



# MARGARET FULLER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## **Margaret Fuller and American Cultural Critique: Her Age and Legacy**

Much of this issue of the **Margaret Fuller Society Newsletter** is devoted to coverage of the two-day conference held at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, April 29-30, 1995. Chaired by Fritz Fleischmann and sponsored by the New England American Studies Association, the conference included thirteen sessions, some thirty-seven paper presentations, a keynote address by Bell Gale Chevigny, walking tours of Concord, Massachusetts, and a closing panel discussion moderated by Larry Reynolds and featuring Fleischmann, Chevigny, Jeffrey Steele, and Joan Von Mehren. By all accounts, including that of **The Chronicle of Higher Education** (June 2, 1995), the conference was a defining moment in the recognition of Fuller as a leading nineteenth-century writer and intellectual. Abstracts of twenty-two papers presented at the conference may be found on pages 2-12 of this **Newsletter**.

## **Fuller Society Meeting at 1995 MLA Convention**

The third annual meeting of the Margaret Fuller Society will be held on Friday, December 29, at 1:45 p.m. in the Atlanta Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago as part of the 1995 Modern Language Association Convention. A session sponsored by the Fuller Society and chaired by Robert N. Hudspeth will follow.

Entitled **James Freeman Clarke, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, and the Specter of Margaret Fuller**, the session will feature:

Barbara L. Packer, "Whetstone and Jackal: The Cor-

respondence of Margaret Fuller and James Freeman Clarke."

Thomas R. Mitchell, "'Mutual Visionary Companionship': Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, and the 'Riddle' of Their Friendship."

Christina Zwarg, "Specters of Reading: Fuller and the Black Atlantic in **The Bostonians**."

Charles Capper, Response.

## **CALL FOR PAPERS** **ALA Conference in San Diego** **May 30-June 2, 1996**

The 1996 Conference of the American Literature Association will feature two sessions sponsored by the Fuller Society, the first on the topic **Margaret Fuller's Visions**, the second on **Fuller and Her Friends**. Anyone wishing to present a 20-minute paper should send a brief proposal to the respective session chair: Leland Person, College of Liberal Arts, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4522 or Judith Strong Albert, 182 Alvarado Road, Berkeley, CA 94705. The deadline is **January 5, 1996**.

## **Fuller Inducted into National Women's Hall of Fame**

At the suggestion of Charles Capper, the Fuller Society nominated Fuller to the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York, and on October 14, 1995, she was inducted, along with seventeen other women, including Amelia Bloomer, Mary Baker Eddy, and Matilda Joslyn Gage. Ellen Fuller Forbes, Fuller's great-great-niece received the award. Ms. Forbes, now 70, is beginning studies at the Harvard Divinity School.

## More Fuller at 1995 MLA

In addition to the Fuller Society session at the MLA, Joel Myerson will chair a session honoring Robert Hudspeth entitled *The Letters of Margaret Fuller: A Celebration*, on Friday, December 29, at 3:30-4:45 p.m. in Suite 265 of the Hyatt Regency. The session includes:

Susan Belasco Smith, "Margaret Fuller in New York: Private Letters, Public Texts."

Jennifer Hynes, "One Down, a 'Damned Mob' to Go: In Search of the Letters of Popular Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers."

Bell Gale Chevigny, "'Extraordinary Generous Seeking': Margaret Fuller's Friendship with Caroline Sturgis."

Robert N. Hudspeth, Response.

## ABSTRACTS OF BABSON CONFERENCE PAPERS

### "Expression to that Spirit": Contrasting Lights for Contrasting Audiences: *The Dial* and *The New York Tribune*

Marie Olesen Urbanski

Margaret Fuller did not follow male rules of discourse, but on the contrary, created a new style of interactive writing. Her voice reflected conversation. Renowned for her conversational brilliance, she knew that a good conversationalist is an observant listener. She was sensitive to the tastes and concerns of her audience, as she modified her erudite style written for the *Dial* elitists to a simpler one for her *Tribune* readers.

In her essays, she confided in her readers the dilemmas literary critics face--whether to make dogmatic evaluations or to praise a poorly written work with "smooth obsequious flatteries." How could she be both fair and honest? Her judgment evolved from tentativeness in her first *Dial* essay to confidence in "American Literature," but she still explained her reasoning to her audience. She invited her readers to participate in a thinking process which understands diverse points of view. Unlike modern journalists, Fuller made no attempt to disguise her emotional response, so today her articles would be on the Op Ed rather than on the front page.

Margaret Fuller is the archetypal woman who ex-

presses the same anxieties women feel today. She elicited a strong response from both women and men. As with her letters written as a child to her father, she was always aware of the patriarchy looking over her shoulder, but she knew she had female readers, too. Ultimately, she transcended her anxiety by acknowledging it and produced a new form of interactive rhetoric.

