



MARGARET FULLER

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fuller Society Special Session at 1999 MLA Convention

The following session sponsored by the Fuller Society was held December 29 at the 1999 MLA Convention in Chicago:

Margaret Fuller and the Rhetoric of Social Change

Chair: Jeffrey Steele

T. Gregory Garvey, "Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and the Context of Reform in the 1840s"

Peter A. Dorsey, "Margaret Fuller and the Slavery Metaphor: The Transcendental Response"

Judith Mattson Bean, "Margaret Fuller and Women's Rhetoric of Reform in the *New York Tribune*"

The proposal for this session, written by Jeffrey Steele, appears on page 3 of this **Newsletter**.

Fuller Session at 1999 ALA Conference

At the 1999 Conference of the American Literature Association held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 27-30, the following Fuller Society session was held:

Margaret Fuller and Transcendentalism

Chair: Deshae Lott

Cynthia J. Davis, "Margaret Fuller, Body and Soul"

Joseph C. Schöpp, "The Metamorphic Self: Margaret Fuller's Multiple M's"

Bruce Mills, "'Apprehensive Genius': Margaret Fuller and the Science of Sympathy"

Fuller Session at 2000 ALA Convention

At the 2000 Conference of the American Literature Association to be held in Long Beach, California, May 26-29, two Fuller Society sessions will be held:

Fuller and Democracy

Chair: Thomas R. Mitchell

Elizabeth Hewitt, "Phenomenal Friends: Fuller's Epistolary Democracy"

T. Gregory Garvey, "Fuller's Conversations and the Domestication of Discursive Democracy"

Paola Gemme, "Roman Visions of American Exceptionalism: A Study of Fuller's *Tribune* Dispatches"

Fuller, Gender, and the Exceptional Woman

Chair: Robert N. Hudspeth

Colleen Glenney Boggs, "Margaret Fuller and the Subject of Translation"

Stephanie Barron, "Health, Education, and Exceptionality in Fuller's 'Autobiographical Romance'"

Lance Newman, "The Landscape of Democracy in *Summer on the Lakes, 1843*"

Hudspeth's Selected Fuller Letters

Cornell University Press will soon publish a one-volume edition of selected letters of Margaret Fuller edited by Robert Hudspeth. The volume has the tentative title *My Heart is a Large Kingdom* and should be available in 2000.

In Memoriam

Joseph Jay Deiss (1912-1999)

Marie Urbanski

“As fragments of the past, like genes, are embedded in the present, understanding the present demands understanding the past. The whole of a man or a woman is derived from the whole of history.”

J. Deiss

Joseph Jay Deiss, the author of *The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller*, died April 10, 1999 in Gainesville, Florida. He was born in Twin Falls, Idaho, in 1912 and received both his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Texas. After having served in a variety of government posts in Washington, D.C. and been engaged in public relations in New York, he became Vice Director of the American Academy in Rome from 1965-1969. There, as had Margaret Fuller before him, he “fell in love with Italy,” and subsequently with Margaret Fuller. In Rome Deiss discovered Fuller when he came upon the “Viale Margarita Ossoli Fuller.” In the American Academy he found a copy of the *Memoirs* that had belonged to George T. Davis [Fuller’s first love], when he began work on his biography. Listed as one of the one-hundred outstanding books by Book World, *The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller* was published in 1969 and inspired a great deal of interest in Fuller. Deiss questioned perceived notions of Fuller, and since he spoke and read Italian, he was able to add new insight to her life in Italy.

Deiss was also a novelist and author of other biographies. One of his best know works is an archeological study *Herculaneum: Italy’s Buried Treasure*. He is survived by his daughter, Susanna Deiss Chivian, and three grandchildren.

American Women Writers

The Society for the Study of American Women Writers held an organizational meeting at the American Literature Association Conference in May 1999. Organized for the purpose of promoting the study of American women writers through research, teaching, and publication, the Society sponsors a journal, *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, and a newsletter, and will sponsor periodic conferences. The Officers and Advisory Board of the SSAWW invite all interested persons to join by accessing the SSAWW website at: <http://www.unl.edu/legacy/SSAWW1.html> and following the instructions for membership.

The SSAWW is sponsoring its first international conference February 14-18, 2001, at the St. Anthony Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The program committee will be formed in January 2000 and issue a call for papers and proposals in March. Margaret Fuller Society members are encouraged to visit the SSAWW website and respond to the call. Questions should be sent to Susan Belasco, Conference Director, SSAWW, by e-mail to susan-belasco@utulsa.edu.

