



Conversations

The Newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller's Posthumous Lecture on "The Home" by Albert J. von Frank

I. General Introduction

The present essay is based on research undertaken by Albert von Frank and Phyllis Cole for an article, "Margaret Fuller: How She Haunts," ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture, 64.1 (2018): 66-131, which surveyed the many uses to which Margaret Fuller was put by American Spiritualists between her death in 1850 and the end of the century. The new approach we took simply involved seeing Spiritualist responses and Spiritualist appropriations as belonging to the long history of Fuller's legacy. We felt then, as we do now, that while there was inevitably much nonsense in the Spiritualist movement, certain thoughtful practitioners, including especially Mrs. H. S. Lake, managed to find in a normalized version of the language of the occult a coherent way of approaching serious social, moral, political, and philosophical problems. There was not room in the essay as published adequately to make that point, or to show with what artistry and inventiveness this forgotten woman and her forgotten career—the latter a sensitive register of the former—deserve not only recovery, but respect. Her courage in the public sphere and her independence of thought and action seem noteworthy instantiations of Fuller's example and in the end significantly advanced the cause of women's rights.

II. Biographical Introduction: A Nineteenth-Century American Woman's Career Rediscovered

"Who is that, and why does she speak?"

—Mrs. H. S. Lake¹

Mrs. H. S. Lake, as she was known professionally for most of her career, was a celebrated trance medium during the last quarter of the nineteenth century when America's fascination with Spiritualism was at its height. The commencement of her public career in 1876 and its brilliant burn-out in 1891-93, coincided with the ends of her first and second marriages, points at which we find her not only pursuing a variety of important reform interests, but engaging in a life-altering contact with the legacy of Margaret Fuller, whose publicist, it might be said, in a limited yet significant way, she strangely became.

Born Sara Genevra Chafa in 1845 in Hounsfield, near Sackett's Harbor, New York, she faced, according to her biographer, "the most distressing conditions in the parental home." As a lonely and sensitive girl, isolated on a farm, Sara maintained frequent interior conversations with an unnamed dead poet and other imagined or spectral beings, including one, encountered when she was twelve, whom she "regarded as Jesus" and who instantaneously cured her of a near-fatal bout of diphtheria. During her childhood she resisted the family's austere Presbyterian culture and most particularly its way, as she thought, of "sinking of the individuality of the wife in that of

the husband." At seventeen, partly to escape the constraints of home-life, but moved also to "slay the dragon of sex slavery," she left home for work as a school-teacher at various locations in upstate New York. Three years later she traveled alone to the Midwest for similar employment. Around 1866, "her health failed" and she retreated to New York City to recuperate. There she lived for an extended period with a "wealthy suffragist" and eventually came under the influence of Victoria Woodhull, the Spiritualist advocate of women's rights and free-love doctrines, who ran for president in 1872 on the Equal Rights ticket. Little of Woodhull's radicalism, however, found its way into the volume of verse that Chafa published that year, *Napoleon Bonaparte and Other Poems*. Two years later she secretly married a Catholic priest, Father Henry S. Lake, with whom, for a short time, she lived in Manhattan, in hiding, under a fictitious name.²

Henry S. Lake was born in 1846, the son of a wealthy fabric and dry goods importer with a store on Broadway. The family attended Edwin H. Chapin's fashionable Church of the Divine Paternity (Fourth Universalist), but soon after Henry's conversion to Catholicism at age 15 he was sent to St. John's College in Fordham to begin his ecclesiastical training. On 23 September 1869, after a trip to Rome, he was ordained in New York at Isaac Hecker's Church of the Paulist Fathers. During a second trip to Europe, Lake studied at the Collège du Saint Esprit in Louvain, Belgium, and managed in his spare time--and apparently with his father's money--to assemble a 5,000-volume library of Catholic theology and church history, which he brought back to New York in 1873. That year, having severed his ties to the Paulists, he became an assistant to Father Thomas Scott Preston at St. Anne's church. It was then that he met (*cont. on pg. 5*)



Sara Genevra Chafa c. 1872, shortly before her first marriage. Frontispiece to *Napoleon Bonaparte and Other Poems*. (<https://books.google.com>)

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: "Reviews," "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.

Margaret Fuller Society Officers

Charlene Avallone, *President*
Sonia Di Loreto, *First Vice President*
Jana Argersinger, *Second Vice President*
Phyllis Cole, *Immediate Past President*
Leslie Eckel, *Communications Officer*
Noelle Baker, *Treasurer*

Board Members

Lucinda Damon-Bach (2018-2020)
Mollie Barnes (2019-2021)
Fritz Fleischmann (2019-2021)
Denise Kohn (2019-2021)
Katie Kornacki (2018-2020)
Megan Marshall (2018-2020)

Other Roles

Katie Kornacki, *Conversations Editor*
Christina Katopidis, *Website Developer and Editor*
Leslie Eckel, *Facebook Page Editor*
Adrienne Perry, *Graduate Student Liason*

Letter from the Editor

Dear Society Members,

It is hard to believe that *Conversations* is about to enter its third year. With four published issues, this newsletter is really coming into its own. When **Phyllis Cole** and I first sat down to discuss the possibility of reviving the society newsletter in Concord, MA back in the early summer of 2017, it was hard to imagine what shape it might take. As a society that aims to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among Margaret Fuller scholars, educators, and professionals from a variety of fields, including journalists, ministers, filmmakers, musicians, and creative writers, we are becoming an increasingly international and diverse community, as President **Charlene Avallone** attests to in her letter (p. 3). I am delighted that *Conversations* has played a part in helping to bring together our members and make Fuller and our society more visible.

Among the offerings we bring to you in this Spring 2019 issue is a featured article by **Albert von Frank**, "Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller's Posthumous Lecture on 'The Home.'" Al's piece grew out of the research that he and **Phyllis Cole** collaborated on to produce their recent article, "Margaret Fuller: How She Haunts," published in *ESQ* (vol. 64 no. 1, 2018). Al's essay provides further biographical information on Mrs. H. S. Lake, one of several since-forgotten Spiritualists who "managed to find in a normalized version of the language of the occult a coherent way of approaching serious social, moral, political, and philosophical problems." In addition to a biographical sketch of Mrs. Lake, we were also able to publish "The Home," one of several lectures she delivered as a trance medium, channeling the spirit of Margaret Fuller. Along with reading this piece, I encourage you to also examine Al and Phyllis's *ESQ* article, if you have not already done so, which is available through Project Muse: doi:10.1353/esq.2018.0002

Also of note in this issue is our notice of the Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award presented to **Phyllis Cole** at the 2018 Triennial Conference of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers, including the nomination letter submitted on behalf of Phyllis by **Charlene Avallone**, **Noelle Baker**, and **Jana Argersinger** and Phyllis' remarks upon receiving the award (see pp. 10-11).

Last issue, honoring Jeffrey Steele, inaugurated a new regular "Review" section of *Conversations*, which I am happy to see continued here. This issue includes three reviews, including two academic publications and one for a more general audience. **Audrey Raden** considers **Ariel Silver's** *The Book of Esther and the Typology of Female Transfiguration in American Literature*, while **Mollie Barnes** offers an insightful reading of **Brigitte Bailey's** *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824-1862*, and **Peter Reilly** responds to Maria Popova's *Figuring*.

You may notice the absence of two regular features: "Graduate Student Voices" and "Bringing Margaret Fuller into the Classroom." We will be bringing these back in the fall 2019 issue, where you can look forward to hearing more from our up-and-coming Fuller scholars and those of us teaching with Fuller in a variety of educational settings. If you would like to contribute to either of these sections, please email me at kkornacki@caldwell.edu

Looking back on our first two years, I would like to thank those who have contributed, read, shared, and in other ways supported *Conversations*, the success of which would not be possible without all of you. Once again, I'd also like to invite you to participate in some of the conversations that we have begun by submitting personal essays, news items, academic and non-academic pieces, book reviews, creative work, and any other Fuller-related notes. Here's to another successful year!

Warmly,

Katie Kornacki
Editor, Conversations

Letter from the President

Dear fellow Fullerites,

What are you doing with Margaret Fuller? The wide range of current involvement with Fuller prompts the questions.

The increasing visibility of the writer and of the Society has brought some strange communications to my email box from people who imagine that they might somehow do something with Fuller to make money – web designers, a purveyor of "adult" entertainment (!), and a phisher who thought he could get me to send him funds from the Society treasury by posing as Finance Officer Noelle Baker. Fuller's increasingly substantial presence on the internet includes websites that offer you many products emblazoned image of her or with her definition of "the especial genius of woman." You may even purchase a shower curtain that features an image of Fuller, Ossoli, and Angelo in their last moments as the Elizabeth goes down in the waves.

On less ghastly and greedy notes: The city of Oregon, Illinois takes pride that Fuller named the Ganymede Spring there on her 1843 visit. Eighty-eight people follow Fuller at Goodreads. (You, too, can follow: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/113907.Margaret_Fuller). An inquiry recently arrived from a high school student asking if the Society could provide promotional materials for her to use in introducing Fuller at a festival. We can thanks to the new bookmark produced by **Denise Kohn** and her student, Jessica Newbacher, with input from the Society Executive Council.

You know from the Society listserv and newsletter that creative writers are doing creative things with Fuller, including Maria Popova in *Figuring*, Glen Ebisch in his historical romance *Dearest David*, and Angela Reich in her novel *Shipwreck of Hopes*. Fuller is inspiring composers to do things with her at the piano, as Elena Ruhr does in her *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, as well as with the voice and other instruments. **Michael Barnett** sends this link to a performance of "Freedom and Truth," the song Debra Kaye wrote for the Beacon, NY Margaret Fuller Marker Dedication: <https://youtu.be/QosL7MFELU>

In film, Jonathan Schwartz's documentary on Fuller, which previewed in part at the 2017 ALA, has now completed forty-five toward a projected sixty minutes, according to The Interlock Media website. And not to forget artists, see what Sasha Chavchavadze does with Fuller by visiting <<https://www.sashachavchavadze.com/#/marga-ret-fuller-society-installation/>>.

At the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, Development and Communications Manager Scott Brigante has introduced information about the author into his listserv messages, and the extensive social programs at the House continue to extend into community service the values that informed Fuller's writing and life. You can visit at <<http://www.margaretfullerhouse.org/>>

Fuller has made her way into religious services as well, extensively during the Fuller Bicentennial year under the initiative of **Dorothy Emerson** and most recently in the sermon that Past President **Phyllis Cole** preached at the First Unitarian Church in Providence, RI, the church the writer attended. The service, featuring Phyllis's sermon, is available at <<https://firstunitarianprov.org/services/margaret-fullers-church-in-providence-and-the-larger-world/>>

Journalism, too, continues to advocate for human rights in the name of Fuller, notably through The Fuller Project for International Reporting. And academic research and teaching around Fuller continue to produce and circulate knowledge, as you see from updates in this newsletter and at the Society website.

Probably many of you like me have not been doing international reporting, films, musical compositions, or sermons with Fuller. But perhaps you have been reading her work lately? Teaching it? Revisiting her life? Writing, blogging, speaking publicly, or chatting informally about her? The Society invites you to participate on this expanding conversation on the writer by telling us through the newsletter and the listserv what you do with Margaret Fuller. We look forward to hearing from you.

aloha,

Charlene

President, Margaret Fuller Society

Recent News

Past President Phyllis Cole Receives 2018 Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award at SSAWW

Phyllis Cole was honored with the Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2018 Triennial Conference of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers in Denver this past November. Nominated by **Charlene Avallone**, **Noelle Baker**, and **Jana Argersinger**, Phyllis was recognized at the conference's Awards Luncheon and Ceremony, receiving a standing ovation. Jana Argersinger gave the award speech, after which Phyllis accepted the award. You will find Charlene, Noelle, and Jana's nomination letter, along with Phyllis's acceptance speech, on pg. 11. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition, Phyllis!

Election Results: Margaret Fuller Society Advisory Board

Earlier this month, elections were held to fill three open seats on the society's Advisory Board. A hearty thanks to all seven members who graciously offered to run and to all those who voted. As **Charlene Avallone** announced via the listserv, **Mollie Barnes**, **Fritz Fleischmann**, and **Denise Kohn** will become the newest members of the Advisory Board, serving terms from 2019-2021. Congratulations to all three, and many thanks for your service.

Recent Publications

Sonia Di Loreto. "Margaret Fuller's Archive: Absence, Erasure, and Critical Work." *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*. 27 (2018). Available at: <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/articles/10.16995/ntn.836/>

Albert J. von Frank & Phyllis Cole. "Margaret Fuller: How She Haunts." *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture*, vol. 64 no. 1, 2018, pp. 66-131. Available through Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/esq.2018.0002

Upcoming Projects

Yoshiko Ito, having translated Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* into Japanese, is now at work on a translation of Megan Marshall's biography of Fuller.

Ariel Silver and **John Matteson** are currently working on a collection of essays on Fuller.

Reviewers Sought to Contribute to *Conversations*

As you will see in this issue, we have begun a regular "Reviews" feature to run in *Conversations*. 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.

Fullerians Gather for Dinner at SSAWW and MLA

Margaret Fuller Society members continue to carry on the tradition of gathering for a convivial meal or drink at conferences where the Fuller society is active. This past fall in Denver, society members at the triennial SSAWW conference came together for a dinner organized by **Noelle Baker** at El Jefe, where they enjoyed Mexican food and stimulating conversation. Make sure to check out **Charlene Avallone's** write-up on SSAWW, including photos from the dinner, below (pp. 12-13).

January found society members in Chicago for the annual MLA conference, where they came together to share sushi at Niu Japanese Fusion Restaurant (see photo below). As **Jana Argersinger** reports below, "the food, sushi and otherwise, was beautiful and the conversation sprightly, ranging from ways to engage Fuller aficionados outside the academy, to the challenges of feminist activism in the Middle East, to the powerful voice of poet Meena Alexander" (see pp. 14-15 for Jana's report on the Fuller Society at MLA).

With the annual ALA conference just days away, **Jana Argersinger** has arranged a brunch in Boston on Sunday, May 26, at the Brownstone at 10:00 AM. We look forward to seeing many of you then!



Fuller Society members gather for dinner and conversation at Niu Japanese Fusion Restaurant in Chicago during MLA 2019. Pictured (left to right): Hediye Özkan; Asmaa Alshehri; Julie Hall; Marlene Redemske; Jessica Horvath Williams; Aimee Allard; Jana Argersinger; Christina Katopodis. Photo courtesy of Jana Argersinger.

