

Conversations

The Newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society

Revolutionary Figures: Death and Life of Margaret Fuller by Richard Marranca

I have a vague expectation of some crisis, I know not what. But it has long seemed that, in the year 1850, I should stand on a plateau in the ascent of life, where I should be allowed to pause for a while, and take more clear and commanding views than ever before. Yet my life proceeds as regularly as the fates of a Greek tragedy; and I can but accept the pages as they turn.
-- Margaret Fuller

23 July 1850. Sunset. Fire Island.

My eyes considered the sea, its anger much reduced. Wisps of purple-pink clouds framed the sun. Seabirds squawked and argued over almonds, then rose precipitously to navigate the winds. I was about to leave the beach when a man suddenly appeared.

"Much death," said the stranger. "This was a world tragedy."

"While the ship sank, those beachcombers glared like hyenas," I replied, my cape billowing. "I floated to the beach on a wooden contrivance."

"Is that a seaworthy vessel during such a blow?" he asked.

I observed the stranger: so absorbed in the memory-maelstrom he forgot to clean sand from his whiskers. The wind whipped at us, he chased his hat to the edge of the sea and screwed it back on. His hair lacked fashion.

"I'm unaccustomed to water and could not help a family I came to know on the voyage," I confessed, hands on hips, with a backward lean, all frontage.

"A family?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, a family. Must I echo?"

"You knew them?"

"Ships force conviviality upon us, as the sea pukes waves and creaking planks make good men into drunkards."

"You don't say. And may I inquire, what is left of this wise family?"

The stranger's demand gave me bile. It took no effort to conjure the family, their wonderment impressed me: the revolutionary man, the mother with a mind like a library, the curious boy. I kept the stranger waiting, pretending to capture the steam percolating in my brain; I knew what he desired more than corpses for Christian burial. We continued along the beach, as the sun darkened like butterfly wings.

"Angelo was his name," I whispered just above hearing. "Called him Nino."

"Nino, you say? A pleasing name."

"The mother Margaret read to us like the music of the spheres," I said. "She knew Greek like Plato, Latin like Caesar, German like Goethe. A delight."

"Italian like Dante?" he said with grim charm. "You exaggerate, sir. What did she say?"

He leaned toward me. Otherwise he was a distant fellow, plain and of middle height, bearded and rude, more country

than city, sedate but vigorous.

"She predicted that from now on it would be constant revolutions."

He nodded in fractions as if calculating the destructive end of all paths, of humans with their infernal ambitions and lusts. We walked along the beach, with pine trees on one side, whale road on the other. The man bent to fetch a button from a shipwrecked coat. The beach was more apparitional than real. It told tales. Of those on board the brig, some made it to shore, while others got reduced to bones and fish meal.

"May I inquire as to your name and origins?" the stranger asked.

"Tis Bastian Bloodsaw, citizen of the world," I answered, circling my finger. "My lineage: royalty. My coat of arms includes a unicorn and dragon."

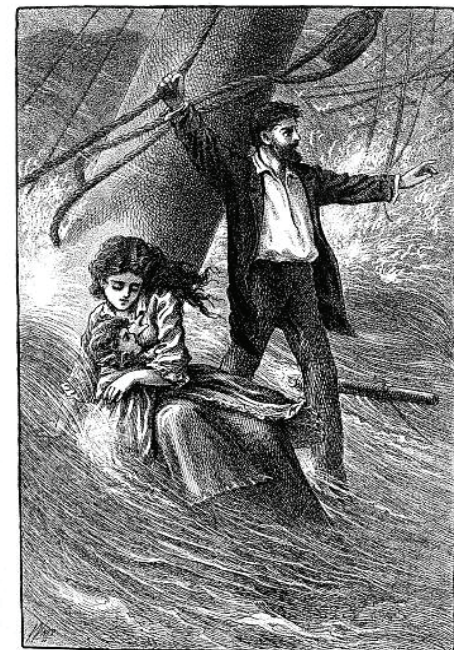
"A unicorn would not sit with a dragon," he replied. "And royalty, it is not popular in America. Fought a war over it."

"Americans love royalty," I said with froth. "Quite an unlovely outcome of your revolution: slavery goes on, women with no vote, the rise of vulgar opinion, the great circle of Indian nations broken."

"We are a-working on that. Freedom is inside too," he said, bending to pick up a shell, enticed by its undulations. "The Indians collected these shells for wampum."

"Sir, did you not rebel during a more recent war?"

"I did. It was slavery, the war with Mexico and so forth. Surely virtue seduces the soul." (con't on pg 10)



WRECK OF THE SHIP "ELIZABETH" AND DEATH OF MARGARET FULLER, HER HUSBAND, AND CHILD.

'Death Of Margaret Fuller And Family.' Illustration depicts the wreck of the ship 'Elizabeth' and the death of American journalist and feminist Margaret Fuller (1810 - 1850), her husband, Giovanni Ossoli, and their son, Angelo Ossoli, New York, July 19, 1850. (Photo by Interim Archives/Getty Images)

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Christina Katopodis

Conversations is published digitally twice a year. Subscription is included with membership in the Society. Current and past issues are also housed on the Society's website.

We welcome short articles on Fuller-related topics (including scholarly pieces and book reviews, as well as personal and non-academic essays). We also welcome contributions to our regular features: "Graduate Student Voices," "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom," and "Recent News/Announcements from Members." Submissions and queries should be sent via email to Katie Kornacki at kkornacki@caldwell.edu with "newsletter" in the subject line.

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Society Members,

When we first launched *Conversations*, it was my hope that just as Fuller envisioned herself as the "nucleus" of her famous Boston Conversations, both "giv[ing] her own best thoughts" and serving "as a means of calling out the thoughts of others," this newsletter would likewise provoke Society members to share their "best thoughts" with one another and that it would serve as a call to its readers and contributors to participate in a lively exchange of ideas. When the inaugural issue of *Conversations* came out last fall, I was overwhelmed by the amount of positive feedback and support the newsletter received. As with many such endeavors, it is only through the active participation and involvement of so many of you that this publication is possible. Not only have I been encouraged by the warm reception with which the newsletter was met, but I have also been heartened by the interest that so many of you have shown in contributing to this (and future) issues. And so the conversation continues...

Picking up one of the strands from last issue, which featured pieces by **Al Von Frank** and **Megan Marshall** that dealt with Fuller's untimely death by shipwreck, this issue features **Richard Marranta's** "Revolutionary Figures," a work of creative fiction also dealing with the shipwreck off of Fire Island. In my own scholarship, I have been working to trace the influence of Fuller on the imaginative literature produced by first-wave feminists who, through their novels, continued the conversations begun by Fuller and am delighted to discover that Fuller remains a vital source of creative inspiration today. As the content of this issue of *Conversations* attests to, Fuller continues to inspire imaginative literature being produced in the 21st-century, including **Adrienne Perry's** dissertation/novel, *See Through Girls*, which she discusses in her personal essay in "Graduate Student Voices," as well as the recently published historical novel, *Dearest David* by Glen Ebisch. You will find more information on Ebisch's novel in this issue, along with a Q&A with the author.

Another example of the ways in which Fuller continues to inspire people today is the Fuller Project for International Reporting. Make sure to spend some time exploring the interview that **Megan Marshall** conducted with Christina Asquith, one of the founders and the editor in chief, to find out more about the exciting and very timely work that the Fuller Project is doing to support journalists in fifteen countries worldwide who are covering issues impacting women.

I am happy to continue to build on Society President **Charlene Avallone's** initiative to promote teaching Fuller through our regular feature, "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom." Rather than a venue in which to exchange syllabi and lesson plans, this section invites personal essays from those of us who are currently teaching Fuller (or have taught her in the past) in a variety of settings and contexts, including the college classroom, an online course, a public lecture series or museum setting, a high school classroom, alternative education setting, or a graduate seminar. This issue features **Christina Katopodis** reflecting on the intersections between her own pedagogy and that of Fuller.

This issue, our other regular feature, "Graduate Student Voices," includes not one, but two personal essays; one from **Adrienne Perry** and another from Simone Puleo. I am also happy to include Nanette Hilton's short essay, "Margaret Fuller: Prophet Poet," in which she examines some of Fuller's *Dial* essays.

As I begin to plan for our next issue, due out in mid-September, I would once again like to invite you all to participate in some of the conversations that we have begun. In addition to personal essays, news items, and scholarly pieces, *Conversations* is also interested in published book reviews. If you would like to review one of the recent publications mentioned in this issue, or any other Fuller-related book that has been published recently, I would be very happy to consider it for the next, or a future, issue.

Warmly,

Katie Kornacki
Editor, Conversations

Letter from the President

Greetings fellow members of the Fuller Society,

As the Society enters on its second quarter century, 2018 promises to be an exciting year. We are already off to a good start. With the new by-laws going into effect, new officers have begun to assume their roles and take part in planning events. Thanks go out to Immediate Past President **Phyllis Cole** for her help in the changing of the guard.

As you know from the Society listserv, First Vice President **Sonia Di Loreto** has already announced the calls for papers for the next upcoming conferences (SSAWW, MLA). Second Vice President **Jana Argersinger** took a hand in organizing the Society's dinner at MLA in New York City and is now making plans for the Society's joint sponsorship of a social tea at November's SSAWW conference in Denver. **Leslie Eckel** becomes the Society's first Communications Officer, with Fuller biographer **Megan Marshall** moving into the seat on the Advisory Board vacated by that move; and veteran Fullerian **Jeff Steele** and Newsletter editor **Katie Kornacki** join the Board as well. Thanks to **Noelle Baker** for running the two elections that give us a full Executive Council.

Our first conference panel of 2018, "Margaret Fuller: New Critical Approaches," was well attended at MLA in January, although the "bomb cyclone" prevented many from making it to New York—including **Mark Gallagher** who was scheduled to speak at the session (hope to hear that talk another time, Mark). Yet the panel, chaired by **Dorri Beam**, drew two dozen people to hear the fine presentations of **Christina Katopodis** and **Katie Simon**. As you might anticipate from reading the abstracts of the talks in this Newsletter, the papers sparked a lively, energetic discussion.

And there is much more to come. Two stimulating panels are scheduled for the San Francisco ALA in May, as you can see from the details in this newsletter. The annual Society meeting will also be held at the conference. If you are unable to be present at that meeting but have an idea or a concern that you would like the Society to address there, please be in touch.

When the long-planned Heidelberg conference, "Transcendentalist Intersections," meets in July, Fuller and the Fuller Society will be well-represented. You can view (soon, if not quite upon reading this) the full schedule of presentations and cast of speakers at the conference website:

<https://transcendentalistintersections.wordpress.com/>

November will find Fullarians gathering in Denver at SSAWW, not only for tea, but also for a panel organized by **Sonia Di Loreto** and chaired by **Noelle Baker** and titled "In the Company of Margaret Fuller: Unexpected Genealogies of Feminism." The session is designed to expand discussion of Fuller's connections with other women writers, intellectuals, and activists, a discussion recently stimulated by essays in *A Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* (2014) edited by **Jana Argersinger** and **Phyllis Cole**, and in *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* (2012), edited by **Brigitte Bailey**, **Kate Viens**, and **Conrad E. Wright**. Again, see details in this newsletter.

