case for several of Lowell’s most famous poetic efforts, including “A Fable for Critics”—a brutally funny send-up of Young America’s ambitions and the self-satisfied U.S. literati—as well as *The Biglow Papers*, a series of satirical poems about U.S. politics, both domestic and international, and cultural conditions. As contemporary satire, *The Biglow Papers* often presented exaggerated articulations of widely-circulating national ideas, as when the narrator of series II, paper IV, “Homer Wilber,” justifies his project thusly: “my messige wuz written / To diffuse correc’ notions in France an’ Gret Britten. . . . To say that I did n’t abate not a hooter / O’ my faith in a happy an’ glorious futur” (8-12). Wilber’s approach to inter-cultural interaction involves a sense of national stability (the “corrc[t] notions” his message is intended to convey) that hinges on faith in a collective future that is “happy an’ glorious”). The poem’s presentations of this perspective (and other objectional characteristics including war-mongering, slave-holding, and political finger-pointing) as laughable does not diminish its stable linear effect.

Howe’s words⁷² for “Battle Hymn of the Republic” display a similar investment in future-oriented national conceptions and a “correct” sense of American ability and potential (this time, authorized by God). What Lowell presets as satirical, Howe, however, takes quite seriously. God’s address to Union fighters highlights an oppositional ontology that I have previously been ascribing to comparison and emphasizes a forward-looking history: “As ye deal with my contemners, so you my grace shall deal; / Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpant with his heel, / Since God is marching on” (10-12). If you are not with me, you are against me, a “contemner,” says God, using a word that implies not just disagreement but a species of hierarchized judgment.⁷³ Howe’s lines invoke two processes we could view as chronologically-linear: a hero grows into power after being

born, while God marches on, bringing “truth” along with him. Although I do not have the space to proliferate examples of American narrative poetry that help create or confirm nationalist hopes and myths, the vast archive of such antebellum material suggests the utility of narrative poetry for national meaning-making.⁷⁴

In closing, I want to suggest that a consistent American tendency to view national narrative as the appropriate form for portraying a collective marching through history comes to organize as well an increasingly-inflexible Italian identity. For many reasons, the acceptance and employment of progressive narratives remains insufficient, unhelpful, perhaps even disastrous, for the emerging Italian nation. In misrecognizing the importance (and specificity) of national context, in understanding themselves as a narrative nation that should progress in linear fashion instead of one assembled through and cohering around the multiple possibilities of lyric nationhood, Italy accepts a generic and national imposition of appropriate form that proves unfit for representing or managing Italian political realities.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that one of the similarities between identity and genre was the importance of circulation conditions for both. In generic terms, these would include, but not be limited to, historical conditions, as we have seen Franco Moretti argue: “when one genre replaces another, it’s reasonable to assume that the cause is internal to the two genres, and historically specific: amorous epistolary fiction being ill-equipped to capture the traumas of the revolutionary years, say” (20). The relation between versions of national identity and cultural or political history could be imagined in a similar way. Perhaps a narrative identity proves “ill-equipped to capture” the experiences of a national collective with a more lyrical history. Indeed, this is what I am claiming about an Italian identity.

In “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Walter Benjamin connects progressive history to historical violence, wherein narrative posing as history may become a tool of “the victors,”

pressed into service in the “triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are laying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures” (256). We might be reminded of the march of a triumphant American God celebrated in Howe’s “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Oddly, the imposition of narrative as a means to organize Italian history comes not from the area’s locally-present rulers; the artworks, buildings, and ruins that were (and remain) Italy’s cultural treasures had little to do with Austrian or Napoleonic tradition. Instead, Americans often acted as Italy’s chroniclers, carrying forth the peninsula’s treasures in the narratives written and avidly consumed back in the United States.

In this account, what gets stepped over are everyday Italians, their varied experiences, the wide range of regional traditions and cultural practices. If Howe offers a deeply reductive version of Italian ignorance and unfitness for political sovereignty, Lowell and Tuckerman both also participate in a cultural flattening through narrative. Lowell, for example, often introduces anecdotes as broadly representative of Italian cultural practice: “this [story] will act as a specimen” (193), Lowell suggests at one point; later, he offers “one universal character of an Italian town[:] . . . two men clamoring and shaking themselves to pieces at one another, and a woman leaning lazily out of a window” (215). The use of “specimen” is particularly striking in Lowell’s narrative, since he has previously been at pains to deny the appropriateness of “science,” “Analysis” and “chemic tests” (150-51) in making sense of travel experience. Tuckerman too, despite his investment in universal humanity, often assumes that Italian aesthetic values and social habits are similar to American ones: hence, ironically, the very ability to claim a universal function for aesthetic contemplation and a progressive political trajectory for Italy. What I am pointing to here is not only the way that content performs nationally-pedagogical work, but the way genre participates in structuring the social or political limits and recognizable historical progression of the Italy

presented in travelogues. As we have seen, for outsiders seeking to understand Italy, the construction of a cultural or national linearity—and the implied singularity of a historical Italian identity—allowed certain American authors of Italian travelogues to recreate for Italy the narrative ordering that structured much American socio-political life.

For actual Italians, however, the linearity and singularity promised by narrative history proved less useful for cultural meaning-making: interactions between past and present were complex in Italy, dependent for authority on distant ages of Roman glory and Renaissance innovation. To nineteenth-century Italians, the political and cultural situation looked much the same as it had to Niccolò Machiavelli in 1532, when the notorious author finished his *Il Principe* (*The Prince*) with an exhortation for Italians to throw off the chains of what Machiavelli termed “queste crudelta ed insolenzie barbare”⁷⁵ [these barbaric cruelties and insults]. Machiavelli’s Italy, 400 years in the past for nineteenth-century Italians, suffered many of the same indignations and imperial controls as the Italy experienced by nineteenth-century residents and visitors, who found themselves in a place “senza capo, senz’ordine; battuta, spogliata, lacera [sic]” [leaderless, without order, beaten, stripped, torn] (99). Certainly, the social order of pre-unification Italy was less brutal than the fourteenth-century heyday of regional pillage and murder, but Italy remained, as many Americans noted, leaderless and disordered, stuck in the patterns of the distant past while inundated with the imported modernity of hundreds of thousands of tourists.⁷⁶

What this meant for the daily lives of nineteenth-century Italians was that a usable, inspirational (and narrativizable) past remained so far *in* the past that a progressive relationship to history proved unproductive. Not only had Italy no recent experience of Tuckerman’s “national growth,” but Italians had to look back four hundred years to glimpse a moment of cultural glory—the Renaissance—dependent on an even-more distant Roman imperial past for cultural authority. Thus, the model of linear narration as a means of understanding the world made little sense for

Italians, who had to overlook vast stretches of history in order to access moments of unity and comparative independence. Furthermore, constructive moments were often predicated on aesthetic superiority instead of military might (of course, the belletristic power of Ancient Rome was always a potent, if strictly aspirational, model). This fragmentary use of history bears little resemblance to progressive histories told through narrative, in which the conventions of narrative and plot act as “a structure for those meanings that are developed through temporal succession . . . made necessary by, those meanings that develop through succession and time” (Brooks 12). The only result of time’s succession in nineteenth-century Italy was the increasing temporal distance between the present and a usable, Italian past.

In thinking through national identity in generic terms, I have imagined what it might mean to shift the formal conventions of nationalist affiliation. Confronting the affiliative limits of narrative, the authors of this chapter sought alternatives in exotic religious traditions, eroticized aesthetic objects, and a sensory relation to history. For Lowell and Tuckerman, the search for nationalist alternatives represented a consistent aesthetic goal, while for Howe such a radical project was restricted to an early radical period of her own personal history. Before the publication of *Passion-flowers* in 1854, Howe had worked for several years on the secret manuscript of *The Hermaphrodite*.⁷⁷ Though it purports to be a personal narrative of individual experience, *The Hermaphrodite* does not present a conventionally-coherent individual. During the course of his narrated life, Laurence is a various points student, teacher, religious esthete, moral philosopher, actor, musician, apparently male, recognizably female, a cadaverous living man, and an undead corpse. Laurence might easily be understood in the multiple, capacious terms of Snediker’s “lyric person,” and the narrative’s very existence suggests that Howe was thinking about alternatives to stable subjectivity before she became more stridently invested in the rights of women, slaves, and disadvantaged children (all of whom had brutally stable identities at the time). It is from Howe’s

recovered narrative that I take this chapter's title: when he claims that "reader, everybody has a world," Laurence seeks to align personal perception with worldly experience: the reader's singular "world"⁷⁸ stems from individual perception but grows to encompass all experiential categories, folding together universal ("everybody") and particular ("a world") outside of the mediation of identity-based collectivity, which has here taken the form of national identification.

Chapter Two:

“I Regret to Learn that You are Enjoying a Civil War at Home”

In a storied anecdote about the American Civil War, an increasingly desperate but pleasingly cosmopolitan President Lincoln attempts to recruit Italian military hero Giuseppe Garibaldi as a Union Army general in 1861. Recovering from the drama of his brief dictatorship in Sicily and the successful liberation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from the Bourbon government,¹ Garibaldi makes two requests from his rustic retreat on Caprera: that he be named “commander-in-chief of the entire American army” and that all American slaves be immediately emancipated.² Despite the ambiguity surrounding its details, this story has remained a popular cocktail-party anecdote among many students of Italian and American military history. Several reasons for its appeal suggest themselves: the story demonstrates Lincoln’s international reach and military creativity; it highlights the humanitarian superiority of the Italian war-hero, insistent upon an emancipation not yet assured for American slaves; it associates one of the mid-century’s greatest international celebrities with the Union cause. Finally, this “might-have-been” narrative suggests that Lincoln, or his military advisors, imagined an essential connection between the American and Italian battles for national unity that made the choice of notorious republican Garibaldi seem a reasonable one for organizing a Union charge against their Southern adversary.³

In this chapter, I explore accounts of war-time Italy that include official documents, factual reports, eyewitness impressions, rumor, and even pure invention. The Lincoln-Garibaldi anecdote, which contains many of these elements at once, offers a condensed version of a certain type of historical fantasy blending elements of mythology, materiality, and linguistic representation. Based in political reality but promising legendary rewards, the anecdote’s charm stems from its blending of historical fact and historical desire, political power and cultural charisma.

Certainly, the war-time feeling of cultural connection between the U.S. and Italy was based on actual political and social correspondences between American and Italian history as well as those between their contemporary military battles. Interested in the juxtapositions between cultural fantasies and historical facts, this chapter argues that powerful feelings of wartime solidarity were underwritten by an American desire for Italian associations informed by mythological grandeur and cultivated camaraderie. In the analysis that follows, recent theories of the celebrity figure highlight the imaginative and aesthetic elements of these historical fancies. As an emergent cultural touchstone unifying reported fact and identificatory fantasy, the charismatic celebrity becomes here a means of viewing Italy itself. Like the figure of the child—a social metaphor that organizes chapter four’s exploration of migrant newspapers and cultural progress—the celebrity is increasingly theorized as an historical phenomenon and as a metaphor for operations of cultural attachment. The celebrity dramatizes the personal terms through which people understand (or even create) cultural occurrences or tendencies.

That the myth of Garibaldi would come to occupy a prominent place in post-unification Italy is as unsurprising as the fact that President Lincoln occupies a similar place in the post-unification United States; both were politically and culturally prominent in moments of collective crisis, serving simultaneously as symbols of unification and violence. In each man, a combination of practical success and collective mythology surrounds a public persona with extraordinary emotional power. This combination is one of the features of what scholars have begun to characterize as modern celebrity culture.⁴ In this analysis, I imagine a nation in personal terms; further, the construction of an iconic Italy through war-time letters is facilitated by the development of tonal intimacy, the aesthetic construction of an Italy presented as immediate, identifiable, and familiarized. In particular, I compare and analyze the Italy portrayed in dispatches written by three

American public figures: Margaret Fuller (1846-1850), Henry Adams (1860), and *Vanity Fair* columnist “McArone” (1860-1861).

An awareness that imaginative writing and political development are closely aligned is nothing new; in a field that often differentiates its practitioners in national terms, however self-consciously employed (“Americanist,” “Caribbeanist,” “Francophone”), the organizational role of national identity is obvious, if not unquestioned. This chapter is interested in a negotiation between individual and collective identities expressed through the non-institutional figure of the celebrity icon.⁵ What happens, imaginatively, collectively, or historically, when we imagine nation as a kind of personality instead of as a series of institutional commitments or allegiances? The war dispatches explored in this chapter, which articulate distinct versions of an already-iconic Italy, permit variations of intimate attachment between citizens and their historical moment. Italy is both exotic and familiar, tragic and inspiring; indeed, I suggest at the chapter’s close that an uncanny version of Italy works as well to distance and reintroduce Americans to their own historical trauma.

I explore representations of Italian civil war through the figure of the icon, an aestheticized, distant, and compelling source of identificatory fantasy and consumable pleasure. Attempting to theorize the “aesthetic formation” of this particular celebrity form, David Herwitz describes the icon as “a being . . . caught between transcendence and trauma in her own life and in the public’s gaze on her” (*Icon*, ix). Although Herwitz explores the aesthetic formulation and circulation of female icons, such as Grace Kelly and Princess Diana, I find especially useful (and mobile) his descriptions of the icon’s status as mytho-religious “cult” figure (who “proclaims that redemption is possible even in the dregs of ongoing despair, 29) and as a figure whose meaning depends upon repetition: “Repetition is not only about the conditions of reproducibility . . . it is also about an endless supply of things, a sense of their inexhaustibility” (36). Endlessly repeatable revolutionary moments and figures,⁶ the inexhaustibility of democracy’s benefits, the seemingly limitless supply

of Italian aesthetic pleasures and American appetite for same: all of these conditions, described and theorized in this study, are elements of American-Italian transnational exchange that suggest how a national personality—or, in the case of pre-1860 Italy, an imagined cultural community—might be constituted. As a location already renowned for its artistic treasures, mid-century Italy became an object of political speculation as well. Could Italy live up finally to her historical inheritance as powerful political actor?

The repetition Herwitz points to in operations of commodified celebrity culture is also a fundamental element of how fame organizes history. In Leo Braudy's formulation, famous people resemble works of art and historical events: all are constantly "reinterpreted to demonstrate the new relevance of their greatness. . . . The ability to reinterpret them fills them with constantly renewed meaning."⁷ Italy in particular, as a celebrity nation, allowed Americans to reinterpret and reimagine their own national history through repetition with a difference. In the era of American independence, the Roman Republic acted as a political model; by the time of the Roman Revolution in 1848, America was imagined as a political model for Italy. Although the relation between political collectives had been inverted, Italy for Americans yet operated as what Braudy characterizes as a legible historical pattern: "general and impersonal patterns meet in the nexus of individual desires to be famous—unique—extraordinary—and thereby to put one's mark on time" (16). All the writers explored here can be considered famous in their own right (Fuller for her intellectual accomplishments, Adams for his family name, McArone for his military prowess); regardless of personal reputation, however, each writer becomes caught up in the extraordinary events they narrate, using dispatches to make their own mark on history.

Especially in the United States, fame and politics were often closely aligned. Tracing the construction of modern celebrity to the antebellum lecture circuit, David Haven Blake connects political fantasy directly to the operations of celebrity culture: "[celebrities] served as instruments of

consensus, representations of the public's attention as well as its will. The celebrity was a kind of medium that could convey a range of political meanings."⁸ At the height of two distinct wars for national unity and personal freedoms, the compelling spectacle of charismatic leadership invested both Lincoln and Garibaldi with mass-marketed celebrity; indeed, we have already seen the anecdotal reach of cultural fantasies about the two men's interconnection. That this relation was imagined to be interpersonal instead of being recognized as political or ideological suggests the degree to which celebrity appeal depended on individual particularity and public perceptions of interpersonal intimacy. In what follows, I explore cultural fascination as developed through an illusion of intimate knowledge combined with personal investment. This chapter lingers in the imaginative space opened by newspaper dispatches, which often combined socio-political detail with flights of linguistic fancy.

Ultimately, I use scholarship on celebrities and public representation to advance my claim that these dispatches construct the Italian nation itself as a celebrity figure: charismatic, an object of public fascination and fantasy, mid-century Italy represented an international *cause célèbre* that demanded immediate attention. The Italy created and conveyed through the dispatch letters shared several important features with the celebrity individuals whose singular personalities became news.⁹ Of these, most relevant is that fantasies of celebrity, and of Italy, construct a sense of intimate knowledge both intangible and readily consumable. This celebrity Italy allowed Americans, increasingly distracted by the looming spectacle of their own civil war, to re-live former republican glory and fantasize about the inevitability of national consensus. Further, the iconic character of celebrity Italy—deeply personal yet distant, beautiful and tragic and perhaps doomed but also poised for salvation—offered a sympathetic and galvanizing international companion in a time of American political uncertainty.¹⁰

I.

One of the most essential features distinguishing war dispatches from international news reports was the former's investment in the singular voice of the on-site reporter. However, as we shall see, location alone did not guarantee access to extraordinary knowledge, nor did it automatically confer the ability to describe clearly what was happening.¹¹ Regardless of the representational challenges, the perception of insider privilege accruing around public letters from the front lines remained a powerful factor in their appeal. Ponce de Leon traces this value to historically-specific conceptions of the public sphere itself: "By the mid-nineteenth century, residents of cities in the United States, England, and . . . Western Europe had concluded that everyone employed fronts when in public, and that all self-presentation in the public sphere was . . . artificial and unreliable" (29). In the case of Italian revolution, a "public front" of military details and political speculation both implied and obscured the degree to which America and Italy shared a republican character.

Since previous sections of this study have made extensive reference to the republican solidarity and political connections most commonly imagined between Italy and the U.S., I need not rehearse those basics assertions here. However, the complexity of national developments in Italy during the time span of this chapter (roughly 1847 to 1861) necessitate a brief historical survey. By the close of 1847, students, political moderates, and musicians across Italy expressed their revolutionary hopes in "inflammatory pamphlets," calls for collective organization and moderate consensus, patriotic songs and operas.¹² Moreover, the rise of seemingly-liberal Pope Pius IX, with his apparent willingness to link Catholic ritual to Italian revolution, galvanized the populace. While none of these developments alone called forth the rumblings of actual military revolution, the tenor of the times was a skittish blend of patriotic excitement and on-going imperial oppressions. Unless one knew where to look for real news, and how to interpret the vacillating

fortunes of the Italian people, it was difficult to separate rumor from fact, wheat from chaff, military news from idle gossip.

While Italy's imperial rulers¹³ worked to manage increasingly fractious citizens in their various kingdoms, fear of Italian republicans in the Papal States caused the pope to flee for the Southern Kingdom, abandoning Rome to Garibaldi's military and Mazzini's republican government. Despite grand hopes and political coherence, Roman republicans were no match for an invading French army deployed at papal behest. This is the revolution narrated in Fuller's *New York Tribune* dispatches from 1848 and 1849.

Following this defeat, Italy fell again under the sway of reactionary imperial rulers who used increasingly brutal mercenary forces to subdue popular uprisings and defend the monarchs as they retracted regional constitutions en masse. The ensuing years were a rubble of failed uprisings, assassination attempts, and shadowy political negotiations. Garibaldi's famous *il Mille* ("the Thousand") march through Sicily in 1860 finally liberated the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, uniting the large Southern kingdom to the Northern Kingdom of Sardinia. Finally, Italy could declare itself a unified parliamentary monarchy under the dominion of Victor Emmanuel II, son of the disgraced Charles Albert.¹⁴ This latter Garbaldian triumph is the moment of Adams's letters published in *The Boston Courier* during the summer of 1860. Although the Papal States and several Hapsburg-controlled Northern regions (including Venice) awaited independence, an official Italian government was announced in 1861, becoming immediately embroiled in military and diplomatic negotiations for the peninsula's remaining regions.¹⁵ This latter Garbaldian triumph is the scene of Adams's reports from Sicily. In the dispatch columns of McArone published in *Vanity Fair*, these two distinct revolutions—constituting the Roman Republic and deposing the King of the Two Sicilies—are blended into a seamless, ahistorical whole.

Because of the convoluted and vacillating relationships among Italy, the new nation's various supporters, and powerful imperial enemies, post-1861 unification history is defined by its upheaval: raids initiated and abandoned, battles against Austrian, French, and Papal forces attempted, diplomatic betrayals and unlikely alliances and civil unrest in abundance. Often, accounts of this period employ personal letters and communications to support historical claims about events, allegiances, and results. The diplomatic letters describing the Lincoln-Garibaldi negotiations are but one example of this scanty and individually-mediated epistolary archive.

Describing changing conventions of communication technology during the Napoleonic Wars, Peter Fritzsche theorizes the role of the epistolary form in changing perceptions of history: "history was increasingly recognized as a comprehensive process that swept up writers and readers, yet it took the form of countless perspectives, each with a certain authority and none authoritative in the traditional sense."¹⁶ Fritzsche's argument concerns early nineteenth-century Europe in particular. By the time of Fuller's 1848 dispatches, however, U.S. periodicals and many of their local readers were also beginning to understand themselves as sharing an international "collective historical consciousness" (134), in which the experiences of ordinary individuals were perceived as historically or culturally informative.

In this highly-individuated reportorial situation, the existence of something like an Italian iconography, a series of identificatory constants, becomes useful to the extent that an assumed stability of national persona and organizing tropes conveyed collective meaning for a range of participants and observers. For observers of Italy, this iconography included the common tropes of Italy as a menaced maiden, Italy as an underdeveloped republican sibling awaiting maturation, Italy as ancient storehouse of art and faded imperial grandeur. As we shall see, these figures all take a star turn in the war-time letters collected here; each letter writer describes, personifies, or meditates

upon these figures to varying degrees, but all are invoked as organizing symbols for the Italian cultural condition and as representational metaphors that imagine the coming Italian state.

The dispatches of Fuller, Adams, and McArone shared some features with the travel narratives explored in the previous chapter: the latter likewise depend for effect on individuated perceptions of culture, though dispatches tended to highlight direct historical change instead of aesthetic spectacle. Both genres benefitted from American interest in international events, and both assured readers that their information was based upon personal observation and some measure of reflection. In the previous chapter, I offered lyric representations of Italy as a means for authors to escape the strictly-nationalist master narratives so common across travelogues. In exploring public letters from Italy, this chapter suggests that the Italy narrated therein represents an intimate, illusory Italy no less than do the Italian lyrics of Howe, Lowell, or Tuckerman. Instead of operating as individuated address from lyric persona to lyric reader, however, the dispatches self-consciously address a collective audience in an assumed voice of the age.¹⁷ I am interested in the connections between the intimate fantasy assumed to accompany lyric expression and the mass-mediated intimacy conveyed in concepts of the charismatic celebrity; both were used to construct an Italy with which individuals were encouraged to identify. Using the reportorial conventions of mass media, the interpretive category of something like intimate lyric expression dilates to include various operations of language that are recognizable as personal, singular, and immediate.

As symbolic hero and living historical personage, Giuseppe Garibaldi was especially suited to embody the juxtapositions between general and particular, between human actor and revolutionary symbol, through which celebrity iconographic power takes shape.¹⁸ The widely-romanticized figure of Garibaldi, filtered through three distinct perspectives, embodied cultural processes that were likewise instrumental in mythologizing Italy for an American audience: the role of personality in authorizing and popularizing acts of collective identification, the use of aesthetic

representation (linguistic or otherwise) for developing historical actors as objects of mythic fascination. Although more often associated with intellectual exile Giuseppe Mazzini, Margaret Fuller's description of Garibaldi leading his troops out of Rome suggests the degree to which Garibaldi's bandit military aesthetic¹⁹ was glamorized by an adoring international public. "I long for Sir Walter Scott to be on earth again, and see them; all are light, athletic, resolute figures, many of the forms of the finest manly beauty of the South, all sparkling with its genius and ennobled by the resolute spirit, ready to dare, to do, to die."²⁰ Henry Adams's otherwise standard dispatches from 1860 Italy are distinguished by the fact that Adams is the first non-military American to report personal interactions with Garibaldi during the famous *il Mille* march on Sicily. In Palermo in June of 1860, twenty-year-old Adams gushes: "Here I was at last, then, at the height of my ambition as a traveller, face to face with one of the greatest events of our day. It was perfect. . . . There was the Great Dictator, who, when your and my little hopes and ambitions shall have lain in our graves a few centuries with us, will still be honored as a hero, and perhaps half-worshipped, who knows! For a God."²¹ Associative similarities and representational distinctions are evident: both Fuller and Adams appeal to a higher order of historical romance, invoking the general's Southern genius and resoluteness of spirit, his Godlike effect and influence.

There are also meaningful tonal distinctions between these descriptions. Fuller, earnest and erudite, compares her perception to the sweeping historical vision of Walter Scott, narrating emotions suited to an epic fantasy world of beautiful martyrs, brilliant rugged soldiers. In Henry Adams, young heir to a storied American political tradition, we see a more cautious, perhaps already more cynical, observer. Where Fuller is already participating in acts of hero-worship, Adams imagines the prospect without quite committing. The image of Adams, brother Charles, and all their "hopes and ambitious" lying for centuries as Garibaldi's legends grow to encompass the Earth is a gently ridiculous vision. Adams is not mocking outright the cultural lionization he

imagines, but he regards skeptically the prospect of such glorification. In this chapter's third example, the historical excesses of Fuller and the parlor-room tenor of Adams find simultaneous expression.

On November 24, 1860, the first American *Vanity Fair* magazine²² began running a series of satirical dispatches from the Italian front. Signed by an American adventurer calling himself "McArone" (imagine a pronunciation that accented the name's final vowel: "macaroni"), the dispatches, which ran weekly for seven months, narrate a series of belletristic adventures in Italy. An intimate friendship between McArone and "Joe" Garibaldi helps organize the narrative arc of the feature: although occasionally separated, the pair are always delighted to sob once again in each other's embrace, retire to Garibaldi's Caprera retreat to sup on turnips and plot their next military success. Early in 1861, McArone insists that "though I be gracious and courtly in love, I am terrible in war. Great joy is within my flagons, but upon my sword sits Death, the Conqueror, enthroned. . . . And Joe Garibaldi is just like me!"²³ The international dispatches end when McArone, having "freed Italy" (25 May 1861), returns to the United State to serve in his own nation's battle for slave emancipation and national (re)unification. Much like the farmer-king myth of Garibaldi (who did often retire to a deserted island to cultivate vegetables), McArone's pose is that of an ordinary man caught up in extraordinary events; exaggerated to the point of absurdity, the events described in the *Vanity Fair* dispatches are different in degree but not, I am arguing, in kind, from those described by Fuller and Adams.

Despite their insistent ludicrousness, McArone's reports, like the Lincoln-Garibaldi anecdote, demonstrate the extent to which some American observers imagined a republican solidarity with Italian revolutionary forces: the dispatches suggest a sophisticated awareness of the connections and affections between Italy and the United States, both of which were embroiled in battles for national unity and individual freedom organized along similar northern-southern

divisions.²⁴ I include the *Vanity Fair* columns, treating them as historical documents in their own right, because their deliberate, egregious blending of national history with fantasy, the exaggeration of personal exploits and a related dependence upon celebrity interactions for effect, help to crystalize the conceptual issues at hand.

As a periodical feature intended to entertain, McArone's "War in Italy" columns provide a sense of the information and perspective that American readers might have had about the international political scene; though much humor derives from punning and exaggeration, the series depends for its reality effects (such as they are) upon the hero's interaction with actual historical actors and his participation in Italian revolutionary events.²⁵ McArone's investment in mythologizing his contemporaries (most prominent among these is, of course, the intrepid hero himself) is a satirical amplification of the ways that periodical features often conveyed social or historical fantasies as they reported news. McArone's columns also offer an exaggerated version of the informational promiscuity underlying historical fantasy, in which real persons, places, or events are rhetorically or metaphorically readjusted to serve particular socio-political needs; when McArone describes an Italian battle thusly, "The town was in confusion. Barricades had been thrown up here and there in Bleeker, Chestnut, and Carmine streets, and the Secessionists held full possession of them" (6 April 1861), he offers a hyperbolized type of the on-the-ground reports Fuller and Adams were also sending from Italy. Moreover, in blending an Italian scene and a New York one, McArone allegorizes the battle scene he describes, suggesting the capacity of violence to migrate and circulate; indeed, such revolutionary violence, although it would not overtake the streets of New York City, was imminent during the first week of April 1861.

The mash-up elements of McArone's dispatches are both historical and geographical in nature; as such, they invoke and confuse all manner of cultural associations.²⁶ In a dispatch published 23 February 1861, McArone reports the following: "My good Joseph will leave his

cucumbers and huckleberries, and Italy shall resound with the din of conflict, like a Sixth Ward political meeting.” As the column continues, McArone suggests to Pope Pius IX that the pontiff flee to Hoboken, reminds him that “I can raise an army to wipe you out as easily as Thurlow Weed wipes his slate,” and asserts, “My name is McArone, on the Grampain hills and elsewhere.” The column, then, is typical of McArone’s correspondence in several ways: using New York City cultural comparisons such as Thurlow Weed and the Sixth Ward, McArone expands his symbolic universe to include Italian huckleberries (not native to that nation, but widely used as a metaphor and a food in the U.S.), outer New Jersey, and the Scottish mountain range of Grampain. While it seems clear that readers of *Vanity Fair* would not have been actively confused about the potential influence of Weed upon Risorgimento politics, not all readers might have known that the Pope’s departure from Rome (not to Hoboken, however) had happened in 1848 and would not be repeated. The shifting nature of the column’s references and settings encouraged readers to, at minimum, imaginatively reconcile the many disjointed references with the world McArone describes. So, while not necessarily introducing genuine cultural confusion with such a fluid mix of scenes, McArone was creating an exaggerated, hyperbolic world that stayed internally consistent and chronological.

McArone was writing a series of humor pieces; Fuller and Adams took their journalistic responsibilities, their job as recorders of history, quite seriously. The opposing intentions of these various dispatches (Fuller and Adams seek factual immediacy while McArone offers diversion from American troubles, couched as international news) suggest the value of tone as a register for interpreting historical perspective. However, differences between humorous hyperbole and earnest emotion become increasingly blurry within analyses (like those here) that highlight the constructed, symbolic nature of celebrity news. While international dispatches were assumed to be informative and, by virtue of their reportorial style, to provide representational accuracy, the blend of

ridiculousness and cultural insight that are hallmarks of McArone's reports demonstrate the craftedness and creative possibility of all war dispatches, even those as heartfelt as Fuller's famous reports from Rome. All the authors examined here make linguistic choices about how to represent an iconic Italy they both imagine and experience. In each example, such crafting serves to develop and support a celebrity Italy—an imagined national persona with broad cultural appeal, conveying a feeling of inevitability and contingency at once. Ultimately, it may be that the figure of iconic Italy allowed citizens to imagine that history might be constituted by such a combination. By presenting a historical contradiction (inevitability and possibility at war) through a figural metaphor amendable to such paradoxical formulations, iconic Italy could contain multitudes with very different perspectives on and relations to historical change. Indeed, the following chapter will take up in greater detail the formal implications of historical rupture, expressed through several late-century authors.

War-time dispatches were obviously intended to convey a powerful sense of immediacy and reportorial urgency; additionally, part of this genre's appeal was its insistence on the historically-singular, privileged position of the reporter. The suggestion of knowingness conveyed by an "insider" report—often the result of a hurried, seemingly-unmediated style—was widely perceived as the most authentic and thus desirable tonal register for news.²⁷ In exploring periodical writing, specifically the foreign (war) dispatch, a few elements prove essential to the genre: an investment rhetorical and formal immediacy, the inclusion of celebrity interaction, and the use of a strong reportorial personality to organize history. Moreover, the tonal distinctions I trace throughout place emphasis on linguistic elements in these letters; for each writer, a calibrated, recognizable version of events conveys authorial responses or values, such as amusement, excitement, disdain, and earnest concern.

The insistence on, and elevated value of, an exclusive perspective for the letters—each author, as we shall see, uses tone as a distinguishing and essential element marking the uniqueness of perspective—was likewise an important element of antebellum celebrity; the dispatches, like celebrity news stories, fed what Baker characterizes as “a growing hunger for just such insider information, along with a complimentary appetite for communion with genius and fame” (6). It was not just the desire for news that was fed by Fuller’s assertions of insider access or Adams’s fervent attempts to gain such; in addition, information from the “real” Italy allowed American readers to imagine that they were communing with the spirit of Italy’s republican desires and with charismatic heroes of the revolution like Mazzini and Garibaldi (and, momentarily, the liberal Pope Pius IX). What was the character of those communions, and what did they permit the reader to feel or to imagine?

II.

Without question, Margaret Fuller was invested in the political independence and cultural progress of Italy. Her foreign dispatches, collected in their entirety by Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith in *These Sad but Glorious Days*, are thirty-seven in number and cover more than 300 pages of type-set print; the final dispatch, dated 6 January 1860, was published in the *Tribune* on 13 February 1850, approximately six months before Fuller’s death in July.²⁸ In the letters she wrote as Horace Greeley’s international correspondent (the first American woman to hold such a position officially), Fuller demonstrates her linguistic competence in Italian, French, and Latin, her grasp of the political situation in 1840s republican Rome, and her intimate knowledge of many of history’s grand players, including Giuseppe Mazzini, Adam Mickiewicz, Alessandro Manzoni, Princess Belgiojoso of Milan, and many others.

Fuller's dispatches from Rome, where she lived for almost three years between 1847 and 1850, are the most well-known Italian war dispatches in American media history, while Fuller remains one of antebellum America's greatest unsung cosmopolites. In "Margaret Fuller's American Translation," Colleen Boggs claims that Fuller's translational methodology in the dispatches "enabled Fuller to define cultural identity as a model of personhood that depends on a dialogue with others in a nation whose culture emerges in global contexts."²⁹ Leslie E. Eckel's "Margaret Fuller's Conversational Journalism" echoes Boggs's emphasis on method and its dialogic potential: "Fuller's 'conversational' approach to journalism . . . encourages the productive juxtaposition of ostensibly diverging viewpoints and generates a drive to seek common ground, whether linguistic or political."³⁰ Both Boggs and Eckel use the content of the dispatches in developing their analysis—their attention is on the material included (translated news items and pamphlets, the "pedagogical rhetoric" and productive national comparisons Eckel emphasizes).

Certainly, Fuller's dispatches articulate a cosmopolitan ethics, include a rich array of useful translations, and demonstrate a rhetorical stance both pedagogical and didactic (Eckel, 29-32). At the level of content, the letters are unquestionably well-informed, offering readers of the *Tribune* information that was extremely detailed and complete. At the level of tone, however, Fuller's dispatches tend toward abstraction and grandiosity, resisting the comforts of imaginative intimacy in favor of political polemic. For all her insider access, Italy remains distant, cerebral, and detached; for all her earnest appeals to American readers for financial subscriptions, cultural solidarity, and national recognition in the name of Italy, Fuller does not provide many figures with whom American readers might identify, including, at times, the correspondent herself.

Fuller's constructed persona in the dispatches can seem, ironically for the genre, distant from the reader and the events she describes. Reynolds's claims of Fuller's journalistic style that "the pull toward the center, toward totalizing abstraction, was often countered by the pull toward

particular human experiences. . . . She felt drawn to the personal, human implications of subjective vision.”³¹ While the Roman dispatches do occasionally make mention of specific human companions or political actors, the particularity Reynolds highlights is regularly deployed for broader, often nationalist ends. Fuller has ambitious goals for her dispatches, and saw them extending the pedagogical and reformatory agendas of her more general writings for the *Tribune*.³² At times, she has a specific, immediate end, as when reminding readers that Italy, “naturally so rich, but long racked and impoverished by her oppressors, greatly needs money to arm and clothe her troops”; certainly, Fuller amends, “some token of sympathy, too, from America would be welcome. If there were a circle of persons inclined to trust such to me, I might venture to promise the trust should be used to the advantage of Italy” (259). Fuller solicits and offers to administer a concrete financial investment in Italy’s revolution while declaring her ability to confer as well, a more abstract form of support in America’s sympathy and its “religious faith in the progress of ideals” (259).

Fuller’s tendency to magnify even her most important personal interactions to the higher plane of history is striking in her first portrait of Mazzini, a description that appeared in the *New York Tribune* on 19 February 1847. Although biographical accounts tend to emphasize Fuller’s intimacy with Mazzini based on mutual admiration, her dispatch description of Mazzini is folded into a discussion of British charitable education, effectively rendering Mazzini a side-note in a reformatory agenda. The charismatic, fervent Italian revolutionary is stripped of his human particularity in Fuller’s historical romance, becoming instead a symbol. “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” (98). Although she makes a seeming effort for a universal address (“those among us” interested in something as broad as human freedom), the latter clause reveals that Fuller is imagining that

audience in distinctly American terms: her appeal on behalf of “struggling nations . . . preparing for a similar struggle” connects the revolutionaries of Europe to those esteemed in American historical consciousness. Over and over again, Fuller and other observers of Italy associate current Italian struggle with that of America’s revolutionary citizens.

Fuller’s interactions with Mazzini himself, a mythic hero that few Americans had the chance to encounter in person, are immediately subsumed into the conventional nationalist structure equating America and Italy that valued the Italian independence movement insofar as it flattered American political systems. Mazzini, the recognizable and knowable historical personage, is likewise subsumed into Fuller’s personal mythos; at one point, she blends her praise with the words of Schiller to characterize the Italian revolutionary.³³ While such a description might have seemed appropriate to Fuller, the stylistic and conceptual complexity of the sentence in which it appears makes this portrait more distracting than informative. Moreover, it is so distinctly Fullerized that the point about Mazzini becomes muddled; that is, Fuller overwhelms the description with her own personality, her national reputation as highly educated and internationally inclined taking rhetorical center-stage as Mazzini is pushed to the wings, another observer of Fuller’s intellectual prowess. Fuller is mediating the news by offering herself as exemplary revolutionary theorist.³⁴

Even a turn toward the more specific is ultimately unsatisfying for conveying a representative sense of Mazzini as a human being with whom Fuller shared many conversations.³⁵ Describing him with (ostensibly) more detail in subsequent paragraphs, Fuller asserts that curious readers will find in Mazzini’s writings “an ardent friend speaking of his martyred friends” with “purity of impulse, warmth of sympathy, largeness and steadiness of view and fineness of discrimination” (99). Certainly, her praise for Mazzini’s political and cultural commitments is genuinely warm; however, there is also a curious standardization at work in her descriptions.

Mazzini seems emptied out of all but the most conventional revolutionary emotions: “ardent” love for the fallen, clarity of mind and vision, purity of action. Perhaps the most detailed characterization—of Mazzini’s thoughts shining “with mild and steady radiance”—remains firmly situated in a quasi-messianic register.

Fuller situates her daily experiences and Italy’s dramatic political events into the same grand historical narrative. At times, elements of her personal experience³⁶ are treated with an almost ostentatious circumspection, casting Fuller herself as a tragic heroine. Writing after six months in the country, she laments in 1848 that “I left what was most precious that I could not take with me; still it was a compensation that I was again to see Rome” (238). As the notes remind modern readers, Fuller had left a child (the resulting of her romance with Angelo Ossoli) in the countryside outside Rome; her family, in December of 1848, did not yet know of this child’s existence. Fuller’s choice to refer to these developments in distracting, mythically poetic language seems at once to elevate her life to epic status and to obscure the details of whatever dramatic suffering and renunciation they entail.

The combination of the familiar and the grandiose is usually understood as a way for Fuller to personalize national history.³⁷ It also (at the same time) conveys the opposite effect: the increasingly subjective register in which Fuller reports the news works as well to abstract the writer and her subjects. Fuller’s dispatches hold these historical scales in tension. While she offers her own emotional responses to the events she describes, the letters most often convey a sort of messianic grandiosity, as Fuller exhorts her American audience to “feel right” and act right toward Italy.

The dispatches often lack any sense of intimate knowledge or attachment, despite being saturated by Fuller’s individual personality. In fact, the distance between Fuller and her audience, and between Americans and Romans, is exacerbated by Fuller’s construction of herself as ultimate

witness and prophet of revolutionary Rome. Descriptions of both Garibaldi and Mazzini work in this way, too, establishing each man as a virtual superman of history, ready, in Fuller's description of Garibaldi, "to do, to dare, to die."

This abstraction is an element of Fuller's style that critics do not often dwell on; to linger in the messianic space of the dispatches is to encounter a vaguely unpleasant Fuller, a highly-educated, densely allusive individual with a serious superiority streak. Although this pose is mediated somewhat by the actual historical conditions, it also grows out of them: Fuller's awareness that she is indeed participating in momentous events seems to invoke both her ambition and her pedagogical impulses. As winter of 1848 descends, ushering in the brief life of the Roman Republic (February to July 1849), a letter dated 2 December claims, "of all this great drama I have much to write, but elsewhere in a more full form. . . . The materials are over-rich. I have bought my right in them by much sympathetic suffering; yet, amid the joys and tears of Italy, 't is joy to see some glorious new births" (237). This is Fuller at her most illustratively contradictory: aware of the limitations conferred upon her writing because of the drama of the situation, Fuller is both pleasingly celebratory and sympathetic, but also unable to resist an assertion of her singular fitness as recorder: "I have bought my right in them by much sympathetic suffering."

One aspect of the celebrity icon is her relation to suffering: the icon displays a disorienting capacity to embody and purge suffering from herself and the audience. In Herwitz's description of the audience of sympathetic sufferers, "desiring reconciliation, they also desire more opera, they are a Roman public fixated with lust for death. . . . Every celebrity is an object of some sort of ambivalence" (29). He calls this appeal a "combination of glow and pain" (30). I think we can easily see such a contradictory imagination in Fuller's accounts of revolutionary Rome; indeed, she even claims her own place in posterity for future work with these "over-rich" materials.

Characterizing Fuller's as one version of iconic Italy offers a lens through which we might see more

clearly the historical and fantastical elements so thoroughly mixed together by the dispatches. In part, Fuller imagines the suffering of Italy (and hers simultaneously) to have earned her something, to be a future-oriented commodity: those over-rich materials will yield much intellectual fruit “elsewhere.” Does that mean Fuller took selfish pleasure in Italy’s trials? I don’t think I have to claim that to be the case to highlight how neatly this version of sympathy and abjection aligns with the iconic figure.

Fuller herself, of course, would come to be associated with tragedy and sympathetic suffering too following her drowning death within sight of the American shore. As Fuller came to reflect some of the iconic, historical tragedy she sees in Italy, so is Fuller’s version of Italy made in her own image: cerebral, romantic, and tragic. As Catholic French troops pour into Rome to save it for the Pope, Fuller’s dispatches become increasingly radical and desperate. She works among the wounded in Rome’s “Hospital of the Fate Bene Fratelli,” continues to translate relevant revolutionary documents for American readers, and begins to articulate her disappointment as the Republic crumbles. Late in June 1849, Fuller expresses a fantasy about dying in the siege: “In the evening, tis pretty, though a terror, to see the bombs, fiery meteors, springing from the horizon line upon their bright path to do their wicked message. Twould not be so bad, meseems, to die of one of these, as wait to have every drop of pure blood, every child-like radiant hope, drained and riven from the heart by the betrayals of nations and individuals” (302). This is Fuller at her most sympathetically suffering and her most dramatically tragic; this is Fuller imaging herself tied to a doomed but historically useful Rome. In her final letter of 6 January 1850, she is uncompromising: “every man who assumes an arbitrary lordship over fellow man, must be driven out. It will be an uncompromising revolution” (321). Finally, Margaret Fuller’s intellectualized, heartbreaking Rome shows her an American future unwelcome but inevitable; if her readers were too apt to dismiss these late prophecies as, perhaps, “over-rich,” so much the worse for them. In contra-distinction to

Fuller's tragic Rome, Henry Adams offered a jocular Italy of vigorous fighters and eager nationalism, filled with famous politicians and artists with whom easy intimacy was always possible.

III.

Henry Adams has ever been difficult for scholars of American literature and students of history to characterize with consistency. This is partially a result of the sheer generic range Adams exhibited during a lifetime of textual output.³⁸ Additionally, the difficulty of placing Adams within a particular historical and political moment stems from his status as a kind of ultimate cultural insider: never to hold political office, Adams spent much of his life as an interpreter and secretary to other, more politically active members of his famous family. This position inside the operations of power, but not of those operations, is one reason why so much scholarly time and effort has gone into collecting and interpreting his letters.³⁹

Letters written to family members during Adams's first journey abroad fall into two distinct categories: in the first, letters to his mother and brother that are intended for private distribution. Those from Italy often contain long, chatty discussions of family dramas, reporting on family and friends in Europe, recording of the comings and goings of American travelers and expatriates. These tend to be casual in tone, detailed in intimate particulars and personal reflection, and often reflect the private emotions of their young writer. In a letter of 30 April announcing his Roman arrival, Adams confides to his mother: "I . . . feel dreadfully adrift in this old grave-yard of a city. It's the mournfulest hole you ever conceived of, and at my table d'hote everyone is dying and talks about it, while at the hotel there have been four deaths in a month. . . . I feel utterly lost here" (*LHA*, 134). The next letter sent home indicates this abjection to have been fleeting, the complaints and concerns of an adolescent far from home. By the first week of May, Adams is

ejaculating enthusiastically, “Lord bless me! I have never enjoyed myself so much in all my life. I never felt so well and happy as I do in this splendid weather and this delicious climate” (138).

Presented alongside Adams’s informal records of friends and touristic pleasures are collected letters to his brother Charles Francis Adams, published by the latter in the *Boston Courier* between April and July of 1860. Although the *Courier’s* “H.B.A.” sent only seven letters for publication, their length and clarity make them valuable reports on Italian revolutionary situation. Moreover, Adams’s timing couldn’t have been more perfect: traveling the peninsula in the fevered months before Italy’s official declaration of independence, the young correspondent records the final days of imperial military might throughout Italy. Letters from Venice, Bologna, Rome, Naples, and Sicily all document the presence of soldiers, the disappointments and enthusiasms of revolution. In Venice, Adams observes, “Commerce is dead or nearly so. So far as I can see, everything is consumption and nothing production. The army and the strangers must support the place now. How far the annexation would alter the state of things, or Napoleon’s idea of an Italian Confederation, is a matter of guess-work” (120); as for Padua, Adams finds it “dreadfully mournful. . . . The old University is closed, all the students having taken to politics, and thus one great support of the place is cut off. . . . Instead of students a regiment of Hungarian cavalry is stationed in the city and one hears at every corner the jingle of spurs and the clink of sabres along the pavement” (123).

Unlike Margaret Fuller, who similarly documents the daily details of military action through personal impression, Adams often approaches fraught moments with a kind of skepticism and levity that Fuller is unable to marshal. While Fuller turns every sight, sound, and event into grand historical drama, Adams displays a markedly personal relation to the players and scenes of revolutionary Italy. In Tuscany at the opera, Adams finds himself in a familiar situation, surrounded by well-known and powerful men who understand themselves to be participating in

history. “It was a very lively, pleasant evening; like the Savoy colors, all pink and white. Everyone looked pretty and was mildly excited. I was at first a little alarmed at finding myself in the middle of a theatre—full of princes and counts and famous characters; it’s not that often that one has the chance to see so many famous men together, and men with names more famous than themselves” (131). Adams makes himself the subject of mild humor, poking fun not at the self-importance of the Italian elite but at his own; it is not only the variety of famous men that impresses Adams, but also the number of them whose political celebrity eclipses Adams’s family name. Here, Adams operates in an ironic, self-assured tonal register that proves one of the collection’s most appealing and original elements.

As with his emotionally inconsistent letters to mother, Adams’s dispatches to the *Courier* are often contradictory, a circumstance that has the effect of making them seem more genuine; as immediate news from the Italian front, this hurried veracity, the tendency of Adams to convey powerful feelings of the moment, makes his reports seem more accurate because they are more personal.⁴⁰ Additionally, Adams treats every experience and bit of news as a familial intimacy, subject of gossipy evenings and minor denigrations. A reader’s sense of Victor Emmanuel II, the newly declared King of Italy, benefits from the fact that Adams describes him twice in very different ways. In Florence in April, Adams asserts of the King that “‘il Nostro Re [our King]’ looked like a very vulgar and coarse fancy-man, prize-fighter, or horse-jockey. He was in civil clothes. . . I began to think that my admiration for him, not only as a soldier but also as a King, must have sprung from some mistaken or false information” (129). A few days later, however, Adams finds the King a more inspiring sight: “The first equipage we met was that of the King. . . It was a great improvement. He did not look so rowdy, and did look much more intellectual than I had supposed at first sight” (131). Although Fuller’s description of Mazzini seems to contain more specific detail about the quality of Mazzini’s political and social commitments, the sense of il

Nostro Re offered by Adams more closely resembles an actual person. Mazzini is elevated immediately into caricature of revolutionary virtue and morality, while the new King of Italy is instead acknowledged to have moments of both grandeur and disappointment; in fact, Adams's initial response to the spectacle of Victor Emmanuel is attributed to too much false information, too great a volume of anticipatory public praise of the very type Fuller offers. From Adams, we get an apparently unstudied intimacy stemming from the writer's embrace of contradiction and his ability to convey the different impressions of distinct moments. Instead of telling his readers how and where and in what capacity to imagine the King as an historical hero, Adams presents him just as "large as life," no larger (*LHA*, 129).

The sense of Adams as an individual with vacillating responses to historical moments renders the events he describes more human, perhaps less "historical," because less abstract. Adams sometimes complains of his own traveler's woes, describes days both good and bad, and vents his frustration about the news system in which he is enmeshed. Lamenting his obligation to report the freshest news from Italy in May 1860, Adams avers, "If you are curious about Roman politics, I'm sorry that I can tell you next to nothing. Since that 'terrible massacre' some three months ago, more or less, which the Times correspondent frightened the world by coloring, Rome has been quiet" (*LHA*, 145). While Adams recognizes his reportorial purpose—and attempts to excuse his dearth of news—he likewise criticizes a reportorial situation he views as loose and often inaccurate. He later expresses a kind of confusion about his role in all the historical drama he pursues, writing from Sicily on 9 June 1860, "as I'm not writing a history of events but only an account of a flying visit to the city, there's no use in my repeating what everyone has heard" (164). It seems as though mythologizing is acceptable (especially if offered with a bit of healthy reflection), but fear-mongering and banality are both improper, at least for his audience of sympathetic American readers.⁴¹

Adams's sense of political action, his interest in the concrete details of governance, conveys a knowingness about the daily operations of power that seems at once more intimate and more accurate than Fuller's grandiose construction of good and evil. Adams is both unencumbered and nuanced enough as an observer to comment on the practicalities of imperial rule as well as the appeal of revolutionary hopes. Assenting that "of course, [we] wish luck to the 'rissorgimento,'"⁴² Adams continues: "but that is really no reason why the Pope or the King of Naples should allow his people to riot and rebel. . . . I don't like the government, I wish it were reversed or at least altered, but if the people are not strong enough to throw it off, I'm glad to see the pope strong enough to check street disturbances" (145). A summary such as this one displays a particular relation to sovereign power, one that accepts its oppressions as a necessary evil within a particular, concrete context. The Italian population becomes an undifferentiated, unacknowledged set of manageable bodies. This is not abstraction like that we have seen in Fuller's assertive departicularizing of individuals, but a distinction of focus: Adams recognizes that a particular Italian population exists, but directs his attention to managing them, not rendering them heroic.

It's not that Adams supports the disgraced Pope or the much-ballyhooed King of Naples; he displays an awareness of collective discipline and management that highlights his education in governmental power. Adams speaks of the need to control an unruly populace as one might discuss rowdy schoolchildren or a litter of puppies; if he seems to side here with power, not with revolution, it may be because his personal and familial experiences have made him intimately comfortable with the decisions made by rulers of men. Sympathetic to the needs of sovereign power here, Adams later expresses boredom and dissatisfaction that order is being so scrupulously maintained. Again mingle the desire of a vigorous youth to live the drama of his age with the sage perspective of American political royalty.⁴³

In Adams's public letters, we can see the influence of his private life. Adams is simultaneously amused and invigorated by his proximity to influential individuals and the sense of historical danger saturating Italy. As a member of one of America's most elite ruling families, the *Courier's* correspondent treats his proximity and access to powerful men as a given, claiming to feel personally affronted by the tedium of his Roman setting: "I feel a sense of personal injury and wrong that everything should be so quiet here. One might just as well live on the Sandwich Islands" (154). Adams's goal is ultimately entertainment (for himself and for readers both private and public) instead of reform or proselytizing.

