



# MARGARET FULLER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## **Fuller Society Meeting at 1993 MLA Convention**

The first annual meeting of the Margaret Fuller Society will take place Wednesday, December 29, at 9:00 a.m. in Room B of the Sheraton Centre in Toronto, Canada, as part of the 1993 Modern Language Association Convention. Election of officers will take place at this time. Allie Perry, Fritz Fleischmann, and Susan Belasco Smith (Chair) are serving as a nominating committee for this election, and you may send nominations for President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, and Executive Secretary-Treasurer to them.

A panel session sponsored by the Fuller Society and chaired by Beth Lueck will follow the brief meeting. Entitled "Margaret Fuller in the 1990's: New Directions for Research," the session will feature the following:

Bell Gale Chevigny, "'Acting Out Her Nature': Margaret Fuller's Performances of Gender, Mysticism, Eros, Utopia in Romantic Friendships."

Christina Zwarg, "New Turns in Literary and Feminist Theory: The Return of Margaret Fuller."

Jeffrey Steele, "Winning 'the Secrets of the Tomb': The Politics of Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing."

Response: Mary Kelley.

The proposal for this session, written by Susan Belasco Smith, appears on pages 4-5 of this **Newsletter**.

## **Call for Papers**

The Margaret Fuller Society will sponsor a session at the American Literature Association meeting in San Diego, California, June 2-5, 1994. The session will focus on "Fuller and Others," and it will be chaired by Thomas R. Mitchell. If you are interested in presenting a paper, please contact Tom before January 8 at 302 Plymouth, Laredo, Texas 78041 (210) 723-1096.

## **Fuller at 1993 ASA Convention**

The Fuller Society is sponsoring a session at the 1993 American Studies Association Convention in Boston, scheduled for Friday, November 5, at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Thoreau Room of the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Chaired by Larry J. Reynolds, the session will feature the following:

Cheryl Fish, "Exotic Travel and Missionary Work: Relocations and Displacements in Mrs. Nancy Prince's Narrative."

Robert K. Martin, "Fourier in America."

Judith Bean, "Boston's Outspoken Women: Transforming 19th-Century Gender Limitations of Public Platforms."

Comments: Mary Kelley

## Balducci Book Available

Carolyn Feleppa Balducci, who teaches creative writing at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, recently published **Margaret Fuller: A Life of Passion and Defiance**, a Barnard Biography Series book, introduced by Anna Quindlen, with an 8-page black and white photographic insert. Selling for \$16.50 hardcover and \$6.00 paperback, the book is available from Bantam Doubleday Dell, Education & Library Division, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. According to the **New York Times** Book Review of Children's Books, "the courage and appeal of the 19th-century radical and the country's first female foreign correspondent are captured in this biography. Fuller's professional and romantic involvement in the Risorgimento, the struggle for Italian unification, is clearly described."

Ms Balducci writes us that she adapted Fuller's **Summer on the Lakes** for film under an Ohio Humanities Grant in 1977 and she would be happy to talk or write about her (un-produced) script or about her nearly twenty years vision of producing a mini-series on Fuller's life. Her phone numbers are (313) 663-8029 (home) and (313) 747-4388 (office).

## Price and Belasco Smith Edition Accepted

The University Press of Virginia has accepted for publication a collection of essays entitled **Social Texts: Nineteenth-Century American Literature in Periodical Contexts**, edited by Susan Belasco Smith and Kenneth M. Price. The volume will contain an essay by Larry J. Reynolds entitled "From **Dial** Essay to New York Book: the Making of **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**."

## Mitchell Essay to Appear

The journal **American Literary History** has accepted for 1994 publication Thomas R. Mitchell's essay "Nathaniel Hawthorne Versus Margaret Fuller: Julian Hawthorne's Intervention in American Literary History." The essay will form a chapter of Mitchell's book-length study, now in progress, on the Hawthorne-Fuller relationship.

