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

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

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