The Mediating Force of Margaret Fuller’s Work in Education, Nature Writing, and Social Reform

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Defining Mediation .......................................................... 1

Chapter I: Education ........................................................................... 14

Chapter II: Nature Writing ................................................................. 36

Chapter III: The New-York Tribune ................................................. 60

Conclusion ......................................................................................... 80

Notes .................................................................................................... 84

Bibliography ....................................................................................... 85
Introduction: Defining Mediation

Gender, Education, and Mediation

In an 1855 address on women’s suffrage, Ralph Waldo Emerson writes: “so much sympathy as they have, makes them inestimable as the mediators between those who have knowledge and those who want it” (Works: Miscellanies 340). With this claim, Emerson effectively conflates the identities of women and the identities of those who teach, marking them both with an observed abundance of sympathy as well as an ability to mediate between the experts and novices of any educational field. Emerson suggests here that women are uniquely suited for the profession of teaching due to the particular trait - sympathy - needed to teach with ease and efficacy. His characterization of women defends the increasingly common delegation of women to the sphere of the educator throughout the nineteenth century, combined with their more traditional occupation of the domestic sphere.¹

Emerson’s claim assumes a great deal about the nature of women and their affect; but also, his sweeping declaration reveals a great deal about the ideologies and practices of education in nineteenth-century America. Whether his associations reflect the pedagogical practices of his culture or merely his own personal beliefs, Emerson establishes a particular positioning of those involved in the learning process that frames this study. “Knowledge,” as it is used in this phrase, is something to be sought
out and achieved. In line with Transcendentalist philosophy, Emerson describes the ultimate quest for knowledge as a process by which those who search for divine truth strive for a communion with God in order to achieve that understanding. The positioning of these two groups suggests that those who want knowledge cannot attain it without mediation and, further, that women are ideally suited to fill the role of the mediator.

The equation of womanhood with mediation is not unique to this time period or to the subject of education. Women have traditionally been considered a medium through which God is accessible. Additionally, women have been positioned in a secondary role of mediator, removed from the essential exchange of experience, necessary only as mere vehicles of transfer. Here, Emerson has applied this identification of woman as mediator to the field of education, problematizing her role in the processes of both teaching and learning. The woman/teacher’s identity here is defined relationally; her role exists only as the point of connection between the two disparate groups. According to her position in this ordering, it seems unlikely that she is ever able to reach the top of the order herself; she merely functions as a vehicle to transport those at the bottom to the top. In addition to what this quotation reveals about Emerson’s understanding of the learning process, it is significant that he associates women here with a particular affinity for mediation. Such a classification warrants an examination of the teacher’s role in education and women’s role in mediation. In his implicit connection of women to education, this quote jeopardizes
the role of women, both as legitimate holders and sources of knowledge themselves, as well as effective facilitators to students who want knowledge.

*Margaret Fuller*

In her short life, Margaret Fuller established herself as a foundational figure of the Transcendentalism movement as well as a leading scholar in feminist theory. Her frequent communication with many figures of the Transcendentalist circle, including her sustained correspondence with Emerson, positioned her at the heart of the relevant debates that dominate these intellectual circles. Fuller’s feminist writings reflect her struggle to create a space for the identity of the educated woman in America, which she felt for herself firsthand.\(^4\) Her father, Timothy Fuller, insisted that Margaret receive the same quality education she would have received had she been a boy. He homeschooled her rigorously throughout her childhood, often depriving her of the time to relax that most children enjoy. She learned several languages at a young age, including German, making her an invaluable translator for the American Romantic movement. By adulthood, she had the intellect to rival her male contemporaries, many of whom had graduated from Harvard, an opportunity she, of course, was denied. Her unlikely education made her the perfect candidate to take on the gender inequalities in education at that time.\(^5\) Fuller used her academic background in a variety of teaching roles. She tutored many of her brothers and sisters, taught formally at Amos Bronson Alcott’s Temple School and the Greene Street School in Providence, and finally, organized a series of Boston Conversations for women looking to continue their
education in the Boston area. These teaching opportunities provided Fuller with the chance to develop her own pedagogical approaches as well as shape her vision for women in American society. Fuller’s interests implicate her in this study of the intersection of gender, education, and mediation. Her writings provide a response to Emerson’s identification of women as mediators.

Fuller’s relevant work extends beyond education and writings on gender equality, however. She writes at a critical point in American history, at the height of the debate over Manifest Destiny, the war with Mexico, the treatment of the Native Americans, and the expansion of slavery. The tension caused by these national and global conflicts are reflected in her writing and her career choices. I will examine how Fuller takes up the problem of mediation in her writings on education, her nature writing and her journalism. We get one example of this writing when, in 1843, Fuller traveled west into the American frontier and published her account in *Summer on the Lakes*. This trip and its literary product position Fuller as a possible mediator both between her readers and nature, as well as a mediator between the east and the west, and an analysis of her writing here allows readers to speculate about her attitudes toward such a position.

Another example comes when Fuller began working as a critic and essayist for the *New-York Tribune* in 1844. This work developed her interest in the major inequalities and injustices within her own New York City community and would eventually send her abroad as the first female correspondent to consider these issues on
a more global scale. The articles I choose to focus on in this study reflect Fuller’s attempt to bridge the gap between her audiences and those she sees as victims of social injustice, and potentially place her in the position of mediator between these groups. The subjects about which Fuller writes, as well as the audiences to whom she writes, suggest the possibility that she could be considered a mediator, not just in education, but also in nature writing and in her journalism. In fact, all of Fuller’s non-fiction writing can be read as a form of education, though less traditional than her work in the classroom, and the potential for mediation is present in the writing of all three chapters of this study. The concept of mediation, though, is loaded for Transcendentalists, including Fuller herself, with many negative implications. It presents a complicated relationship which many writers warn against, while at times accepting it as a necessity of life. In this study, I consider Fuller’s attitudes toward this complicated relationship as they are revealed through her writing as well as the implications of labeling women as the appropriate gender to occupy the space of mediator.

Transcendentalists Define Mediation

Emerson, along with many other Transcendentalists, was outspoken about the dangers of mediation, particularly in their attitudes and approaches to nature, and positioning women as mediators threatens to undermine their work, which could stand on its own. In one of the foundational texts of Transcendentalism, “Nature” published in 1836, Emerson writes: “The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we through their eyes. Why should we not have a poetry and philosophy of
insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?" (Essential Writings 3). Here, Emerson calls for a direct and immediate connection with God through nature, encouraging his readers to seek this spiritual awakening without becoming distanced from the original source. He looks to past generations who had the privilege of exploring and experiencing life for themselves without mediation from their forebears, and hopes for the same privilege for his own generation. Emerson identifies nature as the scope in which many individuals will fall into the trap of allowing someone else - be it artist, poet, theologian, or philosopher - to be the only one who connects directly with nature and then simply passes on that experience to others, for whom the experience will become diluted. In “Nature,” Emerson suggests that it is imperative for individuals to seek direct connection with nature themselves, as their own authentic experience will be richer than that which is mediated.

Another foundational text of Transcendentalism is Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass, originally published in 1855. In “Song of Myself,” Whitman writes:

You shall no longer take things at second or third hand…nor look through the eyes of the dead …nor feed on the spectres in books,

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,

You shall listen to all sides and filter them from yourself. (26)
Whitman echoes Emerson’s call for readers to resist mediation and demand of themselves the achievement of a direct and deep connection with nature. Whitman also expresses the tendency to look backwards and accept the views of one’s ancestry instead of forging an original and authentic path of one’s own. To “look through the eyes of the dead” would mean to only receive and understand individual experiences through frameworks previously constructed by people with vastly different experiences. This way of seeing automatically limits viewers to secondhand experiences. Significant, too, is the fact that Whitman calls into question his own voice as a potential mediator, cautioning readers not to accept his as the final word; instead, readers should look through their own eyes and trust their own abilities to interpret what they see. In so doing, Whitman recognizes the potential for mediation in all of nature writing, and places the burden of responsibility on the readers to challenge themselves to resist the complacency of mediation.

Both of these writers represent the dangers of mediation as they are often understood in the Transcendentalists’ culture of writing. Typically involved in discussions of the importance of communion with nature and the need to achieve a spiritual understanding of one’s world, mediation represents the blockage of all that Transcendentalists value. Mediation precludes the authentic spiritual experience at the core of the Transcendentalists’ mission. When read in the context of these defining quotations, Emerson’s labeling of women as mediators implicates women specifically in that blockage. While it is true that Emerson’s “Nature” is written nearly twenty
years before he gave his “Woman” speech, and he is well-known for his
contradictions, this problematic connection invites readers to consider whether or not
Margaret Fuller, the writer, the social activist, and the perpetual teacher, indeed fulfills
the position of a mediator as defined by Transcendentalist writers. Fuller’s work
throughout her career was marked by her desire to give agency to women, including in
her audiences as well as herself. Fuller sought to move women out of that secondary
role, while navigating the complicated position of mediator that she often occupied.
This study applies the definition of a mediator to Fuller’s position in education, nature
writing, and journalism and develops a set of criteria by which her work in each of
these three areas can be profitably examined for her attitudes toward the act of
mediation.