Announcements from Members

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

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from pg. 1*)

Sara Chafa, first by accident at a performance of *Macbeth*, then again at a series of popular lectures on elocution.³

Their mutual interest in improving their public speaking would turn out to be professionally decisive for both. Some two years earlier Chafa had taken to the stage as a dramatic reader. Her elocution teacher now helped her to find reading engagements in the City and beyond, so that by the time of her marriage in 1874 she was “well known in the Atlantic States.” Father Lake’s performance in the pulpit made him hardly less conspicuous: late in 1873, when asked by his superiors to give a temperance sermon, he created a sensation by pointing out that the Catholic clergy themselves had much to answer for on that score. Shortly afterwards he gave a sermon in which he said that the infallible Vicar of Christ would give no absolution to parents who sent their children to the godless public schools. For these two inflammatory performances he was forbidden for a time to preach. On 17 February 1874, when Chafa (“Father Lake’s especial protégé”) appeared at the Union Square Theater to recite “Fontenay,” her very well-received performance raised \$1000 for a Catholic charity that Lake directed called “The Society for Befriending Young Girls.” Scandal hovered in the air above them both.⁴

No documentary evidence shows when or indeed whether the two actually married, and at least one of Mrs. Lake’s female friends doubted that her marriage-averse, Woodhull-influenced free-love views would have allowed for a formal commitment. Whether sanctioned by any institution or not, the marriage would have occurred in the summer of 1874, when the couple moved into an East Tenth Street boarding house and began calling themselves Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds. Agents of Archbishop John McCloskey penetrated the secrecy shortly thereafter and probably threatened Father Lake with some sort of discipline. In September the couple fled New York and by 6 November had arrived in San Francisco.⁵

The couple soon migrated to the somewhat gentler climate of Santa Cruz, evidently prompted thereto by Father Lake’s declining health and by the presence of a business opportunity. Early in January he became the owner-editor of a local newspaper. The Santa Cruz *Enterprise*, however, would shortly fail, due in part to the buyer’s illness and inexperience and in part to the seller’s chicanery, so Henry S. Lake appears in the 1875 City Directory as a “Farmer.” For her part, Mrs. Lake had never been happier; she doted on her husband and rejoiced in their modest flower-bedecked cottage. When Henry died of consumption in December, his devastated widow broke the news in letters to friends and family in New York, who seem not to have replied; her consolation lay principally in her efforts—successful as she supposed—to contact her deceased lover in séances. Mrs. Lake’s biographer records a contemporaneous passage from a lost diary: “I hope you will not be so changed,” she wrote, “that you are no longer my loving husband. I am beside myself with grief. Darling, I am searching for you, I *must* hear from you, I must know you are near.”⁶

This is the earliest direct allusion to Mrs. Lake’s settled faith in Spiritualism. Without doubt that faith, anticipated in the occult experiences of her childhood, had been much reinforced by a friend of Margaret Fuller’s, Georgiana Bruce Kirby, earlier a resident of Brook Farm, now a resident of Santa Cruz. Mrs. Kirby, for her part, had been converted to Spiritualism years earlier by Eliza W. Farnham, another friend of Fuller’s, who had preceded Kirby in moving to Santa Cruz in 1850. The two women, both

radical feminists, had joined together to run a farm of their own. Each contracted a marriage in 1853, putting an end to their agricultural pursuits, but not to their friendship, which lasted until Farnham’s death in 1864. It was Farnham who had first spread the Spiritualist gospel to San Francisco in a series of lectures in 1859. It seems a logical inference that the two friends would have tried during the 1850s to contact the recently deceased Fuller, especially given how much they are known to have missed the society of educated Eastern women, but what is still more certain is that Mrs. Kirby, in 1876, put Mrs. Lake in touch with her dead husband. “Again and again did he give her every evidence of his loving presence and care, and at last he outlined a plan for her future work, which she has most earnestly and faithfully carried out.” Here, then, was the beginning of Mrs. Lake’s lecture career.⁷

A notice of her first speaking engagement outside of Santa Cruz appeared in the San Jose *Mercury* of 3 May 1876. She would offer a free lecture on “The New Life, as related to the Questions of the Day.” “Mrs. Lake,” the notice continued, “is spoken of as an elocutionist of rare powers. She comes most highly recommended to us by Mrs. Georgiana B. Kirby, one of the most intelligent ladies of Santa Cruz. She is young, pleasing of address, and possesses a great voice.” Many of her earliest lectures were attacks on “Romanism.” Her first on the subject of Spiritualism was delivered in Petaluma, California, on 14 March 1877, and seems to have been repeated in Seattle on 9 September. Her reviews got more effusive as the venues became larger: in October 1877 the Portland-based *Pacific Christian Advocate*, a Methodist paper, favorably compared “this wonderful speaker” to the likes of temperance orator Frances Willard and the erstwhile anti-slavery speaker and women’s rights advocate Anna Dickinson. That month Mrs. Lake executed a highly informal marital contract with another traveling Spiritualist, Professor William F. Peck, stipulating that the relationship would continue no longer than affection lasted. Peck, late of the medical department at the Iowa State Agricultural College, was still in fact married to his first wife.⁸

According to an affidavit filed on 2 February 1891 in an action for divorce brought by Peck against Mrs. Lake, he declared that the two had returned to California three months after signing their marriage contract, spent a year there, then moved for three-and-a-half years to Clinton, Iowa (where they helped to establish the first Spiritualist camp-meeting west of the Mississippi), and finally three months in New York, before arriving in Boston in 1886. During this period both Prof. Peck and Mrs. H. S. Lake, as she continued to call herself, appeared frequently on the Spiritualist lecture circuit, so the gaps in this nine-year sojourn can be attributed to various briefer lay-overs along the way. At many locations she visited in the Midwest between 1880 and 1885 Mrs. Lake established chapters of the National Liberal League, an organization of freethinkers founded in Philadelphia in 1876 to advocate for a thoroughgoing separation of church and state. She served for several years as national chair of the group’s Finance Committee, and as a member of the Committee on Resolutions and Future Work.⁹

The first of Mrs. Lake’s lectures to be fully reported in a newspaper was “What Shall We Do to Be Saved?” delivered at Red Bluff, California, on 28 April 1877, and reported in the Tehama *Tocsin* on 18 May 1878. The burden of the talk was that while theologians occupied themselves in “the splitting of hairs,” dire social questions went unattended; teenaged female orphans, for example, finding no work and disappointed in love, committed suicide, while, according to the New York *Tribune*, a new Catholic Cathedral, never to be taxed, was being erected at the cost of a million dollars. The barely (*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from previous pg.*)

concealed tendency of the Liberal League was to regard the spiritual (in religious guise) as an illegitimate clog to the socially renovating power of the secular imagination; Mrs. Lake’s social views, however, were less binary than that and more nuanced they recall Margaret Fuller’s way of being at once a radical social reformer and a Transcendentalist. An unwavering socialist all her life, permanently scandalized by systemic inequalities of wealth and power, Mrs. Lake was also a Spiritualist. “And, just so, here and there, everywhere, wherever hearts beat and brains throb, wherever the Eternal has gifted his creatures with being, there we find, seeking the possibilities of another life, the doomed and disappointed ones of this.”¹⁰

A year later Mrs. Lake was delivering “some fine addresses on the Spiritual Philosophy” in Iowa. She and Peck (who had ties to the area) were making Liberal converts at a great rate, while at the same time turning the tiny Mississippi River town of Clinton into a major hub of Spiritualist activity. Meanwhile, charges of fraud were leveled at Peck by the editor of the Chicago *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, who also alluded to his irregular marital status. (“I have children in Oakland, but no wife,” Peck replied, feeling as persecuted as Father Lake had.) In the 1880 census, “Sarah Lake” and “William F. Peck” appear as boarders in the same Clinton household, aged 35 and 38 respectively. Their occupations are given as “Lectress” and “Lecturer.”¹¹

Mrs. Lake’s work for the NLL, much of it reported in the *Truth Seeker*, Chicago’s leading progressive paper, broadened her initial anti-Catholic focus into a philosophical assault on institutional religion in general, particularly as it arrayed itself against Spiritualism, against full freedom of speculation and expression, and against progressive social reform. Like the leading Liberal of the day, Robert J. Ingersoll, Mrs. Lake straightforwardly embraced heresy, and by so doing fell in with an old antinomian and Transcendentalist strain of dissent from pious orthodoxies, preferring the intuitive leadings of the spirit to the letter of the law. As Ingersoll had said, “Heresy is the eternal dawn . . . the last and best thought. It is the perpetual New World . . . toward which the brave all sail.” By sailing in that current she became a conspicuous freethinker in the golden age of American Free-thought. According to press accounts she was successful wherever she went, whether on League business or as engaged in Spiritualist apologetics, her lectures being listened to appreciatively in packed halls. In this way, from 1880 to 1885 she gave her attention and her considerable energies to the support of “Liberalism,” neither forgetting nor particularly maturing her concurrent calling to Spiritualist performance. In an ad appearing in the *Truth Seeker* on 10 April 1880, Mrs. Lake listed the dozen lectures she then had available, mainly of the militant secularist sort: “Infidel Integrity versus Christian Creed”; “Separation of Church and State”; “The Spiritual Philosophy, What It Is and What It Is Not”; “The Sunday Question”; “Thomas Paine, Patriot and Hero”; “Crime and Its Causes; or What Shall We Do to Be Saved?”; “After Liberalism, What?”; “Life beyond the Grave”; “Jesus Christ, the Reformer”; “The Three Tyrannies”; “The Old Error and the New Truth”; and “The Scientific Aspect of Prayer.” These could be repeated as needed at various venues; the more rare spirit communications, on the other hand, were unique utterances, given through the medium of herself as trance speaker, sometimes transcribed and reported in the press, but never, of course, written out beforehand. It follows from the radical nature of her performances that Mrs. Lake would be a notable defender of free speech: within a month of placing the ad just referred to, she gave an address on “The Modern Inquisi-

tion” at Maquoketa, Iowa, celebrating the release of D. M. Bennett from prison, where, as editor of the *Truth Seeker*, he had been sent on a charge of blasphemy by America’s archetypical blue nose and Liberal League *bête noir*, Anthony Comstock. Mrs. Lake captured the progressive atheism of the freethought movement when she said, “True, God is no longer dear, but humanity still remains, with all its myriad necessities; and for this, and to supply these, we must now exist.”¹²

The League’s freethought constituency had from the start been a combination of schismatics; Mrs. Lake’s involvement did not outlast its organizational upheaval in 1884-85. She resigned from the governing board on 5 September 1884, specifically in order to attend a Spiritualist meeting in Wisconsin. The choice seems significant as a rebalancing of interests. Certainly her work to that point had done much to advance her career. It brought her into contact with notable movement figures, made her comfortable working as an entire equal in the NLL’s executive structure, as also in its annual conventions and, perhaps most consequentially, prompted her to negotiate for herself a workable balance between progressive reform politics and the Spiritualist orientation she would increasingly embrace a position, that is, between this world and the next.¹³

Sometime during the following year, Mrs. Lake and Professor Peck took up residence at 506 Columbus Avenue, Boston, near the headquarters of the “Working Union of Progressive Spiritualists,” a group recently organized by the wealthy wholesale grocer Marcellus Seth Ayer. Mrs. Lake was asked to address his group from time to time, but she did not become its regular speaker until the death of the incumbent, Mrs. E. R. Dyar-Clough, in May of 1888. By that time a magnificent stone temple had been erected at the corner of Newbury and Exeter streets at a cost to Ayer of \$50,000. The speaker’s hall was configured to seat between 1200 and 1500 persons. Such, often, was the attendance at Mrs. Lake’s very popular services for several years to come.¹⁴

Just as Mrs. Lake began to consolidate her position as one of the strongest and most admired leaders of Boston’s large Spiritualist community, a rift developed between Peck and herself. Indeed Mrs. Lake’s spirit guides advised a separation, which occurred in January 1888, and which, under the terms of their Portland contract, effectively ended the marriage. This estrangement brought to the attention of certain unsympathetic observers the irregular terms and principles that had defined their relationship. It was, in short, a free-love scandal. Mrs. Lake addressed the issue in a series of well-crafted pronouncements on love, marriage, and divorce for which Margaret Fuller was recruited as the author of record. The controversy centrally challenged the gender politics of Spiritualism and evoked that “Goliath of sex slavery” that Mrs. Lake had long ago set out to oppose. As the Catholic writer (and lapsed Transcendentalist) Orestes Brownson pointed out as early as 1869, “The *animus* of the woman-movement is hostility to the marriage law, and the cares and drudgery of maternity and home-life. It threatens to be not the least of the corrupting and dangerous forms of spiritism.” Knowing his wife’s views on the matter, Prof. Peck made the conflict public by bringing an action for divorce (on grounds of abandonment) on 2 February 1891. In the end the judge decided that a divorce could not be granted where no valid marriage had existed, the couple’s contract notwithstanding. One recent commentator on the ruling called it an example of “judicial hostility to marriages where the parties sought to negotiate their own roles.” Meanwhile, Mrs. Lake made clear, in her own and in Margaret Fuller’s voice, what constituted a marriage and what the freedom and self-determination of woman demanded.¹⁵

(*cont. on pg. 16*)

Reviews

The Book of Esther and the Typology of Female Transfiguration in American Literature.

Ariel Clark Silver.

London: Lexington Books, 2018. 228 pp.

I have a storied past with the Book of Esther. In fact, a fit of eleven-year-old rage at the Purim play we put on in Hebrew School made me declare myself an atheist. Each year, a boy in sandals and a paper crown would walk among the silent and motionless girls in the class singing, “I need a queen, a nice new queen,” until it was time to choose one of us. Vashti was vilified almost as much as Haman because where I grew up, few things were worse than a disobedient wife. But all of my sympathies were with Vashti. Even if I’d known the word “transgressive” then, I never would have attached it to Esther. The way the book was taught to us, Esther was a good, obedient girl, but the hero of the story was Mordechai.

Though no longer an atheist, I’ve consciously avoided the Book of Esther until now. Ariel Clark Silver’s fine book made me reconsider, and after all these years, I reread Esther and, except for the violence endemic to the First Testament, I didn’t find it so disturbing anymore. I still greatly sympathize with Vashti, but through Silver’s exploration of how Esther runs through the typology of female characters in nineteenth-century American fiction, I found she made a convincing case that Esther and Vashti are different faces of the same woman.

Silver begins her study with Margaret Fuller and her mostly male contemporaries. Like many of the transcendentalists, Fuller believed that in writing *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, she was not writing a manifesto, but a new scripture. Though the transcendentalists had mostly moved away from the Christianity they had grown up with, the Bible was still in their blood. They turned to the sacred books of Eastern cultures, yet all their exploration led them back to the need of the individual to create his or her own prophetic books. In *Woman*, Silver argues, Fuller sought out her own Mount of Transfiguration. The male God she had been taught all her life was based on sacrifice and martyrdom. The new female deity would thrive on unity and love.

Silver sees *Woman*, along with Esther, as foundational texts that gave rise to the female characters in the fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Adams. For these authors, the figure of the divine female must grow out of an end to male notions of martyrdom. Just as Esther brought about the salvation of her people, women in the nineteenth century must find their salvation through a new female deity. Hawthorne brushed against this conclusion in Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam, but it wasn’t until Adams’ Esther Dudley that a male author showed the triumph of the female without martyrdom or sacrifice, but instead through self-actualization and love.

Silver quotes Cotton Mather on Esther to show how powerful a type Esther was in American culture and religion. In *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, Mather begins centuries of belief in the civilizing work of women in the American home. The Puritan Esther is not disobedient (she keeps quiet in the meeting house) but wields a soft power at home that sets her husband on the path to right moral action, just as Esther does with her “haughty” king of a husband. Unfortunately, Silver doesn’t follow this thread toward the nineteenth century, not showing how Esther evolved in mainstream Protestant understanding, but goes straight from Mather to the “post-Christian” transcendentalists.

Silver also revisits Eve as a type for her two male novelists. Eve’s fall, she believes, was more fortunate than Adam’s—Adam

fell from innocence, but Eve fell into knowledge and experience. This knowledge brings Hester back to New England to continue her ministry, to prophesize in a new age the savior will be a female deity. The same knowledge makes Esther Dudley realize at Niagara that she must turn away from Reverend Hazard to keep her own soul alive and her artistry unencumbered. Men are drawn to original and powerful women, but often their desire is to take these women into their possession and smother their originality and power beneath the cloak of their affections. In order to work her own transfiguration, a woman must be her own force. Silver writes, “Hawthorne...crafts such female characters as Hester, Zenobia, and Miriam who transcend evil by accepting responsibility and punishment as the ‘price for inner victory,’ even when their lives do not seem to rise above defeat” (52-53). Adams, writing forty years later, can take his heroines closer to fulfillment within their lifetimes. “In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Margaret Fuller insists on a virginal period of education prior to marriage, a female preparation apart. By the time Adams writes by the end of the century, his female protagonists are prepared to make a full life apart from marriage” (135).

In one way or another, Hawthorne and Adams, through exposure to Fuller, created female characters who are stigmatized in some way. Even if it’s through death (Zenobia), each of these women rise above the stigmas attached to them, just as Fuller continues to do—she grows and grows toward an ideal of female divinity, still trying to take us with her. Like Vashti, Fuller’s life says no to subjugation, and like Esther, she has the power to be the savior of her people.

Audrey Raden

Audrey Raden is the author of When I Came to Die: Process and Prophecy in Thoreau’s Vision of Dying. She is currently planning a book on Thoreau, Whitman, and transcendental friendship. An independent scholar; she lives in New York City.

American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824–1862

Brigitte Bailey

Edinburgh UP, 2018. 336 pp.

When Margaret Fuller Society members check out Brigitte Bailey’s *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824–1862*, we might be tempted to read it like many academic monographs: to find the chapters with our favorite subjects and then to enjoy them one by one. And bookmarking readers will be happy to learn that this book has not one but two chapters devoted to Fuller’s writing from Italy (Chapters 3 and 4, which I’ll discuss in more detail below). But Bailey’s book is most rewarding to read cover to cover—especially for us—because her discussions of Fuller in Chapter 4 and especially in Chapter 3 serve as turning points within the argument as a whole, which studies a series of texts by Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Caroline Kirkland, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Fuller through critical lenses that link interdisciplinary concerns and contexts in powerful ways. Within the pages of Bailey’s *American Travel Writing*, we learn to read, or to re-read, the series of texts that she puts in conversation with one another through cultural lenses that are, as she argues so beautifully, necessarily interconnected: print culture and its relationship to nation formation; art history

(cont. on following pg.) 7

(cont. from previous pg.)

(from landscapes to genre and history paintings); theories of aesthetic response; and tropes that reveal tourists' expressions as classed and gendered acts of representation and interpretation (3–4).

