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Not Only as Subject, but Also as Citizen:  
Margaret Fuller and the “New Manifestation” of (Concrete) University

This paper will focus on a handful of key passages from three texts of Margaret Fuller’s—*Summer on the Lakes* (1844), *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), and the dispatches she wrote for the *New York Tribune* while covering and eventually joining the Italian Revolution of 1848—all of which reveal Fuller to have understood better than any of her transcendentalist peers the dependence of a properly universalist politics on the concrete as opposed to the abstract. Grounding her advocacy of social reform and, eventually, revolution upon a recognition of the constitutive role played by those who comprise what Jacques Rancière terms “the part of no part”—a recognition that the public sphere born of the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and equality depends for its symbolic efficacy upon the exclusion of an exceptional, counterpublic dimension—Fuller, I argue, further politicizes what G. W. F. Hegel, in his *Philosophy of Right*, terms “concrete universality” (*konkrete Universalität*), a universality constituted, paradoxically, by its abjected content, its “rabble” (*Pöbel*). As I will demonstrate, throughout both *Summer on the Lakes* and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller consistently challenges liberalism’s abstract mode of universalism by identifying the nation’s non-citizens—not only women, but also Native and African Americans—as the core of a truly universalist politics. Such a challenge is exemplified by claims like the following from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*: “While any one is base, none can be entirely free and noble”; “We cannot expect to see any one sample of completed being, when the mass of men still lie engaged in the sod.” Yet, as I also aim to demonstrate, Fuller’s later dispatches for the *New York Tribune* further radicalize this challenge by moving beyond a mere identification of this exceptional/excluded dimension of the body politic to an *identification with* this exceptional/excluded dimension, as Fuller came to join the international Hegelian rabble in its pursuit of freedom and equality. My paper thus traces the evolution of Fuller’s political thought—and action—over the course of a five year period (1843-1848), concluding with her putting into practice the theory of concrete universality elaborated in her more well-known texts (*Summer* and *Woman*).

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### EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Seton Hall University, Fall 2016 – Present

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. English, University of Rochester, 2013

M.A. English, University at Buffalo, 2006

B.A. Secondary Education in English, Canisius College, 2004, *summa cum laude*

### PUBLICATIONS

#### Books:

*American Romanticism and the Materiality of Transcendence: Five Hegelian Variations*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. Forthcoming.

Editor (with Slavoj Žižek), *Subject Lessons: Hegel, Lacan, and the Future of Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press. Forthcoming.

Editor, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Literature but Were Afraid to Ask Žižek*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.

#### Articles & Book Chapters:

“Naught Beyond: Ahab’s Transcendental Materialism.” *Rethinking Ahab: Melville and the Materialist Turn*. Ed. Meredith Farmer and Jonathan Schroeder. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Forthcoming.

“Subject Lessons: Hegel, Lacan, and the Future of Materialism.” Introduction to *Subject Lessons: Hegel, Lacan, and the Future of Materialism*. Ed. Russell Sbriglia and Slavoj Žižek. New York: Columbia University Press. Forthcoming. (Co-authored with Slavoj Žižek.)

“From Sublimity to Sublimation: Hegel, Lacan, Melville.” *Subject Lessons: Hegel, Lacan, and the Future of Materialism*. Forthcoming.

“The Trouble with the Gothic: Poe, Lippard, and the Poetics of Critique.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American Renaissance*. Ed. Christopher N. Phillips. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Forthcoming.

“Did Somebody Say Žižek and Literature?” Introduction to *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Literature but Were Afraid to Ask Žižek*. Ed. Russell Sbriglia. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. 1–32.

“The Symptoms of Ideology Critique; or, How We Learned to Enjoy the Symptom and Ignore the Fetish.” *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Literature but Were Afraid to Ask Žižek*. 107–36.

“Feeling Right, Doing Wrong: Poe, Perversity, and the Cunning of Unreason.” *Poe Studies* 46 (2013): 4–31.

“Revision and Identification: Emerson and the Ethics of Skepticism and Sympathy.” *Arizona Quarterly* 66.2 (2010): 1–33.

#### Reviews:

“Žižek Now! or, a (Not So) Modest Plea for a Return to the Political.” Review essay of Jamil Khader and Molly Anne Rothenberg, eds. *Žižek Now: Current Perspectives in Žižek Studies*. *Postmodern Culture* 23.3 (2013).

Johannes Voelz, *Transcendental Resistance: The New Americanists and Emerson’s Challenge*. *American Nineteenth Century History* 13.3 (2012): 411–13.

Dorothy Baker, *America’s Gothic Fiction: The Legacy of Magnolia Christi Americana*. *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 34 (2008): 117–23.

### **SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

“Allergy to the Real: Cultural Materialism, New Materialism, and the Subject of Psychoanalysis,” LACK Conference, Colorado College (October 2017)

“‘The Fervid and Tremendous IDEA’: Whitman, Hegel, History.” American Literature and the Philosophical Conference, Université Paris Diderot (March 2017)

“*Visionary Compacts* at Thirty: Literature, Ideology, and the Field(-Imaginary) of American Studies.” Roundtable organizer and presenter. MLA Convention, Philadelphia, PA (January 2017)

“Between the Two Deaths: Cultural Materialism, New Materialism, and the Death of the Subject.” International Žižek Studies Conference, University of Cincinnati (May 2016)

“From Sublimity to Sublimation: Hegel *avec* Lacan.” LACK Conference, Colorado College (April 2016)

“Did Somebody Say Žižek and *Literature*?” International Žižek Studies Conference, University of Cincinnati (April 2014)

“The Symptoms of Ideology Critique; or, How We Learned to Enjoy the Symptom and Ignore the Fetish.” MLA Convention, Chicago, IL (January 2014)

“Plantation Romance or Romance with the Plantation? The Paratexts of Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*.” MLA Convention, Boston, MA (January 2013)

“Enjoy Your Fetish! Ideology Critique after the Symptom.” International Žižek Studies Conference, State University of New York at Brockport (April 2012)

“‘Such Capital Spirits’: Economic versus Moral ‘Interest’ in Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*.” C19: The Society of Early Americanists, University of California, Berkeley (April 2012)

“‘To Stand in the Attitude of a Conservative’: Hawthorne and the Politics of Pyrrhonism.” The Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College (June 2010)

“Painful Epistemology: Toward an Ethics of Skepticism.” C19: The Society of Early Americanists, Pennsylvania State University (May 2010)

“The Sublime Object of Alterity: Sympathy, Pain, (Dis)identification.” The Poetics of Pain: Aesthetics, Ideology, and Representation, Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, The Graduate Center, City University of New York (February 2010)

“‘An Appeal to One’s Own Heart’: Poe, Perversity, Affect.” The Third International Edgar Allan Poe Conference: The Bicentennial, Philadelphia, PA (October 2009)

“The Ethics of Eye-identity: Emerson and Sympathy.” The Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College (June 2008)

“The (Ordinary Language) Philosophy of Composition: Poe, Hieroglyphics, and the Logic of Signification in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.” RMMLA, Calgary, AB (October 2007)