

Conversations

The Newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society



Volume 4, Issue 2

Fall 2022

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A New Award from the MFS:

"Teaching to Racial Justice with Margaret Fuller"
The MFS Committee on Racial Justice

The MFS Committee on Racial Justice is pleased to announce a new prize: "The MFS Racial Justice Teaching Award: Teaching to Racial Justice with Margaret Fuller." We welcome entries that



—outline a syllabus including writing by Margaret Fuller and explain how Fuller's work fits into the semester's aims, including support of racial justice.

—describe a classroom activity or series of exercises that use Fuller's writing to teach to issues of racial justice.

—detail a paper assignment that focuses on racial justice and engages Fuller's writing.

—plan a community project that addresses racial justice and Fuller's writing.

—propose a nontraditional pedagogical approach to racial justice issues through Fuller's writing.

Submissions should be limited to one page. We especially encourage entries that engage critical race theory. We welcome submissions from both members and non-members of the Society, and urge graduate students to consider submitting.

The winning submission, as judged by the Society's Committee on Racial Justice, will receive a small monetary award and publication in *Conversations*, the newsletter of the Margaret Fuller Society. Send submissions to avallone000@gmail.com. Deadline: April 10th, 2023.

Letter from the Editor

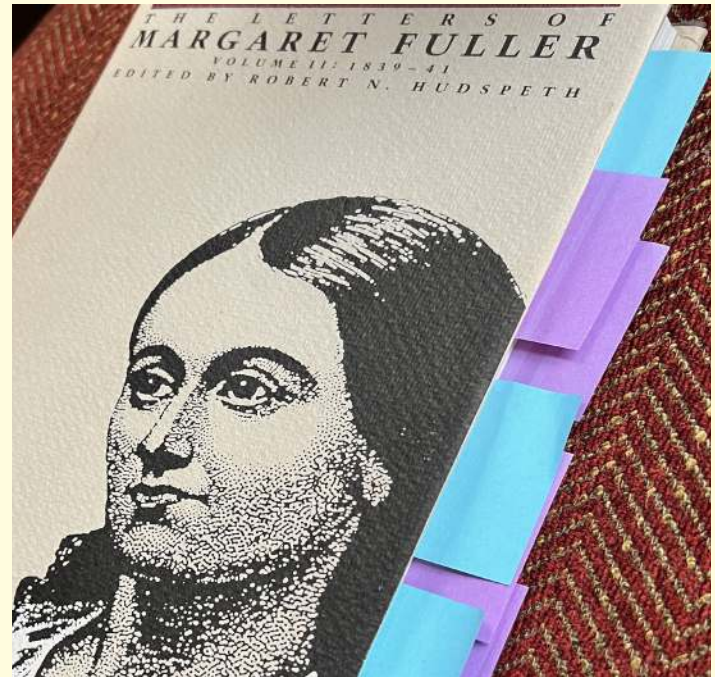
Dear Fullerenes,

In writing this letter introducing *Conversations*, Volume 4, Issue 2, I wondered how our dear Margaret felt about editing *The Dial*. I was on a plane seven miles above earth when I began my search for an answer. With only spotty internet service, I was rewarded with a single, informative document that appeared on my phone's tiny screen.

It was the work of a young scholar. In 2011, Katherine Rondina, a Worcester Polytechnic Institute senior, wrote a paper for her Bachelor of Science degree: "[Margaret Fuller and The Dial, 1839-1844.](#)" In addition to producing a helpful précis of Margaret's life, Rondina developed an impressive [timeline](#), drawing extensively on Margaret's letters. It turns out that our first *Dial* editor worried greatly about her role as she coaxed contributors, reminded writers of deadlines, warned colleagues not to leave proofreading to her because she wasn't good at it, expressed chagrin over publishing an error-ridden Emerson essay, and suggested that poetry might be printed in smaller font to save space, which was always at a premium on the printed page.

Back in my own library, I turned to Hudspeth's *The Letters of Margaret Fuller, Volume II, 1839-1841*, which made me feel better. There are so many flags on the book indicating where Margaret talked about her editorial pursuit that it looks like a toddler was let loose with a pad of post-its. Worrying, apparently, is part of an editor's duties.

And to what end? To pulling together the excellent work of others. First off, welcome and a bow of thanks to Cheryl Weaver, who has generously stepped up to take over layout and design, responsibilities that Mollie Barnes has shouldered for so long. Thank you to both for taking on this challenging task. Second, another round of applause for Andrew Wildermuth, who both compensates for my proofreading deficits and is a first-class copyeditor and acquisition editor, sourcing a provocative essay from a scholar outside the Society. And abundant thanks to our president, Sonia Di Loreto, provider of both keen counsel and moral support.



In this issue born of many hands, we cover much territory from announcing our new racial justice award to rethinking who might be counted as a Transcendentalist to reflecting more deeply on Margaret's passage on abortion to a Society member's art exhibit on Margaret's life and work to an interview with a Society member, which will become a regular feature, to a unique Italian project where *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, was read by a community of teachers and students to three book reviews to a roundup of future and past conferences to our Society's business meeting minutes.

Thanks to all and please put on your thinking caps for Vol. 5, Issue 1, due out in Spring 2023!

Jessica Lipnack
Editor, *Conversations*

Letter from the President

Dear Fullerenes,

In my last letter I wrote of the isolation of these past pandemic years, and the collective desire to go back to a more communal world. For some of us this world also comprises our classrooms, where we shape communities while fostering individual strengths. A good number of our students are coming from faraway countries, and they meet different languages, cultures, and literatures sometimes for the first

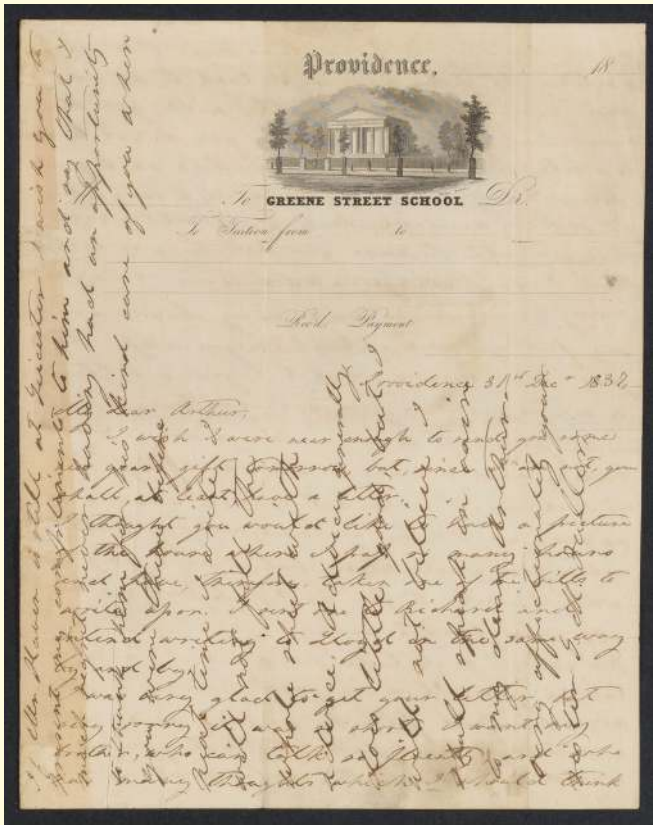
complexity of international and cosmopolitan acumen and attitudes.

Being so involved in teaching also reminded me of a document I came across at the Houghton Library a few summers ago: Margaret Fuller's academic prospectus for "classes of Ladies in German, Italian, and French Literature," written in October 1836. Fuller's classes in modern European Languages and Literatures for young women rivaled those that were taught—in the same years—by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to the young men of Harvard. Obviously, Fuller's focus was young women, their "progress" and "knowledge." As Megan Marshall has noted, "Margaret was, by disposition, more galvanizer than teacher. She was proud of her 'magnetic power over young women,' as she described her ability to draw pupils 'into my sphere.'" I am invariably in awe of the courage and steadfastness of my students, and I hope that the earnestness and authenticity we perceive in Fuller's language, where in the "Prospectus" she puts herself on par with her pupils, claiming that she was "one who had previously traversed the same ground," is a constant inspiration for our pedagogy, and an energetic call to always listen to and respect our students' stories and critical perspectives.

Speaking of pedagogy, the MFS is implementing collaborative infrastructures for exchanging syllabi and teaching materials. Please take a look at [our new pedagogy page](#) on our Society website, and consider sharing your thoughts and your materials! I am sure everybody is looking forward to learning from each other, and I, for one, cannot wait to see what other Fullerenes are doing in their own classrooms.

As you flip through the pages of this newsletter, you will see how a large portion of it is dedicated to teaching activities and teaching philosophies, and it is certainly my wish to keep our attention focused on the ways we can build communities not only through our publications, actions, and research, but also thanks to the relations we build in our classrooms. I think that the abundance you will encounter in these pages is matched by the brilliance of the people who made the newsletter: applause and shoutouts for Jessica and Andrew, and for Mollie and Cheryl—thank you for generating ideas and producing this object. I am delighted to be part of this circle.

Cont'd on page 4



Providence Greene Street School

time spending one or more years in contexts different and unfamiliar. Having gone back to teaching in person, we now appreciate their adjustments even more sharply.

As I was reviewing my students' names in one of my classes this semester, with people coming from England, Spain, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and many from Iran, I was thinking of the wonderful richness in terms of diversity, stories, and experiences that our students bring to the classroom and to our lives. I teach in a department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and I am constantly exposed to the

Conversations

The Newsletter of

The Margaret Fuller Society

www.margaretfullersociety.org

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Conversations is published digitally twice yearly. Society membership includes a newsletter subscription. Current and past issues are available on the Society's website.

Please consider writing for us! We welcome short articles and essays on topics related to Fuller: news, scholarly pieces, book reviews, personal and non-academic essays, and letters to the editor. See this and prior issues for inspiration. Send submissions and queries via email to Jessica Lipnack at jessicalipnack@gmail.com with "MFS newsletter" in the subject line.