In the year ahead, I hope to encourage two initiatives that have emerged from conversation at conferences and the annual Society business meeting. First, an initiative to promote teaching Fuller:

At the 2016 ALA session in San Francisco honoring **Bell Chevigny**'s founding of the Society, discussion turned to the question of how audience members had first come to be interested in Fuller. The consensus credited teachers with making introductions. (I acknowledge my own debt here to **Bernard Rosenthal**, Binghamton University). Continuing discussion at the next ALA in Boston, Society members expressed the desire for conference sessions that would address teaching. We will pick up the conversation again at this year's ALA with a session devoted to that topic. **Katie Kornacki** invites contributions to the "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom" column that she inaugurated in the newsletter with **Michael Schrimper**'s interesting article, "Teaching Fuller in the 21st Century." There is as yet no volume on Fuller in the MLA Approaches to Teaching series; perhaps it is time for Society members to think about changing that.

Of course, there are many ways to teach Fuller other than in academic settings or through the academic and popular publications to which so many of you have contributed. Society members have extended public awareness of Fuller's importance through a rich variety of means: delivering public lectures and sermons, organizing community events, establishing markers at sites important to Fuller, collaborating with state and local historical organizations, introducing her into pastoral work, developing documentary film and web archive projects, leading travel seminars in the U.S. and abroad, preserving Fuller's history through the Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge, MA, and creating various websites, trail guides, videos, and more. Kudos to the many who have contributed to expand the reach of Fuller's history and writing, notably **Christina Alexis**, **Brigitte Bailey**, **Mario Bannoni**, **Michael Barnett**, **Sonia Di Loreto**, **Dorothy Emerson**, **Megan Marshall**, **Jenny Rankin**, and **Peter Reilly**.

We hope to hear from you about your own ideas for teaching Fuller, your innovative syllabi and classroom exercises involving her work, and your other venues for bringing Fuller and her writings to public notice.

Second, an initiative to stress collaboration with other women-author societies and promote attention to Fuller in the company of other women authors:

Following exciting transnational conferences co-sponsored with the Sedgwick and Stowe societies, undertaken severally under the leadership of **Briggs Bailey** and **Phyllis Cole**, and in anticipation of the Heidelberg conference, enthusiasm ran high at the Society's last business meeting for undertaking collaborative projects with other societies. Preparation for renewing the Fuller Society's guaranteed panel at the annual MLA convention reinforced the impetus, for it raised consciousness of the fact that Fuller is the single American woman prose author before Wharton to enjoy such status, thereby maintaining the visibility of early women's writing at the major gathering of our academic profession. In hopes of broadening and deepening our understanding of the linkages—historical, biographical, textual—between Fuller and other women, the panel that the Society will sponsor at the upcoming SSAWW conference invites comparative approaches. This second initiative would invite avoiding the too common misconception that because Fuller made unique contributions she had no significant foremothers or sisters in struggle, a misconception that slights the important contributions of **Sarah Grimké**, **Elizabeth Peabody**, **Sarah Forten**, and **Lydia Maria Child** (to name only a few of Fuller's compatriots), not to mention women in other countries or in the latter half of the century. As Fuller herself emphasized throughout *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, others had gone before her and were working around her to similar ends of furthering protofeminist thought and advancing the freedom, equality, and social position of women. As we begin to reach out more to other societies, we hope to hear from you about your own ideas for collectivity and collaboration.

Please be in touch with any thoughts or suggestions you might have for the Society as it goes forward in 2018 and beyond. The Society's growing membership, expanding presence on the internet and on social media, and active participation in multiple academic and public venues all offer inspiration to renewed efforts.

aloha (as the presidential seat moves from Pennsylvania to Hawai'i),

Charlene

President, Margaret Fuller Society

Recent News

Margaret Fuller Society Receives Renewal as "Allied Organization" of the MLA

Since our last newsletter Phyllis Cole (then Society President) has received notification that our application to renew the Society's status as an "allied organization" of the Modern Language Association has been approved for the next seven years. The allied status benefits our Society especially as it offers the opportunity of a guaranteed session at the annual MLA Convention and thereby keeps Fuller before the eyes of the entire language and literature profession. The Fuller Society holds the distinction of being the single organization dedicated to a U. S. woman prose writer before Edith Wharton to enjoy such allied status.

As many of you know, the annual MLA conference session affords occasion for scholars to share their work of writing and teaching about Fuller. The Society has continued an unbroken record since 1996 of annual MLA panels, especially under the leadership of Jeff Steele. The conference has served as well to recruit new members to the Society. More broadly, as the review committee acknowledged, the Fuller "organization shares common interests with the Modern Language Association," so the alliance of the two organizations thus serves to promote a wide range of interests connected to the study of language and literature.

Renewal of allied status is by no means automatic, but rather depends upon the Society's demonstration of its vitality as a scholarly organization. In renewing the Fuller Society's allied status, the MLA especially valued our recent "membership growth, convention participation, and diversity of membership participation in convention sessions," expressing appreciation of our concerted "efforts in these areas." Every member shares in the appreciation that the MLA expressed to our Society: "we thank you for all the work you do."

Dial Bookshop Opens in Chicago

Mary Gibbons and Aaron Lippelt, owners of Pilsen Community Books, Chicago, recently opened a second bookstore, the Dial Bookshop, a new and used bookstore, in the landmark Fine Arts Building on South Michigan Avenue in Chicago. The store's grand opening celebration took place last November and featured live music, drinks, snacks--and books.

Named after the transcendentalist literary magazine founded in 1840 and run by Margaret Fuller, the Dial Bookshop aims to continue the rich literary history of the Fine Arts Building. The store will offer new and used books and remainders, and will host author readings. The Dial Bookshop is located at 410 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 210, Chicago, Ill. 60605.

Broadview Press Announces New Edition of *Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Broadview Press has recently published a new edition of *Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Robert D. Habich. From Broadview Press:

Somewhere between the iconic sage and the speculative idealist lies an Emerson that students don't often encounter; a flesh-and-blood figure whose writings testify to his continuing exploration of the individual's place in an increasingly conformist and crowded world. In its selections and its apparatus, this

Broadview edition bridges the gap between Emerson and students by stressing his real-world engagements.

The collection contains a range of prose and poetry addressing some of Emerson's major concerns—nature and the self, imagination and the poet, religion and social reform—as he explores the enduring question "How shall I live?" Historical appendices include primary materials on Transcendentalism; the contemporary debate about the nature of biblical miracles; other authors' responses to Emerson as a writer and thinker; and the development of his complex reputation as a representative American.

If any Society members are interested in the edition for potential course adoption or to review, please contact Tara Bodie, Assistant English Editor and Publisher's Representative at: tbodie@broadviewpress.com She would be happy to provide you with a complimentary electronic examination copy. *Conversations* also welcomes any reader to submit a review of this new edition for the next issue (Fall 2018).

Recent Publications

Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos. "Speaking Truth to Divergent Powers: Margaret Fuller, Bettina von Arnim, and the Broken Bond." *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*. Supplement 13 (2017): 35-51. accessible online: <https://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghi-bulletin/bulletin-supplements/forging-bonds.html?L=o>

Fullerians Gather for Dinner at MLA 2018

Despite the arctic temperatures in New York City during MLA 2018, several Fuller Society members braved the cold to head down to Crispo for some hearty Italian fare. Located in the heart of Chelsea, this warm and cozy restaurant provided us with a snug private dining nook where we enjoyed a leisurely meal while catching up with old friends and acquaintances, as well as forming some new friendships.



Fuller Society members gather for dinner and conversation at Crispo in NYC during MLA 2018. Photo by Jana Argersinger.

Announcements from Members

Conversations invites announcements from Margaret Fuller Society members. If you would like to share any upcoming (or recent) conference papers or publications or any other Margaret Fuller related news, please email **Katie Kornacki** at kkornacki@caldwell.edu with your news. Make sure to include "Newsletter" in the subject line.

The Fuller Project for International Reporting: Margaret Fuller's 21st-Century Legacy

Megan Marshall Interviews Christina Asquith, Founder and Editor in Chief

by Megan Marshall

In late spring 2013, shortly after my biography of Margaret Fuller was published, I was invited to speak about Fuller at a meeting of the Cambridge Mothers Discussion Club (MDC), a 118-year-old group whose members (no longer all mothers) gather monthly for lunch and discussion of books or issues of the day. There I met Christina Asquith, a journalist whose own book, *Sisters in War: A Story of Love, Family, and Survival in the New Iraq*, based on several years of reporting on the front lines, puts her in Fuller's company as an intrepid and passionate female war correspondent. Although Asquith had spent many years working in the Middle East, she is also an MDC member, grateful, she let me know, for the support the group provides when she is in town.

That day, Asquith told me of her plans to establish a foundation to support journalists covering women's issues in the Middle East and other war zones. She would name her foundation for Margaret Fuller. Now, five years later, the Fuller Project for International Reporting is a vibrant organization providing news stories that would otherwise be neglected and supporting female journalists overseas in their often dangerous work. I was invited to hear Asquith speak about the Fuller Project at an MDC meeting in December 2017, and afterwards asked her to answer a few questions for *Conversations*.

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MM: What is your vision for the Fuller Project? Does it function as a news bureau or something more?

CA: Reporting on women has never been taken seriously as a beat inside newsrooms. Even though we're half the population, women are quoted much less, have fewer bylines and often make up only a fraction of op-eds and books reviewed.

The Fuller Project was founded with the belief that in disregarding reporting about women and women's rights, editors were leaving out a lot of incredible stories and presenting to the public a world view according to men.

When it began in 2014 and now, the vision for The Fuller Project was to create regular reporting on issues that impact women and publish it in prestige outlets with large audiences already, like the *New York Times*, and alongside their stories on the economy, defense and politics. So far, we've grown into a full time funded staff of six, and we work with a network of more than 30 independent women journalists in 15 different countries worldwide.

We specialize in issues impacting women. The Fuller Project team is almost all reporters, but we raise money additionally to support more reporters, and we find them, develop stories with them, connect them with publications, fund their work and give them training.

MM: How did you get the idea?

CA: As a freelance reporter living in Baghdad in 2003 and covering the US-led war, I grew fascinated with the multimillion-dollar US effort to build women's rights in the Islamic

country, as well as how Iraqi women were struggling with sexual violence, kidnapping, rape, maternal mortality, child marriage and political exclusion—but absolutely no outlets were reporting these stories, and editors routinely ignored my pitches. Stories on women were perceived to lack gravitas. In fact, at a Baghdad dinner party, a colleague from a British newspaper asked me why I didn't "cover something serious."

