



Conversations

The Newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society

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Fall 2019

Translating Fuller: The Play of Interpretation

Fritz Fleischmann, Babson College

Paper presented to the Fuller Society panel on “Margaret Fuller’s Languages” at ALA in Boston, May 25, 2019.

Translation was important to Margaret Fuller. Colleen Glenney Boggs, in her book *Transnationalism and American Literature*, places her among those nineteenth-century American writers who “embraced translation as a model for their own literary creativity” (Boggs 6). Translation, Boggs writes, “enabled Fuller to define cultural identity as a model of personhood that depends on a dialogue with others in a nation whose culture emerges in global context” (92). In *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, Boggs finds evidence for what she sees as Fuller’s strategic use of translation:

When in 1843 Fuller experienced the Illinois frontier as a culturally contested space where race, ethnicity, and class threatened to foreclose dialogic relations among native, immigrant, and Anglo-American people, she drew on translation to give multilingualism full play. By insistently giving prominence to the translations she incorporated into her writing, Fuller developed a strategy of fragmentation and suture that brings into being an American literature that is domestically and globally transnational—or, we might say, translational. (92)

The title of my talk today is “Translating Fuller: The Play of Interpretation.” As we all know, “Fuller ‘requires interpretation,’ sets it as a task for herself and her readers, as the task to see with clearer eyes and to say with better words” (Fleischmann 2). Fuller also saw this as the goal for her translations from other languages. What Fuller, in the preface to her translation of Goethe’s *Tasso*, called the “rendering of the spirit” “shifts the emphasis away from a translation to the translator’s interpretation of the work,” as Renate Delphendahl put it (Delphendahl 81).

Translating Fuller’s own writing into another language opens up some of the same questions Fuller herself raised about the work of translation. Christina Zwarg has argued that, for Fuller, “translation became less a conquest of meaning, a mastery that subdues and potentially annihilates an alien set of values ... than it is about the proliferation of meaning, of everything that might be found when new values open to view within both languages” (“Storied Facts” 133). “For Fuller,” she (Tina) has also said, “one of our earliest and greatest comparativists, the task of the translator became the operative model for the task of reading and interpreting throughout her career. Her model of reading is highly interactive, forming a double strategy whereby one nimbly shifts between frames of reference” (“Trauma” 66).

Translating is reading, of course: it is in fact “the most intimate act of reading,” as Gayatri Spivak once said (quoted in Brodzki 215). So what is the “task of the translator” when it comes to reading Margaret Fuller?

I never expected having to face that question myself. But last year, I was contacted by a translator in Germany, who had just landed a publisher’s contract for *Summer on the Lakes*, for the first-ever translation of a Fuller text into German. He wanted me to write a short essay for his book, a non-academic piece to introduce Fuller to a German audience of educated readers. A few months later, while I was working on that essay, which came in at about 3,400 words, I realized that it might be helpful to have a look at the translation itself, so I asked to see it. And as soon as I read it, I realized that we had a problem. Although the people in this room may no longer find it so, Fuller’s work “is challenging, in both senses of ‘difficult’ and ‘thought-provoking,’ and it continues to give readers pause” (Fleischmann 2). The translator, a highly skilled professional with a Ph.D. in comparative literature, but not a Fuller scholar, had found it challenging to make sense of the many instances in which Fuller’s language is ambiguous, allusive, embedded in intellectual contexts and usages that sound foreign and anach-

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The Newsletter of The Margaret Fuller Society

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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.

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Society Members,

The Fall 2019 issue of *Conversations* is finally here! You may notice some changes to this issue. Since its launch in Fall of 2017, *Conversations* has become firmly established, and with that comes growth and transition. Anticipating the continued vitality of this publication, we have made some transitions in terms of layout and staff as we look forward to continuing to expand the scope of our readership, contributors, and content.

It is my pleasure to announce that, beginning this issue, **Mollie Barnes** will assume the role of **Layout and Design Editor** for *Conversations*. You may notice some changes in the appearance of this issue; Mollie has been hard at work converting our layout and design over to a more user-friendly platform, which necessitated a "new and improved" look and design consistent with previous issues. I think you'll agree that Mollie has come up with an appealing design and layout, and I look forward to working with her on future issues. Thank you, Mollie, for your generosity in giving your time and energy to this project.

The theme of "transition," might very well be a fitting one for this issue of *Conversations* as Society members mark the passing of **Joan von Mehren**, **Annette Kolodny**, and **Dorothy Emerson**, all three of whom we lost in 2019. You will find remembrances of all three in "Tributes." In addition to comments and tributes to **Joan von Mehren**, many of which were shared on the Society's Listserv, **Phyllis Cole** and **Jessica Lipnack** offer an extended tribute to Dorothy Emerson, while **Charlene Avallone** reflects on Annette Kolodny's legacy.

Of particular highlight in this issue is our feature article by **Fritz Fleischmann**, "Translating Fuller: The Play of Interpretation," a paper he delivered at ALA in Boston this past spring (2019). Here, Fritz reflects on his experience of working to edit a German language version of *Summer on the Lakes*, the first-ever translation of Fuller into German. "Translating Fuller's own writing into another language," he writes, "opens up some of the same questions Fuller herself raised about the work of translation."

Among our regular features, make sure to check out "Reviews," for **Adrienne Perry**'s review of Angela Reich's debut novel, *Shipwreck of Hopes* (2018). For this issue, "Graduate Students Voices" has been re-named "Undergraduate Student Voices." Here, Amanda Smith, and undergraduate at the University of South Carolina Beaufort, reflects on the experience of presenting her paper on Fuller's dispatches for the *Tribune* and "feminizing the land" at the Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference (November 2018).

Once again, I'd like to thank all of you for your continued support—whether in the form of readership, contributions, or circulating and promoting *Conversations* beyond the Society—without which all of this would not be possible. And, please – keep on sending in your ideas and submissions! We welcome a wide variety of submissions, including personal essays, news items, academic and non-academic pieces, book reviews, creative work, and any other Fuller-related notes. We'd love to hear from you...

Warmly,

Katie Kornacki

Editor, *Conversations*

Letter from the President

Dear Fuller friends,

We have some exciting news: the Margaret Fuller Society will soon acquire a formal archive at the Walden Woods Project's Thoreau Institute Library in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Last summer, Jeffrey Cramer, the curator of collections there and a professed admirer of Past-President **Phyllis Cole** and Second Vice-President **Jana Argersinger's** *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism*, extended an invitation to consider the Library as a repository for Fuller Society materials. While the Institute is centered on Thoreau, Jeffrey thought that the time had arrived "for a place where there is a focus on the life and works of Fuller" and that the Library was that place. After a lively, extended email discussion, and consultation with Society founders, **Bell Chevigny** and **Larry Reynolds**, the **Executive Council** agreed.

Jeffrey had far more in mind than just to preserve institutional memory for the Society. His offer proposed that the Library:

would hold any and all papers relating to the Fuller Society—its creation, its minutes, correspondence, etc.—as well as work with the Fuller Society to encourage members and scholars to deposit papers, books, artifacts, and other works relating to Fuller and her family to the Fuller Society Archives housed here. A finding aid for the collection would be created and placed on the Fuller Society Archives page on our website. That page, and our Margaret Fuller page (in process now), can also be used as a place where students and scholars can publish their work digitally. We would hope that what we create digitally, as well as what we hold in our collections, will make the Thoreau Institute Library a vital resource for Fuller studies. To that end, we would work towards filling any gaps in our collections, with recommendations from the Fuller Society, so that our works by and about Margaret Fuller are as comprehensive as possible.

The **Executive Council's** careful deliberation of this offer raised considerations of the Fuller Society's stated mission, the construction of Fuller's image, accessibility of the archive, the potential for expansion of materials in the collection, and the promise for growth into a center for the study of Fuller in the company of other women writers as well as the male Transcendentalists. Several factors weighed in the decision that the Thoreau Institute Library offers the Society a unique opportunity: the appeal of the Institute to both the general public and scholars; its teaching mission, which includes guided tours and talks, the hosting of school field-trips, and a lesson available through Skype; the availability of personnel to compile contributions to the Society archive and library collection and to maintain a Fuller website; the curator's openness to dialogue and to the input of Society members in building the Library's holdings.

The Fuller Society Archive will join the archives of the Thoreau Society and the Emerson Society now held at the Library. You can find out more about the Library and explore its current holdings that address Fuller at <https://www.walden.org/what-we-do/library/>.

This project is still very much in process. We are currently awaiting further details and documents relating to the establishment of the archive. Watch the listserv for further information as it becomes available.

Thanks to the officers of the Executive Council—**Jana Argersinger**, **Noelle Baker**, **Mollie Barnes**, **Michael Barnett**, **Phyllis Cole**, **Cindy Damon-Bach**, **Sonia Di Loreto**, **Leslie Eckel**, **Fritz Fleischmann**, **Katie Kornacki**, **Denise Kohn**, and **Megan Marshall**—for giving shape to a guiding vision of what we might hope the Library's collection can become, the sort of "vital resource for Fuller studies" that Jeffrey Cramer began to imagine.

Aloha,

Charlene Avallone
President, Margaret Fuller Society

Recent News

International Margaret Fuller Conference Planning Committee Members Sought

This year, we begin organizing the **next international conference** for the Margaret Fuller Society, entitled “Journaling for Justice.” We encourage members who would like to participate in planning—determining and finalizing our location, writing our call for papers—to join the **planning committee**. If you are interested, please email **Mollie Barnes** at mbarnes2@uscb.edu so that we can include you in our discussions, beginning this spring and early summer.

The Barbara L. Packer Fellowship

The **Barbara L. Packer Fellowship** is named for **Barbara Lee Packer** (1947–2010), who taught with great distinction for thirty years in the UCLA English department. Her publications, most notably *Emerson's Fall* (1982) and her lengthy essay on the Transcendentalist movement in the *Cambridge History of American Literature* (1995), reprinted as *The Transcendentalists by the University of Georgia Press* (2007), continue to be esteemed by students of Emerson and of the American Renaissance generally. She is remembered as an inspiring teacher, a lively and learned writer, and a helpful friend to all scholars in her field—in short, as a consummate professional whose undisguised delight in literature was the secret of a long-sustained success. In naming the Fellowship for her, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society offers her as a model worthy of the attention and emulation of scholars newly entering the field. The Barbara L. Packer Fellowship is awarded to individuals engaged in scholarly research and writing related to the Transcendentalists in general, and most especially to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. Ph.D. candidates, pre-tenure faculty, and independent scholars are eligible to apply.

The application deadline is **January 15, 2020**. Additional information, along with application materials, can be found on the AAS website: <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/short-termfellowship>.

New Leadership Roles

We are pleased that **Michael Barnett** has assumed his new leadership role as the Margaret Fuller Society's **Public Commemoration Liaison**.

Conversations Reviewers

Last year, we began 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.

Fuller in the Classroom Pieces

How have you incorporated Fuller in your teaching? How has her work inspired your students? How has she re-shaped your course and assignment design? We invite members to write pieces for our ongoing **Margaret Fuller in the Classroom** series in **Conversations**. If you have pieces—or ideas for pieces—you'd like to share with our society, please email **Katie Kornacki** at kkornacki@caldwell.edu. Make sure to include “newsletter” in the subject line.

SSAWW Prize

Last summer, the editors of *Legacy* awarded Fuller Society member Mollie Barnes the 2018 **Society for the Study of American Women Writers Best Paper Award** for her work on Charlotte Forten. “Teaching to Resist, Teaching to Recover: Abolitionist Bodies in Charlotte Forten's Sea Islands Journals and Newspaper Articles” will appear in *Legacy's* Fall 2020 issue. Mollie's essay studies Forten's revision strategies in the context of the *Liberator* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, where she published journal entries from her time at the Penn School in Beaufort County, South Carolina.