Commemorating Fuller in Rome

Bell Gale Chevigny

Having the great good fortune to be at the American Academy in Rome for three weeks in December, 1999, I met, at Joan Von Mehren’s suggestion, with Professor Giuliana Limiti, vice president of the Mazzini Society. Originally founded in 1940 by Italian Americans to counter fascism by educating their peers about their Mazzinian heritage, the society, recently revived, is launching a series of projects to draw attention to the Roman Republic and to honor Margaret Fuller’s role in it. These include mounting educational posters about Fuller on the Gianicolo, one next to the statue of Anita Garibaldi, another on the Viale Margarita Ossoli Fuller, a steep wooded path in the overgrown Villa Schiarra, now being renovated; putting a plaque on the house she occupied during the Republic; and, if funding can be found, mounting an international conference

To help identify the house she occupied during the Republic, I met with Roberto Colzi, an archival researcher by avocation, who had last year helped Joan find Fuller’s via del Corso house. Joan had found an envelope addressed by Cristina Belgioioso to Fuller at Pza. Barberini 60 in 1849. Fuller’s descriptions of her house led us to identify it as the tall, yellow house which is now Pza. Barberini 2. Sr. Colzi’s research confirmed that the building’s numbers have changed. Eager to test our hypothesis by examining the view from a high floor, I phoned Doctor Andrea Basili who now occupies the third floor. In the sympathetic belief that spirits of the dead continue to haunt their dwellings, Dr. Basili invited me to visit his rooms. It was raining when I rang his bell, but the sun broke through dramatically as we entered the apartment. Though it has been cut up and renovated, the corner room still commands an excellent view up the via Quattro Fontane toward the gates of the Barberini palace as Fuller described it.

1999 MLA Special Session Proposal:

Margaret Fuller and the Rhetoric of Social Change

Jeffrey Steele

Fuller scholars are still working out the dynamics of Fuller's complex rhetoric of social change. Critics such as Marie Urbanski, Annette Kolodny, Charlene Avallone, Christina Zwarg, and Julie Ellison have begun linking Fuller's social critique to sermon rhetoric, Richard Whately's rhetorical theories, patterns of conversational discourse, and Fourier's models of social critique. But much more work needs to be done both in synthesizing this diverse material and in exploring Fuller's development of a complex, heterogeneric social discourse. Each of the three papers on this panel provides important historical, cultural, and critical contexts that highlight different dimensions of Fuller's rhetoric of social change.

In his paper "Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and the Context of Reform in the 1840s," T. Gregory Garvey lays the groundwork for this rethinking of Fuller's social criticism. Linking Fuller's emerging social theories to the climate of reform in the 1840s, Garvey positions her most famous work within a broad-based cultural debate about the ethics of reform. In her writing, he asserts, a Transcendentalist emphasis upon self-culture was beginning to give way to an increasing emphasis on political organization. By locating a similar tension between self-culture and political activism in the works of Fuller's contemporary Frederick Douglass, Garvey is able to explore the important parallels between her discourse of woman's rights and the rhetoric of abolitionist reform. In the process, he highlights a methodological ambivalence (between self-culture and moral suasion) that "has always characterized American reform movements."

Peter A. Dorsey approaches the connections between Fuller's writing and anti-slavery writing from a different angle. Examining the figuration of slavery in antebellum America, he situates the analogy between black and female oppression within debates over the proper function of figurative language. Building on the work of late-18th-century rhetoricians such as Hugh Blair and Richard Whately, writers such as Emerson and Fuller were able to overcome the fear that metaphor leads to faulty judgments and fabulous ideas. In their works, a metamorphic rhetoric founded on metaphorical exchange became a powerful tool of social analysis. But despite their imaginative appeal, metaphorical equivalences between white female and black oppression tended—at times—to deflect audiences from the specific, material conditions of chattel slavery. In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller deploys an analogical frame-

work that compares the oppression of African Americans and women. But through a strategic essentialism that breaks down rigid epistemological categories, she is able to move beyond analogy and metaphysically fuse feminism and abolitionism. In her eyes, Dorsey argues, the emancipation of women and the liberation of slaves were different manifestations of the same crusade, in which the instantiation of particular injustices reflects the movement toward a "foundational" state of liberated being.

At the present, the most significant project in Fuller scholarship is the forthcoming edition of Fuller's uncollected *New York Tribune* articles, edited by Joel Myerson and Judith Mattson Bean. Drawing on this scholarly work, Judith Bean examines "Margaret Fuller and Women's Rhetoric of Reform in the *New York Tribune*." To date, most readers tend to regard Fuller's journalism as the work of an isolated intellectual and thus overlook the ties between this work and the important nexus of women's creative and reform writing that was either covered or which appeared in the pages of the *Tribune*. During Fuller's years there, the *Tribune* reported on the reform activities of Dorothea Dix, Abby Kelley and Delia Webster; while it published reform-oriented works by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Maria Chapman, Frederika Bremer, Lydia Maria Child, Caroline Kirkland, Catharine Sedgwick, Ernestine Rose, Eliza Farnham, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Reviewing many of these writers, Fuller's development as a critic of contemporary American culture thus coincided with the emergence of a circle of powerful female reformers whose writing emerged along side her own. The complete story of women's reform activities in antebellum New York remains to be written. But by analyzing the discursive frameworks shaping Fuller's rhetorical practice as a New York social critic, Bean provides an important chapter of that history.