I reported on it anyway, and in 2009, I published *Sisters in War* with Random House. It was the only book on Iraqi women to emerge from a war that produced well over 100 books. Very few publications reviewed the book, and generally I felt pretty discouraged by the whole experience of trying to elevate stories by and about women. For the next few years, I started a family and did small editing and communications jobs in Harvard Square, but that frustration I felt about women being ignored and dismissed stayed with me.

In 2013, as my husband—who is also a journalist—was being reassigned to Istanbul, Turkey I began to think about how I'd get back into reporting. Around that time, I learned about Margaret Fuller from reading your book, *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life*. It was like a gasoline poured onto a simmering fire. I could feel Margaret's frustration, and yet her perseverance as a feminist and journalist spoke straight to me, and inspired me immensely, as did you, Megan, for believing so strongly that her story had value.

In Istanbul, I decided to fully dedicate myself to reporting on women's lives, especially Syrian teen girl refugees and Turkish women, whose fight against domestic violence laws and child marriage received little media attention. But I needed a team to push forward a movement to get all newsrooms to recognize these were serious stories. Fortunately, I met a friend in Istanbul then who partnered with me in launching this organization. The Fuller Project seemed an obvious choice because not only was Margaret the inspiration, but her name represented our mission: to give audiences the full story, and not leave out the voices and experiences of 51 percent of the population.

MM: What are some of the stories you're most proud of?

CA: Too many teen girls lose their chance at education because of conflict. We did a short video on a Syrian 15-year-old girl who lost her violin in the war and works at a basement garment factory. The *New York Times* published it. I love it.

Russia doesn't even keep count of women murdered in domestic violence—that's how bad it is. They guess about 12,000. I wrote this op-ed for Public Radio International as part of a series I was developing on Russia's brutal domestic violence problem.

And I recorded this "sweet" radio segment about the changing lives of young Turkish women—focusing on one 20-something MBA graduate who was about to inherit her father's Ottoman Empire sweet shop, and shatter the all-male dominance of Istanbul's Old City. (cont. on pg. 11)

Graduate Student Voices

"Graduate Student Voices" is intended as a platform to introduce Society members to some up-and-coming graduate students in the hopes of fostering connections and stimulating collaboration and mentorship. This issue, I am pleased to introduce not one, but two graduates students, each of whom has submitted a personal essay. Inspired by her time in New York at MLA this past January, Adrienne Perry writes about the connections she made between our historical moment and Fuller's. She also discusses her novel/dissertation (currently in progress) and the ways in which she has woven Fuller into her fiction.

by Adrienne Perry

New York City, January 6, 2018. I spent nearly an hour staring out at the sculpture garden, sitting on the broad benches strategically placed for people who can take no more. The garden was closed to the public, covered in a crust of silver snow, except where footprints suggested a MoMA employee or someone lucky and probably freezing had gained access. MLA Conference and museum-saturated with ideas and images—the architecture of cruising, the gothic in Langston Hughes, Cy Twombly's *The Four Seasons*, Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes* in play with Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, the evolution of the little black dress—I had no room for another teaspoon of wonderful, beautiful brilliance. The museum was closing. Chattering people in down and wool coats moved in a sinuous stream toward the ground floor. I joined them, saw a sign for a Louise Bourgeois exhibit, and thought out of guilt, "Just stop by. Get your money's worth."

Outside the galleries' glass doors, a tapestry. Painted on cloth, a pregnant woman with enough umbilical cords going in and out of her naked body to resemble a power strip. To her right and in French, red embroidered block letters spelled a raw message:

Ma mère avait / raison. Souffrir / et mourir.

Ah! maman, / j'étouffe. Je / n'ai jamais / souffert ainsi.

JE NE / SUIS PAS / ASSEZ / BELLE / POUR LUI

JE SUIS / TROP / L'AIDE, IL / NE FERRA / PAS / ATTENTION / A MOI

Quelle idée / va-t-il prendre / de moi? Il croira que je / l'aime.

Was the "he" the ghostly baby floating near the woman's stomach, an absent lover or a double for Bourgeois' father? As I translated the lines, the vulnerability stunned me. Here was someone saying the unsayable, speaking of her pain and shame. "My mother was right. Suffer and Die. / Ah! mother, I'm suffocating. I have never suffered so. / I AM NOT BEAUTIFUL ENOUGH FOR HIM. / I AM TOO UGLY. HE WON'T PAY ATTENTION TO ME. / What idea will he have of me? He will think I love him." I thought, "Go 'head, Louise."

In the last gallery, a full-sized, androgynous decapitated gold body hung from the ceiling, surrounded by prints and drawings red in tone. The title, *The Arch of Hysteria*. I chewed over hysteria, wondered, "What would Fuller say?" Like a close relative who has passed, Fuller regularly strolls into my thoughts.

* * *

A pastime: Create imaginary dinner parties with short guest lists composed entirely of deceased, luminous artists: James Baldwin, Clarice Lispector, Ursula Le Guin, Margaret Fuller, Prince. Prince is the wildcard; Fuller is always on the roster. We'll talk about Emerson and Thoreau and what does she think of the term "mansplaining"? As a writer of primarily fiction and creative nonfiction, I approach Fuller as an essayist eager for a mixture of

scholarship and a good kiki, but my writing about Fuller began with her translations. Encouraged by a class with Jason Berger at

the University of Houston, I was keen to track Fuller's translation praxis, the polyvocality in "The Great Lawsuit." I considered Fuller's moves as translator in terms of editorial choice and style, and I put those elements in play with current work on language justice and contemporary translation theory.

This work on Fuller's translations continues, but as I finish my novel/dissertation, *See Through Girls*, I've found ways to weave Fuller into my fiction. *See Through Girls* is itself a kind of translation, an adaptation of *Invisible Man* that recasts Ellison's novel in feminist, mixed-race terms. The novel follows Ginny and Aimee—two wonderfully smart, somewhat misguided multiracial college students—as they vandalize books from the western literary canon in their college library. Their goal is to disrupt their peers' ideas about black-white binaries and women. In that process, Ginny, the novel's narrator, describes the importance of reading, and of Fuller:

Light bulbs. A wall of captured suns casting fake-real light onto my skin. My books, mouths opened for the howl. All of the ladies in my army: Spivak and Arundhati, Ms. Fuller and Cixous. Most of them I couldn't understand but loved anyway for writing in a language I would someday speak fluently. In my fugitive dorm room I would get frantic. There was not enough time, enough glue, for all the relearning, the retelling, we had to do.

Fuller makes other appearances in *See Through Girls*, through Ginny and Aimee's encounters with her texts, her ideas, through the appearance of characters that serve as her cipher. Fuller's thumbprints, happily partout, shaping the novel's clay.

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In the online catalog for Bourgeois' show, the page featuring *The Arch of Hysteria* displays one of the artist's quotations about her work. "A ferocious desire for independence is in all the figures...a determination to survive at whatever fragile level you can achieve." Seeing Bourgeois' words, I see why Fuller came to mind. Survival, ferocity, and determination remind me of her and those saying the unsayable in this historical moment, using art and writing and reading to "get free."

About the Author:

Adrienne Perry grew up in Wyoming, earned her MFA from Warren Wilson College in 2013, and is a PhD candidate in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Houston. From 2014-2016 she served as the Editor of *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*. A Hedgebrook alumna, she is also a Kimbilio Fellow and a member of the Rabble Collective. Adrienne's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Copper Nickel*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Tidal Basin Review*, and elsewhere. She is at work on a novel and a collection of essays.

Graduate Student Voices (cont.)

The other contribution to “Graduate Student Voices” this issue comes from Simone Puleo, who shares Fuller’s transnational approach to literature and culture, admiring the way that she “constantly challenges us to expand our cultural frames of reference.” In something of a reverse trajectory from Fuller, Simone’s parents moved their family from Italy to the United States, where he grew up having “inherited” an Italian frame of reference and “adopted” an American one.

As the newsletter continues to find its own voice, I am eager to build this regular feature to highlight content generated by graduate students, any of whom are invited to submit personal essays reflecting on Margaret Fuller and on their own experiences. If you would like to contribute an essay to “Graduate Student Voices,” please submit your piece via email to kkornacki@caldwell.edu with “newsletter” in the subject line.

by Simone Maria Puleo

In 1991, my parents were finalizing arrangements to move our family from Palermo, Sicily, to New York, New York. My father was a pastry chef, and my mother had worked behind a bakery counter since she was a teen. My parents had ambitions to forge a path of their own, to embark on their own transatlantic crossing. We lived in the Northeast for a few years while they operated a small chain of Italian bakeries, named “Anna’s Bakery.” Eventually, we resettled in sunny South Florida, where I grew up.

My mother is a voracious reader, a lover of books and literature. I was fortunate to have a home lined with bookshelves of Italian classics from Dante’s *Divina Commedia* to Manzoni’s *I promessi sposi* and many others (and works by some Sicilians too, such as Camilleri). She’s a spirited raconteur, and in our day-to-day, she would often relate the insight of some author she’d read or was reminded of. She inspired my curiosity about Italian literature, and with time, I started thumbing through her books myself.

Meanwhile, I attended public school in the United States. I read English texts that many American kids read then: YA novels like Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* or Hinton’s *The Outsiders*; and in high school, Poe’s short stories, some Shakespeare, or the poetry of Maya Angelou. I went on to get a BA and MA in English from Florida Atlantic University. I had the pleasure of studying with some incredible professors like Taylor Hagood and Mark Scroggins, whose teaching, for me, animated the American literary tradition.

When I chose to apply for Comparative Literature PhD programs and was thereafter accepted to the University of Connecticut, my hope was to fuse these two differing frames of reference: the Italian one that I inherited with the American one that I adopted. My interest in Margaret Fuller initially emerged from this personal desire. In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, the cosmopolitan scope of Fuller’s idiom captivated me. She draws from a wealth of international source material, with a particular emphasis on Italian literary sources that, for me, were familiar, or better yet, familial.

In one passage, Fuller, with the intention of criticizing arranged marriage, looks at the relationship between Dante Alighieri, his wife Gemma Donati, and his muse Beatrice Portinari. History tells us Gemma Donati was promised to Dante at an early age, as was customary. The two were married, and the couple had three children before Dante’s exile from Florence. Interestingly, what Fuller points out is that Dante never wrote a single word about his wife, Gemma. He did, however, dedicate his magnum opus to his muse Beatrice, a young woman he only met a few times in his youth, if at all. Fuller saw this peculiar instance

of Italian literary history as a moral lesson about the necessity of choice and the virtue of companionate marriage. Without choice, there could be no love, only callousness and often suffering—an insight Fuller gleans from Dante’s life and works.

Fuller was a New Englander with a penchant for Italian literature and culture; that was her particular circumstance. What I came to value about Fuller is that beyond simply showing her knowledge of Italian sources, she constantly challenges us to expand our cultural frames of reference. Her writing encourages an active interest in cultures beyond those we inherit—an important, non-essentialist insight for her era and ours.