### "A Radiant Sovereign Self": Fuller's Far-Reaching Feminism

Judith Strong Albert

This paper presented an overview of Fuller's influence on major feminist thinkers since 1850. Fuller's education disposed her to a different life from that of her female contemporaries. Her literary and editorial career carried her beyond then-acknowledged womanly spheres. Her influence on her first Conversations circle in Boston, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Lydia Maria Child, and Caroline Healey Dall, extended her longer-term viability into a developing feminist understanding of women's history. Child's pre-feminism would be expressed politically in civil and human rights in terms well understood today by Alice Walker, Angela Davis, and Mary Frances Berry. Peabody's views toward women's and children's education and rights is echoed in the poetry and prose of Adrienne Rich and Nancy Chodorow. Dall's subjectivization of later 19th and early 20th century values concerning women's private vs. public selves is embodied in Carolyn Heilbrun's and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's insistence on their own need to write themselves into history.

Threads of Fuller's perceptions of Woman's existence as separate from but interrelated with Man's are evident in a range of representative American feminist voices. Beginning with Mary Beard's important work in the mid-1940s, a continuous spinning of woman's self-naming has been evident: in the fabric of women's unique history. Betty Friedan identified woman's problem with herself in 1963; Kate Millett exposed the 'I' in 1969; Gloria Steinem and Susan Faludi use their voices to speak of themselves as particular women in the 1990s; Gerda Lerner articulates Fuller's concept of a 'radiant sovereign self' as central to all aspects of feminist consciousness and being. Indeed, 'Woman must teach us to give her the fitting name' is as meaningful a quest in our time as in Fuller's day.

## **“(Un)Connected Intelligence”: Darting (Dialogs) in Margaret Fuller’s Letters and Early Criticism**

Cheryl Fish

Margaret Fuller’s discourse reveals and articulates an awareness of the limits of the written word in comparison to speech, and critiques written language’s ability to transcribe meaning and adequately communicate ideas and feelings. Fuller’s letters and criticism draw attention to and deconstruct the disparity between the written and spoken word for a woman of letters in nineteenth-century antebellum America, pointing to the difficulty of negotiating between public and private spheres. In her writing, Fuller aspires to an eloquence valued by her friends, but because of a set of complex social and psychological factors, Fuller acknowledges her own difficulty in transporting her darting, spontaneous spoken words and “disruptive” power to paper. Yet she writes copiously, emphasizing mediation and dialogue in many forms, as a way to work out her own ambivalence about her contribution and legacy as writer and editor. Because of the restraints placed on women as writers and the calculated expectations she feels from men, divorced from the specter of conversational spontaneity, she finds herself in a double bind. She turns to conventional genres and standards at the same time she questions and reinvents them. For Fuller, the power of oral communication is seldom subsumed by textuality; her concern for the “aesthetic performance” is inherent in both the written and spoken word.

In 1840, Fuller was named editor of the *Dial* and assumed greater authority within the Transcendentalist circle; she also ran her *Conversations* for women, and began to strengthen and re-define her positions and emotionally and physically break away from New England and her close friendship with Emerson. The letter is an important genre for Fuller, for its flexibility and the way it can blur the boundaries between person-to-person and more public kinds of writing; it is the form closest to conversation. In her criticism, Fuller posits the problem of universalizing and relying on the power of the editorial “we;” yet in her “A Short Essay on Critics,” the critic bears the burden of recognizing higher “truths.” He must be subjective and objective at the same time, a teacher and friend, learned but not condescending. Fuller’s criti-

cal writing reveals dialogism and contradictions that point to struggle and change that she would later develop in her feminist polemic, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.

## **Mounting the Rostrum: Fuller’s Theory and Practice of Rhetoric**

Carol Kountz

Despite omission from traditional rhetoric anthologies, Margaret Fuller’s theory and practice of rhetoric contributed significantly to rhetoric’s evolution, especially in her *Conversations*, classes in philosophy which Fuller conducted dialectically for adult women in Boston during 1839-1844. Fuller’s rhetorical language and style featured Socratic exchanges, that is, prodding of pupils by Fuller, punctuated by interpretations of myths, e.g., *Psyche*. Judging from these usages, Fuller’s theory was that dialogue enhanced communication and that spontaneous utterance, guided by the teacher, caused self-creation and knowledge for the speaker. Fuller’s rhetorical ideas contrast with the contemporary stress on eloquence, delivery, and transmission of knowledge from rhetor to audience. Fuller’s theory also held that the speaker should inspire and lead by example to bring the audience to knowledge of ultimate values; she exploited a corporeal rhetoric, encouraging students’ identification with her.

## **The New England Women’s Club: The Public Legacy of Fuller’s Private Conversations**

Wendy Ripley

This paper describes the role of women’s literary clubs, as Margaret Fuller first conceived of them, in the professionalization of women writers, especially in the life and career of Julia Ward Howe and her involvement with the New England Women’s Club. The focus of the paper is not on Howe’s story so much as what her experiences, and Fuller’s ideas, suggest about women’s professionalization in mid-century America. A pivotal point in the development of Howe’s writing career is her participation in Margaret Fuller’s “*Conversations*.” Here

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she finally found like minds to discuss her burning intellectual questions and writing concerns. She also received here the first encouraging words about her work. Desperate for an audience she could trust, she brought her poems to Fuller who pronounced them "genuine inspiration" and urged her to publish. Her relationship with Fuller later inspired her to address the needs of other women writers through the founding of the New England Women's Club.