*The Hierarchy of Mediation*

The fact that mediation exists in a hierarchal order is part of what is
problematic about it. To use Emerson’s terms, those at the bottom of the hierarchy of
mediation are those who “want the knowledge.” They are, for example, the teacher’s
students. In this project, those who want knowledge are the women participants in
Fuller’s Boston Conversations. They are the readers of *Summer on the Lakes*, most
especially, those who had not yet been west themselves to see the landscape or the
people and who were eager to hear reports of this enigmatic frontier. And they are the
readers of the *New-York Tribune*, all 300,000 subscribers and, potentially, one million
readers. Those who were exposed to Fuller’s articles in the *Tribune* would read about
the American urban poor, the institutionalized mentally ill and convicts, and they would read about revolution in Rome. They were, for one reason or another, removed from the original source of knowledge or experience, removed from those who “had” the knowledge. In Fuller’s work, the original source of experience was the Greek mythology that was the subject of study in her Boston Conversations. It was the phenomena of nature that had never before been imagined and the American Indians she met for the first time while traveling throughout the American frontier. While writing for the Tribune, her original source becomes the institutions and the inmates, criminal, poor, or mentally ill, and in Rome, those fighting for the Republic. It would not always have been reasonable for those who “want” this knowledge to gain it on their own.

This hierarchy posits Fuller in the middle, literally, of a complicated relationship with the groups at either end of the spectrum. At times, Fuller is a mediator out of necessity. Because most Tribune readers could not witness the Italian Revolution firsthand, if they did not read about it secondhand through Fuller’s dispatches, they would not know about it at all. There are identifiable moments in her writing however, in which she clearly values the firsthand, direct, and authentic experience free of mediation, and she attempts to pass on that valorization to her readers, even as she herself acts as the source of mediation. Throughout her career, as her subject matter and her own experiences evolve, her willingness to participate in this mediation adapt accordingly. It is reflective of her attitudes toward her various
subjects that she becomes willing, at times, to sacrifice her aversion to mediation in order to fight for a particular cause. Because, as a writer, she is always mediating to some degree, I have developed a set of criteria in order to recognize the moments when Fuller resists, and when she accepts, the role of mediator and, in so doing, redefines the role for women and the act of mediation at large.

Modes of Resistance

One way in which Fuller consistently expresses her concern about mediation and actively resists such a role is indirectly through her encouragement of self-reliance and what David Robinson calls self-culture among her readership. In his definitive essay, “Self-Reliance,” Emerson writes: “A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his” (Essential Writings 132). Emersonian self-reliance encourages, even demands, that readers trust themselves to be capable of creating meaning without having to rely on someone they imagine to be more capable to do the work for them. This self-trust comes to play a major role in resisting mediation. When mediation is discussed in terms of connecting with nature, for example, it seems to be in response to a perceived belief among many people that they actually need some kind of mediator, someone who has the skills or ability that they themselves don’t have, to transport them up the hierarchy of mediation. There is a general reluctance to believe in one’s own ability to achieve meaningful connections, with nature and the truth it offers. Margaret Fuller
understands that reluctance and works to counteract it. There are times, then, in Fuller’s formal educational classroom and in her Boston Conversations, when we can read her emphasis on self-reliance among her students as an awareness of the dangers of their relying too heavily on her mediation.

A similar example of evidence of resistance is in the space Fuller allows for her audiences to develop and claim their own agency. Fuller’s readers and students would not be able to take responsibility for their own learning and thinking processes with a heightened level of mediation. Instead, they would simply be handed down information from the top of the hierarchy and receive it passively. Fuller’s work in education sparks this method of resistance for her. She was greatly influenced by Alcott in the time she spent working with him at the Temple School in Boston. One component of his pedagogical theory was to revolutionize the system of learning by rote memorization and establish the student as an active and responsible participant in the learning process. Fuller adopts this approach, which was markedly different from her own childhood education; evidence of it can be found throughout her teaching career and in much of her writing. Whenever her audiences are allowed room to claim ownership of the meaning they have created, it can be interpreted as the mediator’s resistance to fulfilling her role entirely.

Finally, Fuller disrupts the hierarchy of mediation by emphasizing direct and authentic sight. Frank Stewart underscores this emphasis in A Natural History of Nature Writing. He writes that Henry David Thoreau’s “Autumnal Tints” is about
“preparing the eye to see the world as a whole...The observer must cultivate his or her vision just as the farmer cultivates his field, he wrote, but, unhappily, most people cultivate their minds neither as naturalists nor poets” (Stewart 44).

Stewart addresses a sophisticated way of seeing that is often taken for granted. Despite the fact that we look at nature every time we step outside, Stewart suggests that, in order to commune with nature, we must “cultivate” our approach to nature by developing a clear and honest vision of it. Fuller uses the metaphor of sight consistently throughout her writing to achieve two functions. First, it allows her to call for the end of her readers deliberately choosing not to see her subject. Particularly in the cases of her opposition to westward expansion or her fight for better living conditions for convicted criminals, Fuller’s causes were not always popular, and her audiences did not always want to hear, or see, her point of view. Further, her emphasis on meaningful sight asks readers not just to recognize, but to see her subjects from a different perspective, as free from bias as possible.

Finally, an attempt to bring the viewer as close to the original source of the experience as possible is a sign of resisting mediation. Again, the American public was not always eager to see the perspective of her subjects that Fuller presents in her writing. She attempts to depict the living conditions of her subjects - whether they are Native Americans on their rapidly disappearing land, the mentally ill in unhealthy living conditions or the Romans in the middle of a revolution - as honestly as possible. She recognizes that many readers seek aesthetically pleasing literature and art, but she
maintains her valorization of a raw and honest depiction, as she attempts to achieve that depiction herself. When the writer allows for little corruption or interference to keep the viewer at a distance, she is trying to give the viewer an authentic experience of that original source. An expressed concern over this direct contact could be read as an expression of concern over keeping the level of mediation low.

It is clear from Transcendentalists that there are many problematic implications of labeling someone as an ideal mediator, and attaching that label specifically to women. It is also true, however, that Transcendentalists struggled greatly with the concept of mediation, both as it positioned them as the agents and the victims of such mediation. Many Transcendentalists valued an uninterrupted connection with nature, with knowledge, and with spirituality. Fuller grounds these connections in her practical work in education, nature writing, and journalism. In the next three chapters, I analyze Fuller’s various writings and consider how it reflects her struggle to redefine the role of the mediator and allow those traditionally positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy access to authentic experiences.
Chapter I: Education

Boston Conversations

Throughout the winter months of 1839 through 1844, Margaret Fuller conducted a series of what she called “conversations,” at which women from the Boston area gather to discuss a range of material, from Greek mythology to personal definitions of beauty, philosophy, and religion. Though not her first experience in an academic setting, these conversations signify a dramatic shift in her approach to learning, while at the same time revealing the influence such leaders in American education as Amos Bronson Alcott had on her pedagogical practices. Her previous teaching positions, at the Temple School in Boston and the Greene Street School in Providence, were in more formal, traditional institutions of learning when compared with these conversations, in which Fuller did not even want to consider herself a teacher. To trace her involvement with education through these varying institutions illuminates Fuller’s beliefs regarding how people in general, and women specifically, best learn and how they can put what they learn to use. Emerson’s association of the roles of woman, teacher, and mediator in his 1855 address places Fuller’s role as educator throughout her career at the heart of this question of mediation. A focus on the Boston conversations enables us to consider how Fuller herself would have reacted to Emerson’s lecture, had she lived long enough to hear it.
I measure Fuller’s work in education against the criteria of resistance in order to better understand her attitudes toward the complicated role of mediator, and the act of mediation itself. Fuller’s approach unsettles the relationship between teacher, learner, and knowledge that Emerson establishes in his 1855 address. In considering Fuller’s work in education, I draw upon the Boston conversations, but also her own writing, especially letters and diary entries published posthumously in her *Memoirs*. In these writings, Fuller reveals her frustrations over women’s education and identifies areas with the potential for change. I also examine the published firsthand accounts of some women who participated in these series. These accounts, although limited, shed light on Fuller’s approaches to teaching and learning from the perspective of the learner.

In a letter to Sophia Ripley in autumn of 1839, Fuller expresses her goal of providing women more opportunities in their education and their lives. She aims to provoke women to ask themselves: “What were we born to do: and how shall we do it?” (*Memoirs* 324-328). She expresses her concern over women’s lack of opportunities, even when they have been formally educated, to use anything they have learned in a practical way that would enrich their own lives and their communities. Fuller describes the purpose of her conversations as a chance “to systematize thought and give a precision and clearness in which our sex are so deficient, chiefly, I think, because they have so few inducements to test and classify what they receive” (*Memoirs* 325). These claims have been studied and quoted extensively throughout
scholarship of her work, but I will examine these expressed intentions in light of the possibility of mediation in order to understand her attitudes toward mediation and its place in education. Her writing, as well as the conversations themselves, indicates Fuller’s desire to reform American women’s chances to access and utilize the knowledge they seek. If we compare Fuller’s intentions with a pedagogical process that depends on the mediation of knowledge from some divine source down to the learners, it is clear that Fuller is attempting to resist practices and unsettle the assumed positions within this hierarchy. In the biography, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*, Charles Capper summarizes Fuller’s intentions: “She had given two justifications for her meetings: negatively, women’s exclusion from higher education and the learned professions, and positively, their need for a forum to discover for themselves the pursuits ‘best suited to us in our time and state of society’” (Capper 107). Fuller’s private writings in preparation of these sessions, as well as scholars’ analysis of that writing, reveal that she prioritized the development of a learner-based intellectual experience and resisted her position as a mediator within fixed hierarchies. To consider whether or not she was successful in achieving such goals, we must turn to firsthand accounts of the sessions themselves.