## New Chevigny Book

Northeastern University Press has just announced the publication of a revised, expanded edition of Bell Gale Chevigny's **The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings**. Chevigny's classic study combines selections from Fuller's writings, commentaries from her contemporaries, and a running biography to provide a rich and in-depth portrait of Fuller's life and work. The 1994 edition contains a new introduction, a bibliographical essay about the extraordinary proliferation of work published since 1976, and a supplement with writing by Fuller and her contemporaries. The book is available for course adoption at a cost of \$16.95 paper. Its ISBN number is 1-55553-181-4, and it may be obtained on a 60-day approval basis by writing Northeastern University Press, c/o CUP Services, Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851.

## Myerson Bibliography for Sale

Professor Joel Myerson has made a generous donation to the Fuller Society of a number of copies of his **Margaret Fuller: A Descriptive Bibliography** (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978). The retail price of this book is \$60, but members may purchase copies for \$25 by sending orders and checks to the Margaret Fuller Society in care of the editor of this **Newsletter**.

In the bibliography, Myerson provides an analytical descriptive listing of all Fuller's book-length publications, and he illustrates all volumes with facsimiles of title pages and bindings or wrappers. The contents include: A) Separate Publications; B) Writings in Collections; C) Writings in Newspapers, Magazines, and Journals; and D) Appendix: Principal Works About Fuller.

## Zwarg and Hudspeth Books to Appear

Cornell University Press will soon publish a new book by Christina Zwarg entitled **Feminist Conversations: Fuller, Emerson, and the Task of Reading**.

In the fall of 1994, Cornell University Press will also publish the final volume, No. 6, of **The Letters of Margaret Fuller**, edited by Robert N. Hudspeth.

## History of Fuller at the MLA

Patricia L. Repka

I surveyed PMLA Program issues from 1973-1992, examining each for sessions or for individual papers on Margaret Fuller. This brief survey, which reveals Fuller's status as a topic at the MLA, was conducted because a request for such information was made during the 1992 organizational meeting of the Margaret Fuller Society. In the last twenty years, eight individual papers on Fuller were presented at special sessions, at the Nineteenth-Century American Literature session, at the Thoreau Society session, and at the Division of Psychological Approaches to Literature session; four special sessions centered solely on Fuller (1973, 1977, 1988, and 1991). It was difficult to determine if Fuller papers were read at the convention from 1978 to 1982 because many special sessions listed just the panelists and not the titles of the papers. Session titles did not name Fuller, but various panels might have included her. At least one paper on Fuller was presented from 1983 to 1988. Because copies of the 1988 and 1991 proposals were available to me, I have included a brief synopsis of the panels and each paper.

In 1973, Joel Myerson organized a seminar entitled "Research Opportunities in Margaret Fuller Studies." Neither participants nor paper titles were listed in the Program. In 1976, the Nineteenth-Century American Literature session discussed the topic "Creating a Tradition of Iconoclasm: The Paradoxical Mission of American Writing in the Nineteenth Century," at which Bell Gale Chevigny presented "Margaret Fuller and the American Revolution in Exile." In 1977, a session entitled "Margaret Fuller: German Literary Scholar, Journalist, Feminist" was arranged by Laraine Fergenson. Paper titles were not listed, but the panelists included E. Ann Kaplan, M. Roxana Klapper, Joel Myerson, Madeleine B. Stern, and Marie Urbanski.

One Fuller paper was presented at each MLA Convention in 1983, 1984, and 1985. Annette Kolodny read "Recovering Her Mother's Garden: Margaret Fuller's **Summer on the Lakes in 1843**" as a part of the Division on Psychological Approaches to Literature session "The Maternal Subtext." The Nineteenth-Century American Literature session, "Women Authors in the American Renaissance," heard Joel Myerson's "Margaret Fuller's Problem of Vocation," while Robert N. Hudspeth spoke on "Margaret Fuller and Self-Culture: The Example of the Critic" during the Thoreau Society session "The Transcendentalists and Self-Culture."