In fact, one of the most impressive qualities of this project is the way Bailey folds all of these layers and all of these critical practices together, across her sequenced readings, as a basis for the argument that she's making about travel writing and transatlantic studies much more broadly. "*American Travel Literature* examines tourists' aesthetic responses in the context of U.S. nation formation," Bailey writes, and as she frames the historical scope of her project, the period "from 1824 to 1862, [...] when modern forms of tourism emerged," she also frames her reading strategies in interdisciplinary terms that will resonate with many conversations about periodical culture emerging in recent Fuller scholarship (3): "Focusing on representations of Italy in this period enables me to analyze what's at stake in American tourists' acquisition of an aesthetic gaze. The wealth of textual and visual images of Italy in books and periodicals signals its pivotal role as a site on which tourists practiced forms of visual response and reproduced, in print, what they saw. [...] The genre of tourist writing that emerged from this practice and that, in turn, was consumed by a wide middle-class readership, then, was also a modern nation-producing genre" (4). In this way, Bailey's big-picture argument models close readings that take the periodical print culture from Fuller's mid-century moment seriously in order to hone and re-historicize our own critical practices now.

I'll quote one more section from the introduction, not only because it presents the questions that inspired her writing this book in the first place, and in such lucid terms, but also because it suggests, at the same time, the rigorous, imaginative, historicized and historicizing kinds of reading she performs in the pages that follow: "This book takes seriously the large number of published antebellum travel accounts as a revealing episode in U.S. literary and cultural history and seeks to answer the following questions: why did so many Americans write about their trip to Italy and publish their accounts in book form, or as travel sketches worked into fiction, or as essays, poems, and sketches in periodicals? Why was there a market—a reliable appetite—for these accounts? What functions did they serve?" (3–4). "These allegedly personal writings add up to a veiled public discussion," Bailey argues, "a public playing with national, class, gender, religious, and ethnic identity—displaced from the fraught debates on U.S. soil and pleasurably refracted through the prism of leisure and aesthetic contemplation" (4). Ultimately, Bailey's book offers fascinating answers to this constellation of questions, in part by raising even more ambitious questions about what "forms," "genres," and "venues" nineteenth-century tourist writing assumes, and how transatlantic perspectives can illuminate and complicate antebellum conventions in productive ways (247–248).

While Fuller is the focus of Chapter 4, "Fuller and Revolutionary Rome: Republican and Urban Imaginaries," Bailey also reads her in conversation with Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Caroline Kirkland in Chapter 3, "Gazing Women, Unstable Prospects: Sedgwick and Kirkland in the 1840s." In fact, as I can only begin to surface in this review, to appreciate Fuller's place in this monograph most acutely, we might pause over how and why she occupies such an important place in both of these crucial middle chapters that bridge readings of Irving and Cooper (in the first two chapters) with readings of Hawthorne and Stowe (in the final two). In Chapter 3, Bailey studies the three women's contributions to the periodical writing in the 1840s—Sedgwick in *Graham's Magazine*, Kirkland in *Sartain's Union Magazine*, and Fuller's in the *New-York Tribune*—and "thereby follow[s] critics who argue for connecting [Fuller's] work with that of other women" (12). Yet Bailey's point in including Fuller in this chapter that is primarily about Sedgwick and Kirkland is, in fact, to trace the ways Fuller's newspaper pieces mark a gendered shift in

mid-century women writers' gazes: "Reading these three texts in sequence illustrates an accelerating sense, from Sedgwick's generation to Fuller's of the ways in which inhabiting the gap between being an 'aesthetic subject' and an 'aesthetic object' could become intellectually productive" (121). "Fuller's dispatches contain overt critiques of the tourist gaze," Bailey continues, "analysis of the connections between visual and political forms of representation, and the clearest attempt of any U.S. writer of her generation to intervene directly in the creation of nations in 1848" (121). It is with this distinction between Sedgwick, Kirkland, and Fuller's gazes in mind that Bailey links Chapters 3 and 4 and frames a discussion of one of my very favorite passages from the dispatches (no. 28; posted 20 February 1849, published 4 April 1849): the moment when Fuller witnesses the Proclamation of the Republic—and, at the same time, that "[t]he American at [her] side remained impassive" (157). Bailey's gorgeous chapter turns, then, to an analysis of one dispatch as a history painting—a genre that shows how she interpreted and represented the contemporary history that she saw was unfolding around her in the city (13, 163–164). Chapter 4 crescendos with Bailey's discussion of Fuller's prose rendering of "a history painting of Garibaldi's departure from Rome after the defeat of republican forces" in conversation with Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (see 13, 169–177; dispatch no. 34; posted 6 July 1849, published 11 August 1849).

One of the things I find most remarkable about this chapter sequence is that the pivots Bailey makes from Chapters 2 to 3 and then from 3 to 4 are made possible by the visual complexities she teaches us to see within and across Fuller's dispatches. That we read Fuller's complex gazing in dispatches 28 and 34 (among others) next to one another—and in conversation with Sedgwick, Kirkland, and Hawthorne over this two-chapter sequence—shows just how revolutionary her visual strategies are. This is also, perhaps, why I love Bailey's decision to braid her readings together—and not to delimit our encounters with individual texts to individual chapters. For example, we find Fuller as one of three major figures in Chapter 3, and in Chapter 4, we read her in conversation with Hawthorne. Similarly, after reading the *The Marble Faun* in conversation with Fuller's "Republican and Urban Imaginaries," we read Hawthorne again in Chapter 5, now side-by-side with Stowe. Like the very best academic monographs, Bailey's draws strategic connections throughout, building her close reading of Sedgwick and Kirkland and Stowe on earlier analyses of Irving with a generosity that certainly doesn't require us to have these all fresh in mind at once—but with a sensitivity that certainly does reward a reader who has the luxury to do so.

Before I turn to the contributions and interventions that this book makes to Fuller studies and to American studies writ large, I want to linger some more over the elegant organizational strategies *within* and *across* discrete chapters. In fact, these strategies are what make me encourage you to read this book cover to cover, not in one- or two-chapter portions, in the first place. I was immediately struck by how Bailey makes the kind of strategic sequencing that I've just traced above visible to us as readers, since I think this is how she imagines the most exciting possibilities for future studies of nineteenth-century tourist writing at the end of the book. On one level, Bailey draws our attention, again and again, to the fascinating composition and circulation histories that this series of texts have in common. We can find one of the first examples of such work in the introduction, where she draws our attention to her selection of particular texts, and their particular moments in their authors' careers. "Although I examine a range of texts," Bailey writes, "I focus on U.S. writers who were well known at the time they published travel writings on Italy [...], who expected and received a wide readership for their tourist accounts, and who were therefore consciously performing as national representatives" (4). Bailey's long view in moments like this invites us to pause over the reputations these authors had already (cont. on the following pg.)

(cont. from previous pg.)

cultivated with their readers before writing as tourists. On another level, then, Bailey draws our attention to the evolving conventions/expectations that we notice when we read these tourist texts as acts of aesthetic response. By modeling how Irving and Cooper interpret particular landscape paintings, Bailey is, of course, also training *our* eyes, in turn, on how *we* can interpret Irving or Cooper over time. I found myself marveling over the brilliant analysis of, for instance, the picturesque, the prospect, and Irving (chapter 1) and of Kirkland and Martin Johnson Heade's *Roman Newsboys* (chapter 3) because Bailey's particular interpretations of Irving and Kirkland's particular texts are so stunning – and also because, by the middle of the book, I found myself studying the images embedded in Bailey's readings on my own, with a keener sensitivity for the intellectual moves these writers, and we, might absorb in the process. We learn to unpack such aesthetic responses, in other words, because Bailey teaches us how to move from details in paintings and in close readings, especially those that are classed and gendered, to bolder acts of representation and interpretation that unfold over this critical period in Italian and U.S. histories.

Bailey's book is a triumph for transatlantic scholarship – one that is ambitious and generous in equal measure. When I imagine the range of sources that she must have consulted – visible in her incorporation of art historical criticism, literary historical criticism, theories of aesthetic response, and discussions of the literacies we can bring to these texts from periodical print culture, to name just a few – while reading and researching these tourist texts, I marvel even more at the clarity of the story that she tells us across her book. For even a cursory glance through the illustrations and citations bookending the text reveals the monumental work that Bailey has had to do to make this story visible to her readers. Still, she concludes with an invitation to us, not to tie a bow on the reading sequence she has "Solidarity across Classes and Women's Labor," as constructed so elegantly, but to see tourism as a "capacious field" for further research we have only begun to do together (249). The most beautiful scholarship teaches us to read the texts we love with new eyes. Brigitte Bailey's *American Travel Literature, Gendered Aesthetics, and the Italian Tour, 1824–1862* does just this.

Mollie Barnes

Mollie Barnes is an Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina Beaufort, where she works on nineteenth-century transatlantic literature with a focus on social reform. She's published on Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Fanny Kemble, and Edith Wharton, and she has a forthcoming piece on Fuller and abolition in a collection on nineteenth-century activist rhetoric. Her current book project, "Unifying Ambivalence: Transatlantic Italy and the Anglo-American Historical Imagination" studies "problem texts" by Anglo-American expatriates.

Figuring Maria Popova

New York: Parthenon, 2019. 592 pp.

Figuring by Maria Popova is, at 592 pages, a pretty significant investment of lifespan, but anyone interested in Margaret Fuller will find it very rewarding, unless they find it infuriating for some reason that I did not discern. I'll give you a spoiler alert right here as how Fuller's story gets woven in creates a bit of suspense, which I might, you know, spoil for you by sharing too much.

Christine Kenneally's NYT review does not indicate how central Fuller is to *Figuring*, but you can catch a hint in Jillian Tamaki's interview with Popova. Asked what three historic guest she would have at a literary dinner party, Popova chooses Susan Sontag, Margaret Fuller and Rachel Carson.

The overarching structure of *Figuring* is taking stories of brilliantly accomplished women (and some men) over the last

four hundred years and weaving the various strands, making connections – some of which may be stretches. This creates some difficulty in following along as you get sentences like this: "Shortly after Caroline Herschel's birth, a small group of freethinking intellectuals began congregating on the first Monday after every full moon." And I'm like "When was that? Who is she again?" I finally gave up and just went with the flow. But I have sympathy for the reader who might be stumped by "Everything is naturally related and interconnected," Ada Lovelace would write a decade later, in the year Margaret Fuller composed *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*." Do you literary people know about Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage?

Most important is that there is a lot about Fuller. She first shows up on page 59 in a discussion of Ida Russell, who participated in the Conversations, moving onto Brook Farm. Then there is the discussion about Margaret being the inspiration for *Aurora Leigh*, which influenced Emily Dickinson. That was a new one for me. The Margaret Fuller section of the book starts around Chapter 6 and continues with the occasional side trip until Chapter 12, which is a pretty substantial chunk of the book. The side trips are smoothly executed, but kind of strange when you look back at them.

Somehow we segue from Fuller's abortive romance with James Freeman Clarke to Richard Feynman's relationship with his wife, who suffered from a rare form of tuberculosis. The connection has to do with the belief in life after death. Eight pages later, we are back to Freeman Clarke after a side trip that included the Manhattan Project.

Popova wins my heart in Chapter 7 when she brings Thomas Wentworth Higginson into the story, although that introduces the only error that I found in the book: "At forty, he served in the Civil War as colonel in the first federally authorized black battalion." The First South Carolina Volunteers, later the 33rd United States Colored Troops, was a regiment, not a battalion. What is really amusing is that Popova, in her interview with Jillian Tamaki, talks about the rigorous scholarship in Jill Lepore's *These Truths*. Don't get me started. There are a couple of military history errors in there that are howlers. I think it is very unfortunate that history ends up getting siloed as much as it does. That is actually one of the reasons that Margaret is somewhat neglected. Regardless, Popova lavishes enough attention on my hero and uses him as one of the links that connect Margaret Fuller to Emily Dickinson.

In Chapter 10, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* sends us to Maria Mitchell and astronomy and Vassar College. After a few pages we pick back up with Fuller off to Europe, but then we get the James Nathan back story. Chapter 11 is the romance with Ossoli, which has the passage that most moved me.

You see, if you haven't figured it out by now, I am not very literary. An English major who switched to history because somehow I just didn't get a lot of stuff, to me *Moby Dick* is a story about a bunch of guys who worked in the whaling industry. And Margaret Fuller's historiographical stock was at a low point (although poised for takeoff) in 1972 when I took Hawthorne, Melville, Twain. So to me she was kind of a footnote to the transcendentalists, who I didn't really find all that interesting.

I reencountered Fuller through my obsession with reading everything written by Thomas Wentworth Higginson and realizing that Fuller's story was the most romantic story in American history and trying to figure out why there isn't a biopic and then starting to dream one up. What excites me is the Conversations, New York and Italy. The transcendentalists, the whole lot of them, are mainly important as Margaret Fuller's launching platform. Except for "Civil Disobedience." That's important.

Of course, that attitude makes a lot of the story told by Popova kind of drag. All the literary stuff. But she makes up for it. Here is the passage that moved me: "... an attentive presence that seemed to cherish her company not for her mind or accomplishments but simply for who she was." That could kind of be a metaphor for my feelings about Fuller. Ossoli understood less 9

Phyllis Blum Cole Receives 2018 Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award at SSAWW

Our own **Phyllis Cole**, Past President of the Margaret Fuller Society, was the recipient of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW) 2018 Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award, presented during SSAWW's 2018 triennial conference in Denver this past November. This recognition "is awarded every three years at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers' conference to recognize a scholar's career achievement in the study of American women writers. The award recognizes the individual's commitment to the field, as demonstrated in his/her teaching, mentoring of students, scholarship, and service. The award is named in honor of Karen Dandurand, who passed away in 2011. She was one of the founding editors of *Legacy* and was an active member of SSAWW, serving as the Vice President of Development from 2004 to 2009" (ssawwnew.wordpress.com). Congratulations to Phyllis for this very well-deserved honor.

Below, we share with you the nomination letter submitted by **Charlene Avallone**, **Noelle Baker**, and **Jana Argersinger**, along with Phyllis' acceptance speech. For more reporting on the presentation of the award at SSAWW, please read **Charlene Avallone's** piece on the conference on pg. 12.

Nomination for SSAWW Lifetime Achievement Award: Phyllis Cole

Submitted by Charlene Avallone, Noelle Baker, and Jana Argersinger
1 January 2017

We write to nominate Phyllis Cole for SSAWW's Lifetime Achievement Award. As the attached curriculum vitae demonstrates, over the course of a decades-long and still-vibrant career of teaching, publishing, and activism Professor Cole (emerita at Penn State Brandywine) has been a motive force in the study of nineteenth-century American women writers and the building of contemporary female community.

Challenging as it is to single out accomplishments from such a robust professional life, we would like to highlight three with exceptional reach and impact: the renovation of the Margaret Fuller Society (which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2017); the ground-breaking publication of *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1998); and the coediting of *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* (Univ. of Georgia Press, 2014).

In her years as president of the Fuller Society, Cole spearheaded a collective revitalization bent on bringing this pioneering feminist writer and activist, among related female circles, to a larger audience both within and beyond academia. Under her directorship, the society saved its threatened status as an allied MLA organization, preserving the only conference session that annually keeps a female prose writer of the pre-1850 United States before the eyes of the entire profession. Its 2017 session was among those selected for the presidential theme "Boundary Conditions." Further, Cole led a drive that greatly expanded the membership, drawing in scholars focused mainly on other writers as well as people from communities outside the academy, and at the same time broadening the society's diversity in age, professional status, and nationality. She also extended the group's outreach into social action by forging a connection

with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (Cambridge, MA), a community-based nonprofit whose century-old mission to empower underprivileged families and individuals is based on Fuller's legacy. This effort further included the underwriting of a new Margaret Fuller Women's Leadership Award. And again crossing national boundaries, Cole played a substantial role in society plans for a major conference in Heidelberg, Germany (2018), in partnership with the Emerson Society and the University of Heidelberg Center for American Studies.

Professor Cole's work for the Fuller Society is interconnected with her rich record of individual and collaborative scholarship on female writers more broadly in the consequential strain of American literary history known as Transcendentalism. Signal among numerous publications, her book on Mary Moody Emerson, a finalist for the MLA's James Russell Lowell Award that exemplifies, according to Mary Kelley (Dartmouth), "feminist archaeology at its most impressive," and the coedited essay collection *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* bring forward underappreciated and forgotten women of "the Newness": those who anticipated and shaped the major male figures; those who showed the movement's many involvements in social action, including antislavery and feminism; those with transatlantic relations previously unexplored; and those making their voices heard in experimental forms of writing. Recognizing Cole's far-ranging work on Transcendental thought, notably on Mary Moody Emerson and her more famous nephew, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society elected her one of its earliest female presidents (2004-2005) and honored her with its 2011 Distinguished Achievement Award. (*cont. on following pg.*)



Phyllis Cole receives her satnding ovation at the awards ceremony: 2018 Triennial Conference of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers in Denver. Photo courtesy of Noelle Baker.