*The Knowledge to Lead, But Not to Teach*

Elizabeth Healey Dall’s record of the 1841 series reveals the basic structure of Fuller’s conversations. Fuller emphasizes her role as an authority figure only in deciding the topic of study, and assigning the participants some work in which they
will engage in the topic of the day. According to Dall, Fuller would typically present
the topic at the beginning of the meeting or at the end of the previous day’s session.
At times, she would assign a particular topic and ask participants to define it, requiring
them to practice their writing and communication skills as well as forcing them to
question their own assumptions about each topic. These writing assignments provide
the foundation for the conversations on which each session was based. Nancy Craig
Simmons studies one set of notes from one of the sessions, in which Elizabeth Palmer
Peabody “transcribed a number of the written exercises the women were asked to
prepare for the class, which Fuller read aloud and commented on” (Simmons 196).
These accounts give us a sense of the assignments that drove the courses forward.
This process becomes significant in the context of women’s attempt throughout the
nineteenth century to break into the public sphere. Participants of the sessions have
the opportunity to develop their thoughts independently and share their writing in a
sphere that became gradually more public. According to Peabody, Fuller herself
would read the writing of others, thereby contributing the voices of all participants into
the conversation. Simmons also summarizes for us a typical session:

Typically, Fuller would eloquently introduce the topic for the day,
outlining it and suggesting points for discussion and then invite questions
and discussion from the participants ... she defined her role not as teacher
but as facilitator - she would be “one” among, not over, the “class” in their
mutual exploration of the topics she proposed. (200)
From Dall’s account, we can get a sense of the style of Fuller’s approach by the number of people speaking and how often each speaks. It is not a lecture, but a conversation. The first session recorded took place on March 1, 1841 and a total of nine different participants vocalized their thoughts and contributed to the conversation. Fuller does speak more frequently than anyone else and comments originate with her and eventually are directed back to her, thus positioning her as the facilitator of conversation. Throughout Fuller’s childhood, her father, a successful Massachusetts politician who wanted her to receive the same education the boys would, homeschooled her according to an extremely rigorous schedule and demanded the highest level of effort and performance from her. This method created anxiety for her as a child but also produced an incredibly intelligent and critically thinking adult. As such, she consistently had an informed perspective to contribute and naturally fell into the position as discussion leader, which problematizes her attempt to resist mediation. Peabody’s account gives her personal interpretation of Fuller’s organization of the series, based on Fuller’s comments in the introductory session: “This is what is most neglected in the education of women - they learn without any attempt to reproduce ... It is to supply this deficiency that these conversations have been planned. Miss Fuller guarded against the idea that she was to teach anything. She merely meant to be the nucleus of conversation” (Simmons 203).
Conversational Form

This study of Fuller’s pedagogical theory demands that close attention be paid to the form she employs in her approach to teaching and learning. As the name for her Boston series implies, the form in which Fuller chose to work was often in conversation. In fact, even in her writing, a medium in which she was less comfortable, she adopts a conversational tone, affecting a multivocality that disrupts her participants’ position in the hierarchy of mediation. The use of conversation, as opposed to teaching primarily through lecture, posits her work outside the category of formal classroom education, but it is a designed pedagogical approach that reveals Fuller’s resistance to learning by mediation. Fuller’s predominantly dialogic technique here distinguishes her pedagogical choices from those made in more traditional classroom settings. Even in the previous positions she held, however, we can trace the development of her conversational approach and the strong impact of other teachers’ experiments in pedagogy.

To be sure, this conversational approach to learning - and I use the term learning instead of teaching to emphasize the agency and the responsibility of the learner - is evidence of resisting mediation. Exemplifying her efforts to disrupt the hierarchy of mediation, Fuller’s conversational approach is an attempt place herself alongside the participants as opposed to positioning herself above them, standing between the participants and that original “source” of knowledge. Such a positioning can paradoxically imply that the teacher must mediate in order to bridge these two
groups while at the same time suggesting that the teacher blocks that connection by positioning herself between the groups. Fuller falls in line with Transcendentalist thought here, when she demonstrates her theoretical and practical resistance to acting as a mediator. Her practice of equalizing conversation is one that can be traced back to her earliest work in education at the Temple School with Amos Bronson Alcott through her writing in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Though the Temple School was a more formal educational setting than her Boston conversations, it was far from a traditional school. Indeed, Alcott’s radical theories of education, including the belief in providing African-American children education and including them in the same classrooms as white children, were ahead of their time and ultimately resulted in massive withdrawals from his school and forced its closure. What is significant about Alcott’s work in education are his fundamental beliefs in how children learn, which, as George E. Haefner notes in *A Critical Estimate of the Educational Theories and Practices of A. Bronson Alcott*, are rooted in the intersection of his religious and Transcendentalist beliefs:

In Alcott’s philosophical beliefs was the firm view of man as an offshoot of the divine and so innately good. This belief led to the corresponding in Alcott’s philosophy of education that education should be a drawing out and not a pouring in, and the function of the teacher was to encourage, to nurture, and to assist in a process which takes place largely because of the natural development of the divine nature of childhood. (47)
Rejecting the traditional Puritan view that all men were inherently corrupt and evil and needed “goodness” thrust upon them, Alcott believed that people were inherently good and that, so long as they were free of outside corrupting influences, they would develop and grow naturally. This belief directly informed Alcott’s pedagogical theories and practices and influenced those who studied with him. While Fuller may have ultimately diverged from her New England community and their attitudes toward religion as well as Transcendentalism, their effect on education affected her indelibly.

Charles Capper traces the use of conversational learning in America back to Alcott as well: “the concept of a conversation as a revolutionary educational tool and a protean cultural force was developed in American by Transcendentalism’s Platonic enthusiast Bronson Alcott.” Alcott saw conversation as a unique form with a “power of revealing truth, which was conceived to be deeply subjective.” Capper claims that Fuller and Alcott were both drawn to this form as a pedagogical tool for cultural reasons: “because their spontaneity and fluidity seemed to them to mimic the deeper spiritual truths that written or ‘frozen’ language could never capture, and because, unlike the passive medium of the popular lecture, they promoted originality and intellectual self-reliance” (“Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer” 515). It is not surprising, given this belief system, that Alcott would support a conversational-based system of learning, by which the class progresses through a dialogue of question and answer instead of recitation and rote memorization. Fuller’s educational practices, like Alcott’s, emphasize this process of drawing out the best in one’s subjects. This
optimism is appropriate and necessary for the ground-breaking work that attempts to reform women’s education in America and alter public opinion about education and gender equality.

At the Greene Street School in Providence, Fuller continued to emphasize conversational learning with her use of Richard Whatley’s *Elements of Rhetoric.* Bell Gale Chevigny says the following of her objective at Greene Street: “Adapting Alcott’s goals, her main object in teaching moral philosophy was to upset their received notions and stimulate fresh thought ... Fuller shared her own uncertainties as well as her convictions while carefully ‘calling out’ her pupils’ independent views” (*The Woman and the Myth* 151-2). Annette Kolodny traces the focus of this book as well as the reception of her style among her students in Providence, arguing that her conversational discourse in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is an extension of this rhetoric and has a deliberate function. Fuller ultimately leaves these more formal institutions of learning because they did not allow her the time or energy to develop her own interests and work. As Barbara Cross notes, “teaching had distracted Margaret from her primary duty of self-education” (20). Once she established her pedagogical approach conversational learning, she was ready to implement it in the less formal setting of the Boston series. Cross focuses on the transition between the formal educational setting of Temple and Greene Street Schools to the informal conversations. She notes Fuller’s philosophy of education while working at these schools: “For children, she recommended an education that followed, rather than
preceded their experiences” (Cross 19). This suggests an individualized curriculum that follows the experience of the student. Though Cross cites the pursuit of her own self-education as Fuller’s reason for leaving the Greene Street School, she continues her work in education by taking up the Boston conversations even after she has quit teaching. This shift within education suggests that the Boston conversations were significant of something beyond the typical teaching jobs she held. She does not view these Boston conversations as an extension of the draining work that focuses on a removed learning experience, in which she must choose between educating her students and educating herself. Instead, the conversations were a continuation of that self-education in which she can position herself alongside all the other students in the session and share in their learning. Through conversations, she was able to pursue her own education and communicate the value of self-education on to other women as well and instill in them the tools to reclaim responsibility and agency over their own learning.

Although Kolodny focuses primarily on Woman in the Nineteenth Century in her article “Inventing a Feminist Discourse,” she analyzes Fuller’s rhetoric in a way that is applicable to pedagogical style. Form was often a problem for Fuller, who admitted that she was a much more effective conversationalist than writer: “Fuller confided in her private journal a recurrent concern regarding, in Capper’s words, ‘the gap between her conversational talents and her writing abilities’” (Kolodny 358). Orestes Brownson openly criticized her lack of organization in writing, claiming that
Woman in the Nineteenth Century seemed to be less of a great written work and more of a “long talk” (Kolodny 357). In his critique, Brownson identifies Fuller’s mastery of oral conversation over written discourse as gendered feminine. In reviewing Woman in the Nineteenth Century, Brownson writes: “As talk, it is very well, and proves that the lady has great talkative powers, and that, in this respect at least, she is a genuine woman” (Kolodny 357). This critique, of both her written work and herself as a woman, is double-edged. Calling her a “genuine woman” because of her writing style attaches a feminine identity to the form of conversation, undermining both her written work in Woman in the Nineteenth Century - which, according to Brownson should be less talk, more book - and also her work in education, which intentionally fills the space of conversation.

