

# Margaret Fuller's Conference

European Study Group of 19th Century American Literature

Co-sponsored by EAAS and FAAAM (Femmes Auteurs Anglaises et Américaines)

University of Paris Ouest-Nanterre-La Défense

Octobre, 9-10 2009

**Friday October, 9**

**14:30**

**Opening lecture by Professor Jeffrey Steele (University of Madison, Wisconsin)**

“Margaret Fuller's Geographical discontinuities”

**15:30 – 18:30**

General discussion led by Professor Steele around the following questions:

- 1) In the Memoirs, how do the two autobiographical sketches in Part I (the “unfinished sketch of youth”/“autobiographical romance” and the account of a mystical experience at age 21) set the terms for Fuller's construction of identity? How do dualistic structures function in these accounts? What symbols, situations, and literary strategies does Fuller use to represent her subjectivity?
- 2) In the Memoirs, what is Ralph Waldo Emerson's attitude toward Fuller's mysticism? What attitudes and assumptions shape his portrait of Fuller's arcane interests? If one considers Fuller's mythological and mystical interests as the imaginative foundation of her feminist mythmaking, how does Emerson's reaction help us to measure his distance from her feminized model of “self-reliance” in Woman in the Nineteenth Century?
- 3) How does William Henry Channing's account of Fuller's mysticism supplement Emerson's version? What important factors does Channing add to the equation? (Remember that Channing was the male correspondent who was most sympathetic to Fuller's religious and mystical tendencies.)
- 4) How does the mythic language of Fuller's 22 October 1840 letter to Caroline Sturgis, “Leila,” and her 1844 poetry help us to understand the mythic substratum of Woman in the Nineteenth Century? (In this regard, it is useful to consider the figure of Leila as a composite Goddess figure, combining attributes of Isis, Artemis, Diana, the Virgin Mary etc.)

- 5) The essay “Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts” reminds us that the transmission of affect or sentiment played an important role in Fuller’s political writings. I have coined the term “sentimental Transcendentalism” to characterize the hybrid literary mode that results from the mixture of Transcendentalist idealism and the politics of sympathy. How does this mixture of idealism and feeling shape Fuller’s most famous political writings: Woman in the Nineteenth Century and her European dispatches?
- 6) Fuller’s New-York Tribune essay, “Our City Charities,” represents the focus of her writing as “public attention.” How do other texts, such as Woman in the Nineteenth Century and her European dispatches, attempt to mold public attention? Since these works include representations of social conditions, literary allusions, mythical references, and highly symbolic language, what can we conclude concerning Fuller’s understanding of “attention”?
- 7) What literary strategies and techniques (especially, symbolic and figurative language) does Fuller use to represent collective political movements, such as the woman’s movement and the revolutionary upheavals of 1848?
- 8) To what extent can we read Fuller’s figurative language as a psychological and--later--a political application of the symbolism of alchemy? (Alchemy, we remember, involves the material transformation of substances through processes such as *sublimatio*/ sublimation, *purifacio*/ purification, *moritfactio*/ ‘dying,’ *calcinatio*/ calcination etc.) Other related questions: How does Fuller symbolize transformation and change? How do symbolic patterns of death, rebirth, and transfiguration function in her writing?

## **20:00 DINNER in PARIS**

### **Saturday October, 10**

**9:30 ANTOINE TRAISNEL (University of Lille III, France):** “The Resistance to Translation in *Woman in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*”

**10:00 CLAUDE SAFIR (University of Paris VIII, France):** “Creative Correspondences: Margaret Fuller’s New Voice”

### **10:30 PAUSE**

**11:00 ASUNCION LOPEZ-VARELA (Complutense University, Madrid, Spain):** “Issues of Privacy and Literary Property in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Women Authors: The Cases of Margaret Fuller and Fanny Fern”

**11:30 KIMBERLY ENGBER (Wichita State University, Ks, USA):** “Gendering Ethnoscapes in the Travel Writing of Margaret Fuller and Isabella Bird”

**12:30 LUNCH**

**14:00 KASIA KUCZMA (University of Poznan, Poland):** “The Garden and the Bookshelf. Fuller’s American and European Travels”

**14:30 MARIANA NET (Iorgu Iordan - Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest, Romania):** “Margaret Fuller – A Woman in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century”

**15:00 PAUSE**

**WORK-IN-PROGRESS SESSION**

**15:30 JELENA SESNIC (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia):** “Dark Ladies: Figures of Dark Femininity in Antebellum American Literature, 1820-1860”

**16:00 VERENA LASCHINGER (Fatih University, Istanbul, Turkey):** “Bayard Taylor in Istanbul”

**16:30 BRIGITTE ZAUGG (Université de Metz, France):** “Ellen Glasgow’s Gothic Universe”

**20:00 DINNER in PARIS**

**For further information please contact Marie-Claude Perrin-Chenour ([marie-claude.chenour@wanadoo.fr](mailto:marie-claude.chenour@wanadoo.fr))**