Members' Announcements

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

Translating Fuller: The Play of Interpretation

(cont. from page 1)

ronistic to twenty-first-century readers, even in English. To decide what Fuller “meant to say” would have required familiarity with the larger corpus of her work, but also with the fact that some things are left deliberately open – Fuller’s way of putting hermeneutic pressure on the reader. Since the translator is a reader in the first place, that pressure is felt every step of the way.

Derrida, quoted in Tina’s book, describes translation as “a productive writing called forth by the original text,” which “transforms the original as well as the translation” (quoted in Zwarg, *Feminist Conversations* 59; 66 n.18). Derrida’s language hints at a crucial fact: translation is where the rubber hits the road; it requires moving from interpretation to decision, from speculation to taking a leap, often into uncertainty. What did Fuller mean to say? Did she know what she meant to say? Does that even matter? Texts have a life of their own, both in their own time and at the time of reception. What was the imagined audience in 1844? What is it now? What is the “cognitive interest” (Habermas) in reading Fuller today? How does one present this writer to a country in which few have ever heard of her?

Tina Zwarg’s *Feminist Conversations*, published in 1995, made a persuasive case that Fuller’s interest in translation is directed at “dialogue and conversation” (66), not at mastery or imperial usurpation of the foreign text. Translating Fuller into German today can hardly be an act of imperial usurpation, but it still needs to be seen in its various cultural contexts. Let me point out a few of these.

Commercial context: Corso Verlag (our publisher) has a high-end series of travel books that caters to the German lust for exploring supposedly exotic or hermetic places.

Market for translations: “only 633 newly translated works of fiction and poetry [were] published in English in the US in 2016, less than 1 percent of the estimated 300,000 new books published per year,” whereas “in 2016, 9,882 new translations were published in Germany, 13.6 percent of new releases” (Page-Fort).

Political and cultural context: publishing anything about the United States is inevitably seen in the context of German-American relations since WWII, within the complex love-hate relationship between the two countries. At this particular moment, when the

German love affair with Obama has been replaced by dismay over his successor, age-old questions, going all the way back to Goethe, are raising their head again: are the United States a social and political model to emulate? Is the promise of the New World still a promise?

As I said: *you have to make a decision*. Along the way, I discovered that the translator had decided to include only about 75 percent of Fuller’s text, omitting large sections, such as Fuller’s review of Kerner’s biography of the Seeress of Prevorst in Chapter 4—sections that he felt would be of no interest to a German audience: extraneous and redundant matter in a travel book whose job was to transport its readers to a faraway location. This view, as you may remember, is in line with some of the early responses to Fuller’s book when it was first published in 1844. Even as late as 1970, Perry Miller had scathing things to say about it: “reports on scenes alternate with random associations or with insertions of brazenly extraneous matter, especially with *ad hoc* poetic flights. Thus, the real theme of the narrative – the trip itself – becomes miserably confused; the effect on a modern reader is that of an intolerable monstrosity” (Miller 116). To this audience, I do not need to point out that it wasn’t Fuller who was “miserably confused,” nor do I need to elaborate on the misogynistic resonance of Miller’s suggestion that Fuller had given birth, so to speak, to an “intolerable monstrosity.” The “brazenly extraneous matter” Miller complains about is the epistemological equivalent of what economists call “externalities,” those variables that don’t show up in a company’s balance sheet – such as the costs of pollution paid by the public. “Externalities” are all those things we do not permit ourselves to know or consider; our connection with them, their impact on us, remains disguised or invisible. In the case of *Summer on the Lakes*, as Jeffrey Bilbro has written, “Fuller juxtaposes seemingly disparate texts and stories and invites readers to discern the implicit connections or harmonies that unify them” (Bilbro 67). The looming contexts of disempowerment, exploitation, expropriation and extinction do not actually distract from the story of blooming prairies and picturesque waters, but frame their description in a meaningful and unforgettable way. And free association, of which Fuller was such a masterful practitioner, is exactly the holistic and ecological practice of seeing things together, the practice that brings externalities home.

So I had to make a decision myself: abandon ship, or try to rescue the ship. I decided on rescue and went through the translation line by line, correcting what I thought

were mistakes and misunderstandings. (The translator, to his credit, accepted all changes.) I also urged him to complete the rest of the book—which he declined, citing lack of time. So I got in touch with the publisher to plead Fuller’s case. He agreed to commission a new translation of the whole book, while also agreeing to let me have the final say on the book. So we started all over again. The second translator has a brilliant gift for language, and I loved her work. Nevertheless, I still detected a number of things that we agreed to correct, some misunderstandings as well as missed nuances in tone and register. Both translators, for instance, had tended to render Fuller far more “straight” than she was, eliminating her little jokes and sarcasms—for example, when she says in the Mariana story that the girl was left to the “mercies of a boarding-school” (51).

For the translator or, in my case, the editor of a translation, the very struggle of rendering Fuller’s text into German, a language she loved and knew well, creates a new relationship with the original. As Barbara Johnson once paraphrased Walter Benjamin, “an original becomes an original only through the process of translation” (quoted in Boggs 23). That learning process has allowed me to see Fuller’s method more clearly. She brings us along; we see with her eyes, but then she introduces other voices, through letters she received, through other readings, through stories she has heard, through imaginary dialogues. Based on the various perspectives and the variety of evidence she puts before us, she compels us to make up our own minds, make our own decisions.

Those decisions are further complicated by our own place in the hermeneutic circle: translation, like reading, is never done, and every new reading produces a new text. In addition, our reading is always shaped by our expectations and our previous reading experience. We all know that our students read the texts we assign them quite differently from the way we read them. A German audience raised on the western novels of the nineteenth-century writer Karl May will find Fuller’s Midwest both weirdly familiar and exotic. How will they read Fuller?

In the time I have left, I want to share with you two of the numerous decisions I had to make. **Here is the first:** in Chapter 6, Fuller uses the term “massacre” when she refers to an episode in the French and Indian War, during which the garrison of a British fort was killed by Indians. In his explanatory note in *The Essential Margaret Fuller* (1992), Jeffrey Steele also used the term “massacre” (Steele 448). I have long been suspicious of that word, which was routinely used when Indians killed whites (but not always the other way around). So while we kept that term in

the German rendering of Fuller’s text, I decided against using it in our own explanatory footnote.

My **second example** comes from the same chapter. Fuller describes her arrival at Mackinaw Island, where several Indian tribes are camping out in expectation of receiving “their annual payments from the American government” (105). Here is what she says:

As our boat came in, the captain had some rockets let off. This greatly excited the Indians, and their yells and wild cries resounded along the shore. Except for the momentary flash of the rockets, it was perfectly dark, and my sensations as I walked with a stranger to a strange hotel, through the midst of these shrieking savages, and heard the pants and snorts of the departing steamer, which carried away all my companions, were somewhat of the dismal sort; though it was pleasant, too, in the way that everything strange is; everything that breaks in upon the routine that so easily encrusts us. (105)

The first translator rendered “these shrieking savages” literally, but the second turned them into “shrieking Indians.” Hmmm. How should we deal with a term like “savage” in 2019? It so happens that both “savage” and “wild” become the same in German: “wild.” In English, “savage” carries all the historical connotations of the white settlers’ fears, of Indian-hating, of genocide. “Wild” or “wild,” in both English and German, carries some of the same negative or exotic connotations, but also positive ones: wildflowers, wilderness, wild-caught salmon, and so forth. In German, the noun “das Wild” (capital W) is also the word for venison, for the category of four-footed terrestrial animals hunted for food, supposedly unaffected by human agency. In this sense, “wild” can be used as a synonym for “natural.” The savage, or the wild man, by this association becomes the Other, the non-Self, the not-fully-human, the creature aligned with nature or wilderness to whom or to which we don’t have to feel an ethical obligation. Or do we? Fuller, of course, plays with us. Yes, she thinks that the Indians are human. But she wants us to arrive at that conclusion, to make that decision, ourselves. As her German editor, I made the decision to let her have those “shrieking savages” instead of “shrieking Indians.” They will be shrieking in print before long.

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Fritz Fleischmann is the William R. Dill Governance Professor at Babson College, where he co-hosted (with Bell Gale Chevigny) the first single-author conference on Margaret Fuller in 1995. The author, editor, or co-editor of six books and the author of numerous articles about American literature and culture, he also writes about entrepreneurship, college management, organic farming, and environmental ethics.



Illustration by Sarah Freeman Clarke; Wikimedia Commons

Reviews

Shipwreck of Hopes

Angela Reich

Amazon, 2018, 312 pp.

A small map of Fire Island circa 1850 rests at the end of Angela Reich's debut novel, *Shipwreck of Hopes*. Rendered by hand, the map's thin lines carefully trace Long Island and its surrounding waters. Compared to the solidity of Babylon, Islip, and Patchogue to the north, on the map Fire Island looks like a slim, vulnerable branch floating between the Atlantic Ocean and the Great South Bay. Dots along this branch mark locations central to Reich's novel: the original Fire Island light, an inn, the home of the Oaks, and the site where the *Elizabeth* ran into a sandbar. Given the intensity of the novel's final chapters, the map offers a poignant, almost settled coda to a dynamic story that toggles between two continents, two families, and the fortunes of two women whose lives tragically intersect off the coast of this small barrier island.

Reich's narrator takes on this theme of entwined fates early in the novel, asking, "Look, who's to say how past and present intermingle? Who's to say what shapes our future? Who's to say how our minds present dreams, feelings, thoughts. Isn't it all one, then? Time, memory, action? Isn't it all of a piece? Our lives lived on the edge, the threshold of worlds colliding" (5). As *Shipwreck of Hopes* unfolds, Reich trains these questions on the lives of Margaret Fuller and Hannah Oaks, as well as the landscapes and relationships surrounding them. In Reich's hands, we come to know Hannah and Fuller as characters connected to networks of family, friends, and associates that place each of these two women in their complex, mid-nineteenth century milieu. With the exception of chapters in places such as Ohio and West Virginia, Reich primarily splits the novel's chapters between Fire Island and Italy, eventually closing the novel in America. Reich, a self-described "beach lover," "history buff," and "life-long resident of Long Island," clearly knows Fire Island, from the history of its indigenous people to its shifting coastlines. On the eastern shore of the U.S., small, bustling towns with astute shopkeepers stand in contrast to dunes, sparse grasses and few neighbors. Fire Island's limitless sea and sky greet Reich's readers. In Rome, Reich describes the "movement and color beneath [Fuller's] windows," as well as Fuller's encounters with art and architecture (57).

By the time Fuller and Oaks' destinies touch near the shores of Long Island, however, Reich has added layers to these settings. Hannah's beloved landscape holds painful memories of past trauma, as well as present ones. In a vivid scene after French troops overtake Rome, Reich writes,

By midday, the streets were a scene of chaos...Those with horses and carriages careened down the city's thoroughfares, barely missing pedestrians. Others pushed what was left of their households in hand carts, the tops covered with canvas. Yet others walked, and the wounded were pushed in wheelbarrows. All who were part of the revolutionary forces ran for their lives. (216)

The sense of lives in tumult, whether in Hannah's abusive marriage or in political upheaval, runs through Reich's novel.

Hannah and Fuller provide *Shipwreck of Hopes* its gravitational pull, even though the novel has multiple subplots and viewpoint characters. It is impossible not to wonder what might have been had Fuller and her young family survived, or somehow avoided, the shipwreck of the *Elizabeth*. This wondering about Fuller's past and possible future forms part of the novel's subtext. The work of historical (re)imagining central to *Shipwreck of Hopes* depends on such inquiry. At the same time, it is notable that Reich makes readers care just as much about Hannah's fate as Fuller's. Hannah isn't on the *Elizabeth*, but she bears witness to the shipwreck from the home she shares with her abusive husband. Despite Hannah's dangerous situation, Reich depicts her character as one of those many souls across time, with their unrecorded stories, who reads as remarkable in their sphere: "Then, in the quiet evening, she'd use a charred stick from the fire and scraps of paper... She'd create, contouring, with changes of pressure or motion, her fingers playing, coaxing the scene from the crude instrument... In this, her vision, expression, complete" (5). Given the violence and assault Hannah suffers from the book's early pages, these moments of quiet, private creation provide Hannah, and Reich's readers, welcome reprieve. They also reveal Hannah's interiority, containing the seeds not only of her character, but also her art and her personal (r)evolution. Hannah isn't an intellectual in Fuller's vein, nor does she need to be. She is, however, a caring, soulful character with a doggedness and inner world to match Fuller's.