Lifetime Achievement Award

(cont. from previous pg.)

More than any other scholar, in our view, Cole has widened our understanding of the movement long represented primarily by Emerson and his male cohorts to encompass the women who also gave it life.

Collegiality and collaboration inspire Professor Cole's remarkable story—in keeping with a core argument of *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* that female contributions to this movement arose from conversation among women—but it is important to shine a bright light, as the Emerson Society and SSAWW awards do, on those individuals whose particular dedication has moved our community forward. Phyllis Cole is just such a deserving luminary.

Acceptance Speech

Phyllis Blum Cole

Thank you. I'm deeply honored by this award and would like to recall its memorial to Karen Dandurand: her work founding SSAWW and—even before that—*Legacy* has been part of the energy and organization making my study of American women writers possible. I think I represent a great number of us in pursuing the recovery of women's writing and lives, as well as these women's conversations with each other and with canonical writers that have changed the shape of the literary landscape since the 1980s.

For me “recovery” meant finding what was hidden in plain sight, the thousand-page manuscript diary of Mary Moody Emerson, a self-educated woman writer and religious seeker of the generation before her famous nephew Ralph Waldo Emerson. Believed lost, this manuscript was simply in a box of uncataloged Emerson Family Papers at Harvard's Houghton Library. Reading it I was able to construct newly the “Origins of Transcendentalism,” since she recorded affirmations of nature and imagination from the time of the nephew's infancy, then inspired his work in the letters she sent him during his young adulthood. Now that overlooked manuscript is becoming available to us all online through the editorial work of Noelle Baker and Sandy Petrulionis—a recovery project that epitomizes the changes of recent decades by presenting a previously lost woman's voice through technological means.

Looking for what was hidden in plain sight has continued to be my passion as both a scholar and a teacher. My teaching career has been entirely with undergraduates, for 26 years on a Philadelphia-area branch campus of Penn State, but there I had the opportunity to get my students also looking at newly recovered literature and even digging up their own, in the rich archives of our Quaker countryside on the main paths of the Underground Railroad. And so the conversation has continued—both among our subjects and among each other. I turned to conversation between Margaret Fuller and her Transcendentalist friends, both male and female, but more, “conversation” as her technique of teaching and cultural impact among women. Along with Jana Argersinger, I edited the essay collection *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism*, seeking out those dialogues through the written record and printed word, both as they unfolded through time and as they proliferated laterally in the visions and revisions of readers. I share this award with the twenty essayists who contributed to our project. They crossed

race, region, language, and continent, especially as Fuller travelled to Europe and entered into conversation with partners bent on social transformation.



Jana Argersinger, Phyllis Cole, Noelle Baker, and Charlene Avallone at awards ceremony: 2018 SSAWW conference. Photo shared by Sandra Petrulionis via Margaret Fuller Society listserv.

And this collaboration among ourselves also extends more widely, through our author societies and their bonding, since 1990, in the annual American Literature Association conference and, starting a decade later in a memorably crowded room, the Society for the Study of American Women Writers. Penn State generously funded my trips to these conferences, expanding my career with national access, and of course (more technology) in these same years email and internet transformed our ability to stay in touch between conferences. Recently the Fuller Society has sought out collaboration with the Stowe, Sedgwick, Alcott and Child Societies, while also recreating and expanding ourselves from within. We've affirmed our connections to promoters of Fuller outside academe, and in particular have made an exciting connection to the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge. This is her birth home, but the only author home we know of presently serving a function beyond that of preserving historic memory: for over a hundred years, in Fuller's name, it has been providing social services as a “settlement house” to immigrant communities in Cambridge. We are presently working on making Fuller's own presence there more vividly felt, even as we support their current agenda for social change. For she was a questioner of injustice and force for change—an advocate of “Recovery and Resistance” across borders. In fact I'd like to end my comments with some of hers, especially relevant to our current moment. For the past two years our informal motto has been her advice in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*: “Persist to ask and it will come.” In fact she completed her work on that book at the end of 1844 amidst news that newly elected president Polk was threatening to “rivet the chains of slavery and the leprosy of sin permanently on this nation” by widening US borders, taking Texas from Mexico. “Women of my country!” she called out. “Exaltadas! If such there be....Have you nothing to do with this?” There was the “moral power” needed to call for change, she insisted, “whether each in her own home, or banded in unison.” It is a model of resistance still worth hearing in 2018.

Margaret Fuller Society at SSAWW Triennial Conference November 2018

by Charlene Avallone

Margaret Fuller was very much in evidence at the 2018 Triennial Conference of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers in Denver (November 7-11), and the participation of Society members there was gratifying. The richly rewarding gathering around the conference's timely thematics of "Resistance and Recovery across the Americas," afforded many highlights.

VP1 **Sonia Di Loreto**, unfortunately, could not make the journey from Italy to hear the Society-sponsored panel address the topic that she set: "In the Company of Margaret Fuller: Unexpected Genealogies of Feminism." The stimulating session on Thursday spoke to the conference's themes, while it both answered to the Society's initiative of promoting attention to Fuller in the company of other women writers and extended genealogical excavation to include a male (proto)feminist and nineteenth-century women artists. Moderator and Past-President **Phyllis Cole**'s introduction linked the panel to the varied and complex models of relation alternative to lineal genealogy that are discussed in the essay collection that she edited with VP2 **Jana Argersinger**: *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* (University of Georgia Press, 2014). Advisory Board Member **Fritz Fleischmann**, speaking on "Margaret Fuller and John Neal," expanded recovery of the nineteenth-century dialogue between women and men as they attempted to work their way out of patriarchal structures of thought toward expanded ideas of "woman" and women's rights. **Etta Madden**, in "Genealogies of Translation: Fuller, de Staël and Caroline Crane Marsh," explored direct influences among these three women as they found travel and translation means of crossing boundaries of nation, language, and culture to arrive at new knowledge and self-transformation. **Yoshiko Ito**'s paper, "Looking for Transpacific Genealogy in Early Feminism: A Study on the Analogy between Margaret Fuller and Ume Tsuda," reflected on a serendipitous newspaper juxtaposition to present a critical model of how inspiration can travel across cultures even without direct influence. **Janessa Kenway** opened a largely uncharted topic in Fuller Studies with "The Visual Genealogy of Margaret Fuller" as she began to map Fuller's Transcendentalist aesthetic beyond her own appreciation of contemporary artists to recover nineteenth-century female painters and sculptors of the ideal.

Fuller received attention at other panels, too. In the session "Resisting The Canonical Syllabus," **Lesli Vollrath**'s talk, "Voices of Resistance Unfolding: Teaching Margaret Fuller as a Nasty Woman in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*," advanced the Society's other current initiative, to promote the teaching of Fuller. And Sarah Salter presented "Margaret Fuller's Italian Regionalism" at the session "Regionalism Beyond Fiction: Women's Resistance Across Periodical Forms."

Additionally, the conference brought together Society members who spoke on a variety of other writers at other sessions: Treasurer **Noelle Baker** (Elizabeth Cady Stanton), **Mollie Barnes** (Charlotte Forten), **Kate Culkin** (Harriet Hosmer), Advisory Board Member **Lucinda Damon-Bach** (Anna Jameson and Catharine Sedgwick), **Elizabeth Dean** (Nella Larson), **Mark Gallagher** (Louisa May Alcott), Advisory Board Member **Denise Kohn** (Laura C. Bullard), **Ariel Silver** (Alcott), **Lisa West** (Sedgwick), and President **Charlene Avallone** (Bullard, Harriet Beech



Fullerians enjoying convivial company during the group dinner at El Jefe organized by Noelle Baker. Photo courtesy of Noelle Baker.

er Stowe, and George Sand). More details on the presentations can be found in the draft program of the conference currently available at <https://ssawwnew.wordpress.com/conferences/conference-archive/2018-conference/conference-program-draft/>. **Mollie** also volunteered her services at the (very early morning) CV Workshop to help graduate students and others polish their credentials for the job market.

The Society hosted two well-attended social events on Friday. The afternoon tea, a collaborative event with the Sedgwick and Stowe societies, was organized by **Jana Argersinger**, **Noelle Baker**, **Cindy Damon-Bach**, and Beth Lueck (Past President, Harriet Beecher Stowe Society), with the adept direction of Jordan Von Cannon (VP of Publications for SSAWW). In addition to tasty pastries, the tea provided an occasion for new MFS members to introduce themselves and their work in a conversational setting and for all members to engage with scholars studying other American women writers. A hearty welcome to new members who joined the Society around the Conference: **Kate Culkin**, **Elizabeth Dean**, **Janessa Kenway**, **Etta Madden**, and **Lisa West**. **Noelle** also arranged the dinner that spirited Society members away from the tourist district to experience something of a Denver neighborhood, as well as a delectable meal, at the Mexican restaurant El Jefe. Dinner offered further opportunity for that favorite discourse of Fullerites—conversation.

The following day, a standing ovation from a packed ballroom at the conference Awards Luncheon welcomed **Phyllis Cole** to the podium to accept the Karen Dandurand Lifetime Achievement Award. The award, given every three years, recognizes committed and extended work that has furthered the goals of SSAWW "to support and broaden knowledge among academics as well as the general public about American women writers." The award speech, delivered by **Jana Argersinger**, acknowledged the many dimensions of Phyllis's outstanding career: her extraordinary teaching, public speaking, publishing, groundbreaking research on women writers, service, mentoring, and community-building. No applause was more heartfelt than as Phyllis was honored for "her passion for shaping, encouraging, and inspiring the next generation of readers, thinkers, and scholars that makes Dr. Cole such a (cont. on following pg.)



Lesli Vollrath and Charlene Avallone enjoying the meal at El Jefe during SSAWW 2018.

strong role model for us all.”

In her acceptance speech, Phyllis invoked Fuller, too, as a “model of resistance” for today in calling the women of her country to bring their “moral power” to protest the martial nationalism that was transpiring at the Mexican border in 1844. Amy Gore (University of New Mexico), following up on the conversation at a panel sponsored by the Lydia Maria Child Society, shared her own model of such protest for teachers to use; she posts on her syllabus this position on undocumented students: “As an educator, I fully support the rights of undocumented students to an education and to live free from the fear of deportation. I pledge confidentiality to any student who wishes to disclose their immigration status, and I will work with students who require immigration-related accommodations. For more information and/or resources, please contact the New Mexico Dream Team at info@nmdreamteam.org.”

Many left Denver remarking on the inspiration, energy, and inclusion that characterize the SSAWW Triennial and already looking forward to the next conference in Philadelphia in 2021.

Margaret Fuller Society Panel at SSAWW 2018

In the Company of Margaret Fuller: Unexpected Genealogies of Feminism

Organizer: Sonia di Loretto

Chair: Phyllis Cole

Margaret Fuller and John Neal Fritz Fleischmann, Babson College

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

John Neal (1793-1876) — athlete, provocateur, writer, reformer, entrepreneur — was the most prominent male feminist in the antebellum United States. Like Fuller, Neal described men and women as gendered creatures existing in mutuality; unlike Fuller, he demanded specific rights for women, such as the vote and equal pay. Echoes of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* can be found in his work as late as 1864, but his typical stubbornness also led him to disagree with Fuller (and later leaders of the woman’s rights movement) on key issues. In 1845, after she sent him a copy of *Woman*, he wrote to Fuller, “I tell you there is no

hope for woman, till she has a hand in making the law ... But enough — we must have a talk together, if I am ever to persuade you into a right view of the subject.”

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

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

Etta M. Madden, Missouri State University

This presentation will suggest the influences of Margaret Fuller’s and Germaine de Staël’s views of translating upon Caroline Crane Marsh (1816-1901). The “unexpected” aspect of this genealogy is that Marsh was deemed an “invalid” (often unable to see and to walk), a traditionally feminine rather than feminist figure who depended upon and has been eclipsed by her husband. Marsh lived abroad as wife of George Perkins Marsh, US Ambassador to Turkey from 1850-54 and then to the newly-formed Kingdom of Italy from 1860-81. In Turkey she met political exile Cristina Belgiojoso, who stimulated her interests in cultural differences. Marsh became a published translator, writer of encyclopedia entries, author of her husband’s biography, and of poetry and fiction, all while fulfilling duties as an ambassador’s wife. She also responded to a calling as a surrogate mother and social activist amidst Italy’s political upheaval. Marsh, labeled a “Corinne” by one American visitor to Rome, hosted receptions, met with civic leaders, and became involved with a newly-formed school and orphanage in Florence, established by former political exile Salvatore Ferretti.

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

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

Yoshiko Ito, Taisho University, Japan

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

As Margaret Fuller searched for role models for women in European myths and literature when she (cont. on following pg.) 13

Margaret Fuller Society at MLA 2019

by Jana Argersinger

In early January 2019, the Modern Language Association convened its 134th meeting at the Hyatt Regency on the south bank of the Chicago River in partly sunny 40- to 50-degree weather. This temperate surprise, only weeks in advance of the polar vortex, afforded pleasant walks to the new American Writers Museum downtown, visits to Sue the T-Rex at the Field Museum of Natural History, and for Fullerites with welcome guests, a Friday evening stroll across the river to Niu Japanese Fusion Restaurant. The food, sushi and otherwise, was beautiful and the conversation sprightly, ranging from ways to engage Fuller aficionados outside the academy, to the challenges of feminist activism in the Middle East, to the powerful voice of poet Meena Alexander.

On Saturday, the Fuller Society hosted a well-attended session titled “Women at Work: Margaret Fuller and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers on Work,” organized by First Vice President **Sonia Di Loreto**. Second VP **Jana Argersinger** stood in as chair for Sonia, who unfortunately was unable to travel from Italy. Our three panelists—Aimee Allard, Hediye Özkan, and Jessica Horvath Williams—demonstrated in their papers and the Q&A that followed the important vitality scholars in the early stages of their careers and those pursuing alternate career paths bring to the society. (Their full abstracts follow the overview below.)

Aimee Allard, who recently earned her PhD from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and now serves as Journals Production Coordinator at the university press, presented “‘Sent to the Sewing Room, and Compelled to Work’: Institutionalized Women’s Labor in Nineteenth-Century American Hospitals for the Insane.” Situating her paper at the “intersection of sewing, writing and work,” Aimee called to our attention

several little-known asylum narratives from the late 1860s, stressing the relevance of Fuller’s views of involuntary domestic work—sewing in particular—to their female authors. These incarcerated authors often experienced needlework as a redoubled constraint on body and mind—whether forced labor for the profit of others or uninvited therapy—and at the same time a subversive way to reach beyond institutional walls and perhaps prove one’s sanity. Aimee’s claim that the body of women’s writing represented by these narratives will richly reward further study found support in an audience member drawn to the session by specific interest in one of the asylum authors.

In “Solidarity across Classes and Women’s Labor,” Hediye Özkan, PhD candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, explored the confluent themes of female community and female work in reformer Lillie Devereux Blake’s 1874 novel, *Fettered for Life; or, Lord and Master*. “Women are the best helpers of one another,” according to Fuller—a maxim with which, in Hediye’s view, Blake concurs. After setting up in its title an analogy to “anti-slavery narrative[s],” the novel stages resistance by creating points of connection and mutual support among diverse female characters in varied life circumstances—single, married, affluent, poor, middle-class, young, old, cross-dressing, conventionally feminine—focusing on the contested roles of public and domestic work.

Jessica Horvath Williams, a Ph.D. candidate at UCLA and a disability activist and educator, gave a talk titled “The Disabled Superwoman: Domestic Labor and Disability in the Nineteenth-Century U.S.” Questioning our retrospective identifications of disabling stress responses to domestic demands in nineteenth-century women, Jessica proposed that we ask, “Disabled compared to what?” Her answer: we can more meaningfully relate the experience and (*cont. on following pg.*)

SSAWW 2018

(*cont. from previous pg.*)

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

This paper analyzes the letters Ume Tsuda sent to her foster mother, in which she lamented the “poor” women in Japan. Brought up and educated in the United States, she was able to have dual or plural points of view, and she believed in her mission as a pioneer of women’s liberation. This paper will seek what Ume Tsuda saw in American feminism to which Margaret Fuller gave much inspiration and what she wished for women generally, or especially in Japan, and also pay attention to the articles in the New York *Tribune* that reported the activities of Ume Tsuda in America to see what she represented in the American society.

