



Conversations

The Newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society

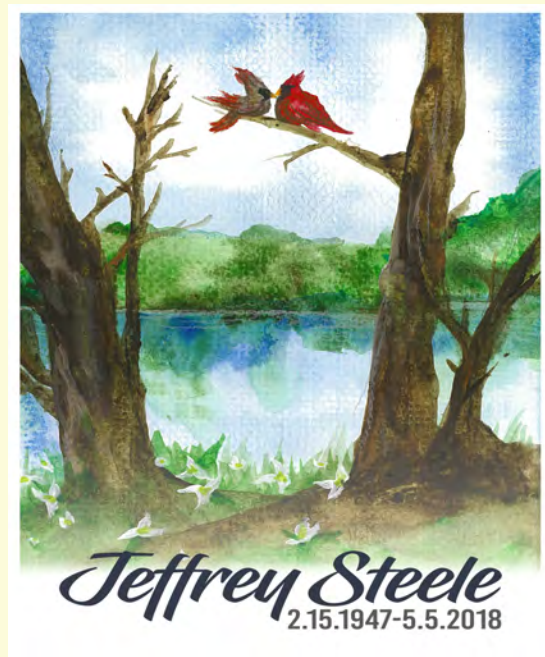
Special Issue: Remembering Jeffrey Steele

Jeffrey Steele
(1947-2018)

Madison - Jeffrey Allen Steele, age 71, of Madison passed away on Saturday, May 5, 2018, in Madison. He was born February 15, 1947, in Berkeley, California, where his father was in graduate school at UC- Berkeley. His parents were Charles William Steele and Eleanor Townsend Steele. Jeff married Jocelyn Carol Riley in Northfield, Minnesota, on September 4, 1971.

Jeff graduated from Granville High School in Ohio in 1965 and magna cum laude from Carleton College in Minnesota in 1969. He earned a master's degree in teaching from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1971, a master's degree in English from Harvard University in 1977, and a Ph.D. in English from Harvard University in 1981. He was awarded the Arthur Lehman Fellowship from Harvard in 1978. A man of great conscience, Jeff served two years of alternative service at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston from 1971 to 1973. He and Jocelyn traveled in Europe for 13 months from 1973 to 1974 on a Thomas J. Watson Traveling Fellowship.

Jeff loved to learn and to teach. He began teaching in the English Department of UW-Madison in 1981 and taught there for 37 years. He was a beloved teacher and was awarded the James R. Underkofler Excellence in Teaching Award (given each year to four teachers in the statewide UW System) in 1992. Jeff was also an enthusiastic scholar. He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on Ralph Waldo Emerson and later became an expert on Emerson's friend and co-editor, Margaret Fuller, who had been nearly forgotten. Jeff helped found the Margaret Fuller Society and served as its president for years. He also served on the Advisory Board of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers. His books include *The Representation of the Self in the American Renaissance* (1987), *The Essential Margaret Fuller* (1992, Choice "Outstanding Academic Book"), and *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing* (2001). He published numerous articles on Margaret Fuller and her contemporaries, as well as essays on the politics of mourning and nineteenth-century racial stereotypes.



Watercolor by Erin Hahhah. Courtesy of Erin Hannah.

Jeff was preceded in death by his mother, father, and sister, Laura Steele Evans. He is survived by his sisters, Lisa Norby (David Shaver) and Martha Hamilton and by his beloved sons, Doran Riley Steele (Frances Scharko Steele) and Brendan Riley Steele (Erin Hannah) and his three precious granddaughters, Adelaide Elizabeth, Imogen Viola, and Alina Kathryn Steele. He cherished his family and dedicated one of his books to them with a quote from Margaret Fuller: "These not only know themselves more, but are more for having met, and regions of their being, which would else have laid sealed in cold obstruction, burst into leaf and bloom and song."

Jeff was a Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader for many years and taught dozens of boys how to tie knots, fish, and set up a sturdy tarp. He was a collector and relished studying, finding, organizing, and cataloging African masks, fish and frog decoys, American advertising trade cards, coins, and more. Jeff joined Midvale Community Lutheran Church in 1986 and was active as a Search Bible study leader and a narrator of many cantatas there.

Editor: Katie Kornacki
Layout: Katie Kornacki &
Christina Katopidis

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,

With Jeffrey Steele's untimely passing this past spring, the Margaret Fuller Society has experienced a tremendous loss. Not only was Jeff a leading Margaret Fuller scholar, award-winning teacher, and beloved friend, family member, and colleague, he also played a central leadership role in the formation of our society and its continued growth. With the outpouring of grief and fond memories that members shared through the society's ListServ, it soon became clear that Jeff had left a meaningful impact on so many. We have therefore decided to make the Fall 2018 issue of *Conversations* a Special Issue in honor of Jeff. From the reminiscences of Fuller Society members, including **Larry Reynolds**, **Phyllis Cole**, **Briggs Bailey**, and **Charlene Avallone**, it is clear that Jeff will be greatly missed for his outstanding scholarship and dedication to promoting the Margaret Fuller Society, particularly at conferences.

Reaching out beyond the confines of the Margaret Fuller Society, we also invited Jeff's colleagues and students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to contribute, along with family members, friends, and other colleagues. The sheer size and scope of this Special Issue (at 36 pages, almost double the usual size of our newsletter) will attest to the many ways in which Jeff has had an impact on countless lives.

For this Special Issue, our regular features, "Graduate Student Voices" and "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom," are dedicated to Jeff. In "Graduate Student Voices," two former graduate students, Sara Otto Marxhausen and David Callenberger, attest to the dedication that Jeff displayed when it came to supporting, challenging, and mentoring up-and-coming scholars. "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom," has temporarily been renamed "Jeffrey Steele in the Classroom," and features memories from Betsey Draine, one of Jeff's UW-Madison colleagues, along with the reminiscences of Manuel Herrero-Puertas, a former graduate student, that emphasize Jeff's award-winning teaching.

New to *Conversations*, starting with this issue, is a "Reviews" section. The inaugural review, fittingly, comes from **Lisa West**, who offers us a timely re-reading of Jeff's *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing*. Reading *Transfiguring America* is this era of #MeToo, the Black Lives Matter movement, and "fake news," Lisa illustrates several aspects of the text in a new light.

In addition to the many tributes to Jeff, which you will find throughout this Special Issue, you will also find news and updates related to the Margaret Fuller Society and its members. Of particular note are two submissions by **Megan Marshall**: an archival discovery of a letter from Sophia Ripley to Mary Channing discussing Fuller's Boston *Conversations*, which "confirms the poorly documented yet widely held notions that Fuller's *Conversations* might meet 'opposition' in polite Boston society," and an interview with composer Elena Ruher on her "Summer on the Lakes, in 1843," a portrait of Fuller for solo piano.

Looking at the abstracts and news from recent conferences, Margaret Fuller has certainly had a good showing, particularly at ALA 2018 in San Francisco this past May, which included two panels sponsored by our society, and at the much-anticipated international Transcendentalist Intersections Conference in Heidelberg, Germany this summer.

As always, the continued vitality of *Conversations* is only made possible by the many people who have generously supplied articles, photos, news items, essays, and ideas -- thank all of you for making this Special Issue such a remarkable tribute to **Jeffrey Steele**. I would also like to encourage you to consider contributing to future issues. In particular, submissions for "Graduate Student Voices," "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom," and our new "Reviews" section are strongly welcomed.

Finally, closing out our issue is a short piece by Jeff entitled "Lenten Devotional." **Jocelyn Riley**, Jeff's wife, tells us that this was the last essay that Jeff wrote. What better way to end our Special Issue in honor of Jeff?

Warmly,

Katie Kornacki
Editor, Conversations

Letter from the President

Dear fellow Fullerites and contributing guests,

As the Margaret Fuller Society dedicates this issue of the newsletter to **Jeffrey Steele**, thanks go to everyone who sent contributions to make this a fitting memorial. As we collectively recall Jeff's gifts and impact, we are reminded just what a remarkable man he was in so many ways. We will benefit far into the future from Jeff's devotion to Fuller scholarship and his long service to the Society.

Since the last newsletter, the Society has begun to move ahead with our initiatives to promote teaching Fuller, to promote attention to her in the company of other women writers, and to collaborate with other women author societies. We have established our first award, realized some conference plans, begun to make new conference plans, and gained a valuable new board member. Read on to learn more. You will see from **Michael Schrimper**'s detailed report in this newsletter that the Society made a fine showing at ALA in May. The session on Fuller, "In the Classroom and Beyond," advanced our project to spotlight teaching Fuller. A version of **Nanette Hilton**'s talk is already available online in [Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice](#). The session on Fuller, "Out of New England," placed the author in a wide variety of historical and literary contexts that show her engagement with a broad range of issues, as well as her enduring resonance. This issue of the newsletter features the abstracts of the talks by **Holly Dykstra**, **Callie Gallo**, **Leslie Vollrath**, **Simone Maria Puleo**, **Clemens Spahr**, **Katie Kornacki**, **Nanette Rasband Hilton**, and **Michael Schrimper**.

The ALA was the scene as well for the inauguration of the Society's Phyllis Blum Cole Award for Social Service. In the name of each member who receives the award, the Society will make a cash donation to the house in which Fuller was born and which now serves the Cambridge, MA community with a wide variety of social services. The first award went, rightly enough, to Past President **Phyllis Cole** who forged a connection to the Margaret Fuller House. More details of Phyllis's much deserved award, the ALA panels, and the minutes of the annual meeting are presented both in later pages of this issue of *Conversations* and on the Society [website](#). Here I thank **Jana Argersinger** for presiding at the meeting that a family emergency prevented my chairing.

In July, the long-planned Heidelberg Conference brought together scholars from around the world to address Transcendentalist literature, philosophy, and religion. Co-sponsored with the Emerson Society, the Anglistische Seminar and the Heidelberg Center for American Studies at the University of Heidelberg, the conference offered a bounty of presentations treating of Fuller, as you can see from the sixteen abstracts in this newsletter and from **Christina Katopodis**'s recap of events at our [website](#). The Society's informal brown-bag lunch session drew members and non-members alike. The temperatures in the mid-nineties did not stifle the enthusiasm of participants for the intellectually intense discussions or for this beautiful city.

VP **Sonia Di Loreto** has organized two stimulating conference panels--one already realized, with another yet to come-- to bring Fuller together with other women writers. If you plan to attend the January 2019 MLA conference in Chicago, please come to the Society's panel "Women at Work: Margaret Fuller and 19th Century Women Writers on Work." There **Aimee Allard** will address Fuller's writing along with several "madwomen"'s narratives; **Hediye Özkan** will pair Fuller and **Lillie Devereux Blake**; and **Jessica Horvath Williams** will speak on Fuller, **Mary Wilkins Freeman**, and **Elizabeth Stuart Phelps**. At the November SSAWW Conference in Denver, our sponsored session, "In the Company of Margaret Fuller: Unexpected Genealogies of Feminism," drew a large audience to hear presentations by **Fritz Fleischmann**, **Etta Madden**, **Yoshiko Ito**, and **Jenessa Kenway**.

Also in Denver, VP **Jana Argersinger** welcomed Society members and others to the social tea she arranged in co-operation with the Catherine Sedgwick Society and the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society. The Society gained several new members at this event.

The highlight of highlights of the Denver Conference, however, has to be the presentation of the SSAWW Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award to our own **Phyllis Cole**. The Award celebrates Phyllis for her exceptional career in scholarship, teaching, and service. You can read the details of Phyllis's extraordinary contributions to the study of American women writers in the nomination document, the Award presentation speech, and my recap of the conference, all soon to be available, along with photos, at the Society website, as well as in the next issue of *Conversations*.

Under the initiative of Treasurer **Noelle Baker** and with the aid of **Phyllis Cole**, we are moving into the process to make official the Society's status as a non-profit association.

We welcome **Lucinda Damon-Bach** to the Society's Advisory Board. Cindy brings rich experience from more than 25 years as President of the Catherine Maria Sedgwick Society, which she co-founded, as well as from co-organizing two of the first international conferences on women writers that included Fuller. We look forward to having her work with us in this new capacity.

I will end, as I began, with thanks here to all of you who are contributing to further the aims and fellowship of the Society.

aloha,

Charlene
President, Margaret Fuller Society

Recent News

The Margaret Fuller Society Announces the Phyllis Blum Cole Award for Social Service at ALA 2018; Immediate Past President Phyllis Cole Named First Recipient

While at the ALA conference in San Francisco this May, Fullerites gathered for a Friday evening dinner at Sens, a warmly-lit Mediterranean restaurant overlooking the Bay Bridge. Before partaking in a meal including grilled Spanish octopus and dry-aged rack of lamb, Society members watched as Treasurer **Noelle Baker** presented the first inaugural Phyllis Blum Cole Award for Social Service to its eponymous original recipient. In giving reasons for her receiving the award, Baker cited Cole's: forging a relationship between the Society and the Margaret Fuller House of Cambridge, Massachusetts, a non-profit organization propagating Fuller's social ideals; and her vital role as President of the Society, which, in her three-year tenure, saw Cole expanding membership, increasing funds, generating a Society newsletter, renewing panel status at MLA, establishing a new Society website, and revising Society governance structure, among other feats. Society members watched with admiration as Baker presented Cole with a plaque engraved with Fuller's words from her 1844 *New-York Tribune* piece, "Thanksgiving:" "No home can be healthful in which are not cherished seeds of good for the world at large." A similar plaque will be presented, to quote the speech written by Baker and current Society President **Charlene Avallone**, "every three years to a Society Member" whom the Executive Council "recognizes as having worked in some significant way to promulgate the social ideals advanced by Margaret Fuller." In addition to the plaque, the award is to take the form of a donation to the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House.

To top off the occasion in honor of Professor **Phyllis Cole**, there were cheers of congratulations, along with heartfelt wine toasts, all around. (by *Michael Schrimper*)



Noelle Baker presents Phyllis Cole with the Phyllis Blum Cole Award for Social Service at ALA 2018 in San Francisco. [photo re-staged at the Margaret Fuller Society Annual Business Meeting.] Photo courtesy Katie Kornacki.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Jeffrey Allen Steele Memorial Scholarship Fund

The family of Jeff Steele has set up the Jeffrey Allen Steele Memorial Scholarship Fund at the UW-Madison. Gifts can be made in his memory online at <https://secure.supportuw.org/give/?id=62822e6d-d962-4383-8ceg-ce43d5372785>

You may also send a donation to:

Department of English Fund
UW Foundation
US Lockbox 78807
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

Recent Publications

Brigitte Bailey. *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824-62.* Edinburgh UP (2018). The book includes a chapter on Fuller: "Fuller and Revolutionary Rome: Republican and Urban Imaginaries." For more information, visit the link: <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-american-travel-literature-gendered-aesthetics-and-the-italian-tour-1824-62.html>

Nanette Hilton. "Praxis of Duality: The Sisterhood of Fuller's 'Leila' and Du Bois's 'Atlanta.'" *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice*. 9.3 (Spring/Summer 2018): 42-53. You can access the article here: <http://www.cpsc.edu/talp/spring-summer-2018-9-3/praxis-of-duality-the-sisterhood-of-fuller2018-2019leila2018-and-du-bois2019-2019atlanta-42-53/view>

Reviewers Sought to Contribute to Conversations

As you will see in this issue, we are starting a regular "Reviews" feature to run in *Conversations*. This Special Issue of *Conversations* in honor of Jeff Steele features a review/rereading of *Transfiguring America* by **Lisa West**. You can also look forward to reviews of **Briggs Bailey's** new book, *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824-62*, and **Ariel Silver's** recent *The Book of Esther and the Typology of Female Transfiguration in American Literature* in the Spring 2019 issue.

We are currently seeking contributors to review recent publications on Margaret Fuller or related topics. If you are interested in submitting a review to our newsletter, please email **Katie Kornacki** at kkornacki@caldwell.edu with your ideas. Make sure to include "newsletter" in the subject line.

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.

Sophia Ripley Letter to Mary Channing: Possible Opposition to Fuller's Conversations among "Polite" Boston Society

by Megan Marshall

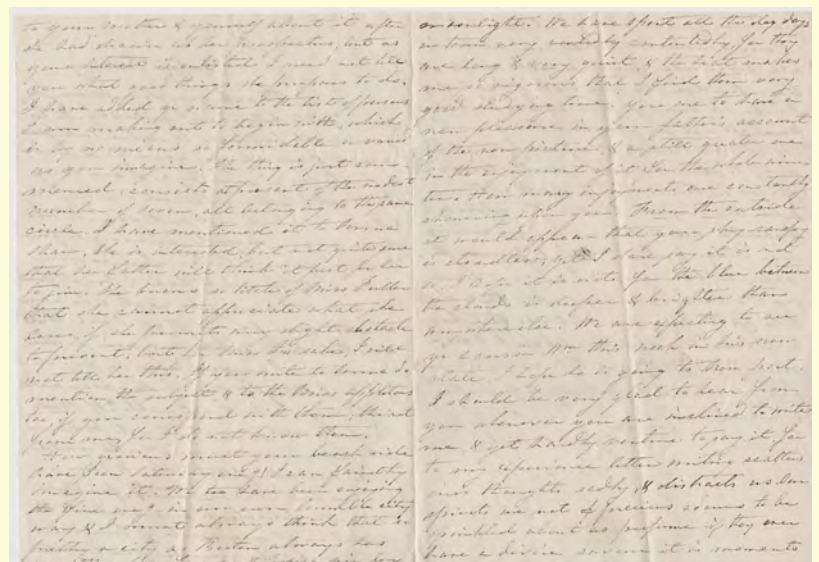
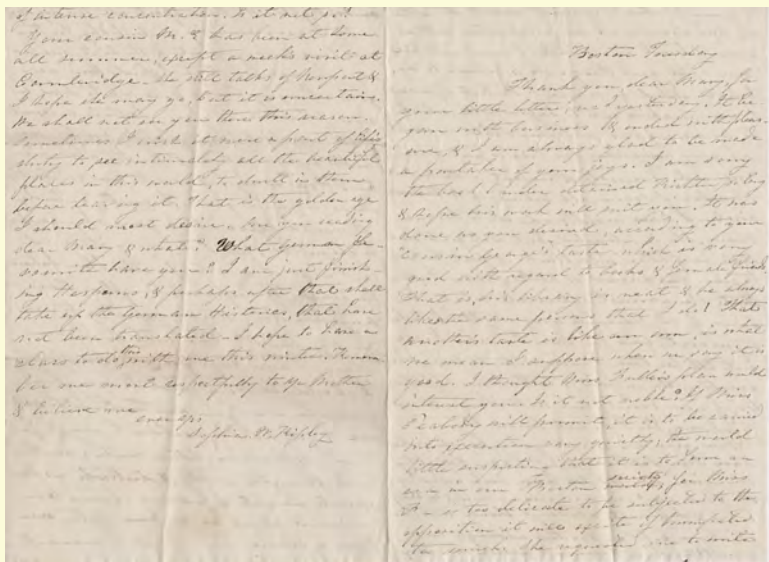
Julia Blackbourn, family archivist/historian for Dr. Frederic A. Eustis II, great-grandson of Mary Channing Eustis (daughter of the Rev. William Ellery Channing) and Frederic Augustus Eustis I, brought a letter concerning Margaret Fuller to our attention. This undated letter from Sophia Ripley to Mary Channing (who married Eustis in June 1843) appears to refer to the first series of Margaret Fuller's Conversations, 1839-40. Fuller's best-known letter outlining the aims of her Conversations was written to Ripley, August 27, 1839. Fuller asked Ripley: "Could a circle be assembled in earnest desirous to answer the great questions. What were we born to do? How will we do it?" In the following passage quoted from the newly discovered letter, Ripley appears to be engaged in helping Fuller increase attendance at the sessions just commenced by inviting Mary Channing and her mother, Ruth Gibbs Channing, to join. The "Miss Peabody" referred to might be Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, who had once been Mary Channing's teacher and who also helped in gathering Fuller's class. Or it could be Elizabeth's younger sister Mary, who had also been one of Mary Channing's teachers and may have provided the meeting space for the first series of Conversations in her rented Chauncy Street rooms in Boston.