Chevigny explains the challenge Fuller faced within her writing which results in multivocality in his book The Woman and the Myth: “Writing was a struggle because in it, she felt she committed herself to one part of herself while betraying another” (26). Chevigny identifies the same tension that challenged many writers in the Romantic tradition - a willed versus a passive life, thought versus action, intellect versus feeling - which was only accentuated by Fuller’s internal struggles with gender and expression. The gendering of the conversational form as distinctly feminine implies that women lack the skill to succeed as writers, devaluing both their literary and oral work. Organizing the Boston conversations in such a culture, Fuller risks that the progress made in women’s education will be undermined by the public’s attitudes.
toward its conversational form. In choosing to continue working within this form, then, Fuller treads a fine line between resisting the expectations of her sex and perpetuating them.

Sandra M. Gustafson provides a historical account of the identification of conversation as feminine in her article “Choosing a Medium.” She focuses particularly on how conversation takes the place of the more popular medium of oratory or lecture, as women have been historically denied access to public speaking. Gustafson emphasizes the importance of having a public platform for expression at this crucial time of social reform. Oral lectures were often the site of the beginnings of these changes. Women were historically denied this privileged space because of the religious roots of American tradition: “Prevailing social conventions, derived most explicitly from St. Paul’s dictum prohibiting women’s speech in church, barred antebellum women from speaking publicly” (35). Gustafson identifies the non-secular origins of this gendering of forms exemplified in Brownson’s argument against Woman in the Nineteenth Century. Brownson’s critique extends beyond form into content, an argument he justifies as divinely inspired: “She says man is not the head of the woman. We, on the authority of the Holy Ghost, say he is” (Kolodny 356).

The Woman’s Sphere

Gustafson identifies the antebellum period as dependent on the public platform and therefore, recognizes the unique harm in denying such a platform to women: “In a democracy that valued oratory as the main vehicle for shaping collective values,
activist women felt that attempts to exclude them from pulpit and platform severely constrained their political effectiveness” (35). With exclusion from the most popular form of communication of values, women had to find some other form within which to work. Ironically, then, conversation works as the default medium in which it is acceptable for women to communicate. While conversation is the only form available for women, it is simultaneously a form that, by design, is uniquely suited to resist mediation, thereby giving agency and voice back to the female participants engaged in the Boston conversations.

Christina Zwarg gives another account of why conversations belong to women, or vice versa: “Her [Fuller’s] conversational prowess had a distinctly feminist dimension; conversation, like the house, was the site of Woman’s intellectual world, the place given to her by culture” (266). Zwarg describes conversation as a physical space that culture has assigned to women. Equating conversational form with the domestic sphere, she casts both gendered spheres as more of a trap than a privileged space for women. Zwarg suggests that women use conversation to deal with “ways of reading” in the Boston conversations. Fuller’s purpose for using conversation “is not about escaping the limits of the written word so much as it is about escaping the limits of the reading encouraged by the hierarchy between men and women in culture” (Zwarg 257). In this way, Fuller regains agency in her roles as teacher and learner by taking the form of expression that has been forced upon her and appropriating it to her best use.
One of the issues that arises through Fuller’s advancement in women’s education is the their equal access to public and private spheres. At the time of Fuller’s work, the developing market economy was increasing gendered divisions in the home; as the market economy grew, it drew more men away from the home into the workplace, requiring someone to stay at home to maintain the home and raise the children. This task fell to the women, who previously, in an agriculturally driven economy, would have played a more equal role in the responsibilities of the conflated home and work space. As the men were drawn away from the domestic sphere, the women were cemented within it and it became a quintessential characteristic of this market-economy society that women’s delegated space is within the walls of the home.

In the context of academics, this entrapment in the private sphere manifests itself through the denial of a public voice, as is evidenced in religious and cultural contexts. In response to this denial, Fuller’s work in women’s education becomes an attempt to claim an increasingly public space for women and prepare them for the opportunity to present their voices publicly.

Dana D. Nelson explores the questions of public and private space in women’s writing in her essay “Women in Public.” Nelson identifies women’s writing, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, as reform driven, rarely revered for any aesthetic value, while at the same time, being viewed as irrelevant in the man’s public sphere of capitalism. Nelson draws on the philosophy of Republican Motherhood, in which the woman’s only claim to a public role is within her private guardianship.
Nelson’s emphasis on women’s captivity in the private sphere adds insight to Fuller’s work in education. While Fuller’s goal was to give women a chance to use what they learned, she understood the importance of women using their knowledge in the public sphere especially. The education they received, both formally and through Fuller’s conversations, was not matched by the career opportunities their societies provided, and Fuller used this continued and advanced schooling as preparation for an existence outside the confines of the home.

This theory of Republican Motherhood is one that Sarah Robbins explores in her book *Managing Literacy, Mothering America*. It involves a kind of reverse mediation for mothers, who have no real existence outside the domestic sphere. As such, their major responsibility is, in raising and educating their sons at home, to instill in them the values of the Protestant American Republic, with the hope that, when they are grown and running the country, they will do so in accordance with the values that were passed down from their mothers. Such a philosophy has two significant impacts on the women of nineteenth-century America, which Fuller would strongly contest. First, its primary function is to maintain and protect the traditional practices of society, leaving little room for the questioning and challenging of such norms. Also, Republican Motherhood designates motherhood as the only identity and the domestic space as the only location within which women can hope to have any impact on their surrounding communities, furthering the limitations of gender identities and
precluding the chance for women to play an agentive role in directly affecting their worlds.

*Education Perpetuates Gender Restrictions*

Fuller engages in a delicate balance simply by acting as an educator in nineteenth-century American culture. In so doing, she participates in one of the institutions that contributes to the limitations of gender restrictions. In Fuller’s time, the purpose of educating young women was to prepare them for one of two roles: motherhood and teaching. Capper says this about the history of women’s education in America:

knowledge of most of these schools was still largely conceived of as ornamental and invariably taught by rote. This weakness, in turn, was related to a fundamental contradiction in the whole female education movement. On the one hand, it trumpeted the opening up of the widest possible vistas of intellectual accomplishment, while on the other hand, the schools it created were intended to prepare young women for only two occupations: that of wife and mother or, in the case of middle- and lower-middle-class single girls, teaching. (“Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer” 510)

While Fuller is working within contexts that have been gendered female - both teaching and the medium of conversation - she works to use the form that is available to her to actively disrupt the hierarchy of mediation as well as the expectations of
women’s education. She organizes the Boston conversations, not to prepare women for their predetermined roles, but to allow them to imagine a future for themselves that is in line with the education they have received. Her employment of the medium of conversation, with all its gendered implications, is evidence of her attempt to thwart the traditionally prescribed roles of teacher as mediator. In addition to positioning herself on equal ground with the other participants, Fuller goes a step beyond, allowing the women to see that they themselves can become the original source of knowledge by creating their own understanding of the material they encounter.

A Model Student

Fuller faced a great challenge in displacing the authoritative role of the teacher. To be sure, she was the most extensively educated woman of all the participants, even in a room full of largely educated women. In attempting to disrupt the hierarchy of mediation, however, Fuller needed to reposition herself, not as an authority figure who was somehow more equipped to reach the top of the hierarchical ladder, but as an equal, participating in a shared experience of learning. It was difficult for Fuller, who was indeed the most knowledgeable of the subjects, to make this positioning genuine. As Emerson categorizes those involved in the learning process into two groups - having and wanting knowledge - Fuller’s knowledge places her as close to the superior position as it was possible for a woman to be. The traditional conventions of education dictate an assumption among the students that they are coming to the teacher to receive the knowledge they seek, because the teacher is nearly situated to those who
are in possession of such knowledge. The assumption is that those in possession have control over the knowledge and the power to decide where, and to whom, it is transferred. As the most extensively educated woman, Fuller would have easily been positioned near the source as the possessor of knowledge. To the extent that she led discussion and made decisions regarding the direction of the sessions, she accepted this role of teacher. But her reluctance to be labeled a “teacher” reveals her discomfort with this role. As Capper notes, Fuller was “not here to teach” but “to provoke the thoughts of others” (“Cultural Reformer” 515). Her challenge, then, comes in resisting the urge to “teach” when she had so much knowledge and experience to give to her “non-students.”