The Visual Genealogy of Margaret Fuller

Jenessa Kenway; University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Critics such as Kathleen Lawrence have suggested that Margaret Fuller’s style of transcendentalism (as opposed to Emerson’s or

Thoreau’s) was primarily aesthetic. But, so far scholars have largely viewed Fuller’s aesthetic sensibilities in terms of literary works. This gap in the scholarship suggests there is a need to link the discussion of Fuller with specific works of visual art and construct her visual genealogy. My paper defines Fuller’s aesthetic criteria and uses her early essays in *The Dial* to establish her interest in female creativity. Those criteria are then matched against female artists living during Fuller’s time, aided by names mentioned in her European dispatches, with whom she would have had opportunity to come into contact, to form a collection of art that could be used to expand the discussion of feminine visual transcendentalism. The conversation about Fuller, Caroline Sturgis, visual art and “aesthetic transcendentalism” begun by Lawrence will benefit from exploration of additional female visual artists. With relatively little digging, artists such as Jane Stuart, Herminia Borchard Dassel, Margaret Gillies, Properzia de Rossi, Elizabetta Sirani, and Lavinia Fontana are located and found to demonstrate striking links with Fuller, which suggests the field of visual transcendentalism has a rich and underexplored vein of images and figures to excavate. Discussion of the women artists she came into contact with during her lifetime is curiously underexplored by Fuller, quite possibly due to her untimely death. With the traces she left, more can be done by looking at clues and visual works to piece together a more complete record and understanding of Fuller’s aesthetic “femaleness” and further the study of feminine visual transcendentalism.

perception of disability to the example of the hardy colonial goodwife than to the effects of “the cult of true womanhood.” The critical remarks Fuller made in *Summer on the Lakes* about pioneer women’s unfitness for their lives’ demanding labors are, according to Jessica, relevant to this view.

Join us at ALA in Boston this May for more conversation and conviviality!



Panelists Hediye Özkan, Jessica Horvath Williams, and Aimee Allard present at the Margaret Fuller Society-sponsored session, “Women at Work: Margaret Fuller and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers on Work.” MLA 2019. Photo courtesy of Jana Argersinger.

Margaret Fuller Society Panel: Women at Work: Margaret Fuller and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers on Work” Organized by: Sonia Di Loreto Chair: Jana Argersinger

“Solidarity across Classes and Women’s Labor”

Hediye Özkan, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

In her groundbreaking work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Margaret Fuller states that when women’s problems, status, responsibilities, duties and rights attracted thinkers and reformers, they started to point out the questions of work, better education, and equal rights for women (11). Lillie Devereux Blake was one of those reformers and activists who wrote about the solidarity and intersection of working women from different classes in *Fettered for Life; or, Lord and Master* (1874) in order to address various struggles of women within a capitalist economy. She also portrays how these women challenge traditional gender roles in order to gain independence, better positions, social status, and self-fulfillment in a male dominant society. Blake presents solidarity among a suffragist doctor, a disguised journalist, a working-class teacher, two prostitutes, and a middle-class housewife by unifying them in terms of their participation to the workforce and roles in their marriages. They are all restricted and oppressed mentally, physically, emotionally by both public and domestic forces. However, they identify themselves within the same group of women who suffered from the unjust social order. Blake intersects and bonds female characters under the roof of sisterhood in order to emphasize that “Women are the best helpers of one another,” as Fuller states (*Woman in the Nineteenth Century* 172). Juxtaposing fact/fiction and history/literature, Blake voices female resistance and rebellion against patriarchy, constraints, and boundaries, emphasizing the importance of community by depicting cooperation and partnership between working women through a subversive novel. Examining women’s paid and unpaid labor in domestic and public spheres, I will discuss how Blake approaches issues faced by women in the nineteenth century by using a woman-slave analogy not only in a capitalist but also in a patriarchal society to reconstruct work, womanhood, and marriage.

“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 Press

Perhaps nowhere is an analysis of Margaret Fuller’s and nineteenth-century women writers’ relation to and representations of labor more necessary than it is in American women’s asylum narratives of the period. From Elizabeth Packard’s 1868 memoir *The Prisoners’ Hidden Life; Or, Insane Asylums Unveiled* to Sophia Olsen’s *Narrative of Her One Year’s Imprisonment at the Jacksonville Insane Asylum* to Sarah Minard’s *Testimony* of her nine years in a state madhouse, it is in these nineteenth-century “madwomen’s” narratives that we encounter a complex critique of labor vis-à-vis sewing. Like them, Margaret Fuller viewed sewing as labor, her writing more concerned with a woman’s place in the “social fabric” of the nation (Fuller 110) than a woman’s skill at stitching fabric. Countless hours spent sewing made the “spirit faint from inanition,” she argued, limiting a woman’s intellectual pursuits and affecting her mental wellbeing (Marshall 73).

In my paper, I argue that Packard, Olsen, and Minard concurred with Fuller, their narratives illuminating the role of sewing within the asylum—it was at once a textile tedium designed to keep female patients busy, a punishment for women who dared to read or write, and a system of unpaid labor from which unscrupulous asylum superintendents profited greatly. For Fuller, sewing was a form of cloth confinement, so it seems only fitting that Packard and her contemporaries aligned needlework with straitjackets and fabric restraints. Giving scholarly attention to this unique corpus of women’s writing from the nineteenth century, one which Margaret Fuller’s treatises on sewing help shed light on, we begin to uncover important perspectives on institutional labor from women writers who were confined as much by lock and key as they were by needle and thread.

“The Disabled Superwoman: Domestic Labor and Disability in the Nineteenth-Century U.S”

Jessica Horvath Williams, UCLA

In 1898, the *Daily Picayune* published a piece called “The American Wife” that rues the differences in cultural expectations of physical, mental, and emotional labor for American women versus their European counterparts. An American wife, it laments, must, as a matter of course, be “a paragon of domesticity, an ornament in society, a wonder in finance, and a light in the literary circle to which she belongs,” whereas European women need only shine in one category or another. Setting aside the assumed class notions embedded in its analysis, the article insists that the culture demands an unachievable “genuine ability,” setting up the notion that the work required of superlative domesticity is, in and of itself, disabling.

Yet when critics approach nineteenth-century American femininity and domesticity with a disability studies eye, they tend to focus on a culturally requisite frailty. While this trope is privileged in criticism, it is not the only one provided to us by nineteenth-century women authors, particularly around representations of domestic labor. In Mary Wilkins Freeman’s “Luella Miller,” Luella’s entire community takes on her daily domestic tasks only to be felled, one by one, by mysterious illness, disability, and death. In Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’s “No News,” domestic labor wastes Harrie, a harried doctor’s wife and mother of three, into a feeble, suicidal “skeleton,” while her husband takes up with her friend, Pauline. Pauline, Harrie insists, can only maintain her attractive looks and attentiveness to Harrie’s husband because she is outside of the domestic sphere; in particular, “she didn’t have three babies to look after.” Taken together, these stories push back against our notions of contemporary compulsory female frailty. Instead, they use the ideas of labor reformers, who addressed acquired impairments in factories and other industrial complexes, to explore the disabling working conditions of domestic spaces.

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from pg. 6*)

She addressed these concerns first in “The Home” on 21 October 1888 (a good example of her best work, reproduced below), then in “Marriage. A Discourse Given through the Trance Mediumship of Mrs. H. S. Lake . . . May 25, 1890,” and again, to great acclaim, on 28 December 1890 in Washington, D. C., in a discourse entitled “Love and Marriage Spiritually Considered . . . , by Spirit Margaret Fuller.” Her last major statements on the subject, delivered at Boston’s First Spiritualist Temple in June 1891, were entitled “Love, Marriage and Divorce” (7 June) and “The Nature, Needs, and Manifestations of Love” (21 June). In the former discourse she said that “the time has passed for those who wish to discuss a reform in the direction of Marriage to be met with vilification and abuse.” The open opposition now apparently directed at her prompted “In Defense of Mrs. H. S. Lake,” written by one of her regular Boston auditors, Jane D. Churchill. Other aspects of the controversy were finally addressed in “Liberty, Love, and Law,” also by Spirit Margaret Fuller, delivered at the Temple on 13 December 1891. “Love, like liberty,” Mrs. Lake declared, “needs redefining. It is crucified between two thieves—the Church and the State.” 1892 was mostly spent addressing receptive audiences at Washington, D. C., or otherwise away from the Boston Temple.¹⁶



REV. H. S. GENEVRA LAKE.

“Rev. H. S. Geneva Lake.” Image provided by Albert J. von Frank, courtesy of <http://madamlake.yolasite.com/>.

Lake’s adoption of Fuller as spokesperson at this crisis in her career—a figure brought out from the shadows of the past effectively framed the argument in terms of a mid-century feminine romanticism. Under this imprimatur of belated romantic reform, Lake would arraign the toxic domesticity discoverable (as the living Fuller had pointed out) in many dysfunctional homes and hurtful and unequal marriages, here mainly spoken of in terms of the effect on children. The targeting of the argument, certainly by 1890, was itself audacious, given the sentimentally aggrandized position of the home in America’s popular mythology. The marital home figured as an indispensable prop to social cohesion and, after the overthrow of chattel slavery, among the nation’s principal sites of incarceration. Mrs. Lake’s younger

contemporary, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, identified the temerity demanded by this necessary critique:

Oh, The Home is Utterly Perfect!
And all its works within!
To say a word about it
To criticize or doubt it
To seek to mend or move it
To venture to improve it
Is The Unpardonable Sin!

So at last it proved in Mrs. Lake’s case.¹⁷

Gilman makes for a useful comparison. She and Lake followed a nearly identical trajectory from an early fascination with the mild socialism of Edward Bellamy’s Nationalist movement to a more political and labor-related vision centering in Eugene V. Debs, whose family Mrs. Lake seems to have known. The coincidence extends to their having both published a treatise entitled *The Home*, Mrs. Lake, of course, in 1889 and Gilman, to rather wider acclaim, in 1903. Gilman had very little nostalgic veneration for Transcendental idealism and addressed the problem of marriage and the home from a sociological or economic (that is to say, from a modern and materialist) standpoint; Lake’s tendency was often in the opposite direction, embracing the individual, ideal, and perfectionist possibilities. The usefulness to her of the “spirits” lay in their conceptual representation of entire freedom and self-sufficiency. As she put it in “The Grandeur of Selfhood” (1891):

The hopeless toiler is doomed. But he who, relying upon the grandeur of his own selfhood, affirms his power to progress and become, to resist tyranny, and to revolutionize forces in his own behalf, is blazing the way toward the glorious estate typical of a free spiritual being.

Lake and Gilman, both tireless on the lecture circuit, were in agreement that what was true of the situation of labor would be true as well of woman’s situation. The perspectives of both are necessary to an appreciation of the intellectual ground of American feminism at the end of the century. Mrs. Lake’s contribution, missing from the record until now, had encouraged a great many, but it did not lie in the direction the future would take. In the end scandal was allowed to undo her reputation and she was for all intents and purposes harried out of Boston. She gave her farewell sermon at the First Spiritual Temple on 31 October 1892.¹⁸

The remainder of her story—a story mainly of exile, decline, and isolation—may be quickly told. She addressed the Albany Spiritual Alliance late in the year and on into 1893, followed by engagements with Spiritualist societies in Buffalo, NY, and Akron, Ohio. By May she arrived at the newly formed Cleveland Spiritual Alliance, where she was installed as their regular pastor. That summer, as was her habit, she attended camp meetings at Lake Brady in Ohio and Lily Dale (Cassadaga) in western New York, resorts where Spiritualists enjoyed each other’s reinforcing company, compared notes, and rested from their labors. (As Anna Howard Shaw shrewdly observed, “There is no penalty for heretics in Lily Dale.”) By the end of 1895, shortly before the Cleveland Alliance broke up, Mrs. Lake found herself working with a Mr. B. F. Foster, “the phenomenal medium,” known for his “materialization of hands in full gaslight.” Soon thereafter Mrs. Lake cut her remaining ties to the East and was lecturing in the far Northwest in favor of vegetarianism, a cause earlier championed by Marcellus Ayer and Jane Churchill in Boston. Moving to Olympia on Puget Sound, she tried to gather support for something she called the “Northwest (*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home”
(*cont. from previous pg.*)

Vegetarian Colony,” modeled, as she said, after the Ruskin Colony, a socialist project in Tennessee intended, as Lake’s was, for those “weary of the crash and conflict of the competitive system” and who longed for a simpler, healthier life in a rural setting.¹⁹

There were, evidently, not enough persons of that description to float a utopia, so Mrs. Lake settled for taking over a disused Unitarian church in downtown Olympia and assembling a small audience to whom she preached “a life of simplicity, probity and purity [as] that for which we should strive.” In this near retirement, Mrs. Lake would write occasionally for Eugene V. Debs and the Social Democrats, advocate for women’s rights, and place a few politically engaged poems in radical journals. These last happened to draw the attention of poet and Spiritualist Edwin Markham, who declared that her productions were “touched with the light of the New Time.”²⁰

The notable events of her last years were three. On 13 May 1905 it was reported by the *Morning Olympian* that “Rev. Geneva Lake is extremely indignant because a customs officer made a search of her home in her absence seeking contraband opium.” This action, following on the arrest of Larry Kelley, “the King of Opium Smugglers,” was shortly afterwards declared “an unfortunate mistake.” A far more consequential event occurred in June 1909, when Mrs. Lake was chosen to address the “Peace Mothers Day” at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle. While the purpose of the fair was to promote the region in general, in fact it hosted a large number of suffragists, gathered especially for “Woman Suffrage Day” on July 7. Mrs. Lake composed a pamphlet for the occasion, *The Flags of All Nations Where Woman Is Known as the Equal of Man, Commemorative of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, July 1909*, while the speeches she gave at this time comprised the heart of the state’s “late Suffrage Campaign.” This political agitation was productive, to say the least. On 8 November 1910, Washington voters endorsed the women’s suffrage law, the first enactment of its kind anywhere in America for fifteen years. The national impasse thus broken, similar laws were soon adopted in California, Oregon, Kansas, Arizona, Montana, Nevada, and Alaska Territory. One immediate effect of the legal breakthrough was that in December Mrs. Lake served on the first all-woman jury ever impaneled in Washington—the first, perhaps, anywhere in the country. Newspaper accounts acknowledged the importance of the event, but also coyly alluded to the fact that the jurors, as jurors had never done before, kept their hats on for the duration of the trial.²¹

At some point after this suffragist triumph, Mrs. Lake, now in her sixties, married (or, again, did not marry) for the third time. Her partner was Jean B. Cutter, an immigrant from Corsica, whose ancestors had fought under Napoleon. The couple lived very quietly in Olympia on his income from real estate dealings. Cutter died of a heart attack on 20 August 1920; dazed and alone, Mrs. Lake refused to credit his decease and for a time kept officials from removing the body. She herself died six months later, on 12 February 1921, at Western State Hospital, a psychiatric facility, following a diagnosis of exhaustion and age-related dementia.²²

Both of their wills, drawn in 1918, contained the following identical language: “I affirm a realization of an ALL WISE SOUL of the Universe; of the unerring working of a righteous law; of conscious communion with denizens of other spheres, and of the persistence of souls beyond this plane of being.”²³

**III. Mrs. Lake Lays Out Her Reform Agenda:
Fuller on “The Home,” 1888**

Wherefore should I withhold the truth?

—Mrs. H. S. Lake

The text of the following address was first published in the Banner of Light, 19 January 1889, and reprinted without alteration in pamphlet form the same year. As indicated in the title, it is part of a series with “The Church” (by Spirit Theodore Parker), delivered 28 October 1888 and published, also in the Banner of Light, on 28 September 1889. The last in the series, “The State” (by Spirit Lafayette) was delivered 4 November 1888 and briefly discussed in the Banner on 17 November. Only the first of these discourses achieved separate publication; the third seems not to have been published at all or substantially reported. The interval between delivery and publication for the first two would seem to imply some revision by Mrs. Lake of the stenographic report credited to Mrs. Ida L. Spalding.

THE HOME.

A LECTURE (THE FIRST IN A SERIES ENTITLED “THE HOME,” “THE CHURCH” AND “THE STATE,”) GIVEN BY

**SPIRIT MARGARET FULLER,
THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF
MRS. H. S. LAKE,**

BEFORE THE SPIRITUAL FRATERNITY SOCIETY, IN THE
FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, BOSTON, OCT. 21ST, 1888.

BOSTON:
COLBY & RICH,
NO. 9 BOSWORTH STREET.
1889.

[3]

THE HOME.

INVOCATION.