When it comes to Fuller, Reich delivers her readers into the arms of the Italian Revolution and Giovanni and Margaret's embraces. Reich's research and passion for history come keenly through in these sections, as does her appreciation of Fuller's dispatches to the *New York Daily Tribune* and the work of biographers like Megan Marshall. At the same time, Reich has rightfully imagined Fuller on her own terms. Reich gets into Fuller's mind, body and soul. During Fuller's visit to St. Peter's Basilica during Holy Week, Reich describes "the folds of [Fuller's] green taffeta skirts" as they "swept the geometric pattern of the Basilica's marble floor from side to side" (65). Looking around, a wide-eyed Margaret exclaims, "There is too much! Too much! For all my senses increase" (65). Moments later Fuller, "[now], enchanted, dazzled... progressed alone along the nave as if drawn by an unseen force toward the central altar" (65).

This kind of spirited detail, which brings readers to the very hem of Fuller's skirts, is part of what makes Reich's sections in Italy a particular pleasure to read. The writing in these passages brims with Fuller's expanding life and experience. The exploration of Fuller's first meeting with Giovanni Ossoli provides another example. There is not even a hint of bodice ripping in *Shipwreck of Hopes*, yet early encounters between these future lovers smolder. After Fuller's enchantment at the Basilica, Reich describes Ossoli "in the shadow of a pillar," where he "leaned against the cold marble, observing" Margaret for the first time (68). Moments later, "Margaret took him in as they strolled easily toward her rooms. He was youthful, tall and slender. Athletic" (68). Reich's attention to bodies, to gazes, lends such passages an almost erotic charge.

Men play an important role in *Shipwreck of Hopes*, even as the novel focuses on Fuller and Hannah, on their lives as women, creators, wives, and mothers. Hannah's scurrilous husband, Smith Oaks, a local guide seemingly without scruples, is a challenging character. Smith's behavior throughout the novel smothers any empathy roused by details of his past. The good news about Oaks: he stirs the pot of any scene he's in and he lends counterpoint to the novel's other characters, who can appear almost angelic compared to this loveless man. I read Smith Oaks as an old school villain straight down to his boots. His dastardly deeds (trust me, dastardly doesn't feel like an overstatement) can make him seem cut from melodrama, but these deeds are also part of what makes for an interesting read. More nuanced male characters are Oaks' younger brother, Giovanni, the crew of the *Elizabeth*, and

Fuller's father, whose demanding love haunts Margaret to nearly her last breath.

Reich does not shy away from Fuller's death on the *Elizabeth*. She stays with Fuller, and I could imagine writing the passages leading up to this moment as taking an emotional toll. As I recently described these scenes, split between the frenzy on the shore of Fire Island and the frenzy on the *Elizabeth*, to a friend, he mentioned how striking it must have been to read across these points of view. To be with Margaret, Giovanni, and their baby Angelino on the deck of the *Elizabeth* and also with the Long Island locals, who "came with carts and wagons," waiting to "swim their horses across" so they could reap the ship's riches (265). Of course my friend was right, and it is one of the wonders of narrative distance: to see within and around multiple, often conflicting, points of view. Even though Reich shows readers these multiple sides, it seems to me that Hannah's point of view is like the moral eye of the storm. She is one who can truly understand, from experience and on an emotional level, the meaning of this loss. Reich, as someone who has put down roots in this setting can and has also imagined, as in the heading of one chapter, the *Elizabeth's* "aftermath." How fitting, then, that Reich concludes her novel with a sure and simple map of the landscape that bore witness to such reckoning.

—Adrienne Perry

Adrienne Perry is an Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing at Villanova University. From 2014–2016 she served as the Editor of **Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts**. A Hedgebrook alumna, she is also a Kimbilio Fellow and a member of the Rabble Collective. Adrienne's work has appeared or is forthcoming in **Copper Nickel**, **Black Warrior Review**, **Indiana Review**, **Ninth Letter**, and elsewhere.

Tributes

Remembrances of Joan von Mehren

Joan, as many of you know, was a longtime Society stalwart. After serving two terms on the Advisory Board (1996–1998, 2000–2002), she later acted as Second Vice-President (2003–2005), First Vice-President (2006–2008), and President (2009–2011).

Her fine 1994 biography, *Minerva and the Muse: A Life of Margaret Fuller*, furnished substance to later biographers. That study continues to contribute to criticism on Fuller.

Joan, who worked as an independent scholar, brought Fuller to non-academic audiences not only through her biography and Newsletter notes, but also through her energetic service. As Society President, she was instrumental in organizing the 2010 bicentennial celebration in ways that made it open to the general public. She helped to underwrite the events at the Massachusetts Historical Society that drew hundreds. Additionally, she was a featured speaker at the Unitarian First Parish.

Those of us fortunate to have known her will long recall Joan's warm openness and generosity of spirit.

Her daughter-in-law, Jan von Mehren, shares a favorite recollection of a late outing that Joan turned into a Margaret Fuller event. Joan "was already struggling with memory issues but had times of clarity. Thanks to park rangers at Walden she was outfitted with a 'beach' wheelchair and away we went! As we went along, she started talking about Fuller and the Transcendentalists and their search for a national identity for our country. She was so eloquent."

Joan continues to smile from the banner photo that greets visitors to the Society website.

—Charlene Avallone

I still remember a day in the mid 1980s while I was toiling away in the reading room of the Massachusetts Historical Society on my research for *The Peabody Sisters* when an excited woman rushed in, breathless, and took a seat at a desk that had been set aside for her, to read through the trove of Margaret Fuller letters that the MHS archivist Peter Drummey had recently discovered among the possessions of the James Freeman Clarke descendants—the unexpurgated original letters that Clarke had excerpted

in his portion of the *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*. That excited breathless woman was Joan von Mehren. I can't remember now whether the letters were discovered in time for Joan to incorporate the material into her book, but as with her later persistence in discovering Nino's birth records in Rieti, that didn't seem to matter. Finding out anything new about Margaret Fuller, whenever that might be, was a cause for celebration and instant immersion in the documents. She was a model of scholarly devotion to her subject, with a detective's curiosity as a researcher and a novelist's sympathy as a writer.

I remember also how generous Joan was decades later when I told her I was beginning work on a biographical project that I didn't yet know would become a book. She shared sources and ideas and was not at all proprietary about Margaret, as some biographers can be about their subjects. In more recent years I accompanied her to a meeting of an exclusive Cambridge club, the Women's Travel Club (WTC), at which she spoke about Margaret's Italian years. It was a pleasure to hear her describe both her and Margaret's time in Rome to an audience of women—sister travelers—whose name tags, stored carefully in a box and pulled out for each meeting, nearly all bore names like "Mrs. Arthur Von Mehren" (although I'm not sure she herself was a member, just an honored guest), yet who were clearly all rugged individualists, like Joan. She was modest about her accomplishments, but unshakeable in her determination—*she* could have been a sea captain, if you will. If she'd willed it.

—Megan Marshall



Joan von Mehren and Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos;
photograph care of Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos



Margaret Fuller Society Members at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, May 2017; Joan von Mehren pictured on the right.

The year was 2010, year of the Fuller bicentennial anniversary: I had recently read Joan's *Minerva and the Muse* as I was embarking on my Fuller research project, specifically her connections to German Romantic writers. Residing in Massachusetts over that summer, I grabbed the opportunity to attend a production of Carole Brazerman's *The Margaret Ghost* at the UU Church in Belmont as well as to view the Bicentennial Travel display there. I had no idea that Joan would be in the audience; I didn't even know she lived in the area. What an honor to meet her and relate how much her work had taught and inspired me. In our brief conversation she focused solely on encouraging me to continue bringing new research and perspectives to the fore.

—Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos

I can hardly remember when I first met Joan through Boston-area conferences—sometime, and with rising warmth of friendship, between the publication of her biography in 1994 and the Fuller Bicentennial in 2010. By then she was president of the Fuller Society and hosted that large gathering of scholars and fans so successfully gathered at the Mass Historical Society. Already in her eighties, Joan was more than ready to welcome and talk with new or old Fullerites.

My copy of *Minerva and the Muse* is full of reminders of what I have found in that book, some of it only there (I think) despite the wealth of other biographies that have been published since. As Joan tells the story, Margaret recorded first taking communion at the Unitarian church in Providence, then three more times in the year following (I wrote “oh wow!” in the margin); her new house on Ellery Street in 1842 had been built in the orchard of the burnt-out Dana Mansion where she had previously

lived with her family; her Paris editor Pauline Roland had herself published articles on women's position in the Saint-Simonian socialist press (this in a portrait of Roland footnoted with six sources in French). But Joan's attention to contexts and to archival sleuthing found its culmination even after the biography with the new evidence she shared about Margaret's Italian experience and relation to Ossoli. Like her subject, Joan reached across languages and borders.

Most recently, she played a happy part in the anniversary of our society at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge, during the 2017 American Literature Association meeting. Joan lived in town, so though she was no longer attending conferences I invited her to join us for the party. Along with granddaughter Paige she did—they're standing together on the right side of the group photo that still heads our website. Most important, she dived immediately into the conversation about Fuller's early experience at this place and her later advocacy for the poor, the very work her birth home now serves. Joan also admitted that she had been rereading her biography and enjoying its revelations with new pleasure.

—Phyllis Cole

Joan von Mehren's name alone was formidable. She represented the innermost circle of that era—those who were Margaret Fuller's current generation of “friends,” “admirers” and “representatives.” Even getting to the outside edge of that illustrious circle was a great honor. Being an independent scholar was to belong to the heartbeat edge of powerful scholarship. To have Joan von Mehren support one's contribution to the legend was itself legendary. Meeting her throng for the conference organized by Fritz Fleischman now two and a half plus

decades ago was one moment in a lifetime's devotion to Fuller, a consummate scholar's dream of having "arrived." Von Mehren was herself an icon!

—Judith Strong Albert

What a sad news! Joan was the first one on your "side of the Great Sea" to lend me a hand when eleven years ago I was in search of documents and information to give ground to my research about Fuller's stay in Italy. I do not consider it a *diminutio* but an honor to say that all my research work is a continuation of her great job, for what pertains to places Fuller lived, her childbirth, supposed marriage, people she met or was in touch with, while in Italy. Thanks to Jeff and Brigitte, who put us in touch, I could benefit from Joan's great generosity and receive real copies of manuscripts and articles that proved milestones in my subsequent work. I cannot forget with great emotion her first reply to my email, late at night, in 2008, when she could not wait until the next morning to assure me she had finally been able to pick up my bottle message in search for help, and that she would reply the next morning, which she actually did, and with plenty of information, and not only that time.

Also, I cannot forget her biography *Minerva and The Muse*, and her article for AMS Press, I quote by heart, "Margaret Fuller and the Marriage Question—Considering Mr. Colzi Research," that were fundamental for my own biography, published in 2012, and for my forthcoming works about marriage and Fuller's-Ossoli Italian letters, continuing from where she had arrived.

Even if I have never met her by person, I have been and I am very sympathetic with her closeness to Italian search issues, and I feel very sad in knowing this news, and I join the Fuller community in mourning this great woman that gave a so outstanding contribution to Fuller's knowledge worldwide.

Grazie Joan!