Margaret Fuller Society

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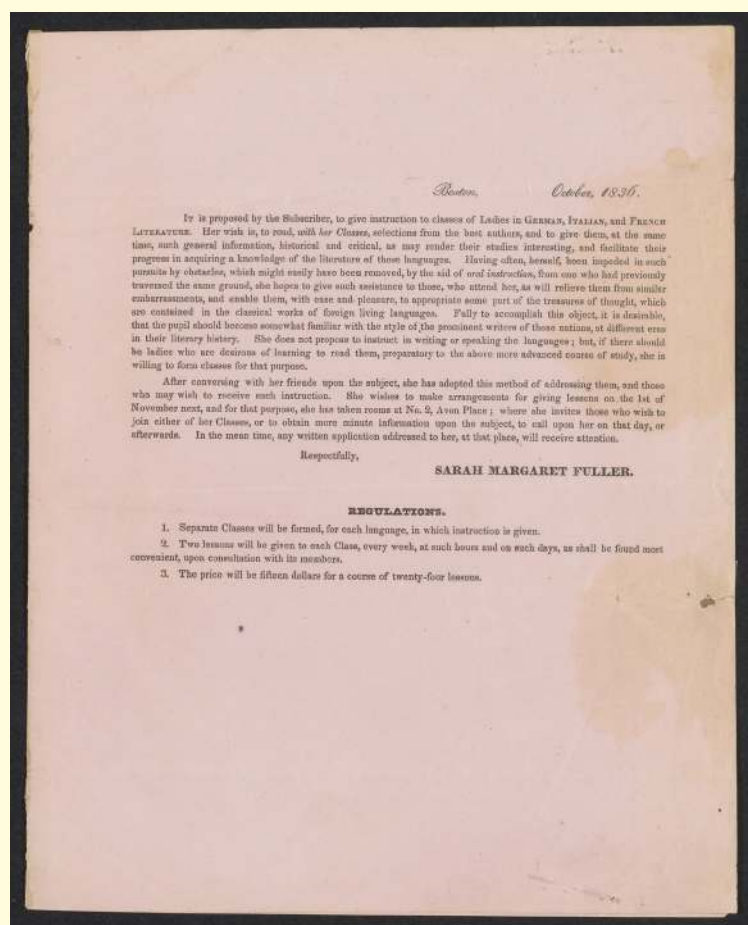
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I cannot fully express what a precious community this has become for me, and I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the friends who contributed to—and brainstormed, suggested, edited, amended, wrote for, supported, and nurtured—the Society in these past months. *Grazie infinite.*

Sonia Di Loreto

President, Margaret Fuller Society



Margaret Fuller's Academic Prospectus

Black Political Organizing and Radical Transcendentalism: David Walker and Margaret Fuller

Alex Moskowitz

I offer this short piece as somewhat of a provocation—hopefully to generate discussion on what it might mean to think through the notion of American radicalism in the context of the nineteenth century. I want to think about the politics of American Transcendentalism, and, more specifically, how within Transcendentalism Margaret Fuller is often cast as an example, or even the exemplar, of its radical figures. The aim of this short piece is to consider Fuller’s position as a radical Transcendentalist alongside the Black social reform in the early nineteenth century—and, in particular, alongside David Walker. This juxtaposition, I’ll suggest, reveals something about the conservative nature of the American literary and historical cultural imagination. My ultimate goal here is to bring together two interconnected points. First: Fuller remains a part of our story of nineteenth-century American social reform because her radicalism is in part owing to foreign influence. Radicalism in the U.S., in other words, is acceptable, or understandable, only if it arrives from somewhere else. Second: We have been historically conditioned to fail to recognize types of radicalism that were very much part of domestic nineteenth-century social reform. For this reason, the tradition of Black organizing has been overlooked and separated as markedly not being part of this same story. In what follows, I offer some reflection on how we might begin to stitch together these two histories and think anew about radical American political practice.

Let’s start with Transcendentalism and Fuller’s radicalism. We can understand, then, why Fuller has been understood as being Transcendentalism’s radical figure:

Fuller’s time in Europe and her involvement in and support of the Italian Revolution has cemented her place to Fuller scholars as not only a leader of Transcendentalism as a system of thought, but also as someone who was willing to get materially involved in the messy politics of her historical moment. Compared to others, most notably Emerson, this designation makes good sense, especially given Transcendentalism’s heritage: believed by many of its contemporaries, and many today, to be an intellectual movement consisting merely of heady dreamers, idealists, and those disconnected from the realities of daily life. We need only to recall Nathaniel Hawthorne’s critique of the Brook Farm experiment in *The Blithedale Romance*, or Louisa May Alcott’s “Transcendental Wild Oats,” to remind ourselves of what it meant to be derisively called a Transcendentalist in the nineteenth century.



David Walker

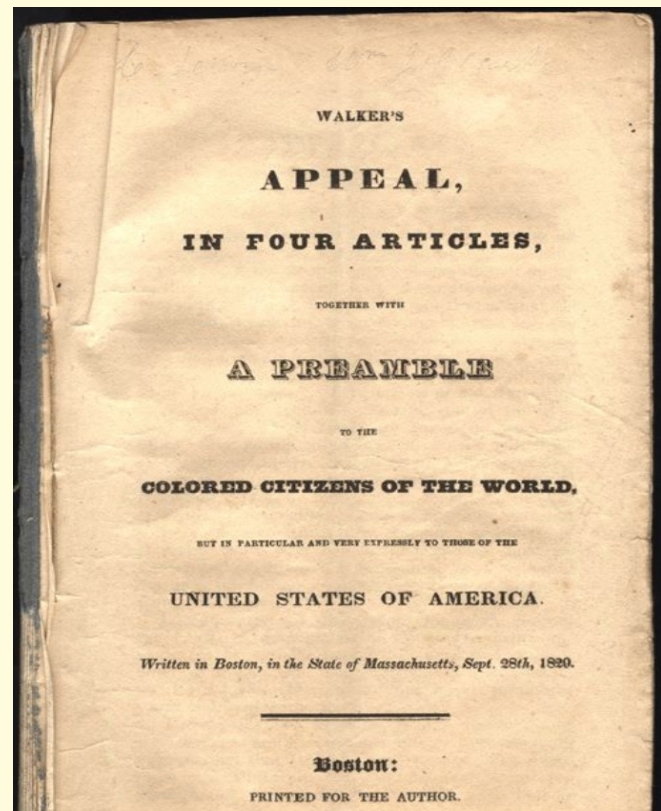
The parodies of the supposed failings of Transcendentalism remain one of the most prominent aspects of the movement in the public mind today. Part of the effect of this is, I think, that we have come to understand Transcendentalism as something much more politically conservative than it was really, and much less connected to and more isolated from the vibrant world of American radicalism in the nineteenth century. In this context, and viewed through this narrow lens, Fuller might indeed appear to be the group’s most, or lone, radical member. Where, in the misguided popular imagination, Thoreau went off to protest society and modern life by living alone in the woods, Fuller went off to participate in a revolution: a real one. On the one

hand, we find the entrenchment of liberal individualism. On the other, actual engagement in collective social movements. I am not here to question Fuller's radical legacy, nor the radicality of her political commitments. I am here, however, to question why Fuller might seem to some to stand alone in her own radical corner of Transcendentalism. Something here to me suggests that we should take seriously the history of the intellectual heritage of which we are the inheritors. We might consider, for example, the history of the rise of American studies, broadly construed, as a field of study. We might think about the postwar and Cold War origins of a field of study that was meant, in part, to cement a specifically American ideology against the threat of Soviet communism. Indeed, the last few remaining threads of American investments in public higher education date from this period as well: both the City University of New York and the University of California systems can trace their founding or rapid expansion to this time. Higher education was seen as a type of ideological shield against dangerous, foreign ideas. Within this context, we can understand the attraction of the developing field of American studies and the more general study of American literature, history, and culture as unique, specific, and distinct.

It's no surprise, then, that the supposedly one radical figure in the Transcendentalist movement has to, in some way, come from beyond the borders of the U.S. Or, maybe more accurately: the radical ideas that found their way into American Transcendentalism via Fuller can be traced back to foreign influence. Fuller's radicalism is allowed, we might say, because those radical ideas are foreign: they are an infiltration of a European avant-garde into American politics and are thus both tolerated at the same time as they are marginalized.

Put more clearly, I believe it is important to uncover how the ideological and intellectual history of the field of American studies has contributed to a blindness towards good, homegrown radicalism in the U.S. To this end, instead of looking for the radicalism of the more familiar faces of Transcendentalism, we might instead begin to think about where we draw the line of who counts as a Transcendentalist. At the same time, I offer this reevaluation as an invitation to read Transcendentalism against the background of all of the radical political and social organizing that went on behind and around it, and inside its formal ranks. Who is and isn't a Transcendentalist? Who is

or isn't a proto-Transcendentalist? And why are all the Transcendentalists white? If George Ripley is an early Transcendentalist, why not radical antislavery activists like David Walker, who I suggest was already speaking the language of Transcendentalism nearly a decade before the 1836 Transcendental Club first met in Cambridge. If we read the history of Black organizing in the decade before the formal beginnings of Transcendentalism as a necessary part of the larger story of social reform, perhaps Transcendentalism will appear less like a phenomenon that materialized out of thin air. In addition, perhaps reading these histories together will give more credit to Black organizers, thereby decentering the whiteness that is presumed to be at the core of mid nineteenth-century anti-slavery politics.



Allow me the space to offer David Walker as a brief example of how we might reassess the emergence of Transcendentalism. Walker, who is today best known for his 1829 *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, was in the late 1820s a central figure of the Black reform movement in Massachusetts, and especially in Boston. Key to this movement were uplift, education, and enlightenment—ideas that Walker and others lectured on frequently. And even

though the *Appeal* is remembered today for its more spectacular moments, such as the embrace of violence, we would do well to remember that even the form of the *Appeal* is written such that its messages about racial degradation and uplift could easily be read to those who were unable to read themselves.¹ In other words, both the *Appeal* and the larger Black reform movement were aimed centrally at education and the dissemination of knowledge. Moral reform and self-improvement were essential to such writings, and continued to be central to the growing antislavery cause in the antebellum period, as found in other texts of the time, including those of Martin Delany, who is often cast off as Frederick Douglass's too-radical counterpart.² One way of making sense of the *Appeal* is to read the text in close conversation with the general generative and influential ethos of the Black reform movement of the 1820s.