At the 1986 convention, Fuller was discussed in two sessions. Julia Bolton Holloway presented "Dante's Risorgimento: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Margaret Fuller, and Cristina Belgioso" as part of the special session "Dante and the Nine-

teenth-Century Literary Imagination"; Brigitte Bailey read "Fuller in Italy: The Politics of the Picturesque" for the session "American Literary Pictorialism: The Romantic Period." During the 1987 convention, Christina Zwarg presented her paper "Reading before Marx: Margaret Fuller and the **New York Tribune**" at the special session "Writing the Reader: Interpretive Conventions and Early Nineteenth-Century American Literature."

The 1988 session "Margaret Fuller in Context: American Transatlantic Perspectives," organized by Susan Belasco Smith, examined the ideological constructs inherent in Fuller's major writings. Charles Capper's paper, "Between Culture and Ideology: The Romantic Feminism of Margaret Fuller," considered the ideological and cultural character and significance of Fuller's feminism, while Susan Belasco Smith in "Margaret Fuller's **Summer on the Lakes: An Anti-Travelogue**" argued that **Summer on the Lakes** reveals Fuller's early efforts at critiques of both American and British ideologies, efforts which would be more fully developed in her later career as a correspondent in Europe. After Robert N. Hudspeth analyzed the circumstances of Fuller's break with America and her life in Italy as a correspondent for the **New York Tribune** in "Margaret Fuller and the Italian Revolution," Susan Sutton Smith provided critical commentary on the papers.

During the 1991 convention, in the special session "Transcendentalists' Daughter-Father Relationships," Fuller shared the panel's attention with Louisa May and Bronson Alcott, and Caroline Healy Dall. Robert N. Hudspeth read "Shadows and Substance: Margaret and Timothy Fuller."

The 1991 session was entitled "Reconstructing Margaret Fuller," chaired by Larry J. Reynolds. This session analyzed the dynamic relationship between Fuller, her associates, and mid-nineteenth century culture by linking historical context to the aesthetics of literary works both by and about Fuller. Susan Belasco Smith in her paper, "(Re)presentations of History in Margaret Fuller's Prose Works," examined the competing structures, discontinuities, conflicts, and contradictions within Fuller's prose works. In "The Constructions of Margaret Fuller in Louisa May Alcott's **Moods**," Patricia L. Repka considered Alcott's interpretations of Fuller's theory of marriage as expressed in **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**. Leland S. Person, in "Transcendentalizing Gender: Margaret Fuller's Construction of 'Woman' in the Nineteenth Century," explored the implications of Fuller's efforts to transcendentalize gender and to construct a Transcendental "Woman" in whose name individual women might signify themselves. In "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Revolutionary Construction of Margaret Fuller in **The Marble Faun**," Lisa Lovelace fused history and gender studies by arguing that Miriam, the protagonist of **The Marble Faun**, is Hawthorne's fictional

(re)construction of Fuller--to him, the woman who revolted against her American friends, the natural laws that defined a woman's sphere, and the moral laws that held society together.

For twenty years Fuller has engaged the interest of members of the Modern Language Association, so the 1992 MLA convention was an appropriate place to discuss and form the new Margaret Fuller Society. One goal of the Society is to become an allied organization of the MLA.

### Founding Members of the Margaret Fuller Society

At the December 1992 organizational meeting for the Margaret Fuller Society, Bell Gale Chevigny presided, and those attending spoke about their interest in Fuller and agreed to form a Fuller Society. The forty-four founding members listed below formally joined the Society by paying membership dues following the organizational meeting and before the publication of this **Newsletter**:

Noëlle Arrangóiz	Karen Hindhede
Charlene Avallone	Robert N. Hudspeth
Brigitte Bailey	Francis E. Kearns
Carolyn Feleppa Balducci	Mary Kelley
Judith Bean	Elizabeth Keyser
Martha L. Berg	Lisa Lovelace
Cheryl D. Bohde	Margaret A. Lukens
Sharon Brause	Robert K. Martin
Charles Capper	Thomas R. Mitchell
Bell Gale Chevigny	Joel Myerson
Phyllis Cole	Allie Perry
Sterling F. Delano	Jennifer Putzi
Laraine R. Ferguson	Patricia L. Repka
Cheryl Fish	Larry J. Reynolds
Margaret F. Flag	David M. Robinson
Fritz Fleischmann	Susan Rosowski
Paola Gemme	Dieter Schultz
Sharon S. Gibson	Elaine Showalter
Sharon Harris	Susan Belasco Smith
Debra A. Hartley	Marie Olesen Urbanski
LaDonna Henderson	Gustaaf Van Cromphout
T. Walter Herbert	Christina Zwarg