—Mario Bannoni

Joan was glowing when I first met her at Fritz Fleischmann's conference on Fuller's cultural critique. It was 1994. Joan had just published her glorious *Minerva and Muse* and she was distributing Fuller's favorite carbuncle stones to her sister Fullerati. For me, the carbuncles epitomized Joan's interest in the things and customs and

settings of Fuller's life—elements I'd neglected in my work.

Her approach prompted me to suggest we make a joint expedition to Nahant. We had fun seeking out the sea-side rocks Fuller had climbed with Sturgis, where Margaret tried without success to elicit a declaration of love from Caroline.

Years later we resumed our sleuthing in Rome. Joan had identified the beautiful building where Margaret lived in the Piazza Barberini, but, we wondered, which was her apartment? Standing in the street, we spotted some housepainters on a scaffolding above us. We yelled up hoping they'd let us in—to no avail. I left a note for the top floor resident, asking to visit. He assented and, sure enough, his corner room commands the very view Fuller described.

Joan's courtly husband Arthur supported her ventures. He called her "young lady." And that's how she lives in my mind, eager, smiling, game—eternally, the best kind of young lady.

—Bell Chevigny

Remembrance of Annette Kolodny

Annette's work is important to Fuller scholarship, as it is to much of the field of American studies. Her essay "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of A Feminist Literary Criticism" (1980) became an inspiring classic of feminist literary criticism, one that enabled recovery work that brought Fuller to greater attention and to new interpretation. The chapter on Fuller in *The Land Before Her* (1984), "Margaret Fuller: Recovering our Mother's Garden," broke ground for what would become feminist ecocritical study. Annette's other work specifically on Fuller includes "Inventing a Feminist Discourse: Rhetoric and Resistance in Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*," which appeared first in *New Literary History* (1994), and "Margaret Fuller's First Depiction of Indians and the Limits on Social Protest: An Exercise in Women's Studies Pedagogy" in *Legacy* (2001).

Annette will be remembered not only as a prolific scholar and a feminist teacher and administrator dedicated to fully including women and minorities in the academy, but also as a generous colleague.

—Charlene Avallone

Remembrances of Dorothy Emerson

The society lost a vital member with Dorothy Emerson's sudden death on May 13. She had a passionate interest in Margaret Fuller and co-chaired the 2010 Boston Bicentennial of Fuller's birth, as Jessica Lipnack will recount below. What I'd like to offer as introduction is a sense of Dorothy's wider career as a minister, pioneer in tracing the history and practice of women's spirituality, and advocate of social causes. All of this work was reflected in her sense of Fuller.

Dorothy and I met for the first time in the fall of 1984 at Harvard Divinity School in its Women's Studies in Religion Program. We were both about forty, arriving after numerous adventures elsewhere. Already established as a scholar of transcendentalism, I had a one-year teaching fellowship and a rather recent conversion to feminist scholarship, brought into being through my work on Mary Moody Emerson. Dorothy had a much longer, wider commitment to feminist practice and arrived directly from the Seneca Falls Women's Encampment for Peace and Justice. I had a lot to learn from her. But in pursuit of her MDiv degree she was enrolled in my course, and when I declared that Unitarian Universalists had done very little to recover their record of women's activism, she responded that she just might take on such work. I'm far from her sole source, but she really could connect and grow with an idea. By 1991, four years after getting her degree, Dorothy had founded the UU Women's Heritage Society, and in 2000 she edited *Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women and Social Reform, 1776-1936*. Shortly before Dorothy's death, the Divinity School library gratefully received forty-four boxes of her papers from this work and much more.

The wider scope of her UU ministry through thirty years included parish leadership in several towns around Boston, work for the denomination's task force on anti-racism, practical counsel to congregations on diversity issues, and the Rainbow History Project. She took a hand in developing teaching materials for adults and children. In 2010 she was a natural for leadership in the Bicentennial celebration of Fuller and fostered its UU connections. She could also work generously on the ground whenever need arose, serving as on-site arranger for our 2017 anniversary party at the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge.

And always she wrote—her books ranging in subject from the new UU ministry to one entitled *Marking the Passage to the Crone Years*. Just a year before her death Dorothy published *Sea Change: The Unfinished Agenda of*

the 1960's, an autobiography of California origins and a defense of peace and love in our present political world. For her, spiritual awakening and the freedom of the sixties had made each other possible, and such “buried hopes and dreams” could still be revived. Dorothy and I have always remained in touch, and over lunch last October with her and her spouse Donna Clifford, I heard of the remarkable adventure it had been to articulate this lifetime experience. She leaves an “unfinished agenda” for us all.

—Phyllis Cole

Dorothy Emerson Throws Margaret Fuller's Biggest Birthday Party: The Bicentennial in Boston

Jessica Lipnack

Were there a ranking for superb networkers, Dorothy Emerson's name would rise to the top. As a hub in many networks, she knew and retained relationships with people from her diverse activities, connected them to one another, and tapped their talents. Never was her networking skill more evident than when she harnessed the passions of dozens of enthusiasts in service of the Margaret Fuller Bicentennial in Boston.

Though we knew many people in common, Dorothy's and my paths had never crossed until the two-hundredth anniversary of Margaret's death was on the horizon. Work on the Boston Bicentennial was well underway when we met at the “Margaret Fuller and Her Circles” conference at the Massachusetts Historical Society in April, 2009. By the end of that weekend, she'd recruited me as her co-chair for the upcoming year of events. She hardly needed me, as her vision, enthusiasm, and ability to execute complex undertakings were prodigious.

Among those whom Dorothy's magnet attracted for the Bicentennial was Rev. Rosemarie Smurzynski. In terms of her Bicentennial contributions, Rosemarie notes the following: “Dorothy's recruiting the participation of Megan Marshall; her organization of the project in general, a job she undertook to make sure Margaret was celebrated; and her recruiting many of us for tasks. For example, [the late] Rev. Becky Blodgett, Rev. Elisabeth Stevens, and I were recruited to produce a [worship guide](#) for UU congregations, all of which materialized in more than a year of celebration of Margaret.”

Dorothy had a marketing gene: She produced a Bicenten-

nial [website](#), a logo, buttons, notecards, and postcards that tied our efforts together in a visually appealing style. She inspired a fundraising campaign that brought in money from individuals and organizations including the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, Mass Humanities, the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society, and one of Margaret's first publishers, John Wiley & Sons (*Papers on Literature and Art*, Wiley and Putnam, 1846). For the Bicentennial period, Unitarian Universalist Women & Religion served as the fiscal agent and for the past decade has continued to host the Bicentennial website, with its many links and blog posts.

The website describes The Margaret Fuller Bicentennial Committee as “a grassroots group of Unitarian Universalists, scholars, and representatives from historical sites, commissions, and organizations. Together they planned tours, exhibits, trips, programs and performances intended to celebrate the life and legacy of Margaret Fuller during the bicentennial year of her birth, and beyond.” Let's take a closer look at what Dorothy did to carry out that mission beginning with the [May 23, 2009, day-long, kickoff event](#) on [Margaret's 199th birthday](#) at which:

- Two Margarets performed—the [late Laurie James](#), who presented her one-woman show about Margaret, and character actor Jessa Piaia, who offered her interpretation of Margaret as one of the [women in history](#) whom she portrays.
- [Megan Marshall](#), who would win the Pulitzer for her Margaret biography five years later, read the Fuller sections from her Pulitzer-finalist *The Peabody Sisters*.
- Independent scholar Judith Strong Albert, author of [Minerva's Circle: Margaret Fuller's Women](#), spoke about that remarkable group.
- Pianist [Jacqueline Schwab](#), who has provided piano improvisations for nine of Ken Burns's documentaries, performed several pieces by Chopin, whom Margaret met in Paris when visiting George Sand.
- Melody Lee, a member of the Women's Sacred Circle First Parish in Cambridge, MA, which hosted the event where the kick-off took place, gave the welcome.
- Dorothy herself spoke about the Bicentennial.
- And I, who have been writing about Margaret—

and the Fuller family—since the 1970s introduced a film I made with filmmaker Ron Mortara and talked about Margaret's intellectual connections to her grandnephew, Buckminster Fuller.

The actual Bicentennial year saw [activity after activity](#), including the official launch of the Bicentennial in January, 2010, at Harvard's Houghton Library. Independent scholar of nineteenth-century literature Rob [Velella](#) curated an exhibition to accompany the launch. Velella also spoke as part of a Bicentennial-sponsored Conversation Series mirroring the ones that Margaret held in Boston in 1839 and 1840. Historian and author Bonnie Hurd Smith created two critical projects: a traveling display, “[Why Margaret Fuller Matters](#),” a ten-panel series that chronicles her life and thinking, and “[Margaret Fuller's New England Trail Guide](#).” The Rev. Katie Lee Crane won [the sermon contest](#), sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society and the Margaret Fuller Bicentennial Committee, with her entry, “A Conversation with Margaret Fuller.” Events were staged at the UU General Assembly. And Dorothy encouraged people to give sermons in many UU parishes and motivated more across the country.

The pinnacle Bicentennial event was [Margaret's memorial service](#) at Mount Auburn Cemetery, held one hundred-sixty years after she died ([see videos here](#)). On a sweltering Sunday, July 18, 2010, at least seventy-five people attended the service then walked together to the Fuller family plot where Margaret's memorial stone anchors one corner. There several others spoke and we all placed snapdragons at the foot of the cenotaph, whose words I read aloud. As no memorial service had taken place after Margaret's tragic death, this service during her Bicentennial year was very affecting—and long overdue ([see account of the memorial service here](#)).

Dorothy honored Margaret as none have done before with enthusiasm, taste, and energy that multiplied through the rest of us whom she inspired. Certainly were Margaret able to offer Dorothy her thanks, she would be generous in her appreciation. We would all very much like to hear that tribute.

*Jessica Lipnack is the author of six books, including **The Age of the Network** (Wiley), and is writing a trilogy about Margaret Fuller in which she returns as a ghost to find a contemporary collaborator to update her classic as **Woman in the 21st Century**.*

Scholar Goes to Rest With Margaret Fuller A Summer Entry from *We Are The Future Generations*

Peter Reilley

We are happy to print a post about Fuller from Peter Reilly's blog [We Are The Future Generations](#). "The blog is really anything that I feel like writing about that is not tax connected," Peter writes, "but I do have a penchant for antebellum reform movements, which is the source of the title."

Monday, June 26, 2017

Scholar Goes to Rest With Margaret Fuller

Some stuff you just can't make up and the final chapter, perhaps the epilogue, in the life of Marie Olesen Urbanski Whittaker is like that. This being my blog and all, I'm going to tell it from my point of view, which may seem a bit improbable.

Let's Make A Movie

Some years ago, I became obsessed with the notion that the life of Margaret Fuller needs to be a major motion picture. My vision of it is as the most romantic tragedy in American history—brilliant young woman associating with iconic intellectuals, smarter than all of them, leading women in discussion of empowerment, authors fundamental feminist text, uses a platform as a literary columnist to examine issues of class race and gender, covers a revolution, marries a man ten years her junior who probably couldn't read her books but worshiped her, participates in a revolution, dies in a tragic shipwreck with her husband and son.

When I first heard about Margaret Fuller in 1972, it was as a marginal literary figure. Editor of a journal that had a short life and a short print run inspiration for Zenobia in *Blithedale Romance*. That was pretty much it.

It took a virtual lifetime of random unsystematic reading focused on the ante-bellum social reform movements for me to rediscover her. Unlike most Margaret Fuller scholars, I am much more interested in the Civil War, abolition and the women's rights movement than I am in literature. To many Margaret Fuller is kind of a marginal Transcendentalist. To me the Transcendentalists, the whole lot of them, are mainly important as a launching platform for Margaret Fuller.

Regardless, my nonliterary background may be why I think the film treatment is so important. As luck would have it I know Jonathan Schwartz of [Interlock Media](#). He convinced me that we needed to do a documentary first. That and the best bonus I had in my career launched the project which has been going on for quite a while.