This letter is of particular interest because it confirms the poorly documented yet widely held notion that Fuller's Conversations might meet "opposition" in polite Boston society. Nancy Simmons's "Margaret Fuller's Boston Conversations: The 1839-1840 Series," *SAR*, 1994, does not list Mary Channing among the participants in the series, although Anna Blake Shaw (also referred to in the letter), daughter of Robert Gould and Elizabeth Parkman Shaw of Boston, did attend. Julia Blackbourn invites readers who might be interested in the Eustis family papers, which include documents from Eustis, Ellery, Channing, Hemenway, Gibbs, Bowditch, and Wister ancestors, to contact her at aeion48@gmail.com

[The following is an excerpt from the letter, in which Fuller's Conversations are discussed]

Boston, Tuesday

Thank you, dear Mary, for your little letter, rec'd yesterday. It began with business and ended with pleasure, and I am always glad to be made a partaker of your joys. I am sorry the book binder detained [Jean Paul] Richter so long and hope his work will suit you. It was done as you desired, according to your "Cousin George's" taste, which is very good with regard to books and female friends. That is, his library is neat and he always likes the same persons that I do! That another's taste is like one's own, is what we mean I suppose when we say it is good. I thought Miss Fuller's plan would interest you. Is it not noble? If Miss Peabody will permit, it is to be carried into execution very quietly; the world little suspecting that it is to form an era in our Boston society; your Miss P-- is too delicate to be subjected to the opposition it will excite if trumpeted too much. She requested me to write to your mother and yourself about it after she had drawn up her prospectus, but as your interest is enlisted I need not tell you what good things she proposes to do. I have added yr. name to the list of persons I am making out to begin with, which is by no means as formidable or varied as you imagine. The thing is just commenced, consists at present of the modest number of seven, all belonging to the same circle. I have mentioned it to Anna Shaw. She is interested, but not quite sure that her father will think it best for her to join. She knows so little of Miss Fuller that she cannot appreciate what she loses, if she permits any slight obstacle to prevent, but for Miss F's sake, I will not tell her this. If you write to Anna do mention the subject and to the Miss Appletons too, if you correspond with them. . . .



Sophia Ripley to Mary Channing (undated). Images courtesy of Dr. Frederic A. Eustis II.

Historical Musings

Beware of Writing Advice from James Clarke

by Margaret Ferguson

If anyone named James Clarke takes an interest in a person's writing, does it necessarily follow that Clarke will make suggestions? An entertaining historical coincidence regarding two men, both named James Clarke, provides superficial evidence that the name bears a tendency toward unsolicited advice. Two different James Clarks separately encouraged two brilliant women writers, Margaret Fuller and Jane Austen, to pen work the gentlemen wished to read.

First, in 1816 James Stanier Clarke suggested Jane Austen might write a "Historical Romance illustrative of the History of the august house of Cobourg" (Austen 325). On April Fool's Day 1816, Jane Austen demurred because she could not write romance to save her life: "I could not sit seriously down to write a serious Romance under any other motive than to save my Life; & if it were indispensable for me to keep it up & never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first Chapter" (Austen 326). Faced with bleak prospects of romance, Austen wavers between humor—laughing at herself—or death in response.

In an 1832 letter, James Freeman Clarke echoes similar sentiments. He requests Margaret Fuller portray Elizabeth Randall and himself. When James Freeman Clarke proclaims Fuller is "destined to be an author," Margaret Fuller mocks the suggestion (Fuller 196). She does not know "whether to grieve that [he] too should think [her] fit for nothing but to write books or to feel flattered at the high opinion [he] seem[s] to entertain of [her] powers . . ." (Fuller 195). While a romance novelist would not be Margaret's first career choice, she acknowledges that her friend intended a compliment, even if he missed the mark.

Perhaps Margaret had romance authors in mind when she wrote "my bias toward the living and practical dates from my first consciousness and all I have known of women authors' mental history has but deepened the impression" that she had better not write novels (Fuller 195). Since Margaret Fuller once recommended Miss Austen to James Freeman Clarke, Austen may be excused from this generalization; like Austen, Fuller rejects a taste that contradicts her own nature.

As generous as unsolicited suggestions are, both Fuller and Austen mockingly decline the wishes of the respective James Clarks. Both women writers prefer to maintain autonomy over their own writing and steer away from romance, regardless of the James Clarks' requests.

About the Author:

Margaret Ferguson recently graduated with an MFA in creative writing from Emerson College. As a current first-year composition writing instructor, she spends her days giving writing advice. She began reading and researching Margaret Fuller's letters in a Transcendentalist Literature class taught by Megan Marshall.

Works Cited

- Austen, Jane, and Deirdre Le Faye. *Jane Austen's Letters*. 4th ed., Oxford U P, 2011.
Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth. 6 vols. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U P, 1983-1995.

Life and Death of Margaret Fuller: A Brief Newspaper Account

by Neil Yetwin

In the decades following the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, Schenectady, New York developed into an important commercial and industrial center, as well as a mecca for visiting lecturers. Margaret Fuller only glimpsed the city from a railroad car on the night of May 25-26, 1843 on her way to Niagara Falls, but five of the prominent lecturers who spoke in Schenectady between 1850 to 1870—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, Henry James Sr., Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Bayard Taylor enjoyed close personal and professional connections with her. Fuller's reputation and the speakers' impact in familiarizing Schenectady's citizens with a wider world of literature, philosophy and reform may have played a part in the appearance of this account of Fuller's death, published in the Schenectady *Cabinet* of July 30, 1850:

The brig Elizabeth, from Leghorn for New-York, was wrecked on the south shore of Long Island on the 19th inst. Among her passengers was the Countess Ossoli, otherwise known in this country as S. Margaret Fuller. She was the star (* editor of the Tribune, before her departure for Italy, in 1845—from which country she wrote a series of letters for that journal. She belonged to the transcendental school of writers, and her productions had attracted some attention. In Italy she married the Count Ossoli, and with him and their child had but just reached the shores of her own country to find an untimely grave. The vessel was laden with a valuable cargo, among which were several costly paintings, and Powers' statue of John C. Calhoun.

The *Cabinet's* editor-publisher and local Whig politician, Stephen S. Riggs, admired the *Tribune* and Horace Greeley, the leading Whig editor of his day. Riggs emulated Greeley by regularly using the *Cabinet* to promote such key Whig issues as public education, universal suffrage, Native American rights, and women's equality. Riggs was likely familiar with Margaret Fuller's work and wrote the brief account to properly acknowledge her life, death and achievements.

About the Author:

*Neil Yetwin is a retired teacher, having taught Global, American and African-American history; AP and IB psychology; and sometimes English at Schenectady (formerly Linton) High School in Schenectady, NY. Although he realizes with great regret that he cannot go back in time to live in Concord, MA when many of his literary and philosophical heroes were active there, he makes do with reading their works and biographies. He has been fortunate, however, in making some minor contributions to the field, including: "Emerson in Albany, New York" for the *Papers of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society*; "Thoreau, Jung and the Collective Unconscious" for the Thoreau Society; and a presentation some years back at the Masonic Temple in Concord about "Thoreau's Jungian Shadow," which was an unexpected dream come true. And although he mainly kept to himself and a few close friends throughout high school, had Margaret Fuller attended that same school, he would have made it a point to have been a close friend of hers as well.*

Margaret Fuller Society Business Meeting Minutes

Saturday, May 26, 2018

American Literature Association Conference, San Francisco, CA

Attendees: Jana Argersinger, Noelle Baker, Phyllis Cole, Holly Dykstra, Mark Gallagher, Nanette Hilton, Yoshiko Ito, Katie Kornacki, Simone Puleo, David Robinson, Clemens Spahr, Lesli Vollrath. In the absence of Society President, Charlene Avallone, the meeting was conducted by Second Vice President, Jana Argersinger.

Agenda Items:

1) Introductions: attendees provided brief introductions

2) Reminders and updates: Katie Kornacki will create a Google Drive for Fuller-related photos. Contact her for questions.

3) Remembrance for Jeffrey Steele:

- a. The next issue of the Fuller Newsletter will be a special issue dedicated to Jeff Steele. Katie Kornacki requested submission of various kinds that relate to experiences (academic, professional, personal) with Jeff Steele. Contact her for questions.
- b. Phyllis Cole offered to contact Jeff Steele's wife, and Noelle Baker suggested adding her to the ListServ.
- c. Suggestions for honoring Jeff Steele in the future were offered:
 - i. Fritz Fleischmann (in absentia) suggested a travelling fellowship. Noelle Baker advised that our lack of nonprofit tax status would be an issue.

4) Society Business:

- a. Treasurer's report: Noelle Baker's full treasurer report was provided.
 - i. In brief: \$1,503.86 was taken in between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2018. Current balance stands at \$6,053.09. Contact Noelle for a copy of the complete report.
 - ii. A request was made to increase advertising of the Fuller Society so as to increase its membership. Nanette Hilton suggested creating a bookmark or brochure.
- b. Election to fill vacant seat on Advisory Board:
 - i. Lesli Eckel requested that we use SurveyMonkey for this round of elections in order to maintain voter anonymity.
 - ii. Timeline for votes is June 30th (survey site to be created)
- c. Phyllis Blum Cole Award: In honor of Phyllis Cole, an annual award was established.
 - i. The first recipient of the award is Phyllis Cole.
 - ii. The award includes a beautiful plaque (pictures on website to come) and a \$250.00 donation to the Fuller Neighborhood House that will be presented in person.

5) Looking Forward: attendees discussed possibilities and initiatives for Society's Growth

a. Teaching Fuller initiative:

- i. Special newsletter section, ongoing. Requests were made to share the newsletter with colleagues, etc., and to contribute to the column when/if possible.
- ii. Phyllis suggested reaching out to female Unitarian ministers to consider the concept of Fuller as prophet: preaching Fuller instead of teaching Fuller
- iii. Lesli Vollrath offered to guinea pig a class on "Leila" for her Fall Women's Studies class.
- iv. Nanette Hilton suggested reaching out to homeschooling communities, possibly creating a Pinterest board or T-shirt.
- v. Noelle Baker recommended we form a 1-3 person subcommittee for pedagogical matters.

b. Collaborating with other female author societies:

- i. A Margaret Fuller panel is organized for the Denver conference with SSAWW. Panelists: Fritz Fleischmann, Etta Madden, Yoshiko Ito, and Jenessa Kenway. Check SSAWW website for further details.
- ii. Jana Argersinger, VP2, is arranging a social tea, jointly hosted with the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society and the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society.
- iii. Sonia Di Loreto is organizing a Fuller panel for MLA 2019.
- iv. Phyllis discussed collaboration with the Lydia Maria Child Society president.

6) Promoting the Society: this was already touched on in various ways during the meeting, but additional ideas were put forth at this point

- a. Request to elevate advertising
- b. Possible fundraiser and the Fuller House
- c. Potential award for students
- d. Look more seriously at the nonprofit status (Noelle said she will discuss with a lawyer; Mark Gallagher offered to reach out to a lawyer friend for advice)
- e. Consider nonmembers for award

7) Announcements and News:

- a. "Transcendentalist Intersections" Conference in Heidelberg, Germany: 3 previously unknown letters will be unveiled. Fuller will be extremely well represented.
- b. Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House Executive Director, Christina Alexis, resigned. Phyllis volunteered to reach out to the interim director to continue working on our shared interests and goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Dykstra

Reviews

In this, the inaugural review of what we hope to make a regular feature of Conversations, Lisa West provides us with a timely rereading of Jeffrey Steele's Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing. Reflecting on what it means to read Transfiguring America in this era of #MeToo, the Black Lives Matter movement, and "fake news," she illustrates several aspects of the work "that speak to today's political climate." Noting how very timely Jeff's analysis feels today, Lisa suggests productive ways we might consider using excerpts from Transfiguring America with our students as a model for how we should approach the many difficult conversations they are being invited to participate in. If you would like to submit a review, please send it as an email attachment to kkornacki@caldwell.edu with "newsletter" in the subject line.

Rereading *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing*

by Lisa West

Last May, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to reread *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing* (University of Missouri Press, 2001) while advising a student's Honors Thesis on transcendentalism, secularity, and religion. I would like to share some ideas from this rereading in the context of Jeffrey's untimely passing. While the text clearly shows its belonging to early twenty-first century conversations about gender and psychoanalytic theory, there are aspects that speak to today's political climate. To be more specific, the book's deep investment in conversation, dialogue, and respectful discourse—and its attention to how pain and loss can be mobilized into social action—speak more to 2018 than to 2001.

The preface to *Transfiguring America* is startling not in its primary goals, but in the way Jeffrey's focus speaks to how American life in 2018 is full of personal pain and public confusion or disorientation. He opens the preface by positioning the book as a measure of rebalance against the scholarship of the past decade: "In recent years, much of the best scholarship on Margaret Fuller has conceptualized her writing in terms of intellectual and cultural exchange." Such writing, he continues, follows her "lifelong engagement with conversation, translation, and epistolary dialogue," shows ways "her writing mediates competing viewpoints, discursive frameworks, and values," and attests to her "intellectual mobility" (ix). This book Jeffrey intended to "right the balance by focusing on sites of emotional and imaginative intensity in her life and writing. The result has been a special kind of biography—not an account of public events of Fuller's life, but rather an analysis of the imaginative events shaping the contours of her career and the emergence of her social activism" (ix). The three terms that complete the title—myth, ideology, and mourning—"highlight dynamic imaginative processes that blend private and public commitments" (ix). Then comes a sentence that jumped out at me for its prescience: "Fuller recognized that a culture is defined by the narratives it believes in—central myths shaping the contours of experience and being" (ix). For Jeffrey, part of Fuller's brilliance lies in her capacity to create new myths rather than merely dismantle dysfunctional ideologies; it also lies in her capacity to take pain and loss—both personal and communal—and mobilize those energies into personal growth and social justice: "Articulating the sedimented losses that had accrued in the silenced and marginalized members of society, she found in narratives of mourning a means of highlighting the pain and dislocation residing in the psychic and cultural 'underworld' of American life" (ix). I considered the power of having students read such claims as they struggle to navigate the world of "alternative facts" and "fake news," with its confusing signposts of opinion, theory, myth, fact, reporting, truth, and reality.

Students can take away more than this particularly effective expression of the power of national myths. In writing about the

1840-41 correspondence between Emerson and Fuller, Jeffrey shows discretion and care in writing conflict as dialogue, conversation—a series of painful, intense, frustrating interactions that ultimately were transformative (and therefore both powerful and positive for both Emerson and Fuller. Through this lens, difficult conversations, disagreements, or challenges do not lead to hate mail or petty grudges, but instead to positive change. Furthermore, Jeffrey takes care to ascribe Emerson's views to Emerson's own limitations and struggles, not to Fuller's. "Emerson's correspondence with Fuller during this period stressed *his* discomfort at the fluidity and excess of her moods and style," he writes (43, emphasis mine, continuing to explain how Emerson retained a unitary vision whereas Fuller explored multi-vocal discourse. Jeffrey's sentences continually assign ideas to the person harboring them, rather than collapsing difference or judging: "From Fuller's viewpoint, Emerson had expressed only one half of being" (50, emphasis mine, he explains of her interest in attending to female spirituality. I see the value in having students read how Jeffrey handles "sites of emotional and imaginative intensity" such as these. Such responsible attribution, precision, and respect are worth attending to, especially in an age where too many people speak for others, willfully misunderstand others, or hasten to identify hidden motives in others. After rereading this book in May, I am encouraged to teach parts of it in my classes, less for the content than for the rhetoric in navigating these issues.

If the beginning of *Transfiguring America* stresses how Fuller's "political insights were born in the crucible of pain," the end focuses more on the collective potential of such pain—or being witness to such pain. Jeffrey's comments about Fuller provide a path for us to consider his legacy as well as hers; the loss—to many deeply personal and to others like myself, more of a public loss—can foster empathy. Mourning, this book suggests, is not only a personal journey but also a way to connect with others and find transformative value in loss or suffering. I think these messages about conflict and mourning are worth sharing with our students.

About the Author:

Lisa West is Associate Professor at Drake University, where she teaches classes in American literature before 1900. She is interested in early American fiction and is working on a project related to early perceptions of marital abuse and violence. She has been an officer for the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society and has published on Sedgwick, Charles Brockden Brown, and Susanna Rowson. Lisa was fortunate to cross paths with Jeffrey Steele at conferences, symposia, and panels hosted by The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society, The Margaret Fuller Society, and The Society for the Study of American Women Writers.

Works Cited

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Remembering Jeffrey Steele: The Scholar

Jeffrey Steele, Exceptional Scholar

by Larry J. Reynolds

For more than thirty years, Jeffrey Steele was a scholar whose work on Fuller I greatly admired and a friend whose generosity and kindness were invaluable to me in a multitude of ways. I knew Jeff as a fellow worker in the field of antebellum American literature, and I considered him one of the most intelligent, insightful, and innovative literary scholars at work in the United States. When Jeff's book *Representations of the Self in the American Renaissance* (1987) came out, I was asked to review it by *American Literature*. I didn't know Jeff at the time, but I was especially impressed by his chapter on Fuller, which seemed strikingly new and important. In the review I praised his "penetrating examination of how Fuller reworked the myth of the goddess Isis, in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* especially, to define a 'new myth of the mind,' one that directly challenged 'the prevailing sexual mythology' of Fuller's day."

Jeff's outstanding collection, *The Essential Margaret Fuller*, came out in 1992, and it was clear to me immediately what an important role it would play in establishing Fuller as a new addition to the literary canon. The book's an aesthetic delight, revealing the power and beauty of Fuller's poetry, which many of us had previously overlooked.

When Bell Chevigny and I formed the Fuller Society in 1993, with crucial support from Joel Myerson, Bob Hudspeth, Fritz Fleischmann, Tina Zwarg, Judith Bean, Joan von Mehren, Susan Belasco, and Charlie Capper, we asked Jeff to join us as one of the founding board members, and he readily agreed. Jeff then became an officer in the Society in 1999 and served as President from 2003 to 2005. Among his many contributions was single-handedly getting the Society approved as an MLA affiliated group, and for many years, he organized the Society's sessions for the annual MLA meetings, a task he fully enjoyed.

In 1997, when I was editing the Norton Critical Edition of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, I asked Jeff if he would contribute an original essay to the volume, and even knowing that the Norton would compete with his own collection, he graciously accepted my invitation and provided the brilliant essay, "Margaret Fuller's Rhetoric of Transformation," a shining centerpiece of the edition.

In 2000, I was fortunate enough to be one of the outside readers of the manuscript of Jeff's magnum opus, *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing*. I found his accomplishment stunning, and part of my reader's report was quoted on the book's jacket. It reads, "Jeffrey Steele's *Transfiguring America* is one of the most original, brilliant, and important scholarly books it has ever been my pleasure to read. Steele brings us the profound account of Margaret Fuller's achievement that she has deserved, but not received, since her death 150 years ago, an account sensitive to the depth of her psychic pain, alert to the complexity of her sublimation, and receptive to the boldness of her feminist vision." Given his theoretical knowledge and interests, Jeff was uniquely qualified to illuminate an aspect of Fuller's life and writings that few scholars had been able to fully appreciate until he showed us how.

The book project Jeff was at work on before he died he had tentatively titled *The Visible and Invisible City*, and it featured Fuller and other authors. I read portions of it and heard Jeff deliver papers from it at conferences, and, along with others in the audience, appreciated how groundbreaking it was. Although his topic at first appeared to update Perry Miller's *The Raven and the Whale* and a host of lesser studies of the NYC literary scene of the 1840s and 1850s, it soon became clear that what Jeff was doing was radically new and important. It involved no less than the discovery and illumination of an unknown aesthetics, created by a group of uncelebrated like-minded authors of the antebellum period: Fuller, Child, Lippard, Foster, and Fern. Jeff's argument, as I understood it, was that New York City became, during the 1840s and 1850s, as it replaced Boston as the major publishing center of the nation, a place of invisible spaces that required new models of literary awareness and new modes of literary description to do justice to the

unseen people living within it. His group of authors, he showed, assumed the task of plumbing the depths of prisons, insane asylums, brothels, and other sites of misery and vice, and bringing a strong sense of social justice to bear upon the people, values, and behaviors they found and described. Jeff's thorough knowledge of transcendentalism and various mystical systems of thought, especially Rosicrucianism, allowed him to treat the moral and spiritual dimensions of this group's work with rare understanding and appreciation. If Jeff had completed *The Visible and Invisible City* (and I don't know how complete his manuscript was at his death), it would surely have revealed a new aesthetics within antebellum urban writing, one of vital importance to American literary history.