By late May, Roman wandering has become deeply unsatisfying to Adams, who is experienced enough in political upheaval to discern a calm before the storm. "One may congratulate himself, I suppose, on living in stirring times, indeed, to a certain degree, heroic time. And here I am directly in the center of it, and what good do I get of it?" he asks from Rome; "there is a great deal of seething and boiling in quiet, but to me the eternal city is more than even eternal in it's ruins, it's priests, and it's beggars" (sic, 153). Young, robust, and in contact with local American military officers, Adams decides to do something historical after all: "I thought of something new, something splendid," he writes to Charles in an unpublished letter of early June, "I would see a great drama of the world's history; I would take at last a part in the excitement of the day. I am going to Palermo. This is what I call a glorious lark. You may hear from me again as I must see something worth telling" (161). Again, Adams de-emphasizes the material struggles and conditions of a general population in favor of pursuing a lark in the company of military power. Adams's family biography makes these pursuits intimate, "insider" material instead of fodder for historical romance.

For Adams, access to moments of high historical drama are his inheritance, a condition of his individual existence. In some ways, Adams was a special case among American foreign

correspondents: relatively untried as a writer or an international diplomat, Adams is nevertheless provided with column inches for his reports. Furthermore, his family name makes it possible for him to embark impulsively on a Sicilian “lark,” entrusted with private military communiqués.

Fuller might well be considered a special case, though with distinctly different associations. As the first female war correspondent, Fuller could be appreciated both for her bravery and for the (presumably) sympathetic, emotionally-charged perspective she offered. Such a precarious position is dramatized and dismissed by Fuller when she reports from Rome under siege in late May 1849: “I am alone in the ghostly silence of a great house, not long since full of gay faces and echoing with gay voices, now deserted by everyone but me—for almost all foreigners are gone now” (*SGD*, 284). After introducing a gothic moment direct from Poe’s “Masque of the Red Death,” Fuller goes on to deflate this effect in order to praise Italian revolutionary character: “I go from one end [of Rome] to the other, and where the poorest and most barbarous of the population (barbarously ignorant, I mean) alone and on foot. . . . The Roman, no longer pent in ignorance and crouching beneath espionage, no longer stabs in the dark” (*SGD*, 284). Fuller makes the most of her personal assets here: setting a scene that depends for its drama upon her vulnerability, the wise and clear-eyed observer turns that drama into a political lesson: those are bad who have no other choice; revolution will set our moral compasses to rights.

Although Adams’s casual relationship to the political elite was not a birthright for many Americans in Italy, and Fuller’s ability to manipulate both gender assumptions and political ones was likewise uncommon for reporters, the expectation that chroniclers of the Risorgimento would witness momentous events and offer personalized versions of them was a common one. In a recent re-evaluation of N.P. Willis, one of mid-century’s most notorious celebrity gossips, Thomas N. Baker brings together commercial and emotional elements of public attention: “the marker for access to renown, in both the Old and New Worlds, assumed an enhanced scope of intensity . . .

in which fame is both a durable commodity and inseparable from public attention to personality” (7). Both Adams and Fuller enjoy such access to renown, and we have begun to see how their distinct personalities filtered the intense historical dramas they pursued. Moreover, the particular emotional components of their experiences allowed both Fuller and Adams to assume the role of cultural mediators with a deeply personal touch; as the lucky ones with exceptional access to momentous events, each writer was able to “share a depth and variety of feeling exhibited to only a special few” (Baker 10).

In maintaining a balance, even a precarious one, between private circumstance and public events, both Adams and Fuller participate in a particular version of historical acting; describing the rise of figures such as Byron or Napoleon, Braudy argues, “by exposing the uncertain line between public and private nature, their self-stagings implied that buried in each spectator was a greatness that could be exposed for public display and fascination” (401). All three of our writers display an awareness that their private natures could advance public causes; in also imagining Italy itself as a celebrity figure, I am further suggesting that Fuller, Adams, and even McArone also used their personal Italian impressions and experiences to present distinct versions of Italy’s more “private nature,” those small intimacies that encourage public fascination. Each one uses public figures to present private impressions, although a fixed sense of Italy remains just out of reach.

Indeed, no observer could comprehensively access what we might imagine as the personality of the revolution. Again, Braudy’s history helps us to see why: attempting to describe this fascinating mix, Braudy ruminates, “one trait that stands out is the seeming elusiveness of character. . . . However public they are, all convey an atmosphere of solitude and self-sufficiency to which their admirers and supporters are drawn without quite knowing why” (401). Fuller tries to fix the character of the Roman Revolution—and related satellite insurgencies in Italy—by including dozens of pages translated from current political proclamations,⁴⁴ but her status as woman and

outsider limits her access to powerful individuals as military action and a nascent government over sweep Rome.

Likewise, Adams's visit to Palermo, the first American interactions with Garibaldi after his successful Southern campaign, are yet too late to provide more than summary and the impressions of aftermath. Landing in Sicily on 9 June 1860, Adams reports, "when I arrived, the lively part of the campaign was over. The shops are still shut and the city still in arms, but there was no more fighting. . . . It was now comparatively respectable to what it had been, and the dead bodies and disgusting sights had been cleared away" (165-66). Adams expresses an historical desire for the "lively part," even the disrespectable moments, of revolution, and at the same time reports his relief that the material effects of revolution have since been cleared aside.

Even his audience with the Great Dictator is tempered by a sort of disappointment; after the most dramatic moments of armed insurgency, Garibaldi is again a man, physically compelling but privately unassuming. Unused to instinctive hero-worship, Adams finds Garibaldi to have great companionable potential but to lack historical gravitas: "As he sat there laughing and chattering and wagging his red-grey beard, and puffing away at his cigar, it seemed to me that one might feel all the respect and admiration that his best friends ask, and at the same time yet enter a protest against fate" (169). This protest is not, Adams imagines, one against his difficult life or military struggles, but against the very process of historical celebrity: "Heaven knows why he of all men, has been selected for immortality" (168).

Adams's position as cultural insider affects his ability to distance himself from personal attachments so as to report history; that is, the American's casual, lifelong relationship to political command means that Adams is more responsive to individual men and less likely to be unilaterally impressed by power as such. The sorts of mercenary soldiers Fuller casts as brutal oppressors of the righteous are described by Adams in strikingly different terms, for example: "Of course one

ought to hate a mercenary soldier, and especially one of the King of Naples' [sic]. Very likely I should have hated him if he had been coarse and brutal, but as he was very handsome, young, and well-bred . . . the thing was different" (171). The man Adams meets in the royal barracks might be himself—young, well-bred, "an extraordinarily gentlemanly fellow," educated, rich. Garibaldi, coarse and funny and approachable, is unimpressive; the young Swiss mercenary a kindred spirit who, by some accident of birth, just happens to be on the wrong side of dictatorial power.

As Braudy has suggested, individual uses of celebrity symbols are often deployed as a means to reinterpret history under newly-useful terms.⁴⁵ Fuller is perhaps too close to the phenomena she describes, concurrently invested in reforming readers and creating the version of history she believes to be morally correct. Adams is, on the other pole, almost too casual of an observer, whose personal ease with powerful men and his familial habits of communication render his reports too intimate, too parlor-room.

We have already seen the ways an historical individual like Garibaldi can become a broadly circulating symbol, the ultimate figure of romantic revolution. Further, we have briefly explored ways in which this individual, as a symbol, is put to different interpretive uses for our two writers. As Scott-inspired hero and charming, if quotidian, soldier, Garibaldi as an icon of Italian revolution is already being re-packaged and reissued in his own time to understand history itself.

Adams even reflects upon a theory of historical symbology. Why lionize Garibaldi, or Victor Emmanuel, he asks, and not another man like Cavour, whom Adams describes as "the greatest man in Europe" (130)? Ultimately, Adams recognizes the role of the image itself, the function of the individual package, as essential for processes of historical memory-making: "in his red shirt [he] looked like the very essence and genius of revolution, as he is" (169). Fuller similarly picks up on the image of the red-shirted revolutionary to situate her sense of the revolution's history. Confronted with "the flower of Italian youth. . . . [Who] had all put on the beautiful dress

of the Garibaldi legion, the tunic of bright red cloth,” Fuller invokes the great historical romancer Walter Scott (304), suggesting the degree to which image and historical meaning are intertwined.

Adams’s version of Italy is far removed from Fuller’s. The former highlights Italy’s youthful revolutionary vigor and potential, making of war a pleasant jaunt, empty of “disgusting sights,” filled instead with charming companions and the free pleasures of the political insider. The casual, familial Italy Adams constructs for readers imagines, by implication, that America and Italy might operate as international fellows; if not national equals, the two are at least mutually beneficial. Indeed, Adams’s final lines from Sorrento on 15 June 1860, affirms the salutary effect of Italy upon human nature itself: “we have ourselves something good and immortal in us, which Italy calls out and strengthens” (178).

For both Fuller and Adams, individual biography affects what version of history they imagine: working within the same iconography of uniform and revolutionary meaning, the two identify very different implications for those images. In this chapter’s final example, I turn to a fictional correspondent, an invented individual whose purpose appears to be to intentionally confuse and fictionalize history itself. In the columns of McArone, all manner of historical and cultural symbols mingle promiscuously. Moreover, the status of these columns as humor makes their purpose and meaning especially complex. In part, of course, the aggressive absurdity of these symbolic mash-ups is purely for entertainment. However diverting, the dispatches are also constructing and presenting a version of Italian history with clear interpretive angles and intentions. The McArone dispatches at once defamiliarize and domesticate the Italian revolution, rendering the Italian revolution a disordered double of the American civil war; at the same time, McArone crafts himself as ultimate war-hero persona and military celebrity.

IV.

Between 1859 and 1863, brothers Henry Louis and William Allen Stephens edited the original American iteration of *Vanity Fair Magazine*.⁴⁶ In the magazine's first issue, the editors offer the following description for their "new literary edifice": "VANITY FAIR will be a humorous and satirical paper. A pleasant tonic to be taken once a-week by the public. A corrective for what seems to us to be at present a rather dyspeptic state of society." Despite this initial appeal to humor and pleasure, the editors go on to highlight the "corrective" aspect of their endeavor above all others. "The true mission of a satirical paper . . . is not extermination but reformation. . . . As a model, we can propose to ourselves none better than one of the knights of the old chivalric days. . . . All that is good and pure we shall salute as we go by."⁴⁷

These introductory remarks position the editors and writers of *Vanity Fair* between a major opposition in studies of political humor, especially humor circulated during war. According to Jan R uger, "the first [theory of political humor], strongly influenced by Bakhtin, sees laughter as intrinsically subversive and in conflict with authority."⁴⁸ By contrast, in an alternative understanding of humor, "it is easy to see Freud's and Bergson's influence here: humour [sic] constituted a 'safety valve' that reduced dissatisfaction. Public laughter, in this reading, was decidedly not a form of carnivalesque subversion" (27). The *Vanity Fair* declaration partakes of both: in suggesting their major goal as "reformation," the editors suggest an oppositional attitude to the political and social status quo, that "rather dyspeptic state." At the same time, the role of knight-errant, salutor of "all that is good and pure," is more often associated with political support for socio-political institutions (of a monarch, for example) than with attacks on the state. *Vanity Fair* immediately presents itself as a middle-ground between two poles, and highlights what R uger characterizes as "the main point about laughter: its inherent ambiguity and resistance to institutionalization" (26). If *Vanity Fair* announces its intentions as a purveyor of ambiguous, multi-directional satire (which I believe it does), it does so in a mode we could classify as dialectical. This mode and purpose for humor has

already its observers and theorizers. Marc Silberman offers one such useful articulation of this perspective: “the comic is a capacious concept that might even be equated with contradiction or the dialectic as such.”⁴⁹ Although Silberman’s Brecht ends up on the “subversive” end of the opposition I have just described,⁵⁰ his argument articulates the power of a humorous dialectic, or play of ambiguities, already expressed in *Vanity Fair*’s introductory column.

The sense of humor as ambiguous or dialectic⁵¹ is a useful rubric for our encounter with McArone, who simultaneously ridicules and celebrates European political figures like Garibaldi, Count Cavour, Pope Pius IX, and Louis Napoleon, as well as Americans including Abraham Lincoln, James Buchanan, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Furthermore, McArone’s patently outrageous military exploits are marked by their ambivalence as well as their exaggeration. In a magazine that advertised prosthetic limbs for home-bound soldiers, McArone’s very first column opens with this admission: “I lost my right arm in the engagement . . . and have been forced to learn to write with my left. Having, if I may be allowed to say it, left my right hand on the field, my left is now my right-hand arm, the right having left me without a hand to write with.”⁵² This excerpt is fairly typical of McArone’s columns in several ways. The tendency for word-games and punning is a constant of the columns, as is the breezy tone and authorial self-consciousness. Acknowledging the egregiousness of his punning with the aside “if I may,” McArone charges right on ahead with what’s left of his amputation joke. Similarly, the common and much-maligned practice of taking war spoils is routinely mocked by *Vanity Fair*’s intrepid correspondent; claiming to have “had a splendid time” pillaging, McArone boasts to his readers, “if you want any gold pens and things, let me know.”⁵³ During a pitched battle “in Bleeker, Chestnut, and Carmine streets,” McArone even robs a corpse: “seeing the body of an officer high in rank, lying in a little blind alley, I, who am naturally economical, went to it, to see whether there might not be a valuable gold watch, or diamond ring, to save.”⁵⁴

In these examples, it is difficult to articulate clearly the source (or perhaps even to find the existence) of the column's humor. On one hand, scenes such as that narrated above, in which McArone is saved by a beautiful woman married to another military-man, might act as the "safety-valve" Rüger describes, rendering a soldier's motivations and his action's outcome cartoonishly innocent and hapless. On the other hand, the columns work consistently to portray their author as heroic, ethical, and appropriately on the side of republican unity and national independence; that is, he is an agent of an American political status quo, fighting for Italian freedom against despotism. In fact, the ambiguity of his position is especially complex given the American political situation in which Union propaganda imagined the cause as one of broad national independence and equality, while the Confederacy often cast itself as David set against a despotic Goliath of Union government.

In the disordered American Italy McArone narrates, we are far distant from the clarity of Fuller's cries for monetary and ideological support, and far, too, from Adams's lighter but still ethically engaged reportage. Perhaps the most obvious difference between *Vanity Fair's* dispatches and those published in *The New York Tribune* and *The Boston Courier* is what I have already identified as tone. While Adams peppers his dispatches with gentle self-mockery and a lightly familial, intimate touch (his war against Italian fleas is a particularly consistent example of both these tendencies), such light-heartedness is a far cry from McArone's antic hilarity and his aggressive conflation of American scenes with Italian military history.

Writing about the excesses of modern political humor, Robert Grossman claims that "the ever abundant productions of imagination . . . are our real means of experiencing those other possible or impossible worlds. Imagination easily transcends time and space."⁵⁵ The world McArone invites readers to imagine is populated with real historical actors, though set in an unreal Italian-American composite.⁵⁶ In that combination, I find a useful articulation of the underlying

fantasy of attachment McArone dramatizes: what if Italy and the United States are the same place? Another way of expressing this question is to ask, following Braudy, what versions of collective identity are being developed or served in McArone's constant invocation of famous individuals? If famous people are "vehicles of cultural memory and cohesion [who] allow us to identify what's present with what's past" (15), how might celebrity Italy be reinterpreted by McArone for American cultural use? In closing, I want to suggest that, although outrageous, McArone's columns allow for a version of "cultural intimacy" mediated through famous political figures and linguistic play.³⁷ The audience with Garibaldi that Adams seeks so assiduously, and reports so completely, is utterly taken for granted in McArone's celebrity fantasies.

McArone's closest intimate during his Italian adventures is "Joe" Garibaldi, a kindred spirit and military companion. If one of the more compelling and novel aspects of antebellum, celebrity news-writing was the developing genre of the "insider report" (and the cultivation of an audience hungry for such access), McArone is an energetic conduit for such insider news. Indeed, as Ponce de Leon suggests, the columns' traffic in blatantly fake exclusivity need not diminish its appeal: "this inside dope itself might not be real—it can be, in fact, yet another image—but its packaging as news gives it more authority" (5). The particular combination the "Affairs in Italy" columns offer—a mix of insider perspective and obvious imaginative creation—make them especially useful for developing a casual, exaggerated intimacy to underlie this cross-cultural affection. Moreover, the paradoxical sense McArone's columns offer, their narration of quotidian events with exaggerated historical importance, connects them directly to contemporaneous conventions of celebrity culture. Finally, McArone's columns dramatize the ambivalence associated with political humor, but more specifically, they dramatize a distinctly Italian ambivalence with American implications. We might say that McArone splits the difference between Adams and Fuller: his Italy is filled with bloody battles and all manner of disgusting sights and tragic occurrences, but somehow still remains a

place of political intimacies and pleasures, of light amusements, mint juleps shared with Garibaldi or the Pope, and hilarious, manly larks around the Italian countryside.

In this chapter, I have imagined Italian revolutionary activities between 1848 and 1861 as a celebrity phenomenon; certainly, such imagining represents a deliberate tropism. However, viewing Italy as a celebrity figure is a perspective suggested by the historical record itself, from the rhetorical conventions underlying both antebellum celebrity culture and war-time dispatches as well as the cultivation, in the dispatches collected here, of an Italy made up of iconic symbols and charismatic individuals. In engaging with a celebrity Italy, Americans can both sympathize with and feel distant from the civic struggles of the emerging Italian nation. The icon figure offers a metaphor that holds in tension the fundamental paradoxes of my dispatch archive: excitement and despair, tragedy and beauty, the material results of war and its more abstract historical implications.

While Fuller and Adams demonstrate some interest in connecting an American political scene to an Italian revolutionary one, it is McArone who makes the stakes of this imagining clear. In his final column postdated from Italy, this hero of the Italian front writes, “I regret to learn you are enjoying a civil war at home. But I have some knowledge that may put a different face on affairs.”⁵⁸ In this moment, all McArone’s insider knowledge is offered up to help Americans navigate their own national tragedy.

Reporting on the development of an independent Italian state (an ongoing revolution with obvious international importance) each correspondent balances historical detail with a distinct representational style. Despite tonal distinctions—Fuller’s earnest and cerebral historical romancing, Adams’s jovial adventuring, McArone’s ambivalent boasting—each author also constructs an iconic Italy that embodies and dramatizes contradictions of personality. Tragic and banal, dangerous and weak, inspiring and pathetic: these are paradoxes of association that also underlie public fascination with famous (or notorious) individuals. The celebrity figure is a means

to hold together and represent consistently these contradictions. Indeed, the iconic celebrity gains public power from an ability to embody and hold together such representational paradoxes at once. In the succeeding chapter, I explore the aftermath of Italy's celebrity revolution. Having achieved the independence from imperial rule for which generations of Italians dreamed and struggled, citizens of the new nation found themselves in an unknown and extraordinary relationship with the present and the future. Surveying the new modern Italy, authors were often more uncertain than they were inspired by its changes. As we shall see, this uncertainty has, for some, particular linguistic implications.

Chapter Three:

Scratching at the Surface: Unified Italy and the Comforts of Style

Ruminating about the relation of satisfactory historical knowledge (which proves “too deep . . . for any ease of intellectual relation”) to superficial Italian pleasures (wherein “we hang about in the golden air,”) Henry James’s 1908 preface to *The Aspern Papers* details an interpretive impasse.¹ “So, right and left, in Italy—before the great historic complexity at least—penetration fails; we scratch at the extensive surface” (xxvii). I want to explore two different meanings for this passage that turn on two distinct interpretations of the preposition “before” in the clause set off by dashes: “before the great historic complexity at least.” Depending on whether one reads the preposition in spatial or temporal terms, James could be expressing resignation about the impossibility of ever moving beyond Italy, understood as a static site of aesthetic indulgence or proposing a historically situated, progressive version of the newly unified nation. In his regular invocation of Italy across the years and forms of his career, James makes that nation² a symbolic touchstone for meditations on memory, morality, art, pleasure, and politics. James was not alone in using Italy as metaphoric center for a philosophical universe, and we shall shortly explore two other authors—American regionalist Constance Fenimore Woolson and Italian stylist Gabriele D’Annunzio—who used fictionalized Italian settings as a stimulus for cultural reflection.

Reading “before” as a spatial preposition implies a species of immediate temporal singularity. Stunned into interpretive submission, the spectator stands and gapes. Here James hints at common perceptions of Italy as a compelling but fixed museum, a show for visitors, a storehouse of aesthetic pleasures unchanged by the rapid pace of post-bellum economic and technological development.³ By contrast, a temporal understanding of the preposition suggests

participation in historical process, the spectator's potential investment in interpretive development: prior to Italy's "great historical complexity," understanding that went beyond surface was bound to fail; after, penetration fails less often.

This instability highlights one of Italy's most appealing conceptual and ontological elements for Americans; Italy's uncertain status as a historical nation compliments an American desire to escape the strictures of nationhood. The contrast introduced in two distinct understandings of James's "before" thus carries national implications: does one understand the newly-sanctioned Italian state as a fully-formed national spectacle, or as the starting point in a national evolution-to-come? As the authors of chapter one turned from narrative to lyric poetry to register a more interpersonal connection to Italian scenes, so do the authors explored in this chapter embrace style in favor of the representational and temporal strictures of progressive plot. The vocabulary of style, attention to the conscious manipulation of language to achieve desired effects, becomes a productive lens for examining responses to Italian unification, a series of events I characterize as both an historical and a representational crisis.

Residents of the peninsula had long understood themselves to live in temporal limbo: beholden to but distant from a glorious past, they were likewise invested in the futural fantasy of unification. The arrival of an Italian state forced these citizens into an unprecedented relation with the present, requiring a new way to think about and articulate socio-cultural experience. In what follows, I claim that for some Italian authors as well as sympathetic Americans, one response to the changing character of Italy was the authors's increasing emphasis on literary surface and style at the expense of plot.⁴ In part, the utility of Italy for grounding explorations of style's relation to history depends on the juxtaposition of progressive history and immobilized aesthetics that Italy represented in an international popular imagination. Writing about Italian scenes and characters, authors could, implicitly or in manifest ways, mobilize a deep collective history of individual artistic

pleasures. Italy as subject always already offered the chance to engage with aestheticized versions of social history.

What I call “style” here most often refers to a writing that is ornamental or wrought: calling attention to itself through complexity or idiosyncrasy, demonstrating unusual grammatical or syntactic patterns, or conveying with particular force a mood or tone we might characterize in negative terms. Moreover, my analysis attends to specific linguistic “bits” that are traditionally understood to be grammatical: the idiosyncrasy or ornamentation I explore often result from syntactical irregularity or through the excessive or anomalous use of certain parts of speech (prepositions and pronouns in the case of James, verb forms in that of D’Annunzio).

Some paragraphs of *The Aspern Papers*’s preface support a reading of “before” as a spatial or locational preposition. James in fact uses “before” just so while making reference to exhibitions and spectators: “[Italy] is fortunately the exhibition in all the world *before which*, as admirers, we can most remain superficial without feeling silly” (xxviii, emphasis added). If we take the meaning of “before” in “before the great historic complexity” to be a spatial one, the passage in question would seem to argue that the failure of penetration, the condition of “scratch[ing] at the extensive surface” is a consistent and unchanging fact of Italian cultural interpretation. As an art admirer takes in a fresco’s details, so too does the admirer hoping to represent Italy confront “great historical complexity,” a kind of mosaic, historical projection before which she stands. Attention to Italy’s style can thus be understood as a kind of instantaneous attention to surface intricacy.⁵ This version of Italy is constituted by style in the sense of an exhibit or performance: distracted by the beauty of artifacts presented before us, this spectacle can be appreciated without requiring mastery of underlying depth. Indeed, such mastery is impossible given the complexity with which we are confronted, hence the assertion that “we” need not “fee[l] silly” in remaining superficial, “with the rest of the case stretching beyond our ken and escaping our penetration” (xxviii). In this version of

Italy, “the rest of the case,” what we might imagine as Italy’s layered historical detail, doesn’t just “escape” our penetration, but actively resists it by over-emphasizing a complexity of immediate detail (hence, for example, the Byzantine structures of quotidian political or institutional operations).

If we read James’s initial sentence as making a particular historical claim instead of a spatial one—if we understand “before” as marking a contrast to “after”—we might more easily reconcile this sentence with the preface’s general observations about historical representation, including James’s claim that “I delight in a palpable imaginable *visitable* past” (xxx). This second version of Italy depicts a place of depth, of complexity; moreover, it is an Italy of concrete, palpable material. Italy’s complexity becomes one of content: the past, imaginable and visitable, is distant from the present in a way that suggests layering. Indeed, James also likens this sense of historical layering to a “buried treasure . . . [a] grave unprofaned” (xxx) where the dramatist may dig without compunction.

In arriving at conflicting versions of time’s passage, a reader must reconcile the semantic intentions of James’s sentence with the larger tone and purpose of the rumination in which it appears, thereby engaging in the navigation between part and whole common to stylistic analysis.⁶ As Mary Cross defines it, “in the case of James [style is] a system of relations, a constellated field of verbal properties.”⁷ Cross’s definition evokes the image of a mosaic: separate bits (an unclear pronoun, an abstract subject, a spatial preposition) work in relation to build something coherent enough to be recognized as a “system.” Cross’s suggestion that attending to interactions between part and whole is one way to do the work of stylistic analysis is cast in slightly different language by Kevin Ohi, who asserts that “the term [style] marks a tension between particularity and abstraction, personality and impersonality.... style is at once what is most intimate about a writer and most inaccessible.”⁸ (20-21). Cross, Ohi, and others propose a definition of style that pivots between

generality and specificity. Style can be anything or everything; almost any facet of language use (syntax, vocabulary, grammar, clause ordering, narrative style, voice, to name a few) can become “idiosyncratic” (*Queerness*, 21) enough to register as particular to an individual. However, for any author, only some linguistic or rhetorical patterns emerge as consistent markers of specific style. In James, acknowledged tendencies toward referential obscurity, James’s “elusive and multivalent effects of syntax, figure, voice, and tone” (ibid, 2)—what another critic calls his “distinctive kind of vague allusiveness”⁹—represent a general understanding of his style. Given the consensus about Jamesian style,¹⁰ the interpretation of a particular preposition becomes an exercise in stylistic analysis to the extent that prepositional obscurity is recognized as one of the many ways James develops his idiosyncratic “allusiveness.”

Drawing attention to the immediate beauty of language and the distracting superficiality of ornate expression, authors offer style as a means for representing and contemplating Italy. In part, style is a reprieve from history because of its ability to resist mimetic or instrumental representation. In Ohi’s analysis, one of the most pressing functions of Jamesian style is its insistence on “disrupt[ing] the possibility of understanding representation in mimetic terms” (14). Style is thus correlative with a sense of presentism: the moment of a reader’s noticing style is a moment of disruption in the present, and we might further understand style to be developed for that very purpose. In its linguistic or tonal ostentation, style seeks instantaneous response. As we shall see in both James and D’Annunzio, language’s ability to convey a coherent impression or the “essence” of a subject is not necessarily dependent on representational accuracy understood as adherence to an experiential reality. Content, understood traditionally in literary works as plot or narrative development, instead suggests a temporal order. Content is process-oriented. One benefit of stylistic representation in an Italian context is thus its flexibility: since the “content” of Italy’s

political existence, and the character of yet-unmade Italian citizens, remains unknown, the resources of style are well-suited for exploring such uncertainty.

Both versions of Italy suggested by James's sentence (an exhibit before which we stand; a place undergoing a dramatic moment of political "after") were viable in the period following unification. We might, then, understand unification in Italy as complexity in the dual senses implied by James. The many institutional difficulties that followed Italy's declaration of its independent status proved both disparate and connected: Italy was a political spectacle resembling a mosaic in process. However, the structural unification of Italy was also a moment of historical rupture, creating a distinctive break between an oppressed and occupied Italy of "before" and a new parliamentary republic "after" official unification.

All three of the authors discussed in this chapter use style to challenge the sense of historical wholeness and aesthetic unity that underwrote the Risorgimento's Romantic aesthetic project. For Woolson and James, Italy provides a location from which to challenge national fantasies of unity and historical continuity. Italy was a productive site for such challenges since it was widely imagined to be living out in the late-nineteenth-century present the revolutionary trajectory the United States had undergone in the late-eighteenth century. For D'Annunzio, a non-romanticized aesthetic philosophy is an inevitable result of the historical rupture of unification and suggests a new national path for Italy.

In 1861, Vittorio Emanuele II was named King of Italy by a newly-appointed parliament and assumed control of a unified and independent nation. Although Venice was yet to be reclaimed from the Austrian Empire (this annexation would occur after an ostensibly democratic vote in 1866) and the Pope's local power over Rome had yet to be refuted (the Papal States would relinquish sovereignty in 1871), Italy was mostly united as a parliamentary monarchy under the new king. Despite the decades of revolutionary struggle by Italian youth, despite the military

triumphs of Giuseppe Garibaldi and his peasant *il mille*, despite the internationally-acclaimed intellectual republicanism of Giuseppe Mazzini, unified Italy was governed by the rich and powerful, often drawn from the military.¹¹ Many Italians, particularly those living in the southern area of the new nation (*l'Italia Meridionale* or *il Mezzogiorno*), were deeply unsatisfied, having traded an Austrian ruler for a northern Italian one with no noticeable improvement in social, economic, or institutional conditions.¹² Italy, and an international community watching with interest, grappled with a realization that the long-standing republican fantasy of Italian unity would take the form of parliamentary rule overseen by conservative Italian elites. Mazzini, for one, justly felt that the 1861 government was not the one he had given thirty years of his life to bring into being, calling the new state “only the phantom, the mockery of Italy.”¹³

The unification crisis can be understood as a linguistic predicament. In his memoirs, *I Miei Ricordi* (1866), well-known Italian statesman and public figure Massimo d’Azeglio offered this oft-quoted aphorism about the problem of unifying Italy: “L’Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani.” D’Azeglio’s claim is that “Italy has been made. It now remains to make Italians.” D’Azeglio reminds fellow politicians and readers of the conceptual problem at hand, that a terminological shift does not automatically convey a shift in cultural perception or social identification. One could also say that while the word “Italy” appears to alter its signification from imagined community to politically-recognized nation, it does not do so for all those falling under its sign at the same time or in the same ways. Yet another way to understand Italy’s dilemma: unification has created an “Italy” of semiotic, surface unity populated by citizens with deep ties to an older regional order.

After unification, visitors as well as Italians confronted the collapse of political and cultural fantasies that had organized influential versions of Italy for decades: Italy’s national status in the European community meant that the newly independent nation was no longer associated with the wealth and organizational efficiency of ruling families like the Bourbons or the Hapsburgs; the

compelling promise of an egalitarian, republican, Italian state had been subsumed by the reality of parliamentary monarchy in Piedmont. Italy became a nation undergoing active development and modernization instead of a vast museum curated by imperial powers, its status as aesthetic escape (or aesthetic fantasy) now challenged by the imperatives of nation-building. These developments had long seemed desirable in the push for Italian independence, requiring as they did the explicit responsibilities and political results associated with independent national status. Although the political unification of Italy changed many things, so too did much stay the same. Regions were still fiercely self-contained, vast disparity separated the rich from the poor, and structural and institutional organization across the peninsula remained under-developed. While “Italy” now named an internationally recognized nation instead of an imagined community of connected regional collectivities, it was already clear, in 1861, that this change in semiotic status did not erase or supersede Italy’s conflicted national history.

The confrontation between unificatory fantasy and political reality suggests that the individual might not be as easily reconciled to the objects of her historical desire; in Romantic dreams of political freedom and social union, such coherence would be a necessary feature. Instead of being presented with a historical or textual whole, attention to surface detail authorizes a series of episodic “impressions,” social judgments, and alternative aesthetic philosophies. Posed against a representational mode that celebrates unity of thought and experience or narrativizes individual relations to a historical whole, linguistic ornamentation insists on the immediacy of the reading experience and the power of the individual impression: for Woolson, interpersonal impression is not to be trusted; for James, cultural impressions are to be refined but are fundamentally trustworthy; for D’Annunzio, the philosophy of aesthetic immediacy and forcefulness represents a cultural opportunity for the future.

In beginning with a balancing act between style (as grammatical implication) and history (as either static or progressive), I am offering an abbreviated example of this chapter's approach to the texts it treats. Although James does make reference to current Italian politics in the essays of *Italian Hours*, this particular chapter is less interested in those moments than in the ones where James offers yet another description of Tintoretto or of an Italian street scene. In the fictions of James, D'Annunzio, and Woolson, contemporary cultural context is almost wholly absent, while the wrought quality of individual sentences has an ultimately disorienting and, counterintuitively, distending effect on historical knowledge. Like James's spectator, readers may abandon an interest in context in favor of language's distracting, immediate pleasures. In the opening paragraph, I claimed Italy as a meditative touchstone for this chapter's authors; Italy acts as an embodied aesthetic fantasy that facilitates the contemplation of political and social realities. More specifically, in their individuated modes of representing Italy, authors display different understandings of the negotiations between surface and depth, developing style as a way to represent interpretations of Italy: as historical object, as aesthetic spectacle, as lived experience.

In chapter one, the syntactical stylization inherent in lyric expression offered authors a chance to experiment with the affiliative semantics of their Italian experiences. In this chapter, we might view the linguistic predicament of new Italy as another iteration of Italy's tendency to act as a signifier for which matter and form are distinctly separate and remain in unstable relation. The style I am attendant to here resembles what Susan Sontag defines as "stylization." In *Against Interpretation*, Sontag classifies "stylization" as that which "is present in a work of art precisely when an artist does make the by no means inevitable distinction between matter and manner, theme and form" (19). The perceived disjunction between manner and matter (or style and plot) is less relevant to my discussion of surface complexity than the disjunction between individual experience and historical continuity that underlie the texts of James, Woolson, and D'Annunzio.

Sontag's language substitutes the terms "manner" and "manner" for a distinction I present as one between immediate individual experience ("style") and historical development ("plot").

Moreover, understanding of style as ornamental, immediate, surface and superficial carries emotional implications. For Sontag, the recognizable distinction between "matter and manner" points to the artist's feelings about the subject at hand: "'Stylization' . . . reflects an ambivalence (affection contradicted by contempt, obsession contradicted by irony) toward the subject-matter. The ambivalence is handled by maintaining, through the rhetorical overlay that is stylization, a special distance from the subject" (19). Thus, increasing linguistic ostentation suggests the existence of negative as well as positive response. D. 'A. Miller is describing the same disjunction when he writes, "behind style's ahistorical impersonality lies the historical impasse of someone whose social representation doubles for social humiliation" (28). This chapter's authors use style—and the accretion of stylistic features we call tone—to convey affective states classifiable as ignominious: humiliation, melancholy, sarcasm and cruelty, violence or indolence.

Instead of using stylistic analysis to reveal a single, hidden political signifier,¹⁴ the prevalence of certain stylistic tendencies suggest themselves as responses to broad historical and political conditions. I identify these tendencies as responses to "historical tone." What might it mean to imagine history as constituted not by discreet events, but as a diffuse mood or tone? In part, viewing history as tone allows us to develop a sense of history as an active and ultimately ungraspable process. Sianne Ngai's description of tone as irreducible to "internally represented [and specific] feelings" might be productively applied to a description of history and the critical or artistic projects of representing history in its entirety; the historical whole is irreducible to its socio-political parts. Thinking of history's bits as "style" instead of "content" would allow us a different vision of history, one that more carefully acknowledges a fundamental absence of neatly-mappable signifier and signified.

Attention to style highlights a lack of specific historicizing context by emphasizing the effect of a given text's stylistic "surface."¹⁵ Like James in Venice, who collects "impressions" to be later "convert[ed] . . . into prose" (17), I will be sifting through a sentence's "bits" in my own efforts to identify and describe a text's aggregate effects. It is often linguistic and representational "bits"—short lyric poems, minor periodical features—that prove effective for conveying the pleasures of Italian interactions for Americans, in contra-distinction to aggressively integrated nationalistic visions. If one accepts even provisionally the idea that style is, as Cross argues, "a rendering, a 'way of doing'" (20), one acknowledges by implication that any given rendering is a single version of representational possibility. If history can be thought to work like or through style, our relation to history might be seen in similarly contingent terms: what we come to view as stable historical process might represent simply a single "way of doing" the past's narrative. Finally, I hope to upset a sense of history as ultimately knowable, arguing instead that historical context cannot be mastered by attending to works of imagination. Indeed, my claim is that history cannot be mastered at all, only gazed upon.

In Smit's analysis of James, he offers an interpretation of how attention to textual details affects understandings of the textual whole: "I have to go back and read the passages again, slowly, carefully, parsing out meaning line by line. I do not find this an enjoyable way to read novels. . . . I must exert myself in short bursts and often find myself lost and confused along the way" (129). Smit's description of the pains and pleasures of navigating part and whole recalls James's "great historical complexity" before which we stand in confusion. One seductive recourse proves to be the retreat to surface I have suggested as the method of this chapter's authors and this chapter's analysis. Although history or politics as plot-points are generally absent from the texts I treat, worth noting is the fact that none of the three authors demonstrate—nor do they desire—a final separation of "form" from "matter": the two exist in shifting and unstable relation, much like the two distinct

but plausible interpretations of “before” with which I began. For Woolson, stylistic bits and plot details together contribute to her fiction’s tonal bitterness; James, as we shall see, cannot finally think form without appealing to history; D’Annunzio, paradigmatic figure of European decadence, seeks to join history to art in order to more closely align the former to the latter. As the hero of D’Annunzio’s *Il Fuoco* proclaims: “La fortuna d’Italia è inseparabile dalle sorti della Bellezza [the destiny of Italy is inseparable from the felicities of Beauty]” (179).

I.

I limit my exploration to writings about a single Italian city, Venice, which I treat as both synecdoche and particulate. Venice’s long associations with wealth, ornamentation, decadence, *and* with political sovereignty and republican success make the city an ideal ground for examining infelicities of style and history. Returning to the interpretative implications suggested by James’s distinctly interpretable pronoun “before,” Venice could be said to represent both: as a vaunted aesthetic playground and a victim of progressive history, Venice is a spectacle well-worth standing “before” and a cautionary lesson in the ravages of “after.”

In the Venetian short stories of Constance Fenimore Woolson, personal histories are more often the subject of interest than cultural ones. Indeed, attention to interpersonal relation instead of historical context is also a feature of Woolson’s current critical reputation, the result of privileging particular biographical details: studies of Woolson often make reference to her friendship with “the Master,” Henry James.¹⁶ Ironically, given this contemporary emphasis on biographical speculation, Woolson’s fiction is habitually concerned with the problems of interpersonal knowledge and individual history; for the most part, Woolson rejects the idea that a person’s social surface reveals characterological truth, and ridicules those who engage in biographical fantasy about others.

About her own aesthetic tendencies, Woolson once wrote, “I have such a horror of ‘pretty,’ ‘sweet’ writing that I should almost prefer a style that was ugly and bitter, provided it was also strong.”¹⁷ Woolson’s extreme pessimism—her narrative investment in renunciation, failure, and cruelty—has contributed to her relative exclusion from the canon, even within literary-critical contexts where the recovery of lost voices is an unquestioned good.¹⁸ Woolson’s pessimism is generally (and appropriately) considered to be about plot: there is Maso, “A Transplanted Boy,” who almost dies in Pisa, abandoned, starving, and refused help by the American consul; the aged New England tourist of “The Front Yard” who marries an exotic Florentine man and sacrifices money and vitality to his greedy family. There are young women caught between two lovers: in “Dorothy,” a widow wastes away in her huge Florentine villa; in “Neptune’s Shore,” one suitor murders another then commits suicide while on Italian holiday with his mother.¹⁹

In her consistent deployment of a tonal register I describe as “irritation,” Woolson suggests that productive interpersonal interactions (especially cross-cultural or class-crossing ones) operate on a model recognizable as revelatory: one must attend carefully to the unspoken or latent characteristics of another in order to plumb her hidden depths. Since my readings of James and D’Annunzio will go on to challenge, even do away with, this particular hierarchy of surface and depth, Woolson offers a productive place to begin since she advocates for ethical human exchange within a comparatively straightforward model. Attention to an individual’s surface often proves deceptive and simplistic, while increasing knowledge of personal “depth” allows characters to understand and sympathize with one another more effectively. As we move from an exploration of Woolson’s tone to the more elaborate and experimental linguistic performances of James and D’Annunzio, we also move farther away from interpretive concepts that invoke a hierarchy of surface and depth.

Avoiding ostentatious ornamentality, Woolson's sentences are often blunt and compact²⁰, as in this statement from "A Transplanted Boy" describing Maso's increasingly desperate situation: "The boys now came down in their expectations" (*Dorothy*, 99). Usually evident as well is a lack diegetic or authorial empathy. Narrators rarely treat even protagonists with narrative compassion nor hold them up as particularly admirable or heroic. We are likewise not often encouraged to sympathize with characters through presentation of their inner states. While Woolson's romantically troubled young women are rarely given a narrative chance to convey their emotions, elder women, whose interior states are more often described, are generally either intolerant or pitiable. The solitary Mrs. Ash of "Neptune's Shore," for example, is almost a caricature of maternal absorption. "Dumb, shy, hopelessly out of her element, the mother had, on the whole, enjoyed her two years abroad. The reason was found in the fact that she could say to herself, or rather could hope to herself, that John was more 'steady' over here" (*FY*66). Not only is Mrs. Ash uninterested in particularly Italian loveliness (she spends her days watching beans grow in a back garden instead of contemplating the Mediterranean out front), she is uncertain about the cause of her ostensible enjoyment: as the narrator points out, she "could hope" for her son's steadiness, but does not know it as fact. Less an effect of individual sentences than an aggregate sense accruing from narrative and descriptive tendencies, the bitterness of Woolson's style seeps up through her texts.

Important to note about Woolson's presentation of character (which assumes a surface, social superficiality that proves distinct from interpersonal, interior depth) is the role of national identity within depictions of individuals. Except in the case of especially sympathetic characters, who are often so because of their abject or pathetic status, Woolson tends to remain on the surface of her characters. Often, as we shall see in "A Christmas Party," national characteristics carry descriptive and interpretive weight: the self-absorption of the Senter siblings is most efficiently

conveyed by tendencies—for national pride and against cultural mingling—cast as explicitly American. As my discussion will demonstrate, consistent social tendencies in Woolson’s Americans abroad stand as a kind of textual shorthand for national character. Perhaps as a response to the cross-cultural laziness depicted by Woolson’s Americans, Italian characters are often presented less as national types than as specific individuals. This is true for Carmela, the Italian anti-heroine of “A Christmas Party,” as well as for the titular figure of “A Waitress.” Despite the particularized depiction of these women as complex individuals, neither of them are presented as especially sympathetic. Thus, even when she offers characters with a sense of personal depth (in contrast to those characterized by superficial national tendencies), Woolson’s bitter narratives do not encourage identification with their particular abject subjects.

While some of Woolson’s ugly or bitter tendencies are matters of plotting, her fiction also confirms her stated stylistic preference. One can understand her aesthetic bitterness several ways. Generally, I would classify this ugliness as tonal; instead of stemming from a single identifiable aspect of text (the plot or the narrator’s cruelty or the use of unflattering description), Woolson’s bitter short stories mobilize all those at once and convey what Sianne Ngai describes as “a strange ‘irritation’—a minor, low-intensity negative affect—at virtually all . . . levels.”²¹ Dorri Beam likewise points to the way tone acts as an unstable, but useful, interpretive rubric for Woolson.²² Beam’s describes how tone and voice help to “shape” the content “and how we are to interact with it” (143). For Woolson, style (as tone) and content (as plot) are not opposed, but nor are they mutually informative; identifying the former helps us decide how to interpret the latter.

Since almost every character suffers some plot-specific unpleasantness or another, it is difficult initially to discern the source of the judgmental, often bitter, tone: does suffering as such annoy these narrators? The empathic failures of Woolson’s narrators often stem from the superficial interpersonal and cultural investments of her characters; the problem of Woolson’s ugly

characters is not simply that they are themselves superficial. In their over-attention to surface, her characters evoke the irritation and even, perhaps, the cruelty of their narrators. Such frustration might be understood as a response to (or dramatization of?) the ethical and cultural blindness of many Americans in Italy. Woolson articulates a system of interpersonal interaction that depends on balancing superficial social impressions with biographical depth: contrasting pleasure-seekers with sufferers, Woolson's Venetian stories insist on the fundamental reality of the latter and the often-contemptible foolishness of the former.

In the case of her deeply pessimistic Italian stories—filled with suffering, cruelty, even death, laden with snide narrative remarks and ridicule—Woolson's tone also reflects an awareness of Italy's failure to remain a timeless aesthetic escape. Although her characters (and Woolson herself) arrive in Italy hoping to bask in its touristic pleasures and the fantasy of *dolce-far-niente*, all are confronted with the realities of economic privation and corporeal vulnerability. These are the hardships of the Italian population; Woolson's realist, regionalist approach to Italy illustrates these difficulties affecting locals as well as visitors. For Woolson, neither impoverished and beleaguered Italians, nor Americans leaving the post-bellum U.S. for presumably greener pastures, were ultimately immune to the struggles of post-unification Italy.

The opening paragraphs of "A Christmas Party" present an American brother and sister on the eve of a lavish holiday event. As in several of Woolson's Italian stories, the cultural superiority felt by her American character is signaled by their linguistic prowess (or lack thereof).²³ Of Peter Senter, an American consul in his third year on the job, we learn, "That he could not understand the speech (gibberish he called it) of the people with whom he was supposed to hold official relations did not disturb him; he thought it patriotic not to understand" (*FY*195). The parenthetical interpolation here marks Peter as not only lazy and unqualified for office but coarsely unkind. Insult is piled upon injury a mere sentence later when a second parenthesis confirms that,

for Peter, linguistic competence is also gender inappropriate: “Peter, in his heart, thought it unmasculine to have a polyglot tongue,” (195).

Directly following this moment, wherein readers are encouraged to view Peter as provincial and intolerant, we are offered an equally unflattering picture of his sister Barbara Senter. Although she can speak Italian and other languages, she seems to be another ugly American, “chronically annoyed” at her neighbor over a minor detail: “She thought that by right the gondola of the Consul should lie among the heraldic posts of the Grand Canal. But, in spite of right, nothing could be done; the antiquity-dealer held his premise on long lease” (195). As the parenthetical asides about Peter might seem at first to be simply presenting information but are, in effect, insisting on Peter’s cavalier small-mindedness, so too does the discussion of canal rights ask readers to ponder his sister’s own limited perspective. Indeed, the story’s very first paragraph describes the typical distribution of space in Venetian palaces, making quite clear the antique-seller’s right to his entrance: “As this dealer had the ground-floor, he possessed, *of course*, the principle entrance to the palace” (194, my emphasis). The snide judgment implied in the narrator’s “of course” sets up the contrast between Barbara’s assumption that want makes right and the usual spatial distribution of canal-space in Venetian rentals.

The plot of “A Christmas Party” is propelled by not one but two villains in disguise: the first, a “scrupulously honest” servant named Carmela. “Carmela was said to be middle-aged. But her short, slender figure was so erect, her little face so alert, her movements were so brisk, and her small black eyes so bright, that she seemed full of youthful fire” (200). Carmela is, unfortunately for Peter and Barbara, none of what she appears: not honest, not youthful. After a robbery and several attempted murders mar the party, Carmela has what looks like a seizure; the hosts rush to liberate her from her uniform: “after a moment, the whole edifice [of her uniform] . . . sank to the floor. What was left was an old, old woman, small and withered, her feeble chest rising and falling .

. . . and the rest of her little person scantily covered with a patched, poverty-stricken undershirt” (231). For the good of her only son, Carmela has been performing the role of fresh and vigorous youth. But this is not all: the son, disguised as a acrobatic, child-pleasing clown, has been all through the palace this Christmas night, robbing and brutalizing at will. As Peter and Barbara are over-invested in American exceptionalism,²⁴ so Carmela and her son display a shocking lack of national solidarity: several of their victims are Italian nationals.

I see Woolson, and by stylistic extension, her narrator, satirizing two related phenomena in this tale. On the one hand, Peter is savagely mocked throughout for his American self-absorption and its resulting incompetence in crisis. He wastes money on heating and fastidious hosting, he is ugly and unaware of it (“in the presence of the Apollo Belvedere”²⁵ the narrator observes, “it never occurred to him to draw comparisons,” 209). When tragedy strikes in the form of fallen hirelings, Peter is virtually at sea, unable to communicate with any helpful official personage. Not only can he not speak the native language, “he was helpless without his vice-consul; he had no clear idea as to what his powers were or were not; he had never informed himself” (213).

Different from Peter’s cultural dismissal, but presented as an equal failure of awareness, we find “the Consules” thoughtlessly romanticizing Italy and its citizens. Barbara’s expectations for her Italian home and its functionaries seem lifted from the pages of Gothic novels and other cultural fantasies. Carmela, the housekeeping “personification of trimness and activity,” is matched by a similarly-ideal cook, the dignified Giorgio, “cheerful and amiable . . . [and] the most skillful cook in Venice” (201). Delighted with the perfection of her bit players, Peter’s sister is unfortunately disappointed by her palace’s lack of the requisite secret passage. She instead purchases an antique cabinet with two secret drawers: “there was a best even to this better; for after the cabinet had been placed in her own room, Miss Senter discovered within it a second hiding-place, even more perfectly concealed than the first. This was delightful, and she confided to its care

all her loose money” (198). Without narrative interpolation, readers may not grasp this passage’s latent sarcasm until it is revealed that the secret so captivating to Miss Senter is unremarkable to the locals. When her deception is exposed, Carmela takes evident pleasure in having outwitted the credulous American. “My son is safe,” Carmela asserts, “and he has, besides . . . all the money which the Consulesse so kindly provided for him by keeping it in a secret drawer, whose ‘secret’ every Italian not an idiot knows. But the Consulesse always had a singular self-conceit” (231-32). In retrospect, the narrator’s seemingly neutral description of Barbara’s pleasure in her secret drawer becomes another example of the story’s mocking tone. Indeed, the strange ostentation of the phrase “there was a best even to this better” acts as a kind of narratorial signpost, exacerbating our sense of the American’s superficial pleasure so as to highlight later the depth of her naiveté.

As the party’s American efficiency is increasingly undermined by gothicized danger and spectacle, events likewise become increasingly preposterous through the melodrama of the story’s climax. As in any good example of melodrama, searched-for parties leave a room just as searchers enter it, unidentified bodies drag across the floor, those presumed dead are found with feeble signs of life. Stagy verbs, histrionic adverbial forms, and spasmodic dialogue abound, as, unsure of the situation and without Italian interpreters, characters “hasten” through the palace, “breathlessly descend[ing]” stairways and “throwing open” doors while “gasp[ing],” “quaver[ing],” and “shout[ing]” for aid (220-22). Highlighting its contrast with the drily ironic or studiously neutral passages we have been exploring, narration of the party’s climactic moments suggests a self-conscious theatricality.²⁶ In fact, the narrator describes Carmela as “like a smart French soubrette of the stage” (201). In this moment of partially concealed revelation, the reader’s own linguistic competence determines her understanding—or not—of the narrator’s description of Carmela.²⁷ Presenting the dramatic dissolution of the Senter’s Christmas party as over-determined and self-conscious in many of the same inappropriate ways as the nationalist perspectives of the Senter

siblings, Woolson refuses to privilege one culture's surface tendencies over another's. The Americans's thoughtless commitment to their superior national identity is no more dangerous than an Italian investment in aestheticized spectacle at the expense of others.