### 1993 MLA Special Session Proposal: Margaret Fuller in the 1990's: New Directions for Research

Susan Belasco Smith

The ongoing publication of the over 1000 extant letters of Margaret Fuller by Robert N. Hudspeth (**The Letters of Margaret Fuller**, 5 volumes to date [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983--]), the publication of the first volume of Charles Capper's new scholarly biography of Fuller (**Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life: The Private Years** [New York: Oxford University Press, 1992]), and the publication of new scholarly editions of Fuller's work such as "**These Sad But Glorious Days**": **Dispatches from Europe, 1846-1850**, edited by Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) have signaled an important new stage in the acceptance of Margaret Fuller into the canon of nineteenth-century American literature. MLA panels on Fuller in the past have concentrated on the work of scholars to establish Fuller's position in the Transcendental circle of the American Renaissance and on the general discussion of the linkage between historical context and the aesthetics of literary works both by and about Fuller. The purpose of this panel is twofold: to sketch out new directions for the study of Fuller's writings and to provide a forum for discussion of these issues by distinguished scholars of Fuller's life and work.

Our panel will begin with "'Acting Out Her Nature': Margaret Fuller's Performances of Gender, Mysticism, Eros, Utopia in Romantic Friendships," a paper presented by Professor Bell Gale Chevigny, whose landmark edition, **The Woman and the Myth: Fuller's Life and Writings** (1976), marked the beginning of the serious study of Fuller's writings. Chevigny's work made Fuller's life and long out-of-print texts of journals, letters, and works available to many students and scholars for the first time. In this paper, Chevigny suggests a new dimension to Fuller studies. When Fuller wrote of persons "acting out" their "character" or "nature," we assume she meant they fulfilled their nature, character, or identity, or performed their destiny. But she was also concerned with the social construction of identity, especially gender identity. Drawing on recent feminist performance theory, Chevigny examines how Fuller "performed" to problematize conventional notions of gender and experiment with more heterodox notions. Fuller's

theatricality has long been noted, and Julie Ellison has recently argued that it was a rich resource for resistant female expression and communion with other women. Chevigny suggests that performance for Fuller was also heuristic, a means of finding out who she was or might be and what kinds of freedom, knowledge, and growth were possible in social relationships. Chevigny considers performances both described and enacted in journals, letters, and such texts as **Woman in the Nineteenth Century** and Fuller's translation **Günderode**. Investigating translation as a kind of performance, Chevigny connects Günderode's and Bettina's utopian, mystical, erotic, and pedagogical relation and Fuller's with her friends. Such an investigation illuminates the relations between feminism and performance, as well as the provocative phenomenon of "romantic friendship."

"New Turns in Literary and Feminist Theory; Or, the Return of Margaret Fuller," by Professor Christina Zwarg, who has written extensively about Fuller's work as a translator, focuses on Fuller's position in the feminist revision of the nineteenth-century American canon. Arguing that Fuller was a true comparativist, Zwarg contends that her continued insistence that we focus upon (and accept) differences both between and within cultures has significance for contemporary feminism(s) and critical theory alike. In 1976 Chevigny made a point of establishing the diversity of Fuller's writerly career. Yet it would take still more time for literary criticism to establish a suitable frame through which to appreciate the complexity of Fuller's work. Indeed, the history of the critical study of Fuller not only reflects the all-too-familiar undervaluation of a woman's accomplishment by traditional scholarship, but also provides an interesting lesson in the history of feminist criticism. In this paper, Zwarg delineates the contours of this last in order to establish Fuller's significance for contemporary debates in literary and feminist theory. While the early emphasis on Fuller's life tended to support the critical inclination of those readers interested in recovering the "experience" of women, Fuller's writing required a slightly different intellectual frame, in part because of the strong theoretical focus of her work. Fuller initiates her "feminism" through her reading--which is to say, through the activity of translation and literary criticism, shifting only then to a theory of history as an act of reading. The direction of her thinking oddly anticipates the feminist negotiation with the theoretical turns of post-structuralism and helps to show how the United States feminists now

turning to this European framework are in many ways returning to their own theoretical legacy.