She manages this challenge, in part, through the encouragement of equal participation among her students. Fuller does not lecture at these sessions. Though she is recognized as intellectually superior, her conversational form still serves its purpose of equalizing the authority of the student and the teacher. According to Jeffrey Steele in *Transfiguring America*, Fuller becomes aware of the problem of male/female friendships and the way they consistently position the woman to idolize the male “genius,” thus undercutting the chance for reciprocal intellectual exchange as well as the opportunity for women to recognize and understand themselves as legitimate agents in a discourse of philosophy. Steele argues that Fuller tries to remedy this by providing positive female models, discussing the goddesses of Greek mythology at the conversations. Fuller herself becomes an example for the
participants as well. If she offers the stories of Greek goddesses as a model for what women could become with the support and reverence of their communities so the women of the Boston conversations could imagine a future for themselves outside the spheres of domesticity, then her own life story would have been received as a similar model. Chevigny recognizes the intrinsic conflict within Fuller’s positioning as a role model, while resisting a position of authority: “In a sense, only by ceasing to be a leader of women could Margaret Fuller become - for those women who could see the meaning of her life in its last years - a model” (“To the Edges of Ideology” 222).

Whether or not she is aware of the delicate balance of such positioning, Fuller models an independent and educated woman in nineteenth-century America and allows her followers to imagine themselves a new future.

In Steele’s introduction on “idolatry,” he traces the ways in which women were set up in a position of worship by their culture, which didn’t afford them any other position. Even if she was intellectually equal, as Fuller arguably was with Emerson, she did not have an equal platform to exert that intellect. In translating Bettina Brentano von Arnim’s novel *Die Gunderode*, Fuller begins to form her understanding of the dangers of gendered idolatry, and looks to replace the inevitable inequality of male/female relationships with female friendships that allow women to admire and influence each other while on equal ground. On Bettina’s friendship with Goethe, she writes: “Immured in the grandeur of his famous literary persona, Goethe was able ‘to make a tool of this fresh, fervent being,’ while Bettina was trapped in an inferior
position and ‘followed like a slave.’ The unavoidable result of Bettina’s “boundless abandonment” was that her emotional and spiritual ‘progress,’ a prerequisite for self-reliance, was hindered” (Transfiguring America 5). To counteract this detrimental imbalance, Fuller draws on Greek mythology in her conversations to provide women with positive models for them to follow, a ground-breaking move in that the only models previously provided for women were always male and had to have affected the psychology of women followers.

Though the content of Fuller’s sessions does not reveal as much about her pedagogical theories as her style, there is still some value in examining what she chose to include as topics of study in her conversations. Nancy Craig Simmons, in introducing Peabody’s firsthand account, writes that “the series focuses on woman-centered topics throughout…and the explicit subject of three of the conversations printed here was ‘woman’” (196). That the subject of conversation was often related to gender issues reaffirms the connection between Fuller’s unique methods of teaching and learning with the pressing questions of gender equality and opportunity that were pertinent at this time. Her acknowledgment of such questions of gender, and her willingness to deal with these questions head on and encourage a similar approach among her students demonstrates the same dedication she shows later in Woman in the Nineteenth Century, but roots that commitment to a cause in the foundational level of direct education. If she sought to “change people’s lives by changing their minds”, then she saw this change beginning in education.
Whether or not Fuller is successful in creating any major social change with her conversations is, perhaps, outside the scope of this study. What I have focused on instead is how she puts her intentions into practice to address, consciously or not, the risks of teaching through mediation, and attaching such identities specifically to women. Some of the conversations’ participants, through their recorded accounts of the sessions, show awareness of the effects of her nontraditional pedagogical approach. In this way, we could trace the reverse mediation of Republican Motherhood from Fuller onto her students and through to the impacts they may have had on their societies. Capper argues that her work in education - because of and through its close connection with social reform advocates and because of its unique form - becomes social reform itself by presenting the first platform for women to assert themselves intellectually.\(^{12}\) Other female social reform activists, such as Sarah and Angelina Grimke, were trying to push themselves into the public platform, despite the challenges women faced in entering into the public space of political discourse. Fuller, meanwhile, works to give women a space for intellectual expression, carving out a public sphere for future generations of American women. It is unlikely that Fuller measured the success of her Boston conversations by the immediate changes affecting society in direct response to these organized meetings. Her satisfaction with the conversations wavers as she, at times, reveals her frustration with women’s opportunities in education, but ultimately affirms after the sessions were through that “life is worth living” (Memoirs 351). Arguably one of the most significant
accomplishments of her work in education, though, is her ability to disrupt the
hierarchy that demands a mediator interfere with the learning process and, in so doing,
establishes a standard of resistance which she continues throughout her career and life.
Chapter II: Nature Writing

The Journey West

In 1843, Margaret Fuller, along with James Freeman and Sarah Clarke, set out to travel through what was then the western United States. For Fuller, the purpose of the trip was to escape the confines of her small New England community and the writing demands placed on her there.\textsuperscript{13} The result of the trip was \textit{Summer on the Lakes}, published in 1843, in which she chronicles her travels. With this essay, Fuller presents the time she spent traveling through areas like Niagara and Chicago and begins her commentary on the underlying philosophy of manifest destiny and its justification of westward expansion. Her potential for mediation here is twofold. First, nature writing is the genre in which the overuse of mediation risks interfering with the direct communion with nature.\textsuperscript{14} Fuller, along with other nature writers including Emerson and Thoreau, had to navigate the contradictory position in which they suggest that readers reject interference from a mediator while simultaneously acting as the source mediation. Fuller runs the risk of distancing her readers from the very source to which she hopes to connect them, by relaying her firsthand experiences to her readers through writing, interrupting the direct flow of experience from source to reader. I will explore the ways in which Fuller recognizes this risk and how she
manages the potentially problematic space of resisting while engaging in the act of mediation.

Additionally, Fuller functions as a mediator between the two geographic spaces she connects. Writing in the time and spirit of Albert Bierstadt’s *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains* (1868), Fuller demonstrates awareness of the image of the new America she constructs and delivers to those living in the east, whose sole exposure to the west is the images they receive through literature and art. Reading *Summer on the Lakes* in the context of the threat of the expansion of slavery also asks readers to examine the living culture of the Native Americans that would be challenged by expanding Americans. As a result of this collision of geographic and ideological spaces, Fuller is again positioned in between two categories, writing in an attempt to bridge the disparities between them. Fuller’s traveling brings her to question how Americans treat the land and its inhabitants; *Summer on the Lakes* asks her readers to consider the same questions. As a result of Fuller’s liminal position, Fuller cannot always effectively avoid the complicated and detrimental relationship with her audience that is brought about by mediation. She does, however, demonstrate awareness of the risks of such a relationship. In *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller’s most fundamental resistance to mediation comes in her acknowledgment of the dangers of her position as a writer and in the encouragement that her readers pursue their own uninterrupted spiritual connection with their natural world and their communities.
Appropriation of Land

In my reading of *Summer on the Lakes*, I suggest that Fuller’s first method of resisting the role of mediator is by questioning people’s approach to the natural world. She observes several people throughout her travels who attempt to appropriate the land they encounter, either by taking something from the natural landscape or permanently placing their own mark on it. She encounters many travelers who are looking to own the new land they cross and she criticizes their approach, suggesting a new attitude toward the natural world, from which the land, the Natives Americans who inhabit the, and her readers alike would benefit. Her first example of such appropriation takes place at Niagara Falls, where she witnesses a man who “walked up close to the fall, and, after looking at it a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use, he spat into it” (*The Essential Margaret Fuller* 73). Later, Fuller speaks to the same attitude that she witnesses in families who are moving west: “It grieved me to hear these new immigrants who were to be the fathers of a new race, all, from the old man down to the little girl, talking not of what they should do, but of what they should get in the new scene” (*Essential Fuller* 80). In both of these cases, Fuller recognizes the common need to make use of the land for one’s own self-serving purposes. The first man, at Niagara Falls, does not respond to the new phenomenon of nature he has encountered, but finds the only way he can to make it his own. In this case, he puts a piece of himself into nature, spitting into the falls, thereby permanently altering the purity of the falls for all who come after. The travelers in the
second example do not pervert the land by adding to it; instead they are looking to take something from the land, but their approach has a similar effect as the man who spits. This desire to take something from the new land is representative of the American attitudes that fueled westward expansion. The motivation to push west came from the rewards the land would yield to all those who inhabited it. Americans sought commodification of the land, imagining the frontier as a blank slate that was free to be taken over or filled up. The conversation of appropriation that Fuller overhears and depicts in her writing allows her to address and denounce this utilitarian approach to the natural world that was adopted by so many Americans at this time.

Lance Newman’s article, “Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, and the Condition of America” contextualizes Fuller’s writing on the commodification of land within the economic crisis that struck the country at the time. In the wake of this crisis, some began to doubt the potential for success within the still very young system of American capitalism. Newman calls the period from 1837 to 1844 “a period of widespread questioning of the historical progressiveness of capitalism” (paragraph 1). Many felt the vulnerabilities brought about by this crash in the economy and became desperate to secure some stable source of income for themselves and their families. For some, the frontier appeared as a product they could purchase and reap the much-needed rewards. Amid such feelings of desperation, many were not willing to question the negative impact their appropriation of the land could have on the
natural environment and the people already living there. They recognized the commercial value of the west as the ideal solution for their economic crisis.

Fuller’s criticism is not unexpected; nor is it surprising that she suggests a more clear and unmediated, we might even say Transcendental, approach to nature in place of utilitarianism and commodification. Despite the moves away from her New England-based Transcendentalism that come later in her career, her attitudes toward nature coincide with her contemporaries in Boston. Considering her critique of popular attitudes toward the natural world at a time when the western frontier was threatened by expansion allows us to recognize her critique as resistance to mediation. Even as she participates in the mediation of nature writing, she uses her literary space to pass on the values that will allow the spirituality of the natural world to flourish.