Frontispiece for the 1830 edition
of David Walker's *Appeal*

To place this back in the context of Transcendentalism: in the late 1820s, Black people were already thinking deeply about educational reform, enlightenment, and moral improvement as necessary to transforming the world. The self and the conception of self-culture was important, as was the need to educate others as a way of waking people up to the possibility of improvement and to the possibility of another, better world.

Black political organizers, in other words, were speaking the language of Transcendental social reform just across the Charles River in Boston, years before the Transcendentalist Club sat down in Cambridge. They were using similar terms, appealing to similar concepts, and similarly rethinking the oppressive foundations of society. Indeed, these were the same organizers that William Lloyd Garrison would get involved with in 1830 and would begin to cover in the first issues of *The Liberator*. Garrison published nine articles related to Walker in the first six months of the newspaper's existence, ensuring that Walker's words and the ideas of the larger political movement of early Black organizing would reach a multiracial audience beyond the walls of the lecture hall.³

My main point here is not exactly to say that Transcendentalism is derivative. Nor do I want to downplay the importance of Transcendentalism as a movement or really any of its figures as individuals. My point, rather, is to suggest that this language of radical political and social reform was well established, and very much in the air, before the more formal beginnings of Transcendentalism. No one thing here points towards some direct influence. Instead, I suggest we rethink how we make sense of the origins of Transcendentalism, while also considering how progressive early nineteenth-century writers were working within common political frameworks that were in fact grounded in both shared geographical proximity and institutional frameworks. Anyone who has themselves spent time organizing, or who has been active in a union, knows the importance of momentum. There need not be a direct connection between separate political groups for the energy of one to transfer to another. My suggestion here is that Transcendentalism needed the energy and the space that was carved out by Black social and political reform in the 1820s.

I suggest, therefore, that we begin to think differently about the radical origins of nineteenth-century Transcendentalist social reform. How did Black political organizing provide the grounds for the type of nineteenth-century social critique that made Transcendentalism possible? What do we lose by not acknowledging this history as central to the political and social struggle for change in the nineteenth century? When we typically consider the connections between the antislavery movement and Transcendentalism, we point to a later period, around 1850, when people such as Thoreau began to publicly

write and speak out against the Fugitive Slave Law and slavery as an institution. Black social and antislavery organizing, however, provided both the rhetoric and the political coordinates that enabled what we call Transcendentalism. By attending to this history, Margaret Fuller might begin to look much less like a foreign anomaly and more like a figure deeply embedded in a larger, global effort for social justice. Along these lines, we might also begin to think through the ideologically driven heritage and reception of Transcendentalism today. Our current moment's interest in the rekindling of the embers of social justice only stands to gain from acknowledging and claiming the long history of progressive American politics: one that is woven through Black political organizing and Transcendentalism alike.

1 See Marcy J. Dinius, "Look!! Look!! At This!!!!": The Radical Typography of David Walker's 'Appeal.'" PMLA, vol. 126, no. 1, 2011, pp. 55-72.

2 Martin Delany published a series of articles titled "Political Economy" and "Domestic Economy" in *The North Star* in 1849. Here, he argues for the importance of applying the principles of economics on the individual level as essential to Black uplift.

3 See Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance*. Pennsylvania State UP, 1997, p. 113.



David Walker Belknap Street Plaque

Fuller Before and After Dobbs

Megan Marshall

Conversations editor Jessica Lipnack invited me to offer some thoughts on Margaret Fuller and abortion rights following from the emails that flew on the MFS listerv in the wake of the Dobbs decision last summer. Could we look to Margaret Fuller as an early advocate for reproductive justice?

The answer to that question is not straightforward, of course, given the distance between our time and hers. I thought I might write about the history of abortion in America, which has been much in the press since Dobbs: how abortion before "quickening" (about four months) was legal in the U.S. throughout Margaret Fuller's lifetime; how countless women availed themselves of herbal or pharmaceutical abortifacients, feeling little if any shame and knowing the risk, but calculating that the risk of death in childbirth or of immiseration was even greater. I planned to write about how Margaret Fuller's concept of the "great radical dualism" of male and female, which she struggled against, sought to reconcile, and also sometimes celebrated, was certainly rooted in the stark biological facts of women's lives.

Yet none of that brings us close to Fuller's views on abortion. On this there is little evidence beyond a single letter written to Caroline Sturgis on October 22nd, 1840, that is, so far as I know (corrections welcome!), the only passage in her writings in which abortion is explicitly mentioned, although not by that term. Fortunately this is an autograph letter, not edited or excerpted by Channing, Clarke, or Emerson for *Memoirs*. The words are entirely Fuller's. The full text of the letter can be found both in Robert Hudspeth's *The Letters of Margaret Fuller: Volume II, 1839-1841* and his selected Fuller letters, *The Heart Is A Large Kingdom*.

Fuller writes in a mood of exhilaration. She's certain of her closeness to Cary, and she's written a letter to "dear Waldo" that "gives me pain" but seems to have been necessary. "The life that flows in upon me is too beautiful to be checked," Fuller exults. Her theme is self-possession, which she identifies with

virginity, the role of the uncorrupted “lonely Vestal” of classical mythology. It is in this context that she recalls a night in Groton nearly five years in the past, not long after her father’s death, when she attended “the sick chamber of a wretched girl in the last stage of a consumption.”

On arrival at the nearby household, Fuller receives a more complete accounting of the young woman’s fate: “It was said she had profaned her maiden state, and that the means she took to evade the consequences of her stain had destroyed her health and placed her on this bed of death.” In Charles Capper’s terse summary, Fuller’s neighbor was dying as the result of a “botched abortion.” (An aside: Capper’s modern usage conjures up twentieth-century scenarios—back alleys, coat hangers—that almost certainly don’t fit the facts of the woman’s ordeal. Fuller’s own description gives the woman agency, whereas Capper’s summary makes her a clumsy abortionist’s victim.)

“The room was full of poverty, base thoughts and fragments of destiny,” Fuller writes. But whose destiny? The story Fuller wants to tell is not about the suffering woman who died that night in her arms, but about herself: “I looked ay I *gazed* into that abyss lowest in humanity of crime for the sake of sensual pleasure, my eye was steadfast, yet above me shone a star, pale, tearful, still it shone, it was mirrored from the very blackness of the yawning gulf. Through the shadows of that night ghost-like with step unlistened for, unheard assurance came to me. O, it has ever been thus, from the darkest comes my brightness, from Chaos depths my love. I returned with the morning star.”

The following passage is (to me) the most remarkable of the letter. Arriving home at dawn, the twenty-five-year-old Fuller lies down in what had been her father’s death bed to watch the sunrise, and then spends a full day in his room without food or drink, reading the Bible and Wordsworth, comprehending “the meaning of an ascetic life,” and deepening her commitment to solitary seeking. “The change from my usual thoughts and feelings was as if a man should leave the perfumed, wildly grand oft times poisonous wildernesses of the tropics the crocodiles and lion haunts and haughty palms, for the snowy shroud, intent unpromising silence, and statuesque moons of the Northern winter from which Phenix like rises the soul

into the tenderest Spring.” She concludes the letter, returning to the present: “I have strength to wait as a smooth bare tree forever.”

When writing Fuller’s life, I took this letter as recording a turning point for Fuller, the time in 1835 when she found the strength to face her responsibilities in the months after her father’s death, a strength she identified with self-denial and patient acceptance, or “waiting”—perhaps forever—even as she writes in a spirit of vigorous inspiration. Fuller depicts herself as rising, in quick succession, from two deathbeds: first that of a woman who represents the dire circumstances that can end women’s lives, and then that of her father, who had both supported and impeded her progress. She chooses virginity: powerful, if so far passive.

When we look at this letter for evidence of Fuller’s view of abortion, however, we may well feel disappointed. While according the dying woman agency in her fate, Fuller faults her for her decisions, and poses her own choice in stark and censorious contrast, diminishing her neighbor’s tragedy to a plot element in her own narrative.

And yet, this is a letter written at age thirty, recalling an incident that took place at twenty-five. So much was yet to come. Perhaps, just as abortion is—or should be—an individual’s choice, we may read Margaret Fuller’s 1840 letter as marking the distance she would travel so very rapidly as an individual from a time when she imagined solitude in male terms (“as if a man”), condemned a dying woman for her indulgence in “sensual pleasure,” and aspired to possess the “strength to wait as a smooth bare tree forever,” to emerge as the radically empathetic writer and reformer and lover and mother whose words and deeds we so admire. In particular we might note Fuller’s commitment to easing the burdens of women like her “wretched” neighbor in her later work with and writing about the female inmates at Sing Sing and at New York City’s Female Refuge: “I like them better than most women I meet,” she wrote of the Refuge residents in 1846.

In the end, Margaret Fuller did not wait. Nor should we.

“Margaret Fuller: Disrupting the Fabric”

A Multimedia Body of Visual Art

Sasha Chavchavadze

In 2017, not long before her death, my mother said to me that I must read Megan Marshall’s *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life*. A poet and linguist, my mother was clearly captivated by the survival of Fuller’s words as she described the recovery of Fuller’s Rome diary from the shipwreck. I picked up the book soon after my mother’s suggestion, and I immediately felt the pathos and power of Fuller’s life envelope me. This experience launched a five-year creative journey as a visual artist that continues to this day.

As I work on the project, images and words from Fuller’s life rise to the surface with a sense of urgency. I do watercolor and ink drawings of objects that Fuller might have held—her pen, spectacles, reticule, a ring—collaging the drawings onto fabric surfaces. Antique fabric is a central medium in my mixed-media paintings and assemblages. As I paint, cut, and collage delicate antique lace and linen to create something new, I am disrupting social hierarchies of gender and class embodied in the fabric, just as Full

er disrupted the social fabric of her own day. I often paint the fabric in watery blues and greens that evoke Fuller’s shipwreck, adding images from the sea, like seaweed, shells, and crabs.

“Margaret Fuller: Disrupting the Fabric” is a multimedia body of visual art that I have presented in a series of exhibitions reactivating Fuller’s life. In September 2022, I was delighted to bring my largest installation to date to the Brickbottom Gallery in Somerville, MA, located near the place of Fuller’s birth and early life. Over the past four years, my work has been exhibited as part of a larger, community-based project called SALLY, named after Sally Hemings, which I co-created with artist and curator JoAnne McFarland. We travel with the SALLY project to communities around the country, researching local forgotten or marginalized women, curating exhibitions as we invite artists to respond to the stories of these women’s lives.