The humiliation suffered by the Senter siblings is partially conveyed through operations of plot: at the event that is to crown their benevolent patronage in Venice, the household is instead robbed and the servants menaced. Mostly, however, I have been exploring the ways in which style undergirds the plot's portrayal of cultural "self-conceit." In these examples, style can be understood as a tonal register most readily identifiable through the operations of irritation or narrative cruelty. In some cases, this irritation is conveyed by cutting asides; in others, plot developments introduce an irony that encourages us to rethink the apparent neutrality of previous descriptions (as in the example of Miss Senter's secret drawer, or the revelation that Carmela is indeed a "soubrette"). While I am reluctant to characterize the striking theatricality of final passages as ironic (they dramatize a situation—the search for prone bodies and hidden burglars—that would be frightening and chaotic indeed), their extreme melodrama contributes to a sense of these moments as self-consciously performative and excessively dramatic. This is in keeping with the narrator's own efforts (or tendencies) to undercut the self-important visions of the Consul and his sister.

At the very close of "A Christmas Party," readers and the Senters confront the sad spectacle of Carmela's true character; in a reportorial series of clauses, the narrator's sympathy for Carmela seems in earnest. The narrator's final description presents information completely and unflinchingly, not conveying sympathy or annoyance through asides or other features that would highlight a distinct narratorial perspective.

His mother, who had worked for him indefatigably through her whole life—worked so hard that her hands were worn almost to claws—who had supported him and supplied him, who had made herself young and active like a girl, though she was seventy-four, in order to be able to send him money—his mother, who had allowed herself nothing in the world but the few smart clothes necessary for her disguise,

who was absolutely honest, but who had stolen for him three thousand francs from the secret drawer, and had stood by and aided him when he beat, stabbed, and gagged her fellow-servants—this mother was not arrested (233).

The narrator reveals a hitherto unsuspected capacity for both sympathy and sincerity. While readers are never offered an unmediated glimpse at the biographical experiences of either Senter sibling, this version of Carmela presents a contradictory figure capable of maternal support, “absolut[e] honest[y],” and attempted murder. As each element of Carmela’s character is revealed, specific details explore and sometimes contradict the original account. The informative excess, facilitated by commas and individual dashes, operates on a depth model as opposed to a surface one. Instead of a series of superficial and lightly connected observations, this sentence develops a few main characteristics through accumulation of related details presented as progressive or historical: Carmela is hard working, long suffering, and willing to sacrifice body and moral sense for her son. At the close of this tale’s satire of superficiality, we are presented with a character of emotional and physical depth.

In part, the complexity of this passage results from an uneasy collaboration between plot-level detail and sentence-level organization. The emphasis on the importance of Carmela’s maternal motivations, for example, is not completely stylistic: it is a matter of plot that her son was the palace robber. However, the repetition of “mother” in the above sentence, especially noticeable in the final clause “this mother was not arrested” is a matter of style, namely the decision to repeat a particular word (or linguistic “bit”) at the head of successive descriptive clauses in order to emphasize the description’s most important aspect. Similarly, the accumulation of seemingly conflicting details is at once about content and style. The paradox between Carmela being “absolutely honest” and the fact that she “had stolen . . . three thousand francs” is an information-specific paradox; however, the stylistic decision to reiterate Carmela’s honesty after

summarizing her deceit, and immediately prior to describing her robbery, renders her character strikingly contradictory.

Woolson presents here a theory of interpersonal exchange: while behavior may indeed be important for understanding an individual, the assumption that surface conduct represents the truth of the individual is a dangerous one. This seems a particular threat when assumptions are being made based on the kind of cultural laziness practiced by the Senters. Our understanding of how to interpret the Senters depends on the submerged values and perceptions of the narrator, graspable through a process of progressive reading dependent on increasing attention to what “can be detected by an extreme degree of penetration.”²⁸ Woolson could be said to be modeling for readers what her stories set up as an appropriate negotiation between surface and depth. Imagining a form of interpersonal knowledge that balances impressions and revelations, “A Christmas Party” sets up the narrator as sole possessor of appropriate individual understanding slowly revealed (or exposed) to the careful reader.

The distinctly nuanced picture of Carmela and the theory of interpersonal interpretation being suggested reveals a complexity in Woolson’s cultural awareness that plot details alone cannot convey. The narrator’s superior understanding of cultural appropriateness is presented through the repeated presentation of the Senters’s failure of same; although it does not offer many specific suggestions about Italian culture or society, the narration encourages us to find the cultural self-absorption of the Senters unpleasant and occasionally ludicrous. Closing passages, which present a complicated portrait of Carmela, suggest that poverty and familial devotion are conditions of certain Italian experience. Privation is presented as reasonable motivation. Even Peter is moved: the ultimate paragraph reveals that it was he who helped Carmela escape after taking pity on her age and poverty. In keeping with what I have characterized as Woolson’s pessimistic tone,

however, the aggression of the story's major Italian characters does not present a viable, ethical alternative to American self-absorption.

There is even a way to understand Carmela's actions as personifying Italy's wide-spread civil unrest during the period that Woolson was writing and living in Italy. As I have noted in earlier sections of this chapter and study,²⁹ inter-Italian violence and exploitation was a common and distressing feature of post-Risorgimento Italian political and economic life. Readers of Machiavelli will recognize that this tendency for regional or localized strife has long been a common feature of Italian life. In a post-unification context, however, the persistence of this tendency would have represented a serious failure of unificatory hopes. Political sovereignty and imperial independence are not enough to overcome local distrusts and individual hardship. "A Christmas Party" can be understood through a mode of interpretation that depends upon plot development and attention to the accumulation of textual details that, over the experience of reading, point the way to a certain understanding of the narrator's cultural values and the text's reflection of Italian history.

The story's plot-details and its use of distinct narrative tones together convey irritation at the ethical or relational failures of Italian and American characters. The Senters may be over-invested in the collective identity conferred by their American history (Peter's version of "Yankee Doodle," for example, nods to revolutionary history), but Carmela and her son are over-invested in individual advancement at the expense of national affiliation. A reader's ability for (or interest in) recognizing this story's depiction of appropriate cultural awareness, and its engagement with the political issues of its day, are dependent upon an understanding of the ways that tone marks the Senters as contrary to what the narrative holds up as an ethical, informed perspective. The theory of interaction I have described here as "interpersonal" is also historical. For Woolson, appropriate social awareness is predicated on a process that is temporally ordered and interpretive. The reader

of texts or people is encouraged to build understanding through the progressive accumulation of details that are portrayed as internally consistent even if unexpected. That the preferred cultural perspective and attendant method of interpretation are signaled through inversion is, I think, typical of Woolson's pessimistic style.

If "A Christmas Story" introduces a theory of interpersonal interaction with cultural as well as individual import, "In Venice" highlights the latter at the expense of the former. That is, this story's exploration of aesthetic appreciation and superficial attraction is generally uninterested in intercultural interaction between persons. Instead, quasi-romantic relations between a group of American tourists are mediated through their interactions with Italian artworks. Conversing about the benefits of aesthetic contemplation, Miss Claudia Marcy inquires about the works of Paolo Veronese, prompting the following exchange:

"But those Veronese pictures, Mr. Blake—after all, what do they tell us? Blue sky and balconies, feasts and brocades . . . colors and splendor, and those great fair women, with no expression on their faces—what does it mean?"

"Simple beauty."

"Beauty without mind, then."

"A picture does not need mind. But, to be worth anything, beauty it must have."

"I don't know; a picture is a sort of companion. One of those pictures would not be that; you might as well have a beautiful idiot." (252-53)

Leaving aside specifics about Veronese's style and reputation for now, this particular concept of aesthetic appreciation resembles and modifies the theory of interpersonal relation posited by "A Christmas Story." For Claudia, who desires pictorial companions, surface pleasure is not enough to redeem empty matter. In particular, she seems distressed by Veronese's expressionless women, the most obvious representations of "beauty without mind." Claudia's characterization of the painting as an "idiot," an unfriendly term at least, suggests her own irritation with the thoughtless (depthless) spectacles of Veronese. Well-known for their detail and sumptuousness, Veronese's famous works tend to be highly ornamental and complex. Claudia suggests that all those "colors and splendors"

do not disguise the paucity of contemplative potential in the painting she observes; this is how to understand her characterization of the unspecified painting as a “beautiful idiot,” lovely companion with no intellectual depth or contemplative capacity. Art here imitates interpersonal interaction as we have seen it presented by Woolson: without the promise (or recognition) of more beneath the surface, companionship is superficial.

Readers, and perhaps Claudia herself, have reason to recall these comments at the story’s close, when an ongoing flirtation between the young lady and married Mr. Lenox results in his absence during a family tragedy. Although she makes no specific reference to her indifference to “beauty without mind,” beautiful Claudia is ashamed and apologetic for her role in marital discord. In forgiving Claudia and explaining her marriage, Mrs. Lenox advances an understanding of intimacy based on interpersonal history: “there are some things in which a husband and wife do feel alike, always and forever; there are ties which are eternal. . . . Those early years of ours, with their joys and sorrows—I often think of them. A man does not dwell upon such memories, one by one, as a woman does. But they are none the less there” (267-68). While “mind” is not synonymous with the experience of sorrows (although Mrs. Lenox refers to “joys and sorrows,” her discussion with Claudia is disproportionately about the latter), the dénouement of this story presents the eternal ties of shared history as far stronger than those of “simple beauty.”

In the terms set up by this chapter, we might imagine “mind” as a characteristic of history, as a desirable interpretive or relational concept related to a progressive, layered version of historical advancement. Turning to James’s more ahistorical impressionism, his embrace of pleasurable linguistic surface, we might at first understand James’s surface to be committed to “simple beauty” as an oppositional category set against “historic complexity.” However, I am interested instead in the ways that James weaves together history and beauty, collapsing in the process the distinction with which I began. As Italy could be both aesthetic spectacle and historical

actor, so, for James, could cultural history itself be understandable as aesthetic representation and collective experience. Italians must “be made” by operations of language and through the operations of social advancement and political consolidation.

“In Venice” does not develop a tone as distinct as the irritation we have explored in “A Christmas Party”; however, “In Venice” does offer a more coherent and explicit proposition about the appropriate relation of style to plot. For Woolson’s Venetian stories, the thoughtful negotiation between performance and interiority, between surface and depth, between style and matter, proves the most ethical and sustainable way to enjoy both interpersonal and aesthetic companions. We will find James disagreeing about Veronese’s potential as an art companion, but, as I will argue, he and Woolson share a sense that form divorced from content, beauty absent ethical or historical reflection, is ultimately unsatisfying.

II.

The ostentatious grammatical surfaces of James’s fictional and essayistic writing highlights the text’s literary surface. In this section, I pay particular attention to passages from James’s *The Aspern Papers* and *Italian Hours* that refuse conformity with the rigors of plot-specific meaning. I argue that an emphasis on stylistic surface illustrates how contemplations of Italy dramatized a distinct struggle of James’s writing career: how to balance the perceived necessity of plot, which I read as an historical impulse, with the rich surface of style, understood to represent an embrace of extra-temporal spectacle.

Woolson’s theory of interpersonal revelation endorses a specific version of the relation between surface and depth. In her social fictions, surface always obscures a realer depth one must work to uncover. In contrast, James’s aesthetic theory of impressions privileges surface, and particularly detail, as a valid means for representing experience and conveying “essence.” For

James, attention to surface coupled with an ability to extrapolate value and coherence from it are the most effective means to convey something like conceptual or historical depth.

James's preference for representation through impression connects the aims of this chapter to James's preference. Presented with a clear view and given the ability to take in sufficient detail at a glance, James's ideal author can glean everything necessary for a "perfect" representation, a process characterized in "The Art of Fiction" as "the power to guess the unseen from the seen . . . to judge the whole piece by the pattern."³⁰ For James, impressions convey quite enough for the thoughtful artist: "The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience. . . . If experience consists of impressions, it may be that impressions *are* experience" (172). In both his fictional and non-fictional endeavors, the "glimpse" proves sufficient for James, who converts his experiential impressions into a linguistic surface capable of conveying a range of cultural, ethical, and nationalist values. The distinction Woolson offers between superficial surface and ethical depth is collapsed by James, for whom surface complexity always already conveys depth. James's theory of the glimpse or the impression thus suggests another way to understand history or temporal order. Instead of a Woolsonian model that treats aggregate detail as a system of layers (an individual's social surface proves misleading without the addition of biographical depth), James imagines interpretation to work most effectively as what Cross has described as a "constellated field," understandable through the metaphor of mosaic. That is, the constellated field of James's linguistic surface contains within its details all the complexities associated with interpretive depth.³¹ In what follows, I linger over grammatical bits that together suggest deeper historical meaning.

In the closing pages of *The Aspern Papers*, our anonymous narrator arrives at an ethical impasse. We are confronted with an extensive description that does nothing to advance the pressing plot details of the novella in which it appears. Confronted with a choice between giving up

bachelorhood to marry the “ridiculous pathetic provincial old” (92) Miss Tina, or sacrificing an unpublished archive of biographical treasure from the hand of Jeffery Aspern, the narrator spends a day wandering Venice. Despite its appearance, at the tale’s moral and narrative climax (Will the narrator trade his dignity for professional glory? Will he damn Miss Tina with marriage in order to grasp his literary prize?), an extended description of Venetian scenes contains no information that contributes to the plot’s resolution, which lies a scant two pages away.

I was standing before the church of Saints John and Paul and looking up at the small square-jawed face of Bartolommeo Colleoni, the terrible *condottiere* who sits so sturdily astride of his huge bronze horse on the high pedestal on which Venetian gratitude maintains him . . . The western light shines into all of his grimness at that hour and makes it wonderfully personal. . . . I don’t know why it happened that on this occasion I was more than ever struck with that queer air of sociability, of cousinship and family life, which makes up half the expression of Venice. Without streets and vehicles, the uproar of wheels, the brutality of horses, and with its little winding ways where people crowd together, where voices sound as in the corridors of a house, where the human step circulates as if it skirted the angles of furniture and shoes never wear out, the place has the character of an immense collective apartment. (93-94)

The first sentence describing the “huge bronze” statue of a notorious Venetian mercenary (*condottiere*) is, though long, straightforwardly expository. Not constructed of the embedded and qualificatory clauses notorious of late Jamesian style, it moves forward with the aid of simple prepositions followed by short descriptive clauses: “at the small square-jawed face,” “of his huge bronze horse,” “on the high pedestal.” While the sentence has the slightly lurching effect of all exuberantly prepositional writing, the phrases in question do not introduce interpretive complexity through stylistic ambiguity, which is often present in James as a result of unclear pronoun reference, descriptive contradiction, or abstraction. Built of a series of prepositional phrases, the sentence is one long declarative, a single, independent clause featuring a connected series of modifiers. The reader is offered the impression of a grim, sturdily mounted soldier.

The third and fourth sentences, describing Venice as “an immense collective apartment,” more closely resembles the syntactic complexity that would come to be associated with late

Jamesian style. Instead of the positioning prepositions noted in the description of Colleoni, prepositions here introduce interpolations that describe the Venetian “expression” through a series of barely connected noun phrases. The entire content of the final sentence, until the independent clause “the place has the character of an immense collective apartment,” is a series of conceptually coherent but loosely related clauses. Prepositions abound, but they serve to introduce dependent clauses such as “*without* streets and vehicles,” or “*with* its little winding ways *where* people crowd together”; even more complexly, embedded clauses often include layers of prepositional subordination further complicated by weak conjunctions, as in “*where* the human step circulates *as if* it skirted the angles of furniture.” Certainly, the effect of this layering is consistent with the sense of “immense” collectivity James attributes to Venice itself. As description, however, this final sentence is quite unlike the first one.

I want to highlight the way that conflicting descriptive modes—long but straightforward as compared to long and embedded/dependent—develop two distinct senses of Venice and of historical knowledge. In the passage’s first sentence, we have ornate artworks, historically situated and available for contemplation, identification, appreciation. The sentence describing Colleoni, built of a connected series of descriptive phrases, might be said to mimic progressive historical understanding: first this detail, then that one, then a third, which together advance a single picture. Colleoni’s statue becomes a symbol for a particular kind of history that imposed by the condottiere and preserved, with “gratitude,” by the Venetian state. Like the “wonderfully personal” grimness with which Colleoni confronts the piazza visitor, this totalizing temporal order (performed by the sentence’s grammatical development, symbolized by the conquering figure of the condottiere) interpolates the spectator into a noble and “sturdy” Venetian history. Invoking the specter of intimate attachment with the descriptive phrase “wonderfully personal,” the characterization of condottieri history represents the relational object of this personal attachment as national history,

not individual specificity. The statue's wonderfully personal grimness is a fleeting impression brought on by a momentary angle of sunlight. Without erasing the spectator's sense of the statue as distant, the wonderfully personal impression suggest that even grand history, even long-held national "gratitude," occasionally presents a singular aspect with which the humblest admirer might momentarily identify.

Against this condottieri Venice, we are presented with a collection of complex, interwoven dependent clauses whose looping movement suggests a dense constellation of canals—together, they offer a sense of crabbed, crushed confusion as the character of Venice. Refusing progressive development, the sentence offers isolated scenes that appear connected in some small spots. This impression is partially conveyed in the way "without" heads a series of noun clauses ("Without streets and vehicles, [without] the uproar of wheels, [without] the brutality of horses"). There is a sense of tableaux all glimpsed at once as from above: the absence of loud wheels, the absence of brutal horses, the winding crowded ways and echoing corridors and unworn-out shoes; a collection of impressions. None of these alone convey the Venice James wants us to understand nor can they be coherently connected into a single image. This description of Venice refuses ultimate meaning or mastery. Not only is the picture dimly comprehensible, it reflects but "half the expression of Venice." Ultimately, the narrator admits that, for him, Venice is well-nigh unnavigable: "At last I took my way home, getting gradually and all but inextricably lost, as I did whenever I went out in Venice" (76). One might get the same effect of gradual disorientation reading James's passage.

This analysis of two descriptive approaches in one textual interlude, which holds in tension two distinct version of historical understanding, begins to suggest how style might illuminate alternative modes of historical identification. Condottiere history is progressive, building details upon each other until an ostensibly complete picture emerges; through its close association with military action and Venice's grateful memorializing, this version of Venice is institutionally

sanctioned and totalizing. The alternative takes shape as a circular knowledge, in which details overlap occasionally but aggregate in a kind of information assemblage instead of in linear fashion. This impressionist vision of Venice depends instead on a mix of street scenes (life lived “without”) and private detail. It is a history of minor intimacies and relational moments. The vision we get here is indeed like the collective Venetian apartment: divergent ideas (forms of historical understanding, relations between plot, description, and style) jostle together in an effort to picture Venice, the narrator’s historical-ethical dilemma, the writer’s own Venetian associations. The distinctions between individual and collective histories are imprecise in ways that might remind us once more of Smit’s contention about style: style is always present, Smit argues, and what it means in any given study depends on the individual performing the study in question (5). Like the observer of a detailed mosaic or the stylistically-inclined critic, those representing history participate in a series of choices, unconscious or aware, that determine the story being told. We might even suggest, following James’s narrator, that history’s recorders or representers make such choices based on what strikes any one of them, at any moment, as the most “wonderfully personal” elements of a historical account.

In *The Aspern Papers* James presents the literary historian—his unnamed narrator—as a condottiere of the romantic age.³² Grimly pursuing his desired objects, the narrator wants to capture the history suppressed by Miss Bordereau in order to enjoy a more consistent relation with the literary past: “After all they were under my hand—they had not escaped me yet; and they made my life continuous, in a fashion, with the illustrious life they had touched at the other end” (28). James’s novella represents (though it does not necessarily condone) a fantasy of historical wholeness that the narrator imagines as the inevitable result of his dogged pursuit. By discouraging our sympathetic attachment to the narrator—that calculating and self-absorbed American—the novella undermines the preface’s investment in the pleasures of historical continuity, what James

describes as the “value of nearness” (*AP*xxxix).

Ross Posnock identifies an “acute unease with both scientific and institutional authority” as fundamental to James’s impressionistic aesthetic, which Posnock characterizes as “a nearly compulsive benignity that serves to displace his anxiety about totalizing forces to a level safely abstracted from political reality.”³³ High above the square, rendered momentarily wonderful in a shaft of sunlight, the condottiere need not overwhelm the spectator, despite the weight of imperial gratitude that holds him above his grateful subjects. My analysis above, differentiating two distinct modes of historical understanding expressed through a sentence’s particular “bits,” suggests that another way James combats his aversion to “political actuality” (an aversion Posnock calls his “escape from authority and history,” 117) is through his impression-based ability to “conver[t] . . . ideas into a concrete image and produc[e] a reality” (*AF*172). Essential for success are the stylistic choices involved in appropriate rendering, a process James describes as “catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life. . . . Art is essentially selection” (177). The job of the literary artist, according to James, is to select bits that offer the most identifiable version of “the whole piece” (172). Turning briefly to *Italian Hours*, we can begin to see how this principle of selection might be applied to history. As early as 1882, James’s appropriately personal history, a stylized history, could more often be accessed through the glimpse or impression than the totalizing view of the historian-as-condottieri. Of course, this claim that James’s aesthetic project—and his philosophical one—depends upon using carefully-selected parts to represent the whole also applies to versions of history that run counter to the totalizing history of the condottiere, hence the capacity of the “immense collective apartment” image to also represent Venice. For James, almost any historical bit—the condottiere of long ago, the city’s architecture, or its most celebrated artists—can become a symbol around which a linguistic field might be built.

Like so many other subjects to which he was attracted, Henry James wrote often of Venetian artwork, especially Tintoretto and Veronese. Veronese's numerous, often enormous, works demonstrate a "command of architecture, of portraiture, of costumes and of Venetian, Titian-inspired color"³⁴ that mark him as an exemplar of Venetian Renaissance style.³⁵ As Woolson's "In Venice" illustrates, the surface style for which Veronese became famous also contributed to criticism of his superficiality and excessive ornamentation. When summoned to an audience with members of an Inquisition Tribunal in the year 1573, Veronese's style represented a legitimate political risk.³⁶

For James, "the great source of [Tintoretto's] impressiveness is that his indefatigable hand never drew a line that was not . . . a moral line. . . . he felt, pictorially, the great, beautiful, terrible spectacle of human life . . . his works are signally grave" (*IH* 57). In almost direct opposition to this gravity, this deep-seated and "indefatigable" morality, we have James's Veronese: "Never was painter more nobly joyous, never did an artist take a greater delight in life, seeing it all as a kind of breezy festival . . . He was the happiest of painters and produced the happiest picture in the world. 'The Rape of Europa' surely deserves this title: it is impossible to look at it without aching with envy" (*IH* 25). For many readers, it may seem noteworthy, to say the least, for James to describe a painting about female assault as "the happiest picture in the world." This jarring dichotomy between subject and assessment can be attributed to James's theories of content's relation to style, presented in the Venetian essays of *Italian Hours*. In these essays, specific details—a painting's ostensible subject, a single interaction, a particular work of art—are intentionally obscured or mixed in the service of an aestheticized immediacy of experience and representation.

We will stop here and linger a bit, as James records doing himself in Venice, to "suffer in a darkness that can never be explored. . . . You catch a glimpse . . . but the rest is impenetrable mystery" (23). Although James is talking here about the farcically poor lighting in Venetian galleries

and chapels, I am indulging in a conceit about Jamesian style. We might recall the reading distress of Smit, who “must exert [him]self in short bursts . . . lost and confused along the way” (129).

The very fact that James writes at all—let alone for dozens of pages over decades—about artists who, even by his own time, had been featured in hundreds of texts, from art studies and regional histories to guidebooks and travel narratives, seems both striking and pointless. With nothing new to add (indeed, James himself claims that “everything has been said about the mighty painters,” *IH* 20), perhaps the first question to ask of James’s writing about Veronese is why provide this content at all? Attending carefully to the style of these writings, drawing from style a theory of history, my implicit answer might be that content is, if not irrelevant, at least of lesser importance than the style in which it is couched and the stylistic distinctiveness to which it responds. At least for James, writing about Veronese was in no way an exercise in appreciating “beauty without mind”: Veronese is perhaps the most cheerful companion in what James often describes as city of “decrepitude,” “decadence and ruin,” a city grasping onto its relics in an effort to stay afloat.

Several commentators on Jamesian style have claimed that its particularities represent James’s efforts to view events and persons from all possible angles, thus drawing a connection between style and epistemology—the difficulties of James’s style reflect his philosophical commitment to representing interpretive alternatives as fully and accurately as possible.³⁷ In his writing about Venetian art in particular, James expresses his appreciation for this concurrence between representation and experience. “Nowhere . . . do art and life seem so interfused, and, as it were, so consanguineous. All the splendor of light and color, all the Venetian air and the Venetian history are on the walls and ceilings. . . . You live in certain sort of knowledge as in a rosy cloud” (21). Tintoretto and Veronese represent, for James, two sides of the same coin: the two painters operate according to the same aesthetic principles while representing opposing emotional registers

within them. Although James professes a deeply moral appreciation for Tintoretto, it is Veronese, the “happiest of painters,” who offers the version of Venetian history James finds most pleasurable; moreover, Veronese may offer James a way to reconcile his two opposing impulses in writing about Italy. As I suggested at the opening of this chapter, we might understand that opposition as one between two understandings of Italy’s “great historical complexity.” In one version, historical complexity is a matter of informational depth and temporally-ordered progress; in the other, history is a grand aesthetic spectacle, wherein any delightful detail might distract us from the whole. In writing about Veronese, as in the descriptions of Venice from *The Aspern Papers*, James attempts to collapse the difference between these two distinct modes.

I want to suggest that, for James, Venetian art (that painted by Veronese and Tintoretto in particular) has an ability to change or condition Venetian history, perhaps even distracting James from “the big depressing dazzling joke” (38) of the city’s decrepitude.³⁸ While James never goes so far as to refute history as such, passages about Veronese offer a different kind of spectacle than that of the “dazzling joke.” Among the confusing demonstrations of Italian modernity and the deeply compelling sights of Italian aesthetic history, Veronese is a consistent source of joy and diversion.³⁹

The Venetian Ducal Palace is a grim and imposing building. In that way, it resembles the statue of Colleoni we gazed up at so many pages ago. Exploring the art treasures on display, James encounters “The Rape of Europa” with which he is so abruptly taken. In an initial description, James’s experiences in the palace environs and his impressions in front of the Veronese merge into one grand aesthetic moment:

The reflected sunshine plays up through the great gilded window from the glittering lagoon and shimmers and twinkles over gilded walls and ceilings. All the history of Venice, all its splendid stately past, glows around you in the strong sea-light. Everyone here is magnificent, but the great Veronese is the most magnificent of all. He swims before you in a silver cloud, he thrones in an eternal morning. . . . the white

colonnades sustain the richest canopies, under which the first gentlemen and ladies in the world both render homage and receive it. (25)

We are both near to and distant from the sense of “beauty without mind” that Woolson’s Claudia found so disturbing in her own Venetian experiences of Veronese. I would not characterize this description as mindless, nor so the visions it describes; it is carefully crafted with a clear organizing principle, designed to convey what we might call, following James, the “breezy [,] strong sea-light” of his experience. In this highly adjectival interlude, not much time is spent on pictorial details, nor, it should be noted, on historical ones. In one sense, the description is mindless in its lack of context or interpretive assistance;⁴⁰ the palace room is described in ways that resemble Claudia’s description of Veronese paintings, filled with “blue sky . . . brocades . . . colors and splendor . . . great fair women” (*Front Yard* 252).

A sense of beauty absent stable referent is perhaps the most striking feature of this entire passage, which moves from describing the room and its effects on James, to a free-floating appraisal of Veronese that collapses a distinction between the painter and his works, ending with a clause that performs a similar collapse of spectator and painting. Entering the gallery, James describes “white collonades [that] sustain the richest canopies, under which the first gentlemen and ladies in the world both render homage and receive it. Their glorious garments rustle in the air of the sea and their sun-lighted faces are the very complexion of Venice” (25). James communicates his sense of the paintings, but this passage could also be describing the physical bodies of the room’s visitors. The auditory stimulation of “garments rustl[ing]” seems an unlikely result of fresco appreciation, and the magnificent Veronese features no visible gentlemen. Alternatively, the physical impossibility of rustling paintings suggests the level of surface detail displayed by each canvas: so real do the painted garments appear, they seem to rustle in the constant ocean breeze. Directly following this sentence, we are confronted with the similarly-ambiguous observation that

“the mixture of pride and piety, of politics and religion, of art and patriotism, gives a splendid dignity to every scene” (25). To which scenes does James refer? Every social scene in the gallery rooms? Every scene represented in every artwork? Distinctions blur at the edges, and while unclear referents establish this confusion, sentence order exacerbates it until we are not quite sure what James is showing us. We know it is beautiful, sun-dappled, and glowing from the sea’s reflection. We know, in short, that it is all Venice, and the differences between the figures on the walls and those in the rooms become unimportant.

The grammar of these sentences seems intentionally to obscure who is acting and what is being evoked, eschewing situating pronouns or situational information that might help the reader imagine the scene. Sentences appear to be describing James’s impressions of the painter and of the responses of the admirers who happen to be present, but the ambiguous use of determiners and pronouns makes it difficult to tell who or what is being described (or personified). Into this confusion, an almost-inexplicable sentence intervenes, in which James may be fantasizing about a mobile figure of Veronese or possibly describing his own response to the gallery. Of this mysterious figure, James offers, “He revels in the gold-framed ovals of the ceilings, multiplies himself there with the fluttering movements of an embroidered banner that tosses itself into the blue” (25). The initial clause suggests a possible reference to an individual art admirer whose function in a gallery might be understood as a responsibility to “revel” in the treasures therein. The second clause describes an action that is significantly less distinct—not only is the actor difficult to parse, the action itself is distinctly fuzzy; the possible referents are themselves multiple, fluttering between embodied persons, historical figures, aesthetic representations, even natural phenomenon like water and light.

Having gazed long and longer at this passage, a single paragraph of James’s 1882 “Venice” essay, we can ascertain, through grammatical and structural “darkness,” the outlines of an aesthetic

theory in action. Leo Bersani asserts that in James, “what we know we know through appreciation and not perception; knowledge is a kind of seeing which can dispense with objects of vision. . . . the reality of a thing depends on the quality of the treatment it gets.”⁴¹ In part, Bersani argues that something like style (the “quality of treatment” something gets) helps condition that thing’s reality in James’s work. Knowledge, perhaps dependent on an actual “object” but perhaps not (the “object of vision” *can* be “dispense[d] with” but is not necessarily unnecessary), results not simply from perceiving but also from appreciating. This mode of knowledge, which Bersani develops from interpretations of James’s late novels, is also operational in James’s Italian essays. As James claims in one of his Italian essays, converting “impressions into prose” is work for “ugly places, at unprivileged times” (17). The prose that results from any series of perceptions develops after the fact, once the writer has a chance to revisit and highlight all that he appreciates about his impressions. The goal of this conversion process, James’s essays make evident, is not progressive narrative; James’s impressionistic mode instead intends to transmit a version of individual immediacy through accumulation of impressionistic detail.

Bersani and James both suggest that reality is partially experiential and partially (at least) representational. The reality of Venice for James and his readers is a result of the information, reminiscences, and details called forth by James during his process of “conversion.” James provides us with a linguistic rendering of such bright confusion. What, finally, might these wonders have to do with history?

This scene’s grammatical peculiarity—the aggressive indeterminacy of its bits—can be understood to represent James’s Venetian experience and his aesthetic theory of representing reality through complexity of style, which erases the hard distinctions between art objects and experiential reality. This tendency to collapse boundaries between art and life proves the most important and salutary aspect of Venice for James. “The great Venetians,” James writes,

“recognized that form and colour and earth and air were equal members of every possible subject; and beneath their magical touch the hard outlines melted together and the blank intervals bloomed with meaning” (*III*, 257-58). The “melt[ing] together” of “hard outlines”—between people and painting, between sunlight and historical personages—is what our passage on the Ducal Palace has been performing. I offer, through an interpretation of James’s Venetian essay, this melting, this delighted indeterminacy, as an antidote to the “decrepitude” and historical density of Venice, indeed the density of all of James’s Italy. In such melting, meaning might finally “bloom,” spilling out from once-firm edges in a promiscuous and compelling spectacle that refuses hard outlines like those dictating linear historical form or circumscribing the appropriate limits of collective affiliation. That this desired effect is achieved, for James, through aesthetic—by which I mean stylistic—effects suggests that historical meaning might in fact be a matter for style instead of a matter of plot.

Even as James’s New Italy emerges onto an international stage, Venice’s inevitable decay, its increasing temporal distance from economic and republican greatness, grows ever more pronounced. At moments, James singles out a sense of historical progression as the cause of his particularly Venetian melancholy: “What is most beautiful is gone; what was next most beautiful is, thank goodness, going—that, I think, is the monstrous description of the better part of your thought” (*III*, 62). Part of what James finds monstrous is a distant relation to the Venetian past that is nevertheless welcome. His “thank goodness” seems to recognize that his paradoxical relief at the passing of the beautiful feels especially monstrous. As time moves forward in a declarative march of events, beautiful things drop away never to return. For James, this process appears sad but necessary. This is, I think, a process of establishing the “hard outlines” that James’s favorite Venetian painters abjure. I am reminded of the preface with which we began, where James compares historical contemplation to a series of gardens: “with more moves back the element of

the appreciable shrinks—just as the charm of looking over a garden-wall into another garden breaks down when a succession of walls appear. . . . the view is mainly a view of barriers” (*AP*, xxxi-xxxii). Ornamental art, stylized aesthetic productions, are, for James, a kind of antidote to the garden-walls of history.

Instead of organizing history into discrete categories (and, I would add, discrete events), James values a shifting group of impressions, a vast collection of bits that the artist or historian can sift among, merging one series of impressions into a memory or image, then remixing the bits and searching anew for a fresh picture or expression. Is style, therefore, the only way to understand history for James? Another way of asking this might be to ask: is historical content—whether understood as personal or social—solely a matter of representation? Can style redeem historical damage? Appreciating Veronese, James indulges the fantasy that history could be a matter of style. A rape scene, filled with representations of “flowers and gems and brocade, of blooming flesh and shining sea and waving grove, of youth health, movement, desire,” thus becomes the “happiest picture in the world” (*IH*, 25). However, in a review essay about this chapter’s final author, Gabriele D’Annunzio, James is unable to sustain an appreciation for the aesthetic ornamentation that make Veronese so deeply pleasurable. Indeed, James’s review castigates D’Annunzio for something James refers to as “mere zoological sociability.”⁴² As I will suggest, the excess of both style and content, and the startling disjunction between the two, leads James to confer on D’Annunzio’s human protagonists a criticism more appropriate to Veronese’s depiction of a human-bovine encounter; surely, the latter represents an apex of “zoological sociability.”

III.

Gabriele D’Annunzio was one of Italy’s most compelling and divisive literary figures during the fin-de-siècle era. In 1879, at the age of sixteen, D’Annunzio published his first volume of

poetry; he would continue to publish plays, novels, poetry, cultural criticism, aesthetic theory, and autobiographies until 1935, three years before his death.⁴³ Famous as the face of the Italian decadence movement, notorious as a dandy and lover and soldier, D'Annunzio has long been understood through two deeply contradictory perspectives: John Robert Woodhouse's 1998 biography proclaims D'Annunzio a "defiant archangel" while Jared Becker's 1994 explication of the writer's aesthetic philosophy calls him "Italy's most original architect of Fascist ideology."⁴⁴ D'Annunzio's aesthetic achievements⁴⁵ and personal peccadillos reveal him as a consummate product of his time; however, I want to leave aside the many biographical controversies and political intrigues that continue to circulate around D'Annunzio and attend instead to the style of his novels and dramas, what Lucia Ra calls his "seductiveness," constituted by "the play of surfaces and . . . the sensuality of words as ornaments."⁴⁶

In addition to being lauded for their linguistic beauty, which is often associated with D'Annunzio's sensuality, his works explicitly participate in developing a theory of social style: the hero of *Il Fuoco* seeks to convert followers to an aesthetic regimen of pleasurable assault. As Stelio describes it, Venice demonstrates to its Italian observers "the possibility of a pain transmuted into the most forceful energy [la possibilità di un dolore trasmutato nella più efficace energia]" (101). We might understand D'Annunzio also articulating a theory of history that navigates between an embrace of "Art for Art's sake"⁴⁷ and his commitment to nationally-specific goals for Italy. Indeed, D'Annunzio's ardent nationalism eclipsed even his writing by the end of the author's long life. Having fought honorably in World War I and in various Italian colonial endeavors, D'Annunzio became a potent symbol of masculine Italian patriotism, rivaling even Mussolini in the increasingly modern, aggressively politicized Italy of the 1920s and 1930s. In this section, I suggest that D'Annunzio's commitment to nationalism can be understood stylistically. Conveying historical theory through use of distinct verb forms, *Il Fuoco* expresses a relation to history and a drive

toward the future comprehensible in progressive nationalist terms. While D'Annunzio's sensuously indeterminate descriptions render his writing especially appealing to James, the Italian aesthetic warrior develops a more consistent, and more nationally oriented, vision of artistic achievement than does the vaguely cosmopolitan James.

By the time his Venetian novel *Il Fuoco* [*The Flame*] appeared in 1900, D'Annunzio was well-known and regarded in Europe following the translation of numerous volumes of poetry and several novels from original Italian.⁴⁸ Henry James's 1904 review essay of D'Annunzio posits him as an ideal "case" for the testing of an aesthetic hypothesis: can beauty of style (what James calls the "curious, various, inquisitive, always active employment of language. . . . [wherein] thick-sown illustrative images and figures . . . fairly bloom," 254-55) ever make up for ugliness of content (here conceived as immorality)? Early paragraphs of the review suggest that D'Annunzio has managed to achieve this triumph of surface beauty by rendering inseparable style and content: "So close is the marriage between his power of 'rendering,' in the light of the imagination, and whatever he sees and feels, that we should much mislead in speaking of his manner as a thing distinct from the matter submitted to it. . . . we see no point of it where literature (beauty of the mind) or where life (beauty of the sense) begins or ends" (*NV*, 255). However, by the close of the review, James has decided that D'Annunzio's high style is ultimately insufficient as a model for beauty since "there is no process, no complexity, no suspense in their story; and thereby, we submit, there is no esthetic beauty" (288). Without sufficient complexity, without the narrative development of depth, the aesthetic pleasures of D'Annunzio's prose are empty ones, possessed of "no more dignity than . . . the boots and shoes that we see in the corridors of promiscuous hotels" (292). Despite the morally loaded language of "promiscuity," what James means in its use has more to do with superficiality than with morally repugnant sensuality.

Instead of a moral distaste, James's objection can be understood in historical terms. The review states clearly that a lack of general context or development accounts for the failure of D'Annunzio's superficially lovely productions; James's biggest complaint is that characters "have no general history, since their history is only, and immediately and extravagantly, that of their too cheap and too easy romance" (285). We see here a combination of James's historical and stylistic values. He appreciates the "general" over the specific in building individual history, and in the absence of "any other light than that of their particular erotic exercise" (285), disdains the extravagant. James rejects that which we might imagine him to be most sympathetic toward: temporally arrested, extravagant presentations of personal history. In this particular exploration of D'Annunzio as test case for the superiority of "esthetic" effect, James suggests that without complexity, without a sense of representativeness within a larger social (that is to say historical) context, even the most beautiful linguistic production "is the open door to the trivial" (230).

James ultimately decides that D'Annunzio fails to offer "beauty appealing alike to the senses and the mind" (195), because his beautiful linguistic creations remain "shut out from the rest of life, shut out from all fruition and assimilation" (231). Such a denunciation might strike us as strange, given what we have seen of James's own propensity for being distracted by sensory beauty. This very capacity for aesthetic distraction is what constitutes Veronese's appeal as an Venetian companion for James. In this review, by contrast, James takes a firmer stance about the inability of surface to convey complexity than we have encountered in either *The Aspern Papers* or *Italian Hours*, where melting beauty proves completely sufficient as an antidote to the bitter lessons of Italian history.

It is in the love of Italy as a particular conduit for a favored type of beauty that James finds common ground with D'Annunzio. Italy provides an exception to James's insistence on a representative outside to any given text's "admirable detached pictures" (231). James responds

favorably to D'Annunzio's descriptions of Italy, arguing in that "the value of the Italian background has been . . . inestimable . . . every spark of poetry it had to contribute has been struck from it" (270). Here at the intersection of description and form, or "background" and "poetry," James finds a fellow aesthetic traveler in the lavish Italian. What, then, does D'Annunzio's Italy look like, and how might we understand that Italy through the specific workings of style?

Depicting an affair between a violently youthful aesthete and his aging actress lover, *Il Fuoco* is praised by one early translator for its "exquisite intuition as to the workings of a woman's mind and the throbbings of her heart," while a later edition calls attention to the "deliberate cruelty" of "D'Annunzio's brilliant portrayal of the heroine's passion and vulnerability."¹⁹ The novel's (distinctly autobiographical) details depict tempestuous weeks in the love affair between young idealist Stelio Effrena and actress Foscarina. Action is limited: the pair, occasionally accompanied by friends and hangers-on, visit Venetian palaces, gardens, and landmarks and, in leisurely fashion, discuss their aesthetic philosophies and related plans to build an outdoor theater in Rome. Early in the novel, Stelio expounds his creative theories to a royal audience assembled to celebrate the rituals of Venetian autumn. D'Annunzio's description of the crowd recalls my opening image of the mosaic, vacillating between individual detail and aggregate effect. I quote at some length from the original Italian.

Soridevano con un vago languor, quasi estenuate da una sensazione troppo forte, emergendo con le spalle nude delle loro corolla di gemme. Gli smeraldi d'Andriana Duodo, I rubini di Giustiniana Memo, gli zaffiri di Lucrezia Pruili, i berilli di Orsetta Contarini, le turchesi di Zenobia Corner. . . . Vedeva Stelio quell busto femineo della smisurata chimera occhiuta, sul quale palpitavano mollemente le piume dei ventagli, e sentive passare sul suo pensiero un'ebrezza troppo calda, che lo turbava suggerendogli parole dall'aspetto quasi carneo.^f (82)

^fThey smiled with vague indolence, being somewhat exhausted by the sensation of strong emotion, as bare shoulders emerged from among their petal-like jewels: the emeralds of Andriana Duodo, the rubies of Giustiniana Memo, the sapphires of Lucrezia Pruili, the beryls of Orsetta Contarini, the turquoise of Zenobia Corner. . . . Stelio saw then the feminine breast of an immense, many-eyed chimera, upon which pulsed, in leisurely fashion, the feathered plumage of

In the pages that follow, I offer my own English translations of textual content at the bottom of the page; however, since this analysis highlights D'Annunzio's style while de-emphasizing its plot-driven content, I engage more directly and consistently with material in its original Italian. Only attention to original sentence-level decisions would constitute an analysis built around style.⁵⁰ The passage's numerous adjectives ("vago [vague]," "forte [strong]," "nude [bare, naked]" in just the first sentence) and the intensifier "troppo" (excessive, too much, totally), coupled with several words for indolence or languor ("languor," "estenuate," "mollemente") convey the paradoxical feeling often understood to represent "Italian decadence," an unsettling combination of power and weakness, excess and indolence.⁵¹ Like the literary movement in which it is often set—and indeed like its author's reputation—the description of Stelio's waiting crowd is fundamentally contradictory in its joining together of excess and indolence. This contradiction between descriptive detail and the absence of descriptive particularity is implied by repeated use of "troppo," which suggests an undefined muchness.

I would characterize the language here as disorienting and specific at once. This passage evinces a general lack of grammatical situated-ness that would be expressed through prepositions or object-pronouns.⁵² The complexity of the mental action being described contributes to a sense of disorientation. From vaguely indolent bodies to highly specific jewels and the women who wear them, the passage moves swiftly to a metaphoric description of Stelio's impressions and their interior effects. Verb forms likewise resist temporal closure or referential clarity, exacerbating a sense of dislocation and confusion. Many verbs take the easily conjugated past tense form *l'imperfetto* [the imperfect]: the verbs "soridevano," "vedeva," "sentiva," and "turbava" all fit this

many fans. [Stelio] felt a powerfully warm intoxication pass through his thought; this disturbed him, evoking fantasies with a strange, fleshy aspect" (*Il Fuoco*, 82).

category. Unlike the compound form *passato prossimo*,⁵³ *l'imperfetto* is a simple tense that proves more difficult to interpret, as it refers to past action that is unfinished or ongoing. D'Annunzio's use of *l'imperfetto* for this passage's verbs make it unclear when the action (smiling, seeing, feeling, being disturbed) began or ended. There are also two gerunds: "emergendo" and "suggerendo[gli]" and one verb, "estenuate," in past participial form without a secondary tense-indicating verb. As in English, past- and gerund-participles most often function as nouns describing states of being or actions; in these cases, they serve as markers of action for which the subject may be delayed or unclear. While the form is simple and specific (a single verb, a basic conjunction), referent is diffused through tense's refusal of temporal completion or the participle's unclear relation to its ostensible subject.

The passage's verb forms, the relative scarcity of situating prepositions or pronouns and a structure of progressive, descriptive clauses headed by verbs all contribute to a sense of suspension, wherein the reader seems to float among the sentences, unsure of the order of events or impressions and unclear about who or what is being called forth and called to in the illusions and images described. In the language's commitment to accurately rendering Stelio's distracted state at the cost of semantic clarity, this passage resembles James's most impressionist moments. Languidly depicting vague relations between verbs and their subjects here, the language seems to undulate much like the sea of jeweled flesh, before which Stelio stands to deliver his aesthetic philosophy.

The general effect of this passage in its original Italian is to present a clichéd picture of Venice: languid, sensuous, richly bejeweled, deliberately impenetrable. The excesses of detail (the particular gems of the particular noblewomen, the exposed shoulders and feathered fans, the "extreme heat" of Stelio's "intoxication") offer semantic contrast to the passage's grammatical indeterminacy. Like the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*, like James's juxtaposed attempts to describe "collective" Venetian expression, we become lost in detail, momentarily losing sight of the

whole. A few pages on, Stelio attempts to hold detail and image in tandem: “E tuttavia, mentre notava i mille aspetti momentanei, egli conserva nella sua visione l’immagine totale della smisurata chimera occhiuta dal busto coperto di scaglie splendide [But nevertheless, while noting the thousand tiny features, he held in his vision the whole image of the immense, many-eyed chimera, its breast covered with splendid crystals]” (94). Grammatical contrasts with the preceding passage are immediately notable: both the situating preposition “mentre” and the subject pronoun “egli,” act to place these visions in Stelio’s own mind at a specific time: he sees simultaneously the “thousand tiny features” and the “immense” crowd-creature. This second passage, occurring while Stelio is mid-speech, might provide a stylistic model for navigating specific “bits” and general effect. Moreover, its position at the beginning of Stelio’s aesthetic philosophizing, and this vision’s relation to his artistic claims, offers an aesthetic theory for the successful merging of part and whole, of surface bits and imagistic depth.

Stelio advocates an idealized life of pleasure and a surrender to the paradoxes of history. Initially, Stelio casts as fools “quelli che di sotto una ruina avevan creduto disseppellire il simulacro della Bellezza [those who believe they can exhume the image of Beauty from under the ruins]” (102). Stelio claims that the true artists of pleasure are “le creature ideali che il suo silenzio custodisce vivono in tutto il passato e in tutto l’avvenire [ideal creatures, those who shelter in silence, living wholly in the past and wholly in the times to come]” (102-03). Again, much work is being performed here by the verb forms: use of the *trapassato prossimo* (equivalent to the English past perfect) in the phrase “avevan creduto disseppellire” indicates that belief in the potential to exhume beauty from history is a belief long dead, having already occurred in a distant, completed past. At the same time, the future in which Stelio’s idealized creatures live and create is a distinctly active one: “avvenire” is both a noun meaning “future” and an infinitive verb meaning “to occur; to happen.” Employing distinct stylistic features—here, the manipulation of verb forms and the use of

a verb/noun homonym—Stelio’s speech suggests a theory of historical interpretation through grammatical contrast: a total or ultimate Beauty can never be recovered from the past, but neither should the past be discarded in its entirety. Furthermore, the “silence” of Venice (a historical silence? a relational one?) grants those who seek succor the ability to live at once in an ongoing uncompleted past and an active, anticipatory future. Instead of using style as a means to evade history (as Woolson uses narratorial tone to place her characters outside any recognizable national moment) or as a transcendent vehicle for historical distraction (as James employs his melting impressions), D’Annunzio’s verb-driven aesthetic philosophy instead suggests the potential of language to alter relations to the world of experience.

The negotiation between past, present, and future Italy is a common feature of D’Annunzio’s work more generally. Jeffrey Schnapp recognizes temporal manipulation as a particular feature of D’Annunzio’s aesthetic project. Describing D’Annunzio’s engagement with the “narrative or historical present” as “*intensification* (or condensation) and *expansion* (or displacement),” Schnapp goes to claim that D’Annunzian allegory “operates on the ‘temporal’ plane by projecting the narrative or historical present forward in time. . . . reciprocally, it makes it possible for certain heroic moments and texts from the Italian and ancient past to be reinscribed and reinvested with meaning.”⁵⁴ In *Il Fuoco*, the narrator describes that very process thusly: “le memorie, non più immobili nell’ombra del passato, vi circolassero a similitudine di aure libere in una foresta commune [memories, no longer immobilized in the shadow of the past, circulated there, resembling free breezes in a common forest]” (106). This free circulation between past and present is enabled, even conditioned, by “le virtù della poesia e del sogno [the capacities of poetry and dream]” (106). D’Annunzio suggests the operations of language as a powerful way to effect relations to historical time and lived experience.

The narrative links style directly to historical consciousness, effectively arguing that aestheticization and fantasy (“poetry and dream”) provide the imaginative space for a distinctly active, unmoored engagement with the distant past and with collectivities. All the action of these sentences is attributed to “la moltitudine [the crowd].” D’Annunzio’s protagonist extends to collectives the kind of flexible relation to the past that James proposes as the province of the individual artist. Listening to the aesthetic theories about pleasure, temporality, and image-making that are propounded by Stelio in his celebratory address, temporal perception actually changes, as the past circulates freely among the entranced auditors.

This circulating past is an unspecific one, not composed of specific events but instead described with a series of abstract nouns: “splendide sorti umane [splendid human destiny],” “un antico retaggio [an ancient heritage],” “un’infinita armonia [an infinite harmony]” (106-07). D’Annunzio’s descriptions of the crowd, of Stelio’s effect on his audience and on temporal perception or history resemble the aestheticized experience of James’s Ducal Palace: suffused with undifferentiated figures, historical beauties, and a sense of potent but non-specific human endeavor. As James heightens this sense of indistinguishability through a proliferation of unclear pronouns and determiners, D’Annunzio achieves a similar effect through his use of temporally unresolved verb forms and grandiose, abstract, descriptive phrases. Both authors use style to convey the conceptual action they describe, performing the link between language and history that their texts claim as important.

Dannunzian style is not mere surface but in fact conditions the character and operations of depth, here understood as historical content or relation. We can see an important distinction between D’Annunzio and James. The former sees linguistic opulence and ornament as essential to the creation of artistic “matter,” while James, as we have seen in his review of D’Annunzio and characterization of Tintoretto, is ultimately unable to appreciate “the ‘esthetic’ law of life” (*NN*,

246) without the gratification of appropriately complex content. James privileges material that charts development, registers values about the world, and engages with history. Woolson, too, is uninterested in perceptions or representations that overemphasize “beauty without mind.” For Woolson, these inappropriate interactions are predicated on insufficient attention to personal history. For D’Annunzio, I am suggesting, that distinction does not exist.

Furthermore, for James and Woolson, both long-term residents of Italy but not Italian citizens, their writing about Venice and history had very different national goals than D’Annunzio’s, if indeed we can speak of the American authors as having national goals at all. Often identified as the “Nietzschianism” of this moment in Italian literary history,⁵⁵ is its participation in a process of national regeneration facilitated by powerful artistic minds. In this project, D’Annunzio, who would go on to fight in several military campaigns during World War I, was of especial importance. We might then consider his portrayal of Venice as espousing a program for national regeneration instead of recording the melancholic story of decline with which James is so distracted. Jared Becker argues just such a point forcefully, linking D’Annunzio’s Venice in *Il Fuoco* to the writings of famous Futurist F.T. Marinetti: “Like Barres and D’Annunzio before him, Marinetti looks upon the fabled decay of Venice as a challenge. Out of the putrid carcass of the city he aims to create a resurgent nation” (149).