Request for Family Information

Bryant Turner Fell of Wales writes, "I believe I am Margaret Fullers' great, great, great nephew through the marriage of the niece of Margaret Fuller, Emily Roelker Fuller, daughter of William Henry Fuller, to Augustus Allen Hayes, the grandson of Reverend Samuel Dana and Henrietta Bridge. I am most curious to receive any information about Margaret. Her great, great niece, my mother Florence Hayes Turner, is now ninety and not very well. I am researching my American family and would appreciate any information. To receive the complete family tree would be a bonus." Mr. Fell's address is: BRYN PABO, CARREGLEFN, AMLWCH, GWYNEDD, WALES. LL68 OPL. Tel: 01407-710572.

New Volume of Fuller's Tribune Writings

Columbia University Press will soon publish the volume *Margaret Fuller, Critic: Writings from the New York Tribune, 1844-1846*, edited by Joel Myerson and Judith Mattson Bean. The collection will include a historical introduction and eighty-seven Fuller essays; the complete set of essays (1844-46) will be published on a searchable CD-Rom which accompanies the book. All of the pieces are annotated.

Lott Dissertation Available

"'This Mutual Visionary Life': The Mystical Model of Margaret Fuller" a 1999 dissertation by Deshae Elizabeth Lott of Texas A&M University is now available from the UMI company, 300 North Zeeb Road, P.O. Box 1346, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346. Phone: 1-800-521-0600.

The dissertation examines the sources and nature of Fuller's mysticism and the ways it affected her career and antebellum American society. An appendix to the study contains Lott's transcriptions of Fuller's marginal notes and markings in the King James Bible given her by her father on January 1, 1832.

Fuller Special Issue of *ESQ* Still Available

ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance is pleased to make available to Fuller Society members a special double issue featuring the following essays: "The Nineteenth-Century Women's Rights Movement and the Canonization of Margaret Fuller," by Phyllis Cole; "'A Commanding View': Vision and the Problem of Nationality in Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*," by Anne Baker; "Margaret Fuller's Visions," by Mary-Jo Haronian; and "'A Presence among Us': Fuller's Place in Nineteenth-Century Oratorical Culture," by Judith Mattson Bean. To order, please send a check for \$10 made out to *ESQ* to Jana Argersinger, Associate Editor, *ESQ*, Department of English, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-5020. For further information about this issue or about *ESQ* subscriptions, available to Fuller Society members at a 20% discount, call (509) 335-4795 or send email to argerj@mail.wsu.edu.

Query

Bell Gale Chevigny would be glad to know if anyone has any plans for marking the 150th anniversary of Margaret Fuller's death. Please contact Bell at her e-mail address: bchevigny@aol.com.

Women in the 19th Century: A Conversation

Joan Von Mehren has brought to our attention a sculpture installation entitled "Women in the Nineteenth Century" by Gail Rothschild, created in 1992 for the sculpture park of the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts. When she received the commission, Rothschild was creating site-specific sculptures and while considering the area around Lincoln, she read up on the local history and discovered Fuller for the first time. After reading extensively about her, she created this circle of five, oversized, steel rocking chairs. Across the backpiece of each, she inscribed a Fuller quotation, while on the reverse side there is a counter quotation. Three of the reverse-side quotations are from Emerson, one from Alcott, and one from Sophia Hawthorne. In each chair is a bundle of hay, shaped with chicken wire into the rough figure of a woman, lying face-down with her head through the rungs of the chair, somewhat reminiscent of certain works of Man Ray or Brassai in the 1930s where women were depicted with their heads in metal cages or nets. The setting of the installation is in a glade of old pines in the pond-side section of the sculpture park. A photo of the work can be seen at the website: www.decordova.org/decordova/sculpt_park/alex/women19.html

Margaret Fuller Society Information

President: Joel Myerson (2000-2002)

First Vice-President: Jeffrey Steele (2000-2002)

Second Vice-President: Brigitte Bailey (2000-2002)

Immediate Past President: Robert N. Hudspeth

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You may enter or renew your membership in the Margaret Fuller Society by sending your dues (\$10 for faculty; \$5 for students and independent scholars) to the Margaret Fuller Society, Department of English, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.