When Margaret Fuller launched her "Conversations" for women in November of 1839, she hoped to answer the questions "What were we born to do?" and "How shall we do it?" Twenty-nine years later, a group of women who had careers in the public realm not available in Fuller's day, looked back to her model of female educational and intellectual collaboration as inspiration for female literary clubs asking, "How are we going to survive and thrive as women writers?" and "What communities can we belong to that will help us do it?" This paper examines, with Julia Ward Howe and the New England Women's Club as central examples, how literary groups offered literary support not always available in families or the culture at large, served a need for an audience, and became the final step in the professionalization process for women writers. Most significantly, these literary groups resulted in subverting the romantic notion of the solitary male author by promoting literary collaboration and created a separate literary canon and history for women. Margaret Fuller's legacy offered women not only a way to privately achieve their goals, but also led the way for public relationships based on the promotion of public roles of women.

## Margaret Fuller and Lydia Maria Child

Carolyn Karcher

Lydia Maria Child and Margaret Fuller influenced each other's thinking on the key problems that preoccupied both: sexuality and marriage, the status of women, slavery, and social reform. In the process, they also shaped each other's careers and left an imprint on each other's lives.

Fuller and Child met in 1825, when Fuller was fifteen and Child, as yet unmarried at age twenty-three, was in the first flush of her fame as the author of **Hobomok**.

They began reading Locke and Madame de Staël together a year and a half later. Much to the young Fuller's disappointment, this intimacy came to an abrupt end after Child's marriage in 1828. Over the next decade, the two women's paths diverged both intellectually and politically. While Fuller studied German philosophy and debated abstractions in the Transcendental Club, Child wrote abolitionist tracts, collected signatures on antislavery petitions, and published a pioneering **History of the Condition of Women, in Various Ages and Nations** (1835).

By the time the two women renewed contact with each other in 1839, they had reversed roles. Now it was Child who attended the feminist Conversations over which Fuller presided and out of which would emerge her **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**. Drawing on Child's historical research, Fuller developed it into a full-scale feminist analysis. Meanwhile, Child had retreated from her early feminist insights and plunged into Transcendentalist mysticism.

The two women's careers again intersected in 1844, when Fuller arrived in New York to join the staff of Horace Greeley's **New York Tribune** some six months after Child had relinquished the editorship of the **National AntiSlavery Standard**. During Fuller's two-year stay in New York, she and Child read and reviewed each other's work, visited and reported on the same penal and reformatory institutions, concerned themselves in different ways with the rehabilitation of "fallen women," and contended with thwarted love affairs. As Fuller moved toward greater and greater engagement with political activism, culminating in her participation in the Italian Revolution of 1848, Child took refuge in the arts, driven from activism by her disillusionment with the schisms in the antislavery movement.

Fuller's own political career ended with the failure of the Italian Revolution, which forced her to return to the United States, only to die in a shipwreck. Child's political career, similarly aborted by the stalemate over slavery, resumed in the late 1850s, as the struggle reached its crisis point, and continued through the Reconstruction era. During the same period, she also embraced Fuller's feminist militancy.

Child and Fuller interacted dialectically with each other throughout their careers, each deepening the feminist consciousness of the other and broadening the other's political sympathies.

## Margaret Fuller and Nathaniel Hawthorne

Thomas R. Mitchell

Julian Hawthorne in 1884 published his father's now infamous description of the "rude old potency" which destroyed Margaret Fuller; the scandal destroyed Fuller's reputation and persuaded generations of readers that Hawthorne not only disliked Fuller but also disapproved of all independent, intellectual women. Obscured initially by the scandal and later by patriarchal critical practice, Hawthorne's brief friendship with Fuller (1839-1844) was one of the most intimate relationships he would ever experience with a woman. Through a fresh examination of Hawthorne's and Fuller's letters and journals (some only recently published), we find that both experienced in their friendship a sympathetic bond in their "mutual visionary life," as Fuller characterized it, that encouraged the legendarily reserved Hawthorne to speak intimately of his personal life and that led Fuller to consider Hawthorne as being "more like a brother" to her than "any man before." When Fuller moved to New York and out of Hawthorne's life in the fall of 1844, Hawthorne within weeks began "Rappaccini's Daughter" and attempted for the first of many times through art to clarify through the translations of imagination the powerfully ambivalent nature of his relationship with Fuller.

### Julia Ward Howe and Margaret Fuller: A Woman-to-Woman (Elective) Influence

Judith Mattson Bean

One woman writer on whom Fuller had a profound (though to date overlooked) influence was Julia Ward Howe. Howe became friends with the older woman after overcoming Fuller's initial negative responses to their meeting in Boston. After Julia Ward attended a Fuller Conversation, she sent the *Dial* editor some of her poems, requesting a critical opinion. Fuller's (recently recovered) response provides an indication of her changing attitude toward Ward which probably contributed toward the development of their friendship. Later, as her diverse publications and private correspondence shows, Howe decisively elected Fuller as a model for the woman

of letters she wanted to become. Writing the first Fuller biography from a woman's perspective in 1883 solidified Fuller as Howe's model for the American woman of letters and helped shape Howe's career. As a woman biographer of Fuller, Howe answered an earlier demand for women's participation in literary history and in the transmission of Fuller's legacy as articulated by Caroline Dall (who protested the male authorship of the *Memoirs*).