Indeed, the recognition of a resurgent national glory is the explicit outcome of the process of memorial “unmooring” Stelio exacerbates in his listening crowd: “ella sembrava ritrovare . . . e riconoscere il suo diretto a un antico retaggio di cui fosse state dispogliata: a quell retaggio che il messaggero le annunciava essere ancora intatto e recuperabile [the crowd seemed to rediscover . . . and recognize the directives of an ancient heritage of which it had been stripped: the messenger Stelio announced of this heritage that it was yet intact and recoverable” (106). In this declaration of inherited potential and dormant but recoverable national power, we find specific situational

prepositions (including “di cui [of which],” “quell [that],” “ancora [still/yet]”) working to clarify the relation between historical awareness and active potential. Additionally, the numerous verbs that take infinitive form (“retrovare,” “riconoscere,” “essere”) convey a sense of concrete action.⁵⁶ In their infinitive forms, actions of “rediscovery, recognition, and being [intact]” are all directives offered from a distant “heritage” (an impersonal source if ever there was one) to an equally indistinct but potentially active crowd of listeners.

Moreover, all of the adjectival forms in this sentence (including “antico,” “intatto,” and “recuperabile”) are lexical adjectives, not the previously explored participle forms (past and gerund) that contribute to an attributive ambiguity. This grammatical circumstance conveys a sense of concrete features attributable to a single noun instead of the indistinctiveness of simultaneously unclear action and modification conveyed by adjectival participle forms in Italian. As Becker suggests, D’Annunzio is here manipulating grammatical circumstances in order to highlight the concrete, active uses to which the past can be put once it has been called forth by a linguistic artist like Stelio. This is quite dissimilar from James, who recuperates a sense of the past in order to fantasize about its pleasures and mourn its passing. An actual Italian citizen, one who would prove increasingly invested in undertaking nationalist projects and participating in battles for the sake of Italian glory, D’Annunzio uses the past for a very different reason: he wants it to authorize and invigorate the present. Thus, the typical Venetian decay is recast as opportunity: “Venezia rimarrebbe pur sempre una Città di Vita [Venice yet always remains a City of Life]” (103).

The project of using history to make a future is understood by D’Annunzio ultimately as a stylistic project. Hence his consistent use of vigorous artistic heroes, his aggressive linguistic distinctness, and his images of beauty as threatening, overwhelming, and ethically ambiguous. In a recent defense of formalist modes of analysis, Llyod Pratt suggests that D’Annunzio’s aesthetic inheritors, the Futurist poets, “especially rejected the romantic and later symbolist emphasis on the

depth of linguistic sign, as well as the notion that it was the portal to hidden meanings unavailable by way of the linguistic surface” (“The Nature of Form,” 427). D’Annunzio, whose aesthetic projects dramatized an uneasy combination of historical depth and extravagant surface power, seems to me to come closest to a direct interaction with his contemporary Italian context.

Reading D’Annunzio through verb forms demonstrates the ways in which the past is conceived of as already affecting the future. Moreover, D’Annunzio also wears his politics and his philosophies on his “surface”: *Il Fuoco*, like many of his novels, contains long stretches of aesthetic exhortation, philosophy couched in aggressive images. Like Woolson and James, D’Annunzio responds to very specific historical conditions in Italy; unlike them, he attempts to alter these conditions through the promulgation of a distinct aesthetic philosophy. Like his style—an indistinct balance of ambiguous tenses, ornamental images, and violent action—D’Annunzio’s socio-aesthetic philosophy was often contradictory: masculine but feminized, aggressive but over-wrought, extra-historical but nationalist.

I have explored here a sample of literary artists who present distinct versions of Italy, a distinctiveness that can be attributed to style. Through style, each author describes a theory of history with particular beneficiaries or targets. Woolson suggests the importance of biographical depth in establishing personal relationships, while James simultaneously embraces the sorrows of history (often at the content level) while seeking to mediate his melancholic relation to Venice through stylistic indeterminacy and an erasure of historical distance. D’Annunzio, the sole Italian author featured here, rejects the distinction between style and matter almost entirely, performing his awareness of style’s effect on lived experience through grammar (in particular, the use of distinct verbal forms to convey specific relations to and uses of history).

Woolson’s short stories make no reference to specific moments in Italian history. It’s not the case that the tales take place in a historical vacuum; instead, personal and collective history are

made legible and interpretable through Woolson's bitter combination of narrated plot and narrative style. This blend is what I have characterized as "tone." In Woolson's system of tonal representation, national history is just another loosely-defined means of indicating how readers might interpret a given character. Peter and Barbara Senter are tonally American in the terms set up by the narrative: preening, patriotic, ultimately vulnerable. Carmela is tonally Italian: Gothicized, deceitful, charming. These are both, of course, reductive and vague means of representing national identity, but I am suggesting such vagueness as an operation of tone. For Woolson, this combinatory register is a way to understand and represent history as well as nation. The tendency to discuss Woolson as a regionalist suggests this blend between abstraction and specificity, between depth and surface. In her Italian stories, a regional, tonal approach is applied to national identities affectively limited by bitterness.

In the works of James that take Venice as their subject, a disjunction between past and present remains especially evident. To counter the distracting unpleasantness of this historical struggle in Italy, James applies his theory of the impression with especial vigor. In *The Aspern Papers* and *Italian Hours*, the "big distracting dazzling joke" of Venice is countered by an expansive, pleasure-seeking style that erases "hard outlines" (between persons, between historical moments, between lived and imagined experience) and insists on aesthetic attention to the complexity at hand. One can't entirely escape history, but one can attend to certain of its "wonderfully personal" moments as a panacea for the relentless march forward of nationalist plot.

Finally, D'Annunzio folds together history and style in a clearly articulated way—through the aesthetic philosophy of Stelio, his autobiographical mouthpiece—for an explicitly national purpose. Unlike Woolson and James, who respond to Venice's history by focusing more tightly on representations of particular moments represented and made distracting by style, D'Annunzio uses stylistic features (the manipulation of verb forms, the absence of individuated

subjects and proliferation of abstract ones) to advance a specifically historical project: the improvement of Italian national hopes. Like the hero of *Il Fuoco*, D'Annunzio appears to have it all: the opulence of style, a clarity of historical message, a firm sense of collective will.

In each case, the operations of politics and the plots of history are distended and made strange through the workings of style. This suggests how linguistic bits might be assembled (“selected” in James’s words) to counter (or, for D’Annunzio, to call into being) an assemblage of representative moments and meaningful actions, an assemblage we often call by the name “history.” As a member of the rising Italian political elite, D’Annunzio’s embrace of a style that carries distinct nationalist meaning responds to an Italian tradition of politicized art. As we have seen in previous chapters, the political force of literary art was an essential aspect of the Risorgimento struggle for coherent national history, while D’Annunzio’s violent lavishness directly anticipates the aesthetic goals of the Futurists and, eventually, the fascist aesthetic regime. The stylistic features that D’Annunzio employs to articulate his sense of Italy’s national potential, the balance he offers between assertive verbal force and languid linguistic opulence, presses style into historical service, acting as a bridge between the “great historical complexity” of Italy’s past and the uncharted national progress that lies before the new nation.

But famous (and infamous) authors were not the only Italian residents struggling to identify proper forms of emotional response to and civic participation in unified Italy. In the most common historical accounting, the static social order of Italy, wherein wealthy northern elites maintained political and economic control over the peninsula while organizing military excursions into the southern regions, contributed to a sharp rise in emigration from those beleaguered areas. While Italy worked to develop a viable national infrastructure and establish a version of socio-political modernity, Americans increasingly focused on the influx of Italian immigrants to its largest cities. Following the post-unification pattern of Italian migration, my final chapter turns to the

United States in order to explore the long history of Italian participation in U.S. civic life, a history often overlooked in accounts of Italian America. Instead of following a neat chronological track, the last chapter of this study reverses course, returning again to midcentury so as to explore the operations (and erasures) of a circular Italian social history in the United States.

Chapter Four:

A Hero and His Newspapers; or, A Romance of Italian America

The history of Italian immigration to the United States is often described metaphorically. From a trickle of immigrants throughout much of the nineteenth century, Italian immigration surged to a “flood,” a “peasant tide”—mostly from the impoverished and exploited Southern regions—“pouring off the immigrant ships” between 1880 and 1910.¹ Many scholars of Italian-American² history have mapped the effects of this flood, documenting the social histories of Italian communities in the U.S., tracing the essential role of Italian immigrant labor in the development of American urban space, charting the rise of the particular ethnic identity of “Italian-American” as expressed in cultural productions.³

The metaphor of an immigrant flood might be read in two ways. In one version, the metaphor suggests a chronological logic: a trickle first, then the deluge; when the wave recedes, Americans are left to make sense of the aftermath. On a different interpretive tributary, the flood works tidally: a cyclical, repetitive operation of ebb and flow. Much like the previous chapter, which opened with two distinct readings of a single preposition, this chapter begins with a metaphor that might mean in two ways. While most cultural histories employ the first metaphor, studying Italian immigration history as a thirty-year’s wave crashing on U.S shores, this chapter explores an alternative, tidal history that privileges the cyclical metaphor. Engaging metaphorically with the historical development of Italian-American ethnic communities, my analysis of Italian-language newspapers focuses on the representational techniques employed to depict and develop collective identity.

The shift in Italian immigration from an episodic to an epic phenomenon is indubitably an important part of Italian and U.S histories. This chapter, however, is interested in an earlier immigration story, one culled from Italian-language newspapers published in the United States between 1849 and 1889, prior to the “great flood.” The narrative presented here is one often neglected in studies of American migration or Italian-American history. Bringing an earlier history to the fore, this analysis offers two distinct conceptual payoffs. First, the antediluvian narrative demonstrates the presence of a coherent Italian-American population decades before most scholars acknowledge; such modification to the historical record offers Italian-American studies a way to address some of the field’s pressing questions about its place in American ethnic history. Additionally, and more theoretically, the details of this early immigration story disrupt the linear narrative of progressive cultural assimilation that so often undergirds American theories of migration.⁴ This analysis traces a long generic oscillation that is only visible, and meaningful, when we expand the historical record to account for the half-century before the Italian immigrant torrent.

If we include the flood’s pre-history in a self-consciously constructed narrative with a future-driven, advancement logic at its core, we see more clearly what is often overlooked. Counter-intuitively, accounting for an earlier, linearized version of history highlights how socio-historical narratives, far from being stable, are always already about figuration and repetition, about storytelling and selective details. As the close of this chapter will contend, understanding history as a repetitive imaginary—that is, as repetition with generic difference—has implications for our understanding of Italian-American identity and highlights the potential of formally inventive archival intercession into cultural narratives. This particular Italian narrative reminds us anew of the aesthetic nature of affiliation, the imaginative components of something we take to be real: ethnic identity.⁵

Importing an aestheticized, literary lens to understand Italian-American ethnicity, I take seriously the claim made by Thomas Ferraro about the particular flexibility of Italian identity in the United States. Not limiting himself to ethnically identified Italians in the U.S., Ferraro's subject is "Italians of both distant history and recent vintage in the United States, but also *the rest of us*, readers and watchers and thinkers at large, who so identify when and how we can, most often through the media arts."⁶ Ferraro claims that the "aesthetic" affiliation of "feeling Italian" is available in the U.S. to people whose genetic history is not Italian, those whose shared generic history has prepared them to appreciate an aesthetic affiliation.⁷ This feeling, Ferraro continues, "is a historical dialectic of representation and self-representation" (3-4). The analysis that follows offers its own dialectical method, using self-representational, nonfictional material of community newspapers to develop a version of heroic narrative, an imaginative representation of Italian-American sensibility.⁸ Doing so, my final chapter proposes that the identity of Italian-American might be productively considered a *mezzo-identity*, a middle- or half- identity that is constituted in the dialectical space Ferraro conjures between stable ethnic or representational categories. This is not to devalue *mezzo-identity* as lacking or incomplete, but instead to point up its associational flexibility.

In the argument that follows, I posit the associations of ethnicity as a middle ground between the romance as nationalist genre and the realist narrative as regional one. This chapter uses material from a genre with realist commitments to explore the transitions between romantic and realist representation in Italian-American history. Here again, we commence with a textual opposition—this one between the realist account and the historical romance—that proves both more unstable and more useful than recent attempts to dismantle it have acknowledged.

In part, this argument presents an alternative reading practice for its archival material. Instead of isolating each paper according to temporal or regional specificity and carefully

historicizing each element, the (temporary) sweeping vision of the historical romancer, the self-conscious pose of mythologizer, enables this reader to piece together a larger pattern.⁹ The analysis moves broadly across region and chronology, balancing the realist content of these newspapers with the temporal sweep and typological conventions of romance. By calling attention to the way that such a vision is both speculative and constructed, this chapter's romantic history challenges assumptions of naturalized order and inevitable cultural progress that underwrite many iterations of the genre. Such a generic challenge also undermines another naturalized American story, that of the assimilationist immigrant; instead, this romance imagines that the aesthetic appeal of Italy (a recurrent theme of this study) might also be imported to the U.S. to affect American socio-cultural order.

In previous chapters, this study has explored distinct historical moments (politics) through literary operations (aesthetics) often assumed to be in opposition: the generic categories of narrative and lyric, distinctions of tone and address, the difference between linguistic style and narrative plot. In each case, my analyses have attempted to demonstrate that the utility of such presumed oppositions lies more often in the in-between spaces, the dialectical spaces, than at the poles. In this final chapter, the specific ethnic history of Italian-America enables me to explore a political opposition (between native and foreigner), an aesthetic opposition (between realistic and romantic representation), and a theoretical opposition (between ethnicity as a material or an imaginative connection). For scholars of Italian-American experience, this final opposition is perhaps most meaningful. The field's most influential practitioners often describe their community as unmoored from both ends of an ethnic binary, adrift without a single organizing ethnic identity nor a distinguishable version of cultural hybridity.¹⁰

In suggesting a notion like *mezzo-identity* as a conceptual bridge spanning the divides referenced above, this chapter emphasizes a middle cultural space different from that of cultural

hybridity.¹¹ While the identity theorized here is a sort of hybrid in its combination of Italian and American values or perspectives, I intend to highlight the generic, aesthetic elements of mezzo-identity more so than the political ones. Although Homi Bhabha attends to the textual or rhetorical nature of political identity, imagination for Bhabha is generally presented as carrying political purpose. Bhabha argues that “the problematic of political judgment cannot be represented as an epistemological problem of appearance and reality. . . . On the contrary, we are made excruciatingly aware of the ambivalent juxtaposition, the dangerous interstitial relation of the factual and the projective. . . . It is this to-and-fro, this fort/da of the symbolic process of political negotiation, that constitutes the politics of address” (*Culture* 36). Instead of imagining mezzo-identity as a means to negotiate political imaginaries only, this chapter uses generic distinction to explore an understanding of identity that carries, as Ferraro suggests, aesthetic meaning as well as political associations. The distinction I am drawing here is not one between political oppositions like nationalism and cosmopolitanism, but is instead one between modes of imagining communal connections themselves.¹²

Furthermore, the analysis here attempts itself to bridge a methodological divide. While scholars of immigrant history use mass-market genres like newspapers and material studies of print to present histories of ethnic assimilation, cultural theorists of identity often privilege imaginative forms and aesthetic associations over material ones. In part, mezzo-identity represents a conceptual attempt to name and exemplify the analytic method present in each of this dissertation’s chapters, which use the materials of history to highlight operations of fantastical attachment. In this chapter, I emphasize the generic elements of immigrant reality and political association as circulated in a form often assumed to be mimetically, unquestionably representative of real life.

Although newspaper studies make reference to distinct genres of content published within a given example’s pages¹³, such work rarely categorizes the papers themselves as being romantic or

realist (or, for that matter, lyric, gothic, or naturalist). The historical analysis of newspapers, however, does categorize through a logic of stages: this is especially true of migrant newspapers, or frontier ones.¹⁴ In using distinctions of genre more often associated with imaginative production than with short, declamatory descriptions of real-world events, my analysis suggests that the naturalization of neutral newspaper content (that is, the critical tendency to not characterize newspaper reports in generic terms) is a historical misrecognition, a misunderstanding of that material as flatly mimetic.¹⁵ Following the lead of these conceptual possibilities, this chapter uses realistic, politically oriented content to highlight aestheticized, romanticized elements in Italian-American history.

The historical newspapers gathered here had two general social purposes: representing Italian populations in the United States and reaping the cross-cultural benefits of “those who have more frequent intercourses with native Americans.”¹⁶ Since the majority of late-century immigrants from Italy were functionally illiterate in Italian (a subject I will return to shortly), a literary history in standard Italian was not usually considered a unifying force for those populations. Instead, functional Italian literacy was often developed in the U.S. out of necessity through community newspapers and other communal texts. For both writers and readers of Italian-language newspapers, the need to develop meaningful coherence (as a unified, participatory community within American public life) and to acknowledge a new nation’s civic norms (what we might call America’s political logic) must have seemed pressing.¹⁶ In order to illuminate essential aspects of U.S. civic imagination, newspapers engaged repetitively with certain cultural events or symbols: discussions of American Independence Day, for example, remained a yearly ritual for several

¹⁶ “[Q]uelli che avendo piu' frequente rapporti coi nativi americani” (“La Stampa Reppublicana Italiana agli Stati Uniti” 6 May 1871. *L'Italo-Americano*).

featured papers; articles examining the similarities between American and Italian public or economic life recurred across and among newspapers with frequency.

Describing immigrant autobiographies, Jolie A. Sheffer claims that authors often “establish[h] immigration as an experience akin to death and resurrection. The language of new beginning is familiar to readers of the bildungsroman, immigration narratives, and autobiographies.”¹⁷ Each of the genres Sheffer names could be considered realist: centered on particular persons, and concerned with the details of daily lives being lived. Shannon Gannon points to a similar cycle of repetition in the romance: “sometimes in fantastic narrative or romance fiction, there is a haunting similarity between almost-identical episodes.”¹⁸ For both realism and romance, one important cultural goal of textual repetition is “to convey meaning [Repetition is] a subtle way of conveying the moral logic of the action” (Gannon 2-3). As we shall see, several newspapers use meaningful repetition—of tropes, of news features—to highlight particular elements of Italian-American experience.

While Italians in the United States were developing cultural awareness through a system of symbolic cultural repetition, the expanded history presented here also illuminates a structure of repetition imposed upon Italian immigrants from without. Having spent almost half a century learning about the cultural order of the United States and constructing well-developed, organized social support systems and economic exchange networks, Italian populations were re-imagined as a novel foreign element during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Freshly categorized in U.S. newspapers, public reports, and even imaginative literature as ignorant and under-developed, Italians were often represented as a caretaking burden foisted upon American’s commercial adulthood.¹⁹

For many immigrants, the particular ethnic association of Italian-American developed through a mixture of temporally limited and politically useful textual genres like newspapers. This

was especially the case in the century's latter decades, when immigrant papers and labor papers offered a potent combination of economic and social organization.²⁰ Looking only at the late-century writing of Italian-Americans, we imagine the literature of this emergent ethnic population to be realist in orientation; we imagine it to index the gritty reality of ethnicity. Expanding our historical scope, we can instead see more easily that realism as a generic category is distinct from reality as an experiential one; we see that Italian-American collectives have also a long tradition of romantic self-expression. This shift across genre suggests that part of the expansive appeal of this particular identity stems from an earlier, heroically imaginative character. Furthermore, the newspaper stories I collect in this chapter—loosely organized around a figure (the maturing individual) and a concept (the participatory conventions of civic maturity)—shift generically between romantic and realist articulation. In this shift, the papers reiterate and expand upon certain cultural imperatives, developing a cultural logic of shared political and social investments across Italian populations and American ones.

We might, in a kind of generic shorthand authorized by decades of cultural study, associate operations of romance with those of nationalism and connect realism to specifics of local or regional affiliation.²¹ Assuming such a shorthand for this particular analysis (although I expand upon these associations in pages to come), I am proposing ethnicity as a particular associational genre through which groups might experiment with and represent cultural inclusivity. Instead of viewing ethnicity as an affiliation with stable parameters, a generic understanding of ethnicity benefits from literary study's expansive sense of generic range and flexibility.²² My final chapter emigrates an insight from formal analysis (in this case, that literary genres offer distinct ways of representing reality) to a realm more traditionally understood as political (the place and role of ethnic populations in U.S. civic life).

The newspapers discussed in this chapter offer realist attention to ethnic experience while simultaneously embracing romanticized metaphors of American socio-political life. In this way, the archival record highlights the significant role of metaphor or figurative language for coding social and political belonging. Joseph Cosco employs both metaphoric and generic language in his own discussion of Italian-American identity as it developed during the great migrant flood: “it was during this period that America’s romance with Italy clashed with the threatening reality of Italian immigrant ‘hordes’ now pouring into the country. The ‘romantic’ and the ‘real’ each had a certain power and status as reality” (17). Taking an interpretive cue from the representational tendencies of historical newspapers, this chapter explores a long, incomplete shift from romantic to realist articulations of immigrant experience through attention to genre conventions and certain powerful figures who recur across the newspapers and the decades. More specifically, the analysis that follows traces this shift through representations both realistic and figurative of human maturation, paying particular attention to depictions of children.

The romance here posits ethnic identity as a mode of social belonging with the potential to disrupt both the romanticized, linear story of nation and the realist utility of the local. In doing so, this analysis emphasizes the repetitive nature of American history, a history more often understood to be deeply invested in a progressive model. Following recent work that theorizes historical repetition so as to upend understandings of historical discourse as a generalizable representation of culture and as chronologically transcendent,²³ I posit that some forms of identity might be broadly available for aesthetic, imaginative association, allowing individuals to transcend cultural binaries understood to be ethnic in nature.

I.

Although realism was not yet being routinely theorized as a distinct genre in mid-century U.S. print culture, some newspaper men, at least, were beginning to imagine a representational mode distinct from the romance. In February of 1850, an Italian immigrant named G.F. Secchi de Casali began publishing *L'Eco d'Italia* [*The Echo of Italy*]. One of the first Italian-language newspapers to appear with regularity in antebellum New York City, *L'Eco d'Italia* offered weekly updates on Italian politics, the failings of the Papacy, and an emerging Italian-American community.²⁴ By November of 1853, the liberal republican leanings and anti-Catholic mission of the newspaper had generated enough attention for the editor to launch an English-language companion, *The Crusader* [*Il Crociato*]. Describing for Italian-language readers the goals and outlook of this cross-cultural venture, the editorial voice claims, “We fight not with romances or little stories, but instead with incontestable facts, those in truth too painful to narrate, but not, however, vile enough to make a Jesuit blush.”^h *The Crusader* likewise includes a disclaimer about its unvarnished content, though this latter is couched in particularly linguistic terms instead of generic ones: “we have a few words to say to some kind persons, who, while they . . . are complete enemies of Roman superstition, believe, however, that our style of writing is too strong, our language too plain These good people think that honey-ink could better color our pages.”²⁵ Making connected claims about proper content (*L'Eco d'Italia* proclaims its investment in facts, not romances) and style (*The Crusader* highlights the paper’s strong, plain writing instead of editorial “honey-ink”), these newspapers emphasize distinctions that were increasingly visible and meaningful for readers of all sorts.

^h “Non cambattereno con romanzi e storielle, ma sibbene con fatti incontrastabili, troppo dolorosi invero a narrarsi, ma non, però, abbastanza nefandi [per] far arrossire un Gesuita” (“Programma del Crociato” 25 Dec. 1853, *L'Eco d'Italia*).

Both *The Crusader* and *L'Eco d'Italia* anticipate generic differences that would seem self-evident by the era of the Italian flood. In the turn-of-the-century years of Italian immigration, realism was emerging as a distinctive literary genre. Most extended discussions of the genre focus on the promotion and theorization of realism through the form of late-century periodicals.²⁶ As a distinct genre, realism “rejected the conventional plots and stereotyped characters of romance in favor of a form that would reflect more accurately the random and inconclusive nature of actual events and the complex individuality of actual people.”²⁷ A broad definition of this sort accounts for several elements of the genre that demonstrate the community newspaper to be a legible component of late-century realist culture.

Whether suggesting that realism (broadly conceived) emphasizes recognizable similarity or highlights difference,²⁸ theorists of the genre as it emerged seem to agree that one of realism’s hallmarks was its descriptive, exemplary quality. That is, a realist representation was assumed to convey about an object a truth of its “very life.”²⁹ Describing Italian author Carlo Goldoni as “one of the first of the realists,” William Dean Howells highlights the importance of specificity for conveying “truth in art”: “I had eyes in my head, and I saw that what he had seen in Venice so long before was so true that it was the very life of Venice in my own day.”³⁰ Howells points to the function of what is perceived to be accurate, individuated representation. In conveying “truth,” such representation develops connections across historical moments (Goldoni died a full century before Howells’s essay was published) and collective identities (such as the national ones of Italian and American). In response to Howells’s claim about the truth effects of his preferred literary genre, I claim that realism is not reality but only a conventionalized means with which to represent the world. I argue that that the connections Howells imagines are perhaps more powerful if understood to be aesthetic instead of validated as reflecting the real as such.

One widely accepted narrative of late-nineteenth-century U.S. literary history acknowledges “the strong relation between periodical culture and literary realism” wherein “various serial publications hosted debates about the efficacy of realism as an aesthetic approach [and] . . . provided remunerative publishing opportunities for realist writers of all types.”³¹ Scholars working earlier in the century point instead to connections between newspaper culture and the conventions of antebellum romance. Examining the “working class accent” of George Lippard’s *The Quaker City*, Michael Denning claims that the novel’s fictional structure mirrors that of the local newspaper: “Lippard’s sinusoidal structure is not only dictated by the necessities of serialization . . . but also replicates the narrative structure of the newspaper.”³²

In contrast to a focus on authors, Nancy Glazener’s *Reading for Realism* takes a distinctly reader-response approach, arguing that “the production and the reception of a text are imaginatively involved with each other . . . realism is something that has to be read for, not something that inheres in how a text is written or where it is published.”³³ Stressing the reader’s responsibility in assessing genre suggests the instability of form: viewing a narrative, a version of events, or an example as either “romantic” or “realist” suggests epistemological categorizations as well as a readerly ones.³⁴ Moreover, participating in textual categorization can be either an individual or a collective endeavor; some theorists highlight the former, emphasizing solitary imagination, while other attend to the communal force of imaginative coherence.

For the regionally situated newspapers published by and for Italian readers in America, the development of cultural and temporal coherence across individual affiliations was of utmost importance. The creation of such connections has been attributed to newspapers at least since the work of Benedict Anderson.³⁵ Like Howell’s literary high realism, newspaper narratives blend the highly specific—weekly publications contain, by necessity, details about persons and events culled from the limited temporal span of seven days—with the broadly representative. In all of the

newspapers featured here, an editorial voice addresses a vague “we” while making consistent use of third-person verb forms to displace and depersonalize the audience.

In particular, Italian immigrants in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwestern regions of the United States often found the balance between specifically local and abstractly national identities difficult to imagine. For centuries, Italy had been divided into regions assertively distinguished by different rulers, laws, traditions, even languages. Arriving in the United States, individual immigrants were lumped together discursively as Italians, with little regard for the Italian perception of dramatic (and dramatically defended) distinctions between, for example, Sicilians and Milanese populations.³⁶ An essential element of the ethnic identity “Italian-American” for these regionally diverse populations was thus banding together in national terms, deemphasizing over time the deep community associations so ubiquitous in Italy.

However powerful the local structures in Italy, nineteenth-century Italian history (a subject often explored in this dissertation’s chapters) also had a literary model for thinking nationally: the historical romance.³⁷ Broadly speaking, romance is a literary genre that depicts exotic figures and features idealized, dramatic action carried out by a vague but representative hero whose actions encompass a broad historical sweep. The tradition of American romancers like Cooper, Melville, or Hawthorne³⁸ is but one iteration of the form’s nationalist utility. In Richard Chase’s description, “being less committed to the immediate rendition of reality . . . the romance will more freely veer toward the mythic, allegorical, symbolistic forms” (13); such mythic, allegorical depictions of society and history are more readily subsumable into the grand myths of nation than into the minor details of quotidian reality. The invocation of generalized, noble heroes and histories is a typical romantic convention, one we have previously encountered in Margaret Fuller’s newspaper dispatches from Italy. During the time of realism’s cultural ascent, however, romance was increasingly dismissed as fantastical, impractical, and retrograde.³⁹

More than periodicals, many of which had fully embraced realism's perceived generic superiority by late century, newspapers traded in generic instability. Publication conditions and content conventions prepared readers to expect temporally consistent documents containing original and reprinted summaries of local events, national and international news reports, advertisements; that is, newspapers in both form and content pointed to the "the random and inconclusive nature" of life. At the same time, many newspapers published actual romances in serial form (such as *The Quaker City*, explored by Denning) as well as poems. The language of editorials in particular was often grandly metaphorical and allegorical, dramatizing moral or historical struggles recognizable in the terms of historical romance.⁴⁰ Finally, newspapers were difficult to situate culturally: Meredith McGill claims that 1830s and 1840s newspapers helped create "a literary culture that was regional in articulation and transnational in scope."⁴¹ In the increasingly heated terms of these generic debates, newspapers often sailed below the radar, unlikely to be associated with these distinctions at a broad formal level. As we have briefly seen, then, both genre and form could be understood in flexible terms: realism is presumed to be a stable authorial desiderata but remains something to be "read for"; newspapers might be realist and romantic, local and national, inspired by and inspiring to writers of fiction.⁴²

This Italian-American historical romance flows through traditional, assimilationist channels of American immigrant narrative. In one familiar refrain, an immigrant collective overcomes its initial outsider status through a model of cultural adaptation: melancholic dispatches from the homeland give way to an increasing interest in the culture, history, and social expressions of an American milieu. The structure of this developmental tale mirrors the narrative arc often traced in the Italian immigrant "flood."⁴³ At the same time, immigrant collectives expand from a social-support model to include accounts of business ventures, capitalist expansion, robust trade associations.⁴⁴ Touching on distinct themes (economics, political awareness, civic participation), the

immigrant story assembled here demonstrates an investment in progress understood as the imaginative movement from idle youth to productive adulthood.⁴⁵ Progress as maturation is a staple of historical, quest-driven romance narratives: imagining a stable movement from youth to adulthood also represents a deeply romanticized understanding of human development, one that depends on several assumptions about history and social belonging.⁴⁶

This story of individual development opens with an impulsive, occasionally cruel youth who cultivates increasing investments in practical self-interest and reasoned reflection, both presented as developmental milestones, eventually demonstrating foibles we could associate with old age like pessimistic despond and salutary solicitousness. Although the historical record most often portrays Italian immigration through the flood metaphor, I instead employ a more explicitly figural trope, that of the individual hero. Such a figure more clearly ties this analysis to the characterological conventions of romance and to realism's investment in depicting the ordinary individual. In exploring a specific immigrant population through a metaphor of human maturation, my intent is not to characterize as "childlike" the experiences, knowledge, and contributions of that population. The maturation frame uses historically specific conventions and language to present a narrative of idealized cultural and national development. In that way, it is directly connected to the genre of historical romance through the convention of the questing hero. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the questing hero trajectory is also one way that scholars of migrant culture metaphorize the stages of immigrant writing.⁴⁷

But the utility of the connected tropes of youth and maturation is not suggested only by historical and critical discourses around immigrants; these metaphors are also commonly employed in analyses of genre and recent explorations of the political uses of child-centered narratives. Glazener's account of generic distinctions between realism and romance—and her argument about the nationalist uses of such distinctions—traces how "the romance gets associated

with obsolescence, artifice, the fancy, and by implication either youth or immaturity” (39). Eric L. Tribunella instead emphasizes the political function of the child figure itself: describing childhood’s “melancholia,” Tribunella claims that the lessons learned by the suffering, melancholy child prove “crucial not only to the development of the individual ego but also to the production of social bonds.”⁴⁸ The child is thus a flexible trope for characterizing processes that involve increasing attention to “the real” or to processes indexing increased social coherence and normalization; we might say that the child is a flexible figure for processes of increasing social rigidity.

Furthermore, the metaphor of childhood development emphasizes what is commonly understood to be an essential feature of immigrant narratives, the universalizable transition from an extra-national position to one that allows, even precariously, the immigrant’s inclusion in the American national family. As Karen Sanchez-Eppler theorizes, “unlike gender, or race, or even class, age is inherently transitional Childhood, in contrast [to above identity categories], is a status defined by its mutability—a stage inevitably passed through As the real and imagined sight of becoming human, of entry into the social world, childhood is the time during which we must each first discover how we are and are not ‘part.’”⁴⁹ Sanchez-Eppler calls attention to the allegorical function of the child, dependent upon the assumed ecumenicality of the process that figure personifies.

Often, such culturally useful children are types, vaguely developed characters used as “test cases for conceptualizing human nature itself” (Duane 60). My analysis thus connects the typological or figural convention of historical romance (peopled with “the hero,” “the maiden,” “the villain,” and so on) to more contemporary arguments about the social operations of type. In this chapter, realist content is fashioned into romantic shape to highlight the ways an ethnic identity (that of Italian-American) engages with both of these representational forms. Developing this particular romance, I too use figure as an argumentative device, presenting a simplified version of

characters moving through a single life's development. Certainly, this model is invested in what is presumed to be a stable, universal model of maturation; hence the importance of the maturation model's cultural repetition. The recognition that the maturation cycle is constantly repeated and refreshed, that the ethnic child is constantly reintroduced in order to be reeducated, suggests the political utility and cultural work done by this figurative imposition. Part of the role of the "ethnic child" figure, a more self-conscious allegorization of the trope of the child, is to repeat and naturalize a cyclical story about the American family that stresses U.S. flexibility, adaptability, and the potential for growth. The related claims articulated here—that genre facilitates cultural representation, that narratives featuring children operate in the service of social unity—together suggest that political life in the United States might be understood as a mix of figural imagination (here associated with romance) and a realist interest in classification and description. This is the mix I characterize as mezzo-identity, which gains its appeal from the very flexibility of imaginative attachment it proposes; in this chapter, imaginative suppleness is understood in generic terms.

Such flexibility surfaces uneasily in a newspaper like *The Crusader*, where the rhetorical pose of the oppressed romantic hero operates in tension with strident references to political argument and "plain language." Often, the paper's editorial "we" seems to set itself against an Italian foe imagined to be vindictive and cruel in Radcliffian proportions: "fearing that a jesudical [sic] dagger might be lodged in our frail bodies [some kind persons] suggest a more moderate proceeding It is very easy to speak of goodness and charity, so long as your slumbers are not disturbed by papal banditti, ready to drag you to a dungeon, or a scaffold" (26 Nov. 1853 *The Crusader*). The editorial voice conjures Gothic-romance plot points: assassination attempts, secret police, the impending threat of imprisonment and death. Here, content and stylistic conventions associated with romance (the pitched battle between good and evil cast in grandiose, heroic

language) are used to describe cultural dangers so pressingly real, and so daily oppressive, that they have effectively caused the very migration that has made this newspaper possible.

Indeed, the editor of *L'Eco d'Italia* and *The Crusader* justifies the realist slant of his publications with a politically-charged rationale for each paper's stylistic choices: "we have no other language for our oppressors and their satellites, wheresoever they are; being unable to express our thoughts freely in the land where we first saw the dawn of day, we utter them on this spot of our adoption" (ibid). The ability to speak freely is directly associated with genre conventions, just as the language referred to above had previously been characterized as a version of realism, an excess of "too plain," "too strong" content contrasted to romance's "honey-ink." We can see the readerly instability Glazener points to operating in de Casali's papers too: form and content are barely distinguishable for the writer of these justifications. Is the language itself "too strong," or is the problem its "too plain" attacks on Catholicism's hypocrisy? Is romance's "honey-ink" a formal feature, or a narrative one?

Often, the sentence-level operations of language seem at odds with the realist agenda of community periodicals, a circumstance that suggests the value of Glazener's argument that genre is something to be "read for." The newspapers present simultaneously a realist interest in quotidian events and a linguistic tendency for mythical, grandiose exemplification.⁵⁰ Furthermore, they circulate this representational blend in a particular immigrant population, as indicated by the language of publication, the content of news reports, and the publications's cultural investments. The papers thus enact for readers a generic mix between embodied, local specificity and dramatized, imaginative abstraction. Presenting this mix in ethnic terms (as a combination useful for and addressed to "Italian," and later, "Italian-American" populations), the papers imply that the social bonds connecting these disparate groups might operate most productively in a middle space I have called mezzo-identity.

In the examples from de Casali, as in others, the discursive goals and the language in which those goals are couched appear contradictory. An understanding of this writing as either realist or romantic shifts depending on what aspect of the text one privileges. Claims about plain language, strong writing, and the paper's "too open" battle against Papal oppression rest uneasily against dramatic apostrophe and metaphorized appeals to the past. "Please, gentlemen of peace and fear," begs the editorial voice, "tell us how the defenders of American Independence spoke? Did they make use of milk, instead of ink; of sugar instead of musket-powder?" (26 Nov. 1853, *The Crusader*): history is both romance and reportage. Further, the paper asserts a connection between its desire for immigrant representation and the struggles of America's founders. In so doing, the editor implies the importance and utility of repeating history linguistically; if we better understood the rhetorical pose of those successful revolutionaries, the editor suggests, we might more easily repeat their socio-political triumph for ourselves.

Finally, my analytic method might be understood as romantic in terms laid out by Glazener, who highlights romance's association with "acts of assembly that resemble industrial production: 'an accretion of circumstances and particulars from without'" (39). The coherent narrative presented in these pages is drawn from an assortment of "particulars." As such, this romance of immigrant experience has been assembled "from without" into what a nineteenth-century cultural critic like William Swinton derides as "a monstrous assemblage of grotesquely illusive pictures of life" (39). Swinton's language raises again the question of genre: the "grotesquely illusive" pictures he derides are not, seemingly, realist. Instead, Swinton imagines pictures carefully (or at least enthusiastically) selected for the exaggerated visions they offer, their typological character. Refuting Swinton's claim that such monstrosities have no meaningful imaginative value beyond a period he describes as "the adolescence of a national literature" (39), I gather together

material from six newspapers and six decades. In this particular assemblage, we find a tale celebrating the pleasures and pains of civic maturation.⁵¹

II.

Before assembling historical romance, I pause for a brief interlude of cultural history. Studies of Italian-American culture often characterize New York City's *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, which ran from 1880-1989, as one of the earliest Italian-language newspapers in the United States.⁵² In part, this assertion of chronological dominance dove-tails with the usual immigration story of Italians to the United States. In 1880, when the Italian-immigration "flood" began in earnest, U.S. census figures listed 44,000 Italians in the country, with 12,000 clustered in New York City (DeConde 77). As there were Italian immigrants previous to the late-century torrent, so too there were their newspapers. The histories of these periodicals remain incomplete. Although Library of Congress records suggest *Il Monitore del Sud* (1849) as the earliest Italian-language masthead in the U.S.,⁵³ the ephemeral nature of newspapers in general, and the rapidity with which immigrant papers in particular crested and receded, makes a complete and definitive list of mid-century Italian papers well-nigh impossible. However, one can make some general assertions about location, circulation, and readership based on available material.

As is well-documented, emigrating Italians often spoke only a local dialect, which might vary widely not only by region but even by town; efforts to introduce a standardized Italian were politically popular during the *Risorgimento*, but no standard version had usurped spoken dialect in families and local settings. Moreover, a national education system, which would promote literacy in standard Italian, was sporadically enforced and often scorned in Italian regions. Thanks to Italy's 1877 Coppino Law, "education was free and compulsory up to the age of nine, and strict provisions were in place for enforcing attendance" (Duggan 276). Intended to bring about

meaningful change in the number of Italian illiterates—in 1861, the national census estimated that 81% of females and 68% of males over the age of six was functionally illiterate—the institutionalization of educational laws did not result in significant changes until the twentieth century.⁵⁴

Italian-language papers in the United States, which helped to establish a cross-regional community of immigrants, were most often published in the national language of Italy, a modification of Dante's Tuscan dialect. Robert Viscusi details a linguistic practice that drew a sharp distinction between Italian dialect as a private, spoken language and standard Italian as a public one: "People could read it [national Italian] in the numerous Italian journals or understand when they heard it on the radio, although few immigrants actually spoke it" (*Buried Caesars*, 33). Not only were there fewer potential readers of standard Italian at mid-century than in the early days of radio Viscusi describes, Italian literacy rates remained quite low except among the rich and educated classes into the twentieth century. Hence, Robert Ernst's assertion that *L'Eco d'Italia*, "supported by small groups of merchants, as well as men of the professions," "represented the attitude of only the wealthy few, while the masses of Italians in the Five Points were too illiterate to care" (158). The Italian-language newspapers of mid-century, then, were always and already addressed to an immigrant public in implicitly politicized terms: printed in the single language of Italian nationalism, these community periodicals hinged on linguistic knowledge whose goal was a "seamlessness of identity"⁵⁵ as Italian, not Calabrian, Genoan, or Florentine. Thus, reading community news in these publications was both a local and a national act. Immigrant newspapers contained the highly specific news of neighborhood Italian associations, ran reports on the operations of American federal government, and included as well as dispatches from Europe. Linguistically, the very activity of reading in these papers produced a movement in readers away

from the micro-collectives of dialect toward the broadly communal experience of national language.

Despite the low numbers of mid-century immigrants (especially literate ones), and the inevitable dearth of comprehensive archival material, some newspaper circulation figures remain accessible. In 1869, Rowell's *American Newspaper Directory* includes de Casale's *L'Eco d'Italia* in its listing of "Newspapers and Periodicals claiming more than 5000 circulation each issue."⁵⁶ By 1893, well submerged in the immigrant flood, the *Directory* includes *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* (daily circulation "not exceeding 3000," 535), San Francisco's *La Voce del Popolo* (circulation between 3000-5000, 82), and a Chicago paper, *L'Italia*, that claimed almost 20,000 readers (150) alongside *L'Eco d'Italia*. It seems reasonable, then, to assume that prior to 1869 a circulation "not exceeding 5000" readers was a rare and notable feat for an Italian-language newspaper. This suggests that the news being circulated—and, as I am arguing, the cultural associations being developed through the newspapers—did have an audience that was proportionately noteworthy, although the circulation numbers seem miniscule by contemporary standards or even those of English-language papers at the time.⁵⁷ Indeed, given the relatively uncontested historical view that newspapers and periodicals reached many more people than subscriber's lists would suggest through private circulation and reading aloud, it is probable that the content featured in publications such as *L'Eco d'Italia* or Chicago's 1868 *L'Unione Italiana* reached a fairly large number of the local Italians in a given region.

Except in the case of *Il Monitore del Sud*, introduced below, all the papers consulted for this chapter took conventional form. Each had a masthead above a news-oriented front page, four to six pages of closely printed reports from local, national, and international settings, and a page or a section of advertisements. Until the late-century heyday of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, advertisement areas tended to be small, often taking up less than a full page. By the time *Il*

Progresso was circulating daily to a large national population, ad space had grown to encompass several pages and distinct sections, while a weekly supplement featured expanded cultural essays, library subscription lists, and assorted commercial offers.

Oddly, few early Italian-language papers surveyed here ran fictional content. Chicago's *Il Messaggiere dell'Ouest* carries over "Ne Povera, Ne Ricca [Neither Poor nor Rich]" from *L'Unione Italiana* in November of 1869, and *Il Progresso* would feature romances—and advertise circulation libraries—by 1880. Other than these small fantastical offerings, the papers explored below feature mainly news items, reflective or quasi-essayistic writing, and advertisements.

III.

For approximately three months, from August until October of 1849, *Le Moniteur du Sud* published an Italian-language supplement, a single page of news that appeared under the heading "*Il Monitore del Sud: Organo delle Popolazioni Italo-Americane*" [*The Southern Monitor: Organ of the Italian-American Populations*]. The four-page publication opened with two pages of French content, inserted a single page of Italian, and finished in French; content on this French final page was often continued from the second full page after a short Italian interlude. Even at a basic material level, then, *Il Monitore del Sud* demonstrates a productively mezzo character. As a focused linguistic address included in a newspaper published for a different language community, *Il Monitore* is doubly constituted as singular provider of Italian-language content and as half of a European pair.⁵⁸ Moreover, the very character of New Orleans cultural intercourse was conditioned by fragmented investments in ethnic origins, linguistic traditions, and local history; at the same time, the city's numerous factions had a complex relation to larger American culture.⁵⁹

Echoing the interrupted form of the newspaper, and its fragmented cultural context, the Italian-language page features an assortment of small news items reporting from several places at

once. Material about subscription rates and publication schedules shares space with shorts news items from Europe, information about the growing Italian community in the U.S. (the paper announces the first edition of *L'Eco d'Italia* in New York City), and reflective pieces such as “Liberty and Despotism [Libertà e Dispotismo]” (2 Sept. 1849) and “Historical Recollections [Rimembranze Storiche]” (7 Oct. 1849). The paper’s greatest accomplishment is its participation in establishing a National Italian Society during the final week of September 1849; the details of registration, meetings, and membership requirements take up much of the paper’s subsequent column space.

Aside from specifics about the nascent National Italian Society, the Italian page of *Il Monitore del Sud* contains scant American news despite the inclusion of local news in corresponding French pages.⁶⁰ Instead, the Italian section features political updates and ruminations from Italian regions and Europe, and reports on political or cultural disputes between European nations. “Libertà e Dispotismo [Liberty and Despotism],” for example, recalls with bitterness the “crafty diplomacy” of the Austrian government, which imposes, “as the first condition” of their assistance, “constitutional violations and despotic oppressions in France, and the assassination of Italy’s young republic.”⁶¹ Writing in the 1849 zenith of European romantic nationalism,⁶¹ *Il Monitore* poses as a romantic revolutionary, caught up in grand political struggles against despotic evil.

Even ostensibly American news is filtered through a distinctly Italian viewpoint, as when *Il Monitore* reports on *L'Eco d'Italia*’s inaugural issue. Declaring of this new New York newspaper that “the principles that sustain it, are also ours,” the writer for *Il Monitore* offers an image custom-built for Italian patriots: “our politics are those of *Liberty, Equality, Independence*; our flag is the

ⁱ “[C]ome prime condizioni gli impose le violazioni della costituzione e le dispotiche vessazioni [oppression] in Francia, e l’assassinio della giovane repubblica in Italia” (“Libertà e Despotismo” 2 September 1849. *Il Monitore del Sud*.)

same as that which flutters, sainted and glorious, over the hills of Rome, the lagoons of Venice, the immortal lands of Hungary.”^j The Italian tricolor flag, first adopted as a unificatory symbol during the Napoleonic empire (1796-1814), was a potent symbol of Italian unity and pride. The reference to Hungary suggests the degree to which *Il Monitore* remained invested in romanticized European politics. Hungary was then a symbolic cousin to Italy, as the two battled for release from Austrian imperialist rule. Moreover, the paper’s grandiose language offers abstract communal desires—for “*Liberty, Equality, Independence*”—set in a sweepingly allegorical landscape of Roman land, Venetian water, and kindred sufferers. Despite the writer’s insistence on the European setting of these political hopes, the appeal to “Liberty, Equality, Independence” also evokes the ostensible founding principles of the United States. This article, which introduces the first Italian-language paper to New Orleans readers, displays a greater investment in European political allegiances and places than in the nascent Italian population ostensibly served by the new paper being announced. But such homeward-looking news is not the only way *Il Monitore* demonstrates an arrested romantic development tied to a progressive and ambitious political program.

Reporting on revolutionary proceedings in Genova, one writer employs a metaphor of childhood when discussing Italy’s political situation. Detailing a proposed European amnesty for Italian revolutionary refugees, the writer offers a list of those excluded from consideration, including “deputies, commissioners, chapter heads, priests, and all those offered amnesty in 1846,” before concluding sarcastically, “And afterwards, you doubt the *paternal* heart of Pio!”^k Instead of a fresh beginning as independent citizens, readers and writers of *Il Monitore* still imagine themselves as

^j “[I] princip[i]i ch’ei sostiene, e che sono anche i nostri . . . [L]a nostra politica e’ di *Liberta’, d’Eguaglianza, d’Indipendenza*; il nostro vessillo e’ quello stesso che sventola’ santo e glorioso sui colli di Roma, sulle lagune di Venezia, sui campi immortali dell’Ungheria” (“L’Europeo Americano” 2 September 1849, *Il Monitore del Sud*).

^k “Sarebbero in ogni modo esclusi i triumviri, i deputati, i commissarj, i capi delle sezioni, i preti, e tutti gli amnistiati del 1846. E poi dubitate del cuore *paterno* di Pio!” (“Refugiati Italiani” 28 August 1849. *Il Monitore del Sud*).

petulant children, dependent for freedom upon the appropriately paternal feelings of the grand Papal Father. Of course, that the writer resents this dependence is also evident in the italicized sarcasm he employs; in ironically characterizing the Pope's paternal feeling, the writer does not refute its authority so much as suggest that authority's abuse.

Bénédicte Deschamps characterizes such news as the province of "an exile press;" often, Deschamps points out, these papers failed as a result of "refusing to pay any attention to things non-Italian, and. . . alienating themselves from the needs or aspirations of emerging or established Italian immigrant communities" (79). In part, Dechamps suggest, the exile press is inattentive to the quotidian needs of its readerly community, focused instead on reports from an already romanticized homeland: "the publications that chose to wrap themselves up into a hermetic political theory, disregarding their reader's practical problems, were doomed" (80).

Although *Il Monitore* attempted to unify the Italian community in and around New Orleans, its overwhelming interest in the Italian revolutionary cause did not result in a local readership large enough to sustain the paper.⁶² On 23 September 1849, the Italian section prints an "Alert [Avviso]" that it will cease publication, despite the "sympathy toward *Il Monitore del Sud* [that] has been spontaneously demonstrated [le simpatie verso *Il Monitore del Sud* sono state spontaneamente mostrate]" by local Italians. We might think of this paper as an immature but enthusiastic adventurer, easily distracted, energetic: in its final month, *Il Monitore* puts out an additional Wednesday edition, laments being cut down in its prime, and tries to rally the readership for a second advance: "If the Italians truly wish to maintain an Italian newspaper here, we must, as always, be quick to promote [Italians in] this laudable enterprise, without, on our part,

counting the sacrifices it could cost.”⁶¹ In the language of sacrifice and enterprise, *Il Monitore* articulates a militant, oppositional perspective, casting itself as the idealistic, doomed scout for an energetic population.

Taking up the fluttering tricolor flag of *Il Monitore del Sud*, New York City’s *L’Eco d’Italia* was an early and influential member of the Italian-American periodical community, mentioned often in both Italian-language and English papers throughout the century. Urgent, earnest, and engaged in a liberal-rationalist war against Catholic despotism, *L’Eco d’Italia* cast itself as the valiant hero, wading in to rhetorical battle against a battalion of enemies international and local.”⁶³ De Casali’s papers index generic oscillation between certain conceptual impulses of realist representation and romanticism’s symbolic, hyperbolized vision.

The sheer volume of column inches given over to debating fine points of Catholic doctrine, and to disabusing papal enemies,⁶⁴ makes it clear that, certainly in the early days, *L’Eco d’Italia* was waging war: for republican liberties, for rational social organization, for intellectual freedom in a new land. This war against the paternalistic Pope represents a kind of conceptual maturation, away from traditional Italian hierarchies and values. *L’Eco d’Italia* orients itself toward the liberal, rational thought, going so far as to nominate radical Protestant Alessandro Gavazzi as the paper’s allegorical leader; in the heroic world of *L’Eco d’Italia*, Gavazzi was the ultimate fighter.