Professor Jeffrey Steele, editor of **The Essential Margaret Fuller** (Rutgers, 1992), will present the final paper in this panel, "Winning 'the Secrets of the Tomb': The Politics of Mourning in Margaret Fuller's Writing." From her earliest 1835 poems addressed to Anna Barker to her final dispatches from Italy, Fuller's writing contains evocative images of mourning. These representations have important biographical and psychological resonances, related to her disordered mourning for her father, to the "loss" of Anna Barker and Samuel Ward, and to her understanding of loss in general. At the same time, important gender issues are raised by the different representations of mourning found in the works of nineteenth-century male and female writers. This gender difference was reflected in antebellum popular culture, where the image of the mourning woman (figured in lithographs and mourning samplers) was an evocative, culturally determined signifier that reinforced female passivity and worship of male power. As she found ways of defining her losses as representative of the losses experienced by other women, Fuller revalued the image of the mourning woman. Instead of reinforcing a sense of passivity, dramatizations of herself as a mourner became a source of political insight. Drawing on a number of examples in Fuller's works, Steele contends that Fuller's position as a cultural critic (in both America and Europe) depends to an important extent upon the dramatization of herself as a mourner, lamenting the losses of oppressed persons. In her writing, the act of mourning (in an echo of Emerson's principle of "compensation") occasions a moment of release and empowerment. As Fuller generalizes her sense of grief into a representative posture reflecting the losses experienced by other people, she transforms grief into political sympathy. The emotional transformation of the self mirrors the transformation of society, as the successful resolution of the mourning process facilitates the utopian vision of a renewed and strengthened body politic.

Mary Kelley, Professor of History at Dartmouth College and editor of the forthcoming **The Portable Margaret Fuller**, will serve as respondent to the papers on this panel. Professor Kelley, a distinguished historian of American cultural and intellectual history, has wide-ranging knowledge of Fuller, feminist studies, nineteenth-century American history and literature. She will provide a critical commentary on the papers and raise questions for the discussion to follow.

## Fuller Society Antecedents

Bell Gale Chevigny

Wondering about our antecedents as a Margaret Fuller Society, I looked back through Joel Myerson's "Ana" section in his secondary bibliographies and noted there were Fuller societies in Chicago in 1880, Knoxville in 1905, and Des Moines from 1896 to 1931. Margaret herself might be said to have initiated another kind of gathering in her honor beginning in 1852 when she conferred on Isaac Post in Rochester her views of her new surroundings [**Voices from the Spirit World**], re-emerged in New York in 1869, to give clairvoyant Henry Horn her remarks on literature in heaven, remembered Boston in 1880, giving a statement through Miss M. T. Shelhamer and again in 1889, when medium Mrs. Lake shared Fuller's lecture on "The Home," visited medium Lizzie Green in Cincinnati in 1883, and "ministered" finally in Buffalo in 1897 to Ira Fuller. No records to date on any visitation to Toronto . . . .

## Membership

Please enter or renew your membership in the Margaret Fuller Society by sending your dues (\$10 for faculty, and \$5 for students and independent scholars) to Margaret Fuller Society, c/o Larry J. Reynolds, Department of English, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843. This payment will cover your membership and subscription to the **Newsletter** through December 1994.

Items for publication in the next number of the **Newsletter** should be submitted to the editor by March 15, 1994.

## American Literary Scholarship, An Annual

David M. Robinson wishes to remind members of the Margaret Fuller Society that he regularly reviews new scholarly work on Fuller in the annual **American Literary Scholarship**, published by Duke University Press. He would appreciate receiving copies of books and offprints of articles for the review. His address is Department of English, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.

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