I fondly recall the last time I socialized with Jeff, at a lunch with him, Briggs Bailey, and Phyllis Cole in a little restaurant in Florence in the summer of 2013. I thought at the time how great it was that the Fuller Society was in such good hands. The news of Jeff's death was so unexpected and so sad. He was such a wonderful soul, as well as such an outstanding scholar. He will be sorely missed.

About the Author:

Larry J. Reynolds is University Distinguished Professor and Thomas Franklin Mayo Professor of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University. His most recent book is *Righteous Violence: Revolution, Slavery, and the American Renaissance* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2011), which includes the chapter "Margaret Fuller's Revolutionary Example."

by Phyllis Cole

Like many of us, I got to know Jeff Steele by joining one of the MLA panels on Fuller that he generated and chaired over the past quarter century. His responsiveness to my topic not only made for a good conference experience; it drew me directly into the Fuller Society and helped shape my work ever since. But we also launched a personal conversation that continued through time, as we shared news of teaching, family, and other interests over dinner or drinks at too many conferences to count. And always we talked about possibilities for the Fuller Society, up through his request in the past year, even after health issues required pulling back from program leadership, to continue serving on the advisory board. Jeff has been a wonderful friend and a devoted supporter of our organization.

Just as deeply has he set the agenda for Fuller studies through his scholarship. We have benefited from his expansive reader, *The Essential Margaret Fuller*, in both our own study and our teaching. His ongoing work until quite recently concerned Fuller's "sentimental power" as a New York reformer in comparison with Lydia Maria Child. But the cornerstone of his work still is the study entitled *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing* (2001). Reviewing this book for the *New England Quarterly* a year later, I began this way: "Despite the remarkable recovery of Margaret Fuller's life and writing over the past quarter century, we have not quite dispelled Harriet Martineau's nineteenth-century caricature of her Boston Conversations: 'While [Fuller] and her adult pupils sat "gorgeously dressed," talking about Mars and Venus, Plato and Goethe, ... the liberties of the republic were running out as fast as they could go.' Today's readers can also find Fuller's writing showy and self-absorbed, with its texture of mythic and literary allusion the most problematic feature. Jeffrey Steele's *Transfiguring America* answers Martineau in her own terms, tracing Fuller's mythic strain from its origins in personal experience to her rhetoric and action on behalf of the republic. Focusing on the emotional heart of Fuller's writing, Steele finds her mythmaking to be both a form of therapy for women's wounds and a vehicle of utopian imagination. He describes his study as 'a kind of biography,' but it is one that resonates with insight into her culture and ours. This book is a landmark in Fuller studies, consolidating the gains of recent years and plumbing new depths of interpretation." Now in 2018, the relevance of Jeff's broad and deep study of Fuller is undiminished, and we should keep returning to it for fresh ideas.

Graduate Student Voices: Jeff's Legacy

For this Special Issue, "Graduate Student Voices" features two of Jeff Steele's former graduate students. Sarah Otto Marxhausen, one of Jeff's most recent doctoral candidates, reflects on "the ferocious of his generosity" as her dissertation director. Additionally, David Callenberger shares some memories that illustrate the "wonderfully obsessive desire for life-long learning" that Jeff exhibited. If you are a graduate student and would like to submit an essay to this regular feature, please send it as an email attachment to kkornacki@caldwell.edu with "newsletter" in the subject line.

by Sara Otto Marxhausen

I have the privilege to have been the final doctoral candidate who completed my degree under Jeff Steele's direction, and I can never adequately express my gratitude to him.

When Jeff graciously took me under his supervision, I was almost as much of a mess as his famously overstuffed office. My previous advisor, after approving my project, had left the university and declined to actively help me re-form my committee. Other faculty members I had approached were already over-booked with other doctoral candidates, or uncomfortable with how far the project was from their own work, or ineligible for other reasons.

Jeff, the Margaret Fuller expert, was miles away from what I was doing—a survey comparing some aspects of 20th-century American and Australian writing—but he said yes. He made it clear that he considered it his responsibility, almost a sacred duty, to help students who were struggling, and he didn't just throw me a life preserver; he jumped in with me.

When we started, Jeff had only read one of the texts I was working on, but was excited to learn more. Then I showed up for one of our meetings and he surprised me by proudly displaying another book I was writing on; he'd bought himself a copy and read it, so he could be sure he was on firm footing when reviewing my next chapter. I surprised him, in turn, by bursting into tears; I was totally unprepared for the ferociousness of his generosity. I had to promise to never do that again while we worked together, if only because he wasn't sure if he had any tissues in his office.

Midway through our working relationship, the department hired me to help Jeff trim down the excesses of that office stacks of extra books blocking access to his bookshelves, folder upon manilla folder stuffed with paper. It was so crowded with debris that getting in and closing the door behind you required some dexterity, and one-on-ones with Jeff involved being basically knee-to-knee. There were legends within the department about the mummified bat that had once been discovered in there, and building management had finally put their foot down, declaring that they would chuck it all in a dumpster unless something was done to decrease the fire hazard.

My favorite time with Jeff (much more fun than the dissertation defense) was the two weeks we spent digging through stacks of paper and bric-a-brac. We filled a small dumpster that had been set aside for us with paper: defunct handouts, now-digitized articles and journals. I wasn't allowed to find a new home for any of the books, even the ten extra copies of *Great Gatsby*—because Jeff wanted to make sure he always had one on hand to give to a student who was short. We snapped in frustration at the piles, at the dust, at each other, and finished each day tired and feeling virtuous in our pursuit of order.

I thank Jeff for the dissertation I wouldn't have completed without him; we taught each other so much with it. I thank him for the time together, and the stories, and the travel mug he told me to keep after we found it behind the floor lamp. I'm glad I got to know him while he was here.

About the author:

Dr. Sarah Otto Marxhausen was a doctoral student of Jeff Steele's during his

time at UW-Madison. After time as a professional technical writer, she has returned to academia. She now teaches in the English department at the University of Minnesota-Morris, where she continues her interests in genre fiction and other deprived texts.

by David Callenberger

I am a former graduate student of the English Department at the University of Wisconsin. I worked closely with Professor Steele over many years as a student, teaching assistant, and advisee. Here are a few brief memories of his persistent and wonderfully obsessive desire for life-long learning.

When I served as Professor Steele's Teaching Assistant, I would notice the habits that made him such a strong scholar. When I borrowed his books I noticed his underlined passages were perfectly straight. He explained that he used a ruler to get the lines just as he liked. The ruler was an information line between the page and his brain because he underlined passages throughout his life and after the information was then permanently remembered. Another time he told me how during summers he would read classic texts like *Huckleberry Finn* or *Moby Dick* and write down every kind of analysis he could think of for the entire book. When he was done he had over twenty-five pages of single-spaced notes. With these examples, he taught me the importance of persistence as a scholar. Additionally, he was a joyous reader of literature. He was not a literary snob—he read fantasy and science fiction as readily as he read Margaret Fuller.

In December 2017, Professor Steele attended my dissertation defense. He said when he arrived he had not been feeling well. Yet he still participated with his usual focus and vigor—he both praised and deconstructed my dissertation to provide for me both a developmental road map and the confidence to do so. My last memory of Professor Steele perfectly encapsulates the scholar and teacher I knew: after my dissertation defense, he stayed behind for more than twenty minutes talking with a geography professor about mutually sharing information on new ideas in humanist geography and novelists who wrote spatially. I loved that he always kept going forward, trying to learn. I think fondly of Professor Steele when I read different books and articles and poems because he showed how lucky those of us who love literature are to be able to joyously learn and expand our minds every day. And that is a wonderful gift someone can give every day as a teacher and advisor.

About the author:

David J. Callenberger graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a Ph.D. in English in December 2017. His work focuses on the literary geographies in post-disaster texts. He is interested in how writers reimagine relationships between disaster landscapes and human victims for the purpose of uncovering new forms of political, social, and spatial meaning during recovery in contrast to the dominance of disaster capitalism. He is an English teacher at Kent School in Kent, CT.

Megan Marshall Interviews Elena Ruehr on her *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* for Solo Piano

by Megan Marshall

It's a roundabout story in which I figure only marginally, but I'll start with my involvement all the same. Four years ago, for my sixtieth birthday, my partner commissioned a piano "portrait" by the composer Scott Wheeler as a birthday gift. Wheeler's portraits are frequently performed and have been recorded by the pianist Donald Berman, who took an interest in my writing after learning and performing Wheeler's "Life Study." Although Wheeler adapted the title of his piece from the subject I was writing about when I sat for the portrait (Elizabeth Bishop, whose close friend Robert Lowell wrote *Life Studies*), Berman was drawn to my biography of Margaret Fuller. He hadn't known much about her, and was inspired to commission a portrait of Fuller for solo piano by another composer, Elena Ruehr.

Ruehr is a faculty member at MIT, a recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Radcliffe Institute, who has found inspiration in historical figures for previous compositions including an orchestral work titled *O'Keeffe Images* and an opera, *Toussaint Before the Spirits*. Berman has not yet recorded *Margaret Fuller: Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, Ruehr's musical evocation of Fuller, but he performed the piece twice during the spring and summer of 2018. The premier was at Barge Music in Brooklyn in May, and Berman repeated the piece in recital at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge in June. Ruehr kindly agreed to answer some questions about her composition, which I have heard and played myself, finding the piece quite beautiful as well as evocative of its subject.

MM: Had you known of Margaret Fuller before the piece was commissioned?

ER: Yes, in passing but not in detail. She was mentioned in some of the women's studies classes I took in college, but that was years ago!

MM: You grew up in Northern Michigan—are some of the places Fuller visited in 1843 ones you know today or experienced as a child? Did you read Fuller's book, *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*? Which impressions of that period of her life informed your composition?

ER: I'll answer these in one go—I started reading *Summer on the Lakes* as I started composing, so I would read for a half hour or so and then compose for awhile every day. I felt immersed in her language and style as I worked. I must admit that I finished composing before I finished the book (I got about 2/3 of the way through) so I'm not certain if she got as far north as my hometown of Houghton, Michigan (which is at the very northmost point of upper Michigan). On the other hand, I have been to all the places she mentions in the book, some many, many times, including Niagara Falls and Chicago (which was where my grandparents lived) and all throughout lower Michigan and Wisconsin.

What informed my composition was a sense of her language and style more than anything else—she seemed to be able to hold a number of disparate thoughts and points of view at once. I interpreted that musically by often having two rather different things go on at the same time—one hand playing a hymn-like

tune, for example, while the other plays a repeated pattern from a non-related pentatonic scale. I also admired Fuller's form, with prose interspersed freely with poetry, a kind of free thinking, stream of conscious form that I also tried to incorporate into the piece. Finally, the landscape of the Great Lakes, especially the winter landscape (which Fuller perhaps didn't truly experience), became a backdrop of inspiration for me.

MM: The primary theme evokes a choral hymn in some of its statements, and I thought I might have detected some more familiar hymns quoted. Am I right about that? I apologize if I'm wrong—perhaps you are very good at writing snatches of new "hymns" that sound to me like the old!

ER: The hymns are actually newly composed. I suppose I am rather good at writing hymns :)

MM: Margaret Fuller wrote in *Summer on the Lakes* that the piano, which she found in many settlers' households, wasn't the best instrument for Western living—it required lessons and practice to master, and keeping a piano in tune was almost impossible. Yet the piano must have been an emblem of civilization that settlers wanted to display. How did you feel about writing this piece for the piano?

ER: Ah well, of course I never imagined writing this piece any other way since Don Berman asked me to write it for him! But the aspect of having each hand play something different (at times) is particularly interesting in piano writing.

MM: The recurring melody of your "Summer on the Lakes" wonderfully captures Fuller's questing, seeking spirit, for me. Was your aim to represent Fuller, as well as her journey?

ER: As above, I was very interested in capturing Fuller's style, her language and yes, her spirit, which is so distinct. Indeed, capturing her spirit and language was what inspired me most.



Title and first line of Elena Ruehr's "Summer on the Lakes, in 1843."
Image courtesy of Elena Ruehr.

Readers can find out more about Ruehr's work and recordings at her website <http://www.elenaruehr.org/wp/>

[Donald Berman's](#) recording of Scott Wheeler's portraits can be found [here](#)

Jeffrey Steele in the Classroom

Our regular feature, "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom," takes a different form for this Special Issue honoring Jeffrey Steele. As an award-winning teacher and life-long learner, Jeff "had important things to say and he you want to hear them," as Betsy Draine, a colleague at UW-Madison, recalls. In addition to Betsy's piece highlighting some of the many ways in which Jeff's teaching had a impact on students, colleagues, and aspiring future teachers, Manuel Herrero-Puertas gives us a view of Jeff from a student's perspective. Next issue, we will resume our regular "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom" feature. Because many of us are educators, this section is designed as a space in which we may share and reflect on our successes and challenges in teaching Fuller. To submit an essay, please send it as an email attachment to kkornacki@caldwell.edu with "newsletter" in the subject line.

Master Teacher, Beloved Mentor

by Betsy Draine

"Excellence in teaching is just as important to me as research excellence." Jeff Steele made that declaration in an annual activities report early in his career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and he spent thirty-six years achieving extraordinary results as both teacher and scholar. The spacious arena of a large land-grant university gave him scope to inspire six thousand first- and second-year students in large lectures, another thousand or so in courses for majors in English and other humanities fields, and hundreds of graduate students. His dedication to students and his brilliance in the classroom were recognized in 1992 by the University of Wisconsin System, which granted him their highest award, given to only four faculty members per year statewide. Over the next twenty-six years, he continually outdid himself, winning the highest possible course ratings from students and a special commendation by the Wisconsin Student Association.

Some people are born teachers, and Jeff was one of them. Everyone who knew him felt the force of his mind, the quickness of his thinking, and the rush of his eloquent voice. Whether pacing the stage of a lecture hall or standing in front of an open mailbox, he had important things to say and he made you want to hear them.

I was lucky to be one of Jeff's colleagues, with an office two doors down. I saw his students trail him down the hall, talking all the while about the last lecture. I saw them lined up in front of his door, waiting for their slice of his long office hours. Students in my classes told me about his tour de force lectures and the intense discussions they had with him one-to-one. Their awe of him didn't diminish their sense of being personally listened to and individually guided. His teaching file is full of letters from undergraduates testifying that Jeff encouraged their interests and guided their research, so that they felt empowered to pursue the work in the world that they felt most worthwhile.

I wish you could read the whole of a letter from a student who went on to graduate school at Purdue University. She took Jeff's course on the American Renaissance and was so intrigued that she changed her major from International Business to English. She says that her greatest experience at Madison was writing her senior thesis on Margaret Fuller. "During that year," she says, "Professor Steele taught me how to do rigorous research, how to write a thesis, how to sharpen my critical tools and follow my hunches, how to find materials, and along with this, just how thrilling academic research can be. The same qualities Steele showed in the classroom—patience, respect, and excitement—I was lucky enough to experience first hand." With Jeff's guidance, this student won an NEH "Younger Scholar's Award" that enabled her to travel to Harvard to examine Margaret Fuller's papers housed in the Houghton Rare Book Library. She also audited Jeff's graduate course, "Gender and Ideology in the American Renaissance," which she says showed her "that the American Renaissance contains a wealth of exciting and unexplored material encompassing many diverse groups and individuals. This is probably the largest reason I ultimately decided to

pursue this literary time period." Graduate students echo this testimony, and the diversity of subjects treated in their dissertations include work on Margaret Fuller and on gender and race in nineteenth-century America.

Jeff's colleagues came to realize that he had a huge amount to teach them about teaching. He was the first in the department to use music and visuals consistently, making them an expected element of his lectures in large and small classes. As I attempted to follow Jeff's lead, I saw how much advance planning, technical competence, and knowledge of the visuals and music of the historical period were needed to carry off even one of Jeff's multi-media classes, never mind a whole course of them. There is more of such media-rich teaching these days, but in 1981 it was novel and few can have used the techniques more effectively.

There's no sure route to great teaching, but good models help a lot. Jeff was grateful for his undergraduate years at Carleton College, a small liberal arts college that values good teaching and provides small classes where students and teachers can form trusting bonds as they explore ideas together. Inspired, he caught the wave of a new training option, the M.A.T. (or Master of Arts in Teaching), at Harvard.

When he went to graduate school in English at Harvard, Jeff put into practice what he'd learned about the ideal student-teacher relationship. He worked as a Teaching Fellow for four years and moved with his wife, Jocelyn Riley, into North House, where they co-served as Head Residents (houseparents) and Jeff served as an Assistant Senior Tutor, a combination of academic advisor and tutor. At UW-Madison, Jeff managed to bring the spirit of tutorial intimacy to a huge university, and that's no mean feat.

He lectured powerfully in courses taught in large lecture halls seating hundreds of students fulfilling the humanities course requirement. But he wasn't content with that. He supervised three to five teaching assistants a term, and he threw himself into helping those graduate students make their discussion sections into communities of learners on a quest for shared knowledge. It wasn't long before Jeff's reputation as a teaching mentor reached the ears of his colleagues, who impressed him into service as the Director of Introductory Literature Courses, which entails orienting, supervising, and mentoring scores of teaching assistants. One can only hope that those lucky graduate students are now professors who are passing on Jeff's teaching style and techniques.

No doubt, members of the Margaret Fuller Society are dedicated teachers themselves and have worked in their departments in ways that support good teaching by others. Jeff gave more time to that work than most of us do. A departmental workload analysis showed that Jeff had many more service assignments than the average in our department. In addition to the work listed above, he served as the department's Undergraduate Director and as the head of minority recruitment at the graduate level. Jeff leaves behind institutions he helped found and foster. He helped to create and maintain (*cont. on the following pg.*)

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the university-wide Teaching Academy, where faculty members take workshops on teaching techniques. He worked to build the faculty and curriculum of the nascent American Indian Studies Program. All this was in addition to the ordinary kinds of committee work that we all have to do.

Jeff Steele taught brilliantly, mentored wisely, and pursued his scholarship with passion and rigor. We will greatly miss him not only for these accomplishments but also as a true friend.

About the Author:

Betsy Draine is Professor of English and American Literature Emerita at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializing in modern British fiction. She chaired the Women's Studies Program from 1989 to 1992 and served as Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs from 1992 to 1999.

Personal Recollection of Jeffrey Steele
by Manuel Herrero-Puertas

I met Professor Jeffrey Steele in my second year of graduate school. I was a student in his "City Writing in Antebellum American Literature" seminar. His Orson-Welles-like physique and baritone voice struck one right away, but if there was something inspiring—overwhelming at times—about Prof. Steele, it was his encyclopedic knowledge of nineteenth-century American literature and critical theory, with an emphasis on cultural geography, affect, and psychoanalysis. I remember his office space as a fair representation of such an omnivorous, yet accurate, intellect, with three layers of books stacked up from the walls in and the occasional request for the visitor to hold a specific pile while he dragged out a volume from the bottom.

Nonetheless, Prof. Steele knew how to descend from the clouds of high-strung theory and make American literature relevant and engaging for undergraduates. I say this in good authority, since I eventually became his teaching assistant for three semesters. While his graduate seminar challenged me to become a nineteenth-century Americanist, his pedagogy opened up new possibilities. An obscure Emily Dickinson poem acquired new meanings once paired with Tom Petty's "Free Fallin'." The intensity of desire in *The Great Gatsby* and *Quicksand* was easier to grapple with by looking at car advertisements from the 1920s. These connections never felt pandering or merely contextual. They served a purpose. They got the job done. Like many in the room, I enjoyed Prof. Steele's plumbing of Emerson, Fuller, and Twain, although I also cherish our random conversations about the Winter Olympics, his grandchildren, or the one time he saw Jimi Hendrix play at the Fillmore.

As an Assistant Professor designing my first American literature survey course, I've been revisiting Prof. Steele's syllabus and lectures. This backward glance coincided with the staggering news of his passing. As much as I find solace in the wealth of work and memories he leaves behind, what truly resonates with me these days is the farewell he bid to students at the end of the semester: "I have the best job in the world. I get paid to read books and talk to people about them."

About the Author:

Manuel Herrero-Puertas is Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures at National Taiwan University. He specializes in early and nineteenth-century American literature, disability studies, and political fantasy.