An early editorial written by Gavazzi clarifies the oppositional terms of this particular battle. “Catholicism or liberalism, constitutionality or republicanism; according to the Jesuits, these cannot exist together. What does this mean? It means that we must choose between two opposite

¹“Che' se gli Italiani vorranno davvero sostenere qui' un giornale italiano, noi sarerno sempre pronti a secondarli in quest alodevole intrapresa, senza contare per nostra parte sacrificj che potrebbe costarci” (“Ai Nostri Lettori” 28 October, 1849. *Il Monitore del Sud*.)

extremes.”^m Although the paper would become more invested in the daily lives of Italian-Americans, in some cases offering social-justice exposes,⁶⁵ it presents rhetorically a segmented and hyperbolic version of the world. While the content-specific commitment to social justice and progressive politics is more commonly associated with a realist agenda,⁶⁶ *L'Eco d'Italia* tended to construct a romanticized cultural world of pure good and pure evil. De Casali and his writers propose pure opposition, and the subsequent triumph over enemies, as an organizing structure for the world. More specifically, the paper imagines a politically inflected religious opposition to underlie all manner of cultural decisions; interestingly, it is on these grounds that the writers of *L'Eco d'Italia* build consensus with Americans.

For all its rhetorical excess, the paper did work to educate Italian readers about the perils and possibilities of American life. As Dechamps summarizes, “De Casali believed that *L'Eco d'Italia* should also be the voice of the small Italian ‘colonia’ that was beginning to form in New York City” (80). Although their anti-Catholic stance might have clashed with the religious practices of readers, de Casali and his writers expanded the scope of their news to include reports from California gold mines, accounts of political events in Washington, contextualizations of American culture. Describing the Fourth of July as “a day of national jubilation [un giorno di giubilo nazionale]” the paper continues, “this free population celebrates, with great liveliness, the memorable era in which its fathers proclaimed, at great risk, a life of independence for the United Colonies.”ⁿ Comparing the American Union to the “great powers of Europe [i grandi potenze d'Europa],” the writer celebrates American civic union, the “population composed of many

^m “Cattolicismo o liberalismo, costituzionale o repubblicano, secondo i gesuiti non possono susistere insieme. Cio' che significa? significa che bisogna sciegliere fra i due opposti estremi” (“Libertà e Cattolicismo” 19 August 1854. *L'Eco d'Italia*).

ⁿ “[Q]uesto popolo libero celebrava con dimostrazioni d'allegria la memorabile epoca in cui i suoi padri decretarono [proclaimed] a rischio [risk] della vita l'indipendenza delle Colonie Unite” (“Anniversario dell'Indipendenza Americana” 8 July 1854. *L'Eco d'Italia*).

heterogeneous elements, many nationalities, religions, and languages [among] which few battles occur.”⁶⁶ Implicitly, such an informative article mounts a political argument for the unificatory power of heterogeneous collectives against the limiting comforts of sameness. We might here be reminded of Hamlin Garland’s celebration of local color, a commitment to difference as a civic good: “Local color in fiction Corresponds to the endless and vital charm of individual particularity” (57). Such value for individual particularity is forecast by the language from *L’Eco d’Italia*, which connects the population’s diversity with its “liveliness.” This perspective lines up with the paper’s fervent battles against the spiritual and temporal dominion of the Pope, singular symbol of totalitarian oppression. National and linguistic differences are to be embraced, not overcome; such cosmopolitan acceptance makes Italian readers more “American,” not less so.

The anti-Papal stance of de Casali’s *L’Eco d’Italia* can seem provincial, or exilic, in its attention to specifically Italian feuds and denunciations. However, while *L’Eco d’Italia* publishes rapturous explanations of America’s Independence Day, the paper also enters an American political debate alongside Horace Greeley’s *New York Tribune*, an intervention representative of the paper’s increasing cultural scope. On 13 July 1854, the *Tribune* publishes a long missive, sent anonymously by “A Professor in a Catholic College,” that offers a rejoinder to what the letter-writer characterizes as “the tendency of the public mind toward disenfranchising our Catholic citizens and placing them without the pale of Constitution.”⁶⁷ Responding to with typical excess to a religious debate within its geographical (but not linguistic) community, *L’Eco d’Italia* runs three full front-page responses⁶⁸ to this anonymous writer, objecting to argumentative minutia as well as broader claims about Catholic “republican” sentiment and political inclusion.

⁶⁶ “[U]na popolazione composta di tanti elementi eterogenei, di tanti nazionalita', religioni e lingue non succede alcuna rissa” (ibid).

This debate, and *L'Eco d'Italia*'s wholehearted embrace of it, illustrates the paper's increasing attention to American political life and English-language concerns. In this public interaction, across two language communities, Italian writers responding to the original letter raise doctrinal details in the service of an American political argument. The final column of 5 August closes with an image straight from the symbolic realm of romantic nationalism, an American tree of liberty. Writers for *L'Eco d'Italia* thus introduce a powerful nationalist metaphor to a new audience of readers: "the American tree of liberty protects every doctrine, everything beneath it, every communal tie; indeed, every individual who comes to take shelter under its benevolent shadow."^p The exception to this rule of political shelter is "the one who dares declare tolerance, liberty, progress to be blasphemous; one unable to concede a place at the banquet providence has prepared to the free children of Adam scattered across the earth [He] shall not contaminate with his breath the atmosphere that surrounds this homeland of Washington and Franklin."^q In the paper's oppositional world order, the excluded is a representative Catholic; the writer is here utterly unable to retain the realist commitment to human difference celebrated in the Independence Day summary published a month earlier. Instead, the writer has recourse to a typological vision: the poisonous breath of exclusivity emanates, of course, from a Catholic, representative of all Catholics, who threatens the remainder of God's "children."

In this example, the religious position of *L'Eco d'Italia* finds a politicized outlet for expression. The writer imagines a broadly inclusive heavenly banquet set under the American tree of liberty, joining two distinct metaphors of community and shelter in the service of its argument

^p "L'albero della libertà americana protegge ogni dottrina, ogni sotta, ogni comunione, anzi ogni individuo che vengano a rocoverarsi sotto la sua ombra benefica" ("I cattolici e la persecuzione" 5 August 1854. *L'Eco d'Italia*).

^q "[A] che osa chiamare bestemmie la tolleranze, la libertà, il progresso non può essere concesso d'assidersi al banchetto che la provvidenza qui imbandiva ai liberi figli d'Adamo sparsi sulla terra. . . Non contaminini col sou repiro l'atmosfera che circonda questa patria di Washington and Franklin" (ibid).

about political representation, mounting a powerful argument, through metaphoric figure, for both inclusion and exclusion. The Italian-language writer for *L'Eco d'Italia* participates in a recognizable discursive tradition in America: an assertion of communal rights that actively discounts particular groups deemed unfit for American privilege. In taking up and repeating a particular form of American discourse (that is, the delicate balance of satisfied inclusion and unquestioned exclusion), the paper renders this allegorical landscape of Adam, Franklin and Washington a meaningful one for a new “American” population.

But this mythicized political fighting is not the only expression of de Casali’s religio-political stance. The paper also includes reports about menaced children (actual youth, not mythologized human sufferers). In the pages of *L'Eco d'Italia*, perhaps unsurprisingly, such child-oriented news often carried a implicit political message. On 10 June 1854, for example, *L'Eco d'Italia* characterizes an attempted hanging of young man by his barely teenaged friends as “An Ugly and Tragic Imitation [Una Brutta e Tragica Imitazione].” The writer imagines these young men to be reenacting a type of tribunal justice they have seen dramatized in the world of adults. “Perfectly imitating what they had seen [imitato perfettamente come aveveano visto]” several young men attempt to hang a companion. In closing, the author sardonically praises the aggressors for a lesson well-learned, claiming that “the death penalty affirms this is how to make an example; these boys have learned [the lesson] beautifully!” This tragic report uses the figure of the imperiled child to organize a larger objection to capital punishment, which was still publically practiced in both Italy and the U.S. during mid-century. At least until unification in 1861, the death penalty was being abused by imperial powers (including the Catholic Bourbons and the Papal States themselves) in Italy to discourage political agitation.

^r “La pena di morte dicono che e' per dar esempio: quest ragazzi ne presero uno bellissimo!!!”

A week later, the paper publishes the Cincinnati arrest notice of a Padre Kroeger, “vicar of the Roman Catholic Church of the Trinity, for having violated a German girl of 14 while she gave confession in a small room next to the vestry.”^s Like the paper’s implication of the death penalty, this news item seems clearly intended to convey a political message as well as information. Since neither the Cincinnati victim nor the priest in question is identified as Italian, this news has no immediate bearing on the daily doings of New York’s Italian population. Both items, however, suggest the malevolent reach of Catholic evil. In the former, recognizing the attack as both political and theological (a potent and common combination in those days, especially in Italy) depends on a larger international awareness. The latter report, on the other hand, is a tiny squib appended to a page of assorted news; its oppositional implications depend, instead, on a hyper-local awareness of the paper’s investments.

In true gothic-romance fashion, *L'Eco d'Italia* had what we could consider a malevolent twin, *The Crusader*, that notorious companion paper of “strong words,” “plain language” and “too open fighting.” *L'Eco d'Italia* and *The Crusader* flaunt a predilection for hyperbolic attacks on enemies real and perceived. In both publications, an impetuous, adolescent antagonism makes of the world a pitched, allegorical battle between the forces of liberal, republican, equality-for-all goodness and those of naked despotism, cynical power-wielding, and rigid doctrinal evil.

Specifically, *The Crusader* fought with New York’s *Freeman’s Journal and Catholic Register*. More broadly, *The Crusader* undertook an English-language war against the forces of Catholicism and in defense of everyday Italians. This fugitive paper⁶⁹ presents a concrete local enemy, Irish Catholics, whose religious commitments render them unfit for political existence, unable even to feel the social connection of patriot feeling. *The Crusader* unabashedly participates

^s “Giovedì scorso e' stato arrestato in Cincinnati il Padre Kroeger, parroco della Chiesa Cattolica Apostolica Romana della Trinita', per aver *violata* una fanciulla alemanna, d'anni 14, mentre si confesseeva in uno stanzino contiguo alla sagrestia” (“Morale Pretina” 24 June 1854. *L'Eco d'Italia*).

in the nativist politics of the age, going so far as to claim that Irish immigrants are “not patriots for Ireland, but patriots for the dank dungeons of Spielberg, patriots for the inhuman inquisition of Rome . . . patriots (to come very low on the scale) for their own dear selves, for their private pockets”⁷⁰ In asserting that Irish-Catholics are unsuited for patriotism as a nationalist affiliation, *The Crusader’s* oppositional politics instead confirms the connections between Americans, Italians, and other immigrant populations who are able to imagine such nationally bounded associations.

As distressing as the claim that some communities may not properly feel national feeling is the suggestion that Catholicism renders some of its most antisocial practitioners unable to feel human connections unmarked by religious commitment. Specifically, the paper offers damning evidence of Irish incapacity for respectful discourse with other, vulnerable members of the larger human family. In one particular example, physical threats to children are linked to religious disputes. *The Crusader’s* intervention is both religious and political: the religious commitments of Irish-Catholic villains indicates their general unfitness for “equality” in American political life. In a story republished from the *Boston’s Traveller*, *The Crusader* relates the ordeal of a wealthy Anglo-Saxon woman attacked in her own home during a failed kidnapping attempt:

Yesterday afternoon, the house of Richard Huntington . . . was visited by two Irish women, with the avowed purpose of getting possession, *dead or alive*, of . . . an Irish girl, an orphan, who was living with Mrs. Huntington . . . In reply to her inquires, what they intended to do with her, their only answer was, to place her under Catholic influenceMrs. Huntington interfered to rescue the girl, and to get her little child, which was in the girl’s arms. Upon this the infuriated woman attacked Mrs. Huntington with great violence.⁷¹

This attack proves doubly vile. Not only are the women violating principles of individual liberty by breaking in to a local home to steal away a servant girl there voluntarily, they spread their aggression to the baby in her arms.

Although this report is, by virtue of its publication context, assumed to convey real information about an event that has actually occurred, we can easily identify the ways that such a story handily fulfills more abstract impulses to create cross-cultural consensus (through outrage) in the face of child-directed cruelty. Indeed, the stated purpose of *The Crusader* is to educate readers about the real dangers posed by Catholics in the United States. These pressing civic and personal dangers, the paper implies, are often hidden or misinterpreted by Americans. In fact, the paper's editor, writers, and Gavazzi (de Casali's liberal hero) present their virulent anti-Catholicism as a version of exposé that Italians are especially well-equipped to provide. Arguing for the paper's particularly Italian content, Gavazzi lays claim to a special awareness of Catholic dangers: "I wish *The Crusader* generally to prefer giving accounts of the news from Italy, especially such as display the insolence of the clerical party against every civil and religious liberty in our dear country, of which almost all Americans know but very little."⁷² Gavazzi suggests a dialectical pedagogy for *The Crusader*. Having fled Italy for a land that more explicitly supports civil and religious liberty, Italians should be sharing their knowledge of Catholic insolence in a location structured to benefit from it.

The great benefit offered by an immigrant perspective is its revelation of civic menace otherwise repressed. Having fled their own nation to avoid the "full power" of Catholic cruelty, Italians can offer an especially useful, revelatory perspective on what would be otherwise unrecognized as Catholicism's political duplicity: "the feigned moderation of Catholicism in America is not the best guaranty of a republic, when it shows itself so unbridled and furious in our country" ("From Buffalo" 9 Nov. 1853. *The Crusader*). Gavazzi and *The Crusader* offer a clear advantage to American readers—or English-language ones—who seek in this paper of immigrant news a clearer picture of pressing political dangers. Extra-national knowledge becomes explicitly and intensely relevant for Americans who wish to preserve or encourage "principles of equality" in

their own homeland. We could understand de Casali's papers, at least as they exist in mid-century, as questing romantic heroes. Chased by Catholic villains from the "land where we first saw the dawn of day," writers for these related publications seek kindred souls, disseminating cross-cultural knowledge and hoping to grasp the representational power conferred by inter-American relations.

The cross-cultural benefits insisted upon by Gavazzi and de Casali can be viewed as an alternative version of the American model we have encountered in previous chapters. Indeed, it is a version demonstrating repetition-with-difference: instead of traveling across the sea for gratifying cultural encounters that affirm the typical national hierarchies, Americans can have a new form of cross-cultural knowledge delivered to their very doors. *The Crusader* stages this inter-cultural relation as both a dispensation and a battle. In reminding readers that the paper has "at its disposal all the official papers of Italy, as well as exact and faithful correspondents," Gavazzi presents *The Crusader's* contents as a realist largesse, a cultural gift "showing [Americans], with evidence, that 'all that glitters is not gold'" (ibid). At the same time, Gavazzi affirms the paper's unrelenting ideological combat against Papal oppression. The letter closes with his benediction: "wishing strong and numerous successful encounters, as well as glorious battles, to *The Crusader*" (ibid). In this encounter, it is Italians who confer political vigor and awareness upon disadvantaged Americans.

Unlike the fervent ideological commitments, and the mythic scale, invoked by de Casali's New York City publications, the conjoined Chicago papers *L'Unione Italiana* [*The Italian Union*] and *Il Messaggiere dell'Ouest* [*The Messenger of the West*] leave behind political or religious agitation. Instead, these papers promote ethnic community, economic stability, and cultural reflection. From its inception in October 1867, *L'Unione* displays a different character from the politicized bluster of earlier papers.⁷³

This difference is partially signaled through the paper's content, which offers sustained information about commercial pursuits. An article of 6 Nov. 1867 details the outsized role Chicago

plays in industry: “the major quantity of the machine and farming parts that, in many reproductions, are used throughout the West, as well as the Southern and Northern areas of America; [these] are fabricated in Chicago with precision and complete exactitude.” Context about Chicago’s industrial prominence is presented alongside the more technical description of how mass-production works: many copies of a single part are fabricated “with exactitude” and sent off to far-flung machines and farms.

Such information was culturally useful on several levels. Certainly, those recently arrived from Italy would have had minimal exposure to operations of mass production, and no clear sense of how Chicago fit into a dispersed national system of industry. The paper also supports the commercial enterprises of Chicago Italians, running advertisements for wholesale items common and rare, including French wines, Kentucky bourbons, fruits and vegetables, sugar, coffee, and coal. In addition to (or perhaps because of) the practical utility of factory descriptions that informed readers about commercial operations and wholesale lists that prepared readers to be proper capitalist investors, such content might also be recognizable in generic terms, as markers of realism.⁷⁴

Alongside business notices, news from Italy, and reports from the local Italian community, *L’Unione* begins to run what we might now identify as an editorial page. This feature reflected two main interests: keeping readers abreast of Italian culture in the U.S. and exploring socio- historical continuities between the two nations.⁷⁵ Editorial essays in *L’Unione* often engaged with broad conceptual questions about American public life (describing the ever-popular Fourth of July

⁷⁴ “La maggior parte degli opifici della machine ed attrazzi rurali che in gran copia si usano tanto nell’Ovest, che nel Sud e Nord di America sono fabbricate a Chicago con precisione ed esatezza somma.” (“La Città di Chicago” 6 Nov. 1867 *L’Unione*).

tradition or America's "Republican rules," wondering about the present moment and future hopes of America.^u).

At the same time, the paper was publishing frank information about the causes of Italian immigration and the civil responsibilities of Italians in the U.S. Reviewing the causes of emigration from Italy, *L'Unione's* editorial writer seems at first conservative, claiming "we repudiate the incentives [to emigrate] in times of peace as an immoral thing, counter to liberty."^v However, as the editor works through a description of Italy's economic privation—the fact that neither private industry nor the Italian Government aid the Italian public, the awareness that "public wealth" remains a low priority in Italian circles of political power—the column takes an unexpected turn: "the intelligent mechanic no less than the everyday man may find in the United State not only bread, but also the prospect of a good future."^w We can see here the editor's investment in "the everyday man [il giornaliero]" and his "good future," another iteration of an experiential, progress-driven logic that has long been associated with realist representation.⁷⁶

The argument made by *L'Unione* about emigration is politically astute and socially conscious. As such, it proves also strikingly different from the religiously inflected rage of a paper like *L'Eco d'Italia*. Of course, de Casali's papers, as we have seen, likewise support emigration for those Italians "unable to express [their] thoughts freely in the land where [they] first saw the dawn of day" (26 Nov. 1854, *The Crusader*). The distinction between these positions has less to do with a programmatic opinion (both support emigration for a better, freer life) than it is about tone and argumentative operation, the distinction less about content than execution. That is, the distinction

^u "Il 4 di Luglio. Anniversario dell'Americana Indipendenza" 10 July 1868; "Le regole Reppublicane dell'America" 28 October 1868; "Qual'è il presente e quale sarà il future dell'America" 4 November 1868. *L'Unione Italiana*.

^v "[Noi] reputiamo la leva in tempo di pace come cosa immorale, a contraia alla libertà" ("L'Emigrazione Italiana" 4 March 1868. *L'Unione Italiana*).

^w "[I]l meccanico inntelligente e perfino il giornaliero troveranno negli Stati Uniti non solo' pane, ma anche la prospettiva di un bel avvenire."(ibid).

could be viewed as a generic one, not an epistemological one. The editorial of *L'Unione* moves through a developing argument attuned to socio-political conditions in the homeland, while de Casali's *Crusader* denounces Italian oppressions in order to justify its aggrandized rhetorical positioning.

L'Unione's ultimate stance on emigration is couched in a realist language of institutional critique and support for the average man. "We conclude thusly: we are in favor of emigration; the Government could remove some of its causes, not impede it, and all its actions must extend such that the emigrant may not be duped at home by wicked middleman."^x One of the processes about which individuals in Italy were "duped . . . by middlemen" involved the kidnapping, selling, and importation of rural Italian children for street work in the U.S. This problem is later taken up by de Casali in the pages of *L'Eco d'Italia*, and adopted by Horatio Alger for his fiction.⁷⁷ Although I do not have sufficient space here to offer detailed analysis of de Casali's reports or Alger's novel, this submerged reference to an international scandal involving the exploitation and abuse of young people points to a cross-cultural conversation between Italians and Americans about the dangers facing children. Tribunella's suffering child operates in this case to "produc[e] social bonds" (xvi) across ethnic categories.

Additionally, these papers recognize a broader national public that they are both addressing and helping to form.⁷⁸ On the paper's front page, the editor regularly run an English column describing a readership geographically and functionally diverse. The paper acknowledges the geographical dispersal of the Italian population its addresses; identifying itself as "the only paper published in the Italian language in the United States outside the cities of New York and San Francisco," *L'Unione* claims "a large and extensive [audience] throughout the West and South, as

^x Concludiamo: noi simao in favore dell'emigrazione; il Governo pou' remuovere in parte le cause, non imperdirla, e tutta la sua azione deve spendersi a che l'emigrante non sia raggirato in patria da iniqui mezzani" (ibid).

well as in the Territories.”⁷⁹ This notice is repeated often on the front page, reminding readers of the community is it also, through its very repetition, is creating as coherent.

A notice like this signals a growing sense of community across Italian population as well as American ones, connecting a far-flung and virtuous Italian professional population while also proposing the commercial utility for American businesses represented by that population. “The ‘L’Unione Italiana’—the organ of the Italian population in the West and South—is published every Wednesday The Italian population of the West and South is numbered by the thousands; they may be found in every city, and almost every village, engaged in all branches of trade and following various occupations.” (ibid). This community is not an abstracted, idealized one, but a concrete conglomeration of Italians and Americans. In addressing these groups, the paper offers material benefits to all comers: “all who desire to bring their business to the notice of Italians, will at once see that this is the proper, and in fact the only channel by which these people can be reached.” When *L’Unione Italiana* [*The Italian Union*] becomes instead *Il Messaggiere dell’Ouest* [*The Messenger of the West*], the paper continues to propound a message of cultural unity across distinct language communities.

Less robust soldier than sober man of business and sensible new citizen, *L’Unione*, and *Il Messaggiere*, which supplanted the former title in November of 1868, offer a sense of developing cultural maturity. This is suggested by the wide range of topics covered by both newspapers, which included European and American politics, news of art events, reports on the activities of Italian immigrants, commercial and industrial news. Instead of rehearsing the same absolutist arguments over and again with bravado, *L’Unione* and *Il Messaggiere* appeal to a range of political investments and cultural interests with diverse content.

The paper’s writers also present a more moderate voice. While the linguistic flourishes and embellishments common to Italian remain, the quality of aggrieved persecution is absent, and the

editorials in particular present thoughtful opinions drawn from observation and reflection, demonstrating a deliberative method that accounts for several perspectives at once. The strict good-and-evil paradigm of *L'Eco d'Italia's* romantic perspective has given way, in the Chicago papers, to a nuanced and historically situated vision, one that observes “the very life” of citizens in an attempt to make civic sense. This vision represents a kind of civic maturity that is signaled by the paper’s realist commitments to “everyday” citizens and economic order. Such maturity is not, strictly speaking, the mezzo-identity I began this chapter by invoking. Instead of that mix of half-and-half, *L'Unione* situates itself on an opposite pole from the romantic cultural investments of de Casali’s papers. In the chapter’s final two examples—*L'Italo-Americano* and *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*—a return to romantic imagination intentionally blended with realist reporting provides a dialectical combination more productively demonstrative of mezzo-identity.

Although records for *Il Messaggiere* do not indicate when the paper ceased publication,⁸⁰ New York’s *L'Italo-Americano* further develops some of the maturing tendencies evident in the Chicago papers.⁸¹ *L'Italo-Americano* proposes to publish an Italian directory of local families and businessmen. In efficient detail, the paper lays out the rationale and process for this enterprise: “It seems to us that many of our countrymen,⁸² for diverse reasons, do not ‘announce themselves’ in Italians papers; perhaps because some [papers] are not useful for their professions, or because they do not believe they should spend the required sum.”^y For a comparatively “insignificant expense [una spesa insignificante],” Italians having commercial or social interests can publish a two-line entry in *L'Italo-Americano's* directory, which, for all its strict practicality and commercial motivations, is simultaneously imagined and structured as a kind of social support system. Capitalist expansion and community building overlap, reflecting an increasing stability within

^y “Sembra a noi che molti dei nostri connazionali che per diverse ragioni non 'annunciano' nei fogli italiani, sia perche non e' molto utile alla loro professione, o perche non credono dover spendere una somma rilevante” (“Gli Indirizzi d’Italiani” 3 June 1871. *L'Italo-Americano*).

Italian populations and their subsequent participation in structures already common in American economic life, such as trade associations and official social groups. This directory brought together Italians from across the city who operated in distinct professional or social circles, thus creating the kind of cross-regional collective more typically understood to have begun in earnest *after* the immigrant flood peaks around 1910.

L'Italo-Americano at the same time, cultural maturation has contributed to an embrace of negativity. Instead of the energetic depiction of youthful antagonisms, later-century writers dramatize their exhaustion, diffidence, and disappointment. While papers like *Il Monitore* and *L'Eco d'Italia* display a vigor for cultural progress or a thirst for exhilarating cultural struggle, *L'Italo-Americano's* "Thoughts from a Pessimist" editorial worries about the vast, phantasmagorical spectacle of commercialized existence, praises the "sublimity" of boredom, and ruminates about the rapidity with which youth passes.⁸³ The Pessimist is, of course, a type, an editorial persona that allows the newspaper to lament cultural or historical situations distinct from realism's quotidian or reformatory commitments. Moreover, the Pessimist is a particularly romantic type, an abstracted voice who laments the human condition more so than that of the Italian immigrant.

The Pessimist articulates an aesthetic outlook recognizable from our own post-structuralist, post-modern theoretical world. All meaningful texts ("le lettere fruttifere"), even those we assume to represent "the core of social life [l'anima. . . della vita sociale]," partake of imaginative—specifically verbal—falsity.⁸⁴ In several remarkable columns, the pessimist seems to reconcile the split between romanticism and realism by affirming the overwhelming constructedness of writing as such.⁸⁵

Remaining conscious of community needs, seeking to support the economic and cultural development—all elements of Italian-American "social life"—*L'Italo-Americano* nevertheless

admits to a kind of philosophical exhaustion or disillusion, a late-stage bleakness. In May of 1871, approximately a month after the paper's debut, the "Pessimist" confesses that, after "thinking over a bit [ripensando un poco]" he has come to see the actions of men as "not different in any way from those seen in the theater, or read in books of comedy or romance. . . . This [observation] signifies nothing else, if not that the wickedness, the foolishness, the vices of every sort, the worthless qualities and habits of men, are much more typical than we believe."^z For the Pessimist, understanding life as romance reveals the real wickedness of man.

An early and explicit theorist of representational veracity, and a proponent of the outlook I have characterized as mezzo-identity, the pessimist affirms an inescapable connection between social existence, artifice, and text itself. Claiming that "no single profession is as empty as that of literature," the pessimist's column of 1 April 1871 points out that aesthetic polish (which the pessimist calls "l'impostura," suggesting its falsity) is over-valued because only with its help can writing become meaningful or productive.^{aa} Moreover, "the flashy display is valuable and has an effect even without its being true; but the truth without [aesthetic display] is nothing."^{bb} There is, the pessimist asserts, no reality; there are only representations of social reality ("the social life [la vita sociale]") that carry meaning by virtue of their constituent falsity or ornamentation.

Turning to this chapter's final newspaper example, the storied *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, I put the Pessimist's aesthetic theories to analytic service. By attending to news items from *Il Progresso* that demonstrate contradictory generic investments, my final analysis

^z "[N]on differenti in nessuna maniera da quelle che vedute ne' teatri, o lette ne' libri della commedie o de' romanzi. . . . La qual cosa non significa altro, se non che la malvagita', la sciocchezza, i vizi d'ogni sorte, e le qualita' e le azioni ridicole degli uomini, sono molto piu' solite che non crediamo" ("Pensieri di un Pessimista" 6 May 1871. *L'Italo-Americano*).

^{aa} "Nessuna professione e' si sterile come quella delle lettere. Pure tanto e' al mondo il valore dell'impostura, che coll'aiuto di essa anche le lettere diventano fruttifere" ("Pensieri di un Pessimista" 1 April 1871. *L'Italo-Americano*).

^{bb} "L'impostura vale e fa effetto anche senza il vero; ma il vero senza lei non puo' nulla" (ibid).

demonstrates the imaginative utility of the child figure, whom *Il Progresso* employs with almost compulsive abandon. What *Il Progresso* presents as reality updates are instead visible as quasi-romantic dramatizations with particular political purpose. That is, *Il Progresso* develops an aestheticized, heightened reality of threatened children in order to illustrate the civic maturity of the community it addresses.

In descriptions of “the most influential Italian daily paper in New York and the United States,”⁸⁶ scholars often mention *Il Progresso*’s powerful editor, Carlo Barsotti, formerly a Tuscan *padrone*. Barsotti opposed labor unions, allowed “unscrupulous advertisers” to hawk patent medicines in his vast advertising section (Mangione 454), and hired “Italians who could [not] write their own language properly” (DeConde 75) to produce the paper’s content. The paper Barsotti founded (which ran for more than a century from 1880-1989) also reached thousands of Italians across the nation, publishing the names of newly arrived families, letters of solidarity from Italians around the nation, lists of books for sale or rent on topics from agriculture and economics to anatomy, hygiene, foreign languages and literature.

Describing *Il Progresso*’s appeal for recently immigrated Italians, Deschamps claims that “Barsotti’s editorial recipe[,] made of translated American news, a collage of imported Italian newspaper clippings, commercial ads . . . and regular columns dedicated to the life of the “colonia”[,] could seduce an Italian population whose literacy level made them more responsive to the yellow press tactics” (82). Human interest stories, essays, and other generalized columns take up significant space in *Il Progresso*’s daily pages. In addition to what we would characterize as hard news, *Il Progresso* also includes a robust personals section in which people advertise items and even entire stores for sale, where individuals seek employees, companions, and runaways.⁸⁷ Advice on “the best way to gain weight” advocates drinking milk or beer and eating foods like rice, cheese,

and chocolate.^{cc} While members of the “Fruit-Vendor’s Association [L’Associazione dei Fruttivendoli Italiani]” offers suggestions for “those who seek exquisite fruit,”^{dd} an article of 22 December 1889 details best practices for the “artificial cultivation of mushrooms [La Coltura Artificiale dei Funghi]” In an almost cartoonish way, *Il Progresso*’s mix of dietary advice and its solicitous participation in neighborhood events (in particular, the paper’s over-investment in the fates of city children) recalls a grandmotherly figure. Uninterested in doctrinal debates or philosophical rumination, *Il Progresso* takes stock of local and national communities and passes along to readers all the juicy details.

Alongside updates about a proposed statue of Christopher Columbus, reports on weekly community events, and news from Italian regions, *Il Progresso* very often ran tragic family stories especially those involving young people. Instead of the issues-driven politics of realist particularity (such as *L’Eco d’Italia*’s child-centered attacks on capital punishment or Catholics), *Il Progresso*’s agitation on behalf of a vulnerable youth population props up a larger social romance about the “better society, [the] brighter tomorrow . . . in the form of the future” (*No Future*, 31) that would be possible if Italians and other city communities could more effectively protect their young.

In September of 1889, the paper published a flurry of such material. This focus was in part motivated by a breaking national scandal involving a Senator, descendant of Alexander Hamilton, in a paternity hoax. Even before extensive coverage of “la dramma Hamilton-MannSwinton,” the September dailies are filled with youth-oriented tragedy. The suicide of Elisabetta Troia, a “poor dear, not even 16 years old, [who] was the daughter of respectable parents well-regarded in the

^{cc} “Il Migliore modo di ingrassare e di far uso del latte. . . . il riso. . . . Formaggi. . . . cioccolate. . . . è la birra” (“Dietetica per la magrazza ossia il miglior modo per ingrassare” 8 September 1889. *Il Progresso*).

^{dd} “Per chi brama frutti squisiti” 26 October 1889. *Il Progresso*.

community,”^{ee} is mourned as the “premature loss [perita immature]” of one with “rare qualities of intelligence and of heart [rare doti di intelligenza e di cuore].” In this initial report, the suicide is presented as more than just news. This particular death initiates a generic reflection on the “painful work of a paper, the need to register bloody facts,” that “meri[t] the compassion of all who hold in their hearts a place for feelings of kindness and devotion.”^{ff} The tragic death of this young woman is offered up as evidence of the paper’s dual commitments to the difficult but necessary realist work of reporting “bloody facts [fatti di sangue]” and to a more romantic dream of idealized compassion.

Adjacent to this communal appeal for empathy is a second familial tragedy. This report pleads for “a bit of precaution and surveillance on the part of parents”^{gg} with regard to their children, in whom the future inheres. This entreaty is occasioned by an “innocent fratricide [Fratricido Innocente]”: a girl of eleven accidentally offered a younger sister embalming fluid to drink. The “poisonous liquid [liquid velenoso]” was necessary to embalm the body of a third sister, who had died the day before. This tragedy is also editorialized by *Il Progresso* as the column reminds readers that, while the original death illustrates the “inevitable hand of fate [la mano inevitabile del fato],” the second, utterly avoidable, only adds to the “grief of this miserable family” [il lutto di quello disgraziata famiglia].”

These hyper-local tragedies are quickly eclipsed by a larger scandal involving the buying, selling, and abandonment of babies, the attempt by an American floozy to trick an American Senator into marriage, and the specter of polygamy. Thanks to an intrepid Inspector Brynes, Eva

^{ee} “La poverina non aveva che 16 anni ed era figlia di rispettabili genitori, ben noti nella colonia” (“Suicidio di una giovinetta italiana” 2-3 September 1889. *Il Progresso*).

^{ff} “[I]l compito doloroso della stampa il dover registrare fatti di sangue” [che] “merita la compassione di ogni persona che abbia nel suo cuore il posto per sentimenti gentili ed affettuosi” (ibid).

^{gg} “[U]n poco di precauzione e di sorveglianza da parte dei genitori” (“Fratricido Innocente” 2-3 Sept. 1889. *Il Progresso*).

Hamilton-Mann's jailhouse confession revealed a wealth of salacious details that are reported and rehashed by *Il Progresso* for weeks to come. After stabbing an Atlantic City nurse, Eva was arrested and a complex plot revealed. New York State Senator Robert Ray Hamilton, "head of a group that calls itself the virtuous ones,"^{hh} had consented to marry Eva following the appearance of an heir. Eva, already married to one Joshua Mann, had previously purchased three illegitimate newborns from underground midwives before the fourth, bought for \$10, lived long enough to be presented to Hamilton as the fruit of his noble American loins.

Expanding its focus from Italian offspring to a variety of the tenement's endangered, *Il Progresso* appeals to an Italian community for social improvement. Alongside notices of naturalization meetings and news from Italy, "la dramma Hamilton-Mann-Swinton" suggests to readers that a precarious relation to future stability was not limited to Italian experience. As in the case of Elisabetta Troia, the paper's coverage solicits sympathetic attachment to the poor children used up and discarded by the hoaxers. Since neither the newborns nor the adults subsumed in this scandal are identified as Italians, the outrage it generates is implicitly presented as broadly humanitarian.

The editorial voice imagines Hamilton's participation in this sordid affair to result from a triumph of paternal pathos, ventriloquizing Eve's entreaty in the name of her baby. "Oh, my Robert! Look upon, gaze at, see yourself reflected in your daughter; Oh, how much she resembles you! And say that it would be a catastrophe for her never to carry the name of her father!"ⁱⁱ If the overheated language printed here were not enough to suggest the grandly romantic slant of this

^{hh} "[I]l capo di quell partito che s'intitola dei 'virtuosi'" ("Lo Scandalo Hamilton-Mann-Swinton" 6 September 1889. *Il Progresso*).

ⁱⁱ "Oh mio Roberto, guardate, mirate, specchiatevi in vostra figlia; oh quanto vi assomiglia! E dire che questa sventurata non potrà mai portare il nome del suo padre" ("Lo Scandalo Hamilton-Mann-Swinton" 6 September 1889. *Il Progresso*).

narrative, Eva's invented appeal to paternal honor, her affirmation that rejection would lead precipitously to familial catastrophe, further situate this tale in the realm of grandiose abstraction.

All of the infants involved in the hoax are given imaginative life, as the reporter describes “no fewer than four babies” who “called Hamilton ‘papa.’”^{jj} This report engages directly in a familial fantasy, imagining that any of these “newborns [i neonati]” understand their false father through the language of family affiliation and affection. Calling out to “papa,” perhaps holding aloft their chubby arms for a paternal embrace, these children, all four dead or rejected, call out as well to readers of *Il Progresso*.

As the Hamilton scandal continues to generate news, *Il Progresso* proclaims its ethical investment in the city's youth population by publishing an exposé of “un mercato dei bambini” [a baby market] operating in the city, complete with names, addresses, and pricing.⁸⁸ Describing the undercover operations of their reporter, *Il Progresso* unveils a seedy underground of baby-selling directories, secret addresses, and newborns purchasable for ten dollars from commercial midwives, whose surnames (Koehler, Knapp, Schwab, O'Reilly, and Wemer) suggest a range of ethnic identities. In the face of this concrete and multi-ethnic abomination, which is likened to “markets for lambs, sheep, or calves [i mercati dei agnelli, delle pecore e delle vitelle],” *Il Progresso* expresses forceful social judgment against a city that treats its unwanted children as so much disposable meat.⁸⁹

At the close of this exposé, the reporter chastises the police, the church, and an adult social order for whom baby markets should be a greater concern: “and the police know all, understand all, and do not take action; those vile cowards, these repulsive middle-men, these sellers of sainted children, responsible for pain, robbery, and evil, no one touched them. They pursue their trade. . . under the eyes of justice, in the midst of flourishing churches, missionaries, and other religious

^{jj} “[N]on meno di quattro bambini. . . che chiamavano ‘papa’ l’Hamilton” (ibid).

people, amid the languages of morality, republicanism, and puritanism.”^{kk} Using the type of overheated language we have before encountered in *L'Eco d'Italia*, *Il Progresso* demands protection for the city's threatened children through reference to a broad American collective of religious followers, regulatory bodies, and proponents of a specifically republican, distinctly puritan moral virtue. In place of appeals to individuals whose hearts hold a place for kindness and devotion, instead of requesting sympathy and aid for the endangered, these closing lines compel collective action by invoking an American socio-political order of police forces, missionaries, and outraged moral citizens. The realist conventions of reformatory agendas and public exposure merge with an idealized romantic conception of cultural unity in the face of “pain, robbery, and evil.” Children of diverse ethnic backgrounds, menaced by an assortment of “vile” “repulsive” abusers, thus become the protected province of an Italian-American collective.

By 1890, our metaphoric Italian hero had grown into an advice-dispensing neighborhood elder, who, all unawares, stood poised on a precipice of erasure and regeneration. Although the most politically charged erasures of Italian civic maturity occur in English-language writing such as other newspapers, ethnographic reports, and government documents, studies of Italian-American writing (in English) also tends to reify commitments to realist imaginaries while de-emphasizing Italian-America's more romantic visions. In conclusion, I identify some of the cultural functions of what might now be recognizable as a repetitive, ceaseless imperative for civic maturation.

IV.

^{kk} “E la polizia sa tutto, e conosce tutto, e non provvede; quelle turpi femminaccie, quelle schifose mezzane, quelle mercantesse della santa infanzia, responsabili di dolori, di colpi e di mali, nessuno le tocca; seguitano il loro mestiere. . . sotto gli occhi della giustizia e in mezzo al fiorire di cheise, di missioni, di evangelizzazioni, e di retorica morale, repubblicana, quaquera e puritana” (“Il Mercato di Bambini in N.Y.” 11 Sept. 1889. *Il Progresso*).

When offering histories of “the immigrant press,” scholars often develop a progress narrative, as when Bénédicte Dechamps characterizes *L'Eco d'Italia* as “a mediating agent in the process that drove Risorgimento émigrés from their condition of forced expatriation to that of chosen settlement . . . *L'Eco d'Italia* can be considered as a halfway house between exile and immigrant presses” (80). Describing the language of *L'Eco d'Italia* as evincing “a certain compulsion for exaggeration,” she argues for the real capitalist function of such a paper, despite its “excessive” rhetorical tendencies. “There is no doubt that . . . the Italian-language press provided Italian ethnic businesses with a promotional space”; moreover, “those papers helped Italian immigrants *name* the surrounding reality and decipher its cultural codes” (83).

In other words, the function of an immigrant press is, in part, helping readers learn to translate real events or circumstances into metaphor and back again, and into profit. Dechamps points to a process that Lee Edelman, in *No Future*, depicts with greater force as “the domestication, the colonization, of the world *by meaning*” (137); describing *The Birds's* birds as a metaphor for social difference, Edelman articulates how aesthetic operations such as figuration effect material results in a social world. This is how assimilation might work as a process that balances realist observation with the figural or typological impulse we could associate with romance. More specifically, the conventions of Italian romanticism, with stock characters like the “perfect knight” (what Daniel Aaron calls “the militant”) and the “virtuous [female] patriot” tended repetitiously to dramatize broad themes of “defiance in the face of oppression, and redemption” (Riall 26) in the service of cultural (and national) coherence.⁹⁰

Though I have been assembling a quasi-linear story following the trajectory of human development, scholars of migrant experience likewise point to the circular or repetitive nature of migration and cultural assimilation. The romanticized version of real progress offered in this chapter can be seen as one particular life cycle in a repetitive chain of them. The robust soldier

who grows into the pessimistic local gossip is but one version of immigrant development in a series. As the historical record is currently understood, this figure precedes the immigrant flood, moving through a process of cultural decoding and recognition that is more typically understood to have come later in U.S. history. Viewing this repetition as both purposeful and unintentional⁹¹ suggests the sense of utility and appropriateness surrounding this version of cultural contact, while also offering a constantly-efreshing subject, the child, around whom to focus new developmental energies on the same linear trajectory.

In Edelman's analysis, the real cultural work of the Child is its invocation in the service of a stable, unified identity. Thus, the Child could be perceived as a romantic figure, one who suggests an idealized potential for social unity and satisfaction.⁹² Defining politics as "the social elaboration of reality," Edelman claims that the Child's purpose in the political arena (the entirety of social reality) is to "enac[t] a logic of repetition that fixes identity through identification with the future of the social order" (25). Ending our newspaper survey with the figure of the community elder, about to be transformed in American immigration history back to the child (newly arrived, ignorant of cultural codes and customs, unprepared for social intercourse), we are able to identify the repetition inherent—but mostly unrecognized—in social histories of Italian immigration.

As suggested at the outset, this recognition has particular implications for perceptions of Italian-American identity. In a recent state-of-the-field study of "Italian Americana," Anthony Tamburri claims that, for ethnic Italian-Americans, "a collective purpose. . . does not exist" because this group lacks "that one issue, as tragic as it may be, that to some degree or another unites the group."⁹³ Strikingly, Tamburri identifies experiences of "immigration" as a potential unificatory force: "by immigration, I have in mind that historical period of 1880-1924, those forty-four years that have now become a sort of historical marker for Italian-Americans" (4). Tamburri,

then, points right at the Italian immigrant “flood” as a powerful historical moment around which Italian-Americans might rally a more collective identity.

I want instead to posit a different relationship between cause and effect than the one Tamburri puts forth. Perhaps the conceptual dispersal of Italian-American identity that Tamburri and others identify⁹⁴ is *enabled* by the repetitive, non-exceptional history of Italian immigration I have called attention to here, not limited by it. That is, the feeling that Thomas Ferraro describes as “feeling Italian” has meaning precisely because of its productive “loose-jointedness” (3); this looseness is constitutive of identity, not a constraint upon it. Ferraro’s embrace of the feeling he describes highlights its artistic character. Although he does not call characterize it in specifically generic terms, he does claim feeling Italian as “an aesthetic. . . the play of ambiguity across the identity line, done well, is the *art of feeling Italian in America*” (3). Like Ferraro, I have characterized the mezzo-identity of Italian-American as an aesthetic operation (of genre balance) that embraces ambiguity as well as historical particularity.

In doing so, I end this study with an analysis that highlights the aesthetic iterations of an identity often understood to be politically constituted. While earlier chapters worked to articulate and explore the distinct versions of Italian history that aesthetic attention allows us to see more clearly, this final analysis imports that method onto an explicitly American geography. By expanding Italian-American history, I have also attempted to complicate the sense of generic chronology that underwrites American literary history.

Folding our historical romance into a larger story of Italian America, we might see two related things about the identity that history describes. First, the dispersed, identificatory potential of “feeling Italian” is a result of the socio-political standardization enabled by romantic repetition; the child figure proves especially useful for organizing those repetitive narratives. Italian-America lacks, in Tamburri’s terms, a sufficiently “tragic” history because of its more assertive normalization

into a longer nineteenth-century ethnic trajectory. This is how romance conveys meaning through repetition, in Gannon's analysis: "magical thinking uses cyclical repetitions. . . in attempts to bring about solutions to inner conflicts" (3). While the conflict explored here could not traditionally be understood as an "inner" (that is, personally interior) one, Tamburri's analysis suggests that some scholars view the relation between ethnic and national identity to be problem "interior" to particular ethnic groups. Additionally, the progressive nature of these repetitive maturation cycles subsumes the degree to which Italian-American might imagine themselves to have "come-of-age" alongside America as such. The ethnic studies with which I began emphasize that the growth of American industry, urban space, and cultural customs is fully consistent with the growth of Italian-American participation in U.S. socio-political life. These conclusions suggest the productively dialectical nature of Italian experience in the United States, although they also imply the normalizing weight of such an identity. Importantly, these ambiguities, and the repetitive cultural history out of which they have developed, are internal to the community itself; that is, even if implicit, an awareness of "feeling Italian" and its attendant meanings are here posited by members of the representative community. In this case, as Ferraro suggest, such inclusion is not necessarily and solely dependent upon ethnic affiliation.

In our contemporary moment, as Ferraro suggest, the aesthetic identity of "feeling Italian" may be imaginable, even open for broader cultural affiliation, beyond genetic identity. In the historical moment in which I end this chapter's newspaper survey—the new beginning of the new Italian immigrant flood—American public writing often refused fully to appreciate or even to see immigrant maturation. Instead, many American newspapers sought to re-present these communities as made up entirely of fresh-off-the-boat arrivals, culturally unprepared and economically dependent. Moreover, a felt need to reassert the importance of civic maturity, to affirm the endlessness of a cultural assimilation cycle in which the ignorance of a recently arrived

populace overwhelms the long-standing cultural awareness of a stable residential community, suggests the power of a certain national romance, one that imagines American progress and political maturity as conveying an ultimate “moral logic” (Gannon 3). In the service of this essential lesson, immigrants cycle through hauntingly similar episodes as they remain ever (or always newly) childlike; is this a cycle of endless life, or a repeated imposition of cultural death?

According to Rodrigo Lazo’s definition, the newspapers I have been surveying could be considered “migrant archives”: these papers “reside in obscurity and are always at the edge of annihilation.”⁹⁵ Certainly, the newspapers preserved in the research libraries of the American Antiquarian Society, the Boston Athenaeum, and the John. D. Calandra Italian American Institute are not in immediate danger of annihilation. As a form, however, the historical newspaper, by virtue of its material delicacy and historical ephemerality, is always endangered. In Lazo’s analysis, this type of archive is both threatened and threatening: “the drive to establish archives, archive fever, is related to a kind of conservation. . . . But according to Derrida, it also erases what came before. . . . the archive is an impression that alters a previous impression” (43).

In face, one goal of this chapter has been historical alteration of the Italian-American immigration narrative.⁹⁶ In doing so, I have sought two distinct payoffs. The first, articulated through the chapter’s self-conscious generic blend of realist content and romantic form, has been my interest in disrupting a linear national romance of cultural integration. The assimilative model, often demonstrated in the newspapers’s content, has resulted in an over-simplified version of Italian-American history and of the Italian-American subject. My second interest, implicit up to this point, is a desire to understand differently the early-twentieth century history of Italian America, an era notorious for labor agitation, anarchist societies, and the simmering violence of Italian-American neighborhoods.

The rise of anarchism, and the embrace of a darkly realist literary aesthetic in the writing of Italian-Americans, might be understood as a collective embrace of the migrant “death-drive” Lazo points to. Unwilling to reify the American romance of economic success tied to cultural assimilation, exploited and disillusioned Italian immigrants turned to the radical politics of anarchism, and the radical realism of a text like Pietro di Donato’s *Christ in Concrete* (published in 1939, the narrative is set in 1923) to disrupt their interpolation in the deeply romanticized, metaphoric structure of the “American Dream.” Perhaps, in the terms Tamburri lays out, we could imagine the proliferation of Italian-American labor struggles and anarchy as the tragedy he seeks. If so, this version of history implies that it is in fact the disruption of U.S. civic maturity, the aggressive assertion of an alternative identity, that proves tragic for the Italian-American community. Thus, the alternative historical trajectory traced here might also illuminate a kind of inverted logic of ethnic affiliation. It is the imposition, not the overcoming, of socio-political difference that marks a tragic moment for this group. Might we imagine that this assertion disrupts the balance of mezzo-identity?

In Edelman’s analysis, the goal of the Child is “a better society, a brighter tomorrow”; in such fantasies, however, repetition is always implied. Edelman claims, “these fantasies reproduce the past, through displacement, in the form of the future” (*No Future*, 31). Instead, I am suggesting, Italian-American artists and anarchists undo this future-oriented but repetitive romantic cycle—which should be recognizable to readers of this chapter—through their “insistence on the negativity that pierces the fantasy screen of futurity” (*ibid*). In a very different context from that of the contemporary queer subjects orienting Edelman’s analysis, the Italian-American figures with whom I close this study are not quite able to imagine disruptive negativity in non-political terms. An embrace of anarchism cannot be seen as a wholehearted rejection of politics. Nevertheless, our cultural fantasies about what anarchism means, based upon its most assertive and iconoclastic

articulations, understand the movement as insistent upon dynamite's political sovereignty, committed to the vigorous rejection of political parties and existent economic structures. Reborn anew at the turn of the century, our mythicized Italian hero rises from the immigrant flood on a wave of political and economic dissatisfaction, looking to sweep American capitalism out to sea on a great tide of explosives. This too represents a romantic view of politics: indeed, anarchism's most famous Italians, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, have long been romanticized, aestheticized, and made the subjects of realist historical accounts. They have long been understood, that is, to bridge a gap between political action and national imagination, broadly appealing to all manner of cultural observers.⁹⁷

If Sacco and Vanzetti are visible as exemplars of mezzo-identity—they are consummately Italian, yet their story reveals distinctly American political flaws; they are victims to a darkly realist system of justice yet flexible figures for aesthetic productions—they are but a single iteration of a fantastical dialectic I have explored throughout this study. Such a balance between presumably distinct poles of representation is visible too in the work of Henry James, who digs for historical facts only so much as they “serve the man of imagination” (*AP*, xxix). In the preface to *The Aspern Papers*, James describes his ideal historical artist as “liking to feel the past strange and liking to feel it familiar” (xxxii). The challenge, continues James, is “to catch [the past] at the moment when the scales of the balance hang with the right evenness” (*AP*, xxxii). This study has tried to catch and to sustain that balance through a series of formal explorations and cultural figures: Italy as a lyric nation; war as an ambivalent textual intimacy; history as ground to dig in and lacquered ornamental surface to float across; the distinct generic associations of mezzo-identity.

The opening pages of this study invoked the ghostly figure of Abraham Lincoln and the political attraction American politicians felt toward Italy. Here at the close, we are confronted with an American anarchist nightmare instead of with republican reverie. As the chapters of this

dissertation have shifted focus across modes of representation and oscillations of form, so too have the imaginative attachments between American writers and Italian citizens demonstrated distinct values and associations. What has remained consistent, however, is the sense of connection itself, an awareness that Italy haunts American dreams of all sorts. The changing meanings of cultural fancy has been the subject of this study's analysis. I end not with a final descriptive conclusion but instead with a series of provocations about the character and purpose of a distinctly American *Italianità*; in doing so, I hold open the meanings of the intimate cultural attachments imagined here, and highlight the importance of imagination in sustaining such attachments.

Introduction

¹ Noah Brooks. *Washington in Lincoln's Time*. Edited by Herbert Mitgang (NY: Rinehart & Co. 1958), 220.

² Doris Kerns Goodwin's wildly popular *Team of Rivals*, one of the most recent re-presentations of Lincoln to a contemporary public, makes no mention of this particular vision despite Goodwin's proclivity toward anecdote.