The Inadequacy of Language

In addition to acknowledging the typically mediated approach to nature and suggesting a different approach, Fuller works through the problematic expectations that books about nature can create. Again, she navigates the thin line between criticizing the tradition of teaching and learning through the secondhand experience of someone else’s writing and simultaneously participating in that very tradition herself. She reflects on the inadequacy of words to completely capture her experience in nature and accurately describe the images she encounters to her readers on the other side of the country. Her struggle here to find the right words for someone miles - and worlds - away is one that will continue in her Tribune writing in Italy. While traveling
throughout the west, in response to both the land and the Native Americans she encounters, Fuller writes: “There is a language of eye and motion which cannot be put into words, and which teaches what words never can” (*Essential Fuller* 221). Fuller acknowledges that something is taking place in her firsthand experiences that cannot necessarily be communicated through her writing to the reader. Whether it is in response to a picturesque landscape or time spent with Native Americans on the land, Fuller observes and interprets something “which cannot be put into words.”

This problem of inadequate language is consistent among nature writers, especially for those who were traveling through “new” territory. Michael P. Branch argues in his collection of nature writing entitled *Reading the Roots* that, although we typically think of nature writing beginning with Thoreau, the tradition began in the United States long before *Walden* was published in 1854. Branch suggests that if we open up the category to include many different genres of writing, we will recognize that some of the earliest published work in the United States can be classified as nature writing. The earliest nature writers faced a similar inadequacy of language that Margaret Fuller addresses here. Because these writers encountered elements of nature neither they nor their readers had ever seen, they had difficulty depicting the new phenomena of nature using only the language previously used to describe the “old” world:

As a tool that humans develop to mediate and express their encounters with the world, language must change and grow to encompass new places,
new experiences, and our emotional and intellectual responses to them.

But early writers who encountered the remarkably powerful physical
geography of North America were equipped with a poorly developed
vocabulary by which to express their observations and feelings. How,
using language developed to describe European nature, does one depict
the marvel of a possum or hummingbird, let alone the wordless
magnificence of Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon? (Branch xiv)

Branch analyzes the need for new language among the first European explorers, as
expressed by writers like Christopher Columbus. Fuller too would have experienced
this problem traveling west and writing about a natural landscape with which most of
her readers were unfamiliar. In referencing the inadequacy of language to depict her
encounters, Fuller cautions her readers against accepting hers as the final words about
this new and unfamiliar terrain. Instead, she suggests that her writing might only
express her own personal experience and that it will, at best, jump start the interest of
her readers to investigate this land and its people for themselves.

Lawrence Buell, in his extensive research and publication on nature writing,
addresses the challenge facing all nature writers to accurately represent what they
themselves encounter through sensory in the medium of literature. In The
_Environmental Imagination_, Buell writes: “our reconstructions of environment cannot
be other than skewed and partial. Even if this were not so, even if human perception
could perfectly register environmental stimuli, literature could not” (84). He identifies
the limitations in registering nature even before writers try to represent it in literature. The physical senses cannot fully process the complete scene of nature; human sensory, too, acts as a mediator. By the time a description is put down on paper, the representation is further removed from the original image. Buell contextualizes this problem of mediation within the historical tradition of nature writing; it is a challenge all nature writers face and one that ultimately cannot be overcome. He continues, though, to point out that most literary theory does not consider the accurate representation of nature to be the primary objective most nature writers. Instead, we can read Fuller’s representation of nature - mediated through her eyes and her language - as a model for her own engagement with the natural world.

Even as Fuller notes the inadequacy of language, she asks her readers to trust her own authorial instinct. While she is not seeking blind acceptance, she does ask her readers to suspend their own preconceived assumptions of the land and the people of the west for long enough to consider the value that she attaches to the land. Writing as a concerned abolitionist and Whig, she is aware of the tendency among the American public to not only commodify the land, but also the people of the west. The threat of expanding slavery raises the stakes of American expansion into western territories. That this possibility was constantly looming in Fuller’s mind is recognizable in its appearance throughout her writing. The question of slavery causes her to question the mistreatment of the Indians by the American expansionists and give her readers a new perspective of Native American culture. Writing of this unspoken connection she feels
with the Native Americans she meets, she asks her readers to trust that, although she
cannot articulate the intimacy and the understanding she feels with them, there is more
potential for shared experiences than most readers would anticipate. Given the
commodification value of the land, many readers would have been eager to take
control of the land and would likely have been unwilling to see the humanity of Native
Americans. It would have been more convenient for them to believe that Native
Americans were dangerous savages. However, Fuller underscores the significance of
her connection with the Native Americans by noting its inexpressible nature, and
reinforces the possibility that the Native Americans whom she encountered are more
human than those in support of expanding west would care to admit or imagine.

Failed Expectations

Fuller begins to work through the shortcomings of the expectations she has
built around her first experience with the reputable Niagara Falls. She warns readers
that books create expectations that cannot be matched by reality and can ruin the initial
encounter with the reality. She depicts her own disappointment when arriving at
Niagara Falls because she had already experienced the falls secondhand through
literature and paintings. Of her first encounter with Niagara Falls, Fuller writes:

For the magnificence, the sublimity of [the latter] I was prepared by
descriptions and paintings. When I arrived in sight of them I merely felt,
‘ah, yes, here is the fall, just as I have seen it in pictures.’ When I arrived
at the terrapin bridge, I expected to be overwhelmed, to retire trembling
from this giddy eminence, and gaze with unlimited wonder and awe upon
the immense mass rolling on and on, but somehow or other, I thought only
of comparing the effect on my mind with what I had read and heard. I
looked for a short time, and then with almost a feeling of disappointment,
turned to go to the other points of view to see if I was not mistaken in not
feeling any surpassing emotion at this sight. (Essential Fuller 76)

What Fuller describes here is familiar to all those who have traveled to a popular
tourist site and been disappointed by what they find. The many reproductions of the
Grand Canyon and the Eiffel Tower make tourists susceptible to the disappointment
that the actual experience of the original source falls short of the anticipation. Fuller
suggests that this disappointing effect is due to the need for an authentic and direct
connection with the original source of the experience. As Fuller approaches the
famous falls for the first time, she cannot help but compare what she sees in front of
her with all she has imagined of the waterfalls from her secondhand exposure to them.

Newman observes the same reaction in Fuller: “Upon arriving at the Falls, she
finds that her appreciation of the scene is blocked by the mediation of reproduced
images and the touristic conventions that governed such encounters” (paragraph 11).
Of course, all experiences are understood within a framework that is constructed by
past experiences. Once Fuller has seen a reproduction of the falls, however, her
“reception” of them is tainted. By receiving the falls first through the mediating eye of
a distancing medium, her initial connection with the true and authentic source is
weakened. She can never erase the mediated image; when she is physically present in nature, that image interferes with her ability to engage in that scene. Fuller’s challenge in nature writing is to avoid passing along the gaze of that mediating eye onto her readers. To a degree, she cannot avoid it. However, she explains her own disappointed expectations to make readers understand the weakened effects of the mediated depiction and to discourage readers from relying heavily on that inauthentic version of nature. Fuller also suggests how to counteract these secondhand exposures, reinforcing the fact that even as Fuller must mediate, she attempts to resist that mediation when possible and encourages such resistance among her readers.

*Fuller, the Book Critic*

Fuller continues her acknowledgment of the dangers of mediation when she assumes the voice and persona of a book critic, a role that she would officially take on later in Horace Greeley’s *New-York Tribune*. Mirroring the conversational tone of her teaching practices and, later, her journalism, Fuller employs a multivocality throughout this piece to criticize the conventions of nature writing, while simultaneously playing an active, agentive role in that very tradition. She notes the benefits as well as the disadvantages that nature writing has on its readers. Her reviews of previous nature writers reveal what kind of mediation she is willing to submit to in her own writing on nature, and suggest what she will sacrifice and compromise to get her message across.

One subject of Fuller’s critique is Washington Irving. She writes that his books “have a stereotype, secondhand air. They lack the breath, the glow, the
charming minute traits of living presence. His scenery is only fit to be glanced at from
dioramic distance; his Indians are academic figures only” (Essential Fuller 88-89).
Her label of a “secondhand air” echoes the problems that she has expresses with the
mediated exposure to the natural world of the west. For Fuller, Irving’s depiction is
missing the authenticity that a firsthand exposure with nature would provide for the
viewer. They are only able, at best, to aspire to be recycled reproductions that lose
some of the magic of the original form in the process of copy. This may seem
counterintuitive for an American public who understands the genre of nature writing to
have begun with Thoreau and Walden, as many readers do. According to this timeline,
it seems unlikely that Washington Irving, writing Tales of a Traveller in 1824, could
have already been stereotype and secondhand. However, Branch thwarts such
assumptions about the beginning of nature writing in America, allowing us to consider
Irving following in a rich tradition of writing, instead of paving a new path. For
Fuller, Irving could not escape the limitations of this tradition.