Courses Taught at the University of Wisconsin

- English 105 Expository Writing
- English 167 Introduction to British and American Literature Before 1920
- English 168 Introduction to Twentieth-Century Literature
- English 207 Introduction to Modern Literature, I
- English 208 Introduction to Modern Literature, II
- English 217 Survey of American Literature
- English 270 Course for Majors: "Hawthorne and James"
- English 281 Honors Course in Introductory Literature, I
- English 282 Honors Course in Introductory Literature, II
- English 574 Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing and Feminist Theory
- English 591 Conceptions of Race in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century American Literature
- English 609 Major American Novelists
- English 613 Major American Poets
- English 618 Literature of the American Renaissance
- English 626 Study of a Theme in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: The American Eve: Images of Women in 19th-Century American Literature

- English 626 Study of a Theme in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing
- English 626 Writing the City: 19th-Century New York
- English 626 Melville's *Moby-Dick*: Sources, Influences, and Analogues
- English 699 Independent Study: American Indian Fiction (undergraduate)
- English 723 Critical Methods (graduate)
- English 799 Independent Study: American Indian Fiction (grad)
- English 811 Major American Poets (grad)
- English 811 American Women's Poetry before 1900 (grad)
- English 812 Literature of the American Renaissance (grad)
- English 812 Exploding the American Renaissance (grad)
- English 940 Gender and Ideology in the American Renaissance (grad)
- English 940/942 Writing the City: Theories of Spatiality and Antebellum New York Authors (grad)
- English 942/971 Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing (grad)

University of Wisconsin-Madison English Department Remembers Jeffrey Steele

In Memoriam: Jeffrey Steele, Fire Hazard

by Russ Castronovo

The fire marshal had condemned Jeff Steele's office at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Faculty colleagues were not necessarily surprised; Jeff's office often seemed like a perilous space. Towers of paper and ziggurats of books dwarfed the admiring undergraduates who sought out this award-winning teacher. There was scant room for two chairs, and to talk to Jeff, you had to wedge yourself into a coffin-sized space, surrounded by an eclectic collection of books that ran the gamut from Catharine Maria Sedgwick to Kathy Acker.

The fire marshal never made clear the particular reason for the violation. Was it that a lifetime of scholarship, historical recovery, and inspired pedagogy was so tightly crammed into Jeff's seventh-floor office that, in the event of a fire in the building, quick escape would be impossible? Or, was there so much paper—such as the cartons of clippings and musings about Walt Whitman that a stranger from Iowa had driven to deliver to this renowned professor of English—that Jeff's office itself could spark a fire? Perhaps the fire marshal shared a secret sympathy for American literature and knew about the dangers of spontaneous combustion from his reading of Charles Brockden Brown. My theory is that Jeff was using these books to construct a scale model of the brownstones, boarding houses, theaters, warrens, and grog shops of New York City for the book he was writing about the connections among authors such as Lydia Maria Child, George Lippard, and Fanny Fern and the mysteries of urban existence. (Although Jeff would not be able to complete this book, he made a start with "The Visible and Invisible City: Antebellum Writers and Urban Space" in the *Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Literature*, a chapter that provides a generous guide for scholars who are sure to follow in his footsteps.)

Jeff's office had proved deadly in at least one instance. Found desiccated and flattened in a stack of file folders was a bat. How long it had been there, no one could say. I like to think that this hapless bat, itself an entity somewhere between Edgar Allan Poe's raven and Walter Benjamin's angel of history (Jeff was a student of both), was sandwiched between, on the one hand, "a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore" like the one held by the narrator of Poe's poem and, on the other, the "storm blowing from Paradise" seen by Benjamin's messianic messenger. As a scholar of American literature who taught classes about women writers' centrality to transformations within the American literary canon, Jeff knew something about both these phenomena. And everything in between.

Jeff was a polymath. Do you need a quick primer on the origins of performance studies? Do you want to find the parts in *The Arcades Project* where Benjamin talks about James Fenimore Cooper? Do you need inspiration for a clever exercise to jump-start a discussion of *Hope Leslie*? Jeff had the answers to these questions, but one always left with something more: a book about tying knots, a story about Frank Lloyd Wright, tips on how to portage a canoe, a recipe for making and storing pesto.

Jeff's ecumenical knowledge was on full display during public lectures in our department. I am fortunate enough to be part of a vibrant campus community that features a steady stream of scholars, artists, and authors. Often the highlight

would be the questions that Jeff would ask. Some people might pose a question to challenge a speaker, to make sure they know their stuff or to trip them up. Jeff had different aims. When he engaged a visiting scholar, he did so because he had retrieved from his vast learning some bit of information that had a deep connection with the material we had all just heard. Like the time Jeff suggested to an aesthetic theorist that a series of masks he was discussing was a cunning allusion to Gene Simmons from the band Kiss. (His suggestion became part of the article this person published.) Remember that Jeff's intellectual wandering led him to the performance studies? When a scholar came to deliver a lecture about the eighteenth-century stage, Jeff asked a question about the history of gesture complete with a fully-embodied set of examples. Jeff rose out of his seat, modeled a few theatrical poses, and then asked a question about the connections among performance, performance studies, and queer theory.

Jeff's love of learning made him a scholar, but it was his love of watching and helping others learn that made him a teacher. We miss our friend. And we continue to honor him by remembering the example he set as a teacher, a writer, and a generous soul.

About the Author:

Russ Castronovo is Tom Paine Professor and chair of the English Department at UW-Madison. He was lucky enough to have an office in the same corridor with Jeff Steele for 17 years.

Vignettes of Jeffrey Steele from the English Department

by Susan Stanford Friedman

Jeff Steele and I were young colleagues together in the early 1980s. Just as he was arriving from Harvard, I was a newly minted associate professor, leaving town for a research leave. I was delighted upon my return in 1983 to find Jeff as the new hire in American Studies. I immediately sensed a *sympatico* colleague when I saw him tell the department that he wanted to teach a course on nineteenth-century women writers called *The American Eve*. In those days, feminist criticism was still deeply controversial in the department, and women writers not easily accepted as a serious topic for research or teaching. I sensed that my senior colleagues thought they were getting a "safe" hire in Jeff in those conflicted times. He had a Harvard degree. His dissertation was on Emerson and the transcendentalists. But Jeff immediately went out on a limb and taught that course on *The American Eve*. I admired his courage and was amused to sense the shock of my senior colleagues.

In one sense, I wasn't surprised, after meeting Jocelyn Riley, his life's companion. As he made it through the arduous process of getting tenure, she was completing her first two major historical/video projects, *Her Own Words: Pioneer Women's Diaries* and *Belle Case La Follette, 1859-1931*. Clearly, I realized, Jeff shared his commitment to women's studies with Jocelyn. How he began is how he ended: as always, a staunch supporter throughout his long career of women writers and of women in the academy—students, faculty, staff. (*cont. on following pg.*)

Vignettes of Jeffrey Steele
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He also served as a long-time faculty affiliate of the American Indian Studies Program and was deeply attuned to the institutional racism that could make the lives of minority faculty and students so difficult.

After finishing his splendid book on Emerson, Jeff turned to that other, mostly ignored transcendentalist, Margaret Fuller. He became a life-long advocate for her work, her importance, her brilliance. In those early days, he and I reveled in what it was like to bring forth an ignored woman writer – me, with my work on H.D.; he, with his work on Fuller. And we especially enjoyed some of the parallels between the women, especially their wide-ranging interests in mysticism and hermetic traditions. It was priceless for me, in those days, to have a colleague who shared so deeply our common academic commitments.

Jeff’s intellectual curiosity knew no boundaries. He was famous in the department for having gobbled up every new theory on the horizon, as well as his eagerness for sharing his knowledge. Every day, he sat in his office, surrounded by books and more books – walking in to chat was a bit intimidating, as one had to wend one’s way through piles of books every which way, on shelves, on the floor. But Jeff was always the spirit of generosity for sharing his latest enthusiasm and his encyclopedic knowledge of literary history and theory.

This generosity of spirit and endless curiosity was evident as well during Jeff’s recent tenure as a Resident Fellow of the Institute for Research in the Humanities, which I directed at the

time. Jeff was one of my favorite fellows for his insatiable curiosity about other people’s projects. He always had astute questions to ask and contributions to make on the wide-ranging presentations of the Institute’s fellows. Sharp in his queries, he wore his wide-ranging knowledge gently, being especially generous with younger colleagues.

In the last year of his illness, Jeff’s determination to return to the classroom, where he loved to teach, was intense, inspiring, and ultimately heartbreaking. He left us with so much still to give. His presence on campus – in meetings, in classrooms, in the halls – is much missed. It’s hard to believe that I will return to the halls of Helen C. White this fall and not see Jeff walking down the hall with a cheerful hello, and a question, “Have you read……?”

About the Author:

Susan Stanford Friedman has taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1975 with a joint appointment in English and Women’s Studies. She has published widely in the fields of modernist studies, feminist studies and women’s writing, narrative theory, migration/diaspora studies, transnational literatures, and psychoanalysis. With several books on H.D., she has also published *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*; *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time*; and the edited or coedited volumes, *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses* (with Rita Felski) and *Contemporary Revolutions: Turning Back to the Future in 21st-Century Literature and Art*. Her work has been translated into ten languages.

Remembering Jeffrey Steele: The Teacher

Professional Positions		Select Teaching Awards, Fellowships, and Grants
1992-2018	Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Dr. Brenda Pfaehler Award of Excellence, Center for Educational Opportunity, UW, 2009
1987-92	Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Initial Fellow, Teaching Academy, UW, 1993
1981-87	Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Wisconsin Power and Light Underkofler Excellence in Teaching Award (awarded annually to four teachers in the statewide UW system), 1992
1981	Senior Proctor & Member of Administrative Board, Harvard University Summer School	Selection by the Wisconsin Student Association as “one of the top one hundred educators at UW-Madison,” 1991
1980-81	Assistant Senior Tutor, North House, Harvard University	Pedagogical Publications
1978-81	Head Resident Tutor, North House, Harvard University	
1978 & 81	Teaching Fellow, Harvard University Summer School	
1977-81	Teaching Fellow, Harvard University	
1971-73	Senior Personnel Assistant, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, administering tuition aid program with an annual budget of \$250,000	
		“‘The Glorious Secrets of Sad Love’: The Development of Margaret Fuller’s Poetry.” <i>Options for Teaching 19th-Century American Poetry</i> , ed. Paula Bennett, Karen Kilcup, Philipp Schweighauser.
		“Douglass and Sentimental Rhetoric.” <i>Approaches to Teaching the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> , ed. James C. Hall. New York: MLA, 1999: 66-72.

Riley Steele Family Memories

by Jocelyn Riley

I met Jeff in September 1967 when I enrolled as a freshman at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, a whopping 40 miles from my hometown of Minneapolis. Jeff introduced me to cowrie shells (one of his many collections), rock music, and action movies. During long walks in the Carleton Arboretum, he told me about Ohio and his hometown, Granville (where his father taught Spanish at Denison and his mother taught high school Spanish). As a lifelong Minnesotan whose only trips out of state at the time had been to next-door-neighbor Wisconsin, I enjoyed Jeff's stories of his family's trips to Mexico, Connecticut, and Detroit. Jeff ran track in college and edited *Manuscript*, the college literary magazine (which won him a national award). We had many conversations over fifty years and we influenced each other in many ways, although I never did acquire a taste for action movies. Jeff was a strong-willed person with a strong personality and when I met his family, I wasn't surprised to learn that most of them shared those traits.

Jeff graduated from Carleton in 1969 and then taught high school for a year in Braham, a little town north of the Twin Cities. Then he moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to earn a Master of Arts in Teaching at the Harvard School of Education, so we lived apart most of those two years, which was very hard on both of us. We talked about marriage often, but at the time, I would have lost my scholarship if I had married. As I often said to Jeff over the years, "There's a reason there was a women's movement." We did marry in September 1971 and when Jeff arrived from Boston for the ceremony in Minnesota, he was bearing two distinctive gold wedding rings, which he called our "leprechaun crowns."



Jeff and Jocelyn's wedding, September 1971. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.

Jeff served two years of alternative service at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston (while I worked at Beacon Press) and then we sailed for Europe aboard a Russian ship, the SS *Pushkin*, in August of 1973. Jeff had been awarded a Thomas J.

Watson Traveling Fellowship, which he had to postpone until his service was complete. His Watson proposal had been to live in Ireland and write a book of poetry, but by the time we got to Europe, the Troubles in Ireland had escalated to the point that we didn't feel it would be safe to go there. He did complete a book of poetry that year, though. We traveled in Great Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Italy, Greece, and Norway. (We finally made it to Ireland in May of 2017, where Jeff got to study ancient Celtic ruins to his heart's content.)



Brendan, Jocelyn, Doran, and Jeff at Brendan's wedding reception. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.

We returned to America in October 1974, ready for new adventures. I was pregnant and we moved to Ohio to live with Jeff's dad (who was newly divorced) for a year while we did odd jobs (some very odd; Jeff became Granville's "beer baron" at a local grocery store) and decided what to do next. Our first son, Doran Riley Steele, was born May 5, 1975, and he has lived up to his name (which means "gift" in some traditions). Jeff received a fellowship to pursue a Ph.D. at Harvard and we moved back to Cambridge, winding up in North House, where we were Head Residents of the Holmes Hall dormitory. Jeff was always hard-working and determined. The summer he was studying for his prelims (and working full time) he had an emergency appendectomy followed by peritonitis. He took his prelims shortly after he was released from the hospital. He managed to pass the prelim exam not with flying colors but he passed. The flying colors came later. Jeff came home one day and walked into our mini-kitchen, excited to tell me his latest discoveries and calling me, as he always did, "Jocey" and "Joce." Doran was four at the time and he and a little pal were playing on the floor of Doran's room just off the kitchen. After Jeff left, the visiting four-year-old came into the kitchen with wide eyes and asked me, "Why was he calling you Jaws?" So the graduate-school years were not all grim, although they were challenging. Our younger son, Brendan Riley Steele, was born April 6, 1985, and, like his brother before him, has been a great gift to us. Doran married Frances Scharko Steele in 2001 and now has three daughters (Adelaide, Imogen, and Alina); Brendan married Erin Hannah in 2012.

In 1981 Jeff finished his dissertation (*cont. on following pg.*)

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Jeff's family (left to right): Doran, Erin, Brendan, Jocelyn, Jeff, Immy (Imogen), Fran and Addie (Adelaide). September 2014. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.

on Emerson and accepted a position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Even though we were both originally from the Midwest, Madison was a bit of a shock at first. We didn't know anyone and I vividly remember the faculty welcome party where someone asked me, "You ARE married, aren't you?" It struck both of us as hilarious since we had celebrated our tenth wedding anniversary a couple of weeks earlier. Jeff relished both his scholarship and his teaching. He taught large introductory lectures as well as smaller classes and enjoyed them all. Jeff found committee work somewhat less fulfilling, but he did his share and then some; one year he served on 17 committees! Jeff taught in many different venues. He was a superb self-taught photographer and computer guru and was happy to share his gifts with me and others. He was a long-time leader in both Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and had the patience, generosity, intelligence, and good humor of a great teacher. He taught dozens of boys how to tie knots, fish, and set up a sturdy tarp. As I developed my career as an independent multi-media producer focusing on women's history, Jeff supported my work in many ways—as a photographer, a travel companion, and a steadfast cheerleader. It was always interesting to live with Jeff, as he loved to explore new subjects. He studied Oriental carpets and Asiatic lilies, fish decoys and painted wooden frogs, African masks and Japanese netsukes, birds and advertising trade cards.

I remember asking Jeff as he worked on Emerson, "Aren't there any women in the American Renaissance?" and when he said he didn't think so, I asked, "Are you sure? Are you positive?" So I might have played some small role in his discovery of Margaret Fuller. Jeff and Fuller clicked right away. Jeff was fascinated by mythology, mysticism, symbolism, and theology; he loved poetry; and he was a staunch advocate of women's rights all things he shared with Fuller. When Jeff told me about Fuller's symbolic carbuncles (red stones), I thought about his fondness for talismans (cowrie shells, rocks, fossils). People have often commented over the years how obscure a subject Fuller is, but Jeff was determined to bring her and her work to a wider audience. One of his treasured experiences was being the guest of honor at a Margaret Fuller Festival held in Oregon, Illinois, in July 1993, where the general public celebrated (and had heard of!) Margaret Fuller. Jeff dedicated his anthology, *The Essential Margaret Fuller*, to us, using her words: "These not only know themselves more, but *are* more for having met, and regions of their being, which would else have laid sealed in cold obstruction, burst into leaf and bloom and song."

About the author:

Jocelyn Riley produces DVDs, resource guides, and posters on Women's

History and Women in Nontraditional Careers that are used in high schools, colleges, and career centers throughout the country. She is Vice-President of the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Education Foundation. Riley's work has received the Write Women Back into History award from the National Women's History project and the Wisconsin Women's Council Governor's Trailblazer Award. Her websites are HerOwnWords.com and NontraditionalCareers.com.



Brendan Steele at the Margaret Fuller Festival, 1993. Riley Steele family photos.

Recollections of Jeff Steele

by Brendan Riley Steele

As far back as I can remember, my dad always loved the outdoors. He guided me through more than a decade of Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, during which he was always happy to teach us kids a new knot, fire starting trick, or handkerchief-folding technique.

But my fondest memories of my dad outdoors all center on one location: my aunt and uncle's cabin in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Jeff may not always have been a successful angler, but he was always an enthusiastic one. We would search in vain for the secret spot where all of the walleyes were hiding, only to come back to the cabin hours later with an empty live well. We didn't always catch fish, but—as my dad would joke—we could always catch mosquitoes. And we always had a good time.

We'd sit on the water for hours watching our bobbers bob and our fishing lines sitting slack in the water. Occasionally, the local bald eagle would circle overhead, and then dive straight into the water and snatch up a fish, returning to its nest minutes later with a bigger bounty than we'd found in an entire afternoon in the boat.

My dad knew that the best spot in the lake to catch panfish was at the end of my aunt and uncle's dock. I think he just liked being out on the water. Over the steady (cont. on following pg.)¹⁷

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drum of waves lapping against the boat, we'd hear the squawk of a great blue heron or, if we were lucky, the mournful cry of a loon. Once, a loon surfaced so close to our boat I could almost reach out and touch it. I remember staring into its eerie red eye before it disappeared back into the water.

This is my father's legacy: a life-long appreciation for nature, for stillness, for a placid lake at sunset. As Henry David Thoreau wrote: "Now I go a-fishing and a-hunting every day, but omit the fish and the game, which are the least important part."

About the author:

Brendan Riley Steele is the son of Jeffrey Steele and Jocelyn Riley. He attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied English (like father, like son). He has spent the past ten years working as a technical writer at Epic, a leading healthcare software company.



Jeff Steele showing off a walleye that he caught with Stephen Bielke. Riley Steele family photo.

Personal Recollections of Jeff Steele

by Steve Bielke

I knew Jeff for 50 years as a classmate, friend, fishing buddy, and husband of my close cousin, Jocelyn. What I will always remember about Jeff are his "conversations." He was the best conversationalist I've ever known as he could talk with considerable knowledge and enthusiasm on almost any topic. I attributed this skill to his vast interests and his ability to devour books at time-warp speed. What a pleasure it was to get a personal seminar, delivered with plenty of humor, while waiting for the fish to bite.



Jeff fishing. Photo courtesy of Riley Steele family photos.



Three generations of Steele men. Photo courtesy of Lisa Norby.



Jeff's sisters (left to right): Martha; her daughter, Jessica; Lisa. Taken at Jeff's memorial service, May 2018. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.

Memories of my Brother, Jeff Steele

by Lisa Norby

My earliest story about my brother Jeff was my mother telling me about the best day of her life — she had a beautiful baby boy and had just given him a bath and patted his clean body with baby powder. She lay on the bed with Jeff with the windows open, the warm summer breeze blowing the curtains, and relished the absolute joy of her beautiful and perfect baby boy, Jeff.

My mom would make me go wake up my brother Jeff every morning because she knew how he'd react. I'd knock and open his bedroom door and he would throw his shoes and anything else nearby at me and tell me to go away and come back later!