³ Brooks's follow-up to Lincoln's doppelganger story is worth quoting in full, if only to give a sense of just how disquieting are the prophetic details of this Lincoln legend. According to the biography, both the President and Mrs. Lincoln felt "uncomfortable" about the doubled-head vision, although for slightly different reasons. In the former's account, Mrs. Lincoln "thought it was a sign that I was to be elected to a second term of office, and that the paleness of one of the faces was an omen that I should not see life through the last term." Mrs. Lincoln likewise relates her spouse's discomfort to Brooks: "she expressed surprise that Mr. Lincoln was willing to say anything about it, as he had up to that time refrained from mentioning the incident to anybody; and as she was firm in her belief that the optical illusion (which it certainly was) was a warning, I never again referred to the subject to either the President or his wife" (220-21). Brooks's simultaneous acquiescence to and refusal of this prophetic interpretation suggests that he, too, felt discomfited. Dismissing it as an illusion, he nevertheless refrains from mentioning this prophecy again in the presence of the First Family; even still, Brooks calls it "remarkable" given the "coincidence" of the President's "cruel death" (220).

⁴ Certainly, there were many revolutionary struggles and pitched internal conflicts in various European nations before the years of the American Civil War (see endnote #34 on the European Revolutions of 1848). However, one could easily mount an argument for the Italian Risorgimento as a special case in terms of its similarities—both historical and conceptual—to the American Civil War. To name some of the most obvious: Italy declared itself a unified parliamentary monarchy and established an official constitution in October 1860, right as Lincoln was being elected to preside over the increasingly fractious U.S. Following the declaration of unified Italy, Northern armies, acting on the orders of the new parliament, began a series of excursions into the poor Southern regions of Italy to conduct what was often called "a war against brigandage" or a "civil war" in the hopes of solving the intractable "Southern Question" of what to do with Italy's Southern regions (Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796* [New York: Penguin Books, 2007], 224; 236. Hereafter cited in the text as *FD*). See also Lucy Riall, *Sicily and the Unification of Italy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1998); John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno 1860-1900* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2002); Frank W. Alduino, *Sons of Garibaldi in Blue and Grey: Italians in the American Civil War* (Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2007).

⁵ John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (London: printed for C. Dilly, 1787), 355.

⁶ Attention to the Machiavellian dimensions of Early-American political thought has a stable history in the field; studies include J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); C. Bradley Thompson, "John Adams's Machiavellian Moment," *The Review of Politics* 57 (Summer, 1995): 389-417; John Lambertson Harper, *American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Paul A. Rahe, editor, *Machiavelli's Liberal Republican Legacy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006) with essays exploring Machiavelli's influence on Franklin (143-167), Washington (170-188), Jefferson (208-228), and Hamilton (254-278).

⁷ Henry Theodore Tuckerman, *Essays, Biographical and Critical; or, Studies of Character* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1857), 433.

⁸ David Gilmore, *The Pursuit of Italy: A History of a Land, its Regions, and their Peoples* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 138.

⁹ The studies that take this as their explicit goal and focus are many, and are often quite detailed and artfully prepared. See Duggan, Gilmore, Lucy Riall's *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (NY: Routledge, 2002), Sabina Donati's *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2013).

¹⁰ Transnational work on these two nations most often attends to explicitly political similarities between the United States and Italy, using political cross-currents to explore the productive nationalist work being performed by cultural comparison during the nineteenth century. See, for example, Dennis Berthold, *American Risorgimento: Herman Melville and the Cultural Politics of Italy* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2009); Robert Casillo, *The Empire of Stereotypes: Germaine de Staël and the Idea of Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Paola Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles: The Italian Risorgimento and Antebellum American Identity* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 2005); Annamaria Formichella Elsdén, *Roman Fever: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2004); Buonomo, *Backward Glances: Exploring Italy, Reinterpreting America* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1996); Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994); Larry Reynolds, *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988).

¹¹ Paul Hamilton proposes a similar alternative to traditional versions of European Romanticism in *Realpoetik*: "Romantic studies ought to demystify, rather than explicate or develop, Romantic ideas that aesthetic discourse might show political discourse the lead" (Hamilton, *Realpoetik: European Romanticism and Literary Politics* [Cambridge: Oxford UP, 2013], 5). Hereafter cited in text as *RP*.

¹² This latter phrase is taken from Judith Butler via Christopher Castiglia and Russ Castronovo's "Introduction" to *American Literature* 76.4 (2004). In that opening essay, "'A Hive of Subtlety': Aesthetics and the End(s) of Cultural Studies," the authors define the aesthetic realm as one that allows "through the sensations of the body and the play of imagination, broader collective—and collaborative—identifications, without necessarily tying them to hegemonic social formations" (428). In another introduction, Christopher Looby and Cindy Weinstein offer a list of "what counts as aesthetic" that includes "the play of imagination, the exploration of fantasy, the recognition and description of literary form. . . the appreciation of beauty" (*American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions*, [New York: Columbia UP, 2014], 4). At stake in applying the former list of "what counts as aesthetic" to a politically attuned, historically situated analysis is nothing less than "the social relations of literary forms" (9). See also "Formal Disclosures" forum in *J19* 1.2 (2013) with essays by Lloyd Pratt, Todd Carmody, Kyla Tompkins, Elisa Tamarkin, and Jennifer Fleissner; Coviello, *Intimacy in America*.

¹³ James Russell Lowell. *The Complete Writings of James Russell Lowell, vol. I: Fireside Travels*. Ed by C.E. Norton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1904), 150. Hereafter cited in the text as *FT*.

¹⁴ Often, studies of U.S.-Italian interactions seek rational, political reasons to explain the powerful connections imagined between these two nations. In subsequent pages, I detail a few of these reasons (and their problems) more specifically. For now, I would characterize the most common explanations for the persistence of U.S. and Italian attachments as: Americans love Italy because its artistic heritage compliments America's lack of aesthetic tradition; Americans love Italy because Italy reveres American republican democracy; Italians covet the industrial and economic dominance of an increasingly imperialist America. Throughout this study, I suggest that the appeal of Italy for Americans, and the late-century influx of Italians to the United States, can only partially be explained by arguments about economic or social necessity.

¹⁵ In their "Preface" to *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*, Charles Capper and Cristina Giocelli remind readers that "although only a tiny number of mostly upper-middle-class Americans in the antebellum era traveled to Europe, they included almost every notable author in

America” (Capper and Giocelli, eds. *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age* [Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2007], xi). Many of these notable authors, of course, wrote about their Italian experiences. Several of the most prominent antebellum American Italophiles are relatively unstudied today. Although Chapter One of the present study examines the work of Henry Theodore Tuckerman, there are many other forgotten American lovers of Italy. John Paul Russo make mention of the Italian texts written by less canonical authors like Washington Allston, George Bancroft, William H. Prescott and G.S. Hillard (Russo, “The Unbroken Charm,” in *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*, pp. 124-155).

¹⁶ James Fenimore Cooper, *Gleanings from Europe: Italy*. Eds. John Conron and Constance Ayers Denne (Albany: SUNY press, 1981), preface. Hereafter cited in the text as *GI*.

¹⁷ By 1882, Henry James had abandoned the pose of demurrer so often struck in such introductory moments. Instead, James relishes the very lack of novelty Cooper is so self-conscious about; in “Venice,” James asserts of his writing about that “there is nothing new to be said about her certainly, but the old is better than any novelty. It would be a sad day indeed when there should be something new to say” (*Italian Hours* [NY: Penguin Books, 1992], 7. Hereafter cited throughout the text as *IH*).

¹⁸ James Fenimore Cooper, *Letters and Journals*, vol. 2. Ed. James Franklin Beard (Harvard UP, 2004), 371.

¹⁹ Lauren Berlant defines desire as “a state of attachment to something or someone, and the cloud of possibility that is generated between an object’s specificity and the needs and promises projected onto it” (Berlant, *Desire/Love* [Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2012], 6). While desire and fantasy are not the same thing, Berlant’s definition helps account for the open-endedness of Italy’s appeal for Americans, and also suggests where, perhaps, the representational gaps I have gestured to might be created.

²⁰ In focusing on fascinating, inarticulatable, or fantastical moments of association and recognition, I am following an interpretive practice—attention to counter-archives and the ineffable—featured in recent studies of American literary history. See, for example, Peter Coveillo, *Tomorrow’s Parties* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), Heather Love, *Feeling Backwards* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2009), Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008). See also Jane Bennett for an account of enchantment’s under-theorized “fable of everyday marvels” (Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001], 4).

²¹ Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham: Duke UP, 1992), 1-3. While Benítez-Rojo’s method is defined through explicit reference to his interpretive object (the Caribbean “meta-archipelago”), others offer a more implicit connection between object and analytic method. Pointing to the distinct, even contradictory meanings for the term “creole,” Sean Goudie’s *Creole America* highlights the intertextuality of his interpretive archive, identifying an angle of approach attuned to “the formation of inter-American, cross-cultural identities inside and outside the nation’s borders,” thus aligning textual artifact and cultural process (Goudie, *Creole America* [Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2006], 10).

²² Studies of European Romanticism often connect the aesthetic aims of a Romantic imagination to its political ones. Hamilton’s *Realpoetik: European Romanticism and Literary Politics*, declares its interest in connecting politics and aesthetic through its very title. Duggan takes a similar approach in his history of Italian unification, focusing throughout on the “rhetorical legacy of the Risorgimento,” its “extravagant claims” and connection to “poetry” (*FD* xix).

²³ Lloyd Pratt, “Introduction: The Nature of Form” *J19* 1.2, 431.

²⁴ D.A. Miller, *Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003), 39.

²⁵ Jacques Rancière *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. Trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 14.

²⁶ For an object to be assessed as art, according to Rancière, “what is required is a specific gaze and form of thought to identify it. This identification presupposes a complex process of differentiation. For a statue or painting to be adjudged art, two apparently contradictory conditions are required. The work in question must be seen as the product of an art and not. . . judged solely in accordance with its principles or its

factual resemblance. But it also must be seen as something that is more than just the product of an art” (*Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. Trans. by Steven Corcoran [Malden, MA: Polity, 2009], 6). For Rancière, the “discourse” we call aesthetic is constituted by these contradictory impulses, and by human need to differentiate between them.

²⁷ Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. Trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), 29).

²⁸ Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991), 20.

²⁹ Margaret Fuller, *These Sad but Glorious Days: Dispatches from Europe, 1846-1850*. Eds Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991), 168. Hereafter cited in text as *SGD*.

³⁰ Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), xiii). Other studies of transnationalism and genre include Laura Doyle, *Freedom’s Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in America* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008); Meredith McGill, Ed., *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange* (NJ: Rutgers UP, 2008); Eva Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence 1688-1820* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2005); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

³¹ I take my understanding of how nationalist abstraction works in individual lives from Dana Nelson’s *National Manhood*. In her analysis, white men in America turned to an abstracted version of community in order to manage their daily anxieties about civic and economic participation in the United States. Nelson describes the process thusly: “The disembodied, objective, and universalized standpoint offered by Enlightenment science became useful for consolidating a perspective for ‘white’ manhood. In the abstract space from which he conducts the global and historical survey of climate and human behavior, James himself is not present as an embodied agent” (Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* [Durham: Duke UP, 1998], 10). While visitors to Italy, or Italians in the U.S., often understood themselves in nominally embodied terms (that is, as tired and overheated, or tired and underfed), many resort to a kind of cultural shorthand of abstraction, portraying themselves as representative stand-ins for a whole host of “American” opinions or “Italian values.”

³² Peter Coviello, *Intimacy In America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2005), 4.

³³ If the theoretical ground commonly designated by the term “transnational” has demonstrated any one thing with consistency, it is the breadth and complexity of America’s transnational relations, communities, and investments. For overviews of the field and its subsets, see Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2012); Winnifred Fluck, Donald Pease, and John Carlos Rowe, editors. *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth UP, 2011); Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the 19th-century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009); Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008); Caroline Levander and Robert Levine, editors. *Hemispheric American Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2008); Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008); Leonard Tenenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the English Diaspora 1750-1850* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007); Paul Giles, *Virtual Americans: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (Durham: Duke UP, 2002); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995).

³⁴ This dialectical model is one reason scholars so often defer to concepts of lack and gratification in exploring the transnational relations between Italy and the United States.

³⁵ William Cullen Bryant argues just that in his *Letters of a Traveller*, claiming that a bright political future for Italy entails a return to the past: “A representative government, freedom of the press, and freedom of trade, have brought back to this part of Italy the impulses to enterprise, the energy and

steadiness of action, which centuries ago made the Italian republics so great and powerful” (Bryant, *Letters of a Traveller* 2nd ed. [NY: D. Appleton and Co., 1859], 257).

³⁶ One could easily build an entire book from comparativist political writing using such figures as James Russell Lowell, William Cullen Bryant, Henry James, Henry Adams, Julia Ward Howe, Caroline Kirkland, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sophia Hawthorne, William Dean Howells, Nathaniel Parker Willis, Henry Tuckerman, Fuller, Cooper, and many more. In this particular study, some attention is paid to this archive of writings, but I expand the focus far beyond politicalized comparison.

³⁷ The influential Italian-language newspaper *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* begins collecting funds for a Columbus statue in New York City as early as 1888. When the statue is finally erected in October of 1892 (just in time for the four-hundred-year anniversary of his voyage), the newspaper provides full coverage of the ceremony and publishes letters of support for the project from Italians all over the U.S as well as English-language letters from “Admirers” (“Per Cristoforo Colombo: Un Memento per la Fiera [For Christopher Columbus: A Memento for the Exhibition]”, 27 October 1892. *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*).

³⁸ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2002), xxv.

³⁹ As Looby and Weinstein argue in *The Aesthetic Dimensions of American Literature*, one important goal of the new formalist approach (a field of inquiry this study remains indebted to) is “to reintroduce aesthetic categories—such as style, form, beauty, pleasure, and imagination, in order to demonstrate the ways in which aesthetics and politics are dialectically involved” (9).

⁴⁰ William Dean Howells *Modern Italian Poets: Essays and Versions* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), 10-11. Hereafter cited in text as *MIP*.

⁴¹ Miller proposes a firm distinction between style and its alternative (Miller calls this “substance”; later portions of my analysis will also refer to this alternative as “content” or “matter”). Miller’s argument is that the two are utterly incompatible: “All style and no substance’ helps us recognize not that style is *different* or even *opposite* to substance. . . but that the one is incompatible with, even corrosive, to the other. Style can only emerge at the expense of substance” (17). As should be clear by now, I am interested in explorations of style that do not hew so closely to a strict differentiation model, but Miller’s discussions of what makes style visible, and how it operates both culturally and personally, have been useful for developing my own thinking about style and substance.

⁴² Called, variously, the European Revolutions of 1848, the Spring of Nations, and the Year of Revolutions, the 1848 revolutions in Europe are the subject of many excellent historical studies. See Albert S. Lindmann, *A History of Modern Europe: From 1815 to the Present* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Timothy Mason Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenges to American Exceptionalism* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2009); John Anthony Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions (1780-1860)* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006); R.J.W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Standmann, eds. *The Revolutions in Europe 1848-1849: From Reform to Reaction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).

⁴³ In this dissertation, I examine texts written in Italian as well as those produced by U.S. writers working in English. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own; when offering translations of original Italian, I include the original text in footnotes.

⁴⁴ My deepest gratitude and appreciation to the libraries and institutes whose newspaper collections allowed me to write this chapter. At the American Antiquarian Society, I viewed *Il Monitore del Sud*, *L’Eco d’Italia*, *L’Unione Italiana*, *Il Messaggiere dell’Oust*, and *L’Italo-Americano*. The Boston Athenaeum has the only existent issues of *The Crusader*, an English-language companion to *L’Eco d’Italia*; I was able to view *The Crusader* in the Athenaeum’s collection. Finally, CUNY’s John D. Calandra Institute holds the most complete collection of the longest running Italian-language daily newspaper in the United States, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*. Without these collections, the work of chapter 4 would have been impossible.

⁴⁵ Tamarkin, *Anglophilia*, xxxiv.

⁴⁶ Such sweep is beautifully managed by Tamarkin's dense chapters, but I instead seek the small moments, the eccentric associations, collected in writing about Italy and Italians.

Chapter 1: "Reader, Everybody Has a World": The Italian Lyric Nation

¹ Henry T. Tuckerman, *Isabel; or Sicily. A Pilgrimage* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1839), 183. Hereafter cited in Text as *Isabel*.

² My initial definition of "nation" and by extension, "national identity," is informed by theorists including Benedict Anderson and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Anderson offers this preliminary definition of nation: "it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. . . . the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Revised edition* [New York: Verso, 2006] 6-7). Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in exploring what they characterize as the decline of the nation-state in post-modern global society, define national identity as "a cultural, integrating identity, founded on biological continuity of blood relations, a spatial continuity of territory, and linguistic commonality" (Hardt and Negri, *Empire* [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001], 95). For both Italy and America in the nineteenth-century, the issue of "territory," or what Anderson calls "finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" (7), is especially fluid: America's expansion across the continent was yet occurring throughout the century, while Italy's borders remained porous until as late as 1919, when Italy annexed the North-Eastern regions of Trieste, Trentino-Alto Adige, and Venezia-Giulia.

³ Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* is a pioneering example of ideological interpretations of travel writing. Pratt asserts a connection between genre and the workings of an imperialist ideology that created "a sense of ownership, entitlement, and familiarity" among European readers (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* [New York: Routledge, 1992], 3).

⁴ In making a claim about the narrative nature of American identity, I am not suggesting that all identities that can be understood as "American" (such as Anglo-American, African-American, the many versions of Creole identity, etc) are the same. On the contrary, there are many varieties of tale-telling that nonetheless would fall under the category "narrative": Franco Moretti lists no fewer than 44 genres of novel in his manifesto for an "abstract" study of literature (Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* [New York: Verso, 2005]). While the histories, values, traditions, and linguistic practices of the American identities referenced above were obviously different, what they do share is a linear relationship to time that allowed communities to narrate a progression (in the case of African-Americans, an imposed regression) of perceived character and socio-political status. A creole identity, for example, results from a process of change over time, as Sean Goudie suggests in a description of Benjamin Franklin's creolization from *Creole America*. Goudie's analysis highlights a temporally-consistent navigation and alteration of character. "Franklin, while admiring of his Anglophone status, opposes certain oppressive attributes of Britishness. . . and in so doing, adapts, or in other words *creolizes*, his Britishness according to a North American context" (26). In generic terms, we might see this particular creolization process as a kind of Bildungsroman, as Franklin grows over time into an American, distinct from the British character he opposes.

⁵ The "Graphs" chapter of Moretti's study surveys generic invention and diversity across the form of the novel from the early eighteenth century to the late nineteenth, arguing that generic cycles "constitute *temporary structures within historical flow*." The payoff of the cyclical or "wave-like" pattern of genre development presented by Moretti is the ability to see more clearly the connections between genre, politics, and the historical pattern of human generations. As Moretti quotes Karl Mannheim arguing, "The aesthetic sphere is perhaps the most appropriate to reflect overall changes of mental climate" (14-21, original emphasis). Thus, attention to the aesthetic spheres of narratives and lyric poems helps us understand the development of a comparatively-nationalist mental climate while suggesting what alternatives might look like.

⁶ Although Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), a landmark study of "print-languages" and national identity, does attend occasionally to poetry, the focus is more often on narrative or expository forms such as newspaper writing, description of invented locales (a kind of imaginative travel writing), and deeply instrumental texts like national-language dictionaries. When he does discuss poetic expression, Anderson focuses on epic poetry, satire, and narrative poems of discovery (68-79) or apostrophes like Rizal's *Último Adiós*, a poetic record of good nationalist death (142). Virginia Jackson identifies these narrative-form poems as different from the lyric because of the latter's relation to (or, to be more accurate, disavowal of) historical context or progression. "Whereas other poetic genres (epics, poems on affairs of state, verse epistles, epigraph, elegy, satire) may remain embedded in specific historical occasions or narratives. . . the poetry that comes to be understood as lyric. . . is thought to require as its context only the occasion of reading" (Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005], 7).

⁷ As Peter Brooks argues, the narrative ordering we call plot emerged historically as "a logic of narrative discourse, the organizing dynamic of a specific mode of human understanding" (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* [New York: A.A. Knopf], 7). I am suggesting here that the nation, and one's status as national citizen with a particular character, is one of the types of "human understanding" that the plot of travel narratives was intended to develop.

⁸ Much has been written about the nationalist role played by figures and publications such as John O'Sullivan, editor of the *Democratic Review*, the Duyckinck brothers Evert and George, editors of *The Literary World* and a "Library of American Books" series." These men, and their published nationalist projects, were leading proponents of the Young America movement of the 1840s and 50s. Recent studies of Young America's place in U.S. literary history and culture include Robert Levine, *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Nationalism* (Durham: U of North Carolina Press, 2008); Dennis Berthold, *American Risorgimento*.

⁹ For more on the relation between nation, narrative, and linear history, see Homi Bhabha's "DissemiNation" in *Nation and Narrative* (Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narrative* [New York: Routledge, 1990]), Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History." Benjamin suggests that narrative is a tool of the cultural or political "victors" of history when he writes, "Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate" (Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn [New York: Schocken Books, 1968], 256). Benjamin's "procession" moves forward through time, as does the conception of history he attributes to mankind: "Where we perceive a chain of events, [the angel of history] sees one single catastrophe" (257). These are version of history that are linear and progressive, as opposed to being momentary or isolated.

¹⁰ James Fenimore Cooper, *Gleanings in Europe: Italy*, 296. Hereafter cited in chapter as *GI*.

¹¹ The proclivity for international comparisons was perhaps analogous to the domestic divisions among peoples that structured many aspects of U.S. public life: Native Americans, nativist Americans, the gendered "separate spheres"; African Americans were further categorized into slaves and free blacks.

¹² John Paul Russo points out that "the earliest American tradition of travel writing on Italy was actually a New England tradition, and it grew out of the fact that so many New Englanders followed one another to Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century, leaving a wealth of journals, letters, travelogues, newspaper articles, aesthetic commentaries, poems, fictions, and anecdotes" ("The Unbroken Charm: Margaret Fuller, G.S. Hillard, and the American Tradition of Travel Writing on Italy," in *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*, 124). As Russo and others have rightly observed, the general participants in and audience for the type of ruminative travel writing featured here was upper-middle-class white Americans. For African-American travelogues, see Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Boston: De Wolfe, Fiske, & Co. 1893); David Dor, *A Colored Man Round the World*. Ed Malini Johar Schueller (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1999). Originally printed privately for author (Cleveland, OH, 1858).

¹³ Richard Gassan asserts that one of the key components of a successful tourist destination is “a cultural infrastructure that gives the tourist a model of thinking about what he or she is experiencing” (Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism: New York, the Hudson Valley, and American Culture, 1790-1830* [Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2008], 5). For travelers to Europe after the late 1830s, when guidebooks and travelogues began overwhelmingly to proliferate, there was arguably too much infrastructure, too strict a model for thinking about Italian sights and appropriate responses. The population that initially embraced touristic travel (and its accompanying monetary outlays) was most often upper-income, educated, and white. Indeed, Gassan’s description of the rise of a more inclusive domestic tourism (during the 1820s) is filled with details of class disputes. Gassan also points out the importance of religious difference for travelers, an issue which would grow even more distracting in American interactions with Italian Roman Catholics. See also Franchot’s *Roads to Rome*. Julia Ward Howe is especially concerned with the moral and social implications of religious distinctions.

¹⁴ In *Interior States*, Chris Castiglia connects the operations of state directly to understandings of the individual, arguing that a certain type of U.S. political and institutional organization—the understanding of democracy as the social management of conflicting forces—has been misunderstood as having an analogue with the individual. Castiglia theorizes the important connections between nation and individual that were circulating within nineteenth-century discourses about proper forms of citizenship and institutional responsibility. Priscilla Wald also explores negotiations between individual identity, national “storytelling,” and narrative moments that reveal anxiety about national belonging: “these works also convey their authors’ understanding that those larger [national] stories constituted them as authors; they could not tell their stories without the conventions the larger stories provided. . . . the official stories of We the People. . . . through their literary narratives, they participated in the imagining of a community” (Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* [Durham: Duke UP, 1995] 3-4). Coviello’s *Intimacy in America* details a conflict between an institutionalized (state-sanctioned) American identity and one understood through relation to other individuals: “for a range of antebellum authors dissatisfied with the claims of the state, American-ness existed, and had meaning, as a kind of relation—for some, an intimacy—that bound together a scattered, anonymous citizenry” (5).

¹⁵ Between 1800 and 1870, approximately 700 books about international travel were published in the United States; that means that about 10 international-travel narratives a year debuted for the first 70 years of the nineteenth century. This figure does not include narratives of domestic travel, which were also being published at a rate of approximately 5 a year. Figures from *American Travellers Abroad* (1999). These figures do not account for the reissues of popular travel narratives that would have debuted in previous years.

¹⁶ This was true of guidebooks as well as travel narratives, and was the case for numerous European nations as well as the United States. Esther Allen suggests that this tailored nationalist approach was one reason for the triumph of the ubiquitous Baedeker Guidebook. She summarizes, “guidebooks often tailored their information to suit the needs of travellers from different countries; Baedeker offered an English Italy, a French Italy, and a German Italy, all quite distinct from each other. Indeed, the international ubiquity of the Baedeker firm can in large part be attributed to the firm’s ability to furnish travellers with guidebooks that would entrench their various national viewpoints” (Allen, “‘Money and Little Red Books’: Romanticism, Tourism, and the Rise of the Guidebook” *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 7 [1996], 222).

¹⁷ Later sections of this chapter (and, more broadly, this book) will take up in detail the political and social complexity of Italian nation-building throughout the course of the nineteenth century. For now, it will be sufficient to summarize as follows: After almost one hundred years of conspiracies, battles, and political maneuvering with the goal of unification, Italy became a unified parliamentary monarchy in 1871, upon the Pope’s surrender of the Papal States. Until that point, Italy had spent many centuries at the mercy of various European imperial powers, while simultaneously embroiled in heated regional disputes. For most of the nineteenth century, Northern Italy fell under Hapsburg dominion, the central Papal States assumed the Pope as ruler, and the Bourbon government oversaw much of Southern Italy.

¹⁸ Tuckerman proves an avid people-watcher and opera lover, Cooper appreciates the sky and ocean views, Bryant turns a sharply sociological eye upon every city, Lowell proves mainly interested in rural adventures, Howe offers religious philosophizing,

¹⁹ While both guidebooks and travelogues were published with astonishing regularity in the antebellum period, the former was often written anonymously, even collectively, at publishing houses (Allen, 220), while the latter usually depended for appeal on the name recognition of the writer. The stated goals of these two modes were markedly different: guidebooks like *Murray's* and *Beadeker*, often updated yearly, were practical guides to the difficulties and delights of travel for a range of travelers. Travelogues, on the other hand, were marketed as the highly-individuated, stylistically-idiosyncratic reminiscences of well-known literary figures.

²⁰ Much like the implied distinction between the consumer and the connoisseur of travel writing, commentators grouped sojourners themselves into two groups: tourists and travelers.²⁰ Daniel Boorstin claims that by mid-nineteenth century, distinctions were absolute: "the traveler, then, was working at something; the tourist was a pleasure seeker. The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him" (Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* [New York: Atheneum, 1987], 85). Jonathan Culler demonstrates that complaints about tourists as "flocks," "droves," or a "deluge," have permeated travel accounts since as early as 1826, concluding that "tourist and traveler . . . are not so much two historical categories as terms of an opposition integral to tourism" (Culler, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* [Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1988]).

²¹ Lowell's 1868 collection *Under the Willows* (London, MacMillan and Co., 1869), for example, featured poems about Middle-Eastern legend ("Dara") and traditions ("The Nomads"), celebrations of British sights and sounds ("Godminster Chimes"), European history ("An Invitation") and German landscapes ("Auf Wiedersehen, Summer" and "Palinode, Autumn"). Tuckerman's *Poems* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1851), likewise demonstrates the author's interest in international scenes: "The Spirit of Poetry" surveys a dizzying breadth of locations and figures (from Apollo's Greece to Mary's Jerusalem, Cleopatra's Egypt, Saul's Isreal, Euterpe's Rome, Bellini's Sicily). Tuckerman even features a Canadian myth in his collection, "The Vestals: A Canadian Legend." In *Passion-flowers* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1854), Howe is mainly concerned to depict Italian scenes and domestic ones, although a few poems are set in England or use foreign languages in their titles ("Whit-Sunday in the Church," "Entbehren," "Coquette et Froide," "Coquette et Tendre").

²² I am thinking of Longfellow's epics *Evangeline* (1847) and *Hiawatha* (1855), the abolitionist poetry of Longfellow, Whittier, or Lowell (1830-60s), Lowell's intellectual satire of American types, *A Ballad for Critics* (1848). For discussions of American politics and poetics, see Michael Warner, "Whitman Drunk" in *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005); Meredith McGill, *The Traffic in Poems*; Michael Cohen, "Whittier, Ballad Reading, and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Poetry" *Arizona Quarterly* 64.3 (2008): 1-30.

²³ Kirsten Silva Gruez's *Ambassadors of Culture* makes a case for vernacular lyric poems, published with great regularity in trans-American periodicals, as a kind of political "daily practice." Countering the perception of lyric poetry as removed "from the daily life of readers and the political evolutions of nations," Gruez claims instead that lyric "registers the events around it in a particularly nimble way" (21).

²⁴ *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature* defines lyric poems as "short poems expressive of a poet's thoughts or feelings"; *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* takes a more historical approach, defining the lyric through its connection to musical expression: "in the case of lyric, the musical element is intrinsic to the work intellectually as well as aesthetically: it becomes the focal point for the poet's perceptions as they are given a verbalized form to convey emotional or rational values." In both cases, the form known as lyric is distinguished by an emphasis on individual expression. Jackson asserts that the genre we think of as lyric tends to be "apparently contextless or sceneless" (*Misery*, 6). Related to the notion of contextless is the idea of inutility: the lyric presents singular experience not to teach but as a vehicle for expressing powerful individual feeling. Unlike a didactic

poem such as *A Ballad for Critics*—which had an obvious audience of educated readers who were poised to take in the poem’s cautions and advice about intellectual pursuits—a lyric poem is generally (mis)understood as presenting a solitary moment of “deep subjectivity.” Michael Warner calls this misperception “one of lyric’s most valued attributes” (*Publics and Counterpublics*, 80).

²⁵ Lloyd Pratt’s *Archives of American Time: Literature and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2010), for example, traces the imposition of genre distinctions over time. Dimock’s *Through Other Continents* demonstrates that a shift of classificatory terms can result in very different generic genealogies. Rethinking the novel under rubrics of fractal geometry and family resemblance theory, Dimock argues convincingly that “genre is not just a theory of classification, but, perhaps even more crucially, a theory of interconnection” (74). Like all genre differentiations, the one I impose here between lyric and narrative does not claim to be absolute. The interplay among the two, and the distinctions their difference provide, are in fact essential to my argument. As Heather Dubrow argues, “rather than attempting to impede, suppress, or supersede each other, lyric and narrative may further common agendas” (“The Interplay of Narrative and Lyric: Competition, Cooperation, and the Case of the Anticipatory Amalgam” *Narrative* 14.3 [Oct. 2006], 256). While lyrics and narrative about Italy shared the basic agenda of representing Italy, they did so in different ways; in this particular case, only one of those genres participated explicitly in creating a national identity based on stable characterological distinctions.

²⁶ The sense of “rhizomatic” deployed in this chapter comes from the definition of “the rhizome” offered by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: “the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature. . . . The rhizome is reducible to neither the One nor the multiple. . . . It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle, from which it grows and overflows” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987], 23).

²⁷ I develop my sense of lyric nationhood from the lyric conception of identity theorized in Michael Snediker’s *Queer Optimism: Lyric Personhood and Other Felicitous Persuasions* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008). Hereafter cited in text as *QO*. In employing and extending Snediker’s sense of “lyric personhood” to explain Italy, I am using a particular, and relatively narrow, sense of the lyric. Thus, this chapter does not take on every possible understanding of lyric and all its implications, but instead focuses on one specific iteration and application of “lyric” like that presented in note 15, above.

²⁸ The imposition of narrative structures for national meaning-making was not limited to American travel texts. As Italian revolutionaries and authors worked to unify Italians imaginatively, they most often did so through narratives, understanding that form as especially useful for creating historical continuity among regional identities and for presenting stable linguistic structures that would collect various readers under an umbrella of “Italian speakers.” As Alberto Mario Banti argues, “the example of the Risorgimento also provided a strongly narrative connotation to national discourse, in the sense that common understandings of crucial points in the national story came to be recounted in the form of specific stories, filled with subjects, plots, and appropriate historical development.” [“anche nel caso del Risorgimento colpisce poi la forte connotazione narrativa del discorso nazionale, nel senso che capita spesso che punti cruciali della storia nazione vengano raccontati in forma di storie specifiche, dotate di soggetti, di intrecci, di sviluppi propri”]. “Introduzione,” in *Immagini della nazione nell’Italia del Risorgimento* [*Figures of the nation in Italy during the Risorgimento*], ed. Alberto Mario Banti and Roberto Bizzocchi (Rome: Carocci editore, 2002), 14.

²⁹ Snediker presents a model for personhood he calls “lyric” or “aesthetic” personhood, which is generically opposed to a subjectivity developed through plotted, linear progression. Snediker’s particular understanding of the lyric subject is created and sustained by invention and a kind of non-linear seriality or multiplicity. The “lyric person” can be understood as “being multiple without one unit in that multiplicity being granted higher ontological standing than the others” (155).

³⁰ Italy, as Machiavelli reminds his Renaissance readers, has long been viewed as a nation shattered, abjected, “lacera” [torn]. Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, one of the Risorgimento’s earliest and most

politically charged poets, often imagines Italy as a stripped and sexually brutalized woman. I am in no way suggesting that queer self-shattering and metaphors of imperial rape are necessarily-related versions of sexual experience, but I would point out that Italy as a pessimistically sexualized female victim was quite a potent trope for centuries of revolutionary Italians. In the final section of *The Prince*, Machiavelli imagines Italy thusly: “Italy, left almost lifeless, waits for a leader to heal her wounds, stop the ravaging of Lombardy, end the looting of the kingdom and of Tuscany, and minister to those sores of hers that have been festering for so long” (Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* trans. Robert M. Adams [New York: W.W. Norton, 1992], 70). Even in English, descriptions of “ravaging” carry a sexual implication; in the original Italian, Machiavelli uses words including “sacchi” (“muggings” or “plunderings” with the added idiomatic sense of deceptions), “espilazioni” (“extortions” or “exploitations”), “taglie” (“tagliare” means “to cut,” “tagliere” a term for “cutting board” or “chopping block”) (Machiavelli, *Il Principe* [Italia, 1814]). See *Il Dizionario Garzanti* or wordreference.com for more linguistic detail. Leopardi’s 1818 “To Italy” personifies Italy in similar terms, despite the 300 years of distance between Leopardi’s Italy and Machiavelli’s: “And this, the bottom:/ that chains have imprisoned both arms,/ yes, with parted hair unshrouded,/ she sits on the ground neglected and inconsolable;/ hiding her face/ between her knees, she cries.” [“E questo e’ peggio,/ che di catene ha carche ambe le braccia;/ sì che sparte le chiome e senza velo/ seide in terra negletta e sconsolata,/ nascondendo la faccia/ tra le ginocchia, e piange.” Leopardi xx, my translation]. Shame, debasement, and the threat of dissolution or shattering (the parted and uncovered hair, recalling Machiavelli’s use of “taglie,” a term for the chopping block, in his own description of a feminized Italy) are all present in this presentation of Italy as ravaged maiden.

³¹ Snediker makes this temporal claim several times: at one point, he attributes Jack Spicer’s interest in Billy the Kid to the poet’s “fascination with a specifically non-chronological simultaneity” (151). Later, Snediker describes the potential richness of Billy’s “lyric personhood” as “a non-chronological capaciousness” (158).

³² Sharon Cameron, *Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981), 22-23.

³³ Coviello differentiates between identity and identification, arguing that the former is more limiting because more easily characterizable as a stable “subject position,” while the latter idea of identification(s) instead refers to “a complicated, never entirely voluntary kind of self-nomination. . . keep[ing] open and alive the question of any person’s *relation* to the range of available. . . descriptions” (*Intimacy* 11). Although Coviello does not often attend to genre as such in *Intimacy in America*, his finely-detailed close readings highlight an attention to form that Coviello sees as “a corrective to the reductive tendencies that any stridently contextualizing textual interpretation risks” (13). Coviello’s commitment to the multiple possibilities of relation pursued through formal attentiveness highlights the rhizomatic potential of explorations attending to style, genre, and other formal considerations. Snediker too seeks to harness a productive openness of character in his presentation of the lyric person and an emphasis on “personhood” over subjectivity: “My theoretical preference for persons over subjects extends from questions of how personhood. . . might be characterized, removed from the columbarium of subjectivity” (3).

³⁴ As the field of temporality studies has grown, many scholars have taken up issues of form, temporal progression (or the refusal of same), and meaning-making. Early, foundational texts arguing for a connection between temporal progress and narrative include Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* and Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984-1988). For an account of the affiliative potential of non-chronological understandings of time, see Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke UP, 2010). For an account of historical “desire” as a way to organize collective identity (in this case, lesbian and gay male identity), see Christopher Nealon, *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion before Stonewall* (Durham: Duke UP, 2001).

³⁵ Early in the Italian portion of *Fireside Travels*, Lowell writes, “the name of Eternal City fits Rome also, because time is of no account in it. The Roman always waits as if he could afford it amply, and the slow centuries move quite fast enough for him. Time is to other races the field of task-master, which they must painfully till; but to the Roman it is an entailed estate, which he enjoys and will transmit” (156-57) That

Lowell is jealous of this approach to time becomes clear in subsequent pages: “We beat him [the Roman] in many things, but in the impregnable fastness of his great rich nature he defies us” (157). Lowell again has recourse to a comparison (we beat the Roman, but he yet defies us), and suggests as well that this “wealth of time” confers a particular character upon the Roman—one associated with wealth, aristocratic distance, and an unhurried cultural richness—against which Lowell posits “we poor fools of time” (ibid). In this battle for temporal remove, the Roman wins.

³⁶ Julia Ward Howe, *From the Oak to the Olive: A Plain Record of a Pleasant Journey* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1868).

³⁷ Probably, Howe meant to use the Latin phrase “egomet ipse,” meaning “I myself.” That is, Howe is making a distinction between the “vague” first-person plural “we” and the “I myself” perspective she claims to avoid in the travelogue.

³⁸ Discussing a museum visit, Howe’s complains, “of the pictures it is little useful to speak. Your description enables no one to see them, and the narration of the feelings they excite. . . is as likely to be tedious as interesting to those who cultivate feelings of their own” (61). Since both guidebooks and travelogues often contained rapturous descriptions of art works, this objection is barely veiled criticism of typical travel-text content.

³⁹ Howe’s pronoun position can be seen as a direct rejoinder to the guidebook’s famously impersonal approach. As Allen glosses, guidebooks depended on a kind of stylistic distance, enabled by pronouns, for authority. “The first person singular was almost entirely absent from the Baedeker text which had completely replaced individual experience with collectively verifiable information, a much more marketable commodity” (221).

⁴⁰ In the only published study of *From the Oak to the Olive*, Mary Suzanne Schriber explores the preface to demonstrate how Howe differentiated her literary method from those of other writers, who tended to highlight the immediacy and “accuracy” of their impressions in the moment. This is a means to generate authority for the narrative, a move Schriber argues is important for a female author of a travel narrative (Schriber, “Julia Ward Howe and the Travel Book” *The New England Quarterly* 62.2 [1989], 270-71); Schriber is less concerned to document the failures of Howe’s prefatory claims than to speculate on why they appear in the first place.

⁴¹ The connection between temporal ordering and religious belief an important subtext of Franchot’s *Roads to Rome*. Describing the U.S. Protestant press, Franchot writes, “combined with Scripture into a single progressive sacred text, *History* as a conventional term of antebellum Protestant periodical prose enjoyed the redemptive power of a language close to ‘nature’” (11). Franchot here describes a conflation of religious outlook with a properly progressive sense of history that is further naturalized in the body of American Protestant writing as “divorced from the contaminations of culture” (11). Later, Franchot points again to this historical/religious temporal awareness, claiming that “increasing contact with Catholic Europe on the part of monied New Englanders complicated the construction of a coherent historical account of national development” (16).

⁴² The passage includes such words and phrases as “sacred,” “devotion,” “covet,” “supreme recognition,” “true ministers.” Howe also includes a description of the artist that seems to mirror descriptions of Jesus’s early moments or the vows of a religious esthete: “He who has it [a gift for art] weds his profession, leaves father and mother, and goes where his slowly unfolding destiny seems to call him” (62). It is difficult to understand why Howe employs such language to describe the artist’s renunciation of earthly things, given her overall disapproval of those pursuits. Perhaps she is poking fun at Catholic traditions of renunciation? It is unclear what the metaphoric structure is doing here for Howe’s larger claims about art.

⁴³ Howe’s deeply national rejection of art as a motivation for emigration displays her relative ignorance of the art actually being produced by American artists in Rome. Sculptors such as Harriet Hosmer, Edmonia Lewis, William Whetmore Story, and Hiram Powers often casted busts of American figures and sculptures of American scenes or historical figures that portrayed distinctly American values. Indeed, one might respond to Howe’s screed against art by calling into question her stated commitment to “practical experimentation; and speculative and theoretical liberty,” those ultimate American freedoms which many

people understood American sculptors in Rome to be exercising in the service of artistic education and national celebration. Equally ignorant is Howe's dismissive comment that Italian art commemorates "something, no one knows what." The fact that Howe does not know what or whom is being commemorated in any given painting or sculpture does not preclude the fact that Italians—and other travelers with different relationships to Catholicism—very well might know the symbolic or religious references of a work.

⁴⁴ Other poems from *Passion-flowers* that celebrate historical rupture, cultural excess, and the simultaneity of the Italian past and present include "Rome," a virtuoso performance of 414 lines, the ethically-charged "From Newport to Rome, 1848," and "The City of My Love." For a close reading of various of *Passion-flowers*'s Italian lyrics, see Leonardo Buonomo, "Julia Ward Howe's 'Italian' Poems in *Passion Flowers*," *Annali di Ca' Foscari: Rivista della Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere dell'Università di Venezia* 30 (1991): 27-35). Buonomo also explores Tuckerman's *Italian Sketch Book* in the same journal: "The Discipline of Travel: Henry T. Tuckerman's *The Italian Sketch Book*" *Annali di Ca' Foscari* 32 (1993): 47-55. Buonomo is the only Italian-Americanist scholar I know of to explore both Howe and Tuckerman in any sustained way.

⁴⁵ The chapel to which Howe's title refers is dedicated to a young Catholic saint, martyred for her refusal of an arranged marriage to a Roman despot. It is thus the perfect spot for an ardent supporter of women's rights to snatch a private moment of communion. Coincidentally, in 1922 the Santa Susanna Church became the official chapel for American Roman Catholics traveling to Rome. ("Our Unique History," <santasusanna.org>).

⁴⁶ I am certainly not arguing for gender identity as a non-rigid or non-ideological construction. However, I am suggesting that, for Lowell, participating with Italian men over a series of robust countryside adventures becomes a way to escape national affiliation in favor of masculine connectivity.

⁴⁷ Obviously, the assertive and productive version of masculinity Lowell has been developing is complicated by the description of Italian hands as "delicate," but I would argue that, in this particular rhetorical arrangement, "passion" and "European fire" (201) maintain the association of masculinity and vigor undermined by the appeal to delicacy.

⁴⁸ Lowell's historical reputation often rests on his abolitionist prose and poetry, much of it from the 1840s. Chief provider of editorial content for the *Pennsylvania Freeman* and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* for much of that decade, Lowell's nationalism can be understood in much the same way I have been articulating his travel position: deeply invested in social observation and analysis, Lowell often took an intentionally iconoclastic position on various American investments, including the U.S. invasion of Mexico (see 1848's *The Bigelow Papers*) and the aggressive literary nationalism of his era (see 1848's *A Fable for Critics*). Thus, Lowell's positions with regard to contemporary American ethical failures (or concerns about those to come), and his expressions of sympathy for an often dismissed Italian population, are in keeping with his general philosophical outlook and the critical nationalism Lowell was unafraid to engage in.

⁴⁹ Cultural reflection—and any resulting political action—of this type was a legible American value, textually inaugurated in the Declaration of Independence: "when a long train of abuses and usurpations. . . evinces a design to reduce [men] under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government" (*The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson [New York: Penguin Group, 1975], 236. While many authors express compassion for the Italian political plight (recall the sympathetic characterizations of Tuckerman or Cooper with which I began this chapter), few suggest that Italians are cognizant of this plight or that they might have active, even violent, plans for revolution; indeed, association of Italian men with feminized weakness and an avoidance of military action was commonplace. See Casillo's *The Empire of Stereotypes*. In a moment like this, wherein Lowell recasts his Italian guides as self-aware enough to recognize hypocrisy and nourish revenge fantasies, we can see the radical potential of Lowell's philosophical investments in imaginative vigor and human attachment.

⁵⁰ Information and historical context from "Masaccio," from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* at <newadvent.org>. My emphasis.

⁵¹ According to Theodor Adorno, “what we mean by lyric. . . has within it, in its ‘purest’ form, the quality of break or rupture” (Adorno, “Lyric Poetry and Society” *Telos* 20 [1974]: 59).

⁵² *Road to Rome* argues that anti-Catholic panic was one of the chief social conflicts of antebellum America prior to the explosion of abolitionist debate and contentions over the institution of slavery. Franchot claims that the philosophical and cultural distinctions indexed by anti-Catholic sentiment were productive for Americans: “anti-Catholicism operated as an imaginative category of discourse through which antebellum American writers of popular and elite fictional and historical texts indirectly voiced the tensions and limitations of mainstream Protestant culture” [xvii]. In this context, then, the repeated disavowals of Catholic ritual *and* the strong personal effect of ritualized moments (the bells’s call for Lowell, the Catholic chapel for Howe) both make historical sense.

⁵³ Even a brief survey of *Under the Willows* indicates the social and political thrust of the collection. Several poems chronicle stages of personal and cultural grief alongside a desire to escape history, including “The First Snow-Fall” and “New Years Eve 1850”; others engage with a range of locations and cultural references: “Dara” reveals Lowell’s knowledge of Middle-Eastern history and language; “Godminster Chimes” takes up the relation between memory and religion; “An Invitation” offers an elegiac song of Europe: “Not ours the Old World’s/ good,/ The Old World’s ill, thank God, not ours” (301), while the subsequent “The Nomads” celebrates a non-Anglo “picnic life.”

⁵⁴ Henry Tuckerman, *Rambles and Reveries* (New York: James P. Giffing, 1841), 364, 371. Other texts that share a focus on location, aesthetics, and what we would now consider “cultural studies” include *America and her Commentators*, whose object is “to present a general view of the traits and transitions of our country, as recorded at different periods by writers of various nationalities; and to afford those desirous of authentic information. . . a guide to the sources thereof” (Tuckerman, *America and her Commentators. With a Critical Sketch of Travel in the United States* [New York: Charles Scribner, 1864], preface) and *Mental Portraits: or, Studies of Character* (London: Richard Bentley, 1853) an early aesthetic analysis that combined the study of individual character with the study of culture. Before moving on to analyses of American authors Hawthorne and Irving as well as Scottish artists Sir David Wilkie and Thomas Campbell, Tuckerman asserts that, “The more we see of the world, the more it becomes a ‘gallery of pictures;’ and it is an interesting study to compare features, trace lineages, and realize how a certain form of character is affected by circumstances as it is this inevitably reproduced” (vi). Tuckerman, then, appears to have had a career-long interest in the intersections of individual and collective histories and a particular investment in multi-cultural perspectives.

⁵⁵ What Tuckerman means by “race” is, I think, more inclusive than is typical for his time: he does not mean that the student becomes a better ally of Americans or Italians as a distinct racial category, but seems to imply instead that his aesthetic admirer becomes a closer ally to the whole race of “humanity” as a result of his aesthetic lessons. Thus, the admirer’s new ability to “love in humanity. . . her capacity of exalted effort.”

⁵⁶ It is worth noting that Tuckerman’s arguments for art’s universal character are organized around art that is indisputably Western in its representational character, its mythological or spiritual investments, and its linguistic traditions. Although not intended as an excuse for this limitation in the artistic archive, I would point out that travel to what Americans termed “the Far East” was an extremely difficult undertaking in the wild and wooly travel days of the early 1830s. Authors like Emerson or Thoreau, who did engage with more Asiatic or Middle-Eastern philosophical and religious tradition, did so through texts, not through sustained travel through those regions. For more on American Transcendentalism and the authors and philosophies of Asia (broadly conceived), see Wai-chee Dimock’s “Global Civic Society: Thoreau on Three Continents” and “World Religions: Emerson, Hafiz, Christianity, Islam,” chapters 1 and 2 of *Through Other Continents* (2006).

⁵⁷ Brooks defines plot (as opposed to narrative itself) as “the principle of interconnectedness and intention which we cannot do without in moving through the discrete elements. . . of a narrative.” The most important element of the plot here, what “allow[s] us to construct a whole” (*Reading*, 5) out of the

observations of *Isabel*, is the development of Isabel and the Count's knowledge—of aesthetics, politics, social structures—as the companions travel Sicily.

⁵⁸ The Count's nearly simultaneous descriptions of the 1820 revolutions and the 1286 Sicilian Vespers, a successful populist revolution against the French rulers of the time, suggests the character of chronological understanding in Italy, which often works by folding over large swaths of time so that distant but similar events (two Southern uprisings against despotic French rulers) can be more easily viewed as a useable history of revolt. Almost 600 years of imperial rule are erased by the re-telling of these events, so that the 1820 revolution seems like an inevitable, and temporally contiguous, extension of the populist rage of the Sicilian Vespers.

⁵⁹ On an excursion to a small town on the island of Sardinia, for example, Howe's description of the locals is markedly different from Tuckerman's. Howe describes "two forlorn women, with a tambourine and without costume, [who] dance a joyless *tarantella*, which cost us a franc" (107). There is no detail to set these women apart from any others, and Howe does not demonstrate any willingness to imagine that such women have personalities, pleasures, or even a recognizable distinctiveness from any other forlorn Italian beggar.

⁶⁰ An important feature of the lyric is the form's dependence upon personal emotion or perception: "any fairly short poem expressing the personal mood, feelings, or meditation of a single speaker" (Chris Baldick, "lyric," *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* 3rd ed. [Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008], accessed 14 July 2014, www.oxfordreference.com); "any fairly short poem, uttered by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind of a process of perception, thought, or feeling" (M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 8th ed. [Boston: Thomas/Wadsworth, 2005], 153); "it is for this kind of sight, which we call insight, and not for any faculty of observation or description, that we value the poet" (James Russell Lowell, "The Function of the Poet," *Literary Criticism: Pope to Croce* eds. Gay Wilson Allen and Harry Hyden Clark [Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1968], 420). Each of these preliminary definitions highlights the individuality of the lyric speaker, an individuality valued as such. One distinction between the perspectival particularity of lyrics and of narrative is the addressee: in the definitions of poetry offered here, the speaker is presented as operating in a kind of referential vacuum—whether or not an outside auditor exists, the lyric speaker is concerned with voicing her own thoughts for her own benefit. By contrast, the narrator of a travelogue has a very specific audience in mind, one she addresses with a specific didactic goal.

⁶¹ The collection *Poems* contains numerous poems about Italian art, people, and culture in addition to retellings of medieval history ("Tasso to Leonora," "Victorine," "Surrey to Geraldine"), celebrations of American landscapes ("The Willow," "Newport Beach," "Sleepy Hollow," "To an Elm"), aesthetic ruminations and studies of historical figures from Byron to Washington to Webster.

⁶² Quoted in *The Classical Tradition*, eds. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and Salvatore Settis (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2010), 56.

⁶³ Tim Dean argues for the productive potential of erotic attachment to aesthetic objects as well as human beings. For Dean, recognition of desire's distance from the interpersonal is essential for understanding the relational potential of humans to art objects: "It might be possible to develop some of our most intense and satisfying relations within realms of experience other than the interpersonal." (Dean, *Beyond Sexuality* [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000], 274). Even more radically, attention to Freud's theories of sublimation allows us to grasp how "our relations to art, just as much as interpersonal relations, may count as in some sense sexual. . . . human connections with visual and verbal artifacts represent a primary rather than secondary form of relationality" (277).