And she very well recognized that living up to such an insight required intellectual labor. Once in Rome, Fuller would often zap fellow Americans who did not put in the work: “Without modest scrutiny, patient study and observation, he spends his money and goes home with a new coat perhaps, but a mind befooled rather than instructed,” she writes of one of the many compatriots with whom she crossed paths in Rome. Fuller could be so witty and contemptuous! She often compels her readers to immerse themselves in cultures different from their own, by traveling or reading, but especially with conversation and through personal relationships. She believes in getting beyond a superficial, touristic understanding of culture. “It is necessary,” she writes about traveling, “to speak the languages of these countries and know personally some of the inhabitants.” So, unlike many others who were solely fascinated by Italian arts or antiquities, Fuller saw value in speaking the language and speaking with people.

In the words of Kwame Anthony Appiah, a philosopher of cosmopolitanism that I admire very much, “the challenge then is to take hearts and minds formed over the long millennia of living in local troops and equip them with the ideas and institutions that will allow us to live together as the global tribe we have become.” What draws me to Fuller’s work, especially the *New York Tribune* dispatches, is that she seems to have been writing with such a challenge in mind.

About the Author:

Simone Maria Puleo is a PhD Candidate in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Connecticut. His dissertation studies Margaret Fuller and a number of other American visitors to Italy; from James Fenimore Cooper to Edith Wharton, as they reflect upon social and political discourses associated with the Risorgimento.

NEH Summer Seminar in Concord

by
Katie Simon

Educators from across the country gathered last June in Concord, Massachusetts for an NEH Summer Institute entitled “Transcendentalism and Reform in the Age of Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller.” I was lucky enough to get a spot in this two-week seminar and came back enriched with pedagogy ideas, inspired to produce collaborative scholarly projects, and full of a new appreciation for the role of place in the development of the literary imagination. Ably organized by Sandra Harbert Petrulionis and **Diane Whitley Grote**, the program included an A-list of luminary scholars, as well as visits to archives and historic sites in the Concord area.

Petrulionis’s lecture, entitled “Transcendental Radicals: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau’s Concord: 1851-1860,” gave a great overview of the Thoreau family’s involvement with the antislavery movement, and documented the key role the women of Concord played in moving Emerson toward an abolitionist position. The issue of social reform became more tangible in Boston, where the group took a tour of Boston’s Black Freedom Trail that emphasized the role many of the Transcendentalists played in the anti-slavery movement. Another day was spent touring the Lowell Mills, a factory town founded in the 1830’s and 40’s that used female operatives. Of course, the group also toured the Emerson’s house, the Alcott house, and walked around Walden Pond, and it was an amazing experience to do this with other scholars who teach and think about these writers regularly. We were lucky enough to dip into the archives at the Concord Free Library and the Boston Historical Society. One relatively new site we toured, the Robbins House, is a museum documenting Concord’s African American history. There are lots of exciting new discoveries and pedagogical projects coming out to light in this space. The two-week seminar was packed with expert lectures by scholars including: **Phyllis Cole**, Robert Gross, **Megan Marshall**, John Matteson, Wesley Mott, **Joel Myerson**, **Lance Newman**, Melissa Pennell, and Laura Dassow Walls.

Of interest to Margaret Fuller scholars in particular would be Laura Dassow Walls’ discussion of her new biography, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life* (University of Chicago Press), timed to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Thoreau’s birth. Asked to summarize her key findings, Walls stated that her research demonstrates that Fuller’s influence upon Thoreau was more extensive than has previously been thought. Walls suggests that while the figure of Emerson looms large in Thoreau studies, there is more work to be done to understand his intellectual debt to Fuller. **Phyllis Cole**’s engaging seminar, “Transcendentalist Women and Reform: Circles and Intersections,” likewise stressed the influence of women upon the canonical male writers of the period, calling for an “alternative genealogy” that would find in figures like Mary Moody Emerson and Elizabeth Peabody “multiple origin stories” for literary Transcendentalism. Casting Fuller as the “most cosmopolitan” of the Transcendentalists, Cole gestured to opportunities for new scholarship in Fuller studies. Our picture of her is still incomplete, still “in motion,” Cole stated.

At a time when the NEH is under attack, it is important to stress how practically useful these seminars are, and how they translate into better teaching and scholarship. Indeed, of the 25

scholars attending the seminar, we will teach some 3,066 students this year alone. Over the course of our careers, we collectively will reach some 76, 650 students in spaces including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and research universities. In my state of Georgia, I am teaching Thoreau and Emerson this week in a large, required sophomore level core class, and my classes are richer for the conversations we had in Concord. Indeed, one of the best parts of the seminar involved “pedagogy conversations” where colleagues and visiting lecturers generously shared lesson plan ideas, creative assignments, even discussion questions for the texts we all read together. There was also lots of informal trading of ideas over lunches, dinners, and during bus rides on field trips.

My students were impressed, this week, when we discussed “Civil Disobedience,” that I had stood in June in the spot where Thoreau went to jail, and that I could provide such context as the short distance between the jail and the residence of the aunt who bailed him out. Most of my students grew up in Atlanta, steeped in the history of M. L. King, Jr., but not a one of them had ever read the Thoreau essay that inspired him. Having studied Transcendentalist writers in the context of social reform this summer, I’m inspired to ask students to connect these writers to our own era, to our own location in middle Georgia, and to formulate for themselves a sense of the issues that matter. What does “self-reliance” mean to them today? What constitutes a life with or without principle, for them?

I’m so grateful to now have an expanded group of colleagues also asking these hard questions, continuing our summer conversations in greater circles extending out across the nation to students in Texas, California, Washington, DC, Connecticut, and beyond.

About the Author:

*Katie Simon earned her doctorate at UC Berkeley; and is now an Associate Professor in the Dept. of English at Georgia College, where she is also affiliated with the Program in Women's and Gender Studies. Her research and teaching focus on American literature before 1900. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *ESQ*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, and *Women's Studies: an Interdisciplinary Journal*. She is at work on a book manuscript entitled *Something Akin to Freedom: Autobiography and Affect in the Long Nineteenth Century*.*



Participants in the 2018 NEH Summer Institute gather outside of Orchard House, the Concord home of Bronson Alcott & family; including Louisa May Alcott. Photo courtesy of Katie Kornacki.

“Margaret Fuller: Prophet Poet”

by Nanette Hilton

Margaret Fuller erupted into an era like her “Leila,” full of purpose and power, even perhaps with “the wind, bare and often bleeding feet, opiates and divining rods in each over-full hand, walk[ing] amid the habitations of mortals as a Genius, visit[ing] their consciences as a Demon,” sharing the mission to emancipate, enlighten and elevate (“Leila” 466). She was stymied by the dominant Romanesque societal framework and expectations (Steele 25-28) of nineteenth-century America, but negotiated and soldiered on to break ground, make her mark, and leave a legacy of prose.

Fuller experienced the frustration of her era daily. Unlike her father or her mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, she couldn’t respond to the call for self-perfection as she might have liked due to gender prescriptions of her day, though she heard it clearly enough (Steele 28). Instead, she did what she could do. And she did it sublimely! Emerson’s poem “Suum Cuique (To Each His Own),” speaks for Fuller’s determination not to lose her opportunity, sorrowing because of the metaphorical rain, but instead to “attend to [her] own affairs...In rain, or sun, or frost” (347).

Fuller’s study of Goethe, published in the *Dial* near the ten-year anniversary of his death, was neither a mere tribute or timely criticism, but rather the examination of an analogous spirit modeling the struggle of genius or the “mental conflicts through which he passed to manhood” (8). Like Goethe, Fuller faced reality as a writer, having to embrace his maxim, “It is not the knowledge of what might be, but what is, that forms us,” making it the second motto to her essay, “Goethe” (7-8). Yet both authors also faced Schiller’s dictate to “keep true to the dream of thy youth,” and the great problem of “how to make the dream real, through the exercise of the waking will” (“Goethe” 7).

Fuller strove to make her dream real as editor of the *Dial* magazine. Fuller’s aim to be that “consecrated bard” (“Goethe” 4), of which she believed Goethe fell short, gave her purpose and place in fulfilling her stewardship at the *Dial*. She was quick and sure to define that role:

The critic, then, should be not merely a poet, not merely a philosopher, not merely an observer, but tempered of all three...If he critiques the poem he must want nothing of what constitutes the poet, except the power of creating forms and speaking in music. He must have as good an eye and as fine a sense; but if he had as fine an organ for expression also, he would make the poem instead of judging it. (“Goethe” 7-8)

Which is exactly what she did — make poems. Her writing, no matter the genre, consistently reached toward and achieved poetic genius.

Her effort was not unique to writers in measure of desire, but certainly unique in measure of success, especially for women of

her era. Fuller’s “Leila” personifies many of the cultural contradictions confronted by middle-class white women of Fuller’s generation, who were exalted for their piety and yet excoriated for spiritual initiative, cherished as mothers and condemned for their sexual impulses, worshipped as “true women” while being sacrificed to restrictive social codes. Both a divine being and a sacrificial victim, Leila incarnates the “pained sense of disturbance felt by women struggling against the confines of a society that purported to cherish womanhood while tying women’s hands with silken cords” (Steele 91).

Like-minded Harriet Martineau was simultaneously in the authorial trenches across the ocean, pen hidden in hand until the exigencies of her father’s failed textile company liberated her from the veil of anonymity with the freedom to write in her own name and thereby earn her own living, eliciting Fuller’s mixed review of *The Hour and the Man* in which she deemed Martineau’s book “deserving a place in the next rank to those which made the modern novel no unworthy successor to the ancient drama” (134-35). Resonating with Fuller’s dream, Martineau autobiographically recalled that her father’s business failure was “one of the best things that ever happened to us” and that her latitude to write enabled her to “truly live instead of vegetate” (108).

Fuller used her poetic palette to paint a character personifying this common struggle against simple vegetation in which she was engaged, similar to Goethe’s creation of Tasso through whom he told “what I suffer.” In defense of Goethe’s purpose, Fuller wrote: “such pictures are not painted from observation merely. That deep coloring which fills them with light and life is given by dipping the brush in one’s own life-blood” (“Goethe” 6). Through “Leila,” Fuller expressed her struggle as she worked in different capacities as a writer. Like Goethe, Fuller had no desire to “truckle” to the world (“Goethe” 20), but instead to truly serve it, even as a savior. Alluding to the Lord’s Prayer, “Not mine but thine, Leila,” and bestowing divine acknowledgement and recommendation, “the Holy Ghost descended on the globes of matter” (Luke 3:22, 22:42; Fuller 466), Fuller colored “Leila, Saint of Knowledge,” and herself with Christlike characteristics overcoming pain, death and sin in her struggle for “an individual existence” (“Leila” 462).