Jeff is my older brother by nearly ten years. One of my favorite stories is about Jeff's views on me growing up: "Jeff, look I am growing up!" I said and Jeff replied, "Lisa, you aren't grown up until your boobs stick out farther than your stomach!"

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Jeff's insatiable quest for learning showed in the things he chose to collect. When we were younger, he collected the usual stamps, coins and baseball cards. As he got older, Jeff's collecting got more sophisticated with finding new treasures, such as 19th-century advertising trade cards, fishing lures, Bakhtiari rugs, and even African masks. He would search on eBay until he found the best item, bid on it, invariably win the bid, and have a newfound prize! His collections were not to amass more stuff, but a way to learn about new things and excitedly share his knowledge with others. One of my most prized possessions is a Guro horned bird mask from the Ivory Coast of Africa that Jeff carefully searched for and found on eBay and sent to me in the last few months of his life.

One summer we lived in Menlo Park, California while my dad was teaching Spanish to people entering the Peace Corps. Spending most days with three sisters and a mom I think was a bit much for Jeff, so he resorted to spending the summer in his room blasting 60's music through the walls of the house, especially "Peace Frog" and "People are Strange" by the Doors while he read Greek tragedies all day – well, at least that what our mom said he was reading!

About the author:

Lisa Norby, nine years younger than Jeff, is the youngest of the Steele children. She received Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees in Geology. After her first job with Mobil Oil Co. she settled in to her dream career with the National Park Service in Lakewood, CO. Lisa supervises staff that oversee energy and minerals development in our national parks and is also following her passion managing two science internship programs for college students – Mosaics in Science and Geoscientists-in-the-Parks Programs. She is the mother of four amazing children and grandmother to three delightful little beings. Lisa really didn't get to know Jeff while they were growing up because she was so much younger. In her 20s, she and Jeff discovered many things they both enjoyed – music, nature, service to others, and collecting just about anything! A day doesn't go by that Lisa doesn't have fond memories and miss her older brother Jeff.



Jocelyn and Lise, c. 1972. Photo by Jeff Steele. Courtesy of Lise Jacobson.



Lise and Bear, 2016. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.

Jeff Memories

by Lise Jacobson

I met Jeff when he and my sister Jocelyn were both attending Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. When they were married at Carleton on September 4th, 1971, I was Jocelyn's maid of honor and read "Love One Another" by Khalil Gibran in their ceremony. Jeff became a treasured member of our family!

Jeff and I shared a great love of music. Jeff gave me a guitar he'd had since high school. I'd been playing since the age of twelve, but always used a borrowed guitar. With a guitar of my very own, I began writing songs in earnest.

We also shared a love of cats. What could be more purrfect than the soft, furry and unconditional love of a kitty cat? His cats, Ginger and Arthur, were constants on Jeff's lap!

Oh, what a cook Jeff was! His use of spices was incomparable and delicious! He introduced me to curry when I visited him and Jocelyn in Cambridge, MA in 1972. He was working at Mass. General Hospital at the time. We all took a road trip through New Hampshire and Vermont, visiting with his sister Martha.

I started a postcard collection from Jocelyn and Jeff's travels in Europe. On their return, I flew to Columbus, OH upon the birth of their first son, Doran. They were staying with Jeff's dad, Charles Steele – a scholar in his own right!

Jeff was an amazing husband and father to his two sons, Doran and Brendan. He instilled not only morality in his sons, but intelligence and the importance of equality for women. Refreshing in a man! Jeff loved his three granddaughters with a passion unprecedented! An exceptional photographer, Jeff had a creative eye which captured life's moments with an extraordinary talent!

I live in the country outside of Austin, TX. Jeff and Jocelyn visited me several times. Jeff was my "Bear" and had the hug to match! Numerous times I have met people who were his students at UW-Madison, and they all sung his praises! Jeff had an impact on so very many, and his legacy will live on forever!



Jeff's granddaughters: Addie, Immy, and Alina. June 2016. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.

Personal Recollections of Jeff

by Erin Hannah

Jeff Steele was my father-in-law. There are many, many jokes and stereotypes about the “evil in-laws,” and wow, did he defy that mold.

I met Jeff in 2004 after I started dating his son, Brendan. Meeting your boyfriend’s parents is always a bit stressful, but I realized quickly that both Jeff and his wife Jocelyn were my kind of people. So kind, so funny, so smart. Dinner with the in-laws became something to look forward to, especially considering Jeff was an amazing cook.

As the years went by, I continued to see more and more that I admired about Jeff. Many people shut off from things they don’t understand like new music, food, and so on. If Jeff saw something new, he wanted to learn more. Example: he once bought a collection of Black Sabbath music so he could talk to me about heavy metal. I’m not sure it was ever really his thing, but the fact that he tried — priceless. That kind of inquisitive, inclusive soul is rare. He loved art, literature, movies, gardening, cats, cooking, birdwatching — it goes on and on.

Most importantly to me, he was a passionate feminist and a teacher. I miss him dearly already, and I know that I will always miss him, but the greatest comfort to me is knowing that as an educator, Jeff taught progressive, important ideals to thousands of students. The world is full of people who know more, care more, understand more, thanks to him. That is one of the greatest legacies you can leave behind.

I’ll wrap up with a few images — I did two paintings for Jeff towards the end, one for his hospital room and one for his funeral pamphlet [which you can find on the front page of this Special Issue of *Conversations*]. His best buddy was his cat Arthur, and he loved birdwatching. And if you ever received a book from Jeff as a gift, you were guaranteed to have the front page inscribed with his classic cat face signature. I miss you, Jeff, but I feel at least a little ease with my belief that the world is a better place for having you here. And thank you for always, always making me feel welcome in your family.



Jeff and Arthur. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.



Cat Watercolor. By Erin Hannah. Image courtesy of Erin Hannah.



Jeff's cat face. Image courtesy of Erin Hannah.

Margaret Fuller Society Panels at the American Literature Association *May 2018*

by Michael Schrimper

San Francisco From May 24-27, 2018, members of the Fuller Society gathered in San Francisco at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero for the 27th Annual conference of the American Literature Association. Over the course of the four days, the Society held two panels, a successful business meeting, and one dinner with a lovely view of the Bay.

On Friday afternoon's panel, "Margaret Fuller: In the Classroom and Beyond," which was chaired by Larry Reynolds (Texas A&M University), the first presenter was Holly Dykstra (Laredo Community College). In her paper, "Using Fuller to Teach Fuller: Creating Agency and Security," Dykstra outlined the ways in which Fuller serves as something of a role model for her students (some of them first generation or undocumented) at her college near the border of Mexico. Dykstra examines the concepts behind Fuller's *Conversations* "immersing others in challenging academic situations, encouraging shared knowledge, and spreading education to those who lack agency" as a way for her students to not only relate to Fuller, but potentially see Fuller's will and work as models for their own. Callie Gallo (Fordham University) presented "Teaching Margaret Fuller, Fanny Fern, and the Nineteenth-Century Press in the Wake of #MeToo," drawing startling connections between nineteenth-century scenes of male aggression and sexual violence and news stories unfolding in our contemporary climate. Lesli Vollrath (University of Houston) presented "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," providing an overview for teaching Fuller's and Chopin's texts through critical frameworks ranging from Hélène Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976) to Stacy Alaimo's New Materialist concept, "trans-corporeality." These frameworks, Vollrath suggests, create relational possibilities for the female body in its environment. Nanette Rasband Hilton (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) also gave a paper concerned with Fuller's "Leila," "Praxis of

Duality: The Sisterhood of Fuller's 'Leila' and DuBois's 'Atlanta.'" Hilton's paper demonstrated the potential of a reader's own ipseity to promote "multiple social identities with awareness of crosscutting memberships." At this notably well-attended panel, Hilton led a moment of silence to honor the memory of prodigious Fuller scholar Professor Jeffrey Steele.

On Saturday's panel, "Margaret Fuller: Out of New England," chaired by Society Treasurer Noelle Baker (Independent scholar), Simone Puelo (University of Connecticut, Storrs) presented "Of Good and Noble Aspect: Margaret Fuller, Catholicism and Pius IX (1847-1850)," tracing Fuller's ambivalent views of Catholicism and Pius IX, as well as her criticism of theocratic monarchy and the Papal State. Puelo sees many of Fuller's critiques of the Church as "emancipatory" in nature, exposing the institutional injustices common Catholics faced. Clemens Spahr (Mainz University, Germany) presented "Romantic Revolutions: Cosmopolitan Radicalism in Margaret Fuller's Dispatches from Europe," which reads Fuller's European dispatches for Horace Greeley's the *New-York Tribune* as "not a refutation of her earlier Transcendentalism," nor a "simple continuation" of that project, but, rather, a "rewriting" of her Romanticism. Katie Kornacki (Caldwell University) gave a paper entitled "'The Morning Star of Margaret Fuller': The Woman's Club Movement and the Legacy of Fuller's *Conversations*," outlining Fuller's continuing influence in women's clubs across the United States. Michael Schrimper (Independent scholar) presented a transatlantic study, "Who's Afraid of Margaret Fuller?: Literary and Biographical Connections Between Virginia Woolf and Margaret Fuller," delineating the ways in which Fuller, in "The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain" in particular, anticipates the high Modernist feminist narratology of Virginia Woolf's experimental 1917 sketch, "Kew Gardens." [this article originally appeared on the Margaret Fuller Society's website]

Abstracts from each panel can be found on the following pages.



"Margaret Fuller: In the Classroom and Beyond."
Photo by Katie Kornacki.



"Margaret Fuller: Out of New England."

Margaret Fuller: In The Classroom and Beyond (Friday, May 25th)

Chair: Larry Reynolds, Texas A&M

Using Fuller to Teach Fuller: Creating Agency and Security

Holly Dykstra, Laredo Community College

Margaret Fuller is so inimitably multi-faceted as to present a rare but remarkable opportunity to more effectively reach nontraditional college students. Border students are uniquely predisposed to benefiting from exposure to Fuller's complexity—as a prominent historical figure who challenged the status quo and proactively sought to remove the educational disparity between genders; as a woman who disdained the constraints otherwise inherent to her gender; and as a cultural critic who, more than simply advocating for and pursuing education, sought to alter the very framework that encouraged the social view of education as a man's game. These qualities, and the context in which Fuller struggled, parallels the situations that nontraditional students often face in border culture. The restrictions against gender that prevented female agency or security in the masculine realm of education and public speaking only moved Fuller to design her own agency, establish her own security, and reject intelligence as a wholly masculine trait: she created her *Conversations*. Border students often demonstrate a similar dedication to education—first generation students must contend with deeply instilled cultural pressures, little academic support from family members, few educational models, and often poverty. The significant number of immigrant students who cross the border to attend classes deal with obstacles and risks daily and frequently struggle with English language use. Both first generation students and documented and undocumented immigrant students experience insecurity on multiple levels. Like Fuller, these students pursue education despite social/cultural barriers. By tapping into the concept behind Fuller's *Conversations*—immersing others in challenging academic situations, encouraging shared knowledge, and spreading education to those who lack agency—and engaging students in a similar classroom experience, Fuller may ultimately become the role model they have been lacking.

New Approaches to Teaching Margaret Fuller, Fanny Fern, and the Nineteenth-Century Press in the Wake of #MeToo

Callie Gallo, Fordham University

Undergraduate students are witnessing in real time the uncovering and unravelling of structures of sexual inequality and harassment in modern media industries in Hollywood, Silicon Valley, and beyond. The #MeToo movement has opened up a dialogue across modern workplaces by harnessing the power of social media platforms, but it is not the first of its kind. Women working in nineteenth-century print media, namely Margaret Fuller and Fanny Fern, were speaking out about workplace inequality and harassment, and they were using the power of the popular press to disseminate and amplify their critique of the sexist practices of the industry as well as society at large.

Fuller and Fern were mid-nineteenth-century trailblazers in the rapidly expanding American commercial press who advocated for women's entrance into professional life as broadly commercial writers. In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), Fuller advocated that more women write for the popular press to

correct the ongoing problem that women “learn without any attempt to reproduce” that knowledge. Writing about a wide variety of subjects, including issues of social justice, she argued, would lead to social and professional equality that had since eluded women because of society's assumptions about their unfitness for many facets of public and professional life. In Fern's novel *Ruth Hall* (1854), the protagonist secures steady employment as a popular newspaper columnist and achieves financial stability for herself and her children. Hall bends the restrictions of her gender by adopting an ambiguous pseudonym, writing beyond domestic themes, and providing for her children without a husband, even as she depends on aspects of domestic ideology to fuel and legitimize her success. Both authors were quick to isolate the ways in which the commercial press and society at large were structured to impede women's progress and they offered distinct pathways to subvert that architecture via women's access to popular media.

To show how the #MeToo movement and these nineteenth-century feminist writers converge, and thus highlight how the social and professional conditions of each era condition each call for change and action, I have my students use social media to spark conversation about Fuller's and Fern's writings—specifically their views on women's equality and women in the workplace. My paper will discuss approaches for using social media like Twitter and Instagram to help students hash out the different perspectives and strategies these authors use to address sexism and harassment, as well as how their perspectives differ about the causes and solutions to inequality between the sexes.

Comparing and contrasting the dialogue spurred by these two nineteenth-century feminist authors through today's popular media and contemporary feminist movements like #MeToo offers students who are unfamiliar with nineteenth-century literature and the development of women's professionalization in this period a relevant and timely way to historicize and understand present-day social struggles as well as appreciate the longue durée of new-media-driven feminist activism in America.

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

Leslie Vollrath, University of Houston

What happens when students consider Donna Haraway's evocative question and imagine a body that exists beyond the skin?¹ This paper provides a plan for teaching—in an Introduction to Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies class—Margaret Fuller's “Leila” (1841), Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), excerpts from Hélène Cixous's “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1976), Astrida Neimanis's *Bodies of Water: Posthumanist Feminist Phenomenology* (2017), and new materialists concepts, such as Stacy Alaimo's “trans-corporeality” and Jane Bennett's “vital materialism.” By assigning two nineteenth-century writers alongside feminist and materialist theoretical concepts, this class will inspire students to examine the significance of the body for women (in the 19th century as well as the present), learn new materialist and feminist concepts, and envision their universe, in Karen Barad's terms, as “intra-active,” one that “signifies the mutual constitution of entangled species.”² Since many students are unfamiliar with Margaret Fuller, the class pairs her with Chopin and contemporary theory to offer touchstones and generate interest. This pairing also enhances students' knowledge of women's history, providing a deeper understanding of the complexity of present-day feminist concerns.

(cont. on following pg.)

To introduce Fuller, a brief historical outline of her life is first offered, and selected quotes from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) are discussed. Emphasis is placed on how, as an editor, translator, writer, teacher, and journalist, Fuller shattered several “glass ceilings” for women during the antebellum period. Next, “Leila” and *The Awakening* are read. Although “Leila” is not one of Fuller’s renowned works, it is nonetheless engaging and provides an interesting comparison to *The Awakening*, particularly Edna Pontellier’s relationship with materiality. Specifically, the class focuses on Fuller’s depiction of Leila as the “moving principle” whose touch makes “all become fluid” and who shifts into various elemental entities: blue sky, sunset, vast deep.³ Students are asked to consider a number of relevant questions: What does Leila represent? What does her body look like? Does she have a body? Why/Why not? What kind of relationship is Fuller setting up between Leila and the material world? What is the tone of this text? Is this a feminist text? These questions challenge students to closely analyze Fuller’s construction of the female body in the environment.

Although students read *The Awakening* in its entirety, the class focuses its comparison to “Leila” on the sections highlighting Edna’s relationship with her body or materiality: her first swim, her newfound awareness of her body, and her final swim.⁴ After examining how the swimming passages position Edna’s change in identity and body as an interconnection with the environment, the class asks students to decipher the similarities and differences between Chopin’s and Fuller’s approach to the body. How does each writer use the environment as a space of authority or resistance? Is the female body constructed as a site of power or weakness? What is the relationship between the female body, the environment, and identity? This comparative dialogue encourages students to create threads between different configurations of the female body and to recognize the prescience of nineteenth-century feminism.

After students read Fuller and Chopin, literary theory is introduced to provide a method of analysis for both literary and social concerns. Cixous’s emphasis on the strategy of writing the body as a means of resistance against the patriarchy frames the initial discussion. Then, the focus is shifted to her concept of the “endless body” and her characterization of the female body’s relationship with matter.⁵ These concepts, along with the new materialist terms mentioned above, provide students with a vocabulary for discussing and reimagining the female body and its relationship to the environment.

By raising questions about female embodiment, power, and the environment, this class hopes to inspire students to reconsider the power and value of their own bodies. As Fuller argues in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), the body, as well as the mind, must be given space to unfold: “Give the soul free course, let the organization, both of body and mind, be freely developed, and the being will be fit for any and every relation to which it may be called.”⁶

1. Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” in *Manifestly Haraway*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 61.

2. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 33.

3. Margaret Fuller, “Leila,” in *The Essential Margaret Fuller*, ed. Jeffrey Steele, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 57, 54.

4. Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Margo Culley, (New

York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994) 27, 36, 109.

5. Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” in *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer 1976), 889.

6. Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in *The Essential Margaret Fuller*, ed. Jeffrey Steele, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 298.

Praxis of Duality: The Sisterhood of Fuller’s “Leila” and Du Bois’s “Atlanta”

Nanette Rasband Hilton, University of Nevada-Las Vegas

Though Margaret Fuller and W.E.B. Du Bois never crossed paths, their Leila and Atlanta were both contenders in the nineteenth century’s race for social reform. Through the lens of both social identity theory, developed in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, and multiple identity theory, introduced by Sonia Roccas and Marilyn Brewer in 2002, I examine how both Fuller and Du Bois grappled with their era’s social prescriptions. I argue that Fuller’s Leila, from *The Dial*, and Du Bois’s Atlanta, from *The Souls of Black Folk*, were autobiographical personifications of their author’s struggles for social reform. While Fuller’s Leila walked on “bare and bleeding feet, opiates and divining rods in each over-full hand...amid the habitations of mortals as a Genius, visit[ing] their consciousness as a Demon,” with the mission to emancipate, enlighten and elevate, so did Du Bois’s Atlanta race for gold in “a journey for weary feet” confronting the “Veil of Race.” Through their writing, the two revolutionaries challenged social barriers—Fuller the gender line and Du Bois the color line. They braved these barriers armed with their multiple identities. Among Fuller’s multiple identities were woman, daughter, student, writer, editor, foreign correspondent, wife and mother—many of which were aberrant or conflicting. A generation later, Du Bois similarly contested social prescriptions by identifying as an emancipated, educated, black male, who, like Fuller, was also a writer and provocateur. He warned that “a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretense or to revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism.” Although these are inevitable risks of conflicted identities, I contend that Fuller and Du Bois each rallied their dualities to create a legacy of social reform. I show that using Fuller and Du Bois as models, students today can shape their own ipseity to promote “multiple social identities with awareness of crosscutting memberships [which are] an effective formula” for perpetuating Fuller’s and Du Bois’s social progress and “the collective understanding of [any] discourse community.”

Margaret Fuller: Out of New England (Saturday, May 26th)

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

Between 1847 and 1850, Margaret Fuller wrote a number of dispatches from Rome for the *New York Tribune* that document the Roman Revolution, an episode of the First War for Italian Independence. Put simply, the Roman Revolution was an insurrection against the Papal States by popular republican forces gaining momentum throughout the Italian peninsula. An avowed republican, Fuller sided with Italian republicans, none more prominently than the revolutionary nationalist leader, Giuseppe Mazzini. American Catholics (cont. on following pg.) 23

such as Bishop Hughes of New York vehemently criticized Fuller's treatment of their spiritual leader, Pius IX, and they decried the anti-Catholic sentiments expressed in the dispatches. Recent scholars such as Leonardo Buonomo and Paola Gemme advance similar critiques of Fuller as anti-Catholic.

Though Fuller came from a New England, Anglo-Protestant stock, the dispatches actually reveal complex, ambivalent attitudes toward Catholicism and the Papacy of Pius IX. They trace Fuller's evolving impression of Pius IX: in October of 1847, she praises his early reforms (granting amnesty to political exiles and prisoners, 1846; creating an advisory council of laymen, 1847; establishing the Civic Guard and a Cabinet Council, 1847) and sees potential in his constitutionalist leanings as her confidant Mazzini had. She becomes exceedingly disillusioned with Pius IX's theocratic constitutionalism by the time of Pellegrino Rossi's assassination and the outbreak of the Roman Revolution in 1848.

