

**“Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion”**  
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“ ‘A Fair Sign of the Times’: Networks of Transcendentalism, Feminism and Reform in the *People’s Journal*”

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

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

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

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