The Talent Scout

I mention all this to explain the improbable assignment I had last year. I was a talent scout for Interlock Media. Me. A CPA. A writer of sorts, but one who writes mostly about taxes. I count myself among the most literary of the tax bloggers. I mean check out my [coverage of JD Salinger's estate planning problems](#). But really not much of a literary person.

At any rate my tax blogging has honed my otherwise pretty good research skills, making me not so bad at finding experts in this or that to add color to my stories. We had interviews with two major Fuller biographers already shot and my mission was to find some other scholars.

An Elusive Scholar

One of the more elusive was Marie Mitchell Olesen Urbanski, author of [Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century: A Literary Study of Form and Content, of Sources and Influence](#) which was published in 1980.

The work was Professor Urbanski's Ph.D thesis. She had gone after the degree when she was already in her late forties, but still managed to land a position at the University of Maine. And it was there that she did the thing that really won my heart. In a site called [Walking Tour About UMaine Women](#), I found the University's "Gender Equity Plan for Athletics" exists to guide UMaine in its continuing efforts to maintain gender equity in its intercollegiate athletics program. We have come a long way since the 1970s when an English professor by the name of Marie Urbanski led a group to demand that women be allowed to use the weight room.

I still couldn't find her though.

I knew Marie had a daughter, Wanda Urbanska (the feminine of Urbanski). Wanda is herself pretty famous. Among other things she had a series of simple living that ran on PBS. I was having trouble finding her too, but I finally struck gold with a story in the *New York Times* - [Three Generations, Two Comfy Homes a Few Steps Apart](#)

For Ms. Urbanska, a media consultant and author, the economics of shared living have eased some of the financial pressures she faces as a single mother. Together, she and her mother, Marie Whittaker, bought the three-bedroom home for \$370,000 last year. They each contributed \$60,000 to the down payment, which consumed a considerable portion of their liquid savings, or money that was not tied up elsewhere.

Well—what can you say? Despite being the very model of a second wave feminist, Marie had apparently changed her name again when she remarried.

Hurry Up

From there it was not too hard to get Wanda on the phone. Wanda was pretty impressed with the depth of my knowledge. She told me her mother was still quite sharp, although she had some trouble hearing, but if we wanted to film her we shouldn't put it off, because she was pretty old. Here is the note from our prospect file:

It turns out that Marie is still alive alert and very feisty and outspoken, as reported by Wanda who is delighted that we called and impressed by the depth of our research. She was very much involved in her mother's work. Marie is going strong. Wanda said that she is holding on so that she can vote for the first woman president. Wanda is also familiar with production and could help with logistics on a North Carolina shoot.

Too Late

Sadly, we could not get it together. Not long after we talked, I got a sad email from Wanda:

It was so good to speak to you earlier this month about the scholarship of my mother, Marie Olesen Urbanski Whittaker, on Margaret Fuller. I had indicated that you should move quickly if you were planning to film her, but I didn't realize how quickly she would go. She died on Oct. 24.

Wanda included links to obituaries in the [Raleigh News & Observer](#) and [The Mount Airy News](#). Best though was the story Wanda wrote for *Glamour*—[The Last Thing My Mother Did Before She Died Was Vote For Hillary Clinton](#). They have early voting in North Carolina, which Marie took advantage of. As Wanda relates it:

This Monday afternoon, when I returned from the post office, receipt in hand, I stepped into the bedroom where Mama was barely hanging on.

“Did Hillary make it?” she asked once more, her words trailing, her voice almost inaudible. Looking at the fading light in her eyes, as her boney hand stretched out from her hospice bed, I considered how to respond. Do I tell her the truth? Hillary's poll numbers are looking positive, but the election is not in the bag.

“Yes, Mama,” I told her. “Hillary made it.”

It was what Marie Urbanski Whittaker had been waiting for her entire life. Within minutes, she was gone.

The post went viral and is pretty well known, although it is little noted that the story was about a pioneer Margaret Fuller scholar. I found that out a few months later.

Independent Scholar and Margaret Fuller Fan Boy

By May, Interlock had a fifteen-minute version of the documentary ready. I had moved from talent scouting to finding images and quotations. A delightful part of that process was rereading *Margaret Fuller Ossoli* by Thomas Wentworth Higginson. You literary types will think of Higginson as a bad guy in the Emily Dickinson story whose reputation was helped by the recent [White Heat](#).

Somebody like me though is a lot more interested in his role as one of John Brown's Secret Six and commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers (33rd United States Colored Troops). It was Higginson's biography that drove home the Margaret Fuller story to me:

And as for Margaret Ossoli, her life seems to me, on the whole, a triumphant rather than a sad one, in spite of the prolonged struggle with illness, with poverty, with the shortcomings of others and with her own. In later years she had the fulfillment of her dreams; she had what Elizabeth Barrett, writing at the time of her marriage to Robert Browning, named as the three great desiderata of existence, “life and love and Italy.” She shared in great deeds, she was the counselor of great men, she had a husband who was a lover, and she had a child. They loved each other in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. Was not that enough?

At any rate, the fifteen-minute version of the documentary was shown at the American Literature Association conference. Lacking any academic affiliation, my ID badge denominated me an “Independent Scholar,” which struck me as a little grandiose.

At Margaret Fuller's Home

There was a meeting of the [Margaret Fuller Society](#) scheduled to coincide with the conference with a bus to take us from the conference in Copley Square to the [Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House](#). Margaret's childhood home in what was then called Cambridgeport has been a community center since early in the twentieth century (Thomas Wentworth Higginson, kind of the last of the Transcendentalists, was there at its original dedication).

As I talked to various Fuller scholars at the conference, I found that although most of them were familiar with Marie's work, none of them seem to know her. This is not entirely shocking. She retired around the time that the Margaret Fuller Society was founded twenty-five years ago. And few were aware of her connection to the *Glamor* story.

So I ended up having the honor of making a little presentation on her at the meeting. I of course included the story about the weight room. If I didn't say "let them be weightlifters, if you will," I should have, so let's just say I did. I concluded with something to the effect that she had gone to a better place where we have a different president.

One of the members dubbed me a Margaret Fuller fan boy and I think I might use that if I ever go to ALA again, but it gets better.

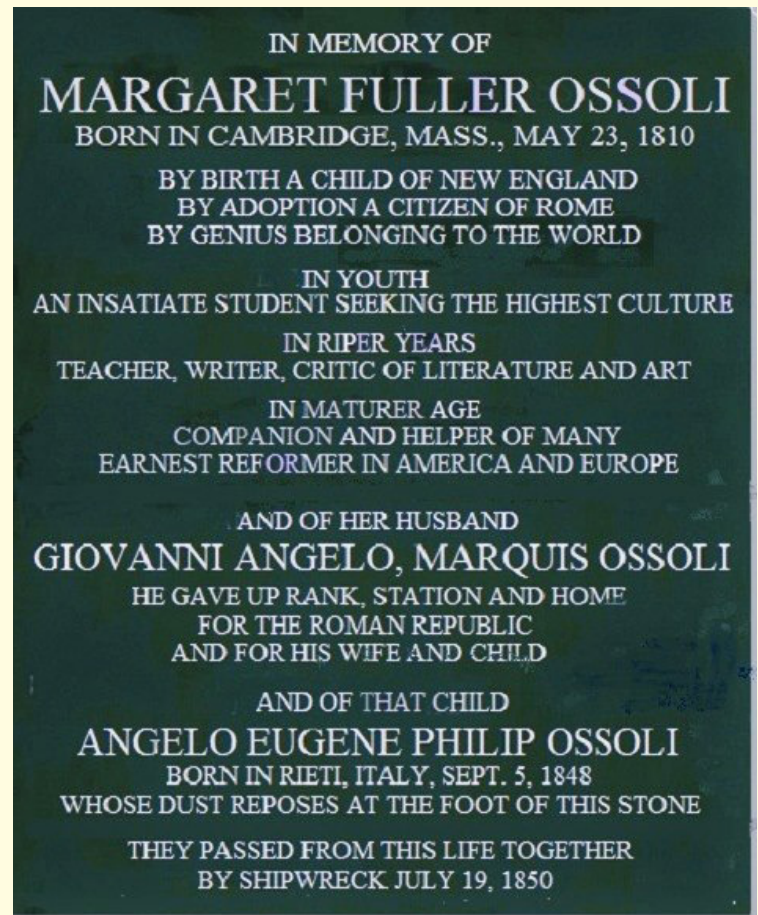
Resting With Margaret Fuller

I let Wanda know about the event and she was really pleased and then she asked if we could meet up. She was going to be hanging out at Logan Airport to meet up with her sister to go to a wedding on Martha's Vineyard.

We worked it out and she met with me, Jonathan and one of his interns. We were able to show her the fifteen minutes on one of our computers and had a great dinner. Most interesting was that she had Marie with her. Her ashes, that is. Jonathan figured she was going to divide them with her sister. But that was not the plan.

Wanda and her sister, Jane Robbins, had a road trip planned. After the Vineyard wedding, they were off to Fire Island where they would scatter Marie's ashes. You and I both know that is where the *Elizabeth* went down with Margaret Fuller and her husband and son, but you have to consider the other readers.

I asked Wanda how it went and she wrote me:
We scattered the vast majority of Mama's ashes off of Fire Island, as was her lifelong wish. We saved a smattering of ashes to scatter in Seneca Falls, NY, at the base of the monument to those who organized the Women's Rights Convention.



Fuller's Mount Auburn Memorial; Wikimedia Commons

Peter J. Reilly, CPA, Independent Scholar, Margaret Fuller Fan Boy, is looking forward to the full length documentary and the feature length biopic that is sure to follow. Tom Hanks will narrate as Thomas Wentworth Higginson, but we still don't know who should play Margaret Fuller.

Margaret Fuller Society Business Meeting Minutes

American Literature Association Conference
Boston, MA | May 25, 2019

1. Introductions (Charlene Avallone, President)

- 13 members in attendance
- Warm welcome to new board members Mollie Barnes, Fritz Fleischmann, and Denise Kohn
- Special recognition of Noelle Baker, Jana Argersinger, Phyllis Cole, Christina Katopodis, and Katie Kornacki for their work on behalf of the Society this past year

2. Treasurer's report (Noelle Baker, Treasurer)

- In the fiscal year July 2018–June 2019, the Society has taken in \$4,149.65 to date from dues and conference fees. The Society's current account balance is \$5,869.33.
- Major expenses were incurred from the Society's collaborations at the Transcendentalist Intersections conference in Heidelberg, Germany and the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW) conference in Denver, CO. Additional funds went to the production of promotional bookmarks. Baker reported that these expenditures "supported our ongoing goals of collaboration and outreach."
- Membership in the Society increased from last year, from 93 to 98 total. This group includes life members (at a one-time cost of \$150), regular memberships (\$10 per year), and reduced cost memberships (\$5 per year) for laypersons, students, and independent or retired scholars.

3. Business

- Promotional bookmarks: Denise Kohn and Jessica Newbacher, one of her students, designed new bookmarks for the Society, which have been in circulation at ALA.
- Academic events: Since its last annual meeting, the Society (co-)sponsored the Transcendentalist Intersections conference in July 2018 (which included 17 Fuller-related presentations), a panel at the SSAWW conference in November 2018, a panel at the Modern Language Association convention

in January 2019, and two panels at the American Literature Association conference in May 2019.

- At SSAWW, the Society co-hosted an afternoon tea with the Sedgwick and Stowe Societies. Phyllis Cole received a lifetime achievement award and addressed the conference audience as a whole.
- At MLA, the Society hosted a well-attended dinner and welcomed an international group of scholars.
- Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House: Phyllis Cole has been working to strengthen the Society's relationship with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House in Cambridge, MA. The House is a public service center that puts Fuller's values into action. The new director of the House grew up nearby in The Port. Cole distributed a fact-sheet that details some of the House's many projects, and she proposed a future ALA panel on authors' houses and their current functions to be paired with an event held at the House. Additional information about the House is available at margaretfullerhouse.org. Individual contributions are welcome to support the multiple community services the House provides in the name of Fuller.