Distinguishing the role of the Pope from the individual person, Fuller nonetheless maintains that Pius IX (Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti) had his heart in the right place. She often characterizes Pius IX as an honorable and dignified religious leader, notwithstanding their political misalignment. Moreover, Fuller slates intolerant English and American counterparts who betray anti-Catholic opinions. She retains a traditional republican attitude, favoring the separation of church and state, but she sees Catholic rituals observed by the populace as surprisingly progressive communal practices. She distinguishes the Catholic public and the Pope from the Jesuit Order, which she often scorns or treats with disdain. Her generous respect for Pius IX and her nuanced musings on Catholic ritual (very much different from her own) are both evidence of what Kwame Anthony Appiah terms "cosmopolitanism." Furthermore, Fuller's critiques of Catholicism, aimed predominantly at the Jesuits, tend to be emancipatory, and they often decry institutional injustices towards common Catholics. She mostly avoids essentialism and prejudice toward the Catholic religion at large.

Examining Fuller's thoughtful reflections on the Catholic public's demand for social reforms, Pius IX's "Non Semel" allocution, the assassination of Pellegrino Rossi, and the Pope's eventual flight from Rome in 1848, this paper defends Fuller's complicated treatment of Catholicism. Her critical stances are not those of an estranged American observer, but instead, they parallel the local opinion, be it the radical view of Mazzini or that of the moderate Alessandro Manzoni, a conservative Italian novelist, whom Fuller also admired. Fuller's substantial engagement with these Risorgimento discourses of religion and politics show the scope of her cosmopolitan frame-of-mind. Fuller's dispatches give light to Appiah's contentious term "cosmopolitan patriotism," in which people, though rooted to a home of their own, put pain-staking effort into the "culture of other, different places that are home to other, different people."

Romantic Revolutions: Cosmopolitan Radicalism in Margaret Fuller's Dispatches from Europe

Clemens Spahr, Mainz University, Germany

Margaret Fuller's dispatches, penned for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* during her stay in Europe from 1846 until 1850, illustrate her transformation into a committed political radical. With the revolutionary situation in Europe intensifying, the letters increasingly turn from cosmopolitan travel account into

radical political analysis. While Fuller's transformation into a socialist has been thoroughly studied by critics such as Bell Gale Chevigny, these assessments usually presume a rupture that separates Fuller's earlier, Transcendentalist writings from her later political writings. In my talk, however, I will argue that the cosmopolitan radicalism of Margaret Fuller's European dispatches is not a refutation of her earlier Transcendentalism, but a drawing out of the logic of Romanticism. This logic dates back to the early German Romantics and their demand that Romanticism must establish a revolutionary politics to enable the "same development of *all* powers, of the individual as well as all individuals" (Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling). The dispatches must therefore be understood as the logical unfolding of a cosmopolitan, utopian Romanticism that has always been at the heart of Fuller's project and of transatlantic Romanticism generally.

To chart how Fuller gradually acknowledges the radical logic of her Romanticism, I will focus on three of her dispatches. While in her earliest (Transcendentalist) dispatch Fuller disjoins reports on British attempts to educate the poor from observations on the "romantic" and "charming" sights which Europe offers to her "trans-Atlantic eyes" (no.1), six months later, amidst the political turmoil of Rome, she connects this vision of beauty to the social conditions that enable it when she appreciates Giuseppe Mazzini's boy school as an attempt to redeem the poor "from bondage and pure ignorance" in order to help them "see the birds singing in [the] branches" (no.9). This connection between a Romantic utopian vision and the revolutionary politics necessary to realize it is brought full circle in December 1848, when Fuller declares that while Mazzini's school plants "a grain of mustard-seed," it is only a comprehensive revolution that will help the common good "bud again out of a mighty corruption" (no.23). The dispatches, therefore, unfold a revolutionary cosmopolitanism inherent in Fuller's Transcendentalist idealism rather than figuring as an anti-Romantic turn to revolutionary politics. By stressing this continuity, I also intend to raise larger questions about the periodization of Fuller's works.

"The Morning Star of Margaret Fuller": The Woman's Club Movement and the Legacy of Fuller's Conversations

Katie Kornacki, Caldwell University

Attesting to the high degree to which Margaret Fuller's presence pervaded the second half of the nineteenth century is the way in which women continued to adopt and adapt her model of conversational theory and praxis in the decades following her death. Specifically, we can see Fuller's Boston Conversations for women as deeply embedded within a larger collective feminist practice rooted in transcendentalist thought and centered on conversation that spanned the course of the nineteenth century and beyond: the Women's Club movement. Often dismissed as apolitical and elitist, the women's club movement, much like Fuller's Conversations, served as a catalyst for feminist intellectual exchange and an affirmation of a woman's right to vocation and education connected to broader reform initiatives. Clubwomen picked up the threads started by Fuller in the 1840s and continued them—within their private club rooms, at semi public conventions and Federation meetings, and through publication in the press—into the turn of the twentieth century.

Fuller's Conversations had opened up a space—which women would continue to enlarge and extend—for seeking education, vocation, and sorority on increasingly diverse social and political levels, beginning within their own clubs. For clubwomen, conversation was central to club work, (cont. on following pg.)

Announcing the Margaret Fuller Society Session & Paper Titles for MLA 2018

478. Women at Work: Margaret Fuller and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers on Work *Saturday, 5 January 12:00 PM-1:15 PM, Atlanta (Hyatt Regency)*

This session explores Margaret Fuller's relation to and representations of labor from multiple perspectives, as we intend to investigate the ways in which Margaret Fuller and other 19th c. women writers considered, debated, practiced, and critiqued labor.

In recent years, scholars such as Gavin Jones, Jennifer Morgan and Lori Merish have addressed the centrality of women's work, especially with regards to the aesthetic and cultural significance of poverty, the reproductive and productive work of enslaved women, and the cultural importance of working class women as both readers and writers in the antebellum era. We would like to raise questions about all types of women's work (domestic, reproductive, forced, paid or unpaid, emotional, cultural) and the meanings this work generates.

What was Margaret Fuller's contribution to debates about labor? How did American women writers from different ethnic, religious, economic, or political backgrounds imagine and experience work? How have ideas about labor been developed in the 19th century from an intellectual, economic, historic, political and literary standpoint? Was class related to work in 19th c. women's circles? How did different kinds of women's labor figure in transcendentalist texts?

Presentations:

1. "Sent to the Sewing Room and Compelled to Work": Institutionalized Women's Labor in Nineteenth-Century American Hospitals for the Insane, *Aimee Allard (University of Nebraska, Lincoln)*
2. Solidarity across Classes and Women's Labor, *Hedi Özkan (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)*
3. The Disabled Superwoman: Disabling Domestic Labor in Mary Wilkins Freeman's "Luella Miller" and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's "No News," *Jessica Horvath Williams (University of California, Los Angeles)*

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fostering self-culture, sorority, cooperative learning, and social action. I argue that conversation should be understood as another form of literacy practiced both by Fuller's Boston circle and the later women's clubs, one that privileged collaboration, mutuality, and socialization, and one that wasn't co-opted and regularized by men. The clear relationship between Fuller's earlier efforts and the women's club movement makes us reconsider the scope and breadth of her influence on this heretofore underexplored aspect of the first wave feminist movement that blossomed in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Because Margaret Fuller is known as one of her era's most important and outspoken feminists, she and her work need to be understood within the larger feminist movement that continued to gain strength throughout the nineteenth century. More specifically, education, vocation, sorority, and the practice of self-culture are some of the primary threads connecting these women across the span of nearly a century. These themes and concerns, so central to the *Conversations*, would in turn drive the formation of and continue to play an important role in the women's club movement throughout its most influential and fruitful years. Tracing the legacy of Fuller's *Conversations* in the women's club movement, this paper enables us to better understand the broad cultural impact that Fuller had. We can better situate Fuller's *Conversations*, and the women's club movement that they so strongly influenced, within a wider community of women using conversation as a model for discourse in their small circles, at larger conventions, and in public performances

on the page and from the platform and pulpit. In doing so, not only do we gain a better understanding of the continued value and importance of Fuller's cultural and feminist work to a vast network of women, but we can also challenge the prevailing notion of women's clubs as apolitical (and even antifeminist), trivial, and disconnected from other women's rights activism.

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

Virginia Woolf and Margaret Fuller have more in common than the dearth of scholarship connecting them might suggest. Both were feminists; both were literary and cultural critics; both were literary artists. This paper aims to link British Modernist Woolf with American Transcendentalist Fuller, and in so doing shed light on some of their most relevant works and projects. One of Fuller's underappreciated works, "The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain," can be viewed as an anticipator of Woolf's short story "Kew Gardens," which is told from the perspective of a flowerbed and is meant to destabilize traditional masculine-heroic notions of narrative. Woolf links patriarchy to war and calls for women to help aid societal reform in *Three Guineas*, moves which, along with her presentation of notions of gender in *A Room of One's Own*, illuminate some of the central conceits of "The Great Lawsuit." Ultimately, this paper incorporates both historical and literary analysis to demonstrate the ways in which the lives, works, and causes of these writers construct a feminist vision that is at once literary, environmental (pertaining to today's conversation about ecofeminism), and political.

Jeffrey Steele's Legacy & The Margaret Fuller Society

Jeffrey Steele and Fuller Panels and the MLA

by Brigitte Bailey

More than anyone else, Jeff ensured that Margaret Fuller was a continuous presence at MLA conferences. For almost twenty years, while he served in various roles in the Fuller Society from executive officer to President he collaborated with others to create timely and substantial panels that gave a forum for innovative work, pushed Fuller scholarship forward, and introduced Fuller scholars to each other. His guaranteeing Fuller's annual representation at the MLA, the largest conference in literary studies, was one of the factors that returned her to a central position in C19 American literature.

For about six years while I was Vice President and President of the Fuller Society (2002-2008) Jeff and I put together what were then the two annual Fuller panels for the MLA. After each MLA, we would confer with other Fuller Society members, or sometimes just with each other, in order to come up with topics and language for the next year's call for papers. These conversations often became wide ranging explorations of what was going on in antebellum studies as well as in Fuller studies. Indeed, researching Fuller's work and hearing each year's panel papers extended our sense of what questions *could* be asked of the period and reminded us of Fuller's own extraordinary capacity for asking the key questions of her age. And so the CFP topics kept spilling out, year after year: Fuller in the 1840s; Margaret Fuller's New York; Margaret Fuller and the Discourses of Liberty; Margaret Fuller and Class; Margaret Fuller and the Politics of Everyday Life; International Margaret Fuller: Transatlantic and Global Circulations; Margaret Fuller and Revolution; Margaret Fuller's Geographies; Margaret Fuller and Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing; Margaret Fuller and the Nation: Composition, Conversation, Translation, etc.

My own scholarship also benefited from these panels and from conversations with Jeff, both at the MLA and at other conferences, from the ALA to the SSAWW to the Transatlantic Women conferences. He was always interested in the papers, always engaged in the theoretical or archival questions a speaker pursued, and always generous with his time and comments. Our research interests overlapped especially in one area: Fuller and the antebellum city. Jeff wrote a series of articles on the subject, from which I have learned, as I have started to launch my own project. Once, some years ago, I told him I was taking on a four-year stint as my department's graduate director, and he laughed; well aware, from his own experience, of the time demands such an administrative role makes on one's life, he joked that he would certainly get his book on city writings out first. I deeply regret that I don't have that book as I move ahead with my own work. His scholarship, especially his intellectually ambitious *Transfiguring America: Myth, Ideology, and Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing*, has provoked and challenged my thinking and has made my work better. I will really miss Jeff.

About the Author:

Brigitte Bailey is Professor of English at the University of New

Hampshire. She has co-edited two books—*Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and Great Britain* (with Beth Lueck and Lucinda Damon-Bach) and *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* (with Kathryn Viens and Conrad Edick Wright)—and has edited a special issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* on Margaret Fuller. She has served as president of the Margaret Fuller Society. Her recent monograph is *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824-1862* (Edinburgh UP, 2018).

Remembering Jeff Steele

by Charlene Avallone

Jeff remains with us in Fuller studies in a very real way because of the rich legacy of criticism and textual recovery he leaves. Panels at the recent Heidelberg Transcendentalist Intersections conference invoked Jeff in the present tense. His scholarship is guaranteed a long, vital afterlife as it continues to inform the work we do. But we will miss him. I will miss him.

Fuller scholars, of course, are particularly indebted to Jeff for his editorial and scholarly work. Yet not Margaret Fuller, but rather Herman Melville first introduced Jeff to me, through his chapter in *The Representation of the Self in the American Renaissance* (1987). Fuller as well as Melville, however, made Jeff someone I recall most fondly as a conference crony. At a time when conferences included few scholars who had read Fuller or might be interested to hear about her writing, Jeff would enthusiastically trade information and ideas about her work. And at a time when people were not always comfortable with women in the academy (nor women always comfortable there), Jeff was welcoming and relaxed with women colleagues, always interested to connect, to talk literature, theory, or feminist scholarship, as well as to listen.

Thanks to Jeff, I have a deep archive of memories of conversations at annual MLAs, then ALAs, the Hartford women writers conference that spawned the SSAWW, the Sedgwick Society conference on the city, the two TAW conferences in Oxford and Florence, and the bicentennial Fuller conference at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Jeff would often start a conversation early, with an invitation to serve on a panel that he knew would be of interest or perhaps with a question from his seat in the audience that showed deep listening to the heart of a presentation. Then he was quick to invite conversation over coffee or dinner and quick to share tips, as he did about this great new place he had discovered to buy books online (Amazon!). I'd like to say that one of Jeff's insightful comments on Fuller or a particularly apt quotation from her is what remains most indelible from such exchanges. What lingers most vividly, however, is the sound of Jeff laughing when he ritualistically, every conference, repeated his standing joke about dining with Carolyn Karcher and me at a New Orleans MLA.

Jeff's talent for dialogue weaves through other aspects of his academic life. What especially appealed to me on that first reading of *The Representation of the Self* was how closely Jeff attended to all the authors he treated, including Fuller, interested not only to follow his psychological (cont. on following pg.)

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model of interpretation to its conclusions, but also to hear the voices speaking through the writing, to establish connections with the thinking mind at work in the texts. He would extend that attentive approach to argue for relational models of literary study that could take into account the social aspects of reception. From what Jeff told me about his teaching, he carried into his pedagogy a relational model as well. He was certainly invested in establishing relations between people and between ideas in his many sessions of chairing of panels, where he would tie together some aspect of every presentation in a summary that acknowledged the contribution of each participant into what became a common conversation. He continued some of these conversations with several young scholars after providing them a forum for their public debut and became a mentor to some. With others of us, he might continue a dialogue into one of his publications, say, with a generous acknowledgement.

Jeff's organization of innumerable MLA and ALA panels was only one of the several ways he served the Fuller Society. In his capacity as Executive Officer, Jeff recruited many to the Society, expanding our membership and visibility in the Academy. He expanded the reach of the Society as well when he gave us our first website, providing a larger community with information about Fuller, about scholarship on her, and about Society events. Jeff's request at the Transatlantic Women conference in Florence that I take over the organizing for ALA, made me glimpse the fact that he might not always be with us, not forever guiding the Fuller Society. Yet the spirit of his enthusiasm for Fuller's work, the memory of his collegiality, and his wealth of scholarship remain to us.



Always eager to learn more. Transatlantic Women conference, Florence, Italy. Photo courtesy of Sirpa Salenius.



In the garden at Villa il Palmerino. Transatlantic Women conference, Florence, Italy. Photo courtesy of Sirpa Salenius.

by Sirpa Salenius

I only met Jeff Steele once, but I am glad it happened in Margaret Fuller's beloved Italy. Jeff Steele was there participating in the Transatlantic Women 2 conference in Florence in June 2013 (I wish to thank Beth Lueck for giving me the opportunity to collaborate with her in organizing it). The conference ended with a reception at Villa il Palmerino, the former home of the writer Violet Paget (Vernon Lee). Florence seemed such an appropriate setting for meeting this impressive scholar and charismatic person.



Enjoying an aperitivo at Villa il Palmerino. Transatlantic Women conference, Florence, Italy. Photo courtesy of Sirpa Salenius.

Margaret Fuller Papers at “Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion” Heidelberg, Germany 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 was held this July and Margaret Fuller was well represented, as you will see by the following abstracts. For more conference highlights, including photos, please visit the [Margaret Fuller Society website](#).

Panel: Who Figures in Transcendentalism Thursday 26 July 4:00-5:50

Emerson Read George Sand. And So Should You! Charlene Avallone, *Independent Scholar*

In 1839, Thackeray, then Paris correspondent for the *New York Corsair*, cautioned Americans against "muddy French transcendentalism," epitomized by George Sand's "religious manifesto," *Spiridion*. He "trust[ed] in heaven that German art and religion will take no hold" in America, but feared the effect of the "mysterious transcendental talk" of the French.

The warning came too late. Margaret Fuller had already read Sand's vision of a post-Christian religion that would exit the cloister to act in the world and was promoting la Jeune France to her circle as closer to their "Psycho-theism" than were the Jena Romantics. The *Christian Examiner* would soon tolerate reading Sand and Orestes Brownson argue for translating *Spiridion* in Ripley's European writers series.

Reading *Spiridion* made Emerson reverse his initial dismissal of Sand as a morbid "Parisian Corinna." Now Sand's "wonderful opulence of mind," "marvelous" knowledge of "nature & society & books," and "scholastic" perspective made him conclude, "I must read more of this new De Stael before I know her." When he finished that project, Emerson had reread *Spiridion* and read at least eighteen more of Sand's works. His reading of Sand outwent Fuller's in both extent and appreciation. He came to rank Sand's masterwork *Consuelo* above Goethe's fiction as "truer," her characters the "servants of great ideas, and of the most generous social ends."

Privately, Emerson repeatedly acknowledged Sand's "great genius" and "extraordinary spirit," copied and recopied citations from her writing, and defended her work (against Thoreau's abjection of fiction, against Carlyle's dismissal of her "Gospel of Fraternity" and "new Heaven-on-Earth" as "a detestable phosphorescence from the dead body of Christianity"). He evaluated Sand a "classic" writer (in Sainte-Beuve's sense of one who enriches the human spirit with the discovery of some moral verity and successfully embodies his/her thought), and thus a writer who surpassed his own achievement. Publicly, Emerson admired Sand's individualism and her fiction's representation of "real life." His writings appropriate her phrases without acknowledgement or attribute them only to "a brilliant French writer."

Emerson's journal notes on Sand cluster around topics of genius, inspiration, aesthetics, the art of writing, and, especially, spiritual "realism" and ethical, that is religious, idealism. Her works that address the transformation of religious faith in the context of contemporary questioning of institutional Christianity especially attracted him (*Spiridion*, *Consuelo* and *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*), while *Le Compagnon du Tour de France*, and *Lettres d'un Voyageur* figure importantly as the focus of his meditations on religion turned from mystical vision and inspired revelation to practice. Emerson lamented he could not "write the novels for the people!" and emulate Sand, Plato, and others who successfully embodied in writing or social action the "doctrine of the secret societies[,] the fraternity of the best joined for benefit through the world."

I will argue the importance of scholars becoming familiar with the work of a writer who loomed so large in Emerson's view and in the transnational transcendentalist movement.

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Fuller, Fourier, and the Coming Democracy

David M. Robinson, *Oregon State University*

Writing to William Henry Channing from Rome in 1847, Margaret Fuller offered a remarkable synopsis of the course of European politics and philosophy: "I see the future dawning; it is in important respects Fourier's future." These words in themselves would no doubt have pleased Channing, an ardent champion of Fourier who had persistently urged the claims of "Association" on Fuller, despite her misgivings. Fuller therefore carefully qualified her grand prophecy: "But I like no Fourierites; they are terribly wearisome here in Europe" (L 4:217). Fuller's letter was part of a long conversation on Fourierism that she had carried on with Channing and many others as her thinking had developed in the late 1830s and 1840s. Never a Fourierist, she was nevertheless Fourier's fellow traveler, holding his practical theories incongruous, but his social (*cont. on following pg.*)

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vision inspirational. Most importantly, Fourier “places Woman on an entire equality with Man, and wishes to give to one as to the other that independence which must result from intellectual and practical development” (WNC 73 Norton).

