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GURC Abstract

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### Bodies of Land and Bodies of Women: A Feminist Research Perspective

Last Spring, my Transatlantic Literature class read Margaret Fuller's European dispatches for the *Tribute*, depicting her travels. I was intrigued by her use of female pronouns in reference to land, especially since her reports depict countries under political turmoil. The connection she establishes between bodies of land and bodies of women is significant for conversations about female agency, not only within Fuller scholarship but perhaps, more ambitiously, within feminist criticism, at large. My research focuses on the tradition of feminizing bodies of land in literature, such as referring to Rome as a "she", and how that relates to the tradition of abuse of bodies of women. Fuller's awareness of this tradition allows her to subvert the tradition in ways that resist it.

This literary analysis focuses on Fuller's rhetorical choice of feminizing the land she's traveled to. The treatment of land, such as claiming ownership of it, transcends the physical property to the patriarchal ideologies that women's bodies can also be owned. The gendering of land is a powerful concept that aligns a piece of property with a gender, and in my argument, aligns it to women. Fuller's dispatches then becomes more than just land, taking on the body of a woman and in result, encouraging the ideologies that bodies of women can be used like bodies of land.

My close-reading of her dispatches speaks to larger conversations of victimization of land and bodies of women to raise awareness about gendered language that may go unnoticed. Through the tradition of feminizing lands, patriarchal ideologies that bodies of women can be colonized and capitalized is akin to the same ideology that bodies of land are conquerable and owned. My research found that the connection between the ownership mentality towards women's bodies is supported through the feminization of bodies of land.