Remaining true to her nature was Fuller’s task — a task at which, Fuller laments, Goethe failed. “If his genius lost sight of the highest aim,” she wrote, “he is the best instructor in the use of means, ceasing to be a prophet poet, he was still a poetic artist. From this time forward he seems a listener to nature, but not himself the highest product of nature, a priest to the soul of nature.” Fuller notes that Goethe’s other character, Faust, likewise spoke for his creator, this time employing necromancy to predict the future: “Not willing to grow into God by the steady worship of a life, man would enforce his presence by a spell; not willing to learn his existence by the slow processes of their own...” (“Goethe” 21-2). (cont. on pg. 11)

Revolutionary Figures

(cont. from pg. 1)

The stranger had not offered his name, nor had I required it, yet I did wonder. Children shouting and tossing yarn redirected our gaze. We surveyed picked-over carnage: clothes, silk, rags, wood, almonds, olive oil, soap, broken chests, frames absent of paintings, an adult skeleton with a frown; leftovers from a non-attended funeral. Wagon furrows and footprints had been worn smooth, but there were some remaining labyrinths on the sand. Items had been stolen and re-stolen by the local pirates who'd returned to their homes and legitimate pursuits.

"There, there," I said, pointing, catching a nose of salt air. "Sandbar out yonder called the brig like the proverbial Sirens, doomed us. The captain had died of smallpox and the first mate, Mr. Bangs, was unqualified for his promotion. I should have banged Bangs onto the pirate plank. But who would have steered us? Like so many, Bangs was a boy-man. Did I tell you we carried a load of marble that crashed through the sides? Oh, cruel seas! Oh, Poseidon."

"Sir, you have a preternatural levity with words," he said, rubbing the button like a rosary, a tear escaping his stoic visage. "I am told the hurricane sent up wicked waves, that the lifeboat fell short of volunteers, that the scavengers were more interested in things than lives."

"There should be a law against beach vultures."

"Law never made men a whit more just," said the stranger.

A horse and buggy creaked along, its residents tipping their hats. A meat wagon, pulled by some devilish canine, left empty with its owners cursing. So long folks, nothing left to loot. The rustic and I continued in a line along the beach, avoiding horse dung. He bent to touch a woman's glove, twisted and mummified. He gasped.

"I feel a trample of my soul," I offered. "Margaret could not swim, the husband Ossoli raised his arms, in hopes that God was watching. The steward grabbed Nino, to take a chance on the waves. When I looked back, Margaret in ghostly white leaned against the foremast with a most dejected mien. Waves snatched her and the Italian."

"A terrible day for the respiration of our Republic," he said. "Only a few minds like hers in a century. Even Poe feared her genius."

"I know you, sir. Your name is Thoreau—agitator and Emerson sidekick?"

"Henry David Thoreau," he said, "Waldo Emerson is my friend, as is Lydian, his wife."

"'Tis an honor."

"As for me," Thoreau said, with a slight bow.

We continued until I bent to examine a single bottle of wine embedded in the sand. While I took a swig and another and another, he stared at the moon. Buddhists in far-off lands celebrate such glowing nights...

"Mr. Thoreau," I said, "have you thought much of the next world?"

"One world at a time, sir."

I removed snuff from my ivory case and offered some to Thoreau. "No fish, fowl, meat, drink or smoke for you, sir. May I inquire of your fitness?"

Thoreau exhaled, with one of those Hindoo seashell breaths. "I awake with sunlight and birdsong, to swim the pond, to saunter the universe of Concord. And you?"

"My humors are balanced, enough blood," I said, smiling.

"Well, have you read Emerson? Revolutions started behind his house and inside even more," Thoreau said, covering his

mouth. "Good things are wild and free."

I detected something. So we strolled along the beach; even with the sun's deflation, the wave crests shone like old heads. We passed four boys playing dominoes wearing pilfered clothing, including hats: one boy wore six. When I saw one of Margaret's hats, I wanted to ring their little chicken necks. Thoreau was uncharacteristically disturbed. We continued on a course parallel with the restive waves. He referred to it as "a saunter in search of remnants," which was oddly grandiloquent. Thoreau had hastened from Concord-town when news came of the shipwreck, only to find funereal objects, and me. He told me that Bronson Alcott would arrive soon. Of Margaret, he found little but the false door of memory. Genius, such as it is, lives on.

Margaret, you may recall, was a celestial salon all by herself, a source of new and antique ideas. Books and ideas leaped from her head, like Athena from Zeus. Her father the barrister had trained her beyond the normal range, let us conjecture. While other children played with dolls, she recited Homer and Cicero. Margaret had been editor of *The Dial*, the mouthpiece of those Romantic peacocks. (During my time abroad, copies of *The Dial* reached me by some miracle of transport.) Margaret had been hired by the *New-York Tribune* to cover the Roman Revolution in all its winged glory and airless failure. One day, she had been wandering around St. Peter's when she met that Italian aristocrat. Love begins so freely in the modern world. Zounds!

What of her Italian manuscript? Was it scooped up by the waves, or used by ruffraff to kindle a fire? Oh fates, terrible ones. Thoreau and I were out of words, exhausted, sand-filled.

But I miss Angelo, that child; the best children act like adults, but allow adults to act like children. Angelo Eugene Philip Ossoli mixed English and Italian. At times, I fed him, along with porridge, various Latin words. They were a family with a future. Angelo was buried in a white outfit. I placed a sailor's hat over his heart.

How I wish I could have shared with Thoreau the stories of her childhood vision of an eagle with a chain on its foot, of Mazzini and Garibaldi's faith in Italy, of her brave husband and the crack of cannon fire, of the ancient ruins and piazzas Margaret told me on the doomed brig, with a cape of translucent sky; but the sadness brought up the eels in me.

Death echoes from the hollows, from the bottom of the seas, from the graveyards and city dumps, from the diseases that slumber in breath and bowels, from the infuriating darkness, from whales and waves, from enemies.

"Mr. Thoreau, you have a scientist's mind and a mystic's heart. A new species, is it not?"

"I'm not the first," he said. "In fact, Margaret rejected a few of my essays. She, Bronson Alcott and Emerson are the ones with immortal fame. Someday they will wear marble garments. I am mainly a saunterer and note-taker."

"You un-sole boots, Mr. Thoreau. But slogging in the sand has unraveled me. Perhaps another time I could offer you ale in that public house up yonder?" I said.

I'd not feasted in days, felt water-logged, bloodless. I looked him over from boots to beard-hairs. I sniffed him, the graveyard of his lungs...

"I accept your invitation, though I'm not known for merry-making," he replied, cocking his hat. "Mr. Bloodsaw, you are a man out of time."

I nodded in agreement. Seagulls cackled overhead, as if laughing at us. Trees have souls and voices. Methinks the moon shares a secret language with crabs heading into the sea.

"Sir, do you have a hermit nature?" I asked.

"Being a hermit is preferable to city muck. (cont. on pg. 15)

Fuller Project (cont. from pg. 5)

MM: What ways has Fuller inspired you and other journalists in the FP?

CA: She inspires me almost every day. As we face challenges, I always think about how much harder it was for her in the 1830s and 40s, as she wasn't allowed into university and felt social pressures to marry and [to] ignore the many injustices against women. I think about her work reporting on overworked women and children and labor laws, and of course I think about her covering the Roman Revolution, and having also made epic global journeys about the long, dark nights and the excitement and fear of arriving in unfamiliar countries. Mostly, I appreciate the way she challenged norms of her time and was unafraid to go public with her vision.

Perhaps right now, in the wake of #metoo and #timesup we think there is ample space for women's voices and issues in media--we may even feel tired of hearing about it. But what change if any will happen as a result? Around the world, too many women live truly desperate lives, restrained by law, culture, religion and brutality. For too long we've shrugged off this patriarchy. We're going to keep saying injustice against women "is a big story." We're seeing huge societal shifts globally right now, and although I'm cautious, I'm also hopeful this next decade will be historic for women.

Prophet Poet (cont. from pg. 9)

It was this slow process that Fuller accepted and embraced as editor of the *Dial*, as a writer and journalist, and as a literary critic and feminist. Fuller was not only a poetic artist, but a prophet poet, seeing far into the future shaping that future wherein opportunity for an individual existence might not require so much blood.

About the Author:

Nanette Rasband Hilton's work has been published in travel and trade magazines, in literary journals, and as instructional manuals in digital and print formats. Her artwork has been licensed world-wide and can be found on products ranging from nutcrackers to textiles. She holds a degree in Writing and is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Language and Composition at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has particular interest in excavating buried writer's voices and helping new writers find their voice. When she's not creating, Nanette may be found cycling the Mojave or enjoying time with her husband, five daughters and their families. You're invited to view her portfolio and learn more about Nanette's work at www.nanettehilton.com

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MM: What are some of the FP's needs that you'd like Fuller Society members to know about can we help you?

CA: We need help with copy editing, editings and reporting, and would really appreciate a solid volunteer to take on any of those tasks.

And we'd appreciate introductions to individuals who have capacity to support our organization and spread the value of our mission, as well as suggestions of people we should introduce ourselves to. We're almost always happy to speak at a dinner party or gathering as an excuse to meet new people and expand our network of supporters.

Sign up for our newsletter at www.fullerproject.org or just email me your request: Christina@fullerproject.org

MM: What's on the horizon for FP?

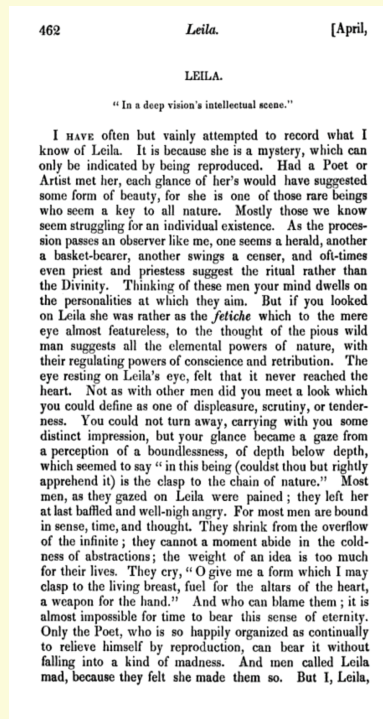
CA: This January, we launched a year long partnership with *ELLE* to cover global women's issues; and we have a partnership with a Kenyan newspaper unfolding. We're also launching US coverage, including a series on women in power.

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"Leila," as it appeared in the *Dial*, volume one, issue four. Image courtesy of Google Books: <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=-ukAAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA462>

Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom

Because many of us are educators, this is designed as a space in which we may share and reflect on our successes and challenges in teaching Fuller. In this second installment of what I hope will become a regular feature of *Conversations*, Christina Katopodis shares her recent experiences teaching “Advanced Topics in 19th Century Literature: Gender in the American Renaissance” this past fall. Drawing connections between her own pedagogy and that of Fuller, Christina describes an productive two-class sequence pairing Milton’s *Paradise Lost* with Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. To submit an essay, please send it as an email attachment to kkornacki@caldwell.edu with “newsletter” in the subject line.