Fuller’s radical voice, erased over time, speaks volumes to the present. I add descriptive words and



Hurricane Force



Survived the Wreck

phrases—often Fuller’s own—to my paintings, cutting each letter from paper with scissors, applying them to the warp and weft of the fabric: “Monstrous are the treacheries of our time”—“The scrolls of the past burn my fingers”—“her soggy diary”—“her words”—“survived the wreck.” These ecosystems of image and text create an elegy to a lost, and now found, mentor—and enable me to express themes of loss, survival, and agency in my own life.

My work as a visual artist has often revolved around disappearance, as I explore erased or forgotten history. I am interested in how history repeats itself, particularly when forgotten, and I am drawn to lost narratives of survival and change. Perhaps this fascination with the past has come from a childhood surrounded by the shards of my emigre grandparents’ former lives in Russia and Georgia, a world erased by war and revolution. My grandparents “survived the wreck” by embracing their new lives in the United States. My mother’s poetry “survived the wreck” of her long illness.

Fuller has taken me to archives in the U.S. and abroad, where I have carried out my decidedly non-academic research. At the Houghton Library in Cambridge, MA, I held Fuller’s letters in my gloved hands. As a 2018 Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome, I walked in Fuller’s footsteps with Joseph Jay Deiss’s *The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller* as my guide. I worked in a beautiful studio looking out over the Trastevere, where Fuller once walked. I scoured Roman flea markets, searching for objects that could once have belonged to Fuller, incorporating these faux artifacts into my

installations. I have documented my journey in search of Fuller by using mixed media art and text in a digital publication (see link below).

Fuller’s ability to survive and to create under the most restrictive of circumstances, by inventing alternate paths, has reinforced my own practice of creating interdisciplinary art projects that question the status quo. As part of the SALLY project, my Margaret Fuller work has been presented in five exhibitions in both university and community venues. SALLY grew out of “conversations” between JoAnne McFarland and myself, in which we discovered commonalities across differences of race, sharing a sense of integrity and purpose as artists through community-building and collaboration.

We hope to next bring SALLY to France, where both Margaret Fuller and Sally Hemings encountered emancipated communities that would alter their lives. Another meaning of the word “sally” seems particularly resonant today—a sudden charge out of a besieged place.

View images from my Margaret Fuller project [here](#). View my eight-minute digital publication, “Disrupting the Fabric,” [here](#). (Scroll through the pages by clicking on the arrow on the right.)

www.sashachavchavadze.com
www.sallyproject.net



Roman Burial



Photo of the exhibit by Megan Marshall



The artist, Sasha Chavchavadze



Photo from the exhibit taken by Megan Marshall.

Member Portrait: Nanette Hilton

Nanette Rasband Hilton

Editor's note: With this issue, we're inaugurating portraits of our Society members. We pose a series of questions; people answer. First up is Nanette Rasband Hilton, who has taught writing, rhetoric, and world and American literature at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she is a doctoral candidate in English Literature.

Q. How did you become interested in Margaret Fuller? What led you to her?

A. I became interested in Margaret Fuller at the beginning of my master's program in 2017, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, while in Dr. John Hay's graduate seminar on American non-fiction. In that course I read Fuller's "Leila" and was captivated by what Jeffrey Steele calls "Leila's transcendence of 'sex, age, state' and other human 'barriers,'" which give "her a supernatural aura" (442). The way Fuller showed the feminine divine surpassing social prescription and escaping human compulsions to capture, possess, consume, and weaponize caught my attention. Even more intriguing to me was Fuller's shift in perspective, herself quickly becoming Leila—like Diana Prince becomes Wonder Woman—and thereby experiencing "boundless suggestion" (54). Fuller's sensory-rich descriptions of Leila were irresistible, delicious to both my ear and tongue as I spoke them aloud, lines like: "I have seen her among the Sylphs' faint florescent forms that hang in the edges of life's rainbows" (55). Rereading "Leila" thrills me and I thank the Fuller Society for inviting my reflection for the purposes of the newsletter.

Q. Which aspects of Margaret Fuller's intellectual life are most like yours?

A. I hesitate to compare my intellect to Fuller's because of her grandeur, but I certainly relate to her limitless curiosity and refusal to be denied or defined. The fact that Fuller embodies so many qualities, aspirations, and accomplishments inspires me. I believe this is Fuller's greatest legacy: to inspire others.



Nanette Rasband Hilton

Q. Many people outside of New England study Fuller. Do you feel your being in Las Vegas has an effect on how you view her?

A. Perhaps being in the West kept Fuller remote, making her more of a revelation when we met—much like Fuller reveals Leila. With family in Boston, I've had greater opportunity and motivation to visit New England historic literary sites, many connected with Fuller. For instance, hiking around Mt. Auburn Cemetery until I stood beside Fuller's cenotaph was an emotional experience, as was visiting Harvard's Houghton Library and handling her papers. These



Swan with magnolia decoration painted by Hilton for daughter's wedding

moments felt like fulfilling a pilgrimage.

Q. Fuller was deeply drawn to and profoundly interested in different forms of art. You're an artist. Have you incorporated Margaret Fuller into your art work?

A. My artwork connecting me most to Fuller are my renditions of magnolias. For my daughter Chelsey's wedding reception in 2010, I painted large wooden swan decoys with magnolia blooms and hand-crafted chocolate magnolia flowers to adorn her seven-tier wedding cake. These paintings were published in *The Decorative Painter*. In preparation for this work, I studied the flower with its unique cone-like center, clefted petals, and thick two-toned velvety leaves. Surprisingly, magnolia trees are sometimes planted in my desert valley. I even coddled one in my front yard for a time. I was raised in Louisiana and drove across Lake Pontchartrain as an adult. So, when I read Fuller's description of the magnolia being a conduit to Heaven, "the poet of the lake," and "Queen of the South" (44-5), I knew exactly what she meant. Our shared experience with magnolias increases my kinship with Margaret.

Q. What projects are you working on now in these still complicated Covid times?

A. I am finishing my PhD dissertation, including a chapter on Fuller focused on the intersections of genre and gender. I look at the agential irony of her *Summer on the Lakes*. This work stems from earlier work, including "[Margaret Fuller: Prophet Poet](#)," published in *Conversations*, vol. 1, no. 2, Spring 2018, p. 9,11. One of my first conference presentations was for the Society, entitled "Praxis of Duality: The Sisterhood of Fuller's 'Leila' and Du Bois's 'Atlanta,'" at ALA, San Francisco, CA, May 2018, later published in [Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice](#), vol. 9, no. 3, 2018, pp. 42-53. I am indebted to the Society for providing these opportunities that helped shape my graduate study and instill confidence as a young scholar.

Q. Do you teach Margaret Fuller? Which Margaret Fuller texts do you use and who are your students?

A. Of course I teach Margaret Fuller! How couldn't I? I include her in everything I teach, as either an aside or as a primary subject. For instance, in every class



Magnolia decorations by Hilton for daughter's wedding cake

I reference her *Conversations* as vehicles for critical thinking, listening, and speaking, and as patterns for my own students' classroom discussions. In teaching American literature, I include *The Great Lawsuit* in my syllabus. When teaching world literature, we talk about gendered norms, and Fuller appears as a strong figure in the history of the rhetorics of feminisms.

Q. If you could eavesdrop on a conversation between Margaret Fuller and one of her contemporaries, whom would you most like her to talk to? What would they say?

A. Other than buying a yearly subscription to Fuller's *Conversations*, I would like to drop in on Margaret's chats with her friend Cary Sturgis. I imagine each sharing the longings of their "woman's heart" in a most confidential and empathetic way, but elevated by their intellectual aplomb. Modern society does not foster such relationship. The collaboration between Margaret and Cary surely resulted in human connection and new knowledge for both women.

Works cited: *The Essential Margaret Fuller*. Jeffrey Steele, Editor. Rutgers UP, 1995.

Italy Reads: Margaret Fuller's Summer on the Lakes, in 1843

In fall 2022, twenty Italian high school teachers joined students and faculty at Rome's John Cabot University to read *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, the book based on Margaret Fuller's journals during her travels across the Great Lakes region in 1843.

On October 18, 2022, Society member Katie Simon, Associate Professor in the English Department at Georgia College, served as the keynote speaker for "Thinking through Fuller: Environment, Aesthetics, and Social Justice." Society president Sonia Di Loreto, Associate Professor of American Literature at the University of Torino, introduced the program with her talk "Margaret Fuller's Rome," speaking to an Italian audience of nearly 150 students, teachers, and scholars who participated in the Italy Reads Program.

Italy Reads came to select Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* with a phone call, after Sonia contacted John Cabot University to discuss the possibility of hosting the "Journaling for Justice International Conference: The Life and Work of Margaret Fuller." A discussion ensued with Gina Marie Spinelli, which led to the decision to select a text of Fuller's for Italy Reads 2022.

Now in its thirteenth year, JCU's Italy Reads Program was initially funded with a National Endowment for the Arts grant to host "The Big Read Rome" program.

That year, twenty Italian high school teachers worked together to begin this community-based, English-language reading and cultural exchange program. The following year, John Cabot University established its own Italy Reads Program. Since then, the program has expanded to cover the entire academic year and includes four more programs for high schools. Together, nearly two hundred teachers from over sixty high schools across Italy have participated reaching thousands of young people annually.

For teachers, Italy Reads offers professional development and networking opportunities, and coordinates peer-to-peer in-class and online meetings between JCU students and high school students. During these meetings, students get to know one another and share ideas about the chosen author, the work of literature, and the themes it presents.

Introducing the keynote speaker, done this year by Sonia, has served as an important part of the program. In 2017, when participants read poems by Emily Dickinson, former U.S. poet laureate Billy Collins served as keynote speaker, and was introduced by ESA astronaut Paolo Nespoli aboard the International Space Station! Sonia, thankfully, did not have to leave Earth. ([See Nespoli reading Poem #1695 from the Cupola](#))

ITALY READS 2022-2023: MARGARET FULLER'S 'SUMMER ON THE LAKES IN 1843'



"Sarah Margaret Fuller Ossoli (1810-1850), better known as Margaret Fuller, was a writer, editor, translator, early feminist thinker, critic, and social reformer who was associated with the Transcendentalist movement in New England. This is her introspective account of a trip to the Great Lakes region in 1843. Organized as a series of travel episodes interspersed with literary and social commentary, the work displays a style common to the portfolios, sketch books, and commonplace books kept by educated nineteenth-century women.