Joel Myerson remarked, when noting the absence of a discussion of Howe's biography of Fuller in Donna Dickenson's recent study of Margaret Fuller, it would be interesting to compare how a contemporary woman wrote Fuller's life. Indeed, such an examination contributes to our understanding of paradigms of woman-to-woman influence. The "elective influence" of Fuller on Howe contrasts to the well known male-oriented paradigms such as those of Harold Bloom and Robert Weisbuch; rather, it illustrates a type of influence that supports rather than limits the subjectivity of the woman who is "influenced."

As essayist and speaker in women's organizations, mixed-sex social clubs, and professional speaking organizations, Howe drew on her memories to extend and participate in a Fuller tradition. Rarely bitter and frequently witty, Howe shared elements of Fuller's characteristic discourse style and carried out some of the feminist projects Fuller had outlined. This examination of the Fuller-Howe relationship will contribute to our understanding of Fuller's importance to her contemporaries and to the issue of influence patterns of nineteenth-century literary figures.

### From Muse to Ceres: The Influence of Margaret Fuller's Philosophy on Louisa May Alcott's *Diana and Persis*

Christopher Fahy

In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Margaret Fuller sets forth the conditions under which an individual may become both an artist and a wife. According to her, each female possesses the internal qualities of Muse and Minerva. The Muse aspect of the self is intuitive, magnetic, "feminine"; in contrast, Minerva, the "masculine" aspect, represents analytic thought and intellect. Com-

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bined, Muse and Minerva constitute the mature woman: aware of "divine rapture" and reason, she is an independent "unit" primed to marry and either create or inspire the work of art. Describing a crisis in the institution of marriage, she recommends female abstinence, a period of celibacy in which the nineteenth-century woman may don the armor of Minerva. Once she embraces her own intellect, the warrior's Muse will ripen into Ceres; in marriage, the self-reliant soul shall engender both creative and procreative fruit.

Louisa May Alcott, who knew and admired Fuller's work, portrays the evolution of two would-be feminine "units" in her unfinished novel, *Diana and Persis*. Diana, a virginal sculptor identified with both her namesake goddess and Minerva, undergoes a lonely apprenticeship before molding her masterpiece of "accuracy" and "passion," the tragic Saul. Possessing the qualities of a "fine man and a fine woman," Diana represents woman as wife and creator, attracting a mate only after herself achieving an internal equipoise of reason and emotion.

Her friend, Persis, attempts to modify her own passionate art with a sojourn in France studying drawing. Achieving an independent lifestyle, she wins her male masters' approval by both executing a domestic still life and subduing her heroic ambitions. Having attained acclaim, she marries, becomes a mother, and serves as inspiration for her musician husband. While still attempting to produce work of her own, Persis increasingly represents Fuller's less assertive ideal, woman as wife and muse. At once capturing Fuller's ambition and her ambivalence over that ambition, Persis serves as counterpart to the model Alcott prefers, the self-reliant Diana.

### **The Influence of Goethe on Margaret Fuller: Interpreter and Translator of German Literature**

Renate Delphendahl

Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) was one of the first literary critics in the United States who recognized Goethe's genius. Through her clear-sighted criticism and sensitive interpretations of Goethe's works--both from a philosophical and artistic point of view--she greatly increased the awareness of Goethe's works among her

compatriots. As early as 1833/34, Fuller translated Goethe's **Torquato Tasso** which, however, was only published posthumously. In the preface to her translation of Eckermann's **Conversations with Goethe** (1839) and in her essay "Goethe" in the **Dial** (1841), Fuller introduced Goethe's ideas to the American Transcendentalists. While many American intellectuals considered Goethe's works as immoral, Fuller understood his works as artistic creations. Fuller's linguistic skills and her wide knowledge of German literature, at a time when the study of the German language and literature was still in its infancy in the United States, places her at the cutting edge of the study of a new language, and made her a disseminator of new cultural information. As an interpreter/translator Fuller was creative, mediating between two different cultures and reconciling them through her translations.

### **Science and Seeing in Fuller's Texts**

Mary-Jo Haronian

This paper, part of a larger project in which I am tracing the convergence of science and literature in the works of American women writers from 1830 to 1930, examines the connections between seeing, science, and visual imagination in Fuller's **Woman in the Nineteenth Century** and **Summer on the Lakes, in 1843**. Fuller's personal familiarity with the important scientific developments of her day, as well as with the popularized versions of these developments, informed her understanding of the world and affected her texts to a degree not widely recognized. Science, which enables us to see what had not previously been known to exist, was a complement to Fuller's already extraordinarily visual imagination. Accustomed, by biographical and historical factors which I will outline, to understanding the world primarily through visual evidence, Fuller was attracted to the new ways of seeing science offered. In her writing, scientific ideas are translated into a rich visual language of seeing, seen, and scene. Her dramatic metaphors of seeing past, present, and future, and her frequent descriptions of herself looking, all spring from and nourish a kind of visual thinking.