Our guardian spirits! your presence we now invoke. May we feel, both in the inward and the outward being, your nearness! May we be stimulated by your thought, and inspired by the energy of your spiritual life! Bring us into harmony with ourselves, and thus into harmony with others. May we, through your experience, learn wisdom! May we constantly aspire to greater good! May we, this afternoon, receive new and true impressions of the topic chosen for our consideration; and as our thought shall travel through the mazes of spiritual life, may we gather here and there many things which will be of service to us in the incessant toil and struggle of this mundane world. May we feel always, as at the present time, the consolation and strength imparted by you our guardian spirits, so that the tangled threads of life may be straightened out, and our pathway made more clear by our endeavors and by your assistance. Amen.

(*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from previous pg.*)

DISCOURSE.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I have selected the subject which has been announced, “The Home,” because it is the first thought of the child and the last reflection of the adult as he leaves this earthly stage of human endeavor and is translated into the realities of our inner world. If there are any assembled here who have an idea that this topic is not of supreme importance, I trust that their minds may be disabused of that thought before I have finished what I have to say.

[3/4]

I look upon the home as the central point in human destiny; as the pivot around which all aspiration and all energy cluster; and I perceive that if the conditions which surround the child when it is ushered into this sphere of life are not what they should be, there is for all time, yea, for all eternity, a consequence entailed thereby. This fact alone makes the home an object of special solicitude to all advanced, progressive and benevolent minds. It is so to many embodied in the earth-form, but it is particularly so to us who have arisen from your plane of life, and can perceive more clearly both cause and effect.

If you, in accepting your individual mortal destiny and coming here as a child, find yourself embowered, as it were, in conditions which tend to draw forth the higher and better faculties, you start that much in advance of those whose conditions are the reverse. Therefore, it seems to me, I need not be extremely impressive when I state that it is the duty of all men and women to pay especial attention to the home; to cultivate those faculties and feelings which tend to give it joy and light. A home in which love is not is a dungeon to the spirit; and thrust into conditions of that kind no human being, however gifted, can begin his earthly pilgrimage with that aspiration which should be the common lot of all.

I therefore emphasize, as my central thought, the statement that love is of supreme importance in the establishment of home; and when I speak of love, I wish you to understand I use that term in the sense in which any person disconnected with the mortal, and moderately endowed with the spiritual, would use it. I know there are a variety of emotions originated upon your plane, or springing therefrom, in the nature of the animal state, in which the human race is at present involved, which, to our thinking, are not properly denominated love; they are, however, a species of attraction between persons of opposite sex, which draws them together in a union harmonious, or otherwise, as the case may be. This last statement is almost a paradox, however, inasmuch as there can be no union without harmony. [4/5] A union of the external, merely, is an expression of that which is false, and like all other expressions which do not correspond with the spiritual, it lasts but a brief period of time.

I catch now the thought of many who have looked to us for information regarding the association, in spirit, of those related by what you call “ties of blood.” There are many on our plane who, coming from homes of inharmony and injustice in mortal life, are to-day endeavoring to straighten out those tangled conditions which were generated by the improper association of those who begot them; and there are many others in spirit-life who not only make no effort to change the conditions by which they are environed, but are fairly content, so to speak, with the imperfect states in which they find themselves, as a consequence of the home life they lived on the earth-plane; just as there are multitudes of people to-day living in earth-conditions (“homes,” they call them) who accept because they believe that all things mortal must be imperfect the imperfections of that life in which

they find themselves involved, without making the effort which the spirit would prompt them to make, to produce harmony out of the discord surrounding them.

Now let me say to you in advance, this afternoon, that there can be nothing of a spiritual character evolved in the world, unless there be a condition which will tend to *draw people together in spirit, rather than to drive them by the letter of the law*; and that the homes which to-day are established upon your earthly plane are not ideal homes, as we view them in spirit, but only suggestions of that which is to be in the hereafter, when men and women learn the law of love, and, having learned it, apply the same. You might ask me: “Are not all things in the material world suggestions of what is yet to be?” and I would answer; “Most assuredly they are.” But you will certainly agree with me that no subject can be more important than that upon which so much depends in the development of the individual soul, namely, the home, and that it should receive the [5/6] special attention of men and women everywhere. I know that such is the condition of home-life at present, that men are unduly involved in the outward affairs of life—in war, in commerce, in government. The thought of mankind is to-day largely forced into those channels, because home-life is so imperfect; because it so little answers the needs and necessities of the inner being, and because the dreams which all men have dreamed in their youth have not come to full fruition in the earthly state. As was said in the little poem repeated prior to my taking control, “All men and all women are dreamers.” There are few men who enter upon your earth-plane who do not have their dreams, their pictures of the possible in the external plane whereon they are placed. Great achievements loom before them in the future. Sweet visions of happiness float athwart the day-dreams of this life. Success means, in those early and poetic times, not merely material gain, but the grasping and holding of those subtle principles which give to the heart happiness and to the mind content. If at last the dream proves illusive; if by-and-by, in the turmoil of earthly states, it is set aside as something that can never be realized, the memory of the sweet vision that brightened those early years will linger to the close of the twilight of this life.

If this is true of men, it is even more true of women. Women, like men, have their dreams, and they are embodiments of the possible in spirit-life. Your dreams of home presage the realities of our spiritual plane; and what I desire to impress upon your minds as you listen to me, and I look into your several states of life, is this: *Never give up your dreams!* No matter how unreal they may appear, viewed in the light of your present every-day experience, remember that your dreams spring from the activity of your spirit. If you fail to realize them in your outward life it is simply because your spirit has not yet gained sufficient control over the material, and it is only biding its time to make the supreme effort to embody your ideal—to make your home the center of your love and thought, that [6/7] there you may draw to yourself all that shall minister to your needs.

I suppose most of you recall the conditions by which you were surrounded when you were children. You think of the states of your parents, and of your environments in consequence. You remember whether love and harmony were yours, as a result of the blending of the lives of your father and mother, or whether storms and tempests shook your inner being, because storms and tempests had shaken theirs. With this heritage of weal or woe, you started on life’s pilgrimage. If of woe, you did not know, perchance, what had burdened you. You had not become, as yet, sufficiently developed mentally to weigh, measure, criticize, investigate and experiment. Many of you, it is true, knew that you seemed to be weighted in the race of life; that the purposes which you planned did not perfect (*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home”

(*cont. from previous pg.*)

themselves. You were weak in body, or feeble in spirit, or both. You saw the great world lying before you, and you wanted to conquer it; for no man or woman ever comes upon this earthly plane without the desire to master the outward states that hamper him or her. In the mad rush to carry out this spirit impression, many things occur which produce crime, disease and disorder. Philanthropists, and benevolent-minded people, who are endeavoring to eliminate from society those persons who fill your asylums, penitentiaries and houses of reformation, are working at cross-purposes. When the germ is planted in the home in the soil of inharmony, it cannot, in all the eternities, blossom into perfection. It will only struggle through the material to accomplish that for which it was designed; and it may return many and many a time to earth, to gain an outward expression, and repeat the experiences by which it strives to become a perfected spirit.

Therefore I say to all: Think less of the concerns of government, think less of the cares and responsibilities of your outward, temporal existence, and turn your attention more especially to the home, the central, pivotal point of human individual being. See to it first that love is the presiding [7/8] genius there. “But,” you exclaim, “can you manufacture love to order?” Not at all; but you may so order yourselves as to make it possible for a species of affection to be developed thereby, which will bring you nearer together in the relationship of the spirit. What I wish to impress upon you in this discourse, as in all my utterances upon the outward plane, is this: Learn to live in the spirit! Young men and young women who are thinking of the establishment of a home, do not regard, I entreat you, with such excessive care the appointments of the external what shall be the building, what shall be the interior decorations, what shall be the furnishings, but think, first and foremost, what shall be the spirit reigning there? whether the woman shall be the queen, because she controls by right of *love*, instead of by right of *law*; and whether he who presides over the outward or external states shall do so because she generously accords to him the hospitality of the sovereign, or because the world endows him with the powers of dictatorship.

I need not say to you, intelligent men and women sitting before me, that the conditions which obtain in this, as in many other directions in your world to-day, are false ones. It is not necessary, even, that I should say to you that most of the homes in which little children are brought upon the outward plane of life are inharmonious. You are cognizant of this fact, just as much as you are of the fact that the adverse conditions in your industrial, religious and governmental spheres are assuming alarming proportions. Everywhere unrest and inharmony presage the advent of a new order of things, and it is partly to assist in bringing this about, that I speak to you this afternoon. We would cooperate with you in working out the problem by which happy homes may be founded, wherein human spirits may be generated in that condition which will enable them to set out upon the journey of mortal life under the most favorable auspices. You are so overburdened and overwhelmed by the outward conditions which have been entailed upon you by your forefathers, that you are not half [8/9] the way along the road of human progress that you should be. You are fettered, bound, cramped and hampered in all your movements, because it has been thought that the letter instead of the spirit, of the law must be obeyed. I bespeak not those conditions which will give men and women larger liberty to do wrong, but I bespeak those conditions which will give them *larger liberty to do right*, and to make the best of them



Mrs. Lake. Image provided by Albert J. von Frank, courtesy of <http://madamlake.yolasite.com/biography.php>

selves possible. I would that all human spirits should be enabled to so enter this world that it would not be necessary for them to go through hell in order to attain heaven. I would that the advent of every child upon the earth-plane should be welcomed with smiles of joy and happiness. No sadder spectacle presents itself to spirits, watching over the destiny of the race, than that of millions of human souls entering your world unwelcomed, unloved, and uncared for, except in so far as society enjoins. When they attain to manhood and womanhood they are careless of obligations, because those who begot them were careless of theirs; they have no regard for duty, because those who brought them into external being neglected to perform theirs. The first duty which every individual owes is, I repeat, to make of himself the very best possible in every way. This is the first and fundamental law and gospel of human endeavor everywhere, in earth and in spirit-life. Your homes are what you make them, it is true, but they are what you make them *by what you yourselves have been made*.

When I speak of love as the foundation of home, I use the word in the sense in which a spirit may be supposed to use it, namely: as that which draws the inner nature of man and woman together, irrespective of the obligations which society enjoins. I do not mean those sentiments denominated affection, which draw the outward into a temporary union, for what we would regard more as a coalescing of material elements, which, when the body crumbles to dust and the spirit escapes from its bondage, no longer obtains.

There are few homes in the spirit-world that were homes here. In our spheres homes are made up of those who are [9/10] spiritually drawn together. In many households, on the earth-plane, there is no spirit relationship, and the members are united by the ties of blood alone. There is an antagonism between father and child, brother and sister, concealed, it is true, by the mandate of society, but working, fermenting, in the spirit, and laying up its treasure in heaven, so to speak, where it finally confronts these individuals. They find there that the divergence of the spirit upon the outward plane, between members of one family, manifests itself in our spheres as a condition which cannot be overcome, and those persons who were united in family bonds in earth-life may be sundered as wide as the poles in spirit-life.

This ought not to be. It is a source of sorrow to the spirit, because, for a long period, you retain the effects of your earthly conditions, which have been engrafted upon your interior being. Recollection is a potent factor in spirit-life. If you can remember here with accuracy and in detail those things which transpired in your childhood, in your youth, and in later life, and you recollect them with pangs of sorrow, or with thrills (*cont. on following pg.*) 19

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from previous pg.*)

of joy, as the case may be, just imagine yourselves divested of your outward being, with everything which has occurred throughout your earth-history flashing instantaneously before the eye of the spirit! the associations that you have formed, correct or otherwise, the conditions under which you have labored as a child, the struggle, the effort, with falls here and there from those higher states of the spirit! In that picture you see, perhaps, your mother, who was not your mother in spirit, but only in the outward, and, thrust into the world by accident, as it would seem, you find, on recollection, that those things which should have given you pleasure cause you pain, because there was inharmony between the mother and the child. You grieve as you recall these things; and you wish it had been otherwise. Let me tell you that a spirit thus endowed, and seeing that which caused inharmony in his own home, will make every effort to produce newer and better states here on the material plane; and [10/11] wherever he finds an organism through which he can express his thought relative to these things, he will make use of it to stimulate you into seeking to produce those conditions in home-life which are the birthright of every child.

There are multitudes of spirits lingering in the atmosphere of your earth-world, striving to give men and women a diviner idea of home and its responsibilities. Reviewing their pilgrimage of life, they see where your earth states are imperfect and seek to correct them. Now and then, here and there, they find those through whom they can express themselves, and if those who adhere to the old customs of thought rebel when we tell them that their homes are imperfect, and their laws the same, we only pour more spiritual force and life, if possible, into the channels through which we communicate with the outward plane of life, and endow our instruments with yet greater energy to disseminate this vital truth.

When you rightly seek to eradicate crime you will begin with the conditions, spiritually, which surround the mother in the home. You will not wait until the child has received its impress and its outward expression of being in your earth-world, and then place it in a house of refuge or a reformatory institution. You will then understand that all children must be welcome, because welcome is harmony and harmony is invitation. Before the true home can be externalized it must be *built in spirit*. There are millions of structures in your world to-day—houses with walls and doors and windows, and they are called homes; but they are tombs, living tombs, to the human spirit, where the sunlight of love never penetrates, and where men and women grow up criminals in consequence of this fact.

Such being the case, is it not essential that you should begin to understand that the first and foremost duty of spirits incarnate and spirits exarnate is to evolve harmony out of discord? We know that we shall encounter obstacles in our work. There never yet was a reform introduced upon your earth-plane that was welcomed as it should be. Everywhere there has been the antagonism of preconceived [11/12] opinions. Everywhere men and women have said, “Let well enough alone! We are living comparatively free and easy in our present conditions; *do not disturb us with a new thought.*”

Such are the ideas prevalent in the world at large to-day. A new thought creates commotion, because it has entered a condition which is not in keeping with it; and all ideas, whether of a religious, social, or industrial nature, which are not in common with the preconceived opinions of the people, cause a ferment in human society, which engenders antagonism and ridicule. In consequence of this fact independent-minded men

and women are misunderstood. There rises from the brains of the people a fog, which clouds the spirit and prevents it from following logical conclusions.

When we speak of the sanctity of the home, and of that love-element upon which it should be founded, and when we say that walls do not create homes, nor appointments make the spirit thereof, those who say, “Let well enough alone,” cry out against us, declaring that the world is not ready to receive ideas concerning the new order of things. But we affirm that just as fast as the people can comprehend these truths, it is our duty, as guardian spirits, to enunciate them, and if it be possible, to stimulate every individual to rebel against all false conditions, whether industrial, social or religious. The antagonisms which to-day are fermenting in all human society are the work of the spirit, compelling man to give expression to the higher possibilities within. I am stating only the exact truth when I say that your homes, your social arrangements, your governments—all things by which you have lived, are insecure, because, in the light of the spirit, their partial or entire falsity is revealed. You are dimly conscious of this fact, yet you do not know what has made you cognizant of it, and I repeat, it is the light of the spirit.

In addressing you upon this subject, I desire to speak even a little more plainly than I have already done—as plainly, indeed, as you can understand and bear with me. I do not emphasize appointments, they are material things; [12/13] I do not emphasize interest in relationships which produce the home, the union of men and women in the bonds of marriage; I do not emphasize any one of those things which the world in general considers so important; but I *do* emphasize that divine harmony between men and women which is of the spirit; and when this exists it is of little consequence to the incoming soul whether he be born in a hovel or in a palace; whether he be clad in fine raiment or in homespun linen; whether he receive the advantages of a liberal education, that his mind may be cultivated to the highest degree of intelligence, or only the rudiments of learning. The power of the spirit of harmony existing between those who brought him externally into being will give his spirit an impetus toward divine light and truth which he never could receive in the world’s ways of training. I see the confusion and sorrow engendered in your earth-sphere because your homes are not spiritual ones, and I emphasize these things. You are looking forward to homes of bliss in the Summer-Land—in the “sweet by-and-by” because you have not received here that for which your spirit cries. Let me say to you that when, as human beings environed by the flesh, your homes are built where light and love and harmony prevail; where morning, noon and night the song of thanksgiving that you have been born shall arise, you will think far less of the glories of paradise than you now do; you will understand what a heritage of love means.