4. Developing projects

- Teaching Fuller: The Society recently received a "fan" letter from a high school student who expressed her enthusiasm about Fuller's relevance today. Other author societies have created successful syllabi exchanges. Should we? The American Antiquarian Society and its journal *Common-place* have a "Just Teach One" initiative that encourages instructors to include short, noncanonical works in their courses (jto.common-place.org). *Conversations*, the Fuller Society's newsletter, includes a column on teaching Fuller. Could we use the website to publish notes and/or papers on teaching as well? Might future panels emphasize "Fuller and..."? (current issues such as gender, immigration, etc.)? What about sponsoring an essay contest for student work? Elizabeth Dean volunteered her WordPress skills to help develop the Society's website. Sandy Petrulionis has a wealth of knowledge about teaching initiatives as well.
- Revising the Wikipedia page on Fuller: Christina Katopodis and her students have been working on these updates and have added a new page on Fuller's associate, Caroline Sturgis. Christina invites

suggestions from members as the revision process continues. Members requested a link to the Society's website. Notice was made of the foreign-language Wikipedia pages dedicated to Fuller.

- Planning the next international Fuller Society conference: Mollie Barnes will take the lead in organizing this conference on the theme "Journaling for Justice." Megan Marshall has begun to explore the possibility of including journalists currently reporting on international women's issues. Possible sites include Paris and New York. Members expressed interest in opening up the call for papers to the long nineteenth century, with an emphasis on the multiracial and multilingual literary landscapes of this period. Some suggested that the conference be scheduled in an "off" year to avoid conflicts with SSAWW and/or C19.
- Organizing a Fuller-focused panel at the upcoming C19 conference in April 2020. Sonia DiLoreto will pursue this possibility.

5. Additional announcements and conversation

- Mollie Barnes volunteered her help to support Editor Katie Kornacki with *Conversations*, the Society's newsletter.
- The Society is co-sponsoring two panels on "Transcendentalism: Men and Women Conversing" at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in July 2019.
- Jenny Rankin has formed a new business partnership to lead Transcendental-themed tours of Rome.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Eckel, *Communications Officer*

Margaret Fuller Society at ALA 2019

Boston, MA | May 23–26, 2019

Panel: Margaret Fuller's Languages

In the "Preface by the Translator" that Margaret Fuller penned for her translation of Goethe's *Tasso*, she states: "There are difficulties attending the translation of German works into English which might baffle one much more skillful in the use of the latter than myself. A great variety of compound words enable the German writer to give a degree of precision and delicacy of shading to his expressions nearly impracticable with the terse, the dignified, but by no means flexible English idiom" (*Art, Literature and the Drama*, p. 355). In her work as critic and translator, Fuller has always been attuned to style, register, nuances, wording, irony and all the richness and complexity of language, and to the particularities of different languages. As a result, readers have often been "baffled" by her complexity.

For this panel, we seek presentations on all matters that have to do with Margaret Fuller's languages, both in terms of her translation work, but also regarding her code-switching, generic mixes, neologisms, rhetorical force, word-play. How do Fuller's theories about translation and her ideas about language/languages inform her writing? How have recent transnational perspectives on American Literature shed new light on Fuller's rhetoric and language?

"Translating Fuller: The Play of Interpretation" *Fritz Fleischmann*

That Fuller 'requires interpretation,' sets it as a task for herself and her readers, is well-known to Fuller scholars. An intellectual whose forte was criticism, interpretation, sense-making, she also saw this as the goal for her translations from other languages. What Fuller called the "rendering of the spirit" (in the preface to her translation of Goethe's *Tasso*) "shifts the emphasis away from a translation to the translator's interpretation of the work" (Renate Delphendahl).

Translating Fuller's own work into another language opens up a range of questions that Fuller herself raised about the work of translation. Christina Zwarg has argued that, for Fuller, "translation became less a conquest of meaning, a mastery that subdues and potentially annihilates an alien set of values ... than it is about the proliferation of meaning, of everything that might be

found when new values open to view within both languages.” Zwarg also points out that Fuller’s “model of reading is highly interactive, forming a double strategy whereby one nimbly shifts between frames of reference.”

How is it possible to avoid mastery when translating Fuller herself? So much of what she says is opaque, suggesting various possibilities to the translator. What is the translator’s task in this instance?

In 2018, I was invited to write an essay to accompany a translation of *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* for a German publisher (the first-ever translation of a Fuller text into German), but ended up also revising the translation that was sent to me. The professional translator had found it difficult to make sense of the many instances in which Fuller’s language is ambiguous, allusive, embedded in Transcendentalist usages that sound foreign and anachronistic to 21st century readers. To decide ‘what she meant to say’ required not only familiarity with the larger corpus of her work, but also a recognition that some things are left deliberately open—Fuller’s way of putting hermeneutic pressure on the reader.

In my paper, I propose to apply Fuller’s own thoughts about translation and interpretation to the experience of translating her own work into another language—a language, too, with which she was quite familiar and about which she had much to say. When Derrida described translation as “a productive writing called forth by the original text,” which “transforms the original as well as the translation,” he might have characterized the experience of translating Margaret Fuller.

“Glimpsing Goethe’s Corpse: Translating the Now in Fuller’s Eckermann”

Christina Zwarg

In 1839 Margaret Fuller translated J.P. Eckermann’s *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of his Life* and, the final scene—where Eckermann visits Goethe’s naked corpse—provides a useful place to ponder the “now” of translation, particularly as it relates to both the problematic immediacy of such moments and the extended “now” of immortality that Goethe expected to achieve through Eckermann.

Part of a larger trend to make available the “table talk” of great men, Goethe is set up in the “conversation” as the one presumed to know and Eckermann’s task is to transcribe ideas as they arrive between them in their daily encounters. In this sense, Fuller translates what might be called a cultural case study, one that frames a transference

tial encounter through notions of cultural exchange.

At the same time, Eckermann’s Goethe is not the “real” thing, but a cunning counterfeit, just as—in 1839—the staging of blackface performances in the US creates the aura of black cultural production. The proliferation of blackface performances in the decade of 1830 marks a negotiation of cultural value, in particular, the fit of “blackness” into an understanding of U.S. democratic culture. It is a decade marked at one end with the 1831 revolt of Nat Turner and, at the other, Frederick Douglass’ escape from slavery. Thus it is interesting to see how an ironic idea of culture gets exposed when Fuller pulls a “counterfeit” Goethe into view at the end of this important decade.

Raymond Williams reminds us how the word “culture” was beginning at that time to assume its problematic double meaning, separating a distinctive form of aesthetic culture from activities identified with a “whole way of life.” The gradual separation of the two meanings creates for Williams the formidable “obstruction of a certain kind of experience” vital to the realization of emancipatory transformation. Fuller’s 1839 translation of Eckermann’s *Conversations* allows us to see the shuttle between these two valuations of “culture” and the challenge the “now” of translation poses to her early thoughts about abolitionists.

“Translating Urban Radicalism for the New-York Tribune: Fuller’s Readings of the *Deutsche Schnellpost*”

Brigitte Bailey

As one of several German-reading staff members who worked at Greeley’s newspaper during the 1840s, Fuller was part of the *Tribune*’s effort to “promote” the German-language immigrant paper the *Deutsche Schnellpost* and to bring its accounts of urban, especially Paris-based, working-class socialism into the American national conversation (Tuchinsky). Biographers have pointed out (e.g., Capper) that Fuller’s views on politics, economics, and immigration grew in response to reading such foreign-language periodicals during her time in New York. I would argue that these readings and especially her translations for the *Tribune*, such as her column “The Social Movement in Europe,” also reveal her development of a vocabulary for describing and analyzing the transnational emergence of the modern metropolis—as it appeared in Paris and New York. Arriving in the city just at the time that New York’s explosive growth led to its characterization “as a figure or microcosm for the na-

tion” (Scobey), Fuller understood the national and international importance of the emergence of the modern city and of the cultural work of describing, theorizing, and critiquing it.

Critics working on Fuller’s translations especially from German and French sources—such as Charlene Avallone, Christina Zwarg, and Collen Glenney Boggs—have noted the feminist and transatlantic implications of these acts. As Zwarg says, Fuller’s “interest in translation enabled her to address the vehicles of cultural ... transmission,” to connect “the activity of reading and the process of social change,” and—by understanding that translation is not “simple importation” but an act of interpretation and revision—to see its potential to “disrupt” ideological formations. I propose to read the columns in the *Deutsche Schnellpost* that Fuller translated or summarized together with her relevant *Tribune* columns in the context of her attempt to develop language to describe the city and its emerging class and other ideological formations. Although I have not been able to find issues of the *Deutsche Schnellpost* online thus far, the American Antiquarian Society has originals; I read German and will be visiting the AAS (which is nearby) this spring. My close readings of Fuller’s acts of literal and implied translation from the *Deutsche Schnellpost* will be informed by other writers’ strategies of urban representation in the 1840s.

Panel: Winged Sphinxes: Margaret Fuller’s Poetry and Poetics

In his “Introduction” to a special forum on poetry in *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* (Spring 2013), Max Cavitch states “The study of nineteenth-century American poetry and poetics has been enjoying an efflorescence that shows no signs of contracting”, adding also that “among the most consequential developments has been the belated recognition of not simply the existence but also the centrality to North American literary and cultural history of poetry by women”. In keeping with this appraisal, the present panel invites examinations of Margaret Fuller’s poetry and poetics from a wide array of critical approaches, including, but not limited to, historical poetics, ecocriticism, new materialisms, as well as linguistic, historical, ethical, feminist, transatlantic, transnational perspectives. We invite contributions that will consider Fuller’s poetry and poetics in their various forms and instantiations (original compositions, translations, embedded poems, quotations, etc.), and we welcome proposals that approach Fuller along with other writers and poets.

“Fuller and the Flowering a Female God: Male Sacrifice and Female Transfiguration in “Raphael’s Deposition from the Cross”

Ariel Silver

Two years after publishing her “Credo” and months before publishing *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Margaret Fuller turns to poetry to express a culmination of her religious understanding and provide an overture to her social and political engagement. In “Raphael’s Deposition from the Cross,” she imagines the death and deposition of the male Christ figure from the cross and the conclusion of the “seeming promise of his life.” The faith, hope, and love he represents are broken upon a “guilty cross,” and already “crucified within [her] heart.” The death of male deity serves as prelude to, and preparation for, the birth and flowering of a new “God,” a “full-voiced” and “free” female redeemer. Fuller asserts that the male divine—and all those associated with the institutions built up to honor him—must be deposed from the positions of cultural power and authority they have long occupied. The messianic type must be “crucified,” for this type, once defiant against imitation and corruption, now encourages, represents, and provides a veil over the values it once reacted against. She contends that such institutions have already taken their part, for they have maintained their power through the patriarchy of *pater*



Winged Sphinxes Panel; photograph by Noelle Baker

familias, feudal practice, slavery, industry, and commerce. Ending the poem with an evocative charge - “maiden wrap thy mantle round thee” - Fuller calls on women to cover themselves in power and authority. That same year, she argues in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* that “better forms of woman” are now required to create a more maternal economy where the female can establish her own mantle of authority and influence in social and political as well as religious spheres, creating a real life for women that “is risen to flower a God.”