Book Reviews

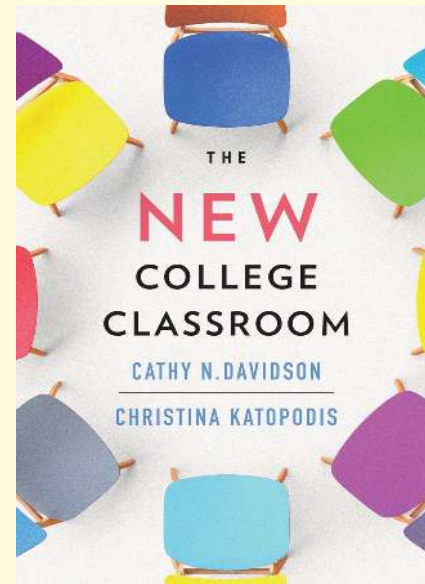
The New College Classroom by Cathy N. Davidson and Christina Katopodis
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022)

Editor's note: Please enjoy two reviews of this book, the first by Lisa West and the second by Eagan Dean.

Lisa West, Financial and Membership Officer

This handbook and research-based, classroom-tested study by CUNY professor Cathy N. Davidson and MFS board member Christina Katopodis is a timely life-jacket in the riptide many of us face as we return to the classroom after the pandemic—finding not only that many pre-pandemic teaching methods are outdated (considering current student demographics), but also that the turmoil of multimodal teaching and forced flexibility has left us without firm footing to “go back to normal,” if we so desired. The underlying premise of this book is that many higher education practices—including syllabus standards, assumptions about grading, and the relationship between work in- and outside the classroom—are historically produced, and that higher education can (and must) adapt to reach more students (and reach them more effectively) now that we find ourselves in a new historical moment. The book relies on theoretical research on learning as well as classroom-based case studies to consider what methods we can add to our toolboxes, and why they are worth cultivating. Fundamentally, the book stresses ways we can help all students become more active learners who display the confidence and skills to thrive after college.

For many readers, the premise is not startling—and I am not sure the introductory sections are compelling enough to convince someone who does not already want to change. The book contains sections on “Changing Ourselves” and “Changing Our Classroom.” It ends with the question, “What if we are the people we are waiting for?” That is, what if we are the people who can effect social change and work toward equity and justice by implementing manageable changes in how we think of ourselves as teachers and mentors, and how we approach the learning experience. The “Classroom” section covers topics such as “Before the First Class” (with particularly helpful considerations of “the syllabus” and setting goals), “Activities for Any Day of the Term,” group work, research, feedback, and grading (with particularly helpful considerations



of “ungrading,” such as “contract grading”). The most powerful aspect of the book, in my opinion, is how it blends research-based theories of learning with specific methods, activities (such as “Think-Pair-Share”), and interventions. It links very localized and specific pedagogical exercises to broader frameworks (the syllabus, course goals, research projects) and larger goals (equity, engagement).

Each chapter has sections and several italicized lists to make it easy to relocate material. In other words, it is a text that invites itself to be reread and reused. For example, in the “Democratic and Antiracist Pedagogy” chapter, there is a list of “methods” for “structuring equity into our classrooms” (129): which include “Popsicle Sticks,” “Question Stacking,” “The ‘Oops’/‘Ouch’ Method,” and more. Popsicle Sticks is explained as a method designed by feminists several decades ago who noted gender disparity in class discussions. Each student is given two sticks, which they set down when they speak. This activity encourages students to listen to each other and better evaluate when to participate (129–30). In the “‘Oops’/‘Ouch’ Method,” “when someone is hurt or offended by something that is said, they have the right to say ‘Ouch,’ and the offender has the right to say ‘Oops.’” (133). Methods like these are tools that can be incredibly helpful in certain situations. These tips balance the book’s more sustained theoretical discussions about topics like equity and the vast challenges in achieving it.

Eagan Dean, Board Member

For me, the book has been highly helpful in guiding my thinking about syllabus construction and grading. In particular, the case studies and theory are useful in not just letting technology (e.g., features of our learning platform) dictate pedagogy, but instead asking how I can let my practices drive how I use technology. I have been uncomfortable with how the focus on transparency in grading at my school can lead to increasingly rigid and detailed numerical rubrics and a sense of, in my mind, over-grading. The chapter on grading provides suggestions, such as contract grading, to combat this trend, while still focusing on transparency. I also appreciate the many sub-sections about what to do when things go wrong—when no one has done homework, or when an activity is simply not successful. The book resists an overly idealistic notion of what it means to change practices, while instilling a sense of reflection and pragmatism in its reader.

At Drake University, we are reading this book in a breakfast book club that crosses college and department boundaries. Faculty with K–12 experience note that many of the ideas and methods have been implemented in other areas of education far longer than in higher education. At Drake, the sciences have done much in terms of the “flipped classroom,” but other fields, particularly those with specific credentials or desire to lead students to graduate programs, have been less innovative with practices. It is a wonderful text to facilitate discussions across the university about historic trends, desire for change, and resistance to change.

I conclude this review with a list of “the top five” ways to interact with this text: 5) Recommend it to colleagues who complain about feeling disconnected from the present generation of students. 4) Use it for a department retreat or discussion about curricular goals and pedagogy, and cite it in grant applications for new initiatives. 3) Suggest it for a broader group of faculty to consider university-wide standards and practices. 2) Read relevant chapters as you plan for your next “first class,” or consider changing to a version of ungrading. 1) Keep it handy for quick reminders of in-class activities and tasks for quick fixes and reminders during the semester. While at times I wanted more theoretical depth and entry into the research, I think the value of this text is how it combines broader pedagogical issues, administrative considerations, and hands-on tips in a single volume: a combination both rare and useful.

The New College Classroom is a guidebook and a DIY manifesto for change in college teaching.

In Part I, “Changing Ourselves,” Davidson and Katopodis contend that the industrial age of education must end. “Why Change Now?,” the first chapter, historicizes and thereby denaturalizes the current state of higher education. Pointing to the influences of industrial-era Taylorism and white-supremacist nation building, the authors highlight the unjust outcomes of the current system. Instead, they argue, higher education should foster skills essential to economic mobility and active citizenship “for every student—not only for the ones who most resemble us, their instructors” (xii). Throughout, they draw on educational research as well as anecdotes from college instructors across disciplines.

The new classroom, they argue, can be rooted in “backwards design” (which plans toward learning goals) and active learning (i.e., participatory or student-centered learning). In Chapter 2, “Structuring Active Learning,” they explain that active learning requires a foundation of structure, trust, and community. Like other chapters in this practical book, the third chapter, “Teaching Is Mentoring,” offers activities for instructor self-knowledge. It also addresses likely problems, including questions like “How Can I Be Personable Without Getting Too Personal?” and “How Do I Address Racial and Other Forms of Discrimination?” The authors provide models for preparing not only for the theory of injustice, but also for its daily harms.

In the second section of the book, “Changing Our Classrooms,” they offer concrete plans and advice. For example, “Before the First Class,” Chapter 4, encourages active learning through co-creating a syllabus. In Chapter 6, “Activities for Any Day of the Term,” the authors do not assume that readers have planned ideal classes from scratch, but rather offers various activities (arranged by required prep time) for trying active learning or intervening in a struggling class. Throughout, this book attends to power structures in teachers’ lives, including advice on explaining active learning to administrators and tips for activities that work without institutional buy-in.

In “Democratic and Antiracist Pedagogy,” Chapter 7,

Davidson and Katopodis offer strategies for universal participation and modeling repair in the classroom. The next three chapters offer new models for group work, feedback, and research that build on principles of active learning and backwards design by helping instructors and students conceptualize new types of goals for these activities. In Chapter 11, “Grades—Ugh!,” they critique conventional grading’s impact on instructors and students and provide guides to trying out alternatives. The final chapter, “What Could Possibly Go Wrong?,” demonstrates that anything could go wrong, but that occasional failure is not only normal but important for growth. The authors encourage instructors to revise and try again, ideally with feedback from their key audience—students.

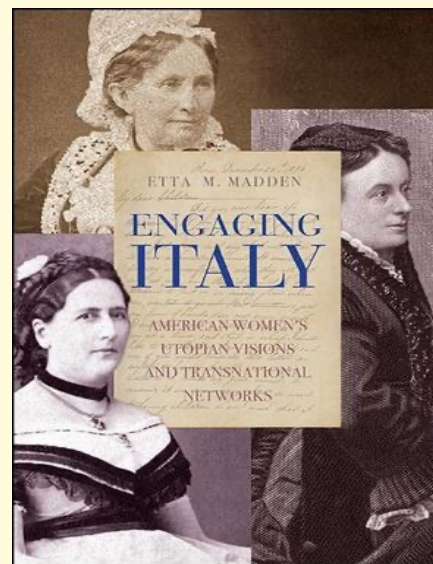
Davidson and Katopodis conclude with the rallying cry, “We can do this. We are the people we’ve been waiting for” (277). This book can help any instructor striving for just and excellent teaching, especially those in the Margaret Fuller Society who already appreciate the value of collaborative, “conversation”-based learning, and the role of education in resisting injustice.

Engaging Italy: American Women’s Utopian Visions and Transnational Networks

By Etta Madden (Albany: SUNY Press, 2022)

Lisa West, Financial and Membership Officer

Engaging Italy makes me want to travel to Italy. Enough said on that point. It also makes me want to remain immersed in this engaging archive of manuscript and print texts—letters, personal writings, news, social gossip columns, gift texts, fundraising reports, journalism, extemporaneous translations, religious tracts, and more—which, in Madden’s hands, challenges distinctions between genres, public and private texts, individual and collective authorship, work and personal growth. It also makes me want to elevate the varied reading and writing we do in academia—the writing support groups, the conferences, the administrative reports, the society listservs and newsletters—into a similar vision of intersecting social, political, professional, personal, and transnational networks. At times in-depth studies of one of the three women at its core, and at times studies into their interconnections and networks, the richness of the chapters of



this book far outreaches the underlying focal point. This book is meticulously researched, well informed in nineteenth century literary studies, innovative in its literary analysis of texts and intertextual connections, and written with a contagious sense of appreciation for these women, their challenges, their limitations, and, above all, their callings: their intense desires to be engaged in transformative work, service, and learning.

