

Fuller, New Women, and the Paris Socialists

Proposal for “Transcendentalist Intersections” Conference

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

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