I include discussions of Leibniz's **Monadology**, Goethe's botanical writings, Faraday's writings on electricity, and the history of the field of optics, as well as a

contextualization of Fuller's texts within Transcendentalism and within current feminist theories of subjectivity. Finally, I explore how an ocular mode of thinking and writing enabled Fuller to understand her own cultural moment to a remarkable degree. When she turned her practiced gaze back on science and herself, her visual tropes not only expressed her understanding, but actually enabled her to understand more deeply, to see beyond epistemological frames and raise questions about knowledge and its relationship to gender and power.

### **Symbols of Transformation: Fuller's Psychological Languages**

Jeffrey Steele

Margaret Fuller's writings between 1840 and 1844 focus upon profound processes of psychological transfiguration. Striving to heal the various fractures of her being, she invented for herself a new language of the self that focused upon woman's discovery within of a transcendent center authorizing self-reliant action. This new psychological awareness emerges in Fuller's writing during the autumn and winter of 1840-41--time of crisis and radical reorientation. In her letters, she began exploring symbols such as the carbuncle--an alchemical symbol of psychological wholeness akin to the "philosopher's stone." In "Leila," she develops a feminized vocabulary that locates a Goddess--as opposed to a masculine God--within. Some of Fuller's writings depict psychological transformation as a seasonal change initiated by a killing wind that links consciousness to the hidden depths of the self. At other times, she used the tomb as a profound symbol that enabled her to represent processes of spiritual death and resurrection, psychological burial and rebirth. In Fuller's psychological mythmaking, the tomb or crypt of the buried self could easily turn into a womb in which gestated a divine child (a new self) waiting to be born. In an 1840 letter, she depicts her psyche as a receptive womb that is fertilized by a divine spirit--a process of spiritual insemination and pregnancy in which her "soul swells" and eventually gives birth to a divine "child" that has gestated within. Carrying to term the new self emerging within her psyche, the self-reliant woman finds growing within a divine power that Fuller links both to narratives of the Virgin Mary and accounts of the great Mother Goddesses of classical antiquity. The

"pure child" of transfigured selfhood is the product of what Fuller (like many others before her) called the "sacred marriage"--a symbol that, in Fuller's usage, balances the masculine and feminine aspects of the psyche. Providing a new way of defining the self, Fuller's symbols of transformation helped her to realize the dream that she inherited from Goethe: that "New individualities shall be developed in the actual world."

### **"I Acknowledge No Limit": The Expansion of Narrative Form and Woman's Sphere in Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes***

Erika M. Kreger

In *Summer on the Lakes*, Margaret Fuller appropriates traditional forms for her own purpose, critiquing both the constraints of society and the limitations of verbal expression. She uses images taken from the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity to further her arguments for a broader experience for women, better understanding of the native population, and deeper appreciation of the spiritual world. The vocabulary of sincerity and hypocrisy appears in her included stories, such as the tales of Captain P., Marianna and the Seeress of Prevorst, as well as in the discussions of Indians and female settlers. In these narratives, Fuller alters and expands the traditional definition of true sincerity: she applies it to men as well as women, links it to the mind rather than the body, places its origin in free experience rather than domestic enclosure, and shows its range of influence reaching far beyond the parlor. The terms of the sentimental obsession with the sincere and the hypocritical provide an apt metaphor to express Fuller's idea of the division between spiritual understanding and earthly ignorance. In both her travel descriptions and her included stories, Fuller presents sensitive sufferers who break bounds rather than accept restraints. And the author herself, attempting to find adequate words to express herself, is aligned with such tragic strugglers. Her inclusive form points to the failure of traditional narratives to fully convey human experience, while the content of her inclusions reveals the constraints of nineteenth-century definitions of female identity.

## Representing Italy: Fuller, History Painting, and the Popular Press

Brigitte Bailey

Most American newspapers and periodicals that published pieces on the Roman Revolution (1848-49) were sympathetic to Italian efforts to reunite the country under a republican government. But, in her correspondence from Rome to the *New-York Daily Tribune* in these years, recently edited by Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith, Fuller saw perhaps most clearly the link between aesthetic and political forms of representation, that is, between depicting others and speaking for or silencing them. Many of the journals that reported on the political ferment also included tourist sketches; the *Tribune* serialized Bayard Taylor's picturesque *Views A-Foot* just before it began running Fuller's letters. The revolution did not alter tourist representations significantly but merely added the familiar icon of the republican patriot to older habits of depiction; images of Italians as middle-class revolutionaries impelled by bourgeois liberalism coexisted, rather illogically, with images of Italians and their landscape as exotic, apolitical "others" that helped Americans define their own national and class identities by contrast. As scholars have begun to argue, Fuller inserted into her letters prose sketches of public events and urban spaces that revised the traditionally timeless and pastoral Italian scene of Anglo-American depictions. I also believe she drew on the model of history painting, an important genre in the 1840s and practiced by such painters as Emanuel Leutze and John Vanderlyn, to bring images of revolutionary change directly into this scene. My paper sets Fuller's work in the context of the interplay of travel writing, political reporting, and visual images of Italy in American periodicals (from the *Democratic Review* to *Godey's Lady's Book*) in the 1840s. While Fuller's awareness of the connection between aesthetics and politics occasionally surfaces in obvious ways, as in her outburst against tourists who freeze the Italian scene in their sketches, her dispatches imply a longer and more complex working through of the problem, as she tries to develop modes of spectatorship and depiction that are capable of representing a fluid social scene and that do not silence those who inhabit this scene.