We may be familiar with Margaret Fuller’s political correspondence from Italy, with the expatriate community surrounding sculptor Harriet Hosmer in Rome, and with the later years of Constance Fenimore Woolson, but the women featured most in this book are likely less familiar. Emily Bliss Gould was a married Protestant woman whose writings from abroad consisted first of travel sketches, but then changed as she felt an urgent need to reform education and to improve the conditions of the poor. Among her achievements is the establishment of an industrial school in Rome. Anne Hampton Brewster converted to Catholicism in adulthood, which gave her an unusual perspective from which to respond to the intertwining of religion and politics in Italy during the years of unification conflicts. A frequent contributor to *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* and other periodicals, her writings reveal a deep interest in faith and (in personal writings) an interest in, but concern about, the possibilities of relationships between women. Lastly, Caroline Crane Marsh, whose husband George Perkins Marsh was ambassador, combined what she conceived of her public role as *ambasciatrice* with her liberal interest in the aesthetics of religion and appreciation for language (and translation) as ways to learn about culture.

As Madden notes: "To claim that Marsh, Gould, and Brewster were close friends would exaggerate the nature of their relationships. Rather, their shared citizenship and language linked them through networks of transnational concerns and social obligations that endured for many years" (6). What makes this study interesting is precisely the diversity among these women: Protestant, Catholic, and self-proclaimed "rationalist," their priorities, view of gender roles, and response to both social and political situations vary, as does the way they respond to current events or celebrities of the day. (In other words, this is not a literary circle of like-minded friends and writers.) Texts of all sorts ground these discussions, and "writing" provides their foundation. As Madden asserts: "Within these networks and activities, writing provides a record and a reinforcement, as well as an enabler of ideas" (6). Madden cites Fuller's 1848 *New-York Tribune* comment that "the American in Europe, if a thinking mind, can only become more American" (7), stressing how it was possible for these women to travel abroad not merely as observers but as active seekers of personal growth and commitment to democratic ideals.

The book's first section, "Portraits of Diversity," provides background on the three women before their time in Rome. The second section focuses on "Circuits and Networks," including a fascinating revision of Henry James's classic *Daisy Miller*, exploration of everyday issues such as language fluency (or lack thereof) and lodging, and discussion of associations. The final section dedicates a chapter to each woman's particular search for "Utopian Experiences," in an illuminating consideration of spiritual journeys, public writing personae, and responding to one's calling to effect change, whether in education, political understanding, women's issues, or other forms of service. Most chapters open with a fascinating anecdote or specific situation facing the women, such as the introduction's focus on the social performances surrounding Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1868 arrival in Rome, and chapter three's opening vignette with Brewster writing in July 1870 of her surroundings in Rome: her rooms, her work, and her proximity to the footprint of Anglo writers of the past (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, and her husband). The overall structure of the book reflects the variety of genres that form the archival basis of the study. Some chapters feel more biographical in nature than others. There are clusters of pages that respond to nineteenth-century scholarship on print culture or Christian Mission work. There are moments of in-depth literary analysis,

and sections that trace fascinating intertextual connections and networks. The methodology, therefore, is varied to suit the material, and for me, the reading experience is at its best in the smaller sections where a particular letter exchange or contrasting approaches to a social event take center stage. In fact, I can easily imagine assigning excerpts of three to ten pages to undergraduate classes to provide context for literary culture (expatriate writing, the public nature of women's private writing, women's engagement with education reform), or to accompany a Catharine Maria Sedgwick travel sketch or a Constance Fenimore Woolson short story.

Engaging Italy makes several significant contributions to nineteenth-century studies. It advances our understanding of women's writing in and for associations, particularly how private correspondence can have political goals. It also expands our notion of women writing from abroad, challenging not only a common notion of women writing as tourists or aesthetes, but troubling a dichotomy of "home" and "abroad" and asking critics to consider transnational networks or interests, including topics like gender and democracy. The lives of Gould, Brewster, and Marsh add to our understanding of the lives of nineteenth-century women who traveled and found their lives transformed as they engaged with other cultures, languages, and opportunities, while they also sought to effect change around them. This book also enlivens discussions of nineteenth-century women's spiritual lives and how women experienced religious challenges, linked or differentiated their spiritual and work lives, and articulated what it means to have a calling or vocation.

This book should find its way onto the bookshelves of many Fuller Society members. The records of women reporting news during times of political turmoil are highly relevant as the Society plans for an international conference on "Journaling for Justice." And *Engaging Italy* speaks to the legacy of Fuller's investment in conversation. We can better understand these three women through their engagement with others. Alone, none of these women would have produced the variety and volume of writing the archive now holds. Reading, learning, sharing, disagreeing, inspiring, and recording all were essential to Fuller's vision of conversation as well as to the utopian visions, as Madden argues, of Gould, Brewster, and Marsh.

Fuller Society On the Conference Circuit

Jana Argersinger, First Vice President

Discover here how you can take part in future conference sessions sponsored by the Fuller Society, and read about where we have been sparking conversations since the Spring 2022 edition (Vol. 4, No. 1) of this newsletter. You'll find calls for proposals for the American Literature Association conference in Boston, May 2023; an invitation to our MLA session "Conditions of Exile" in San Francisco, January 2023; and a review of panels at the Thoreau Annual Gathering and ALA, 2022. (For abstracts of 2022 papers and bios of their presenters, please see the [Society website](#).)

Calls for Proposals American Literature Association May 25–28, 2023, Boston

The Margaret Fuller Society seeks proposals for two guaranteed sessions at the ALA conference in Boston. Please help us circulate these calls far and wide across your circles of shared interest.

Session 1: *Foundations for the "World at Large": Women Authors and Their Homes*

"No home can be healthful in which are not cherished seeds of good for the world at large."

—Margaret Fuller, *New-York Tribune*, 12 December 1844

The Fuller Society invites ideas for a panel that will explore the historic residences of female U.S. authors and leaders of thought. Our author's childhood home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has for 120 years served as a neighborhood center that provides empowering community services (<https://margaretfullerhouse.org/>), a mission in close keeping with Fuller's own commitments—and one that also invites us to study how her contemporaries and inheritors have worked toward antiracist justice in ways her writing only begins to imagine.

What, we would like to ask, are the possible meanings and uses of the former dwelling places of women authors and intellectuals—whether maintained as museums, recognized with historic markers or street names, preserved as National Historic Landmarks and run as active public institutions like the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, held in private ownership, or still standing only in text and memory? How does lack of property rights for married women and people of color in the nineteenth century bear on the matter? What of indigenous and enslaved or formerly

enslaved writers for whom habitation could be troubled, impermanent, or simply modeled on a different—non-Western—concept of home?

We welcome proposals from folks associated in any way with an author's house in any region of the U.S.: directors and staff of houses themselves, members of societies that honor the authors who lived there—or who left only textual traces of home—and others with scholarly interest in the subject. Scholars and society members might team up with house representatives for joint presentations. Indeed, as part of our antiracist work, the Fuller Society is learning how to partner with other author societies and institutions that honor the legacies of nineteenth-century women intellectuals and reformers. Houses of interest include those of Anna Julia Cooper, Charlotte Forten Grimke, Louisa May Alcott, Frances E. W. Harper, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Emily Dickinson, Jane Addams, Sarah Orne Jewett, Edith Wharton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Laura Ingalls Wilder—and of course Margaret Fuller—among numerous others.

Possible topics:

- the public-facing work undertaken by historic author houses, and its relation, if any, to the work of the author
- factors influencing whether an author's house is preserved as such or not
- the work of recovering houses and places associated with women intellectuals, in relation to literary scholarship
- the meanings of home to writers for whom experiences of residence are troubled
- archaeological recoveries associated with enslaved women's homes or places of refuge

- archaeological recoveries associated with enslaved women's homes or places of refuge
- the diversity of forms that habitation can take, and how that can inform, enable, or inhibit writers' work (e.g., boardinghouses, shelters, asylums, orphanages)
- personal places of residence memorialized in authors' texts, whether treated autobiographically or fictionally

Please send 250-word proposals (indicating AV needs), with brief biographical statements, to Jana Argersinger, First Vice President, at argerj@gmail.com, by January 10, 2023.

Session 2: Mutual Transformation: The Social Justice Classroom in the Nineteenth Century and Today

The Fuller Society's Committee for Racial Justice invites paper proposals on social justice pedagogies past and present—from approaches developed in early schoolhouses to the strategies of teacher-scholars in today's classrooms. The panel especially invites proposals that connect theory and practices of antiracist pedagogy so named to earlier theories and practices that have been labeled progressive, feminist, queer, social justice, or active learning. It is important to remember these progressive pedagogies as we work to transform American literary studies and make the university more equitable and just in support of social change.

Rather than dictating or lecturing in her 1839–1844 Boston Conversations, Margaret Fuller led open dialogues among women meant to empower them to think for themselves, practicing an early form of social justice pedagogy. Her purpose was to discover “what we [she and her pupils] may mutually mean.” Today, her forward-thinking feminist methods resonate with the progressive pedagogies of June Jordan and Felicia Rose Chavez, among others. Her model of “mutual meaning,” or co-learning, whereby participants arrive at conclusions through an open-ended process of self-discovery, anticipates Maria Montessori and John Dewey. But it is often forgotten that Fuller's Conversations were themselves anticipated by conversational pedagogies in such associations for mutual “improve-

ment” as the Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of Boston and the Female Literary Association of Philadelphia, where Sarah Douglass recommended that the group's reading, conversation, and writing “be altogether directed to the subject of slavery.”

Much of today's higher education descends from the nineteenth century—not from progressive educators but from the industrial revolution and eugenicists who made the modern university a training ground for factory workers through the passive “banking model” of education (in Paulo Freire's terms). Cathy N. Davidson and Christina Katopodis, in their recent book *The New College Classroom* (Harvard UP, 2022), argue for the crucial role that active learning plays in structuring equity into our classrooms, going beyond inclusion to antiracist praxis. This panel takes up the book's invitation to change by uplifting progressive pedagogues and calling for presentations that seek to transform us.