Fuller uses language that suggests that the writing of the nature writer should
be able to come alive to match the subject about which she or he writes. Her claim
that Irving’s writing lacks “breath and glow” identifies her problem with writing that
falls short of capturing the vivacity of the subject matter. She addresses Irving
specifically here, but her writing suggests that she recognizes this to be a problem with
much of nature writing. This can be attributed to the inadequacy of language that
Branch identifies. He quotes Christopher Columbus in his introduction, who wrote: “I
have wrongly used the most exalted language I knew, so that everyone has said that there could not possibly be another region even more beautiful. But now I am silent, only wishing that some other may see this land and write about it” (Branch xiv). Columbus’s words reflect the struggle of trying to capture the beauty of a foreign land without the language to do so. The earliest American nature writers had not developed a language that could appropriately bring to life the new elements of nature they encountered.

As much attention as Fuller gives in this piece to the treatment of the land, she is equally concerned with the inhabitants of that land, and Summer on the Lakes segues into her Tribune writing on social issues in the United States and around the world. This passage is reflective of that duality of focus, particularly in her line: “His scenery is only fit to be glanced at from dioramic distance; his Indians are academic figures only.” With this line, Fuller has identified the major theme of the problematic relationship between academics - both writers and readers - and the oppressed subjects they study. Here, Fuller speaks about the Indians who are often read about and dramatized by the readers and writers of the American public, who are incredibly curious about this mysterious species of savages. Rarely, though, do they have the opportunity to sit down and get to know these people who inhabit the very land that Americans are so eager to appropriate. Fuller argues here that Irving captures the spirit and attitude of the American people, mirroring their desire to study Indians from a safe distance, satisfying both their curiosity and their fear. From such a detached
gaze, readers are able to learn the facts about Indians as if they were studying a textbook, but will never know them as people. Fuller’s criticism of Irving’s writing disrupts that complacency with, and even the eagerness for, that detached gaze. The detached gaze cuts readers off from the subject, allowing readers to maintain beliefs about land and people that give them permission to exploit them and utilize them for their own benefit.

To some degree, Fuller’s issues with Washington Irving’s writing seem inherent in all nature writing, including her own. To the extent that the writer must necessarily come in between the subject of the text and the reader, the writer effectively distances the reader and allows a distanced view. However, Fuller maintains her voice of the book critic for some positive recommendations as well. She turns readers’ attention to James Adair, an Indian trader who wrote *History of the American Indians* in 1775, as a model for what nature writing should accomplish. In a sarcastic tone that subtly critiques the literary tastes of the mainstream American readership, Fuller looks for any “patient” readers in the United States, and suggests that they read Adair for his “infusion of real Indian bitters, such as may not be drawn from any of the more attractive memoirs on the same subject” (*The Essential Margaret Fuller* 201). In the voice and language of a literary critic, Fuller evaluates Adair’s writing and reveals what she herself values in nature writing. She compares Adair’s work to others of the same genre that are more “attractive” and challenges readers to look beyond their superficial interest in literature that is easy or pleasing. Like much
of her criticism of art, literature, and music, this too serves as a form of education for her readers. She instructs them through her critiques and her valorization on what they would benefit from reading, viewing, and listening to, as well as how they would benefit from traveling. She identifies in this passage the rawness of Adair’s work as something valuable and worthy of attention.

She offers the disclaimer that the reader of Adair must be patient and tolerant of his “prolixity and dryness” but suggests that there is a reward for the hard work of reading his writing on American Indians. It is not for the entertainment or the attractiveness of his stories but the honest depiction that most other portrayals do not achieve. Fuller invites her readers to give Adair a chance and share this valorization.

To be sure, the arising conflicts between the Native Americans and the European-Americans will not be attractive, especially to those readers who are looking to travel west. Fuller suggests here that she values the raw truth and bitterness of reality over the picturesque quality of some other writing, an impulse matched in her own attempt to get as close to the authentic source of experience as possible.

Frank Stewart addresses the concept of the picturesque throughout nature writing in his book *A Natural History of Nature Writing*. Stewart refers to William Gilpin and his construction of the “picturesque” landscape, that which was “not ‘beautiful’ in the era’s popular sense - that is, ‘elegant,’ ‘smooth,’ and ‘domesticated’” and which “came to stand for a revolutionary way of regarding the natural world and natural scenery” (Stewart 46). Fuller seeks a similar picturesque quality in nature
writing; she privileges rugged, authentic beauty over that which is simply attractive. Lance Newman puts it differently in his article “Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* and the Condition of America”: “She believes that it is her duty to see the pure ideal world behind the grubby material one” (paragraph 6). Newman twists this idea that Fuller valorizes Gilpin’s “picturesque” by arguing that Fuller does in fact value the beauty of the natural landscape and the beauty in the literary depiction of that landscape. However, Fuller seeks the beauty that lies behind the superficial appearances. She wants to get at the heart of the ideal natural beauty and she works through the gritty material to get at that beauty. She, like William Gilpin, is willing to work in the space that many readers and viewers often reject because it is not traditionally beautiful, but Fuller asks her readers to reconsider their definitions of what is beautiful.

*Novelty in Nature*

Fuller has emphasized the importance of her first encounter with Niagara Falls and continues this focus with the attention she gives to the significance of the novelty of nature. The significance of novelty is bidirectional. Fuller values the importance of the first encounter with nature, as we have seen with her initial visit to Niagara. Her first contact with nature, whether direct or removed by mediation, leaves a lasting impression on her consciousness that cannot be undone. She can never understand or connect with the falls outside of the framework of this original impression. The importance of novelty works on another level as well. Fuller places great value on the
chance to witness a piece of nature before anyone else has had the chance to corrupt it. Fuller writes: “Happy were the first discoverers of Niagara, those who could come unawares upon this view and upon that, whose feelings were entirely their own” (The Essential Margaret Fuller 77). She suggests here that no one after the first discoverers of Niagara Falls can ever have the same genuine authentic encounter with the falls that the first discoverers had. Her reason here mirrors the last: once you have experienced the falls through someone else your experience of them is always diluted by theirs. But she also suggests that this impact of nature on man’s consciousness - which she alludes to in her discussion of the detriment of preconceived expectations - works in reverse as well. Not only does an encounter with nature leave its mark on the viewer, but also, in such an encounter, the viewer makes his mark on nature as well, leaving it fundamentally altered by his viewing.

While there is nothing Fuller’s readers could have done to become the first discoverers of Niagara Falls, or to relive their first encounter with the falls, they can maintain their awareness about the level of mediation and attempt to stay as close to the original source as possible, keeping the mediation to a minimum. I read Fuller’s focus on novelty as an acceptance of the degree to which she is reproducing the problems of mediation regarding any major American natural tourist attraction; her description can mediate and dilute the experience for her readers as well. However, her major point of resistance here is that she attempts to instill in her readers that same value of new, fresh, authentic experiences through which they can bring themselves to
the true source of the experience instead of just coming near it, only as close as the mediator herself. She encourages her readers to seek their own new and genuine experience in nature. She suggests that her readers search for authenticity over grandeur, for raw truth over sheer size, and for original unmediated experience over material commodification.

*The Valve of the East/West Exchange*

In addition to Fuller working in the space between the original source of experience and her readers, Fuller also works in the literal geographic space between the east and the west. Annette Kolodny, in her chapter “Rediscovering our Mother’s Garden,” points to the large number of Americans who had already begun to move west or at least explore the “new” frontier. “In 1840...more than a third of the nation’s population lived west of the Appalachians...in May of 1843...a thousand emigrants in ox-drawn covered wagons were beginning the ‘Great Emigration’ overland to Oregon” (Kolodny 112). This, however, does not eliminate what is at stake for this land and the society that will develop there. Chevigny articulates these high stakes when she writes: “As the frontier exposed the democratic experiment at its baldest extreme, Fuller looked to the white settlements for a ‘new order’” (*The Woman and the Myth* 287). Just as the annexation of new states heightened the slavery debate, calling into question the state laws that should rule on new American soil, so does westward expansion call into question the values that should be spread along with geographic expansion and those that should be left behind. Fuller travels through the west and
writes *Summer on the Lakes* within this context. She struggles with the direction she sees the country heading with this westward expansion, regarding the treatment of land and its people. Throughout this piece, she uses nature writing to expose the social ills she sees in the already established eastern United States, born from the colonies that fought for equality in revolution, but who have since lost that ideal and replaced it with commercialism and greed, which they take with them into the west.

Fuller explicitly states this liminal positioning between the old established eastern United States and the new frontier of the west with her anatomical metaphor of valves. When moving from Buffalo to Chicago, she identifies these two cities as representations of that liminal position: “There can be no two places in the world more completely thoroughfares than this place and Buffalo. They are the two correspondent valves that open and shut all the time, as the life-blood rushes from east to west, and back again from west to east” (*The Essential Margaret Fuller* 87). This description of a valve that allows, but controls, the flow of “life-blood” between the east and west represents that which truly does flow from east to west and back again. Fuller, here, refers to the trends of American society that dominate the eastern states and will, of course, spread west with emigration. If we understand these trends within the context of this piece, we could assume them to be mistreatment of the land through utilization and commodification, as well as the social inequalities that afflict the Native Americans already inhabiting the west as well the inequalities that plagued American society even before westward expansion. These inequalities reflect an American value
system that could easily spread west without control or interruption of these values. Interesting, then, is her choice of the metaphorical term “valve.” Using such an image portrays the chance to control and shape the values that do spread west, as well as any stereotypes of frontier life that spread from west to east. Fuller is aware of her position as an educator and an informant to those Americans who have not yet traveled west, nor seen Native Americans firsthand. With other literary depictions of Native Americans, Fuller recognizes the opportunity and the need to give an authentic account of the frontier that drew so many Americans west.