“A remaking of the mind itself”: Margaret Fuller’s Pedagogy & Mine

By Christina Katopodis

Teaching Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is instructive in its challenge. The text contains numerous references that task students with additional research to understand the import of its anecdotes. The text’s oscillation between essentialism and radical gender fluidity can also perplex the student who expects a linear argument one would find in a work such as Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Yet, when given due time for reflection, Fuller’s *Woman* never fails to reach students at the heart in our moment today, troubling gender and feminism further, and begging comparison to Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity.

Fuller raises questions that demand a response from a modern audience ill-equipped to answer them. Is there room for the spiritual in feminism? Have our voices lost some of their passionate urgency in our reserved, academic writings that seek to foster political change? Can women offer the world something that men cannot? Even to take a first stab at that last question appears at once dangerous and also necessary. Fuller has a way of transferring urgency to her readers and waking even the sleepest of students at eight o’clock in the morning—but it takes work to get there.

My pedagogy, like Fuller’s, depends on the circuitous nature of conversation that returns to some of the same ideas over and over again throughout the semester, complicating them with each turn. My classroom is student-centered: students generate the discussion questions and pick the passages we spend time closely analyzing. They also generate anywhere from one third to half of the content for the syllabus; they take turns presenting or leading a discussion; and we rotate time-keeping to make sure we get to everything on our agenda for the day. This equity in leadership brought us to Fuller’s *Woman* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in the same week in my “Advanced Topics in 19th Century Literature: Gender in the American Renaissance” course this fall. Students paired two passages of Milton that they selected themselves with Fuller’s *Woman*. One passage was selected for each class period on Fuller, and students compared the authors’ portrayals of marriage, especially the mutual dependence of man and woman in heteronormative marital relations.

Fuller’s text really needs two class periods because students need time to carefully read her sentences, digest their meaning(s), and let the text do its work in their minds. Phyllis Cole writes about Fuller’s *Conversations* as inspiring a “remaking of the mind itself,” and I believe Fuller’s *Woman* does the same in its anecdotes and examples that lead readers to their own, personally meaningful conclusions rather than dictating oversimplified, generalized answers.

What I’ve found helps most with Fuller is telling students not to look for a linear argument but to let the text affect and change them, to attend to the examples and anecdotes that strike them, leave others that don’t for another day, and remain open to reconsidering what they think they know. This approach comes from reading Jane Duran’s 2010 article in *The Pluralist*, “Margaret Fuller and Transcendental Feminism.” It’s a great piece to read during lesson prep.

At the end of the first class, I asked students to choose one sentence from *Woman* for the next class that they would like to read aloud and discuss. It could be a sentence that spoke to them or one they had a question about. Although I limited them to one sentence, a few students had picked the same one or had almost picked the same one. Giving students the opportunity to decide what was discussion-worthy empowered them to draw their own conclusions while navigating a very difficult text. Each student had an opportunity to adequately prepare a focused point or question, and every student shared something in a generative discussion with 100 percent participation.

If you have the opportunity to guide your students to consider pairing Milton with Fuller, in a 75-minute class, I recommend giving 20 minutes to Milton (approx. 50 lines), and 50 minutes to half of Fuller’s *Woman*. Adding a great deal of Milton to the reading load is unreasonable, but reading 50 lines aloud, together in class, leaves plenty of time for analysis and discussion. Milton’s portrayal of Eve in comparison to Fuller’s radical ideas disseminated in *Woman* brings out the innovations of the latter both in its time and in a modern context.

While many students read Virginia Woolf and Mary Wollstonecraft, few read Margaret Fuller so, at least in my class, most are reading her for the first time. Comparing *Woman* to *A Room of One’s Own* and *Vindication* helps to place Fuller in the American and Transatlantic canon of women’s writing. Soon after Fuller, we read Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Birthmark,” and discussed what kinds of endings women authors of the period would have written (e.g. Fanny Fern, Catharine Maria Sedgwick). This exercise helped us to see similarities between Fuller and other women authors of the period. Transitioning into discussions of race and gender, we read Audre Lorde’s “Poetry is not a Luxury,” Phillis Wheatley’s “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” bell hooks’ *ain’t i a woman* [Chapters 1-2], and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s “The Slave Mother,” soon followed by Sarah Grimke’s “Letters on the Equality of the Sexes” [Letters V, VI, VIII]. Grimke brought us back to some of Fuller’s points about slavery that were progressive and also limited by her white female perspective. When I found some students struggling with this, I brought up Fuller’s letter 489 to Georgiana Bruce that contains Fuller’s questions about the women at Sing Sing.

Inevitably, students reading Fuller come to see how little has changed since her time, and the tone of the conversation is notably different once Fuller has passed through the room. Nineteenth-century Victorian ideals feel pervasive and ever present in our lives today, suffocatingly so, and students speak more passionately when we discuss “historical” female-authored texts. They demand so very much from antebellum female authors, and some can be unforgiving of a “meek and mild” female heroine. When I introduce Fuller to a class, it seems that the question of “is this feminist enough?” has been answered with a resounding “Yes!” at this point in the semester, and we have been grounded, at last, in Fuller’s time and in ours.

About the Author:

Christina Katopodis is a doctoral candidate in English at the Graduate Center, CUNY, a Futures Initiative Fellow, and an adjunct at Hunter College.

Margaret Fuller Society Panel at the Modern Language Association January 2018

The Society presented the panel, “Margaret Fuller: New Critical Approaches,” chaired by Dorri Beam, at the 133rd MLA annual convention, which was held in New York City from January 4th to January 7th, 2018. Despite a snowstorm at the start of the convention, which ushered in some bitter cold, we had a strong turnout. Unfortunately, the storm prevented panelist Mark Gallagher from attending. Below are the abstracts from each presenter, including the absent Mark:

Critique as Affect in Margaret Fuller’s Transcendentalist Writings

Mark Gallagher, University of California, Los Angeles

While the arc of her literary life bent toward a career in journalism, the title of “critic” was one that suited Margaret Fuller even in her earlier, more Transcendental years. This is because the optative mood of Fuller’s Transcendentalism often takes the form of critique—be it social, political, aesthetic, or protofeminist—one in which the world is seen as a perfectible condition despite appearances to the contrary. We first see this utopian urge in a self-reflexive mode of semi-autobiography. It is a form that characterizes many of Fuller’s Transcendentalist writings, one in which her proto-feminist critique is embodied by an androgynous ideal of human equality. This harmonization of the masculine and feminine that would become the subject of “The Great Lawsuit,” later revised into *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, was foregrounded in her earlier sketches, “The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain” and “Leila.” In these semi-autobiographical stories, Fuller advocates for a new way to know oneself—a phenomenology of the spirit with the power to affect social, political, and religious change. For Fuller, such a critique consists in feeling, for to apprehend the world is to be affected by it. This affect of critique, or what Fuller calls an “intelligent sympathy,” emerges from the conflict between cultures of sentiment and criticism in the early nineteenth century.

The Trouble with Gender for Margaret Fuller

Christina Katopodis, CUNY

Margaret Fuller knew the significant connection between Transcendentalism and transcending social and physical boundaries. To her, the material and the spiritual were vibrant and capable of fluidity and conversion. As a woman who loved both men and women intensely, and was perceived in different social contexts as more feminine or more masculine, Fuller offers us an early example of a woman’s experience of fluid gender identity akin to a stream of thought. Moreover, she reminds us of something that has been lost in feminist discourse today by bringing the spiritual back into conversation. Her notion of gender troubles our notions of solidity, of the flesh, by emphasizing the soul in her sense of solidarity, a transcendence of the flesh and of our “mean egotism.”¹ Fuller’s feminine self is transpersonal, as Dorri Beam notes, it “can be felt within the body, but it does not originate there; it is a transpersonal force existing beyond the confines of the person” (63). Femininity is not rooted in the body, nor fixed for Fuller; rather, it was a force that could be shared, linking the one and the many through a notion of spirit.

Yet, John Matteson reminds us that she was writing “within a culture that firmly associated womanhood with externality” (34). Intellectualism at the time was considered a masculine quality, which Fuller was fully aware she demonstrated. She had been educated by her father and treated like a first-born son. Later in her schooling she was competitive with her male counterparts, and criticized for being unladylike—too smart, too competitive for a girl. The disconnected experience of living in the flesh of a woman but being perceived as having the mind of a man is likely

what led to her insight that gender may sometimes feel embodied, and, equally, disembodied. Fuller understood that gender—although this was not a term in use then—is not tethered to the body but socially constructed.

In a close reading of Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, which Beam argues “merged Mesmerist descriptions of vital fluid and Transcendentalist faith in an Oversoul” (57), my paper begins with Fuller as a precursor to the field of Gender Studies and draw parallels between her and Judith Butler.² I argue that Fuller’s inclusion of the feminine soul adds a missing element, a spiritual element of solidarity in shared experience, to political discourse today.

Citations

Beam, Dorri. “Fuller, Feminism, Pantheism.” *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles*. Ed. Brigitte Bailey, et. al. Lebanon: New Hampshire UP, 2013. 52-76.

Matteson, John. “‘Woes...of Which We Know Nothing: Fuller and the Problem of Feminine Virtue.’” *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles*. Ed. Brigitte Bailey, et. al. Lebanon: New Hampshire UP, 2013. 32-51.

¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836).

² For the sake of time and scope, I will mostly stick to Butler’s *Gender Trouble*, but I may refer to her later work in order to demonstrate the relevance of Fuller’s nineteenth-century contribution, made before sexual categories became inflexible in the eugenics movement.

Haunting Affect in Fuller and Thoreau

Katie Simon, Georgia College

Margaret Fuller’s influence on Thoreau gets discussed primarily through her editorship of his articles published in the *Dial*. This paper takes up a further debt, one of emulation, analyzing closely the haunting assemblages in Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes* and their contribution to what I have termed the “hauntological sublime” in Thoreau’s posthumously published *Cape Cod*. Both texts are unusual travel narratives, self-consciously deconstructing their own genre. Both adopt detached journalistic realism to counter the easy sentimentality of conventional portraits of death. Drawing upon Jane Bennett’s concept of “geoaffect,” I examine the haunting affect projected onto the landscape in both works, tracing complex vectors of racialized violence, subordination, disgust, loss, and death as they appear in the assemblages of rocks, bones, trees, beaches, and trinkets. Like the “assemblage of thoughts, feelings, cultural intertexts and ideological inscriptions” Jeffrey Steele terms “the textual sublime,” the hauntological sublime “embeds perception in an intertextual matrix”. But the hauntological sublime that *Cape Cod* borrows from Fuller goes further in actively haunting the reader with a sense of what has gone missing from the conventional sublime. Despite the cheery, upbeat picturesque descriptions Fuller deploys to counter sentimentalized notions of the Vanishing Indian, Fuller’s counternarrative critiques the inadequacy of an inherited visual/textual/aesthetic system overlaid with racialized violence. *Summer on the Lakes* posits the logic of haunting as a way of blasting through received narratives of progress, assembling a constellation of images outside of the space and time continuum of the travel narrative, and depicting a landscape supercharged with negative affect.