Possible topics:

- Literary representations of learning
- Literary products of progressive or radical pedagogy
- Early historical examples of social justice pedagogies (e.g., African American literary associations, Boston Conversations, Hull House)
- Antiracist teaching, including course and/or assignment design inspired by Fuller (or her limitations) or by contemporary writing that helps us to be in dialogue with her
- Women's education and issues of race
- Black Panther Party Liberation Schools
- Talks to teachers (e.g., William James, James Baldwin)
- Teaching diaries (e.g., Audre Lorde's)
- Progressive pedagogical theories (from Elizabeth Peabody to Maria Montessori to bell hooks) put into practice
- Practical examples of lessons learned from the antiracist classroom
- Specific activities that have been particularly effective in structuring equity into a class
- Trauma-informed pedagogies of care
- Culturally responsive teaching methods

Proposals from graduate students are most welcome. Please send 250-word proposals (indicating

AV needs), with brief biographical statements, to Jana Argersinger, First Vice President, at argerj@gmail.com, by 10 January 2022. For conference details, visit <https://americanliteratureassociation.org/>

Modern Language Association January 5-8, 2023, San Francisco

Join us in San Francisco for a session titled “Conditions of Exile in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond.”

Session 487 | Saturday, January 7, 12:00–1:15 PM
Moscone West–3024

Chair: Jana Argersinger, Washington State University, Pullman

1. “Transcendence from the Colored Conventions to the Harlem Renaissance,” Marlas Yvonne Whitley (North Carolina State University)
2. “Exile and the Perils of Travel: Nineteenth-Century Black Women Organizers’ Fight for Dignity,” Sabrina Evans (Penn State University)
3. “Du Bois in Berlin, Du Bois in Atlanta: The Affect of Exile in *The Souls of Black Folk*,” Thomas Howard (Washington University in St. Louis)
4. “Exile’s Persistence: Margaret Fuller and the Public Trauma Culture of Expat Paris,” Stephanie Peebles Tavera (Texas A&M University–Central Texas)

American Literature Association, May 2022 Women Editors and Women’s Editions

During the May 2022 ALA conference at Chicago’s historic Palmer House, we presented two panels on women editors and women’s editions that reflected our efforts to reach beyond the Society’s usual environs. The panels drew robust turnout, and the subjects they explored, we noticed, were in provocative resonance with a recurring focus on women’s editorial work across the gathering. Perhaps this is a topic whose time in the spotlight has come!



“Breaking the Editorial Ice”

(l-r) Susan Tomlinson, Todd Richardson, Wendy Counsell Petrie, Eve Kahn, Demetra McBrayer

Our first session, “Breaking the Editorial Ice: The Work of Women Editors,” was chaired by Jana Argersinger, MFS First Vice President, and graced by respondent Susan Tomlinson, professor at University of Massachusetts, Boston, and editor of *Legacy*, the journal of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers. Dr. Tomlinson brought a roster of four papers into lively conversation:

Demetra McBrayer (University of Delaware), “Labor-Centered Data Creation: Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Fostering Black Community”

Eve Kahn (historian and journalist), “Printer’s Devil, Circulation Liar, and the Whole Shebang: Zoe Anderson Norris’s One-Woman Magazine, 1909–1914”

Windy Counsell Petrie (Azusa Pacific University), “Stubbornness and Sustainability: Why Harriet Monroe’s Poetry Outlasted the Little Magazine Movement”

Todd H. Richardson (Univ. of Texas, Permian Basin), “The Uses of Great Women: The Revolution and the Canonization of Margaret Fuller”



“Making and Using Scholarly Editions of Women Writers”
 (l-r) Lisa West (reader of Lydia Willsky-Ciollo’s paper), Leslie Eckel,
 Jennifer Putzi

In our second session, “Making and Using Scholarly Editions of Women Writers,” Second Vice President Mollie Barnes of University of South Carolina, Beaufort, presided over a panel of three compelling talks:

Jennifer Putzi (The College of William & Mary), “Her Great-Grandmother’s Diary: Editing the Diary of Frances (Frank) Rollin (Whipper)”

Leslie Eckel (Suffolk University), “Editing Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* for the Next Generation(s)”

Lydia Willsky-Ciollo (Fairfield University), “Helen Deese and Daughter of Boston: Editing Caroline Healey Dall’s Diary”

A productive business meeting followed the sessions. And capping one conference day on a note both delicious and convivial, our society dinner at Acanto Italian Restaurant brought together MFS members and panelists for friendly chat, a view of bustling Michigan Avenue, and signature delicacies like budino with blood-orange whipped cream.



Acanto Italian Restaurant
 (l-r) Todd Richardson, Eve Kahn, Jana Argersinger, Mollie Barnes,
 Jennifer Putzi, Wendy Counsell Petrie, Demetra McBrayer

Thoreau Gathering July 2023, Concord, MA Margaret Fuller: Westward to the Lakes, Eastward to Europe

Phyllis Cole, Past President

The Margaret Fuller Society invites your participation in the Thoreau Gathering (July 12–16, 2023), in-person in Concord, MA. For this conference, whose major theme is “Thoreau, Politics, and Extinction,” we will consider his colleague Fuller through her public and private record of travel from an original base in New England. Before and after *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, she bore witness to transformations in both nature and politics: first of the Midwestern “frontier” in *Summer on the Lakes*; later, in columns for *The New-York Tribune*, confronting that city’s needs before moving finally to direct witness of Europe amidst revolution.

In what ways did she describe and envision transformations toward a millennial future, a cataclysmic collapse, or a conditional position between the two? Did her radical optimism refuse the possibility of extinction? How did she express environmental and social justice concerns or advocate for political change?

These questions are meant to invite many kinds of thematic, comparative, or closely focused studies. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* might be a point of reference for papers that also focus on lesser known works, especially those that challenge the American republic or affirm new roles for women. Just a few examples:

- Fuller’s direct descriptions of natural landscape (Niagara Falls or Scottish Ben Lomond)
- her white gaze upon Indigenous peoples or American encounter with European politics
- her assessment of women’s roles in the American West or the Italian revolution
- her narrative of catastrophic colonial time in relationship to the “vanishing Indian” myth, particularly in dialogue with Indigenous writers on the environmental cataclysm of colonization
- her dilemmas of republican or socialist principle in the Italian revolution
- her allegory of the American continent’s “planting” (“What Fits a Man to be a Voter?”) as a racial or racist statement

- her editorials on Pope Pius IX or Giuseppe Mazzini or another individual
- her prospective vision in “Thanksgiving” or “1st January, 1846,” or her final columns as affirmation of the “next revolution”
- late letters about her motherhood and return with her family across the Atlantic

Comparisons with the journalism, travel writing, and diary descriptions of travel by other women writers, as well as applications to present-day issues, are always welcome.

This will be a peer-reviewed panel. Please send one-page proposals and short CVs by December 20 to Phyllis Cole (pbc2@psu.edu). Decisions will be made by early January, and inquiries are welcome at any point. For more information on the Thoreau Gathering, see <https://www.thoreausociety.org/event/annual-gathering>. To learn about the Fuller Society, visit <https://margaretfullersociety.org/>.

And from the 2022 Conference Circuit: Margaret Fuller at the Thoreau Gathering— and Around the World

Phyllis Cole, Past President

At the Thoreau Gathering in Concord, Massachusetts, in July 2022, with a conference theme of Globalism, our Society contributed a panel entitled “Where in the World is Margaret Fuller?”

There was warm audience response to papers that found such varied perspectives on the broad topic. We had Fuller reading female-inflected German Romanticism in one paper, negotiating the difficulties of trans-Atlantic letter-writing in a second, sustaining friendship with an Italian noblewoman of opposing political belief in a third, and finally making her belated appearance in today’s China. At the same time some common themes emerged in these papers: epistolary expression, friendship between women, translation as vital work from Fuller’s day to our own.

The members of our panel also ranged in background across national boundaries:

Alice de Galzain (University of Edinburgh), “‘Woman [and] Artist’: Margaret Fuller on Bettine Brentano-von Arnim and Friendship”

Cheryl Weaver (University of Buffalo), “‘I found your note here several days since’: Margaret Fuller and Postal Delivery from Europe”

Mario Bannoni (independent scholar, Rome), “The Opposing Political Passions and Common Womanly Positions of Margaret Fuller and Costanza Arconati Visconti on the Eve of the Italian Risorgimento”

Julia X. Du (Brandeis University), “Margaret Fuller in China”

Also at the Thoreau Gathering:

Translating Fuller across Languages and Cultures

Not only did Margaret Fuller in her lifetime read multiple languages and encounter history as it unfolded across national boundaries. In addition, she is read and studied around the world today, and members of our Society are among those making Fuller’s work accessible by serving as her translators. The significance of such work has recently been highlighted for me by the Thoreau Gathering on Globalism, especially our Society’s own panel for it: “Where in the World is Margaret Fuller?” In fact, I crossed paths there with two eminent translators I’d like to present to you now. Their home cultures and reasons for translating Fuller are interestingly different, one pointing her fellow Bulgarian readers to Fuller’s presentation of America, the other opening Fuller’s unique report on revolutionary Italy to fellow Italians steeped in this native history.