## Nature and Light: Luminism and the Future of the West in Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lake, in 1843*

Kathleen Healey

Throughout *Summer on the Lakes*, Margaret Fuller describes the Western landscape vividly, in images often reminiscent of nineteenth-century landscape paintings such as those of the Hudson River School and Luminist painters. Although Luminism did not emerge until the mid-nineteenth century, the Luminists best expressed transcendentalist ideals about nature and God. Throughout *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller experiences a series of epiphanies, in which she merges with nature and comes to see--in the metaphysical as well as physical sense--nature and its design. At these moments, Fuller describes landscapes similar to those painted by the Luminists and the proto-luminist, Washington Allston, an artist Fuller admired. Art historian Angela Miller has argued that Luminism is a more feminine way of seeing. Luminism is not defined by expansionist ideology, for the artist and the viewer merge with nature, do not see it as an object of conquest. Fuller's ideal landscape is one in which humankind and nature almost merge, where there is a sense of communion between them. If the landscape is also a metaphor for the nation, then Fuller reveals that it is through communion and harmony with the natural world, not conquest, that America can create a new Eden in the West. At the same time, Fuller critiques the masculine view of nature which demands the domination of nature, not peaceful co-existence. In her luminist descriptions of the landscape, as she merges with nature, Fuller acts as an example of the ideal she hopes her fellow Americans will achieve as they build the West.

## Margaret Fuller "Receiving" the "Indians"

Susan Gilmore

In *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, Margaret Fuller's vision of the new American frontier woman depends, problematically, upon both the vigor and the vanquishing of her Native sisters. In "The Great Lawsuit," Fuller presented the "Indian Girl" as a figure for women's ideal freedom and strength. On her Western tour, Fuller en-



countered a grimmer reality. Although she documents and protests the displacement of Native American tribes, Fuller stakes her authoritative claims on what she recognizes as shaky ground: in her chronicles of Indian territory she serves as both sympathizer and surveyor. Her commentary reflects an awareness that her writing on the subject of the "Indians" is in danger of becoming enmeshed in hackneyed and culturally enervating portraits of the ever-receding "stoics of the woods." This view culminates in the poem "Governor Everett Receiving the Indian Chiefs," (from **Summer on the Lakes**) in which Fuller incisively scrutinizes the politics of reading or "receiving" the "Native." I argue that Fuller's solidarity with Native Americans and the limits of this identification must be understood in the context of editorials and iconography which positioned white women both as colonial agents whose artistry would civilize the West and as moral arbiters whose depth of feeling would decry the true "savagery" of colonialism. My reading of **Summer on the Lakes** explores this precarious mediator's role which Fuller undertook as well as Fuller's eloquent pleas for a more capacious view of the West and its peoples.

### **"The Betrothed of the Sun": Female Celibacy, Communities and Convents in the Age of Margaret Fuller**

Nancy L. Schultz

This paper describes some cultural contexts for Margaret Fuller's life and work, particularly for her public life as an unmarried woman in America during a period of dramatic social changes. It highlights the thread of anti-Catholicism during Fuller's day that relates to anxieties about deviations from culturally sanctioned roles for women, connecting it to Fuller's ideas about women's self-reliance. In **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**, Fuller related a parable about a maiden from a mythical North American Indian tribe who was "betrothed to the Sun," and lived a life apart from the tribe, devoted to meditation and celibacy. Fuller's Indian maiden was tolerated by even the tribal chief, who "keeping many wives as useful servants, of course looks with no kind eye on celibacy in Woman." Like a Catholic nun "betrothed" to Jesus and entering a convent, the Indian maiden

chooses to live independently, not in a traditional female role. Fuller called celibacy, associated with what she termed masculine traits (virile force, rationality and genius), "the great fact of the time" and embraced the idea of women living in community outside the traditional family unit. Antebellum American society, in contrast to the native society idealized in Fuller's parable, displayed little tolerance of the idea of female celibacy and of women living in community. Fuller's public life as an unmarried woman in her late twenties and early thirties, and as a member of an intellectual community was in fact conducted in a hostile climate. This paper examines the burning of the Ursuline convent in Charlestown MA in 1834, noting striking parallels to witchhunts in convent hysteria. It details some implicit cultural assumptions about celibate nuns, particularly about the Ursuline order and examines Fuller's response to an Italian nun taking the veil in 1847. It may be deduced, therefore, that Fuller's personal definition of celibacy as a route to artistic creation and self-reliance was at variance with her culture's conception of celibacy.