“In the Company of Margaret Fuller: Unexpected Genealogies of Feminism”

Upcoming Margaret Fuller Panel
at SSAWW in Denver

November 2018

In the Company of Margaret Fuller: Unexpected Genealogies of Feminism

Chair: Sonia Di Loreto

A large part of the scholarship regarding Margaret Fuller has been devoted to her feminist sensibility, and it has emphasized her participation in circles of intellectuals advancing a gendered perspective. Among other recent works, both Toward A Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism (2014) and the volume Margaret Fuller and Her Circles (2012) have uncovered and discussed complex and rich relations between Margaret Fuller and other women writers, intellectuals and activists. In the tradition of this scholarship, this panel seeks papers that address and contribute, hopefully in surprising ways, to scrutinize and redesign the acquired lineages of feminism in Margaret Fuller and other 19th-century women writers, in order to bring about new critical approaches to the study of Margaret Fuller.

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Margaret Fuller and John Neal *Fritz Fleischmann, Babson College.*

“I knew none who was so truly a man,” Margaret Fuller wrote after meeting John Neal, whom she had invited in 1838 to address her students at the Green Street School in Providence “on the destiny and vocation of Woman.” When Elizabeth Oakes Smith heard him speak on women’s rights, he “fired my enthusiasm. What he said of women responded to what had so long been fermenting in my own mind that I was deeply affected.”

John Neal (1793-1876) – athlete, provocateur, writer, reformer, entrepreneur – was the most prominent male feminist in the antebellum United States. Like Fuller, Neal described men and women as gendered creatures existing in mutuality; unlike Fuller, he demanded specific rights for women, such as the vote and equal pay. Echoes of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* can be found in his work as late as 1864, but his typical stubbornness also led him to disagree with Fuller (and later leaders of the woman’s rights movement) on key issues. In 1845, after she sent him a copy of *Woman*, he wrote to Fuller, “I tell you there is no hope for woman, till she has a hand in making the law ... But enough – we must have a talk together, if I am ever to persuade you into a right view of the subject.”

On a panel on “unexpected genealogies of feminism,” leading to and emanating from Fuller, John Neal clearly belongs “in the company of Margaret Fuller.”

Genealogies of Translation: Fuller, de Staël and Caroline Crane Marsh

Etta M. Madden, Missouri State University

This presentation will suggest the influences of Margaret Fuller’s and Germaine de Staël’s views of translating upon Caroline Crane Marsh (1816-1901). The “unexpected” aspect of this genealogy is that Marsh was deemed an “invalid” (often unable to see and to walk), a traditionally feminine rather than feminist figure who depended upon and has been eclipsed by her husband. Marsh lived abroad as wife of George Perkins Marsh, US Ambassador to Turkey from 1850-54 and then to the newly-formed Kingdom of Italy from

1860-81. In Turkey she met political exile Cristina Belgiojoso, who stimulated her interests in cultural differences. Marsh became a published translator, writer of encyclopedia entries, author of her husband’s biography, and of poetry and fiction, all while fulfilling duties as an ambassador’s wife. She also responded to a calling as a surrogate mother and social activist amidst Italy’s political upheaval. Marsh, labeled a “Corinne” by one American visitor to Rome, hosted receptions, met with civic leaders, and became involved with a newly-formed school and orphanage in Florence, established by former political exile Salvatore Ferretti.

My hypothesis is that Marsh’s translating – reading, writing, and communicating orally in a language other than English – contributed to her openness to intellectual and ideological transformations that she believed all should undergo. These changes influenced her activism. She wrote admiringly of Matthew Arnold’s continual seeking of “new truths,” and her husband wrote in his lectures delivered at New York’s Columbia College in 1858 that “translation forces us into new trains of thought” and “lifts us out of the rut.” Most importantly, I will discuss influential concepts of translation in Fuller’s life and writings and in de Staël’s *On Germany*. The couple’s library and writing demonstrate their awareness of both women’s revolutionary ideas.

Looking for Transpacific Genealogy in Early Feminism: A Study on the Analogy between Margaret Fuller and Ume Tsuda

Yoshiko Ito, Taisho University, Japan

This paper explores an indirect linkage between Margaret Fuller and Ume Tsuda on the premise that an outstanding pioneer existence can be an encouragement and act as a guide for a person who intends to do the same challenge even if there is no actual encounter. Ume Tsuda is one of the five girls whom the Japanese government sent to America in 1871 soon after Japan ended its national isolation. She was six years old when she arrived at San Francisco and spent twelve years in Washington, D. C. Returning to Japan after a long absence she found much difference in culture and custom and concluded that the conditions of women’s status in Japan were helpless. To her eyes, America was an example of ideal liberalism though American women themselves were struggling for equalities when she had lived there.

As Margaret Fuller searched for role models for women in European myths and literature when she wished to change the current situation surrounding women in America, Ume Tsuda tried to see an ideal in the United States that had culturally nurtured her. The American way of living she had experienced was a beacon light for her. The analogical pattern of thinking between Margaret Fuller and Ume Tsuda is to see an ideal outside so that they might change the inside structure.

This paper analyzes the letters Ume Tsuda sent to her foster mother, in which she lamented the “poor” women in Japan. Brought up and educated in the United States, she was able to have dual or plural points of view, and she believed in her mission as a pioneer of women’s liberation. This paper will seek what Ume Tsuda saw in American (*cont. on following pg.*)

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(cont. from previous pg.)

feminism to which Margaret Fuller gave much inspiration and what she wished for women generally, or especially in Japan, and also pay attention to the articles in the New York *Tribune* that reported the activities of Ume Tsuda in America to see what she represented in the American society.

The Visual Genealogy of Margaret Fuller

Jenessa Kenway, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Critics such as Kathleen Lawrence have suggested that Margaret Fuller's style of transcendentalism (as opposed to Emerson's or Thoreau's) was primarily aesthetic. But, so far scholars have largely viewed Fuller's aesthetic sensibilities in terms of literary works. This gap in the scholarship suggests there is a need to link the discussion of Fuller with specific works of visual art and construct her visual genealogy. My paper defines Fuller's aesthetic criteria and uses her early essays in *The Dial* to establish her interest in

Revolutionary Figures

(con't. from pg. 10)

A Yankee farmer is a true philosopher."

"You prefer trees to people," I said, glancing at the pines.

"That single tree is a life-giving force to countless creatures. Sitting beneath a tree was not lonely for the Buddha or Lao Tzu, nor the desert an affront to Jesus or Mohammad."

"Jesus' first miracle was making wine at a wedding," I said.

"There is mystery about you," Thoreau said. "I should want to introduce you to Mr. Hawthorne. Have you an acquaintance with his romances? I don't read them."

"There's nothing wrong with fancy granted, it's pocked with sin and Puritan purpose. Just finished Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. Melville and Poe are the gravediggers of darkness," I said, then something jumped inside of me, and I fiercely gripped Thoreau's arm. "Thoreau, what did you learn in the woods? Was it not a return to man's dark primitive?"

Thoreau stepped back, broke free, found his composure, gave a crooked smile.

"Bloodsaw you act like a zad. I learned about ants and beans and water and trees, and simplicity and friendship, too."

"Boring as a rocking-chair," I sneered. "I love power, engines, smoke, spinning wheels and men seeking coal and gold and stacks of buffalo hides and empires, and shares of stock."

"That is mad and diabolical," Thoreau said, tugging his beard. "Another thing I learned: all is one."

"No, no, no, sir."

Time stopped, insects paused in the air just like when Krishna and Arjuna conversed between battle lines, just like when the Pythia spoke at Delphi. I gasped, unknowingly biting my knuckles until blood trickled.

"I have a demand," Thoreau said. "What did Margaret reveal of her time in Italy?"

"There is no recreating that. She said her Italian adventure was like five lifetimes."

He looked at me and removed his hat. I paused, swinging my cape around, walking into the doorway of the indigo night. He trailed along, desirous of lodging a complaint.

"Emerson sent me here for her Rome manuscript. Have you seen it?"

"There was a reason Romulus had been suckled by a she-wolf and came to kill his brother," I said with steel. "Good and evil are intertwined like rope. Rome, the center of the world, the proverbial umbilicus. Margaret said many things, which filled her like mother's milk."

"That was her nature. Luminous and generous like sunlight," said Thoreau. "Bloodsaw, what in grim Hades do you mean? Do you blab to clarify or confuse?"

female creativity. Those criteria are then matched against female artists living during Fuller's time, aided by names mentioned in her European dispatches, with whom she would have had opportunity to come into contact, to form a collection of art that could be used to expand the discussion of feminine visual transcendentalism. The conversation about Fuller, Caroline Sturgis, visual art and "aesthetic transcendentalism" begun by Lawrence will benefit from exploration of additional female visual artists. With relatively little digging, artists such as Jane Stuart, Herminia Borchard Dassel, Margaret Gillies, Properzia de Rossi, Elizabetta Sirani, and Lavinia Fontana are located and found to demonstrate striking links with Fuller, which suggests the field of visual transcendentalism has a rich and underexplored vein of images and figures to excavate. Discussion of the women artists she came into contact with during her lifetime is curiously underexplored by Fuller, quite possibly due to her untimely death. With the traces she left, more can be done by looking at clues and visual works to piece together a more complete record and understanding of Fuller's aesthetic "femality" and further the study of feminine visual transcendentalism.

"The ocean has taken her secrets, Thoreau."

Thoreau stomped the ground like a tribal. Dear Reader, I took the English pipe from my cape and glared at Thoreau. I wanted to kick sand in his direction and pluck his whiskers. The power of a secret lies in its concealment: does this Harvard rustic not understand? It's not enough to read and speechify. One must have affairs with the fair sex and converse with the night and make steam.

"Forsooth," I finally ejaculated. "She was alone with her newborn baby, while Marchese Giovanni Ossoli defended Italy with Garibaldi's army. The pope was on the side of the people, but soon enough his heart turned cold. Margaret was melancholy. It was raining. On the way to a market, an artist begged. Margaret gave the miscreant all that she had."

Thoreau put his hands to his forehead and pressed; he cursed muses, ocean, providence and time. Poor man, did these Romanics not adore Nature, its ponds and hedgerows and daffodils? Well, Nature kicks back. What next? Thoreau removed his clothes, leaping into the Janus waves. I felt too astounded to lift a finger to stop him, the hair on my arms became electric. Oh, death the always-late teacher.

He rolled over and under the waves, into the spectacular gloom. "Cold in there, Henry David," I yelled, "Catch your death." But I remained numb. Another scribbler called by death. Then I too felt called to the water, to attempt a saving of this luminous character, for a plank lay half-buried.