⁶⁴ Tuckerman's 1846 *Thoughts on the Poets* includes commentary on, among others, Petrarch, Pope, Alfieri, Shelley, Byron, "Miss Barrett," Moore, Tennyson, and Bryant. *Characteristics of Literature* (1849), explores the literary contributions of Channing, Swift, William Roscoe, Charles Lamb, Burke, and others. Along with Americans like George Washington and Daniel Boone, and Charles Brockden Brown; *Essays, Biographical and Critical* (1856) contains entries on Lord Chesterfield, Jacques Lafitte, Chateaubriand, Daniel de Foe, and many other European luminaries. As may be obvious from even this

relatively brief list, Tuckerman was a major figure in antebellum American criticism and a committed literary cosmopolite.

⁶⁵ As Tuckerman himself glosses in *Essays*, “When [Napoleon] crossed the Alps, he carried new principles into the heart of Italy; a thousand time-hallowed abuses vanished. . . feudalism gave way, *for the time, to progress*; entails, titles, sacerdotal tyranny, monopolies, absurd laws, and many other social evils, disappeared, or were essentially mitigated; petty states were merged into one confederacy; the palsied arm of industry was active in effecting local improvements of vast public utility. . . in a word, a fresh and infinitely higher and more productive life, civic, social, and individual, followed the Italian campaigns” (433, my emphasis). Many of the “social evils” Tuckerman decries remain problems in Italy to this day (monopolies and the tyranny of economic collectivities in particular), while the attempt to re-merge “petty states” into “one confederacy” would become one of the organizing desires of the Italian unification movement. We could certainly see Tuckerman’s list here as overly simplified in its understanding of progress as fixed and absolute, but it is not unreasonable to imagine that the consistent development of Napoleon’s social and economic freedoms over the course of the nineteenth century would have resulted in a very different modern Italy.

⁶⁶ The specifics of the various political skirmishes over constitutions, individual rights, and imperial consistency are too convoluted to cover in detail here. Important background for the Count’s particular Sicilian story of revolution is that fact that Naples had voted to put the liberal Spanish constitution into effect there. Sicilians revolting against their foreign administration were much tempted by this constitution, enough to contemplate an alliance between fiercely independent Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples. For more information, see Duggan, pp. 73-89 or David, pp. 137-155.

⁶⁷ The distinctive characterological differences between Northern and Southern revolutionaries would hold across the many conspiracies, uprisings, and developments in nineteenth-century Italian independence struggles. The comparatively wealthy and industrial North tended to develop intellectuals and writers who acted mostly in institutional settings, while poverty stricken and under-educated Southern Italians tended toward armed action.

⁶⁸ Silvio Pellico, *Le Mie Prigioni e Poesie Scelte: Edizione Consentita dall’Editore Proprietario* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1885). All original Italian citations are from this edition; original Italian and page number included in footnotes.

⁶⁹ For almost the entire period covered in this chapter (roughly 1820-1868), Italy existed as a symbolic nation only: there was no politically active, internationally recognized body governing a nation named Italy; there was no sustained history of such a politically unified nation; there was only, as we shall see in coming pages, a conception among some groups that Italy was a distinct location. There was only the dream of a unified Italy voiced by artists and philosophers from before Machiavelli’s time. “Italy” was thus the marker of a purely imagined nation, a signifier without an extant signified.

⁷⁰ The intimacy of their prison experiences carried over into the American lives of several prominent Italian revolutionaries. One of the imprisoned, Dr. E. Felice Foresti, came to New York City and was hired as Italian professor at both Columbia and New York University. Dennis Berthold briefly discusses the twenty “Martyrs of the Spielberg” who arrived in America to live out their post-prison lives in exile, including Foresti and Maroncelli. The cultural generosity and “endurance” many saw in these exiles helped draw Americans to the Italian independence cause, claims Berthold, as the men “legitimated rebellion through moderation” (*American Risorgimento*, 42-43). Maroncelli became another recognizable local figure in New York’s cosmopolitan literary scene. In the introduction to a widely reprinted American edition of *My Prisons*, Epes Sargent writes, “In New York I saw much of Maroncelli. I could well understand why Pellico should call him his ‘much-loved Piero;’ for Piero was one to inspire, not only love, but respect” (Pellico, *My Prisons* ed. Epes Sargent [Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1868], vii). Pellico, for his part, remained in Italy until his death in 1854. For discussion of Pellico’s life after prison, his withdrawal from Italian political life, an analysis of his psychological state, and a description of his funeral procession, see Tuckerman’s “Silvio Pellico: The Italian Martyr,” *Essays, Biographical and Critical*, pp. 428-440.

⁷¹ In a phrase deleted from the final document, Jefferson claims that the King's "long train" of impositions and abuses were "begun at a distinguished period;" later sentences offer an argument about the progressive development of English "tyranny": "the history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of REPEATED injuries and usurpations," one which has benefitted from "the patient sufferance of the colonies" a condition no longer historically sustainable: "such now is the necessity which constrains them to ALTER their former system of government" (*Jefferson*, 236). In practice, Jefferson is making a coherent historical argument here: many abuses, sustained consistently over time, created the conditions of tyranny which the colonies can no longer countenance, hence their development into a revolutionary force. The logic here is linear: first this, then more of the same, then a dramatic intervention attributable to the desire to change the course of political reality.

⁷² Although more recognizable as a musical term, I do not use the term "lyrics" when discussing Howe's verbal contribution to "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in order to avoid terminological confusion.

⁷³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a "contemner" as "a dispiser, scorner." Scorn in particular is associated with a kind of ordered judgment, a looking-down-upon. "Contemner," *Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. Accessed 20 March, 2013.

⁷⁴ See note 22.

⁷⁵ Machiavelli. *Il Principe*, 99. Machiavelli goes on to expound a vision of Italian military masculinity that bears much resemblance to what we have already seen in Anglophone eighteenth- and nineteenth-century descriptions of Italian masculinity: "in tante rivoluzioni d'Italia, e in tanti maneggi di guerra, e' pare sempre che in quelle la virtù militare sia spenta" ["in so many of Italy's revolutions, and so many of the operations of war, it seems always that military might is gone," *Il Principe* 100].

⁷⁶ Cooper's *Gleanings in Europe: Italy* highlights the difficulty of unification for the series of regions referred to as Italy, a problem exacerbated by the presence of many foreign leaders and a lack of cultural and governmental consistency: "The laws and customs of the Italian countries have so many minute points of difference, that the wishes of some of the patriots of this region point towards a Confederated Republic. . . . In the absence of great political events, to weaken the authority of the present governments, education in the surest process, though a slow one. In no cases, should the people of a country confide in foreigners for the attainment of their political ends" (299). Cooper points neatly to the underlying impediments for Italian unification: not only are regional traditions vastly different, but there is no overarching domestic structure within which to initiate negotiations about legal and traditional differences among an educated Italian population.

⁷⁷ Certainly some of the text's resemblance to unconnected lyric moments is a result of its composition and publication history. Written in secret because of its controversial portrayal of gender and its occasionally frank sexual tone, Howe's deeply poetic narrative lay, in fragments, among her papers for more than a century until its discovery by scholar Gary Williams, who read and assembled the narrative into a reasonably coherent package for publication. For more details about Howe's text, its discovery by Williams, and the process of preparing the text for publication, see the introduction (Julia Ward Howe, *The Hermaphrodite*, ed. Gary Williams [Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2004], ix-xliv).

⁷⁸ In this case, singularity is implied by the use of the demonstrative "a," a grammatical usage that indicates specificity of referent without linking that specificity directly to one or another recognizable noun. Whereas "the world" would seem to refer to a single, broadly understandable place recognizable to many, "a world" suggests a series of separate, individuated reference points; that is, the determiner here suggests a paradoxically singular multiplicity of "worlds."

Chapter 2: "I Regret to Learn You Are Enjoying a Civil War at Home"

¹ Although the military successes in Naples and Sicily throughout 1860 and 1861 were perhaps Garibaldi's most famous campaigns, he would go on to re-enter the Papal States and battle Austrian forces across Italy in 1862 and 1864, respectively. By 1861, the soldier-hero had already led various successful revolutionary campaigns in South America, and had been at the head, with Giuseppe Mazzini,

of the short-lived Roman Republic of 1848-49. See Duggan, Gilmore, Riall, on Risorgimento history; see Riall, Viotti, Ridley, Mack Smith, and Garibaldi for details about the life and times of Garibaldi.

² In of the few scholarly treatments of the attempted recruitment of Garibaldi, Alduino draws upon private letters between Italian ex-patriot Joseph Artoni and Henry Shelton Sanford (the U.S. minister to Belgium who was charged with the task of recruiting Garibaldi). Even with this unusual trove of direct correspondence about Garibaldi, the story is quite vague: eventually, “for reasons that remain unclear, [Garibaldi] reversed course and politely declined Artoni’s invitation” (*Sons of Garibaldi*, 35).

³ If we take seriously the definitions of “aesthetic” that refer to the imaginative quality of the “not-yet-real” or “fantasy” (see Castiglia and Castronovo, Looby and Weinstein), we can see that the appeal of the imaginary Lincoln-Garibaldi intimacy has an aesthetic or mythological character as well as a more political-historical one. The continued circulation of this story in historical accounts, encyclopedias, and cultural histories, despite the negligible historical record for Lincoln’s offer and the obscurity surrounding the actual communications and negotiations, suggests that the imaginative power of this connection far outstrips the historical evidence.

⁴ Recent studies of modern celebrity culture include *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Edited by Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Eric Eisner, *Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity* (New York: Palgrave, 2009); Thomas N. Baker, *Sentiment and Celebrity: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Trials of Literary Fame* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999). Of particular use in developing a theoretical account of the celebrity metaphor has been Daniel Herwitz’s *The Star as Icon: Celebrity in the Age of Mass Consumption* (New York: Columbia UP, 2008).

⁵ Conceptions of “fame” have depended on the juxtaposition between singular individual and collective will since at least Leo Braudy’s landmark history of fame. In an early and especially clear formulation, Braudy claims, “Fame allows the aspirant to stand out from the crowd, but with the crowd’s approval; in its turn, the audience picks out its own dear individuality in the qualities of its heroes” (Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown* [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986], 6).

⁶ Repetition was also an important feature of war-time experiences for both participants and observers. As Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in 1861, “When any startling piece of war-news comes, it keeps repeating itself in our minds in spite of all we can do. The same trains of thought go tramping round in a circle through the brain, like the supernumeraries that make up the grand army of a stage-show.” Quoting this newspaper rumination, Eliza Richards points to the use of metaphor (the trope of the “grand army tramp in a circle”) to unify readers of newspaper news with those performing news-worthy events (“Correspondent Lines: Poetry, Journalism, and the U.S. Civil War” *ESQ* 54. 1-4 [2008], 146).

⁷ Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), 15.

⁸ David Haven Blake, *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity* (Yale UP, 2006), 57.

⁹ Leo Braudy identifies a kind of historical allure as one of the more fascinating elements of nineteenth-century celebrity: “we see the early nineteenth-century fascination with a kind of visual glamour that takes its material from surfaces only to hint at what lies behind and beyond them” (*Frenzy*, 406). In part, the insider imperative of the dispatches was authorized by the desire to overcome the very distance Braudy theorizes. Eric Eisner points to a similar dynamic, although he casts it as a juxtaposition of public and private selves instead of one between personal surface and depth. As Eisner describes, “at once individual and collective, the feelings incited by celebrity are properly neither public nor private, but help organize a new kind of public space in which deeply private meanings find display” (*Poetry and Literary Celebrity*, 5). Indeed, what is the story being presented by the present study if not one of private feelings finding meaningful public expression? Italy is a particularly powerful conduit for those sorts of negotiations.

¹⁰ Herwitz claims that the “star icon” works in the same way, embodying and transcending individual suffering to a mass public of observers: “the public misrecognizes itself. . . falling into the fantasy that its own lives are reflected in her halo, and its suffering is also, like hers, referred to beauty, made beautiful, redeemed” (*Icon*, 28).

¹¹ Margaret Fuller, the best informed and most prepared of all this chapter's featured correspondents, was occasionally unable to manage the details and revelations she witnessed with much clarity for her American readers. Discussing the temporary abdication of Pope Pius IX in December of 1848, Fuller writes, "To protest that all his promises to Rome were null and void, when he thought himself in safety to choose a commission for governing in his absence, composed of men of princely blood, but as to character so null that everybody laughed and said he chose those who could best be spared if they were killed (but they all ran away directly;), when Rome was thus left without any Government. . . these are the acts either of a fool or a foe" (*SGD*, 244). Although this sentence certainly refers to real historical actors (Fuller is talking about Pope Pius IX's 1848 abdication of Rome), the action being described is difficult to parse, as are the actors and even the value scale. Though perhaps more encouraging to imagine Pius IX as political fool than as powerful foe, Fuller seems undecided.

¹² Duggan, 168. See in particular chapter 8, "Revolution 1846-49."

¹³ The Kingdom of Sardinia, encompassing the region of Piedmont and the island of Sardinia, was ruled by Charles Albert of the House of Savoy; the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Sicily and Naples, then representing the entire Southern area of Italy) was under the control of the violent Bourbon king Ferdinand II, who worked closely with the Austrian Hapsburgs, holders of most of the remaining Italian regions. The central-peninsular Papal States were under the spiritual and temporal dominion of Pope Pius IX, closely aligned with the Austrian and French rulers of Italy's surrounding regions.

¹⁴ See Duggan, Gilmore, Riall for more detail on the complex social history of Italian unification.

¹⁵ Again, the Italian histories repeatedly referenced in this chapter are of use here. Also worth noting is the continued element of "civil war" following Italy's unification. Often referred to as the "Italian war on brigandage," Northern Italian soldiers were repeatedly deployed to the Southern regions to carry out raids and battles against Southern civilian populations in the name of eradicating banditry. One particularly prominent historical example is the 1861 attack on the Sicilian town of Pontelandolfo carried out by Piedmontese troops. Duggan estimates the initial death toll at 400 citizens (223). See Duggan, p. 220-228; Dickie, *Darkest Italy*, especially chapter 1: "A Word at War: The Italian Army and Brigandage" (25-51). Riall, *Under the Volcano: Revolution in a Sicilian Town* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013).

¹⁶ "Historical Actors," in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Edited by Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 135.

¹⁷ For a study that theorizes explicitly the connection between lyric modes of revelatory address and the operations of mass-mediated celebrity, see Eric Eisner's *Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity*. Eisner's description of "lyric intimacy" as a relational mode that mediates between public and private bears certain resemblance to other theories of authorial charisma: "Lyric intimacy then describes a zone of unstable contact. . . at once individual and social" (18).

¹⁸ In her full-length study of Garibaldi and the emergence of an international mass-market for celebrity heroes, Lucy Riall brings together, history, charisma, and operations of power in order to argue that Garibaldi's charismatic celebrity offered a new, modern model of fame and cultural influence. "What makes a study of Garibaldi especially interesting and important is that, unlike most successful or charismatic leaders. . . he was not (or was hardly ever) in power. His success allows us to examine the process, generally neglected by scholars of both charismatic leadership and modern political symbolism, whereby radical movements invent new rituals and symbols, and use these both to delegitimize established authority and to make believable their claim to be the genuine governing elite" (*Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* [New Haven: Yale UP], 15). Riall's theorization of political power (or its lack) and the existence of charisma and international reputation are useful for imagining Italy as well as that nation's powerful human actors—Italy too would spend much of the latter nineteenth and early twentieth century attempting to develop economic and political power equal to (or at least worthy of) the degree of international and aesthetic attention it received from American and European admirers.

¹⁹ Describing Garibaldi as having "exceptional personal allure," Riall's narration fleetingly adopts the tone of his time: "He is a virile 'white savage' with a gentlemanly countenance, and it is perhaps this combination of strength and mildness, a combination so popular in the romantic hero, that best explains

his immediate physical attraction” (*Garibaldi*, 46). Identifying Garibaldi as a distinctly Romantic national hero, Riall’s argument connects Garibaldi’s personal characteristics to popular aesthetic philosophy, suggesting the depth of interaction between reality and fantasy that structured understandings of the Italian Risorgimento.

²⁰ Fuller, “*These Sad but Glorious Days*”: *Dispatches from Europe, 1846-1850*, 304. Excerpted from Dispatch 33 of “Things and Thought in Europe” series. *New York Tribune* 11 August 1849. This collection retains, when possible, the dates included on the letters themselves while also noting the date of American publication. Unless there is an historical reason to note a letter’s original date (such as those dated during the flight of the Pope, the siege of Rome, the declaration of the Republic, etc.), I will note the date of American publication. Although the dispatches are titled in Reynolds’s and Blasco’s edition, these titles have been created by the editors and are generally unused in this analysis.

²¹ Henry Adams, *The Letters of Henry Adams vol. I: 1858-1868*. Edited by J.C. Levenson et al (Cambridge: the Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1982), 168. Excerpted from letter “Palermo 9 June 1860.

²² There have been several iterations of *Vanity Fair*, including a British version (1868-1914) and three distinct American magazines of the same title; one of these, Conde Nast’s 1913-1936 *Vanity Fair*, has been revived and is currently available for subscription. This chapter looks at materials from the original *Vanity Fair*, published in the United States between 1859-1863, edited by Henry Louis Stephens and William Allen Stephens.

²³ McArone, “Affairs in Italy,” *Vanity Fair* 16 March 1861.

²⁴ Decades, if not centuries, of Italian political writing have taken up what Italians often refer to as “the Southern Question” (or, “la questione meridionale”). While the literature dealing with the North-South distinction in Italy is quite vast, useful studies of the problem include Lucy Riall, *Sicily and the Unification of Italy* (Clarendon Press, 1998), John Dickie, *Darkest Italy*, Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius*, and Roy Palmer Domenico, *The Regions of Italy: a reference guide to History and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002).

²⁵ Indeed, both the humor and the utility of the dispatches depend upon readerly awareness of the political and cultural matters at hand; as Alison Olson argues, “humor, like gossip, works best when audiences are familiar with its subject. People do not laugh very hard, if they laugh at all, at a subject they do not know or an episode they have never heard of” (Olson, “Political Humor, Deference, and the American Revolution” *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 3.2 [2005], 366). Given Olson’s argument that both the target and the pleasure of political humor depended upon knowledge, McArone’s detailed and intentionally confusing accounts suggest a very high level of American awareness of Italian historical particulars.

²⁶ The column of 16 February 1861 contains a long section of U.S. boxing slang, as the correspondent details an altercation with King Frances II of the Two Sicilies; later, McArone confides to readers from Rome that “the officers of the French army, and the ward politicians, are banded together to overthrow my influence” (Affairs In Italy: From Our Own Correspondent” 30 March 1861. *Vanity Fair*).

²⁷ In *Self-Exposure* Charles L. Ponce de Leon claims that a mass-mediated culture of celebrity “is geared toward the exposure of the ‘real selves’ that are presumed to lie behind [] images” (Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940* [Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2002], 5). Likewise, both Eric Eisner, in *Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity*, and David Haven Blake, in *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity*, attend to the ways celebrity culture—as promulgated by newspaper columns and other publicity-generating texts such as reviews and gossip reports—depended on interactions between famous individuals and a mass audience “organized around the cultivation (and consumption) of personality” (*American Celebrity* 65). For Eisner, this is an affective (and affecting) relationship: his study of famous Romantic poets calls attention to “the intensity of the transferential relationship that develops between the public and the poet, the deep and complicated involvement of each in the emotional life of the other” (*Poetry and Literary Celebrity*, 23). While this depth is undoubtedly exacerbated by the confessional conventions of lyric poetry, I would argue that the intensity of Fuller’s relation to the Italian people

evidenced in her dispatches is no less powerfully organized around personal feeling than a Byronic lyric might be.

²⁸ Fuller's tragic drowning death alongside her Italian-nobleman husband and their child is one of American literature's most melancholy legends. Shipwrecked a few miles from New York's Fire Island, Fuller and her family drowned in an overnight storm; Fuller refused to leave the wreck without her husband, and their young son, whom she eventually agreed to send along with the escaping crew, did not make it alive to shore. In 1852, Fuller's friends Emerson, Channing, and Clarke curated her private letters and collected their own memories into *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli* (Boston: Brown, Taggard & Chase, 1860). Since then, Fuller has been the subject of many biographies and historical treatments, in addition to the many works of literary criticism that take Fuller as their subject. Most recently, Megan Marshall's *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2013) has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Biography. See also Brigitte Bailey, *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* (Durham, NH: U of New Hampshire P, 2013); John Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), Meg McGavran Murray, *Margaret Fuller, Wandering Pilgrim* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 2008); Charles Capper et al. *Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic Crossings in a Revolutionary Age*. Indeed, Fuller biographies are a sort of cottage industry, supplemented by novelistic re-imaginings of her life; see April Banard, *Miss Fuller: A Novel* (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press, 2012) and Barbara Novak, *The Margaret-ghost: A Novel* (New York: George Braziller, 2003), which imagines a documentary after-life for Fuller facilitated by a mournful Henry David Thoreau.

²⁹ Colleen Boggs, "Margaret Fuller's American Translations" *American Literature* 76.1 (2004), 33. Boggs further claims that, in Fuller untimely death, "the United States lost its premier theorist of literary cosmopolitanism, who practiced translation as a viable social ethics" (32).

³⁰ Leslie E. Eckel, "Margaret Fuller's Conversational Journalism: New York, London, Rome" (*Arizona Quarterly* 63.2 (2007), 32.

³¹ Larry Reynolds, "Subjective Vision, Romantic History, and the Return of the 'Real': The Case of Margaret Fuller and the Roman Republic" *South Central Review* 21.1 (2004), 7.

³² See Reynolds, Eckel, Capper on Fuller's conversational pedagogical style.

³³ In barely decipherable sentences, Fuller claims Mazzini as "one of those who, disappointed in the outward results of their undertakings, can yet 'bate no jot of heart and hope,' but must, steer right onward,' for it was no superficial enthusiasms, no impatient energies, that impelled him, but an understanding of what must be the designs of Heaven awith regard to man, since God is Love, is Justice. He is the one who can live fervently but steadily, gently, every day, every hour, as well as on great occasions, by the light of a hope, for, with Schiller, he is sure that 'Those who live for their faith shall behold it living.'" (*SGD*, 99).

³⁴ In a later dispatch from 20 March 1849 (during which time the Roman Republic was a functioning, if besieged, government), Fuller writes, "in thinking of Mazzini, I always remember Petrarch's invocation of Renzi" (*SGD*, 262). Fuller herself gives no explanation or context for this comment, nor does she remind readers what she remembers about that invocation. This kind of intellectual showmanship is more distracting than informative; while it might well convey meaning for certain readers who remember the specific content of a letter written in the mid-thirteenth century, this description mainly demonstrates Fuller's impressive memory and intellectual reach. It is not even quite clear to the scholarly editors of *These Sad but Glorious Days* which passage Fuller might be referring to in Plutarch.

³⁵ The two were friends for some time, exchanging letters and meeting in person over the course of several years. For a brief but useful analysis of their epistolary exchanges, see Leona Rostenberg, "Mazzini to Margaret Fuller 1847-1849" *The American Historical Review* 47.1 (1947): 73-80.

³⁶ Fuller pregnancy and etc.

³⁷ See Reynolds, Capper, Boggs, Eckel for versions of this argument.

³⁸ William Merrill Decker offers the following description: "The author of political journalism, scholarly mono-graphs, biographies, novels, a multi-volume national history, a memoir of Tahiti under colonial rule, a lyric meditation on medieval France, poems, autobiography, and speculation in the line of

"scientific history," Adams never committed himself to a single major genre and his signal achievements are commonly perceived to divide between disciplinary camps" (Decker, "Authority and Alliance in the Letters of Henry Adams (review)" *Biography* 17.2 [1994], 194).

³⁹ The Harvard University Belknap Edition of Adams's letters runs for six volumes and covers the years 1858-1918. As the introduction to volume I announces, the collected letters "cover a period of momentous change in American and world history. . . . Although politics and manners—people in their public and private aspects—were Adams's main topics. . . he was an acute observer of secret diplomacy, business chicanery, the expansion of railroads, the waning of native cultures. He chronicled the rising profession of scholarship, the making of art collections, the breakdown of nineteenth-century assumptions about physics and economics and parliamentary democracy. He made it seem that nothing human was alien to him" (*The Letters of Henry Adams, vol. I: 1858-1868*. Xiii. Hereafter cited in text as *LHA*).

⁴⁰ The connection between immediacy, accuracy, and the perception of insider knowledge is the main focus of Ponce de Leon's journalistic history project. "A major theme of celebrity journalism is that. . . professional activities, and public appearances are unreliable. . . and must be supplemented with 'insider dope'. . . that is more accurate and thus revealing. Of course, this inside dope may not be real—it can be, in fact, yet another image—but its packaging as news gives it more authority" (*Self-Exposure*, 5).

⁴¹ Fuller does the same thing, complaining often of English news reports, especially those offered in the *London Times* (*SGD*, 91). The heated international rivalry between Americans and English in Italy is a subject for another study; hostility and even outright disgust for English tourists is certainly an undercurrent of many American reports. McArone also provides his own version of the newspaper-rivalry convention, boasting that "on my prompt action depended the safety of the army. . . of Italy. . . perhaps of the World," then deadpanning, "I do not refer to the newspaper of that name" ("The War in Italy: From Our Own Correspondent," 22 December 1860. *Vanity Fair*).

⁴² Sic. The word in Italian is spelled "Risorgimento." Adams, a careless speller and not a speaker of Italian, does not get it quite correct.

⁴³ Much of Adams's best writing about history either personal or collective acknowledges the dual character of life. In *The Education of Henry Adams*, Adams describes his "double nature": "Winter and summer, cold and heat, town and country, force and freedom, marked two modes of life and thought, balanced like lobes of the brain. . . . Winter and summer, town and country, law and liberty, were hostile" (*The Education of Henry Adams*. Ed. Ernest Samuels [Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1973], 7-9). Even this description manages to convey Adams's commitment to doubleness: in the first sentence, the two modes of life are "balanced" and suggest a harmony like that in a healthy brain; in the latter description, the two are hostile, at war with one another.

⁴⁴ Fuller's dispatches includes whole host of translated documents: an appeal from Mazzini to Pope Pius IX and a proposal for independence addressed to the King of the Two Sicilies (31 Dec. 1847); two letters from "the Provisional Government of Milan" one addressed to "the German Nation," the other to "Nations Subject to the Rule of the House of Austria" (19 April 1848). This latter is an attempt by Milan's provisional government to assert sovereignty and cultivate international relations with the Austrian populace. "From your lands have come three armies which have brought war into ours; your speech is spoken by those hostile bands who come to us with fire and sword; nevertheless we come to you as brothers. The war which we combat is not your war. . . you are only instruments in the hand of our foe" (219). In such an excerpt, we get closer to a representational "personality" for revolutionary Italy, presented through the periodical convention of the revelatory document. In place of an earnest lecture, the various voices of the translations invite an imaginative identification with a recognizable humanitarian collective. Instead of instructing Americans about the factual details that should underwrite their sympathy for Italy, addresses like that written to Austrian subjects (which most certainly did represent exclusive material for the *Tribune*) demonstrated the character of the revolution: personalized, measured, invested in cross-cultural sympathy.

⁴⁵ Brady claims that his project, a history of the meanings of fame, represents "an effort to understand what is general in the history of individual nature in Western culture by observing those individuals who

tried to stand out on their own and those who stand out for our eyes as well” (*Frenzy*, 17). This tension is especially useful for the famous observers of celebrity Italy; Adams and Fuller represent the former attempt (to intentionally “stand out on their own”) while Italy is here the figure who “stands out for [American] eyes as well.”

⁴⁶ The magazine, edited by Henry Louis and William Allen Stephens, was financed by Frank J. Thompson and included contributions from luminaries such as William Dean Howells,

⁴⁷ “Preface” *Vanity Fair* vol. 1, 1860, iii-iv. *Making of America Database*. umich.edu. Accessed 28 May 2014.

⁴⁸ Jan Rieger “Laughter and War in Berlin” *History Workshop Journal* 67.1 (2009), 27.

⁴⁹ Marc Silberman, “Bertolt Brecht, Politics, and Comedy” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 79.1 (2012), 172).

⁵⁰ Silberman goes on: “To accept the idea that the comedy genre is a ‘progressive’ form narrows the category of the dialectic to the conflict between historicity and topicality. Only the social formations that have been transcended or ‘over-come’ can be laughed at; that is, once they are no longer threatening” (“Brecht,” 177).

⁵¹ While “ambiguous” and “dialectical” are not synonyms, I align them here because, in the case of humor, they work in similar ways. Unable to decide between supporting the state or undermining it, uncharacterizable as either unilaterally subversive or at the service of hegemonic systems, political humor is dialectical to the degree that it registers ambiguity or even ambivalence about its targets *and* its audience.

⁵² “The War in Italy: From Our Own Correspondent.” 24 Nov. 1860. *Vanity Fair*. Accessed through *American Periodicals Series Online* 6 June 2014.

⁵³ “Affairs in Italy: From Our Own Correspondent” 16 February 1861. *Vanity Fair*.

⁵⁴ “Affairs in Italy: From Our Own Correspondent” 6 April 1861. *Vanity Fair*.

⁵⁵ Robert Grossman “Occupy This: Humor verses Reality” *Social Research* 79.1 (2012), 113.

⁵⁶ McArone offers several ways to imagine this composite. At times, he posts letters from obviously fictional locations with American cultural associations, such as “Picaninni” (16 Feb. 1861), “Fiddeldidi” (2 March 1861) or “Olordi” (9 March 1861). More imaginatively interesting, perhaps, are the places where *Vanity Fair*’s correspondent mixes cultural or political practices, as when he and Cavour travel South to stump for Cavour in his race to be “deputy sheriff.” As McArone glosses, “No man, in the provinces, has a fairer start in political life, or a better chance for advancement, than a deputy-sheriff. . . . but up here in the inaccessible caverns and ravines. . . there dwells a rugged, hearty race of mountaineers who do not comprehend the fairness of choice by ballot” (“Affairs in Italy: From Our Own Correspondent” 13 April 1861. *Vanity Fair*).

⁵⁷ In *Cultural Intimacy*, Michael Herzfeld asks “what advantages social actors find in using, reformulating, and recasting official idioms in the pursuit of often highly unofficial goals” (Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State 2nd edition* [New York, Routledge, 2005], 2). Taking up this work, Riki van Boeschoten expands Herzfeld’s formulation to include certain uses of language that are easily recognizable in McArone’s columns, specifically “code-switching and the telling of jokes.” According to her analysis, “informal linguistic practices. . . . Located in the interstices between official discourse and the private sphere, this is the space described in recent anthropological literature as ‘cultural intimacy.’” (Riki van Boeschoten, “Code-Switching, Linguistic Jokes, and Ethnic Identity: Reading Hidden Transcripts in a Cross-Cultural Context” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 24.2 [2006], 349).

⁵⁸ “Affairs in Italy: From Our Own Correspondent” 18 May 1861. *Vanity Fair*.

¹ Henry James. *The Aspern Papers and Other Stories*. (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2009). All citations from this text, which reprints the 1908 New York Edition with contemporaneous preface. Hereafter cites as *AP*.

² James first arrived in Italy in 1869, after the peninsula had been declared a parliamentary monarchy under the rule of King Vittorio Emanuele but before the Pope relinquished sovereign control over Rome. Rome's shift from Papal to parliamentary control in 1871 completed the initial process of peninsular unification.

³ In the 1882 essay "Venice," James writes of the city, "the Venice of today is a vast museum where the little wicket that admits you is perpetually turning and creaking, and you march through the institution with a horde of fellow-gazers" (*IH*, 10). In "The Grand Canal," published a decade later, not much has changed for James. Venice remains a "vast museum" where locals depend on the tourist influx of money: "Venetian life, in the large old sense, has long since come to an end, and the essential present character of the most melancholy of cities resides simply in its being the most beautiful of tombs," (33). This perception of Venice was by no means limited to tourists: in 1900's *Il Fuoco*, Gabriele D'Annunzio's novel of Venice, the protagonist describes "a city to which artists once assigned a certain powerful spirit. . . [which] is today considered no more than a great, inert relic" ["Una città a cui tali creatori composero un'anima di tal possanza. . . non è oggi considerate, dai più, se non come un grande reliquiario inerte,"] (*Il Fuoco*. Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1900. pp. 99. All citations in the text are from this Italian edition).

⁴ The term "surface" as a signifier for "style" is a common substitution for James and his critics. Sarah Blackwood suggests that the portrayal of Isabel Archer's consciousness provides a model for understanding "how consciousness inhered in the affective *surfaces and depths* of the individual human body," extending James's own metaphors for writing to the experience of individuals as well as works of art (Blackwood, "Isabel Archer's Body," *The Henry James Review* 31 [2010], 272). In a materialist study of James, Thomas Otten argues that "objects give the reader purchase on 'the Jamesian': they offer something like a cognitive handle. . . on the highly, sometimes almost forbiddingly, nuanced surfaces of the texts" (Otten, *A Superficial Reading of Henry James: Preoccupations on with the Material World* [Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2006], xvi). In his revised preface for *The Wings of the Dove*, to take but a single example, James writes, "The enjoyment of a work of art. . . is greatest, it is delightfully, divinely great, when we feel the surface, like the thick ice of the skater's pond, bear without cracking the strongest pressure we throw on it" (*The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962], 304-05). Many of James's prefaces and other expository writings (including *Italian Hours*), engage a metaphoric system of "surfaces," "impressions," and "depth" to differentiate style from content.

⁵ If a reader of this chapter is initially in doubt about the extent of Italy's political or institutional complexity, I would urge that reader to consult the footnotes of previous chapters in this study, which can often only thumbnail the myriad governing bodies, promiscuous political allegiances, and shifting collective affiliations constituting the nineteenth-century Italian socio-political landscape. A preliminary list of relevant socio-political problems in James's time might include the problem Italians referred to "la questione meridionale" ("the Southern question"), the desire for and failure of Italian colonial ambitions, ineffective attempts at economic regulation (such as the imposition of economic norms for agricultural products), and attempts to create and impose social-service institutions such as schools, hospitals, pensions, and transportation. For more detail, see Duggan *The Force of Destiny*; Gilmore, *The Pursuit of Italy*; Lucy Riall *Risorgimento: the History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation-State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁶ D.A. Miller claims that Austen's "Absolute Style" is often noticeable in small moments that conflict with the larger tenor of the plot, creating what Miller characterizes as "tension, everywhere visible in Austen, between her typical subject. . . and her characteristic voice (the exclusiveness of Absolute Style)" (*Jane Austen*, 25). David Smit's *The Language of the Master* makes a similar point about how we decide what counts as style when confronted with language as such: "Among all the ways in which we may explain the language of a literary work of art, the most common is. . . that it is appropriate to the subject

matter” (80). That is, schematizing the relation between linguistic part and subject-matter whole may assist the critic in making stylistic assessments.

⁷ Mary Cross, *Henry James: The Contingencies of Style* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 21.

⁸ Kevin Ohi, *Henry James and the Queerness of Style* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2011), 20-21).

⁹ Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *The Later Style of Henry James* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), 2.

¹⁰ Both David Smit and Mary Cross provide lists of the most commonly-acknowledged features of late Jamesian style. Smit’s catalogue records several features that contribute to the indeterminacy and ambiguity considered hallmarks of late James, including “the use of intangible nouns as the subjects of sentences,” “the use of semi-colons to signal loosely attached participials or supplementary phrases,” “the use of ambiguous conditionals” (Smit, *The Language of a Master: Theories of Style and the Late Writing of Henry James* [Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1998], 39-40). Cross’s own list offers a more rhetorical focus than the grammatically-organized features of Smit and notes James’s preferences for “the rhetorical word patterns of chiasmus, oxymoron, antitheses, and irony,” “the rhetorical schemes of repetition and of parallel structure,” as well as “a marked preference for periodicity in his sentences, suspending their resolution” (], 30).

¹¹ For more detail on the creation of an Italian parliamentary monarchy in the late 1850s and 1860s, see Duggan, pp. 181-241, Gilmour, pp. 176-257, Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento*.

¹² As discussed in greater detail in chap. 3 (“Civil Wars”), many Southern Italians (who, at the time, thought of themselves as Sicilians and Neopolitans not as Italians) in fact engaged in armed revolt following the establishment of the Italian State in 1861. A particularly bloody dramatic uprising in the Southern town of Pontelandolfo ended on August 14, 1861 with the massacre of an estimated 400 Sicilians by the Piedmontese troops sent in to end what the new government saw as an insurgency (Duggan 223). See Riall’s *Under the Volcano* for an explicitly transnational account of the 1860 revolution in Bronte, Sicily.

¹³ Denis Mack Smith *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994), 221.

¹⁴ Donald Pease does just that, connecting the “comic exaggeration” and metaphoric system of Hawthorne’s “The Custom House” directly to the author’s particular, personal problems: “[Hawthorne] managed to shield himself from the damaging effects of contemporary press accounts of his firing. . . by redescribing them in metaphors he appropriated from the French Revolution” (Pease, “Hawthorne in the Custom-House: The Metapolitics, Postpolitics, and Politics of *The Scarlet Letter*” *boundary 2* 32 [2005], 55).

¹⁵ Sontag points out the spatial metaphor underlying most discussions of style before negating entirely the distinction: “practically all metaphors for style amount to placing matter [what I refer to as content] on the inside, style on the outside. . . In fact, such a disjunction is extremely rare. In almost every case, our manner of appearing is our manner of being. The mask is the face” (17). In part because I agree with Sontag that “appearing” and “being” are closely, perhaps inextricably, bound together, I instead refer to what she calls “matter” or “being” as “content,” in order to maintain a distinction between subject and presentation. James also highlights this unsustainable categorization in “The Art of Fiction,” averring his confusion over critical distinctions between “story” and “something different”: “I cannot see what is meant by talking as if there were a part of a novel which is story and a part of it which for mystical reasons is not” (17).

¹⁶ Although Woolson has lately come into her own as an object of literary study, the Woolsonian critical bibliography demonstrates a tendency for biographical speculation and imaginative engagement: novels fantasize about her relationship with James, biographies argue about whether she should be pitied or dismissed, literary analysis experiments with ways to connect the two authors. Notable novels treating of the James-Woolson friendship include Emma Tennant’s *Felony: A Private History of the Aspern Papers: A novel* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), Colm Toibin’s *The Master* (New York: Scribner, 2004), and Elizabeth Maguire’s *The Open Door* (New York: Other Press, 2008). The latter contains a scene wherein Woolson accidentally sees James receiving fellatio from a young Italian boy; while other fictional treatments are less deliberately scandalous, all are interested in the contours and meaning of the short but

intense friendship between the spinster Woolson and the confirmed bachelor James. To date, the biographical treatment of Woolson and James that has gained the most critical and popular attention are Leon Edel's *Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1962), which offered a deeply unflattering portrait of the former as a pathetic and love-stricken clinger to James. Lyndall Gordon's *Henry James: Two Women and His Art* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), is only slightly less offensive in its dismissal of Woolson: Gordon refers to James's review of Woolson in *Partial Portraits* so as to demonstrate James's professional cruelty toward his friend. Joan Weimer's *Back Talk: Teaching Lost Selves to Speak* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998), is an autobiographical account of Weimer's struggles with pain management and simultaneously a critical study of Woolson. A brief list of recent literary criticism would include Victoria Coulson, "Teacups and Love Letters: Constance Fenimore Woolson and Henry James" *The Henry James Review* 25 (2005): 82-98; Victoria Brehm, ed. *Constance Fenimore Woolson's Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2001); Sharon Dean, *Constance Fenimore Woolson: Homeward Bound* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1995). An especially useful recent essay is Dorri Beam's "Henry James, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and the Figure in the Carpet, in *The Aesthetic Dimensions of American Literature*, 137-155. Beam offers a gloss on the critical history of the Woolson-James relationship and attempts to move beyond the female-male binary in interpreting two related works by James and Woolson.

¹⁷ Constance Fenimore Woolson, *The Complete Letters of Constance Fenimore Woolson*. Ed. Sharon Dean (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2012), 26.

¹⁸ Woolson has long been included in Southern Studies, feminist and gender studies, and queer studies. See Kathleen Elizabeth Diffley, *Witness to Reconstructions: Constance Fenimore Woolson and the Postbellum South 1873-1894* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2011); Anne E. Boyd, "Tourism, Imperialism, and Hybridity in the Reconstruction South: Constance Fenimore Woolson's *Rodman the Keeper: Southern Sketches*" *The Southern Literary Journal* 43.2 (2011): 12-31; Neill Matheson, "Constance Fenimore Woolson's Anthropology of Desire" *Legacy* 26.1 (2009): 48-68; Peter Schmidt, *Sitting in Darkness: New South Fiction, Education, and the Rise of Jim Crow Colonialism 1865-1920* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2008); Georgia Kreiger, "East Angels: Constance Fenimore Woolson's Revision of Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*" *Legacy* 22.1 (2005): 18-29.

¹⁹ The two collections of short stories from Italy, *The Front Yard and Other Italian Stories* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895) and *Dorothy and Other Italian Stories* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1896. Reprint 1969), feature work originally published in *Harper's Magazine*, *Century Magazine*, and *The Atlantic Monthly* in the years and months before Woolson's 1894 death in Venice. All in-text citations are from these editions; the former is abbreviated as *FY*, the latter as *Dorothy*.

²⁰ Often, the most dramatic or bleak situations are narrated in particularly concise language. A passage describing Dorothy's wasting illness, for example, is made up of a series of short, declarative sentences. "An English doctor came up daily. But there was nothing to combat. There was no fever, no malady save this sudden weakness. . . . The delirium passed away and they made another attempt" (*Dorothy*, 49).

²¹ Describing Nella Larson's *Quicksand* as a novel of "irritation," Sianne Ngai links this mood directly to superficiality ("irritation. . . might be described as negative affect in its weakest, mildest, most politically effete form," 181) and to a kind of knowledge distribution that Woolson's unsympathetic narrators also often evince: "the character may be unaware or mistaken about what is happening, but the reader, 'knowing better' is able to fill the gap" (Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005], 181; 387). Ngai's description of irritation's "minor" affective character, the way it is comprehensively developed "at all levels," are why I claim Woolson's effect as stylistic instead of simply content-based; Ngai analysis the effects of free indirect discourse, for example, on the reader's experience of Helga in *Quicksand*. The contrast set up in moments when free indirect discourse fails are moments that convey stylistically the concept of irritation Ngai traces throughout: "it is precisely when the two aesthetic stances [that of Helga and that of narrator] seem most to converge that the discourse insists on their separation, as if to stylistically foreground the incommensurateness on which the concept of irritation depends" (203). For this discussion in its entirety, see *Ugly Feelings*, pp. 201-207.

²² That tone and narratorial perspective are important elements for assessing Woolson's work beyond the level of content is an explicit claim of Dorri Beam's recent essay on James, Woolson, and narrated scenes of reading. For Beam, "we cannot understand Woolson's treatment of gender and literature without also recognizing and attending to the comedic tone, the parodic treatment, and the narrative voice to understand how the content is being shaped" (Beam, "Henry James, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and the Figure in the Carpet," 143).

²³ In "The Front Yard," the ancient protagonist, a recently married and widowed New England ex-spinster, "remained always convinced that Italian was simply lunatic English, English spoiled. One of the children, named Pasquale, she called Squawly, and she always believed that the title came from the strength of his infant lungs; many other words impressed here in the same way" (*The Front Yard* 8). Readers are likewise encouraged to dislike a certain American character in "A Waitress" in part because of his ignorant assertion of linguistic competence. "[Grey] was sure that he could learn to speak Italian in a week or two. Simplest thing in the world" (*Dorothy* 195). He does not do so, and his eventual failure of cultural understanding is initially signaled by a dismissive attitude toward the Italian language.

²⁴ In addition to Peter's disinterest in linguistic competence, despite his position as consul, and Barbara's stubborn adherence to her Italianate fantasies, the party features a ludicrous performance of "Yankee Doodle." The children's choir, trained by Barbara, sings Peter's original verse: "Though we are here on foreign shores,/ We are all devotion/ To our land of stars and Stripes,/ Far across the ocean./ Yankee doodle doodle doo,/ Yankee doodle dandy,/ Buckwheat cakes are very good,/ And so's molasses candy" (210).

²⁵ Famous—perhaps almost notorious—for its display of masculine beauty, the Apollo Belvedere is described in greater detail in chapter 1, where the statue is the subject of an erotic fantasy in Tuckerman's "Apollo Belvidere." See pp. 66-69 of the present study.

²⁶ Fred Lewis Pattee views dialogical theatricality as a common feature of Woolson's fiction, claiming that "her characters are inclined to be as overly declamatory even as Cooper's: their talk is often stiltedly bookish. Surely, even the most ardently patriotic of Southern girls would not talk in such theatric strain" (Pattee, *Development of the American Short Story* [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1923], 254).

²⁷ Although its secondary usage of is "a lady's maid," the first definition of "soubrette" offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "a maid-servant or lady's maid as a character in a play or opera; In extended use, a woman playing a role or variety of roles in light entertainment. . . with implications of pertness, coquetry, intrigue."

²⁸ In a recent special issue of *Representations*, guest editors Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus define this interpretive method, which asserts the importance of readerly penetration, as "symptomatic reading," which is always underwritten by the notion "that the most significant truths are not immediately apprehensible and may be veiled or invisible" (Best and Marcus, "Surface Reading, An Introduction" *Representations* 108.1 (2009), 4).

²⁹ See, in particular, Chapter Two's discussions of Italian "insurrections" and civil wars in the Southern regions following official unification.

³⁰ Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in *The Art of Criticism: Henry James on the Theory and the Practice of Fiction*. Eds. William Veeder and Susan M. Griffin (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), 172). Hereafter cited in text as *AF*.

³¹ This balance of surface and depth with regard to interpersonal interaction is especially striking in the late novels *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*. In both, dialogue that conveys complex, often dramatic, plot developments often deals very obliquely with those developments. That is, dialogue that seems superficial is instead both highly emotionally charged and is invested with deep meaning in resolutions of narrative dilemmas.

³² The narrative is filled with militaristic metaphors and figures of speech. At one point, the narrator avers his participation in a "tradition of personal conquest" (14), only to lament, a few pages later, the futility of trying to "batter down a dead wall. . . when I ought to have been carrying on the struggle in the field" (25).

³³ Ross Posnock, *The Trial of Curiosity: Henry James, William James, and the Challenge of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), 117.

³⁴ Richard Cocke, *Paolo Veronese: Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform* (Aldershot UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), 4. Other studies of Veronese that attend to the socio-political context of Veronese's art while offering sustained art criticism include *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*. Eds Virginia Brilliant and Frederick Ilchman (London: Scala, 2012).

³⁵ A useful general introduction to the diversity and complexity of regional artistic traditions is offered in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*. Eds. Babette Bohn and James M. Saslow (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). See especially "Part I: Social-Historical Factors in Artistic Production," pp. 21-148.

³⁶ In July of 1573, Veronese was called before a Tribunal of the Inquisition to discuss the overly ornamental character of "Supper in the House of Simon," a depiction of Christ's Last Supper. Pressed to defend various figures in the painting, including a servant with a nose-bleed, dogs with drunken human companions, and a group of armed men, Veronese offers the following reply: "We painters have the same license as poets and madmen, and I represented those. . . because it seemed to be suitable and possible that the master of the house, who I have been told was rich and magnificent, should have such servants." Quoted, in translation, in Francis Marion Crawford's *Salve Venetia: Gleanings from Venetian History*, vol. 2 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1905), 32. As Veronese was a famous, well-respected, and oft-patronized artist at the time, the matter was dropped when the painter added the inscriptions "FECITD.COVI. MAGNU. LEVI and LUCAE CAP V" (Cocke 179), effectively retitling the piece "Feast in the House of Levi" to de-emphasize its religious context. For additional detail and analysis, see Edward Grasman's "On Closer Inspection: The Interrogation of Paolo Veronese" *Artibus et Historiae* 30 (2009): 125-34; Paul D. Kaplan "Veronese and the Inquisition: The geopolitical context." In *Suspended Licence: Censorship and the Visual Arts*. Ed. Elizabeth C. Childs (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1997).

³⁷ See Smit and Cross for versions of this argument. David Kurnick suggests that late Jamesian style, including "the use of appositives and inversions, the almost Germanic deferral of grammatical closure," and the "striking verbal similarities" that occur across characters and texts, reveal "a deeply Jamesian interest in what I want to call performative universalisms" (Kurnick, "What Does Jamesian Style Want?" *The Henry James Review* 28 (2007): 214). All of these critics connect James's style to the ethical or philosophical concerns of James, thus suggesting, at least implicitly, that James's style reflects certain epistemological or ontological perspectives about the world of lived experience.

³⁸ James's essays about Venice tend to be melancholic, reflecting sorrow at the impositions of modernity. Additionally, they articulate an ethical cosmopolitanism that responds to Italy's new position as independent international entity: "Young Italy, preoccupied with its economical and poetical future, must be heartily tired of being admired for its eyelashes and its pose" (103). James may be offering this advice as much to himself as to his readers, since most of his Italian essays record his admiration for, and rhapsodies over, "Old" Italy's "eyelashes and pose." James's 1889 essay "Two Old Houses" offers an especially frank declaration of what James sees as the ethical issues at stake in cross-cultural lamentation. Discussing renovations in Florence, James writes, "The little treasure city is. . . a delicate case—more delicate perhaps than any other in the world, save that of our taking on ourselves to persuade the Italians that they mayn't do what they like with their own. . . . It will take more tact than our combined tactful genius may at all probably muster to convince them that their own is, by an ingenious logic, much rather ours" (IH 71, emphasis in original). Many critics explore James's cosmopolitanism in their attempts to reconcile that tendency with the commercialism, exploitation, and modernization of James's age, efforts I view as ethically invested. Thomas Peyser claims *The Princess Casamassima* as an especially cosmopolitan novel, arguing that James's "provides a critique of the theatrical representation of self," attempting instead to "pin down a complex reality made all the more elusive by its ever-shifting, cosmopolitan character" (Peyser, "The Princess Casamassima and the Theatrical Cosmopolis" *American Literary Realism* 42 [2010], 97). According to June Hee Chung, Jamesian style (what she calls his "remediation of visual and verbal techniques") "shows the way to bridge the seemingly opposed views of

popular and high art for the next generation of cosmopolitan modernists” (“Cosmopolitan Visual Culture in *The Ambassadors*” *American Literature* 79 [2007], 330-31).

³⁹ Dimock’s *Through Other Continents* makes a more politically charged claim about the relation between James and Veronese, suggesting that the two are connected by their portrayals of “what a conqueror ought to look like, as idealized as can be. . . . Conquest, so charmingly personified, ensures that there is only mild unease on the part of the conquered” (96). In Dimock’s reading of Veronese’s *Family of Darius before Alexander* and James’s *The Golden Bowl*, conquerors like Alexander the Great and Adam Verver are sanitized and made sympathetic. Dimock also views these two artists as connected via their perceptions or presentations of history: sections of the chapter “Genre as World System” take up James’s *Italian Hours* essays in order to suggest that James was moved by Veronese’s illustrations of “open-palmed beneficence.” (*Through Other Continents*, 94).

⁴⁰ The detailed notes to the Penguin Classics edition of *Italian Hours* (edited by John Auchard, 1992) is careful to record many of the references or possible sources for James’s art assessments. James himself also makes note of many influential texts in the essays themselves; perhaps the most well-known are the many writing of John Ruskin (James’s essays record an uneasy relation to this particular author’s Italian pronouncements and provocations) and Théophile Gautier, especially his 1860 *Italia*.

⁴¹ Leo Bersani, *A Future for Asyntax: Character and Desire in Literature*. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1976), 138.

⁴² Henry James, *Notes on Novelists with Some Other Notes* (New York: Charles Scribner’s and Sons, 1914), 287. Hereafter cited in text as *NN*.

⁴³ “Gabriele D’Annunzio.” *L’Enciclopedia Italiana*. Treccani.it. Accessed 13 June, 2013.