I cannot use fine phrases and weave beautiful theories when I see before me this afternoon, in spirit, those who have been driven to take their own lives, materially speaking, because they were not welcomed upon their advent into the earth-sphere, and the burden placed upon their spirits then had grown too heavy to bear; neither can I remain silent when I see the numberless wrecks upon the highway of your human experience, because your homes are false and are not built upon the everlasting foundation of right. Wherefore should I withhold the truth? These things are serious and affect mankind immeasurably. Why [13/14] should I not speak of the heritage of immortal life, when immortal life is only had because of the harmony existing between the spirit and its outward expression? That is all immortal life means. No man or woman ever becomes immortal until the soul is anchored in harmony with that which is objective; consequently, let me add here, those (*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (cont. from previous pg.)

feelings which we, as spirits, denominate love, *are simply the heralds of immortal life.*

Perhaps you ask me, as I am about to close this discourse, to explain to you in some practical way what we, as spirits, would have done to bring about a reformation in the homes in human life. I reply: We would have, first and foremost, more regard for the spirit, and less for the letter of the law. We would have men and women so educated *that the sanction of society would be to them no excuse for acting a lie.* We would have men and women so brave and so pure in their own lives, that they would never present a false front to the world. We would have men and women so devoted to the interests of posterity that no child should be introduced into the earth-sphere who is not wanted there. We would have all these things so clearly understood, and so perfectly carried out, that home should become not merely the ideal of that divine sentiment which obtains in the race to-day, but we would have it practically a rest for the spirit. Home means to cover, to conceal, to keep, to hold fast. We would have every home, built within your earth-world, a cover for the spirit, where it may rest and receive the heritage of its immortal life by natural spiritual evolution upon your outward plane.

There are many children to-day who have plenty to eat, to drink and to wear; yet are starving in their affectional nature. The inhospitable spirit in the home is dwarfing that part of their being which is the best; and they are growing up to be cold, careless, indifferent, hard, exacting men and women, immersed in trade, art, society, and interests of an external character wholly. There cannot be too much love in the home; too much sympathy, consideration, and all those tender little things that [14/15] go to make up the most beautiful part of human life. You want to educate your children. But what is education? It does not consist simply in sending the child to school to be taught from books, but it is a drawing out of the spirit of the child. Nowhere can that work be done so well as in the home; and home should mean a place where men and women in embryo may be launched harmoniously upon the sea of life, to prosecute their voyage, wafted on by the fair winds of love to the beatitudes of our world of spirit-life.

About the Author:

Albert J. von Frank, retired from the English department at Washington State University; and longtime editor of *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, has published widely on Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose sermons and poetry he edited. He is the author of *The Sacred Game: Provincialism and Frontier Consciousness in American Literature, 1630-1860* (1985), *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston* (1998), and *An Emerson Chronology*, 2nd revised ed., 2 vols. (2016).



Grave marker: “H. S. Geneva Lake Cutter Died Feb. 12, 1921.”
Image courtesy of Albert J. von Frank.

IV. Chronological List of Mrs. Lake's Lectures and Publications

*Mrs. Lake gave a great many more sermons or lectures than appear on the following list, which is restricted to first deliveries of addresses reported by title in newspapers. Most seem to have been delivered in a trance state, but she would from time to time, especially early and late in her career, deliver her remarks in a normally awakened state. The entries below consist of the lecture title followed by the place and date of delivery and conclude with the source-citation. If the contents of the address were substantially reported, that fact is noted. The *Boston Banner of Light*, the preeminent American Spiritualist weekly; is abbreviated *BofL*. Boston's First Spiritualist Temple, where Mrs. Lake was resident speaker, is abbreviated *FST*.*

1872. *Napoleon Bonaparte and Other Poems*. Cambridge, MA, Riverside Press. 211pp.
1876. “New Life, as Related to the Questions of the Day,” San Jose, CA, 7 May. *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 6 May.
- “The Catholic Church, and the Great Question of the Day,” Santa Cruz, CA, 22 Aug. *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 19 Aug.
1877. “Danger Signals: A Political Sermon,” Petaluma, CA, 14 Mar. *Petaluma Weekly Argus*, 9 Mar.
- “Romanism,” Russian River, CA, 19 Mar. *Russian River Flag*, 22 Mar.
- “Spiritualism,” Russian River, CA, 20 Mar. Ibid.
- “What Shall We Do to Be Saved?” Red Bluff, CA, 28 Apr., and Petaluma, Cal., 29 Apr. Reported in the *Tehama Tocsin*, 18 May 1878.
- “Spiritual Philosophy,” Seattle, Washington Territory, 9 Sept. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 10 Sept. [Published as a pamphlet, 1884.]
- “Romanism in America,” Portland, OR, 28 Oct. *Puget Sound Dispatch* (Seattle), 27 Oct.
1878. “Catholicism vs. Civilization.” Sacramento, CA, 25 Sept. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 25 Sept. (cont. on following pg.)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home”
(*cont. from previous pg.*)

1880. “The Modern Inquisition,” Maquoketa, Iowa, 2 May. *Truth Seeker*, 5 June.
- “Infidel Integrity vs. Christian Creed,” Chicago, 26 Sept. Reported in *Truth Seeker*, 23 Oct.
- “Individualism,” Elgin, IL, c. late Dec. *Truth Seeker*, 8 Jan.
1881. “Thomas Paine, Patriot and Hero,” Linesville, PA, c. 30 Jan. [Not first delivery.]
- “The Higher Life,” Chicago, c. 1 Oct. *Truth Seeker*, 15 Oct.
1882. “The Mission of Liberalism,” Chicago, 16 Apr. Reported in *Truth Seeker*, 29 Apr.
1883. “The Effect on Morality of a Decline in Religious Beliefs,” Kansas, 31 Aug. *The Radical Review*, 15 Sept.
- “Woman’s Rights,” Kansas, 1 Sept. Ibid. 1885. “The Home, Cassadaga, NY, 9 Aug. An early treatment of this topic, published in *BofL*, 30 Jan., 1886.
- “Heroes of Freethought,” Milwaukee, mid-Sept. At the convention of the National Liberal League. *The Radical Review*, 6 Oct. Cf. Samuel P. Putnam, *400 Years of Freethought*, p. 533.
1884. *Woman’s Right in Government. A Lecture Delivered by Mrs. H. S. Lake, before the Wapello County (Iowa) Woman’s Suffrage Association, January 31st, 1884.* Ottumwa, Iowa: Publishing House of the Spiritual Offering. 15pp.
- “The Kinds of Spiritualists” [Letter to the Editor], *Truth Seeker*, 9 Feb, p. 87.
1887. “Religion; Its Rites and Reasons” (afternoon) and “Reform and Reformers” (evening), Worcester, MA, 23 Jan. *BofL*, 12 Feb.
- “The Rights of Man” (afternoon) and “Marriage and the Home” (evening), Worcester, MA, 30 Jan. Ibid.
- “Spiritual Laws,” Boston, 13 Feb. [Reported in *BofL*, 7 May.]
- [On the Marriage Question], *New Thought*, ed. Moses Hull, 19 Feb. [Regarding the Walker-Harman affair.]
1888. *The Law of Conjugal Love: A Woman’s Book for Man.* [Boston:] C.M.A. Twitchell. 34pp.
- “The Life and Character of Thomas Paine,” Salem, MA, 29 Jan.. *BofL*, 14 and 21 Jan.
- “The Industrial Problem from a Spiritual Standpoint,” Brockton, MA, 19 Feb. *BofL*, 18 Feb.
- “The Distinctive Features of Spiritualism,” Amesbury, MA, 11 March. *BofL*, 31 March.
- “The Ways of the Spirit,” FST, Boston, 7 Oct. Reported in *BofL*, 13 Oct.
- “The Spirit and the Letter of the Law.” FST, Boston, 14 Oct. Ibid.
- “The Home . . . Given by Spirit Margaret Fuller,” FST, Boston, 21 Oct. Reported in *BofL*, 19 Jan. 1889; republished as a pamphlet, Boston: Colby & Rich, 1889. Reprinted in *The Sower*, 3 (Jan. 1892): 1-7.
- “The Church . . . Given by Spirit Theodore Parker,” FST, Boston, 28 Oct. Reported in *BofL*, 28 Sept. 1889.
- “The State . . . Given by Spirit Lafayette,” FST, Boston, 4 Nov. *BofL*, 17 Nov.
- “The Discipline of Life,” FST, Boston, Dec. Reported in *BofL*, 5 Jan., 1889.

1889. “Prospect and Retrospect, or, The Old and the New,” FST, Boston, 6 Jan. Reported in *BofL*, 12 Jan.
- “The Value of a Living Faith,” FST, Boston, 13 Jan. *BofL*, 19 Jan.
- “God in the Constitution,” FST, Boston, 20 Jan. *BofL*, 26 Jan.; reported *BofL* 3 Aug.
- “The Rights of Man, by Spirit Thomas Paine,” FST, Boston, 27 Jan. *BofL*, 26 Jan.
- “Spiritual Purpose and the Purposes of Spirits,” FST, Boston, 24 March. *BofL*, 30 March.
- “The Impending Social Revolution,” FST, Boston, 5 May. Reported in *BofL*, 11 May.
- “Love and Marriage from a Spiritual Standpoint,” FST, Boston, 12 May. Reported in *BofL*, 18 May; possibly by Spirit Margaret Fuller.
- “Reincarnation and Responsibility,” FST, Boston, 19 May. *BofL*, 18 May.
- [On Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward], Albany, NY, 22 June. Reported in *The Nationalist*, (July): 90.
- “The Future Religion and the Unity of Reforms,” Harwich Camp, 26 July. *BofL*, 25 May and 10 Aug.
- “Life: What Is It? What Is Its Purpose? Does It Continue after So-Called Death?” Harwich Camp, 28 July. Ibid.
- “Looking Backward and Forward,” FST, Boston, 29 Dec. *BofL*, 4 Jan. 1890.
1890. “The Gospel of Self-Help,” Winsted, CT, 26 Feb. *BofL*, 22 Feb.
- “The Home,” West Winsted, CT, 27 Feb. Ibid.
- “The Unity of Reforms and the Needs of the Hour,” Norwich, CT, 27 April. *BofL*, 10 May.
- “Some Conditions of Spirits in Certain Strata of Spiritual Life,” FST, Boston, 18 May. *BofL*, 24 May.
- “Marriage,” FST, Boston, 25 May. Reported in *The Sower*, 3 (July 1891): 277-82. Possibly by Spirit Margaret Fuller.
- “The Realms of Sleep and Dreams, and the Mystery of Hypnotism,” FST, Boston, 22 June. Reported in *BofL*, 22 June; cf. *The Sower*, n.s. 1 (March 1891): 143-51.
- “Sowing and Reaping,” FST, Boston, 29 June. *BofL*, 28 June.
- “Nationalism, Vegetarianism, and Marriage, from a Spiritual Outlook,” Parkland, PA, Sept.
- “Magnetism, Mesmerism, Clairvoyance, and Clairaudience.” FST Boston, 2 Nov. *BofL*, 6 Sept.
- “Personal, Domestic, and Public Duties,” FST, Boston, 9 Nov. *BofL*, 8 Nov.
- “Life,” FST, Boston, 23 Nov. *BofL*, 29 Nov; reported in *BofL*, 6 Dec.
- “The Cause and Cure of Disease from a Spiritual Standpoint,” Washington, D.C., Dec.
- “The Coming Commonwealth, or the Impending Industrial Revolution.” Washington, D.C., Dec. Reported in *Progressive Thinker*, 3 (17 Jan. 1891): 2.
- “Reëmbodiment, Its Reasonableness or Otherwise,” Washington, D.C., Dec.
- “Light on the Path,” Washington, D.C., Dec.
- “Love and Marriage Spiritually Considered,” [by Spirit Margaret Fuller.], Washington, D.C., 28 Dec. Reported in Washington, D.C., *Daily Post*, 29 Dec.; (*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from previous pg.*)

The Better Way, 8 (10 Jan. 1891): 5, and *Progressive Thinker*, 3 (17 Jan, 1891): 2.

1891. *Private Pages, for Public Enlightenment: Revealing Some Methods, Employed by Some Spiritualists, ‘To Keep the Cause Pure,’ and Block the Wheels of Progress.* [Boston:] C.M.A. Twitchell, 1891. 36pp.

“Love and Marriage Spiritually Considered,” [by Spirit Margaret Fuller.], Washington, D.C., 28 Dec. Reported in Washing-

“Resources of the Spirit” / “Possibilities of the Spirit,” FST, Boston, 4 Jan. *BofL*, 3 and 10 Jan.

“Ireland and the Irish,” FST, Boston, 11 Jan. *BofL*, 10 Jan.

“Righteousness: What It Is and How Attained.” FST, Boston, 18 Jan. Reported in *BofL*, 24 Jan.

[Thomas Paine celebration], FST, Boston, 25 Jan. *BofL*, 24 Jan.

“What Then?” FST, Boston, 8 March (afternoon). *BofL*, 7 March.

“The Relation of Roman Catholicism to the Republic,” Brockton, MA, 8 March (evening). Ibid.

“The Ethics of Truth,” FST, Boston, 15 March (afternoon). *BofL*, 21 March.

“The Mysteries of Mediumship,” Waltham, MA, 15 March(evening). Ibid.

“The Grandeur of Selfhood,” FST, Boston, 22 March. Reported in *BofL*, 4 Apr. [Anniversary of the Advent of Modern Spiritualism], FST, Boston, 29 March. Reported in *BofL*, 11 Apr. and (at greater length) 2 May.

“Marriage and Divorce,” Willimantic, CT, 26 Apr. *The Better Way*; 30 May.

“The Ministry of Spirits,” FST, Boston, 3 May. *BofL*, 2 May; reported *BofL*, 9 May.

“The Search after Truth,” FST, Boston, 10 May. *BofL*, 10 May.

“Joan of Arc,” FST, Boston, 24 May. Also Washington, D.C., 24 Apr. 1892, and Albany, 23 Apr. 1893. *BofL*, 23 May 1891; *Progressive Thinker*, 21 May 1892 and 6 May 1893.

“Personal Experiences in Spiritual Progress,” FST, Boston, 24 May. *BofL*, 23 May.

“Love, Marriage, and Divorce,” FST, Boston, 7 June. Reported in *BofL*, 13 June.

“The Nature, Needs, and Manifestations of Love,” [by Spirit Margaret Fuller], FST, Boston, 21 June. Reported in *BofL* 27 June.

“The Aspects of Spiritualism in General, and of the Fraternity Work in Particular,” FST, Boston, 28 June. Reported in *BofL*, 4 July.

“To the Priests and People. Address and Confession of Spirit Henry S. Lake, Formerly Roman Catholic Priest of New York City. His Apostasy in 1847 [i.e., 1874] and Subsequent Death,” 26 Sept. Reported in *Progressive Thinker*, 26 Sept.

“Planetary Influence,” 4 Oct. *BofL*, 10 Oct.

“The Law of Human Interdependence,” FST, Boston, 11 Oct. [Preceded by readings from Emerson.] *BofL*, 10 Oct.

“Political Duties,” FST, Boston, 1 Nov. *BofL*, 7 Nov.

“Why Do Not Spiritualists More Generally Organize or Unite?” FST, Boston, 15 Nov. Reported in *BofL*, 21 Nov.

“Liberty, Love, and Law” [by Spirit Margaret Fuller], FST, 13 Dec. Reported in *BofL*, 19 Dec.

“The Ideal Spiritual Temple,” FST, Boston, 20 Dec. *BofL*, 26 Dec.; reported in *BofL*, 2 Jan. 1892.

1892. [Thomas Paine celebration], FST, Boston, 31 Jan. *BofL* 6 Feb.

“The Problem of Life,” FST [?], Boston, 20 March. *BofL*, 2 Apr.

“Spiritism, Spiritualism, and Spirituality,” Washington, D.C., Apr. *Progressive Thinker*, 21 May.

“Unity and Diversity in Spiritualism,” Washington, D.C., Apr. Ibid.

“The Lesson of the Civil War,” FST, Boston, 29 May. Reported in *BofL*, 11 June.

“The Discerning of Spirits,” FST, Boston, 5 June. *BofL*, 11 June.

“Individuals and Institutions,” FST, Boston, 19 June. *BofL*, 18 June.

“Conscience and Compromise,” FST, Boston, c. 19 June. *Progressive Thinker*, 23 July.

“Fidelity,” FST, Boston, 26 June. Ibid.

“Not Understood,” Washington, D.C., Sept. Reported in *BofL*, 29 Oct.

[Farewell Sermon], FST, Boston, 31 Oct. Reported in *Light of Truth*, 12 Nov.

1893. “Nationalism and Spiritualism,” Albany, 8 Jan. *BofL*, 14 Jan.

[Thomas Paine celebration], Albany, 29 Jan. *BofL*, 11 Feb.

“The Mission and Use of Spiritualism,” Cleveland, 7 May. *BofL*, 13 and 20 May.

“My Mediumistic Experience and Its Lessons,” Cleveland, 14 May. *BofL*, 20 May.

“Spiritualism,” Canal Dover, OH, 18 May. *BofL*, 3 June.