As Christina Zwarg has persuasively shown, the rising interest in Fourierism among the transcendentalists influenced the intense “conversations” between Fuller and Emerson that helped to frame *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. “The critique of domestic life at the center of Fourier’s theory,” Zwarg explains, made Fourierism a code for the necessary reconstruction of the most fundamental precepts of Western civilization (Zwarg, *Feminist Conversations* [Cornell 1995] 23). This code energized Fuller to criticize the barriers to open conversation, and challenged Emerson to follow his rebellious religious stance to its politically radical conclusions.

As Fuller launched her journalistic career in New York, her friendship with Channing grew. Channing’s self-appointed mission was to merge Christianity with Associationism, the name that Fourier’s followers had given to their organized efforts to publicize and enact his theories. While Fuller became more open to Fourier at this period, Channing was less valuable to her as a political theorist than as a working reform minister, one who knew the appalling conditions under which the New York poor lived. He helped Fuller find New York’s destitute people and its reprehensible prisons and asylums, and thereby helped her develop a stronger sense of oppression by class in the supposedly democratic United States. Fuller took this sharpened recognition of the inadequacy of American democratic ideals to Europe, where, as she told Channing, she took “interest in the state of the people” (L 4:271). With this perspective Fuller became particularly interested in those European voices who offered a more hopeful future. Fuller met perhaps the most prominent of Fourier’s students, Victor Considerant, and became a devoted reader of his periodical *Démocratie pacifique*, where news of the quickly growing democratic resistance in France, and the concept of a new democracy was under discussion. Perhaps more significantly, became a close friend in London of the exiled Giuseppe Mazzini, whose series of English language treatises, *Thoughts upon Democracy in Europe*, were just being published in 1846-47. These theories came dramatically to life for Fuller during the Roman uprising, an ultimate defeat that pushed Fuller to her deepest and most anguished struggle with political principles.

Panel: Pretestant Heritage/Religious Radicalism Thursday, 26 July 4:00-5:30

Margaret Fuller: A Publicistic Dialogue with the Puritan Heritage

Marina P. Kizima, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Russia

The paper concentrates on the religious aspects of Margaret Fuller’s (1810-1850) work. The analysis is focused on a close reading of Fuller’s writings for the New York *Tribune* in 1844-1846; it shows that the religious dimension was an important part of the broad public debate at the time, and Fuller had a deep interest in it.

From the religious perspective of the analysis, all Fuller’s publications can be divided into three major groups.

The first group is writings dealing primarily and directly with religious matters, covering events in the religious life of the

community. Fuller’s review of Theodore Parker’s sermon “The Excellence of Goodness” (1845) is an example. Parker was a reformist minister, and the controversy he caused was an occasion for Fuller to discuss the state of religious consciousness in New England, for Parker faced “a tacit persecution.” Fuller was deeply worried at this situation; with great concern she wrote that, as yet, in the United States, “after so many years of political tolerance, there exists very little notion, far less practice, of spiritual tolerance,” and stressed the need to return to the great principle of Protestantism—respect for the right of private judgment.

The second group is writings on social problems. Fuller here is both a journalist and a social reformer: she writes on racism, poverty, homelessness, the ills of the penitentiary system; she informs the public and calls for action, often offering steps to improve the situation. Significantly, her articles of the 1840s written on the social problems of new urban America are rich in religious allusions involving the old Puritan heritage in the urgent modern public debate.

The third group is works written in the form of sermons: Fuller here demonstrates that she was a good preacher, as well as a journalist.

The analysis leads to the general conclusion that Fuller had a deeply religious mind, was immersed in the religious controversies of her time, but was free of religious prejudice; in her writings, affirming the spirit of Christianity, she often went beyond denominational boundaries. Considering American religious heritage, Fuller criticized New England Puritans for their pride, their narrow-mindedness, their failure to be true to the principles of Protestantism. Nevertheless, she regarded Puritanism as a source of American identity, the “pure” and “noble” blood that could play a very important role at a time when the country faced new waves of immigration. Fuller’s position expressed in her publications in the *Tribune* made a significant and unique contribution to American Transcendentalist thought.

Panel: Revisioning the Political Friday, 27 July 9:00-10:30

Not Only as Subject, but Also as Citizen: Margaret Fuller and the “New Manifestation” of (Concrete) University

Russell Sbriglia, Seton Hall University

This paper will focus on a handful of key passages from three texts of Margaret Fuller’s—*Summer on the Lakes* (1844), *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), and the dispatches she wrote for the *New York Tribune* while covering and eventually joining the Italian Revolution of 1848—all of which reveal Fuller to have understood better than any of her transcendentalist peers the dependence of a properly universalist politics on the concrete as opposed to the abstract. Grounding her advocacy of social reform and, eventually, revolution upon a recognition of the constitutive role played by those who comprise what Jacques Rancière terms “the part of no part”—a recognition that the public sphere born of the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and equality depends for its symbolic efficacy upon the exclusion of an exceptional, counterpublic dimension—Fuller, I argue, further politicizes what G. W. F. Hegel, in his *Philosophy of Right*, terms “concrete universality” (*konkrete Universalität*), a universality constituted, paradoxically, by its abjected content, its “rabble” (*Pöbel*). As I will demonstrate, throughout both *Summer on the Lakes* and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller consistently challenges liberalism’s abstract mode (cont. on following pg.)

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of universalism by identifying the nation's non-citizens—not only women, but also Native and African Americans—as the core of a truly universalist politics. Such a challenge is exemplified by claims like the following from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*: “While any one is base, none can be entirely free and noble”; “We cannot expect to see any one sample of completed being, when the mass of men still lie engaged in the sod.” Yet, as I also aim to demonstrate, Fuller's later dispatches for the *New York Tribune* further radicalize this challenge by moving beyond a mere identification of this exceptional/excluded dimension of the body politic to an *identification with* this exceptional/excluded dimension, as Fuller came to join the international Hegelian rabble in its pursuit of freedom and equality. My paper thus traces the evolution of Fuller's political thought—and action—over the course of a five year period (1843-1848), concluding with her putting into practice the theory of concrete universality elaborated in her more well-known texts (*Summer* and *Woman*).

Panel: Transcendental Feminisms

Friday, 27 July 11:00-12:30

“Learn how to be victorious”: Transatlantic Pathways to Feminism

Noelle A. Baker, *Independent Scholar*

In her essay “The Novel as Our Contemporary Epic” (1853), the Swedish novelist, travel writer, and social critic Fredrika Bremer suggests that the novel's primary “task” is “to portray the development of a single woman, her battle with ‘devils and trolls’ but also her victory.” “The novel comes to every person with this admonition,” Bremer adds: “Learn how to be victorious.” As this and her other works attest, Bremer was deeply invested in helping women acquire social and political triumphs for their sex. Inspired by Margaret Fuller's *Conversations*, Bremer's notorious 1856 propaganda novel *Hertha* was one such effort. In the words of Caroline Healey Dall, through *Hertha*, Bremer “aimed” “a direct blow . . . at the laws of Sweden concerning women”; indeed, the novel fostered Swedish legislative change in 1858: women's attainment of full civil rights at the age of 25.

Notwithstanding this achievement, Bremer's “devils and trolls” remain, the metaphorical impediments to equality, and remind us that “victory” is an ongoing process. While reiterating Bremer's emphasis on a learning curve for women's sense of independence, this paper explores transatlantic pathways to feminist possibility, through the experiences of Bremer (1801-1865); Fuller (1810-1850); and Mary Moody Emerson (1774-1863). These nineteenth-century women are perhaps an unlikely collective; they differed in age, nationality (in Bremer's case), public achievement, life experience, and religious faith. Importantly, however, when considering the impact of “the newness” on emerging feminist thought, we see that each recognized that women's intellectual and cultural victories depended in part on a Transcendentalist sense of the higher law and the primacy of dialogic self-culture. Moreover, each acknowledged the significance of autonomous, unmarried women to this struggle. These points of similarity build a tangible pathway between them, with Fuller serving as the connecting thread.

Fuller, New Women, and the Paris Socialists

Phyllis Cole, *Penn State University*

I propose a paper on Fuller's engagements with the Paris Socialists, focusing on their case for women's liberty and

religious prophecy in two-way dialogue with her own. We have assessed Fuller's Socialism primarily through her representations of Fourier and by comparison with Marx (e.g. Zwarg, Fleischman, Tuchinsky). While building upon these scholars' work, my interest is in the Saint-Simonian Socialist movement, which extended from before 1830 through the aftermath of the Revolution of 1848. George Sand was allied with this strain of Socialist/feminist thought, and additional recent scholarship (Avallone, Williams) details Fuller's engagements with Sand. I aim for a study of the broader movement, especially of two women journalists and activists in it who were Sand's colleagues, Pauline Roland and Jeanne Deroin. They were among the young women who broke with the Saint-Simonian leadership of Prosper Enfantin in 1831 and wrote for a series of Paris-based periodicals for the next two decades, both small women's publications and eminent transatlantic journals.

My starting point will be the 1853 *Almanack des Femmes*, a bilingual annual edited from exile in London by Deroin: as well as mourning the defeat of the revolution and martyrdom of Roland to the forces of repression, it celebrates women's achievement mostly as enacted in the United States—and positions an excerpt from Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* shortly before its concluding memorial to Roland. From this newly discovered meeting point I will proceed to the past, as fragmentary but telling evidence reveals a longer transatlantic exchange of feminist religious and political thought. Fuller engaged with Saint-Simonian advocates of the “New Christianity” along with others in the Transcendental Club (Ripley, Brownson) from 1836 on. And though no surviving letters or journals detail such responses, Emerson testifies that one of her two strongest concerns over the next decade was “French Socialism, especially as it concerned woman.” Certainly a major turn came in 1839, when she met Sand's fiction in Pierre Leroux's *Revue Indépendante*. I will offer a reading of this journal for the wider messages it offered along with Sand's work, including Roland's writing on the history of women in France. It was Roland who became Fuller's agent in Paris in 1846, leading to an invitation to be the *Revue's* American correspondent and a plan with Roland's help to write on Sand, Leroux, Beranger, and Lamennais as a group. I will follow Roland's career from her earlier rebellion through survival as a “new woman” (with children but no husband), career as an educator and writer, and eventual engagements (along with Sand and Deroin) in the 1848 revolution. What is at stake is not only new biographical and textual knowledge. Bartlett (1988) proposes four foundational traditions of feminism: Enlightenment (Wollstonecraft), Romantic (Fuller), radical sectarian (the Grimké's), and Socialist. I see Fuller in dialogue with all the others—and with Socialism primarily through the Saint-Simonians of Paris.

“A Fair Sign of the Times”: Networks of Transcendentalism, Feminism and Reform in the *People's Journal*

Sonia Di Loretto, *Università degli Studi di Torino*

In her article written in Paris and published in the *New York Daily Tribune* in early February 1847, Fuller speaks at length of one of the periodical publications that she deems important in her present day England, the *People's Journal*. She remarks: “The People's Journal comes nearer being a fair sign of the times than any other publications in England, apparently, if we except Punch.” Her own writing, and the letter of introduction to the *Journal's* editors John Saunders and William Howitt provided by Harriet Martineau, enabled Fuller to enter the circle of collaborators and intellectuals gravitating towards the *People's Journal*; to become good friends with some of its contributors (Mary and Margaret Gillies, for example), and (cont. on following pg.) 30

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to establish some intersections and relations among similar visions and ideas.

The *People's Journal*, by presenting on its cover a quotation from William Ellery Channing ("The grand doctrine that every human being should have the means of self-culture, of progress in knowledge and virtue, of health, comfort, and happiness, of exercising the powers and affections of a man, this is slowly taking its place as the highest social truth"), had already established a conversation with some of the most profound tenets of Transcendentalism.

In my paper I would like to investigate some other transnational intersections and conversations, especially with regards to reformist and feminist writings appearing in the *Journal*, specifically those authored by Mary Howitt and Mary Leman Gillies. By looking at articles such as "A Happy New Year to the People," by Mary Leman Gillies, and other texts about domesticity and marriage, and by reading them together with Fuller's own contribution, "To a Daughter of Italy" (1848), I would like to reflect on the construction of transnational publics in relation to the rhetorical definitions of collective identities such as "people" or "women," interrogating the potential political inclusivity (or exclusivity) of such social and cultural constructions. Furthermore, as part of a larger project on the reconstruction of Margaret Fuller's transnational archive, and by drawing on recent works by Brigitte Bailey, Charlene Avallone, and Adam-Max Tuchinsky, I intend to map out some of the networks of reformist and feminist thought as they emerged in periodical publications such as the *People's Journal*.

Panel: Transcendental Forms

Friday, 27 July 2:00-3:30

"To Mold in Clay and Carve in Stone": Temporality and Literary Form in Margaret Fuller's Italian Dispatches

Mollie Barnes, University of South Carolina, Beaufort

In the middle of a dispatch published 16 May 1849, Margaret Fuller turns sharply from the promise of a republic in Rome to a claim about sculpture, the artistic mode that is, she argues, "the natural talent of an American." "The facts of our history," Fuller attests, "ideal and social, will be grand and of new import; it is perfectly natural to the American to mold in clay and carve in stone. The permanence of material and solid relief in the forms correspond to the positiveness of his nature better than the mere ephemeral and even tricky methods of the painter to his need of motion and action, better than the chambered scribbling of the poet." As recent conversations about Fuller's *Tribune* articles emphasize, the sometimes fragmented, self-interrupting quality of her prose reflects important journalistic circumstances and artistic choices (2017 SSAWW Fuller Society Panel). In fact, the moment I quote above dramatizes the very subjects that captured Fuller's geopolitical imagination during this period: complex temporalities with which she contended as a foreign correspondent reporting news that would be delayed to her readers by several weeks/months. Fuller may not be the first Romantic to muse over representational crises (who should choose clay and stone over paint or ink? why?). Yet the fact that she wonders over sculptural "permanence" is worth pause, precisely because she seems so self-conscious of her responsibilities as a transatlantic journalist at this particular moment in American and Italian history.

In this paper, I close read passages where Fuller links ques-

tions about literary form with questions about political/philosophical reform through her critiques of expatriate sculpture. As I demonstrate, Fuller's studies of Thomas Crawford, Horatio Greenough, and Hiram Powers (dispatches 15, 17, and 29 reveal her evolving approaches to antislavery writing. Part of my argument is about how Fuller transitions from specific points about specific works of art to broader philosophical/political arguments about the potential for sculpture to represent "motion and action." Part is about what such representational crises have to do with her recursive allusions to slavery in these moments. Fuller's discussions of sculptural temporalities contextualize changes we witness in her abolitionist writing during this period: columns that discuss Crawford's *Orpheus* and the institution of slavery in the same breath; paragraphs that critique Powers' *Greek Slave* and his bust of *Calhoun* (not once but twice. While Fuller's references to slavery in these passages may seem out of place, at least at first, her meditations on form—in stone, in clay, or, as she intimates, in newspapers—illuminate a belief in the potential for art to move people to action at moments when inaction/stillness is unnerving.

Fuller's appreciation of sculptural permanence is all the more poignant given the ways other writers compare her—and her literary body of work—to this medium. "Margaret was one of the few persons who looked upon life as an art," Ralph Waldo Emerson writes in *Memoirs*, "and every person not merely as an artist, but as a work of art. She looked upon herself as a living statue, which should always stand on a polished pedestal, with right accessories, and under the most fitting lights. She would have been glad to have everybody so live and act. She was annoyed when they did not, and when they did not regard her from the point of view which alone did justice to her." What does it mean for a person to be remembered as a work of art? How might we read this passage through Fuller's own ideas about sculpture? I'll end by tracing the ways sculptural conceits/connections shape how some nineteenth-century artists read, or refused to read, Fuller's late writing as literature.

Panel: Translation and World Literature

Saturday, 28 July 9:00-10:30

Fuller's Translation of Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*: German Translation Theories and the Conception of Feminist World Literature

Kohei Furuya, Kanagawa University, Japan

Frederick Braun, Christina Zwarg, and many others have suggested that Fuller's engagement with translation opened her a channel for not only becoming a professional writer, but also establishing a new way of writing and thinking as a woman in the nineteenth century. In my paper, I also join the conversation, discussing Fuller's translation of Johann Peter Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe in den Letzten Jahren Seines Lebens*, or *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*—one of Fuller's earliest works as a professional woman of letters. I reread the work not just as a collection of Goethe's interviews, but as a bildungsroman of the minor writer Eckermann. In so doing, I also attempt a comparative analysis of Eckermann's original German text and Fuller's English translation. Focusing especially on the author's "Preface" and "Introduction"—which is of great importance as a concise introduction to the modern German theories of translation, national literature, and world literature—as well as the translator's "Preface," I examine the influence of Eckermann's *Conversations* on the shaping of Fuller's literary career as a transcendentalist feminist critic.

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Thinking Fuller: The Ethics of Transcendental Translation

Adrienne G. Perry; University of Houston

That Margaret Fuller's early translations of Goethe and Bettina von Arnim informed her thinking, writing, livelihood, and, more broadly, American Transcendentalist thought, has been actively explored. Since Arthur Schultz's "Margaret Fuller: Transcendentalist Interpreter of German Literature," contemporary scholars such as Colleen Glenney Boggs and Christina Zwarg have gone on to frame Fuller's translations and translation practice as multilingual, transnational, and vital in shaping Fuller's feminism, subjectivity, and influence within the Transcendentalist sphere. While these and other scholars have put Fuller's translations into play with translation theorists ranging from Dryden to Benjamin, and from Derrida to Venuti, Fuller scholarship has not adequately engaged contemporary translation theory beyond these familiar canonical theorists. As a result, Fuller's translations and practice occupy a more limited position within the field of translation studies and Fuller scholarship than they deserve. My paper addresses this position by recasting Fuller's German translations, and their relationship to transcendentalism, in light of Henri Meschonnic and Naoki Sakai's theories in *The Politics and Ethics of Translating* and *Translation and Subjectivity*, respectively. Specifically, this paper will explore Fuller's prefaces to *Die G nderode* and *Eckerman's Conversations with Goethe* and her gestures toward translation theories that move, like Meschonnic and Sakai, beyond a hermeneutical approach. Placing Meschonnic's theories on ethics and rhythm, as well as Sakai's analysis of translation's role in shaping politics and subjectivity, in dialogue with Fuller's prefaces will recast the ethical dimension of her project and her potential effort to, in Meschonnic's terms, "Think Transcendentalism" and "Think Translation." Through these texts, I argue that Fuller's approach to translation reveals not simply a transcendentalist's method, but a multifaceted relationship to language—from code-switching to thick translation—and ethical implications, in Meschonnic's terms, beyond a mere "code of conduct." Fuller certainly wanted to translate von Arnim and Goethe "faithfully," yet the struggles and priorities she voiced as a translator underscore the tensions Meschonnic and Sakai see as inherent in translation, in an act that simultaneously reconstitutes the writer, translator, reader, and text, thereby calling the very notions of authorship, language, and authenticity into account. This paper, by closely examining Fuller's critique of her German translations, continues this act of reconstitution as it complicates and re-contextualizes Fuller's feminist, transcendental project in light of contemporary translation theory.

Panel: Interconnected Selfhood

Saturday, 28 July 11:00-12:30

Pulse and Polarity: The Vibrational Epistemology of Fuller and Emerson

Christina Katopodis, The Graduate Center, CUNY

The American Transcendentalists lived—and we live—in a vibrating world. Thoreau's interest in the vibrating "telegraph harp," Fuller's use of magnetic treatments for her spine, and Emerson's theory of polarity are well-known examples of nineteenth-century interest in invisible energies (e.g. electricity, mesmerism, magnetism) and mysticism. Given this interest, *sonic* vibrations were not lost on the American Transcendentalists.

Although we have witnessed a recent increase in Sound Studies scholarship on Thoreau, Sound Studies scholars have yet to take up the subject of Transcendentalism. More specifically, Fuller's music criticism and Emerson's references to sound in his philosophy have been neglected by Sound Studies scholars. By arguing for what I am calling Fuller's and Emerson's "vibrational epistemology," this paper begins to rectify this oversight, directly engaging with Transcendentalism in a Sound Studies analysis.