### **"What Speaks in Us": Margaret Fuller, Woman's Rights, and Human Nature**

Cynthia J. Davis

Suffragist Paulina Wright Davis, speaking at a Woman's Rights Conference held in Worcester, Massachusetts only weeks after Margaret Fuller Ossoli drowned off Fire Island, invoked this tragedy as more than just a personal loss: as Davis shared with the women there gathered, "To her [Fuller] I, at least, had hoped to confide the leadership of this movement. It can never be known if she would have accepted it; the desire had been expressed to her by letter." Yet another letter, this one dated some seventeen years later, provides additional evidence of Fuller's importance to the first wave of feminist movement: in 1867, a young suffragist named Mary Livermore wrote Susan B. Anthony that "I have always believed in the ballot for woman at some future time-- always, since reading Margaret Fuller's 'Woman in the Nineteenth Century,' which set me to thinking a quarter of a century ago."

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The genealogical connection between Fuller and the woman's rights movement extends beyond that of written correspondence, as in my first example, or that between writer and reader, as in my second: Fuller, a feminist before the word was even coined, counted as personal friends several women who would go on to figure prominently in the woman's rights campaign. Although our dating of the nineteenth-century suffrage movement from the now famous conference in Seneca Falls in 1848 often obscures this fact, Margaret Fuller was clearly considered by many nineteenth-century women as the sine qua non of the woman's rights movement.

In our own day, divergent critical views have either strengthened or unraveled the ties that bind Fuller and the organized suffrage campaign, inaugurated while Fuller was in Italy. After assessing these views, I situate Margaret Fuller within a culture that was increasingly medicalizing and essentializing woman's nature and vis-a-vis an emergent woman's rights movement that would ultimately ground woman's rights in natural rights and woman's especial nature.

Fuller, in fact, explicitly distinguishes a woman's gender from her nature at a time when the two were fast becoming synonymous for women: hence in **Woman in the Nineteenth Century** she contends that "what woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded." Here, the freedom and lack of impediments she believes to be guaranteed any soul are conferred upon women precisely by identifying her as soul versus the traditional identification of women with (or as) body. Fuller's treatise, then, provides women with a potential means of escape from their confinement in woman's sphere, in a "woman's place" where and when that confinement is based on the penalty of biology. Ultimately, I argue, Fuller's failure to precisely locate gender identity within the body destabilizes and denaturalizes a gendered dichotomy that would, alas, become increasingly stable and natural after her death.

### **Sisters of Difference: Fuller, Chopin, Anzaldua, Morrison**

Pamela Glenn Menke

This paper explores Margaret Fuller as a prophetic theorist in **Woman in the Nineteenth Century** (1845)

and applies her theory of the soul to a reading of Kate Chopin's **The Awakening** (1899), Gloria Anzaldua's **Borderlands/La Frontera** (1987) and Toni Morrison's **Beloved** (1987). Fuller establishes the margin as the active site of possibility for transfigured woman and the rejection of the center as a site of authentic being. Fuller's concept of "soul" is a site of fluid passings; fluidity is the sign of gender. She speaks of an androgynous continuum through which male and female are "perpetually passing into one another." At variance with this "great radical dualism" is woman's bondage within male hierarchy. Declares Fuller, "there exists in the minds of men a tone of feeling toward women as toward slaves." In cultural constructions, then, woman is a sign for the enslaved other. In fact, Fuller uses abolition as an argument for woman's freedom. Fluidity is impossible in dominant cultural discourse, but is possible in the soul space of passing. Fuller conjectures about the properties of the soul. Chopin, Anzaldua, and Morrison give it voice through ephemeral narratives which imagine a far different *a priori* source than the privileged script of male dominance. This source, which Fuller first explores, is akin to Julia Kristeva's conception of poetic language (*le semiotique*), to Paula Gunn Allen's "mythopoeic vision" in **The Sacred Hoop** and to Karla Holloway's "textual language that is mythic in its proportion and its intent" in **Metaphors and Moorings: Figures of Culture and Gender in Black Woman's Literature**. The channels of this source are the seavoice in **The Awakening**, the textually silenced, but imagistically expressed **Coaticue** in **Borderlands/La Frontera**, and the voices of "Sixty Million and more" in **Beloved**.

### **"We use a different rhetoric": Fuller and Emerson as European Travellers**

Joseph C. Schopp

Fuller and Emerson visited Europe in a critical period of its history. From the very outset Fuller used the persona of a political traveller who deliberately deviated from the typical itineraries of the culture-oriented grand tourists of the time. The Italian risorgimento of 1849 was only a logical fulfillment of her innermost political desires and ambitions. On the barricades of a pope-free

Rome she rediscovered not only the power of the people but also the liberal political values, underwritten by the revolution of 1776, which she wanted to see reintroduced and revitalized in her politically discredited America. Emerson, on the other hand, remained more or less aloof from politics. The cultured circles of the English literati were more to his taste. The people he viewed with skepticism and all too often saw as an unruly "mob." The Paris revolution of 1848 in his eyes was a sublime and colorful spectacle without any major political consequences. But like Fuller he discovered value in Europe which he wanted to be held up as a mirror to his country. Unlike Fuller's future-oriented republican values, Emerson's values are those of England's past which he sees increasingly degraded in the present. Where Fuller's rhetoric is clearly that of a historical romance Emerson's is unmistakably tragic.