“The To-morrow of Death,” Lake Brady Camp meeting, 25 June. *BofL*, 24 June.

“Spiritualism and Its Republicanism,” Cassadaga [?], 10 Aug. *Progressive Thinker*, 26 Aug.

“The True Church,” Cleveland, 10 Sept. *BofL*, 23 Sept.

“What Is Living?” Cleveland, 17 Sept. Ibid.

[Address to 1200 Workingmen on behalf of the Populist Party], Cleveland, 21 Oct. *BofL*, 4 Nov.

1894. “Spiritualism in Its Relation to the World’s Ills,” Cassadaga, 19 Aug. Reported in *BofL*, 8 Sept.

1896. “What Relation Does Spiritualism Bear to the Progress Moral and Spiritual of the Race?” Cassadaga, 25 July. Reported in *BofL*, 8 Aug.

“Theories and Facts,” Cassadaga, 30 July. *BofL*, 8 Aug.

1898. “A Call to Olympia,” *Food, Home and Garden*, 2 (Oct.): 138.

1900. *Poems of Justice: Inscribed to Eugene V. Debs, and the Social Democrats of the World.* Cleveland: Charles Lezius, 1900. 21pp.

1904. *How God Tests Souls on the Moral Firing-Line.* Chicago: Light of Truth, 1904. 13pp.

The Spiritual Philosophy; What It Is and What It Is Not. Chicago: Light of Truth, 1904.

Death and the After Life. Chicago: Light of Truth, 1904.

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from previous pg.*)

“The Way and the Life,” Olympia, WA, 18 Sept. *Washington Standard* (Olympia), 16 Sept.

“Woman’s Right to Govern,” Olympia, WA, Nov. Reported in *The World’s Advance Thought* (Portland, OR), 16 (Nov. 1904); 140.

1905. “Diversity of Gifts,” Olympia, WA, 29 Jan. *Washington Standard* (Olympia), 27 Jan.

“Soul Attainment,” Olympia, WA, 21 Feb. *Morning Olympian*, 21 Feb.

1908. “Religion and Science,” Olympia, WA, 2 Feb. Reported in *Olympia Daily Record*, 4 and 6 Feb.

1909. *The Flag of All Nations Where Woman Is Known. Commemorative of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, July 1909, Seattle, Wash.* Olympia, WA, Privately Printed.

1910. “The Desert Land of the Soul,” Olympia, WA. Reported in *The World’s Advance Thought*, 24 (1910-1911): 11.

“Equal Suffrage, and the Church,” Olympia, WA. Ibid.

Notes

1. Lake, “Psychic Experiences. Leaves from a Life,” *Light of Truth*, 26 (31 March 1900): 9. Mrs. Lake, as a child, responds to a dream-vision of her adult self addressing a multitude.
2. Lydia R. Chase, *Biographical Sketch of Mrs. H. S. Lake, Speaker at the First Spiritual Temple, Boston* (Boston: The Spiritual Fraternity, 1891), 4-6; “Rev. Mrs. Genevra Lake Interprets Parables,” Olympia (WA) *Daily Recorder*, 4 February, 1908; Dee Morris, “The First Pastor of the Temple,” in *Boston in the Golden Age of Spiritualism, Séances, Mediums and Immortality* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2014), unpaginated; “Priest and Poetess. The Strange Dramatic History of Rev. Father Lake,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 October 1876, 5.
3. *New York Times*, 22 December 1884 (obituary for George Graham Lake); *New York World*, 22 September 1869 (ordination); *Sadlier’s Catholic Directory . . . for . . . 1872* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier, 1872), 80 (Louvain); Charles Sotheran, “The Lake Library,” *The Bookmart*, 3 (February 1886): 269-70; *Catalogue of the Lake Library* (New York: George A. Leavitt, 1886); Lake, “Psychic Experiences,” *Light of Truth*, 21 April 1900, 2 (Macbeth); Chase, *Biographical Sketch*, 6 (elocution); “The Late Henry S. Lake,” *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel*, 22 (1 January 1876): 3 (elocution).
4. *Petaluma Weekly Argus*, 9 March 1877), 5 (“Atlantic States”); “Priest and Poetess,” 5 (temperance); *The (New York) Christian Leader*, 27 December 1873, 8 (public schools); *The (New York) Sun*, 18 February 1874, 1 (Union Square). Regarding the “scandal” it should be noted that most people commenting at this time, innocently or otherwise, very much underestimated Miss Chafa’s age.
5. “Love and Duty. The Romantic Story of Father Lake and Miss Sara Genevra Chafa,” *Buffalo Courier*, 7 January 1876, 4.
6. “The Late Henry S. Lake,” *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel*, 1 January 1876, 3 (sale of *Enterprise*); *Handbook and Directory of . . . Santa Cruz* (San Francisco: L. L. Paulson, 1875). 208 (“Farmer”); “The Life of Father Lake,” *The (New York) Sun*, 3 January 1876, 1; Chase, *Biographical Sketch*, 9 (“searching”).
7. See Helen Giffen, Carolyn Swift, and Judith Steen, “The Life of Georgiana Bruce Kirby,” in *Georgiana, Feminist Reformer of the West: The Journal of Georgiana Bruce Kirby, 1852-1860* (Santa Cruz: Santa Cruz Historical Trust, 1987), 1-58; JoAnn Levy, *Unsettling the West: Eliza Farnham and Georgiana Bruce Kirby in Frontier California* (Santa Clara and Berkeley: Santa Clara University, 2004); Julia Schlesinger, *Workers in the Vineyard: A Review of the Progress of Spiritualism . . .* (San Francisco, 1896), 24 (Farnham in San Francisco); Chase, *Biographical Sketch*, 9 (diary).
8. For particular lectures, see the “Chronological List” above. For Peck and

the text of the contract, see note 9.

9. See 155 Mass. 479, 30 N.E. 74 (1892); Joseph R. Long, comp., *Illustrative Cases on the Law of Domestic Relations* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1915), 1. Mrs. Lake’s intention in the Portland agreement was preemptively to moot the formal divorce process, which at the time typically put the woman at a disadvantage; she felt that contract should be as adequate a recourse in marriage as in other ordinary dealings, such as real estate transactions. For Lake’s sarcastic view of the male-authored divorce laws, see “Woman’s Right to Govern” (1904). For reference to her committee work, see “Report of the Fifth Annual Congress of the National Liberal League,” *Truth Seeker*, 15 October 1881, 660-61.

10. “What Shall We Do to Be Saved?” (1878), 1. In this sermon, first delivered in April 1877, Lake commended the work of Felix Adler, who founded the Ethical Culture Society the year before, inspired by the Free Religious movement and the examples of Emerson and Margaret Fuller. According to the *Biographical Sketch* by Lydia Chase, Lake “usually succeeded in uniting the spiritual and material elements in the many Leagues she organized in those days” (11).

11. Clinton became the headquarters of the durable Mississippi Valley Spiritualist Association and the home of their allied camp at Mount Pleasant Park. See Ronald L. Koch, *Introduction to Modern Spiritualism* (Lulu.com, 2006), 22. On Peck, see *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, 26 July 1879, 6, and “W. F. Peck in His Own Defense,” *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, 13 September 1879, 6. Once again, and not for the last time, Mrs. Lake was negotiating her way through marital scandal.

12. For the Ingersoll quotation, see *Equal Rights in Religion: Report of the Centennial Congress of Liberals and Organization of the National Liberal League* (Boston: National Liberal League, 1876), 133. See *Truth Seeker*, 10 April 1880, 240 (list of lectures). On the notorious Bennett case, see Lake, “Liberal Labor in Iowa,” *Truth Seeker*, 1 May 1880, 279, and the notice of her Maquoketa lecture in the same journal, 5 June 1880, 364. Lake’s comment about God being “no longer dear” is in *Truth Seeker*, 2 July 1881, 422.

13. Mrs. Lake’s amicable letter of resignation appears in *Truth Seeker*, 20 (September 1884): 597. A few months earlier she had pointed out that Spiritualists, like people in general, are divided into religious and agnostic camps, and each bases their respective positions on the reports of those spirits to whom they are drawn and with whom they are conversant. Each sort, in other words, attracts spirits congenial to the medium’s own ideas and beliefs. This concession makes statements arising from “the other side” subjectively determined by and expressive of the medium herself. “We should recognize . . . that spirits are only persons, translated to another plane of existence, whose opinions, as presented through mediums, should be carefully weighed, criticized, and received with the same deference and consideration which we accord to persons on this plane when speaking upon subjects with which they may be supposed to be familiar.” The implication is that religious Spiritualists use the ideology and terminology of their party to vindicate the ways of God, while agnostic Spiritualists like Mrs. Lake use them in a broadly metaphorical way to express themselves. Thus no particular augmented authority attaches to the ghost, who speaks always in some relation to the mind of the medium. Lake, “Two Kinds of Spiritualists,” *Truth Seeker*, 9 (February 1884): 87.

14. *Articles of Association of the Working Union of Progressive Spiritualists* (Boston: C.M.A. Twitchell, 1883). *Banner of Light*, 2 June 1888, 8; cf. *The Better Way*, 25 August 1885, 5. Historical information on the First Spiritual Temple may be found on its web site, <http://www.fst.org/msayer.htm>.

15. In addition to sources cited in note 9 above, see “Peck v. Peck,” *North-eastern Reporter*, 30 (March 18-June 3, 1892): 74, and “One Way to Marry. Queer Contract of Prominent Spiritualists. They Agreed to Separate When Mutual Affection Ceased. Mrs. Lake Left William Peck in Compliance with Spirits’ Commands,” *Boston Globe*, 22 April 1891. Brownson, “Spiritism and Spiritists,” *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson* (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 9:346. Naomi R. Cahn, “Faithless Wives and Lazy Husbands: Gender Norms in Nineteenth-Century Divorce Law,” *U. Ill. Law Review* 651 (2002), 17, n. 50.
(*cont. on following pg.*)

Mrs. Lake and Margaret Fuller on “The Home” (*cont. from previous pg.*)

16. For additional discussion of the lecture on “The Home,” see von Frank and Cole: “Margaret Fuller: How She Haunts,” *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture*, 64.1 (2018): 102-07. Jane D. Churchill, “In Defense of Mrs. H. S. Lake,” *The Sower*, n.s. 1 (June 1891): 262-63. *Banner of Light*, 19 Dec. 1891, 8 (“crucified”).

17. Gilman, *What Diantha Did* (New York: Charleton, 1910), 105.

18. Lake, *Poems of Justice: Inscribed to Eugene V. Debs, and the Social Democrats of the World* (Cleveland: Charles Lezius, 1900. Gilman, *The Home* (New York: Charlton, 1903). Both however responded positively to Fuller: when in 1887 Gilman committed to a course of reading on the woman question, the text she began with was *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, which she pronounced “Fine!” (*The Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, ed. Denise D. Knight (Charlottesville: U P of Virginia, 1994): 371.

19. Following Mrs. Lake’s lectures in November and December 1892, it was reported that “the cause of spiritualism never looked more favorable in Albany than at present” (*Banner of Light*, 14 Jan. 1893, 5); her lectures in the western part of the state were the occasion for the founding of the Buffalo Society of Spiritualists (*Progressive Thinker*, 29 Apr. 1893, 5). That spring she became the resident speaker of the newly formed Cleveland Spiritualist Alliance, as reported in the *Banner of Light*. For Shaw’s remark, see *Banner of Light*, 8 Sept. 1894, 2, and for Foster, *Banner of Light*, 19 Oct. 1895, 9. Plans for Lake’s Northwest Vegetarian Colony were discussed in *Food, Home and Garden*, 2 (Oct. 1898): 138, 2 (Nov. 1898): 157, and 3 (Jan. 1899), 6.

Reviews

(*cont. from pg. 9*)

tell that she was marvellous and deserved devotion. Higginson, probably partly out of projection, perceived her as someone primed for action and not merely intellect. Her greatest work was the life that she led.

Popova finishes Chapter 12 with the *Elizabeth* off the coast of New Jersey: “The novice captain of the *Elizabeth* could do none of it. But when the ship breezed past Bermuda on the wings of unexpected winds, he took heart that nature had compensated for his mathematical inadequacy and chance had interceded in his favor. When the distant pulsar of the New Jersey lighthouse appeared on the horizon, it seemed like nothing less than divine intervention. He ordered the passengers to pack their trunks and ready their salutes.” And then we start the next chapter with Darwin. That kept me glued to the book as I was waiting for Popova to pick the Margaret thread back up again.

In the succeeding chapters Fuller is regularly referred to, either as a temporal marker or an inspiration to someone, but I experienced this great tension as to when the thread would be picked back up. The Fuller thread is picked back up in Chapter 29 after we witnesses Rachel Carson’s ashes being scattered. The wreck of the *Elizabeth* brings together many of the other themes: “Another foolish fancy: the losing game of what-ifs that bedevils all hindsight. For instance: When the *Elizabeth* plummets to the howling infinite, the United States Nautical Almanac is still five years into the future. Would the ship have fared differently if it had been navigated by Maria Mitchell’s celestial computations?”

Popova reflects on reactions to Fuller’s death and tells us about her own trip to Mt. Auburn Cemetery: “I go searching for Fuller’s tombstone one wet autumn morning a million and a half hours after her death, listening to the sonata of raindrops on the

20. *The Vegetarian Magazine*, 4 (June 1900): 18 (“a life of simplicity”). For Markham’s letter see <http://primarilywashington.org/items/show/25969>. Brief notices of Mrs. Lake’s sermons to her Olympia congregation (the Unity Church) may be found in the *Morning Olympian* (1899-1900; 1905-1906, 1908-1910, 1913), the *Oregonian* (1902, 1912-1913), the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* (1902); and the *Olympian Daily Recorder* (1908, 1910, 1912, 1914).

21. For the 1905 customs raid, see the *Tacoma Daily News*, 12 May; *The Morning Olympian*, 13 May; and *The Olympia Daily Recorder*, 27 June (“mistake”). *World’s Advance Thought* 23 (Nov. 1909): 56 (“Peace Mothers Day”); *ibid.*, 24 (Feb. 1911): 40 (“late Suffrage Campaign”). “First Jury of Women Is Called at Olympia,” *Tacoma Times*, 10 Dec. 1910; *Washington Standard* (Olympia), 16 Dec. 1910, 3; *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 14 Dec., 1910 (“hats”).

22. “Spiritualist Says Body of Dead Man Must Be Left Alone,” *Olympia Daily Recorder*, 23 Aug. 1920, 1; “Calls in Vain for Dead Husband to Comfort Her Aged and Alone in World,” *Olympia Daily Recorder*, 24 Aug. 1920. Probably Lake and Cutter were not married. The 1920 census lists her as the 72-year-old widowed head of household and him as a 55-year-old single man and a “boarder” at their shared address. The first of the newspaper articles referenced above gives Mrs. Lake’s age as 83, a wildly inaccurate guess that may help to account for the medical diagnosis.

23. Copies of the wills, from the originals deposited in the Washington State Historical Society, were provided to me by Shanna Stevenson, whom I would like to thank for her interest in this project and for her assistance, particularly in documenting the Olympia period.

pond as I weave through the maze of paths.” This illustrates the problem of people being poetic, which I can appreciate, really. Nonetheless I felt compelled to do the math and I am sorry to report that Popova will not be at Mt. Auburn until 2021. I guess she was rounding up to the nearest half million.

Popova’s visit to Mt. Auburn is the last event in the book. It is followed by a kind of lyrical reflection which begins, “Meanwhile, someplace in the world, somebody is making love and another a poem. Elsewhere in the universe, a star manyfold the mass of our third-rate sun is living out its final moments in a wild spin before collapsing into a black hole.”

I thought that my sense of the predominance of Fuller in *Figuring* might have been coming from my own preoccupation, but looking back I think that Fuller is a strong contender for the most important figure in *Figuring*. I suspect that the more learned members of the Margaret Fuller Society will find other things to take exception to even more grave than confusing a battalion with a regiment (although that is a really big deal), but I think *Figuring* should probably not be evaluated as historical scholarship. What it really gets right is the central importance of Margaret Fuller.

In a final irresistible note, I suspect that everyone will have one or more brilliant woman who they think should have been included. My pick is Grace Hopper, whom I think does not get enough attention from you literary types, but that is another story. If she doesn’t ring a bell even before you get *Figuring*, read *Grace Hopper: Admiral of the Cyber Sea* by Kathleen Broome Williams. At the age of 34, Hopper left her job as a mathematics professor at Vassar to enter the Navy where she worked on one of the earliest modern computers. She never became a sea captain, but she did become an admiral.

Peter J. Reilly CPA