But my point in writing is also to open the door to more such reports by readers of our newsletter. Have you yourself translated Fuller to another language? Why and for what reading audience, in what relation to your teaching or writing or interests in the worlds of yesterday and today? Could you give an account of either your own work or someone else’s of value to you—possibly even offer leadership in making an ongoing conversation possible? If so please consult with our editor Jessica (jessicalipnack@gmail.com) or me (pbc2@psu.edu). Meanwhile, here are snapshots of two Fullerenes and their projects:

Albena Bakratcheva has long attended the Thoreau Gathering and has now joined the Fuller Society as well. Welcome Albena! In 2020 her translation of Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes* (Sofia: Kryg)

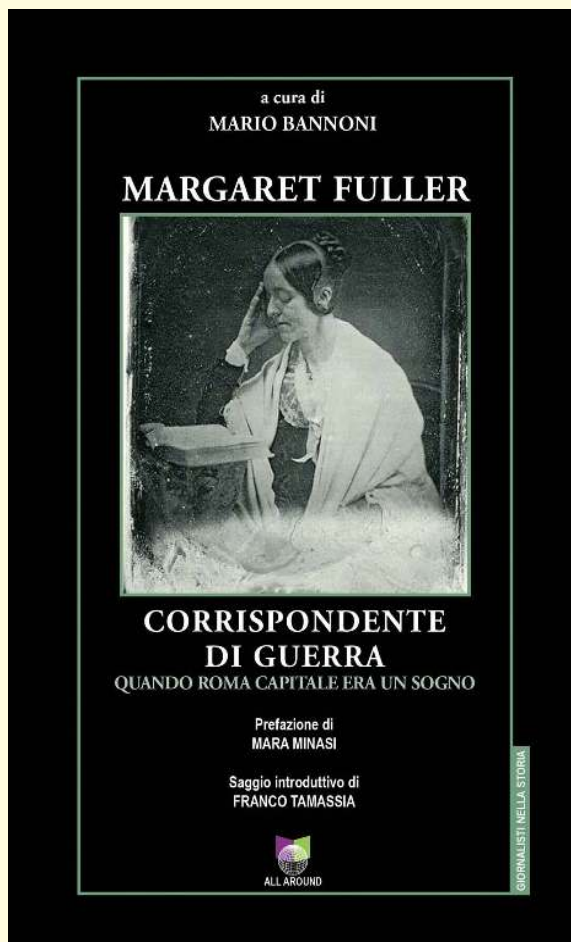
was nominated for the Bulgarian national translation award, and has enjoyed many reviews and media presentations. Chair of the American and British Studies program at New Bulgarian University in Sofia, Albena has been an interpreter and translator of American Transcendentalist writers for over two decades. She explains her interest in American scenes and points of view as partially the result of influence from her father, who attended Sofia's American College (the oldest American college outside the U.S.). Throughout his life he got together to talk with his classmates almost every week. Such personal surroundings supported Albena's independent discovery of *Walden* in her early twenties, substantially before the 1989 end of communist rule in Bulgaria. As she says, "it all began" from there.

She has always been interested in Fuller as well as Emerson and Thoreau. Her 2013 book, in English, *Visibility beyond the Visible: The Poetic Discourse of American Transcendentalism* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi) devotes a chapter to Fuller as, in Emerson's words, "our citizen of the world by quite special diploma." When asked why she chose *Summer on the Lakes* for translation, Albena says simply, "I love that book," and adds that perhaps it should be less under the shadow of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. We might all enjoy reading her afterword, which of course is available only in Bulgarian. But some of the themes she finds in Fuller's writing are surely implied by the titles in her large scholarly bibliography: frontiers, "revelations of place," and (most suggestive of all) "Wild, West, World." For Albena these are fascinating American themes, but they also belong to the world at large.

Mario Bannoni is known to readers of the Fuller Society listserv as he updates publication milestones, while also reflecting on the parallel invasions of Rome by the French and Ukraine by Russia. He speaks of discovering Fuller in a book sixteen years ago and being captivated by her passionate investment in the Roman Republic of 1849. From then on he has worked as an independent scholar to recover all possible aspects of Fuller's years in Italy, while also pursuing his day job as a marketing researcher. A graduate of La Sapienza University in languages and literatures, as well as Arizona State University in marketing, he has been able to cross between both professions and nations.

Mario's major work of translation has reached print in 2022: a new edition of Fuller's dispatches on Italy, now in Italian, including twenty-five to the *New-York Tribune* and two to other papers (Rome: Edizioni All Around). His goal of bringing Fuller's American perspectives to an

Italian audience, one already knowledgeable about the national history of revolution, has certainly found a warm reception. His publication was supported by the Ministry of Culture and officially presented at Rome's Foundation for Journalism. Mario comments that the edition in English of the *Tribune* dispatches, published by Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith in 1991, has offered invaluable guidance in this project even as he has also enlarged the informational base of the notes from his own local knowledge and new discovery. His book includes 112 historical images of people and places.



The research that makes such a context possible has also supported Mario's further goal of editing and translating all of Fuller's correspondence with Italians during her sojourn there, from her aristocratic friend Costanza Arconati Visconti to her partner Giovanni Ossoli and other members of his family. Here again he is combining the resources of the U.S. and Italy: letters in Italian from the archives of Harvard's Houghton Library, now often aligned with their responses from Italy. His lengthy research into the legal status of the Fuller-Ossoli union is just one example of the local research he has accomplished over the years. His work of translation, now approaching completion, will have Italian and English texts on facing pages. Mario is presently seeking an American publisher for the book and would welcome leads or supporters.

*Margaret Fuller Society, Inc.
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2022*

Lisa West, Financial and Membership Director

The MFS Annual Business Meeting took place at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, IL, on May 28, 2022. In attendance: Jana Argersinger, Mollie Barnes, Latitia Nebot-Deneuille, Susan Roberson, Lisa West, and a representative of The Thoreau Society.

1. Jana Argersinger, First Vice President, opened the meeting with thanks and greetings.
2. Our newsletter (Spring 2022) is over forty pages long, and includes a feature by the Committee for Racial Justice, obituaries and tributes, regular column on teaching Fuller, book reviews, and more. Contact Jessica Lipnack for more information. (We had copies available at ALA.)
3. Past Conferences: We are working on learning how to be allies; having outreach beyond academia; and striving to be more inclusive.
4. Social Media: There was brief discussion if we want to add Instagram to the Facebook page, and suggestions to visit and share what we have to make our social media presence more vital.
5. Outreach/Public-facing Initiatives: We should ask the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House what kind of help they need, and/or consider their programs. Todd discussed the Emerson Society and ways it reaches beyond academics to ask what Emerson has meant to various people. They have a \$500 community engagement grant for someone who might want to coordinate with a local library (or other organization) to do something related to Emerson, such as displays or one-act plays. Phyllis Cole has a panel at the Thoreau Gathering this July.
6. There was a suggestion that we put out a call for someone to oversee the Pedagogy Initiative.
7. Journaling for Justice: Goal of July 2024 (NY or Rome), current work on crafting CFP. Forum: take seriously journalism and periodical print culture, as well as invisible work and activism. This will be an inclusive project, with antiracist work at the forefront. Mollie wants to include contemporary journalists. We can reach out to international Fuller scholars, Ida B. Wells scholars, various author societies. There was a suggestion to develop a relationship with the new leader of The Fuller Project (which is doing work on Ukraine).

*Margaret Fuller Society Business
Meeting Minutes
5 PM CEST, September 9, 2022 via
Zoom*

Lisa West, Financial and Membership Officer

Present: Kathleen Lawrence, Sonia Di Loreto, Yoshiko Ito, Jessica Lipnack, Andrew Taylor, Andrew Wildermuth, Eagan Dean, Charlene Avallone, Jana Argersinger, Lisa West, Mollie Barnes, Leslie Eckel

1. Introductions of this very international group, spanning more than 5 time zones
2. Report from Committee on Racial Justice (Charlene): Charlene praised Jana, noting that every conference panel this year has focused on race and racial justice. As the Society expands its commitment to racial justice beyond conferences, we hope that each issue of the newsletter will, as discussed over the listserv in the days following George Floyd's murder, include an article dealing with the topic of race. She proposed for Executive Committee approval that the Society also sponsor a pedagogy initiative: to offer a small award for a syllabus, classroom exercise, or assignment that addresses "Teaching Racial Justice with Margaret Fuller." Suggestion to announce the prize and/or publicize it in the newsletter.
3. Newsletter (Jessica): Twenty-five people contributed to the spring 2022 edition. Cheryl Weaver will start working on layout/design. Current status of fall issue: Megan Marshall is working on a longer piece connecting MF to abortion issues; Phyllis Cole is working on a piece on translation; interviews with Society members on how they came to MF; an essay on Thoreau, David Walker, and MF; book reviews; publicize conferences and CFPs as well as publish abstracts. There will be optimized editing processes this time around. Oct 1 deadline, with publication in early December. Sasha has an art exhibit in Somerville Sept 11–Oct 15 and there will be an article on that in the newsletter, as well.
4. MLA San Francisco, CA. January 7–8th. Jessica invited us over to her house if she is not traveling. Thank you, Jessica. ALA will be in Boston over Memorial Day weekend 2023.

5. Journaling for Justice Update (Mollie): Mollie suggested a sequence of spring symposia as a way to discuss the project and generate interest (especially among journalists). There will be a spring digital symposium using a variety of formats: submission of traditional papers, open discussion, mini-explorations. She wants to get the CFP to get beyond MFS—but be aware that “asks” have to be reasonable.

6. Conferences (Jana): MLA—registration is open. “Condition of Exile in 19th c. and Beyond”—planned with input from Committee on RJ. ALA Boston—Author Houses and their Uses/Missions, with the goal of setting up some house visits.

7. Pedagogy. Other ideas for conferences: Fuller and Feeling? Relationality? (Christina Katopodis area of specialty). Other ideas include a roundtable on Christina’s new book with Cathy Davidson.

8. Symposium on Women’s Health/Mental Health

9. Graduate Liaison (Andrew W) – Andrew is thinking about how the role can be more engaged. Charlene mentioned it had not been clearly defined. We discussed that the Society can write letters for those on the job market, as well as read material or provide workshopping sessions. Eagan suggested we allow students to join free for a year just to bring others into the organization.

10. Financial/Membership (Lisa): Lisa shared status. It seems as if we now are consistently recognized as the Margaret Fuller Society, Inc. We are incorporated in Massachusetts but are recognized in Iowa as a foreign corporation. Status has been updated with IRS. Bank is now OK with the data and we can receive and give out funds. Lisa suggested we consider creating an office for permanent address in MA. It is difficult navigating the competing demands of bank, IRS, state, etc. We also need to think about ways to bring in more money, such as annual fundraising around MF’s birthday (May 23).

Note: The Margaret Fuller Society, Inc., also held its annual business meeting at the ALA conference on May 28, 2022.

**IN 1840 CRITIC &
AUTHOR MARGARET
FULLER BECAME THE
FIRST EDITOR OF THE
DIAL, A JOURNAL OF
THIS PHILOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENT**

Margaret was a clue on Jeopardy!