### Margaret Fuller and the "Scotch Woman"

Rosella Mamoli Zorzi

During her trip to Europe, Fuller met, and wrote about, many famous literary and political figures--among them Wordsworth, De Quincey, Carlyle, George Sand, Manzoni, but also Mazzini and Mickiewitz. Of other great patriots--from Kossuth to Manin to Tommaseo -- Fuller knew the political ideas and actions, during 1848-49, and of these too she told her **Tribune** readers. Less known "patriots" were also part of Fuller's Italian experience, among these her generous friend and helper Costanza Arconati Visconti, and the beautiful Cristina Belgioioso, two very different women, with different political ideas, but united by their love for Italy.

In almost all of these cases, Fuller indicated clearly to her readers the identity of the persons she was writing about: in a few cases she mentioned persons without naming them explicitly. This is for example the case of a "scotch-woman" whom she met in 1846 at Lancrigg (Easedale, Ambleside) or of a German sculptor whose works she saw in Rome.

In this paper I have identified this Scottish lady, Eliza Dawson, married Fletcher (1770-1858), not a "Scottish" lady (only by her marriage), but moving in the lively circle of the Edinburgh of social and political reforms.

I have tried to throw light on the reasons why these two women, different in age, position, nationality, were so much taken one with the other. Mrs. Fletcher wrote about Fuller in her Autobiography, calling her "an agreeable American woman of genius." Fuller and Fletcher had in common the passion for democracy, liberty, and justice, as documented in her writings. Also their upbringings have some points in common, as their attitudes towards husbands and children. Deep feelings of love never stopped these two women from having a lively and active interest in the political scene around them.

### Editing Margaret Fuller's Poetry

Jeffrey Steele

A close examination of Arthur Fuller's editing of his sister's poetry in the posthumous volume **Life Without and Life Within** reveals the ways his editorial procedures distorted Fuller's poetry. Arthur added interpretive titles that altered the meaning of specific poems. In other cases, he dropped lines and stanzas. For example, the omission of fifteen lines from a poem entitled "The Thankful and the Thankless" mystified Fuller's theological views through the elimination of heterodox and occult images. The deletion of eighteen lines from "The Captured Wild Horse" eliminated Fuller's comparison of oppressed wives to slaves. A more interesting case involves Arthur Fuller's publication of "On a Picture Representing the Descent from the Cross." Selecting the shorter and more orthodox variant of this poem, he silently suppressed one of Fuller's most radical examinations of personal transformation--a poem that imagines a process of personal crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Many of Fuller's most important poems have been omitted from Arthur Fuller's selection: the early poetic epistles to Anna Barker, the haunting 1841 poem that opens "River of beauty flowing through the life," and many of the most evocative 1844 poems (such as "Double Triangle, Serpent and Rays" and "Winged Sphynx." He leaves out Fuller's examination of her androgynous identity in "To the Face Seen in the Moon." We miss Fuller's moving poetic farewell to New England, "Leaving Fishkill for New York." In short, Arthur Fuller's editing suppressed much of the emotional complexity

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and literary richness of his sister's work. In place of the brilliant visionary, who provided a generation of men and women with a vision of feminist transformation, we encounter a much tamer Margaret Fuller. We miss most of the pain and--as a result--the joy of Fuller's greatest personal victories: her transformation of suffering into creative insight, and of mourning into spiritual ecstasy.

### Kelley Book Available

Mary Kelley, the John Sloan Dickey Professor of History at Dartmouth College, has edited **The Portable Margaret Fuller**. This 531-page volume includes a critical introduction by Professor Kelley, the complete texts of Fuller's **Summer on the Lakes** and **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**, selections from Fuller's contributions to the **Dial** and the **Tribune**, and fifty-four pages of her correspondence. The book is priced at \$13.95 and may be obtained from Penguin Books, 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014.

### Fuller Sessions at 1995 ALA Conference

At the 1995 Conference of the American Literature Association held in Baltimore May 25-28, two Fuller Society sessions were held. The first, chaired by Dennis Berthold, featured:

Christina Zwarg, "Fuller and the Work of Trauma."

Buford Jones, "Writing **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**."

Jeffrey Steele, "Fuller's Rhetoric of Transformation."

The second, chaired by Pamela Matthews, featured:

Judith Mattson Bean, "Feminist Readers in History: Margaret Fuller's Review of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's **Poems**."

Thomas R. Mitchell, "Fuller's Voice, Hawthorne's Translation."

Cheryl D. Bohde, "When Ideologies Collide: Margaret Fuller, Evert A. Duyckinck, and **Papers on Literature and Art**."

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### Chronicle of Higher Education Recognizes Fuller

In "Margaret Fuller Gets Her Due," **The Chronicle of Higher Education** 51 (June 2, 1995): 6-7, 12, Scott Heller reports on the recent scholarly interest in the life and writings of Fuller, concluding that she "is slowly being added to the canon of important 19th-century thinkers." In his discussion of the Babson Conference, Heller credits Fritz Fleischmann with making a "rare move," devoting the meeting to a single author and her influence. "The meeting," Heller observes, "demonstrated that scholars are looking at more than her foundational feminist work, **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**. They are also interested in her depiction of American Indians and westward expansion in **Summer on the Lakes**, and they are excited by the bold political commitments that fired her European journalism." Photographs of Bell Chevigny and Christina Zwarg appear in the piece.