In a *Sound Studies* article on "Thoreau's Ear," Jeff Todd Titon asserts, "Sounds vibrate living beings into a way of knowing that proceeds by interconnection, a community of relations: a relational epistemology" (2015, 145). I alter Titon's phrasing slightly to use the term "vibrational epistemology" instead to put emphasis on the vibrations and pulsations that produce sounds. Fuller's vibrational epistemology emerges in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in reference to woman as "the other chamber of the heart of life" and Emerson's is foundational to one of his most often quoted passages in *Nature* (1836), when "the Universal Being circulates" through him. Sound production provides a medium through which individuals become more self-aware in a vibrating world. It is the body that produces sounds and listens, the mind that contextualizes, and the combination of the two that bring about self-awareness in relation to a particular environment. Discovering one's inner creative power as a pulsing, vibrating being is a central component to Fuller's and Emerson's transcendentalism.

This framework of creative, embodied listening provides a useful tool for understanding how Fuller's transcendentalism flows into her social organization of women. When Fuller finishes *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* with a portrayal of the Over-Soul as "the heart of the world" into which she must beat her "own pulse true," she translates her vibrational epistemology into social activism. Similarly, she later would confide in Emerson that women's minds, once awakened, could not "cease to vibrate." But the self-reliant sound-producer must also adjust to others in a fluctuating soundscape in order to achieve social harmony.

Both Fuller and Emerson encourage finding a balance between the individual pulse of self-reliance and the generative energy of polarity in interdependence in their writings. Emerson's theory of polarity, when considered in musical terms, offers harmony as an ongoing activity between contrasting individuals who produce a creative third possibility that cannot be achieved alone. Difference is not always dissonant but often generative and beautiful. This paper splits time equally between Fuller's and Emerson's vibrational epistemologies and, by reading the two together, demonstrates what Transcendentalism has to offer Sound Studies and what Sound Studies has to offer the study of Transcendentalism.

Panel: Transcendentalist Histories: Questions of Failure, Progress, and Reception

Saturday, 28 July 2:00-3:30

Transcendentalism's Useful Failures

Leslie Eckel, Suffolk University

Being a Transcendentalist meant having grand ambitions, from Emerson's "old largeness" of the philosophical imagination to Fuller's strong intent "to share and impel the general stream of thought" in her work as a journalist. Members of the Transcendental Club were activists, authors, innovators, and architects of utopia in their own time, which led them to achievements we now both celebrate and critique. (cont. on following pg.)

Heidelberg

(cont. from previous pg.)

Still, we often neglect the value of the failures that dogged each one of these figures in turn. Focusing primarily on the intersecting uncertainties, doubts, and disappointments of Emerson, Fuller, Bronson Alcott, and Thoreau, this paper argues that Transcendentalism's staying power comes not just from its will to transform the world, but from its beautifully handled failures to do so.

As she told William Henry Channing about George Ripley's vision of a utopian community at Brook Farm, Fuller expressed impatience that he "will not say, however, that he considers his plan as a mere experiment, and is willing to fail, or can well bear to fail. I tell him that he is not ready till he can say that." For Fuller, failure makes utopia possible; it was the very earnestness of Ripley and Bronson Alcott, who fervently believed that Fruitlands would turn "the whole earth" into "a Happy Valley," that made her skeptical of utopia at first. Although Alcott was devastated by the failure of his utopian community, his daughter Louisa May mitigated this loss by gathering what she called the "invisible harvest" of Fruitlands and recognizing the love, optimism, and humor that survive disaster.

Writing against such utopian absolutes, Emerson asserts in "Circles," "I simply experiment," and Thoreau exits his two years at Walden Pond by characterizing them as "my experiment." Building on Robert D. Richardson's studies of Emerson's creative process, I explore Emerson's understanding of failure as a necessity for thinking and becoming, instead of just being. Perhaps the most successful utopian of all the Transcendentalists, Thoreau actually dismissed the concept of success in favor of the "satisfaction" of work and the "truth" of humility. As much as the Transcendentalists teach us about genius, they are also startlingly articulate about what it means to fail, especially on one's own terms. Drawn from the final chapter of my book in progress, *Dwelling in Possibility: Atlantic Utopias and Countercultures*, this paper pursues a counterintuitive route by asking whether the Transcendentalists' deliberate failings might make them especially useful to us today.

Panel: Religious Trajectories

Saturday, 28 July 2:00-3:30

The Seeress of Prevorst as Margaret Fuller's Field Guide to the Frontier (in *Summer on the Lakes*)

Monika Elbert, Montclair State University

When Margaret Fuller found herself exhausted from travel and resting at a hotel in Milwaukee, she took to reading the strangest book considering she was on the American frontier: Justinus Kerner's *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, a book about German mysticism (worlds apart from the frontier hotel)! In an almost thirty-page excursion in her *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller discusses the significance of Frederike Hauffe (the Seeress)'s experience of the spirit world in the context of her own growing sense of mortality (on a personal and national mythmaking level). In my talk, I propose to examine the intersection of Fuller's interest in the spiritual realm as it applies to her increasing knowledge of death on the frontier—as she witnesses it among the Native American inhabitants (and the extermination of their culture) and the destruction to the natural environment (as a result of a growing industry around the Great Lakes). Her sense of a steady New England Transcendentalist thinking fails her as she becomes more aware of a mystical connection to her frontier landscape, and she draws some comfort from a spirituality that would have

been anathema to her more pragmatic Transcendentalist brothers-in-arms, Emerson and Thoreau. Early on in *Summer on the Lakes* (the second page, in fact), Fuller writes about the feeling of self-annihilation when she witnesses the cascading Niagara Falls: she experiences "an undefined dread, such as [she] never knew before, such as may be felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence." She feels the presence of some unknowable foe, which she translates into her fear of Indians ("naked savages") "stealing behind [her] with uplifted tomahawks." Her inclination is to merge what is foreign—"the mood of nature in which these waters were poured down"—with the Indians, who were "shaped on the same soil." The treatise by Kerner allows her to take a journey within, a journey for which she is not prepared, but which allows her to experience what Justinus Kerner describes, using the idealist Kant's philosophy about ghost-seeing, as the thin curtain between life and death.

Panel: Transcendentalist Archives and Afterlives

Saturday, 28 July 4:00-5:30

Three New Fuller Letters Found in Italy Reveal the Role of Women in the Struggle for Freedom

Mario Bannoni, *Independent Scholar*

In his fourth volume of *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, Robert N. Hudspeth shows a fragment of a letter that does not come from the Harvard Houghton Library, where most of her papers are stored: he quotes it from the *People's Journal* that in 1847 published it together with a poem and a postscript from Fuller in favor of the Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini, then exiled in London. The original manuscript was believed lost.

Instead it still exists, and I found it in Italy together with a second one from her. The first manuscript appears as a brief note of instruction not for publication that Margaret set above the actual presentation of a poem, written by the Florentine authoress Isabella Rossi, that Fuller had translated and adapted for the rhyme. With its notes—that Hudspeth does not quote—it helps us understand where Margaret wished to draw the reader's attention along the text. The second manuscript, conceived to be set before the first, is the real letter by which Margaret addresses Linton, forwarding him an introduction to the said article.

A third letter I found is in a way connected with the two manuscripts: during summer 1847, while Mazzini was in Switzerland trying to trace Fuller, she was in Rome afraid of venturing to write to him or his mother, Maria Drago Mazzini, mistrusting the correctness of her own Italian or French. When she finally wrote this letter to Mazzini's mother, she had moved to Florence on her journey to the north. I found it published in a collection of correspondence that Maria Drago Mazzini had received, never published until now outside Italy.

Joan von Mehren says that when Mazzini "finally caught up with her (Fuller, ed.) in December 1847 after his return to London, he did not thank" Margaret for her "well-meaning article on the People's Journal."² Now, after finding this new Fuller letter and relevant notes about Maria's reaction to it in that book, I am not so sure Mazzini was so upset: on the contrary, I can prove at least his mother's appreciation for Fuller's move, as to cut out her article from the *People's Journal* and store it together with a translation of it from English into Italian.³ In addition, from this source we know that Mazzini himself several times praised the authoress of the poem Fuller published. I must therefore presume that when Fuller forwarded her letter in defense of Mazzini to Linton she must have been absolutely sure that, apart from the possible rashness of her (cont. on following pg.)

deed, Mazzini would appreciate the underlying message of Rossi's poem, and consequently the overall spirit of Fuller's move in his defense.

What was it? Fuller conceived an interesting parallel about the role of ancient Woman as "supporter of the hero" and modern Woman as "inspirer of the patriot" a concept that she had shared with young patriots who followed Mazzini she met in Milan.⁴ For sure, she would not hazard acting so openly in favor of Mazzini if she had not got tuned with the circles of democratic patriots sympathizing with his ideas.

1. Robert. N. Hudspeth, *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*, IV, Cornell University Press, Ithaca-London 1987. Letter No. 683, p.297, from *People's Journal* 4 (1847): 327.

2. Joan von Mehren, *Mineva and the Muse*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1994, p. 273.

3. "Maria Mazzini ed il suo ultimo carteggio con 79 lettere inedite di Giuseppe Mazzini", editor Itala Cremona Cozzolino, Genova-Imperia, 1927 p.247n.

4. See my forthcoming: "Margaret Fuller and Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga, a Forgotten Romance." AMS Press, 2017.

Panel: Print Cultures and Literary Networks

Sunday, 29 July 9:00-10:30

Fuller, *The Dial*, *The Tribune*, and Periodical Print Culture

Brigitte Bailey, University of New Hampshire

From the first issue of *The Dial*, Fuller is at work not only contributing to but also theorizing periodicals. In "A Short Essay on Critics" she mentions the popular "magazine," "journals," and "the daily paper," even as she is especially concerned to critique the quarterly "reviews," whose "partisan spirit" and "dictator[ial]" reviewers have "brought them into disrepute." However, her overview of "periodical writing" and criticism also argues that "their golden age cannot be quite past. They afford too convenient a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge; they are too natural a feature of our time to have done all their work yet. Surely they may be redeemed from their abuses, they may be turned to their true uses."

This paper will chart Fuller's evolving sense of the "true uses" of periodicals in the 1840s. Her *Dial* essay, unsurprisingly, defines the role of the critic writing for periodicals in Transcendentalist terms: the ideal critic is able to "enter into the nature" of a work and judge it by its aims but also "to put that aim in its place, and ... estimate its relations ... [because he] perceives the analogies of the universe, and how they are regulated by an absolute, invariable principle." But when Fuller arrived in New York as the "Star" critic of Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune*, she entered into a quite different milieu, where daily newspapers (what Fuller calls "the paper wings of every day," 15) and other urban print ephemera were surging in circulation and when the city was embarking on the economic boom that, as David Scobey has shown, transformed it into the national commercial metropolis and that helped to create this efflorescence of textual matter. David Henkin has argued that "city reading" was "promiscuous read[ing]"; by "inducing ... countless and disjointed acts of browsing," the textual ephemera "of everyday city life cultivated reading subjects" who were modern, consumerist, and anonymous (12): in other words, a self at odds with the values of Fuller's ideal critic in *The Dial*.

In a much-quoted letter to James Freeman Clarke, Fuller defines her journalism at the *Tribune* as part of the "great work of

mutual education"; however, in addition to her emphasis on the dialogic, Fuller also describes her participation in newspaper work in New York as being "afloat in mid-stream," not exploring "the depths" but engaging broadly (in "the shallows") "all the signs of life" (Hudspeth *SL* 227). I propose to situate Fuller's columns in the context of this urban textual world and in the "shallows" of modern life. As the *Tribune*'s first-page critic, Fuller's job, in many ways, was to review the new flood of printed material at the advent of the "industrial book," as the editors of the *History of the Book in America* call the period beginning in 1840. Given recent research into the textualized spaces of New York and into the history of periodicals in this era of their rapid growth, we can now see Fuller's position more clearly as someone hired both to mediate and to help produce this emergent world of modern print culture, and we can see how she situates herself rhetorically in the discourses of this world.

Fuller's Influence on the Politics of Suffrage, Marriage, and Free Love in *The Revolution*

Denise Kohn, Baldwin Wallace University

Although Margaret Fuller died 30 years before Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton published *History of Woman Suffrage*, Fuller's work as a transcendentalist, journalist, and most of all as the author of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* figure prominently throughout the history. Indeed, Fuller serves as a sort of frame for Volume I she is one of the women listed in the dedication, and the first chapter of the Appendix, titled "Preceding Causes," focuses solely on Fuller's work and life. In other words, Stanton and Anthony portray Fuller as *the* preceding cause, the originator of woman's rights in America. In one of the many references to Fuller in Volume I, Paulina Wright Davis states that she "had hoped to confide the leadership of this movement" to Fuller (217), and Stanton and Anthony declare that Fuller "possessed more influence upon the thought of America, than any woman previous to her time" (801).

The influence of Fuller's thought is also clear in the pages of *The Revolution*, the woman's rights newspaper edited by Anthony and Stanton from 1868-1870 and later by Laura Curtis Bullard throughout 1871. Over the course of nearly four years, the newspaper published 45 different articles that reference Fuller. On December 1 1870, Curtis Bullard dedicated the front page to an article about Fuller, which asserts that Fuller would "have been grieved and shocked had she lived in our day to note the efforts which some reformers are now making to narrow the movement down to suffrage alone, when wrongs cry out from the very ground, so that we cannot close our ears" (1). While suffrage was certainly the driving goal of *The Revolution*, the newspaper campaigned for a full spectrum of woman's rights, including Fuller's emphasis on the need to reform marriage and her exploration of the ideals of "free love," the argument that that a sexual union ennobled by intellectual and emotional sympathies between women and men was more important in defining relationships than the legal bonds of marriage. The willingness of the New York-based *Revolution* to address what was considered the "divorce issue," "true marriage," and "free love," even if the language was sometimes coded, branded it as a radical publication in the suffrage literature of the period. In this paper, I will look at the ways *The Revolution* kept alive Fuller's influence on woman's rights through references to Fuller herself and through editorials and articles that both echo and extend her critique of marriage as a central tenet to defining female equality in the nineteenth century.

Tributes to Jeffrey Steele from the Margaret Fuller Society ListServ

When news of Jeffrey Steele's passing reached the Margaret Fuller Society last spring, people began circulating tributes and memories of Jeff on the society's ListServ. Here, we present for readers some of those memorials:

My goodness, what a shock. I have known Jeff since 1977, when we lived in the same graduate housing complex overlooking the Charles River in Cambridge; he sold me his gardening tools when he and Jocelyn moved out. A marvelous man and a kind soul, who would become such a pillar in the Fuller universe.
(Fritz Fleischmann)

I worked closely with Jeff in the 2000s organizing MLA Fuller panels. He was interested in everything and was enormously supportive. I'm a bit in shock. I learned much from him and will miss him. Briggs (Brigitte Bailey)

Such sad news. I knew Jeff almost from the beginning, when Fuller scholars were few and far between, when his colleague, Mert Sealts, spoke highly of him. He was a tireless promoter of Fuller as a serious writer (whose poetry was worth studying) and gave impetus to our society when it began.....Joel (Joel Myerson)

If you do not know yet you need now to find out that a most marvelous man and Fuller scholar died last Saturday; that's Jeffrey Steele, who I believe founded the MFS. It is not my job here to tell you how wonderful he was I have of course known him for years; he has been most generous in helping me with my work on Fuller, which ended in my book *Wandering Pilgrim*, winner of a Choice award for outstanding scholarship, thanks in part to Jeff. I am going to cut and paste the obituary below. I hope you will be in touch with Phyllis Cole, who also knew Jeff well and hopes to find some way for us as a society to honor this man who gave so much of his life and energy to enriching our understanding of our dear Margaret.

Best, Meg McGavran Murray

I too am very sorry to hear about Jeff's passing. He was such a strong advocate for Fuller's work, and just at the right moment. He sent a clear, strong, signal that Margaret was here to stay and worked continually on her behalf. He shall be missed. (Tina Zwarg)

If I have yet to join your voices in reverent regard for a truly exceptional soul, it is out of shock and a sense of loss. I now simply want to add to the concatenation of memories. Jeff Steele was always a thoughtful mentor and encouraging guide. I benefited immensely from his comments and suggestions over the years. This was just too soon.

May his memory be for a blessing.
Kathy Lawrence

I am so very sad to hear of Jeff's passing. The last time I saw him was at MLA in 2016, when he asked me to serve as a panel member on one of the Fuller sessions that year. He always encouraged my scholarship, and I will be forever grateful for his kind advice. (Stephanie Barron)

I will be speaking at ALA in a couple weeks, using Jeff's scholarship in my paper. I have always found his work so enlightening and eloquent and don't know where I'd be without it/him though I never knew him personally. I will invite members of the audience to observe a moment of silence to reflect on and celebrate Jeff's contribution to the society and the world, unless this has already happened during my panel by the time I present. Certainly and thankfully he lives on in the legacy he has left us. (Nanette Hilton)

I remember sitting right next to Jeff on a panel in Florence, Italy, reading from a paper in which I was quoting from his work fairly extensively. I never imagined that we would be sitting elbow to elbow as I read, and I guess it could have been a pretty awkward situation we didn't know one another at all, although I had (obviously!) read his work. When the panel finished, I murmured that I thought about asking him if he'd like to read the last few quotes himself rather than hear from me yet another, "As Jeffrey Steele points out...." He laughed, and added that he didn't think he'd ever had a panel experience like this one before. I had written on one of Fuller's 1844 poems, and of course, Jeffrey Steele was really the only one I could quote for that conference paper a few years back. As a number of you have pointed out already, he really did pave the way for critical recognition of Fuller's poetry. And I'm most grateful for that. (Joan Wry)

Dear friends,

I am so sorry to hear about Jeff. I only met him once at the ALA a few years ago, but he seemed like such a gentle man. Those lines about the cub scouts, the cantatas and the Bible study are the lineaments of a sensitive soul. (Michael Lorence)

Dear fellow members,

In such an hour, it is hard for me to say something more than just thank you, because I only had the privilege of knowing you from your outstanding works and not by person. Therefore, from Italy I can only ideally associate to you in the grievance for the departure of your, our fellow member in the Fuller Society, Jeffrey Steele, and appreciate from your messages the warm flow of memories, sentiments and good feelings that spring from you all as his friends.

Thank you!
Mario Bannoni

I am so sad to hear the news about Jeff Steele's death. I had only met him a couple of times, and heard him deliver outstanding papers, and I have learned much from his perceptive scholarship. I certainly agree that MFS should acknowledge his enormous contribution to Fuller scholarship in whatever ways we can.

All best,
David Robinson

Lenten Devotional

It seems fitting to close this Special Issue of Conversations in honor of Jeffrey Steele with his own words. His wife, Jocelyn Riley, submitted the following piece, "Lenten Devotional," telling us that it was the last essay that Jeff wrote, either in late January or early February 2018.



by Jeffrey Steele

I have long been attracted to religious imagery that refers to the heart. We often speak of the heart as the center of emotions. For example, a person can be hardhearted or tender-hearted. In 19th-century books, it is common to find references to a "heart of stone." Frederick Douglass, who had experienced the cruelty of slavery, argues that those who fail to empathize with the suffering of racial others must have hearts of stone—an argument that is still relevant today. In the Bible, the heart is the seat

of spiritual awareness. My favorite passage is found in the first chapter of Ephesians, which affirms: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you" (NIV 1:18). Even though the translation may not be as accurate, I have long preferred the RSV version that reads "that the eyes of your heart may be opened." This translation spoke to generations of readers. In the 17th century, the Lutheran theologian Daniel Creamer published an emblem book that contained numerous illustrations of all the stages of suffering and spiritual enlightenment that the heart might pass through. For example, in one emblem he envisions the heart being pierced; in another, the heart is subjected to the pain of fire. But the most striking illustration of all (probably influenced by the passage in Ephesians) shows a heart with an open eye in the middle. This eye stares directly at the viewer, offering the spiritual challenge that we should move toward enlightenment and not the darkness that Jesus often refers to. This combination of heart imagery with spiritual vision is continued in my favorite hymn, "Be Thou My Vision," which begins "Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart." "Thou and Thou only, first in my heart," we later sing; and the hymn concludes: "Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, / Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all." In this hymn, which I think of as a love song to God, the emotional and spiritual meanings of "heart" blend together. We open our hearts to God and let illuminating grace stream in.



Jeff at twenty-four. Photo courtesy of Lise Jacobson.