“Portals of Transformation: Object Studies in Fuller’s 1844 Poems”

Joan Wry

In his groundbreaking work on Margaret Fuller’s poetry, Jeffrey Steele established that the 38 poems written between April and November 1844 chronicle one of the most significant transitions in Fuller’s life, giving insight into her passage from personal turmoil and inner crisis to a public life dedicated to political and cultural activism. In many of these poems, Steele identifies a sequence of mythic encounters enacted by goddess figures and archetypes—Leila, Diana, Hecate, Isis, the Virgin Mother—who function as sources of guidance and inspiration even as they also symbolize Fuller’s own creative powers. Within this same mythical context, the 1844 poems also feature a number of material objects that serve as powerful talismans or catalysts for transformative energy. In select poems, objects that are invested with notable mythic, historic, or symbolic import—such as ruby carbuncles and other precious gems with ties to both biblical passages and alchemical processes, or triune-shaped magic sistrums featured in ancient Egyptian rituals—also provide “portals” (to borrow Laura Thatcher Ulrich’s term), that lead to “other worlds or states of being.” In a broad sense, Fuller’s object-based mythic encounters in poems such as “Leila in the Arabian Zone, Sistrum,” “Now wandering on a tangled way, and “Double Triangle, Serpent and Rays,” all foreshadow aspects of her transition to a life of public service in New York and Europe that began in 1845. Many of Fuller’s 1844 poems address deeply spiritual awakenings, and the objects within them are invested with long histories of symbolic and ritualistic import. My paper will investigate these object-based histories as a way of illuminating their significance in Fuller’s own rite of passage in the pivotal year in which she composed some of her best prose and poetry. As Bill Brown states in his seminal text, *A Sense of Things*, “an object can have ‘metaphysical subtleties’ that exceed its physical form . . . it can [even] become something tran-

scendent” (42). Fuller’s object studies in the 1844 poems give insight into her desire to realize an inner source of transcendent spiritual power—even as she transitioned outwardly to a public career that defined her for the rest of her life.

“The Vanishing Indian in Margaret Fuller’s ‘Governor Everett Receiving the Indian Chiefs, 1837’”

Thomas Sorensen

By the time Margaret Fuller published “Governor Everett” in 1837, the vanishing Indian myth had settled into certain conventions. (1) It associates Indigenous culture with the past, and opposes it to progress. (2) It imbues progress with the anonymous dignity of a natural force. By this, I mean that it invokes a conception of progress as the ineluctable legislation of a transcendent source—God’s will or natural law. This denies Indigenous peoples a human assailant and condescends to their resistance. (3) It interpellates the white, privileged reader into the position of an innocent and sympathetic bystander, eliding her complicity. “Governor Everett” overturns these conventions. (1) Indigenous culture falls deftly in step with the secret promptings of the universal spirit, which Fuller upholds as the one true standard of progress. (2) Fuller denies commercial interests the sanction of God’s will or natural law, restoring Indigenous dispossession and relocation to the culpability of human agents. Extinction remains inevitable, but it is a corrupt, mechanical, unthinking inevitability. (3) Fuller summons the reader to atone for the evil of her race, and part of her purpose is to make this evil palpable.

“Fuller’s Hauntological Poetics”

Katie Simon

This paper pays attention to the style and aesthetics of Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, uncovering a modernist mode of engaging with the landscape. Fuller innovates an aesthetic form I had previously identified in Henry David Thoreau’s work, which I call “the hauntological sublime.” This poetics of haunting proceeds through creative juxtapositions, fragments, digressions, dissected remains, distortions, traces, and extracts. In *Summer*, I argue, Fuller haunts her readers with images of the past, images that, in Walter Benjamin’s terms, would only “flit by” unless, at once “seized” in “a moment of danger.” The temporal disjunctions in this text, specifically the allusions to Puritans and the inclusion of the narrative of a clairvoyant Seeress, link it to wider historic and political currents, and I read these hauntings as part of a

commitment to represent the unrepresentable in European encounters with indigenous people. Mediumship, for Fuller, is a viable mode for moving out of the space/time continuum and into a Benjaminian sense of time as “filled by the presence of the now.” Fuller’s poetics is more than a style; it introduces a mode of knowledge production. Her hybrid forms and textual assemblages model ways to engage with both nonhuman nature, and humans who have been ghosted from the category of the human. From Fuller, Thoreau learned a mode of writing the unthinkable and unsayable through a logic of haunting.



*ALA Brunch in Boston with the Margaret Fuller Society;
photographs by Noelle Baker*

Fuller and Others at the Thoreau Annual Gathering 2019

A double session investigating conversations across gender, within and alongside of the Transcendentalist movement, was offered jointly by the Emerson, Fuller, Alcott, and Thoreau Societies at this year’s Annual Gathering of the Henry David Thoreau Society. When Emerson looked back in “Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England,” he explicitly recalled “men and women” joining in direct talk and letters, leading to friendship and to creation of a club and journal. Eventually some also responded to each other in published works. What did they have to talk about?

Transcendentalism: Men and Women Conversing (Session 1)

Organizer: Phyllis Cole

Chair: Phyllis Cole

The Vexed Nature of Home: Concord in 1845

Sarah Wider, Colgate University

Throughout their forty years of correspondence, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Caroline Sturgis frequently turned their discussions to the vexed nature of “home.” In 1838, during the “Human Life” lecture series (a series which Sturgis attended), Emerson asked, “What is the philosophy of Home?” For both, there were no easy answers, as indeed there could be none. In their United States, the image, philosophy, and lived reality of home were fraught by slavery, removal of Native peoples from their lands, unfair labor practices and the constraints imposed by a rigidly gendered society. Indeed, it might be argued that Transcendentalism’s fundamental questions were always founded upon the unresolved problems of creating an ethically grounded home.

In their correspondential conversations, we see Emerson and Sturgis working out what it means to be “inhabitants of the same thought.” If there were any truth in that possibility, it turned on the fact that the “same” thought was often a divided reality. Given Sturgis’s familial background, home was not to be trusted, and yet, she still argued strongly for the “necessary home” that could be found in “genius” or in her radical ideas about “love.” A person who put Transcendental precepts into practice, she sought to live flux and transition off the pages of both Emerson’s essays and her own writings. Residing in Concord in 1845 raised signal challenges: could a “philos-

ophy of home” encompass the necessary wildness that would rid domestic life of its exploitative practices?

Margaret Fuller and John Neal Conversing

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.”

Helen Thoreau’s Brother Henry and Lucretia Mott

Audrey Raden, Independent Scholar

During his six-month ordeal on Staten Island in 1843, Henry Thoreau wrote to his sister Helen on July 21st that he had been to “the Quaker Church in Hester Street” to hear Lucretia Mott speak. One can surmise from his other letters home that he had gone to hear Mott at Helen’s request because in his letter to their mother of August 6th, he has a message for Helen—“Tell her I have not seen Mrs. Child or Mrs. Sedgwick.”

Much has been written about Henry’s relationship to his brother John and his younger sister Sophia, who became his literary executrix, but scholars have only recently begun to talk about Helen, his quiet, methodical older sister who was a passionate abolitionist and feminist. Helen and Henry had a warm correspondence, both directly and through the aegis of other family members.

They clearly respected one another’s interests and intellect, frequently corresponding in Latin.

I find it telling that though Henry chose to relate to Helen through their mother about not seeing Child or Sedgwick, he chose to write directly to her about his experience of Mott. His response to Mott and the Quakers lacks all irony or paradox. Famous for “signing off” from the Unitarian Church and organized religion generally, he says of the Quakers, “On the whole I liked their ways, and the plainness of their meeting house. It looked as if it was indeed made for service.” Of Mott herself, he speaks glowingly about her “self-possession” and related her discourse to “transcendentalism.” He tells Helen, “Her subject was abuse of the Bible—and thence she straightaway digressed to slavery and the degradation of woman.

In 1849, the year Helen died, Mott delivered a sermon in Philadelphia entitled “Abuses and Uses of the Bible,” through which one can get a sense of what Henry heard that Sunday morning six years previously. Sounding much like a Thoreau, Mott says, “But also my friends, has there not been an unworthy resort to this volume to prove the rightfulness of war and slavery, and of crushing woman’s powers ... indeed of all evils under which humanity has groaned from age to age?”

Referring to the scholarship of Carol Faulkner, Robert A. Gross, and Sandra Harbert Petrolionus, I intend to show in this paper that the admiration Helen and Henry Thoreau held for Lucretia Mott typified their mutual devotion to one another and to the causes of antislavery and equality.

Darkened Domesticity: The Sturgis Sisters in Dialogue with Emersonian Poetics

Kathy Lawrence, Georgetown University

It was a striking fact that Emerson included the work of both Ellen Sturgis Hooper and Caroline Sturgis Tappan in his late poetry collection *Parnassus* (1874). The inclusion was especially significant in light of the fact that Emerson rejected poetry by celebrated contemporary American poets Emma Lazarus and Walt Whitman, both of whom noticed their exclusion with consternation. It was a seemingly ironic outcome from the prophet who inspired new American poetry with “The Poet” (1844) and “The American Scholar” (1854). Even stranger, Emerson’s ‘Preface’ mentioned only obscure Americans Forsythe Willson, the cryptic “lady who contents herself with the initials H. H.,” and the poet of “Sir Pavon and Saint Pavon,” rather than the Sturgises or his circle of poet-fol-

lowers Ellery Channing, Henry David Thoreau, Jones Very, and Samuel Gray Ward. Yet, the ‘Table of Contents’ reveals that Emerson printed a total of seventeen poems from these acolytes, added to five from the Sturgis sisters combined, totaling twenty-two verses from the transcendental band. Emerson also used one poem of his own: “The Last Farewell,” bringing the tally to twenty-three with a particularly personal note.

As this paper will argue, *Parnassus* is far from a repudiation of American poets; rather, *Parnassus* presents a buried memoir of Emerson’s affective life, a private palimpsest under the veneer of Shakespearian and Victorian British writers. Close examination of exactly which poems he chose from his transcendental disciples, and how he categorized them, uncovers the submerged text within *Parnassus*, a record of Emerson’s dialogue with his past, with the *Dial*, and especially his female disciples. Most important, Emerson’s decision as to which poems of the Sturgises to use and where to place them discloses his recognition of their darkened domesticity, their struggle to live up to Emersonian idealism in the face of trauma. Against his own poetics, Emerson validated their Corinne-like mantel.

Emerson had confided his reason for *Parnassus* in journal ST (1870–77), “I wish a volume on my own table that shall have nothing that is not poetry.” Ronald Bosco affirms in his “Introduction” to the new edition of *Letters and Social Aims* (2010), that *Parnassus* was the fruit of Emerson’s own hand. He further asserts that “Poetry and Imagination” of 1872 from *Letters and Social Aims* provided the foundation for the idea of *Parnassus*—to show the ideal poet and ideal poetry. As Emerson specified in that essay, the ideal poet must be an ideal man: “He is the healthy, the wise, the fundamental, the manly man, seer of the secret; against all the appearance, he sees and reports the truth, namely that the soul generates matter.”

But this definition has little overlap with the words of the Sturgis sisters, and indeed contrasts with much of the language in the verses of his circle of male devotees. As early as 1866, Emerson recorded he wanted to use Ellen Sturgis’ poem “Sweep Ho!” in *Parnassus*. Yet this poem is as dark in tone and meaning as the soot on the chimney sweep’s face. He added Caroline Sturgis’ “The Poet” to his roster in 1870, a poem that begins, “Thou hast learned the woes of all the world/From thine own longings and lone tears....” This paper will explore the discrepancies between Emerson’s idealist propositions and the reality of his past and that of his followers as expressed in the encapsulated sub-text of *Parnassus*. What were the Sturgis sisters saying to Waldo?

Transcendentalism: Men and Women Conversing (Session 2)

Organizer: Phyllis Cole

Chair: Sarah Wider

Rewriting the Life of an “Ultra-Radical”: Ralph Waldo Emerson on Margaret Fuller in *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*

Alice de Galzain, University of Edinburgh

Cowritten by James Freeman Clarke, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and William Henry Channing, *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli* disappointed the expectations of many of its contemporary readers when it was published in 1852. Built along a succession of letters and quotes, *Memoirs* “gave us little satisfaction when first read,” reported the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1854. However, although Fuller’s biography was criticized for its general lack of narrative fluidity, it is precisely in its fragmented nature that I like to locate its literary and historical value.