Suddenly Thoreau popped up and turned round; life got the better of him and he beavered toward the shore. Upon arrival, his legs gave out, and his knees fell into the sand.

"I know. I know why Margaret waited on the ship," said Thoreau. "She had faith in mankind."

I let a book drop from my hand; Thoreau, shivering, traversed the sand, lifting the book to ascertain its plumage.

"Bloodsaw, damn you, this is not the Italian manuscript."

"Yet it is a fine book," I said, tipping my hat.

Searching for the dead is bound to arouse a melancholy furor in the soul. Without saying goodbye, I turned toward some lights over the hill, thereby making my escape.

About the Author:

Richard Marranca feels very fortunate to have participated in the NEH Summer Seminar (2009) in Concord. It helped invigorate his attachment to the Transcendentalists. Two years ago, his story collection, "The New Romantics," was published in print by Oak Tree Press of California and Illinois. He also regularly publishes essays, poetry and interviews -- the latest with Egyptologist Kara Cooney in Minerva Magazine. For over twenty-five years he has taught writing, literature and humanities, culminating in being given a Fulbright to teach at the University of Munich. He enjoys hiking, yoga and travel.

More Conference News

UPCOMING: The Margaret Fuller Society at the American Literature Association Conference San Francisco, May 24-27, 2018

The Margaret Fuller Society will be well-represented with two panels at the 29th annual American Literature Association conference. This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco from May 24th to May 27th, 2018. For more information, visit the ALA conference website: <http://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/> Below are the paper titles for the two Fuller Society-sponsored panels:

I. Margaret Fuller: In the Classroom and Beyond

Chair: Larry Reynolds, Texas A&M University

"Using Fuller to Teach Fuller: Creating Agency and Security,"
Holly Dykstra, Laredo Community College

"Teaching Margaret Fuller, Fanny Fern, and the Nineteenth-Century Press in the Wake of #MeToo,"
Callie Gallo, Fordham University

"Elemental Bodies: Mapping the Materialist Cartographies of Margaret Fuller's 'Leila' and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* in a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Classroom,"
Lesli Vollrath, University of Houston

"Praxis of Duality: The Sisterhood of Fuller's Leila and Du Bois's Atlanta,"
Nanette Rasband Hilton, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

II. Margaret Fuller: Out of New England

Chair: Noelle Baker, Independent Scholar

"Of Good and Noble Aspect: Margaret Fuller, Catholicism and Pius IX (1847-1850),"
Simone Maria Puleo, University of Connecticut, Storrs

"Romantic Revolutions: Cosmopolitan Radicalism in Margaret Fuller's Dispatches from Europe,"
Clemens Spahr, Mainz University, Germany

"The Morning Star of Margaret Fuller': The Woman's Club Movement and the Legacy of Fuller's Conversations,"
Katie Kornacki, Caldwell University

"Who's Afraid of Margaret Fuller?: Literary and Biographical Connections Between Virginia Woolf and Margaret Fuller,"
Michael Schrimper, Independent Scholar

UPCOMING: "Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion" University of Heidelberg, Germany, July 26–29, 2018

Sponsored by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, and the Anglistisches Seminar and Center for American Studies at the University of Heidelberg, this multi-disciplinary, international conference dedicated to new scholarship on American Transcendentalism will be held this summer in

Heidelberg, Germany. Inspired by the *Dial*, which announced itself to be "A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion," the conference aims "to do justice to that breadth and depth of the movement."

The organizers have announced three keynote speakers: Dr. Charles Capper, Professor of History, Boston University; Dr. Russell Goodman, Regents Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of New Mexico; and Dr. Laura Dassaw Walls, William P. and Hazel B. White Professor of English, University of Notre Dame. When finalized, the schedule will be available on the conference website:

<http://transcendentalistintersections.wordpress.com>

You will also find details regarding registration and accommodations, as well as contact information on the conference website.

"Margaret Fuller's Politics of Dissent" at the American Studies Association Chicago, November 9-12, 2017

The ASA 2017 annual meeting this past November, which took as its theme, "Pedagogies of Dissent," included a roundtable entitled, "Margaret Fuller's Politics of Dissent," chaired by **Sonia Di Loreto**. Below is the abstract for this session:

In the light of this year's theme, "Pedagogies of Dissent", for ASA 2017 we would like to propose a round-table on the conjuncture of politics, intellectual activity, and education in the work of Margaret Fuller and some of her friends and collaborators (especially Giuseppe Mazzini and Cristina di Belgiojoso) in the revolutionary Europe of the 1840s.

Centering the roundtable on our collaborative, multilingual Digital Humanities project, the Margaret Fuller Transnational Archive, we would like to address the intellectual genealogies of revolutionary thought. These intellectual networks of exchange became visible in our research and in the construction of the archive. By portraying networks and clusters of publications involving Margaret Fuller and some of her correspondents in Europe, the archive helps to uncover how the intellectual militancy of these public figures was deeply invested in creating oppositional pedagogies. We will concentrate on specific articles published in the *People's Journal* (London) in 1847 and in the *New York Tribune* in 1847-50, to reflect on educational models outside of well established educational institutions, such as, for example, Mazzini's evening school for Italian boys founded in London in 1841, as well as Fuller's observation that educational opportunities in England are increasingly "extended to girls," as she writes, they "ought to be."

While focusing on Fuller's role in the exchange and circulation of revolutionary theory in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, we also aim to engage with Fuller's transformation of genre-conventions in her letters to the *Tribune*. In particular, we will be examining Fuller's breaking with the conventions of travel writing and with the politics and aesthetics of landscape writing in her accounts of travelling through Europe. In so doing, it is possible to consider Fuller a forerunner to the genre that would come to be called literary journalism.



New England Author Glen Ebisch Explores Love in the Time of Emerson and Thoreau in Historical Romance, *Dearest David*

Westfield, MA New England mystery author Glen Ebisch announces the release of his historical romance, *Dearest David*, the story of a young woman, Abigail Taylor, who leaves her family farm fifteen miles outside of Concord, Massachusetts, to take a position as a servant in the home of transcendentalist lecturer Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Abigail spends only a few months during the year 1841 as a kitchenmaid and part-time nanny to the Emerson children, but she experiences life in the Emerson household at the peak of both its intellectual and emotional intensity. She falls in love with the free-spirited but emotionally ambivalent Henry David Thoreau and learns that she must share her fascination with him with both Emerson's wife, the prophetic and frightening Lidian, and the children's governess, Ms. Ford. She also meets the charismatic radical journalist, Margaret Fuller. And she learns to respect but also to recognize the limitations of Emerson himself. Eventually, Abigail is forced to leave her employment in the Emerson household, but only after realizing the magical nature of her time in this special place, where discussions about the principles of self-reliance, feminism, and abolitionism flourished.

Below is a Q&A interview provided by Ebisch's publicist in which Ebisch discusses the project.

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Q: *Dearest David* tells the story of a young woman, Abigail Taylor, who leaves her family farm outside of Concord, Massachusetts, to work as a servant in the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson. What was your inspiration for Abigail's story?

A: The inspiration came when I was thinking about how a young woman of humble means but with a good education for her class in society would respond to the rarified atmosphere of the Emerson household, where talk was often considered the equivalent of action. I thought it would be interesting to contrast her sensible, but intelligent approach to things with the sometimes less than practical musings of Emerson and his friends. I also thought it would be valuable to have a woman's insight into what was largely a man's world, while at the same time contrasting her with the very different figures of Lidian Emerson and Margaret Fuller.

Q: In *Dearest David*, Abigail falls in love with essayist Henry David Thoreau, who is a frequent house-guest at the Emersons. How would you describe their relationship?

A: For Abigail, she falls in love with Thoreau partly as a man and partly as a representative of an intellectual life that she finds exciting. She longs to be someone such as Margaret Fuller, but knows that her position in society limits her to a life of physical labor. Thoreau sees her as a friend, as someone who is fiercely independent like himself. That's why he finds the idea of their having a romantic relationship so unthinkable. He believes, perhaps rightly, that she has no more need for anyone to share her life than he does.

Q: Emerson's reclusive wife, Lidian, and the children's governess, Ms. Ford, are also interested in Thoreau. How does Abigail handle the conflict brought on by this three-way romantic triangle?

A: She is out of her depth. Abigail thinks that her youthful enthusiasm and affection will win Thoreau away from Lidian, not realizing that his innocent attentions to a married woman are the only sort of relationship that he feels completely safe

with having. She also doesn't fully understand that Lidian's need for Thoreau, although not romantic, is as equally strong as her own. Although Abigail does outmaneuver Ms. Ford, it is only at the expense of her conscience and leaves her with a strong sense of guilt.

Q: During her time at the Emersons, Abigail meets the charismatic, feminist writer Margaret Fuller, who provides counsel and insight on women and their role in society. What made you decide to pursue these thematic issues in this novel?

A: The two themes in this novel are the role of Transcendentalist philosophy at this point in time, and the status of women in the early nineteenth century. Margaret Fuller did visit Emerson often, and their relationship was close and complex. Lidian was definitely jealous of her, and Emerson often did little to allay that fear. I wanted Fuller in the novel as someone who could give some intellectual form to the feelings that Abigail was having. Since the novel is written in the form of recollections from twenty years in the future, I thought it would give the older Abigail a chance to reflect on what she had learned since.

Q: Abigail also forms an intellectual friendship with Emerson during her time in his household. How do his transcendentalist views on life influence her?

A: His doctrine of self-reliance, the idea that everyone should develop their own ideas and not rely on established authority, is the main notion I wanted Abigail to take away from her time in this household. As the end of the story suggests, she lives an exciting life after leaving Emerson, and I think much of it is due to his intellectual influence. In some ways she lives a life of courage that Emerson only talked about.

Q: After publishing over 30 mystery novels, you wrote *Dearest David*, your first historical romance. What did you learn while doing research for this novel and do you plan to continue writing historicals?

A: When I visited the Emerson house in Concord, Massachusetts and sat in Emerson's study I really felt as if I had entered into the fictional world of my book. This is a feeling I had never experienced before when writing pure fiction, and it made the story particularly intense for me. Another thing I learned is that, although we often think of the people in the Transcendentalist circle as being emotionally cool, they were extremely passionate not only about ideas but in many cases in their feelings for each other. At some point in the future, I would like to write another historical carrying Abigail's story on to the next stage.

Q: Are you working on a new novel and, if so, what can you tell us about it?

A: I am currently working on the second in my series of mysteries featuring Charles Bentley, a retired professor of English, who seems to have the bad luck of stumbling across dead bodies. By turns humorous and serious, it shows some of the challenges age brings to solving crimes and forming relationships.

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*If any reader is interested in reviewing *Dearest David* for the next issue of *Conversations*, please contact Katie Kornacki at kkornacki@caldwell.edu for a free ebook copy.*