⁴⁴ John D. Woodhouse. *Gabriele D’Annunzio: Defiant Archangel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Woodhouse is certainly aware of D’Annunzio’s contradictory reputation, asserting in the biography’s opening pages that the author has “aroused either passionate support or vitriolic opposition” among Italians as well as a host of European and American critics. Woodhouse notes the influential assessment of D’Annunzio as conveying a “pre-fascist aura which caused some writers and critics to regard him as the John the Baptist of fascism. . . . Yet all the evidence shows that he despised the fascists, considered Mussolini his social and political inferior” (1). Woodhouse is at pains to separate an historically-factual D’Annunzio from the controversy surrounding him. Jared Baker’s more interpretive study argues that critics “have neglected or misunderstood a variety of features that connect [D’Annunzio] to fascism, including his program of winning the socialist constituency to imperialist ends, his militaristic vision of the industrial age, and his politics of race” (Baker, *Nationalism and Culture: Gabriele D’Annunzio and Italy After the Risorgimento* [New York: Peter Lang, 1994], 1. This contradictory view of D’Annunzio is not limited to readers in English.

⁴⁵ D’Annunzio is very often invoked as a figure par excellence of the fin-de-siècle decadence movement: as it is commonly understood, the decadence movement was committed to style at the expense of political or cultural content, motivated by the desire to escape history—personal, social, or national—through attention to interior experience and the careful, highly crafted practice of rendering that experience into art. Decadence represented what we might consider a proto-modernist attempt to sever form from content. For George C. Schoolfield, the decadent exemplar displays “a sense that national culture. . . is bound for mongrelization or annihilation. . . .supremely egotistical and sometimes supremely wealthy, the decadent can form his own artificial paradise as he waits for the end” (Schoolfield, *A Baedeker of Decadence: Charting a Literary Fashion 1884-1927* [New Haven: Yale UP, 2003], xiii). Jean Pierrot likewise describes artists who “were to seek for escape from the boredoms and banality of everyday life through exquisite refinements of sensation. . . . they had dethroned life and put art in its place” (*The Decadent Imagination 1880-1900*. Translated by Derek Coleman. [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981], 10).

⁴⁶ Lucia Re. “Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Theater of Memory”: Il Vittoriale degli Taetro.” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts 1875-1945*. Italian Theme Issue: 3 (Winter 1987), 8.

⁴⁷ James extends the conventional awareness of an avant-garde commitment to “Art for Art’s sake” when he describes *Il Fuoco* as ““go[ing] in, as the phrase is, for beauty at any cost. . . the whole effect becomes

for us that of an organized sacrifice to [beauty] and an organized general repudiation of everything else” (Notes 214).

⁴⁸ Poetry includes *Primo Vere* (1879), *Canto Novo* (1882), *Poema Paradisiaco* (1893); fiction includes the short story collection *Terra Virgine* (1882), and numerous novels such as *Il Piacere* (1889, English translation 1898), *L’Innocente* (1892) and *Le Virgine delle Rocce* (1895).

⁴⁹ *The Flame*. Translated by Dora Knowlton Ranous (The National Alumni, 1906), x; *The Flame*. Translated by Susan Bassett (London: Quartet Books, 1991), x.

⁵⁰ I will note here that my translation differs some in approach, though not in a meaningful content way, from two different English translations, one from 1906 and one from 1991. Both of these take greater liberties at the word and sentence level, as each is invested in presenting an aesthetically coherent novel. The 1906 version, for example, is at pains to de-emphasize the intense sensuality of the excerpt’s final clauses, offering this relatively bland version that excises the “fleshy” fantasy: “. . . over his spirit passed an intoxicating glow that disquieted him.” (49). Translation censorship, often practiced by simple omission of shocking material in English editions, was by no means limited to *Il Fuoco*. See for example, Schoolfield, especially pp. 30-33. Schoolfield cites an early edition of D’Annunzio’s risqué novel *The Child of Pleasure* upon whose flyleaf has been written, “Beware of translations by Victorian ladies” (31). For critical explorations of translation’s many ethical and linguistic complexities, see Susan Bassnett, Lawrence Venuti, or Emily Apter.

⁵¹ One Italian anthology describes “il Decadentismo” in Italy as “including a general desire for political and moral change, but nevertheless lacking solid ideological foundations [and]. . . filled with contradictions.” [“si accompagna al desiderio di un più general rinnovamento politico e morale, che tuttavia, privo di serie basi ideologiche. . . [e] pieni di contraddizioni”]. (*storia e antologia della letteratura italiani*. Ed. Nino Marziano, Giancarlo Conti, Giorgio Baruffini. [Italy: Edizioni Scolastiche Bruno Mondadori, 1973], 162). A more recent English-language history of Italian literature likewise highlights, a bit more circuitously, the contradictions between art and reality (the tension between “desire” for change and a “solid ideological base”) inherent in D’Annunzio in particular: “There is nothing a reader can recognize as belonging to his own world of prose, as he is thrown without any mediation whatsoever into an alien reality, *beyond history*, into the realm of the Imaginary” (*The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*. Ed. Peter Brand and Lino Pertile [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008], 475, my emphasis).

⁵² Temporal or situational prepositions could include “mentre” [during, while] “come” [as, during], “ovunque” [across]; relevant pronouns might include “la, [her/it], “le” [them], “loro” [them, their]).

⁵³ While *l’imperfetto* is conjugated with the relatively simple addition of regular short endings, *passato prossimo* requires two verb forms, a modal and the root verb, both of which are differently conjugated; moreover, the proper modal form changes depending on the root verb and whether the action being described is active or passive; both further effect the conjugation of the root verb. *Passato prossimo* is used to indicate one-time, completed action that has occurred in the past: “he *had walked* by the canal” [*ha camminato* vicino alla canale] or “*we were* happy that day” [*siamo stati* contenti questo giorno].

⁵⁴ Jeffrey Schnapp, “Nietzsche’s Italian Style: Gabriele D’Annunzio” *Stanford Italian Review* 6 (1986), 255. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁵ Schnapp’s very essay title indicates his awareness of the connection between Nietzschean philosophy and the aesthetic and cultural goals of D’Annunzio’s decadence. Becker also views Nietzschean philosophy as underwriting some of the projects and outlooks of D’Annunzio’s particular version of decadence, arguing that “Nietzscheanism, in the hands of the Italian poet [D’Annunzio]. . . is bent to serve the cause of nationalism” (“Nietzsche’s,” 145).

⁵⁶ Instead of the temporally vague *l’imperfetto*, infinitive forms in Italian can be used to “convey a sense of impersonality both for the source. . . and for the target reader [or listener].” (Anna Proudfoot and Francesco Cardo. *Modern Italian Grammar: A Practical Guide 2nd ed.* [New York: Routledge, 2005], 214.

Chapter 4: A Hero and His Newspapers; Or, A Romance of Italian America

¹ This particular language quoted from Alexander DeConde's *Half Bitter, Half Sweet: An Excursion into Italian-American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 77; see also Jerre Mangione's *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian-American Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993): "emigration from the *Mezzogiorno* [Southern Italy] was reaching flood proportions" (74). As Joseph Cosco summarizes, "Between 1880 and 1921, some 4.5 million Italians came to America, some to settle permanently, some as seasonal workers who would eventually return to Italy. Approximately 80 percent of them came from the poor, backward southern portion of Italy known as the *Mezzogiorno*—'the land that time forgot'" (Cosco, *Imagining Italians: The Clash of Romance and Race in American perceptions, 1880-1910* [Albany: SUNY Press, 2003], 4).

² Anthony Tamburri's *To Hyphenate or Not to Hyphenate: The Italian/American Writer: An American Other* (Quebec: Guernica Editions Inc., 1991) argues that "a seemingly neutral diacritical mark such as the hyphen is, instead, an ideologically charged marker" (11). I agree with Tamburri's assertion—seconded by several other theorists of ethnicity—that the hyphen may offer a syntactic iteration of cultural distance. Daniel Aaron, for example, calls this distance the immigrant's "hyphen's length" from dominant culture (Aaron, "The Hyphenate Writer and American Letters" *Smith Alumnae Quarterly* [1964], 213). I employ the hyphen throughout this chapter's analysis for two reasons. At the practical level, the hyphen has a long usage history in studies of ethnic writing and is a grammatically conventional means to describe ethnic populations, even though such a convention is not without representational baggage. Additionally, this chapter is concerned to explore and theorize perceptions of distance and proximity to American culture felt by Italian immigrants in the U.S. Thus, overcoming or maintaining the distance signaled by the hyphen is the very subject of this chapter, and the hyphen remains a marker of that process here.

³ For broad cultural history, see DeConde, *Half Bitter, Half Sweet* (1971); Mangione, *La Storia* (1993); Giovanni Ermenegildo Schiavo, *Four Centuries of Italian-American History* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1992); Vincenza Scarpari, *The Journey of Italians in America* (Louisiana: Pelican Pub., 2008); for labor relations, see Philip V. Cannistraro and Gerrald Meyer editors, *The Lost World of Italian-American Radicalism: Labor, Politics, Culture* (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing, 2003); Edwin Fenton, *Immigrants and Unions: A Case Study: Italians and American Labor 1870-1920* (NY: Arno Press, 1975); for ethnic development, see Steven Belluscio, *To Be Suddenly White: Literary Realism and Racial Passing* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2006); Marina Cacioppo, *If the Sidewalks of These Streets Could Talk: Reinventing Italian-American Ethnicity: Representation and Construction of Ethnic Identity in Italian-American Literature* (Torino: Otto, 2005); Joseph Cosco, *Imagining Italians* (2003); Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998).

⁴ In recent years, many scholars have sought to move away from an assimilationist model for describing or theorizing immigrant experience. Such efforts have vastly expanded our understandings of cultural mixture, identity, and individual relations to collectivities. However, in my work with mid-to-late century Italian-language newspapers, it is the material itself that suggests a critical framework of progress and assimilation: in Bénédicte Deschamps's words, "Italian-language papers were thus particularly instrumental in the political education of immigrants. . . in helping them open to the life of the 'city.'" (Deschamps, "The Italian Ethnic Press in a Global Perspective." In *The Cultures of Italian Migration: Diverse Trajectories and Discrete Perspectives*, edited by Graziella Parati and Anthony Julian Tamburri [Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2011], 84).

⁵ Critics who contend that race, for example, is a cultural construct are numerous and influential. See Robyn Weigman, "Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity" *boundary 2* 26 (1999); Walter Jacobs, "After-Whiteness Studies" *sympløke* 12 (2004): 261-64; Jacobson (1998). In 1996, Hortense Spillers wondered if race was "our deadliest abstraction? . . . our deadliest fiction?" ("All the Things You

Could be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race" *boundary 2* 23.3 [1996], 78). Although race might be considered a different social category than "ethnicity," the field of whiteness studies explores the intersections of these two constructs, positing that ethnicity and race are related if not seamlessly connected. The history of whiteness in the U.S. is very often the history of "becoming white" that is, overcoming ethnic difference in the service of joining "race." See Ian Marshall, *Reading, Writing, and the Rhetorics of Whiteness* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Sherrow O. Pinder, *Whiteness and Racialized Ethnic Groups on the United States: The Politics of Remembering* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011); Coviello, *Intimacy in America*; Nelson, *National Manhood*; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; David Reodiger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991)

⁶ Thomas Ferraro, *Feeling Italian: The Art of Ethnicity in America* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), 7. Emphasis in original. Ferraro theorizes that, in the United States, "Italian-like feelings were turned into the feeling of being an Italian" (3).

⁷ Ferraro continues, "Italian American self-understanding, and the portrayal of Italians in American culture at large, then, moved closer together, to the point where the feelings Italian American have for themselves, the feelings non-Italians have for Italian Americans, and the feelings they both have for the role of Italianness in America intertwine and interpenetrate" (*Feeling*, 4).

⁸ Again, Ferraro's description of Italian-American identity lines up with my own method in this chapter: "This book is for each and every one of us, the democratic way, who has always wanted to be the hero of every story we care about" (*Feeling*, 7).

⁹ George Dekker describes this sweeping view as beloved of Enlightenment historians in the early age of historical romance: "In their most speculative moments, Mill and other philosophers of progress scanned the action of history as if from a great height, looking for 'the general tendency' and finding that it was unilinear and good" (George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987], 74).

¹⁰ Robert Orsi characterizes the fin-de-siècle racial status of Italian-Americans as one of "inbetweenness": "the issue of racial inbetweenness existed in the urban, industrial North as well, where most of the immigrants from Southern Italy settled. . . . The issue of the immigrants' place on the American landscape vis-à-vis other dark-skinned peoples fundamentally shaped not only the contours of their everyday lives at work and on the streets, but also the 'Italian-American' identity they crafted for themselves" (Orsi, "The Religious Boundaries of an Inbetween People: Street Feste and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem, 1920-1990" *American Quarterly* 44.3 [1992], 314). See Tamburri, *Re-Reading Italian Americana* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson, 2014) and *A Semiotic of Ethnicity*. In the latter, Tamburri imagines the literary history of "Italian/American" texts through what he calls a "cognitive" perspective, in which writers "represent different modes of being dependent on different levels of consciousness" (Tamburri, *A Semiotic of Ethnicity: In (Re)cognition of the Italian/American Writer* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1998], 12). See also Cosco, *Imagining Italians*; Ferraro *Feeling Italian*, Robert Viscusi *Buried Caesars, And Other Secrets of Italian American Writing* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006); *Italian Americans: New Perspective in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity*. Ed. Lydio F. Tomasi (New York: Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc., 1985).

¹¹ Homi Bhabha's classic articulation of cultural hybridity certainly engages with some of the conceptual and temporal matters I raise in this chapter. Using the example of a stairwell to metaphorize cultural order, Bhabha connects temporal order and identificatory absolutism as two structures undermined by cultural hybridity: "the hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage it allows, prevents identities at either end from settling into primordial polarities" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* [New York: Routledge, 1994], 5).

¹² Thus, this analysis is more like the "cognitive" perspective posited by Tamburri in *A Semiotic of Ethnicity* than like a progressive blending of distinct political, national tendencies.

¹³ In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson discusses the genres of epic and narrative poetry, travel writing, and even dictionaries; Meredith McGill, who rarely makes reference directly to genre, refers to the textual

objects of her study as “literature itself,” while her attention in *The Culture of Reprinting* to literary works by Dickens, Poe, and Hawthorne seems to split the difference between realism and romance, respectively (McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2003).

¹⁴ See Richard Clement, *Books on the Frontier: Print Culture in the American West 1763-1875* (Hanover, NH: U P of New England, 2003); Barbara Lee Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier* (Reno: U of Nevada P, 1992); Dechamps, Ernst.

¹⁵ Certainly, the idea that public discourses are constructed and potentially ideologically inflected is nothing new. However, it is worth noticing how very textual, and imaginative, such seemingly straightforward content might be. When we look at newspaper reports, we want to see reality; what if, I am suggesting, we instead saw a kind of realism?

¹⁶ Several of the newspapers featured here contain explicit claims about Italian representation in the United States. The masthead of New Orleans’s *Il Monitore del Sud* calls the paper the “Organ of Italian-American Populations [Organo delle Popolazioni ItaloAmericane]” as early as 1849; Chicago’s *L’Unione Italiana* proclaims itself the “organ of the Italian population of the West [Organo della Popolazione Italiana dell’Ovest]” in 1868; *La Voce del Popolo* in San Francisco likewise characterizes itself in 1878 as the “Organ of the Italian Population of California” [Organo delle Popolazione Italiana di California]. In all these cases, a regional paper declares its mission to be serving a population at once regional and national.

¹⁷ Jolie A. Sheffer “Recollecting, Repeating, and Walking Through: Immigration, Trauma, and Space in Mary Antin’s *The Promised Land*” *MELUS* 35.1 (Spring 2010), 141. Maria Lauret, in contrasting Antin’s *The Promised Land* to Edward Bok’s *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, unintentionally connects the two narratives instead through shared structures of repetition: “Compared to other immigrant tales of the early twentieth century, such as Mary Antin’s *The Promised Land* (1912), Bok’s is not only atypical in its subject matter but also in its style, which is anecdotal and repetitive” (“When’s an Immigrant Biography not an Immigrant Biography?” *MELUS* 38:3 [2013], 7).

¹⁸ Susan R. Gannon “One More Time: Approaches to Repetition in Children’s Literature” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 12:1 (1987), 2.

¹⁹ Nineteenth-century writers for American newspapers often used the language of childishness and maturation to describe immigrant experience and acculturation, often constructing the entire Italian population as helpless, unprepared, childlike. News reports from 1872, for example, describe these immigrants as “deluded” and unable to ensure their own survival: “During the winter, the Italians can not sustain themselves, and how the immense numbers pouring in here are to be kept from starving remains to be settled.” (“Deluded Italian Immigrants” [11 Dec. 1872, *New York Tribune*]; “Another Cargo of Swindled and Destitute Italian Immigrants” [11 Dec. 1872, *Cincinnati Commercial News*]. *America’s Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 9 April 2014.) The *New York Tribune* in 1891 describes the Italian immigrant as “by nature ardently attached to whatever his affections incline toward, so that when his success weans his heart from Italy he generally gives the full measure of his love to the land of his adoption” (“Bad Italian Immigration.” [10 Feb. 1891]. *New York Tribune*. *America’s Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 9 April 2014). Regardless of the report’s content (it is offering guarded praise for the immigrant, after all), the metaphoric use of terms like “weans” and “adoption,” the figure of the “ardently attached” innocent, all point to the ways that these adults, having fled economic exploitation and endured weeks on the open sea, are constructed as socially immature, “less intelligent than those of northern climates” but willing to perform the “unskilled cheap labor that has to be done and is unattractive to [civically-mature] Americans” (10 Feb. 1891, *New York Tribune*). Like Nancy Galzener, who seeks historically-appropriate definitions for the terms she critically engages, I find it useful here to gesture towards the language and rhetorical norms of U.S. discourses on immigration that are contemporaneous to my own archive.

²⁰ Humbert Nelli, *Italians in Chicago 1880-1930. A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (NY: Oxford UP, 1970); Rudolph Vecoli, *Italian-American Radicalism: Old World Origins and New World Developments* (NY: American-Italian Historical Association, 1973); George Pozzetta, *Pane e lavoro* (Toronto: MHSO, 1980).

²¹ Of course, newspapers themselves have been associated with nationalist projects at least since Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

²² See Pratt's *Archives of American Time*, Dimcok's *Through Other Continents*,

²³ One recent and striking example of this critical interest is the special issue of *American Literary History* "History, Historicism, and Historiography." Rodrigo Lazo's contribution calls attention to the cycles of repetition evident in the work of hemispheric American studies, reminding readers that what appears to some as a fresh critical "turn" is, in fact, "nothing new. The Americans have provided an opportunity for discovery for centuries, and the recent enthusiasm. . . can be traced back decades" ("The Invention of America Again: On the Impossibility of an Archive" (Lazo, "The Invention of America Again" *ALH* 25.4 [2013], 752). Jennifer Fleissner likewise attends to the repetitive nature of historicist inquiry, asking whether "a notion of history-writing as repetition [might] provide a strong alternative to the historicizing assumptions of literary criticism?" (Fleissner, "Historicism Blues," *ALH* 25.4 [2013], 702). These examples highlight the role of repetition (either scholarly or historical) in shaping versions of history, the present, and certain fields of inquiry. The analysis in this chapter likewise points up the repetitive nature of Italian-American experience.

²⁴ For a brief outline of the early publication history of the newspaper, and an analysis of its readership of "Whigs" and "the wealthy few," see Robert Ernst's *Immigrant Life in New York City: 1825-1863* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1994, reissue edition), 157-58.

²⁵ "A Word to Our Readers" 26 Nov. 1853. *The Crusader*.

²⁶ Roughly conterminous with the rising crest of European and especially Italian immigration occurred another sort of flood: the surge in community newspapers and taste-maker magazines. An editorial and readerly thirst for realistic fiction washed up against the growing pool of community-specific newspaper publications; while explorations of "authentic" cultural distinctions propelled a local color movement, the consumer rage for "story-papers," "little magazines," and a proliferation of foreign-language local newspapers all fed into the great tide of realist periodical culture. See Janet Casey, "Realism and the Discursive Dynamics of the Popular Periodical 1900-1930" *Mosaic* 46. 2 (2013); Brad Evans, *Before Cultures: The Ethnographic Imagination In American Literature 1865-1910* (Chicago, The U of Chicago P, 2005); Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997);

²⁷ Elizabeth Segel, "Realism and Children's Literature: Notes from a Historical Perspective." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1980), 15.

²⁸ Already in 1894, Hamlin Garland was asserting of local color writing that "it is the native element, the differentiating element. It corresponds to the endless and vital charm of individual particularity" (*Crumbling Idols* [Chicago: Stone and Kimball, 1894], 57). Recent theories of "New Regionalism" (widely understood as a realist endeavor) are often attuned to the inclusion/exclusion paradoxes of the genre. See Stephanie Foote, *Regional Fictions: Culture and Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2001); Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse *Writing Out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and Literary Culture* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2003); Thomas Constantinesco and Cécile Roudeau, "Limning New Regions of Thought: Emerson's Abstract Regionalism." *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 60.2 (2014): 285-326.

²⁹ The assumption that realism represents "an objective reflection of contemporary life" has been challenged since the genre's heyday, as Amy Kaplan points out. She goes on: "realism has become a fictional conceit, or deceit, packaging and naturalizing an official version of the ordinary" (Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* [Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1988], 1). Indeed, the fictionality Kaplan imagines as a fundamental aspect of the genre (or of any literary or imaginative representation of reality) is one reason for this chapter's embrace of the metaphoric conceit of childhood—that is, the romance assembled here is not at odds with a realist agenda, but instead suggests that realist content and romantic form are compatible ways to "explor[e] and bridg[e] the perceived gap between the social world and literary representation" (9).

³⁰ William Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1895), 208-09.

³¹ Janet Casey, "Realism and the Discursive Dynamics of the Popular Periodical 1900-1930" *Mosaic* 46. 2 (2013), 123.

³² Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1987), 90.

³³ Glazener, *Reading for Realism*, 3. Glazener thus undermines early theorists of realism like Ian Watt, who asserts that realism is exactly an issue of representational decision. Of the realistic novel, Watt asserts, "it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience. . . the novel's realism does not reside in a the kind of life it presents, but on the way it presents it" (Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding . 2nd American Edition* [Berkeley: U of California P, 2001], 11).

³⁴ Glazener plays up these slippages in outlining the process by which "high realism" was converted into a recognizable and desirable genre, pointing out that "realism was everywhere invoked. . . even though it was sometimes identified with specific subject matters. . . it was made to depend so much on subtleties of style that it must have been hard for anyone to learn to identify it reliably" (49). Casey likewise highlights the role of the reader in creating and recognizing the representative conventions of "realist" fiction: "periodicals constructed not a passive reader, but an active and sophisticated one. They also positioned realist fiction within a fluid, exploratory space in which real-ness had multiple valiances" (125).

³⁵ Anderson summarizes, "the newspaper [] quite naturally, and even apolitically, created an imagined community among a specific assemblage of fellow-readers, to whom these [reported upon] ships, bridges, bishops, and prices belonged. . . . important to that imagined community is an idea of steady, solid simultaneity through time" (62-63).

³⁶ Many scholars of Italian migration history emphasize how the emerging Italian-American identity for immigrants to the United States depended on an expanding sense of who could properly be considered a "countryman." As Robert Viscusi explains: "ritual [socio-cultural] humiliation convinced the migrants that, in some way new to them, they had become Italians. They began to band together in groups for mutual protection, not just on the basis of their regional identities but on the basis of their collective national destinies." (Robert Viscusi. "The Future of Italianità: The Italian Commonwealth." *Center for Migration Studies Special Issues* 24 [1994]. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>). See also Tamburri, Mangione.

³⁷ The complex and deeply influential role of Romanticism on Italian nationalism has been explored in several excellent studies. See Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall, Eds., *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Alberto M. Banti, *Sublime Madre Nostra: La Nazione Italiana dal Risorgimento al Fascismo* (Roma: Laterza, 2011) and *La Nazione del Risorgimento* (Torino: Einaudi, 2006); Joseph Luzzi, *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008); Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (2007), Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny* (1997); Mario Puppo, *Romanticismo Italiano e Romanticism Europeo* (Milano: Istituto Propaganda Libreria, 1985).

³⁸ Theorizing the American Romance as a distinct branch of a larger Romantic tradition, Richard Chase describes a genre that "feels free to render reality in less volume and detail. . . . The characters, probably rather two-dimensional, will not be completely related to each other or to society or to the past. . . . Character itself, becomes, then, rather abstract and ideal. . . . Astonishing events may occur, and these are likely to have a symbolic or ideological, rather than a realistic, plausibility" (Chase, *The American Novel and Its Traditions* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1957], 13).

³⁹ Glazener documents the plummeting fortunes of the romance genre: "the romance gets associated with obsolescence, artifice, the fancy, and by implication either youth or immaturity. These oppositions will crop up for decades to come. . . usually to the end of celebrating (realist) novels and devaluing romances" (39). Despite her title's stated focus on "reading for realism," Glazener follows the romance's reputation through the nineteenth century up to the romantic revival of the 1890s. By that time, according to Glazener, realism had replaced romance as the high-status, nationalist genre par excellence, making romance a fresh alternative to realism's growing investment in cultural progress: "the rhetoric of the new

romance valued fiction for providing readers with a thrilling escape from the routine and restrictions of their daily lives” (148).

⁴⁰ In an early editorial about labor published in *The New York Tribune*, for example, American ideals of morally and politically proper capitalist behavior are cast in grandly universal terms: “Mankind are just waking to a consciousness of the duty resting on every man to be active and useful in his day and in his sphere. All are not called to dig or hew, or plow or place—but every man has a sphere of usefulness allotted him by Providence, and he is unfaithful to his high trust if he deserts it for idle pomp or heedless luxury” (“The Duty to Labor” 18 August, 1841. *The New York Tribune*).

⁴¹ Meredith McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, 1. Trish Loughran also explores the local and national functions of newspapers, although her history begins earlier than McGill’s with the American Revolution. Indeed, Loughran’s analysis puts pressure on the Anderson model of nation building, claiming that “there was no nationalized print public sphere in the years just before and just after the Revolution, but rather a proliferating variety of local and regional reading publics scattered across a vast and diverse geological space” (Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building 1770-1870* [New York: Columbia UP, 2007, xix).

⁴² In contrast to the “sinusoidal” structural inspiration newspapers offered to *The Quaker City* for Denning, later-century authors counted newspaper content as inspiration for fictional endeavors. An especially relevant example for this chapter is Horatio Alger’s 1872 *Phil the Fiddler*, the story of an Italian beggar named Filipio. According to the author’s acknowledgments, “Mr. G.F. Secchi de Casale, editor of the well-known ‘L’Eco d’Italia’” provided “full and trustworthy information” about Italian street children (Alger, *Phil the Fiddler* [New York: Hurst & Company, 1903], 7). It was, Alger claims, “a series of articles contributed by Mr. De Casale to his paper, on the Italian street children, in whom he had long felt a patriotic and sympathetic interest” that allowed the story of Phil the Fiddler to reach American audiences: “but for the information thus acquired, I should have been unable to write the present volume” (7).

⁴³ Robert Viscusi, for example, glosses Italy’s “Great Migration” (1880-1924) as follows: “These people had little but imagination to guide them, arriving in the United States with little idea of what they would find there. . . . Indeed, as they struggled with [U.S.] language, laws, markets and customs. . . they found that America’s enigmas grew deeper and wider” (*Buried Caesars*, 8). As my own study of pre-flood Italians shows, these “enigmas” were already being grappled with by an Italian population as early as the 1850s in the United States. Cosco offers an historically sensitive account of Italian-American relations in his claim that “traffic between Italy and America went both ways in those early [colonial and early-century] days. . . . contacts between Italy and America intensified during the course of the nineteenth century, and the two countries established a rich cultural exchange” (5). See also *Half Bitter, Half Sweet*, chapters 1 “Early Encounters” (pp. 1-17) and 4 “Unification and Emigration” (pp. 58-76) and *La Storia*, chapter 1 “Italians Among the Colonizers” (pp. 1-30).

⁴⁴ While an early paper like *Il Monitore del Sud* (1849) collects money and participants throughout New Orleans for benevolent societies and benefits for Italian refugees, later papers host cross-regional dances and develop Italian-American societies to consolidate prices for imported items (Chicago’s *L’Unione Italiana*, 1868), organize people around Italian industry or domestic colonization projects (*L’Italo-Americano* in New York 1871). By 1889, New York’s *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* is raising money from across the city to build a statue of Christopher Columbus, promoting Italians for public office, and convening specific collectives like The Association of New York Fruit Vendors [L’Associazione dei Fruttivendoli].

⁴⁵ I could thus tell several versions of the story I offer here: one might look only at the shift from benevolent societies to political action, trade associations, and cross-cultural groups; another might follow a history of economic participation; a third, the history of political writing as it develops from an intense focus on Italian nationalism reported from afar to information about and participation in American political activities such as nationalist celebrations and voting. Each of these stories demonstrates a

progressive trajectory from exile/observer to active participant; given the limitations of the chapter form, I condense these all into a single story of recognizable immigrant assimilation.

⁴⁶ In a recent essay, Jordan Alexander Stein describes fundamental assumptions of American literary history as fully imbricated in processes of progressive assimilation and cultural normalizing: “American literary histories shared a tacit understanding of what counts as history. With similar consistency to the ways they frame American literary nationalism, these works describe peoples and nations in terms of progress, development, and maturity; they characterize processes like immigration and war as though they are decisive events; and they identify different decades, movements, and generations as the direct inheritors of their predecessors. That is to say, the narrative of American literary history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is organized by multiple but overlapping temporalities, including chronology, development, generation, and reproduction, all of which are presumed to move in a regular and uninterrupted sequence, and all of which can be conceptualized diachronically” (“American Literary History and Queer Temporalities” *American Literary History* 25.4 [2013], 859).

⁴⁷ Daniel Aaron offers a three-stage vision of immigrant experience, describing “the first generation immigrant as the ‘local colorist’ [or pioneer spokesman]. . . the second as the ‘militant protestor,’ actively fighting for his own identity; and the third as the ‘American,’ the assimilated” (“Hyphenate Writer,” 214).

⁴⁸ Eric L. Tribunella, *Melancholia and Maturation: The Use of Trauma in American Children’s Literature* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2010), xvi. Anna Mae Duane highlights the metaphoric uses of the child in organizing American politics: “Metaphors based on the child. . . appeared at the heart of many cultural conflicts” (Anna Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Violence, Race, and the Making of the Child Victim* [Athens: U of Georgia P, 2010], 4).

⁴⁹ Karen Sanchez-Eppler. *Dependent States: The Child’s Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2005), xxv.

⁵⁰ Scholars of children’s literature point to a similar, if inverted, generic blend. Elizabeth Segel offers an especially clear gloss on this incongruity: “Juvenile authors saw their mission as shaping the young reader’s character and believed in the efficacy of presenting ideal types. . . the result was a far cry from ‘a full and authentic report of human experience.’” At the same time, however, Segel points out that “realism has been a shaping force in children’s literature”; Segel is referring to childhood’s fascination with specific detail and the operations of daily life,⁵⁰ two realist conventions likewise common to newspaper writing. Segel uses novels as diverse as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Little House on the Prairie*, and *The Borrowers* to exemplify “the realist’s method of establishing authenticity through an accumulation of detail.” (Elizabeth Segel, “Realism and Children’s Literature,” 16).

⁵¹ My translation method might also be understood as a kind of “monstrous assemblage”: the dense Italian in these newspapers relies heavily on referential object pronouns and implied subjects when laying out various argumentative particulars or moving through information. Thus, my translations make use of discrete sentence bits; English legibility sometimes necessitates the carrying-over of one sentence’s specific subjects and objects into the pronoun-heavy and implied-subject verb forms of later sentences. In all cases, I do my best to retain and include all necessary parts of an idea in both my English translation and the Italian original appearing at the bottom of a relevant page.

⁵² In a different version of this argument, Mangione and Morreale assert of *Il Progresso* that it was the “most successful of all the Italian-language newspapers [and]. . . the first to profit from the massive Italian immigration” (454). Several studies of Italian-American culture identify *Il Progresso* as an originary example of the Italian-language periodical. While it was certainly one of the earliest and most broadly circulating Italian-language *daily* papers, it was by no means an influential *early* one, as my work with numerous earlier papers illustrates. For versions of this claim about *Il Progresso*’s temporal superiority, see Salvatore J. La Gumina et al, *Italian America Experience: An Encyclopedia*. (New York: Routledge, 2005) and *Half Bitter, Half Sweet*.

⁵³ According to the Library of Congress’s *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers* database, *Le Moniteur du Sud* was published in New Orleans between August 1849 and at least May 1850 with “an additional masthead in Italian: *Il Monitore del sud*, Aug 5-Oct. 28, 1849.” (“About Le moniteur du sud.”

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress <loc.gov>. Accessed 28 Dec. 2013). Pietro Russo's 1983 survey of "The Italian American Periodical Press, 1836-1980" makes reference to an "Italian section" in the 1836 Spanish-language newspaper *Il Corriero Atlantico*. Published by Italian exile Marquis Orazio De Attellis of Sant-Angelo, this paper had begun in Mexico and continued from New Orleans following the Marquis's relocation there (Tomasi, *Italian Americans*, 248). 1849's *Il Monitore del Sud*, although also literally a section in a French-language paper, did have the distinction of its own masthead.

⁵⁴ Figures on Italian literacy rates from "Literacy," *Encyclopedia of European Social History*, vol. V (New York: Scribner's, 2001).

⁵⁵ Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke UP, 2004), 8. Hereafter cited in text as *NF*.

⁵⁶ Geo. P. Rowell & Co's *American Newspaper Directory containing accurate lists of all the newspapers and periodicals published in the United States and Territories, and the dominion of Canada, and British Colonies of North America; together with a description of the twons and cities in which they are published*. (New York: Geo. P. Rowell and Co., publishers and Newspaper Advertising Agents, 1869), 172.

⁵⁷ In 1873, for example, the *New York Herald* weekly edition was circulating to 88,000 people (Rowell, 1873, pp. 238).

⁵⁸ Although *Il Monitore* is recognized as the first Italian masthead published in New Orleans, *Le Moniteur* was by no means the first French paper to be published in nineteenth-century New Orleans. *Chronicling America* lists ninety-four French newspapers published in that city between 1800 and 1850. Of these, almost all feature either French-only or French and English content. Exceptions include *The Union* (1803-1804), *L'Abeille* (1827-1830), *Le Figaro* (1838-18??), *Le Avenir du Peuple* (1840-1841), all of which featured French, English, and Spanish content; *L'Omnibus* (1840-1841), which included French and Spanish only; *Le Moniteur du Sud* (1849-185?) with its Italian and French blend. ("US Newspaper Directory Search Results." *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress <loc.gov>. Accessed 12 July 2014).

⁵⁹ Discussing the ethnic history of New Orleans, Joseph Tregle describes an historical imagination in which Americans were perceived as cultural interlopers, not as original members of Louisiana's "ancienne population": "It was as a native Louisianian that the Latin creole [any descendent of the first French and Spanish settlers] primarily thought of himself. . . . The two other major groups in New Orleans and throughout the state had gradually come to dominate the affairs of the community to the growing exclusion of all others: the Anglo-American and the so-called foreign French" (Joseph Tregle, *Louisiana in the Age of Jackson: A Clash of Cultures and Personalities* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1999], 26). A few decades after the early-century triad of "Latin creoles," "Anglo-Americans," and "the foreign French," the cultural landscape was even more mixed: "By 1850 the sheer explosion of [major foreign elements] gave New Orleans a population 49 percent foreign born" (33). See Tregle, Chapter II: "The Ethnic Imperative" for more detail on these negotiations between distinct foreign elements the many varieties of ethnically-mixed populations, and "Anglo-Americans." Kirsten Silva Gruesz highlights the contradictory nature of New Orleans political imagination, describing the city as "a space whose shifting sense of relation to the rest of the Gulf of Mexico system has shaped not only its own local identity but that of all the nations that share its coastline" (Gruesz, "The Gulf of Mexico System and the 'Latinness' of New Orleans" *American Literary History* 18.3 [2006], 471). See also *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization* Eds. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1992).

⁶⁰ The French pages include such news items as "Chronique Americane [American Chronicle]" (19 August 1849), "Correspondance Particuliere du Moniteur du Sud [Distinctive Letters to the Southern Monitor]" (19 August, 28 August 1848), and "Chronique des Salons de la Louisiane: Historie d'un mari [Records of the drawing-rooms of Louisiana: The History of a Husband]" (28 August 1849). This latter item appears to be a quasi-reportorial series that blends social custom with gossip.

⁶¹ See Introduction, endnote 43.

⁶² In part, the failure of *Il Monitore* was also the result of its dependence upon a French-speaking population for support. The paper's final edition places the blame for its cessation squarely on French readers: "*The Southern Monitor* believes that subscribers to the French part do not come forward and subscribe themselves to the [subscription] list in mass because, for them, the Italian page is useless—it is a language that most of them do not know. [*Il Monitore del Sud* crede che gli abbonati alla parte francese non sono venuti ad iscriversi in massa sulla sue liste perche era per loro inutile la pagina italiana--e' una lingua che i piu' non conoscono]." ("Ai Nostri Lettori" 28 October 1849. *Il Monitore*).

⁶³ Occasionally, news reports refer to anonymous letters submitted by "our enemies political and personal [nostril nemici politici e personali]" ("Avviso" 29 April 1854. *L'Eco d'Italia*).

⁶⁴ Often, the paper attacked prominent local figures or reported on the nasty doings of more distant priests. A particular object of the paper's ire was Monsignor Gaetano Bedini, a Catholic Cardinal and influential diplomat.

⁶⁵ In 1854, *L'Eco d'Italia* printed a series of eyewitness reports from the notorious Sing-Sing prison describing for interested readers the space, the operations of prison life, the experience of imprisoned women, and assorted details of daily prison life (*Il Carcere di Sing Sing!*" 24 June; 1 July; 15 July, 1854. *L'Eco d'Italia*). Horatio Alger's *Phil the Fiddler* uses *L'Eco d'Italia*'s 1870s reports on Italian street children as foundation for its fictional depiction of young Phil (See endnote 37).

⁶⁶ Kaplan points out realism's capacity to be both progressive and conservative at once: "from a progressive force exposing the conditions of industrial society, realism has turned into a conservative force whose very act of exposure reveals its complicity with structures of power" (*Social Construction*, 1). As Kaplan implies, this contradiction is mainly managed through the balance of site-specific causes (the conditions at Sing-Sing, the situation of destitute children) against structural norms that dictate appropriate civic or economic behavior (that criminals should be punished by society, that destitute children should be educated into productive capitalists).

⁶⁷ "The Catholics and Persecution" 13 July 1854. *New-York Tribune*.

⁶⁸ On 22 July, 29 July, and 5 August 1854, *L'Eco d'Italia* dedicates its entire front page—four full columns—and additional inches inside the fold to rebuttals of the examples, claims, and doctrinal history offered by the anonymous Catholic letter-writer.

⁶⁹ The Library of Congress records a mere year of publication for this paper, 1853-1854, and a single holding, at the Boston Athenaeum. ("About The Crusader," *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress <loc.gov>. Accessed 28 Dec. 2013). All material cited from *The Crusader* in this study is taken from the collection of the Boston Athenaeum.

⁷⁰ "Michel and McGee; or, Two Kinds of Patriotism" 26 November 1853. *The Crusader*.

⁷¹ "Attempt to Kidnap an Irish Girl Suspected of Protestantism" 31 December 1853 *The Crusader* (my emphasis).

⁷² "From Buffalo" 9 Nov. 1853. *The Crusader*.

⁷³ Although the collection of papers offered here does not include publications during the years of the American Civil War, *L'Unione* (and, to some degree, *Il Messaggiere*) report on the national results of that war. Relevant articles from *L'Unione* include "La Repubbliche dell'American del Sud [The American Republic of the South]" (18 December 1867); several reports on the doings of the Ku Klux Klan, in "Rivista Politica Americana [American Political Review]" (15 April 1867) and "Ku-Klux and Loyal Leagues" (6 May 1867). *Il Messaggiere* also summarizes a speech by Jefferson Davis and several other news items from the American South under the English-language headline "Let Us Have Peace" (3 December 1868).

⁷⁴ At least since Ian Watt, critics have imagined connections between forms of representation and economic structures. See György Lukács, "Realism in the Balance," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch, 1033-1058 (New York: Norton, 2001); Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, esp. chap. III, "'Robinson Crusoe,' Individualism, and the Novel" (60-92); Warner Berthoff, *The Ferment of Realism: American Literature, 1884-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1965). More recently, critics

have posited a theoretical connection between structures of thought and structures of social interaction, including but not limited to capitalist pursuits and class conflict. As Michael Davitt Bell argues, “it can be misleading or confusing to use a word meant to describe a mode of literary representation, a kind of literature, to describe instead a shift in concern—a new interest in industrialism, say, or the growing dominance of a market economy” (Bell, *The Problem of American Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea* [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993], 2). Although Bell wants to complicate the too-easy associations of realism as a form with realist content (what he calls “concerns”), he points to a very conventional sense of historical concerns and formal representations. Kaplan also explores this connection in *The Social Construction of American Realism*.

⁷⁵ Previous chapters in this dissertation have presented extensive information about Italy’s complex national unification process during the century. By 1867, Garibaldi and his peasant army had liberated the Southern regions from Bourbon rule and the Italian state had emerged as an independent parliamentary monarchy under the monarch Victor Emanuel II. While the Papal States still awaited liberation from the “temporal” domination of the Pope, Italy was functionally a nation with an operational constitution.

⁷⁶ Lukács claims that realism “captures tendencies of development that only exist incipiently and so have not yet had opportunity to unfold” (1049).

⁷⁷ Alger’s 1872 novel *Phil the Fiddler* introduces readers to the talented and hard-working Filippo, offering an uplifting narrative of “Phil’s” escape from economic exploitation at the hands of a *padrone* and detailing his subsequent participation in American urban life. Alger wants to expose a reality with which some portions of the “American public” remained largely unacquainted; readers of Italian-language newspapers, however (still quite a small “public” in 1872), had long been familiar with the details of this particular exploitative plot. In fact, some American readers might also have been familiar with the general troubles of Italian street children as told through romanticized fictions about this immigrant group. Jacob Abbot’s *Carl and Jocko; or, The Adventures of the Little Italian Boy and his Monkey* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1857) presents Carl as an inspiration for its young readers: “By following his example in these respects when you enter yourselves, hereafter, upon the serious struggles of life, you will almost certainly succeed in the end, and you will, at any rate, be cheered, and sustained, and comforted through all the disappointments, trials, and sufferings that you will encounter on the way” (preface). In contrast to Carl’s inspirational development into a neoliberal wage-earner and productive member of democratic society, the tale of *Lucian Guglieri* follows an unfortunate Neapolitan youth who is kidnapped and forced to sing for money on the streets of New York. Lucian’s story is inspirational not as a civic lesson but as spiritual one; at the close of the narrative, “The saving grace of the gospels lighted their hearts, and they became Christians in fact as well as name. Perhaps it was for this that trouble had come upon them” (Mary B. Lee, *Lucian Guglieri* [New York: Nelson and Phillips: Sunday-School Department, 1874], 84-85).

⁷⁸ Following Michael Warner’s influential definition of “a public,” we might easily identify Chicago’s *L’Unione* as participating in the creation of a cross-regional public of Italian immigrants in its invocation of Italian-language readers “throughout the West and South, as well as in the Territories.” As Warner clarifies, this is “the kind of public that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation.” (Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 66). It is the very fact of circulation throughout diverse U.S. regions that *L’Unione*’s “To the Business Public” uses a selling point for advertisement space; the existence of a widely circulating newspaper in Standard Italian creates the unified public of readers that the editors invoke in appealing to businesses across the nation.

⁷⁹ “To the Business Public” 26 February 1868. *L’Unione Italiana*.

⁸⁰ *Chronicling America* lists several holdings for the paper, but none have issues of the newspaper beyond the date of February 10, 1869. (“Libraries that have it: Il Messaggiere dell’Ouest” *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress <loc.gov>. Accessed 28 Dec. 2013).

⁸¹ Increasing attention is paid to ambitious Italian commercial projects in the United States. One of the most ambitious, and unusual of *L’Italo-Americano*’s economic efforts is its pursuit of a Mississippi “colonization” project: “The Commission appointed to research a location in which to establish an Italian colony was in Meridan (Mississippi) 27 May, and it seems to have decided to suggest the acquisition of a

large tract of land in that area. The dominant idea [for the colony] is still cultivation. [La Commissione incaricata di ricercare una localita' per stabilirvi la progettata colonia italiana era a Meridan (Mississippi) il 27 Maggio e sembra che abbia deciso di proporre l'acquisto di un largo tratto di terreno in quelle vicinanze. L'idea dominante e' sempre la sericoltura].” (“Società di Colonizzazione Italiana,” 3 June 1871. *L'Italo-Americano*).

⁸² In using a loaded communal term like “countrymen [connazionali]” in place of something more regionally recognizable like “paesani,” which carried regional associations, *L'Italo-Americano* illustrates a terminological shift that had distinct community implications.

⁸³ See, respectively, “Thoughts of a Pessimist [Pensieri di un Pessimista]” from 1 April or 6 May, 8 April, 29 April, 1871.

⁸⁴ “Pensieri di un Pessimista” 1 April 1871. *L'Italo-Americano*.

⁸⁵ What the Pessimist calls “imposture” carries the implication of created falsity as opposed to accidental inaccuracy. “Impostura: abitudine alla menzogna, all'inganno, per trarne vantaggio [the habit of fabrication, through deception, to gain an advantage]” (Garzantilinguistica.it); “Impostura: Vistoso apparato di falsità e di menzogne [The flashy mechanisms of falsity and of fabrication]” (wordreference.com).

⁸⁶ Quoted from the paper’s masthead, 1880.

⁸⁷ By 1894, the vast advertising section of *Il Progresso* (which took up approximately half of the paper’s pages) had separate sections for, among other things, “For Sale [Da Vendere],” “In Search of Employment [Ricerche d'Impiegati],” and “Marriage Requests [Domande Matrimonio]” (4 September 1894). An exemplary ad from this latter section affirms the “utterly honest intentions [intenzioni onestissima]” of the advertising gentleman, whose “exclusive object is marriage [esclusivo oggetto matrimonio]” to “a widow or spinster [una vedova o zitella].”

⁸⁸ “Mercato di Bambini in N.Y.: Come e Dove È Possibile Comperare Neonati e Per Quale Prezzo Si Hanno nell'Imperial City [Baby Market in N.Y.: How and Where It Is Possible to Buy Babies and What Price One Pays in the Imperial City]” 11 September 1889. *Il Progresso*.

⁸⁹ A small squib next to the exposé reports that police have discovered an entire family of children, and their aged grandmother, dead of hunger: “A poor old woman was found. . . with four grandchildren, aged, respectively, 6, 4, and 2 years, and the last at 13 months, all practically without clothes and dead from hunger [Una povera vecchia fu trovato. . . con quattro nipotini delle rispettive età di 6, 4, e 2 anni e l'ultimo di 13 mesi, tutti quasi privi di abiti, e morenti di fame]” (“Triste Caso di Destituzione [Sad Case of Destitution]” 11 Sept. 1889. *Il Progresso*).

⁹⁰ Aaron’s dehistoricized yet progressive rubric employs generic language (the first stage of migrant writing is described as “local-colorist”) in portraying the first stage of immigrant experience; linking it to the work of late-century realist fiction, Aaron implies that generic categories of representation might correlate with particular moments within progressive cultural stages. Glazener makes a strikingly similar point in her Anglo-American context, arguing that the shifting definitions and values associated with “the romance” and “the novel” in American periodical writing “identified the romance with earlier or less mature phases of a culture’s development, and. . . threw their rhetorical weight behind the novel as the bearer of progress and national/class mission” (60).

⁹¹ I use “purposeful” instead of something like “intentional” to acknowledge that repetitions within these particular versions of immigrant history are not being crafted by a single author or politician or student of history. It would be functionally impossible that the immigrant narrative I trace in this chapter was 1. intentionally developed by a single or even collective body of individuals and 2. subsequently ignored or suppressed on purpose so that it could be satisfyingly (re)debuted in the “flood” narrative of Italian immigration. Nevertheless, the presence of such a notable repetition of narrative structure might well serve a purpose. At the very least, both versions convey a message about an appropriate model of immigrant assimilation (developmental), and the appropriate cultural community to focus that process (children).

⁹² Margaret Hunt Gram has recently posited a provocative connection between Edelman's notion of reproductive futurity and genre. Exploring the progressive commitments of Jonathan Frazen's *Freedom*, Gram argues that one narrative way around the problem of textual futurity is to imagine "forms better equipped for doing that imaginative work. Would exploring the limits of growth," she asks, "require, paradoxically, the creation of open-ended stories. . . . stories that 'declin[e] to affirm as certain,' as Edelman puts it. . . 'any future at all'" (Gram, "Freedom's Limits: Jonathan Franzen, the Realist Novel, and the Problem of Growth" *American Literary History* 26.2 [2014], 312).

⁹³ Anthony Tamburri, *Re-reading Italian Americana*, 4. In contrast to this Italian-American "lack," Tamburri characterizes the history of American slavery, "two millennia of diasporic existence" and the Holocaust, and the Irish potato famine as acting to unify, respectively, African-American, Jewish-American, and Irish-American ethnic identities.

⁹⁴ In "The Future of Italianità," Robert Viscusi argues that Italianness has become "a world network. . . not just networks of trade, but subsequent networks of architecture, of operatic theater, or large populations of Italians" (web). Thomas Ferraro's inventive *Feeling Italian* uses a pun to highlight the paradoxically exclusive/inclusive nature of modern Italian-American ethnic identification: "to 'feel like an Italian' means, first, to feel the way Italians feel, to have Italian or Italianate types of feeling, whether recognized or not; and, second, to feel that one's identity is Italian or Italian-like, no matter the ancestry. The phrase invokes cultural continuity over distance and across time, including the *mystique* of such continuity" (3). Ferraro points out the simultaneous specificity and flexibility of "feeling Italian": encompassing particular "types of feelings," Italianità ("feeling Italian") is also available for identification "no matter the ancestry" of the relevant feeler.

⁹⁵ Lazo, Roderigo, "Migrant Archives: New Routes in and Out of American Studies." In *States of Emergency: The Object of American Studies* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2009), 37.

⁹⁶ My "alteration" of the historical record is intended not solely as a kind of corrective to overly simple, strictly linear accounts of Italian immigration. Lazo further suggests, and I would follow him here, that migrant archives also have the potential to disrupt a traditional story of immigrant assimilation: "An 'immigrant life' has traditionally implied integration or even assimilation into a national panorama" (47). Lazo is most interested, though, in those texts (or the ethnic perspectives they document) that resist such integration: "The change into an immigrant life deemphasizes what may be its most interesting dimension. . . the importance of a [] work-force that is not easily assimilated" (47).

⁹⁷ In particular, the trials and tribulations of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti have remained especially attractive to historical mythmakers and romancers. See Rick Geary *The Lives of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York: NBM Publishing, 2011); Mark Binelli, *Sacco and Vanzetti Must Die!* (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 2006); Upton Sinclair, *Boston: A Novel* (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius, 1928). Furthermore, there is a cottage industry in depictions of this anarchist romance for children. See Judy Monroe, *The Sacco and Vanzetti Controversial Murder Trial* (NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2000); Howard Fast, *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti: A New England Legend* (CT: Greenwood Press, 1972).

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|| **Publications**

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“Pure Language and Linguistic Purity: Translation, Fascism, *Moby-Dick*.” In *Facing Melville, Facing Italy*, edited by John Bryant, Gordon Poole, Giorgio Mariani, 241- 254. Rome: University of Rome Sapienza Press, 2014.

“I Got A Crush on That Fellow’: Cesare Pavese, Herman Melville, e il desiderio di un traduttore.” *Ácoma*, nuova serie n. 2 (2012): 98-104. Essay, in Italian.

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Joyce Tracy Fellowship. Awarded for research on newspapers and magazines.
American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA. 2013-2014.

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