Indeed, I believe *Memoirs* deserves critical reappraisal for allowing us to perceive Transcendentalism’s eminent thinker under a new light: as co-writer of Fuller’s *Memoirs*, Emerson appears in the more unusual role of editor. Thus, I plan to investigate how his editing, as well as his re-writing, of Fuller’s life is problematic: more particularly, I wish to analyze how Emerson’s chapter on “Conversations in Boston” betrays his intentions of minimizing Fuller’s social reformism and mitigating her contentious early feminism. Narrating the life of an “ultra-radical” mustn’t have been an easy task. Yet rather than being the narrator of Fuller’s story, Emerson saw *Memoirs* as a way of giving voice to “Margaret and Her Friends” (original title of the work): his use of single quotation marks for Fuller’s writing—as opposed to double ones for other accounts—formalizes that intention.

However, Emerson did not recount Fuller’s Boston Conversations through word-to-word transcriptions of the records available to him at the time. Thanks to Nancy Craig Simmons’ findings, Elizabeth Peabody’s accounts of the Conversations (first series) enabled me to play “spot the difference” and expose Emerson’s attempts to polish her recollections of Fuller’s feminist discussions. On the one hand, many of Emerson’s cuts were simply the result of conventional editorial choices: numerous corrections were made to erase traces of oral discourse from records of Fuller’s Conversations in order to improve their readability. Nevertheless, Emerson also altered the content of certain records by erasing

significant terms from Peabody's version. I believe these visible modifications to be extremely resourceful to our knowledge of Emerson himself and to our understanding of the gendered rhetoric of his times - how did midnineteenth-century language convey gendered social norms?

Yet another important aspect of Emerson's rewriting of the *Conversations* lies in his emphasis on Fuller's appearance. The insistence on her beauty, on her grace and charm, contrasts with other accounts of Fuller's real-life physical presence. Adjectives such as "beautiful" and "sumptuous" pervade Fuller's description and recall the myth of "true womanhood" - a popular vision of woman in the first half of the nineteenth century which promoted ideals of passivity, self-sacrifice, and femininity. Although Emerson explained Fuller's beauty as the pure reflection of her genius, his depictions remain nonetheless gendered and reductive. Emerson's rewriting of Fuller's posthumous image places her within the boundaries of social norms: is it in order to protect her or to conform her that Emerson tried to diminish his friend's radicalism?

"Woman Conversing: Feminine Philosophers at the Concord School of Philosophy"

Tiffany K. Wayne, Independent Scholar

This paper will trace the role of women as lecturers and attendees at the Concord School of Philosophy summer sessions between 1879 and 1888.

Who was conversing? Women were active in a variety of post-Civil War Transcendentalist sites and organizations. Amos Bronson Alcott, founder of the Concord School, purposefully drew on his decades-long intellectual friendships with women in inviting thinkers such as Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Julia Ward Howe, and Ednah Dow Cheney to lecture at the School. Of these major figures, Cheney is the only one to have lectured every summer of the Concord School's existence, although Cheney rarely figures in any significant way in histories of the Transcendentalist movement. Women's presence at the Concord School of Philosophy was so apparent that one commentator was moved to describe the summer lecture series as "*a torrent of feminine ethics and woman's wit.*" This was at a time, in the late 19th century, that the broader American intellectual culture was shifting away from an emphasis on the intuitive and subjective, toward more "masculine" social sciences and materialism. Indeed, by the 1880s, the Transcendentalist movement itself was characterized as not only declining, but as "feminized,"

as the popular press portrayed women (and elderly men, such as Bronson Alcott) as the last remaining adherents, attempting to memorialize the earlier glory days.

What were they talking about? The men and women involved in the Concord School, however, were not merely holding on to a dying philosophical outlook, but rather vigorously emphasizing the continued value - even necessity—of "feminine ethics" or ways of knowing.

In her Concord School lectures, Cheney sought to promote a Margaret Fuller-inspired philosophy of androgynous humanity, emphasizing that both men and women could (and should) embody both feminine and masculine characteristics. Much attention has been paid to the role of women—Fuller's disciples—in maintaining and defending Fuller's legacy through the end of the 19th century. The women philosophers who lectured at the Concord School, however, continued to actively promote Fuller's *ideas*, providing an alternative arc of the movement from Fuller's conversations for women of the 1840s to the conversational space of the Concord School of Philosophy in the 1870s and 1880s.

Let It Be Known: Fuller's Voice in Emerson's Work on Women's Rights

Jennifer Daly, Drew University

Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Emerson frequently debated women's rights and women's equality during their friendship, and even in death they continue to converse about this particular topic. It is clear that Fuller had a standing impact on Emerson's work, particularly his work on the equality of women, and this can be observed in the rhetoric of Ralph Waldo Emerson's lecture at the Women's Convention of 1855. This lecture reflects Fuller's ideas and influence, and many of the ideas seem to be pulled directly from Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. While I have previously thought the similarities were due to the influencing nature of their friendship, there are discrepancies particularly in a lack of citation. While Emerson often cites male writers, or at least references the original writer, he does not acknowledge that the ideas he shares in his lecture are influenced by Fuller and, in some cases, come directly from her and her previous work on feminism and women's rights. It may be thought that Emerson's speech at the Women's Rights Convention was a eulogy for Fuller, but it is still problematic that Emerson's lecture lacks any citation for Fuller's ideas. Drawing on the rhetoric of the texts and the previous scholarship of Christina Zwarg, Phyllis Cole, and Armida Gilbert, among many others, I intend on re-

vealing not only that the influence of Fuller is clear in this lecture, but that these are Fuller's original ideas.

Standing Her Ground: Caroline Healey Dall and the Male Transcendentalists

Helen R. Deese, Tennessee Technological University

Caroline Healey Dall enjoyed one of the longest periods of interaction with the Transcendentalists of any of the movement's adherents. She began by hearing Emerson lecture when she was only twelve, discovered Elizabeth Peabody and her bookstore as soon as it opened in 1840, attended Margaret Fuller's conversations when she was eighteen, wrote a revisionist history of the movement in her seventies, and when she died in 1912 at age ninety had outlived just about all of the Transcendentalists, her frenemy Frank Sanborn being perhaps the lone exception. During nearly eight decades of encounters with many of the movement's principals, she engaged with them in a variety of ways, in person, through letters, through lectures and sermons (as both speaker and auditor), and in publications. Among the subjects of her conversations, broadly defined, with the male Transcendentalists, religion, abolitionism, and gender roles were the most significant. This paper highlights Dall's interchanges with a few of her male peers: Emerson, Samuel Osgood, Frederic Henry Hedge, and Thoreau, making clear that Dall was both influenced and an influencer. Emerson and to a lesser extent Thoreau were important to Dall not only in introducing her to inspiring and life-transforming thinking, but also as affirmers, persons who took seriously her own opinions and ideas. On the other hand, in daring to take on Osgood and Hedge, both high in the Unitarian hierarchy, Dall was acting boldly and self-reliantly. I think we can assume that they had been put on notice that any public pronouncements from them on the woman question would be closely examined and vigorously responded to from a woman's perspective.

Margaret Fuller Society at ALA 2020

Calls for Papers

San Diego, CA | May 21–24 2020

Panel 1: Traveling with Margaret Fuller

In her article titled "Books of Travel", Margaret Fuller declares that "innumerable as are the books of travel now into every region of the world, the proportion of good ones to the whole is still very small", but "among those we have, the best as to observation of particulars and lively expression are by women." (New York Daily Tribune, 18 Dec. 1845, p. 1). Taking Fuller's article as a point of departure, this panel proposes ways to think about traveling, including theorizing as well as representations of travel in Fuller's writings. We would like to interrogate how encounters, itineraries, geographical locations, traveling equipment have shaped literary and cultural expressions in Fuller's work and in that of her contemporaries. By including travel writing by Fuller and other writers, this panel aims to explore how these writers conceptualize travel, and how they respond to travel's capacity to register physical and imaginative experiences, and its possibility to imagine communities.

Panel 2: Teaching and Practicing Fuller's Feminism(s) in 2020

Margaret Fuller's feminist visions for social change are still valid and contemporary in our age. The 2020 anniversary of the women suffrage in the US calls attention to women's civil rights, and to the language of the law. As Phyllis Cole noted: "Fuller's feminist essay was first entitled 'The Great Lawsuit'; and in both versions of this manifesto she declares that a human 'inheritance' has been lost, now urging its recovery in ever higher courts." Drawing from the language of law (literally and metaphorically), this panel seeks to investigate how the reconceptualization of gender, sexuality, politics, and the body in the feminist writings of Margaret Fuller and other women writers can be practiced and taught in the classroom. Using both theory and pedagogy, we invite papers that center on feminist practices and rhetoric, collaboration, aesthetics and activism.

We welcome papers from scholars at any career stage. Paper proposals of 250–500 words and a short Vita should be sent to Sonia Di Loreto (sonia.diloreto@unito.it) by January 15, 2020. Please note if you will require A/V for your presentation.

Undergraduate Student Voices

Amanda Smith, University of South Carolina Beaufort

Margaret Fuller Conference Paper Reflection

Last November, I had the pleasure of presenting my research about Margaret Fuller and her dispatches at the Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference (GURC).

I got to share the power of feminizing land and how Fuller uses this rhetorical strategy to make larger strides towards gender equality. I talked about a few key passages from her dispatches that showcased her using feminized language in regards to bodies of land and how that patterns transcends her writing and becomes a body of a woman. After I gave my presentation, there was a moment where my audience asked me questions about my research. Even the questions that I couldn't quite answer told me something about my own work, and rejuvenated me in terms of continuing my research with Margaret Fuller and the pattern of gendering bodies of land as a woman.



Moving forward, I plan to do just that. As I am soon to be in the senior year of my undergraduate degree, I am planting the seeds of what I hope to be my senior thesis. I am incredibly excited at the prospect of answering the questions that Margaret Fuller and her writing as left me with. I am interested in seeing if other transcendentalist

writers are partaking in this pattern of feminizing land and how this pattern continues to operate in our society now. I look forward to seeing in what ways Fuller's writing has continued to fight the battle for gender equality in our modern world. What are the 21st century implications of the pattern of feminizing land as Fuller uses in her dispatches? I intend to explore that more.

GURC Abstract:

"Bodies of Land and Bodies of Women"

In the dispatches that Margaret Fuller wrote for the *New York Daily Tribune*, she creates a pattern of using feminine pronouns in reference to land. I found this particularly interesting given that the lands she traveled and wrote about were under immense political turmoil. The connection that Fuller and this pattern establishes between bodies of land and bodies of women is significant for conversations about female agency, not only within Fuller scholarship but perhaps, more ambitiously, within feminist criticism at large. The tradition of feminizing land, such as referring to Rome as a "she," speaks to the patriarchal abuse that is inflicted upon the bodies of women. Fuller's awareness of this tradition allows her to subvert it in ways that resist it.

The dangerous power in using feminine pronouns for land is that the treatment of the land, such as claiming ownership of it, transcends the physical property to the patriarchal ideologies that women's bodies can be owned. Fuller's dispatches become more than just commentary on land, taking on the body of a woman and in result, works to showcase the reality that bodies of women are seen as pieces of property, and left up to the ownership of men. The patriarchal ideologies that women's bodies can be owed as property is akin to the ideologies that bodies of land can be conquered, which is enforced through the pattern of using feminized language for land.

Her dispatches speak to larger conversations of victimization of land and women to raise awareness about gendered language. To further this, I place Mary Hawkesworth's research on feminist rhetoric in conjuncture with Fuller's work to articulate that Fuller was aware of the tradition of feminizing land and uses that to her benefit, in terms of writing for her American audience and their exposure to this tradition. Fuller was establishing a connection between the male-dominated violence of the lands in Italy to the violence of the bodies of women in America. In analysing the tradition of feminizing land, we become aware of how it is affecting women in society and thusly, how to push back against it in the same ways Margaret Fuller did and continues to do.