In Transfiguring America, Jeffrey Steele encourages readers to pay attention to all of the voices Fuller adopts in Summer on the Lakes. Steele suggests that readers resist the temptation to conflate Fuller’s authorial voice with the multiple perspectives she puts forth. He writes that, through this multivocality, Fuller “dramatized her ongoing struggle to achieve harmony and explored the disharmonies inherent in available literary and social roles” (Steele 135). While I agree with Steele’s emphasis on Fuller’s multivocality, I would qualify his interpretation to add that harmony and avoidance of struggle are not the ultimate goals for Fuller. In representing multiple voices, she is not trying to compromise various perspectives, but provide a model of how to work within that disharmony. She demonstrates for readers the ability to balance multiple, and at times contradictory, perspectives and allows readers to hear all sides and develop their own individual perspectives. William Stowe similarly reads Fuller’s form as an encouragement for readers to maintain awareness of multiple
points of view simultaneously. The conversational style of Fuller’s writing allowed her to “combin[e] disparate modes of discourse” (Stowe 243). While this practice may be uncomfortable for readers, it moves agency away from the writer and onto the reader. Zwarg speaks to this empowerment of readers as well; she is quoted by Steele, claiming that the book’s “textual multiplicity” helps to create what she calls “critical agency” (Transfiguring America 137). Fuller’s deliberate choice of this multivocal form indicates the value of encouraging self-reliance among her readership.

As a part of Fuller’s travel log, she tells the story of Muckwa, an Indian bear hunter who comes to live among the bears. He has two children, and because one resembles a man and the other a bear, they are treated unfairly by their mother. Fuller reproduces this story in Summer on the Lakes as an allegory for social injustices throughout the United States. She describes the story as “a poetical expression of the sorrows of unequal relations; those in which the Master of Life was not consulted” (The Essential Margaret Fuller 194, 195). She draws analyses of social equality from her direct encounters with the land and the people, subtly asking her readers to compare this allegory with their own understanding of social injustice in American society. She continues, questioning: “Is it not pathetic; the picture of the mother carrying off the child that was like herself into the deep, cool caves, while the other, shivering with cold, cried after her in vain?” (195). While she employs a story that she has taken from the Native American people, she uses it as a lesson for her American
readers, from whom she anticipates a dangerous level xenophobia upon the collision of American and Native American culture.

With this story, Fuller begins to use her experiences traveling west to deduce her own beliefs about social inequality. Kolodny’s analysis of *Summer on the Lakes* in “Rediscovering Our Mother’s Garden” addresses Fuller’s observations of social inequalities among Indians and extends the gaze to gender inequalities, which are underscored in the west. Kolodny examines how, though the frontier may have been advertised as a liberating space to some Americans, such liberation was only available to men and when women followed their husbands, “as women will do,” they will find only furthered domestic captivity (Kolodny 121). Kolodny also notes that Fuller comes to understand the disproportion of women’s abilities to their opportunities through her encounter with and understanding of the same imbalance among Native Americans (Kolodny 127). This connection between travel west and time in nature with the man-made ills that plague society is an important connection as it leads into Fuller’s subsequent work with the *Tribune* and also positions her in a risky position of mediation in both realms.

Steele also observes the connection between her traveling west and her response to gender inequalities. “Writing in an age when the language[s] of westward expansion...[of domesticity, even of reform] had been permeated by the pervasive assumption of masculine superiority, she learned to diagnose the sexual, racial, and class prejudices that marred the efforts of many women to achieve personal
independence” (Essential Margaret Fuller xiv). Steele identifies the powerful challenge that Fuller faced in entering a genre of writing and reform that held the implicit assumption that men would dominate the culture of westward expansion as they had throughout American history. To work against this assumption in order to establish new laws of equality and new identities for women in the west, Fuller had do adopt a language and form that would allow traditional attitudes of American culture to be challenged.

From the Frontier to New York City

Much of Margaret Fuller’s resistance to mediation in her nature writing comes in the form of mediation itself. She necessarily falls into a liminal position here, which complicates her desire to avoid mediation and precludes her complete avoidance. Even while she must accept the role to some degree, however, she consistently reminds readers of their responsibility to achieve the most direct connection with their subject as possible, regardless of the written form by which they access that source. She challenges readers to move beyond the easiest and most fruitful approach to newly acquired land and seek a more spiritually rewarding approach in which the subject and readers are equally empowered. It is when Fuller’s writing shifts from nature to a question of social equality and human rights that she becomes more willing to sacrifice her reluctance to mediate if it means having a stronger impact on her readers and convincing them of the stakes of westward expansion. This compromise in Fuller’s
writing becomes more consistent as she goes on to report on the sociopolitical crises in New York and throughout Europe.
Chapter III: The New-York Tribune

Fuller, the Journalist

Margaret Fuller became the literary editor for Horace Greeley’s New-York Tribune in the fall of 1844. She had already traveled west, a trip that resulted in Summer on the Lakes and developed “The Great Lawsuit” into the book-length feminist manifesto, Woman in the Nineteenth Century, a text that would establish her as a leader in American feminist writing. While she was hired as a cultural critic to review works of literature, music, and art, as well as a commentator on American society, it is the articles in which Fuller focuses on the sociopolitical issues facing the United States in the mid-nineteenth century that are most pertinent to this study of mediation. Fuller’s journalism, which was published in the midst of the controversy surrounding the annexation of Texas, the expansion of slavery, and the ideology of Manifest Destiny calls into question the promise of democracy in America, a question that Fuller faces directly in her Tribune articles in New York as well as throughout Europe and finally in Rome.

As with much of her other writing, Fuller necessarily acts, to some degree, as a mediator, bridging two groups which were fundamentally different enough to bring significant distance between them. In the introduction to their anthology of Fuller’s work in the Tribune, Judith Mattson Bean and Joel Myerson write: “Fuller’s Tribune writing illustrates the potential service of the critic as mediator in a pluralistic,
cosmopolitan, literary culture. Mirroring New York life in the 1840s, the Tribune displays a heteroglossia of urban cultures and international dialogue” (Bean & Myerson xxi). The very nature of her work in the New-York Tribune is aimed at bringing together two classes at opposite ends of society who otherwise have no reason to interact with each other. In this way, she cannot entirely escape the role of mediator. There are moments in her Tribune articles where, as with her work in education and in nature writing, she resists the role as it extends beyond the inevitable mediation. One example of the necessary level of mediation can be found in her article “Prevalent Idea that Politeness is too great a Luxury to be given to the Poor,” in which she positions herself between the wealthy upper-class readers to whom she speaks directly and the underprivileged subject about whom she writes. She holds a similar position when presenting life inside prisons and mental institutions to the outside world. And in her move to Europe, she works as mediator between Italian revolutionaries and the American public, whose support she is trying to win over. She must be a mediator here if she is to successfully bring her readers inside the world of her subjects when, in some cases, the two groups are literally on opposite sides of the world. In place of readers traveling to Italy to witness the revolution firsthand, the average American citizen had access to this world through Fuller’s writing. She acts as a facilitator in bridging gap, without whom, the American people would know little of the European revolutions.
As her surrounding environments grow more and more tumultuous, however, her priorities in writing begin to shift and her method of resistance evolves. If her priority while educating women in Boston or traveling through the west was to encourage some substantial level of self-agency among her readership, which we identified in that writing, then her political causes replace such priorities as she becomes more involved in the revolutions of Europe. This shift is visible at times in her writing and should prompt readers to question where Fuller places the authority of and responsibility for learning in these articles.

*The Voyeuristic Gaze*

As with her nature writing in *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller demonstrates her resistance to mediation by acknowledging the risks that accompany it and by reminding her readers of the problematic position of removed observers. The consistent demonstration of her awareness of such risks ultimately become signs of her optimism that, as readers, we can escape the dangers of mediation by maintaining a focus on the active role of an engaged reader and rejecting the role of receiver of education. In her March 19, 1845 *New-York Tribune* article, “Our City Charities,” Fuller enters the world of the underbelly of American society, observing those who are mentally ill, homeless, and incarcerated as a part of her research to educate her readers on a world they could otherwise conveniently ignore. Such work, as Fuller knew, could easily deconstruct into dehumanizing voyeurism that fails to offer any real help to the subjects. Fuller writes: “In the hospital, those who had children scarce a day old
were not secure from the gaze of the stranger” (Bean & Myerson 99). As with her nature writing, she herself occupies the space of the “gaze of the stranger,” while simultaneously critiquing the detrimental effects of such a gaze. Jeffrey Steele, in *Transfiguring America*, argues that her awareness and acknowledgment of such effects are not enough to keep her from becoming that same distanced stranger in her visits, particularly with the little Dutch girl, whom, according to Steele, Fuller makes surreal, mystical, and picturesque. Fuller “exemplifies the problem of moral response that had structured *Summer on the Lakes*...the conflict between a picturesque gaze imposing standards of middle-class respectability and a moral involvement with society’s ostracized victims” (Steele 259). He is arguing that Fuller’s warnings become hypocritical, as she allows herself to fall victim to the same problem that she criticizes among other strangers visiting the hospital.

The ease of adopting a detached gaze, even while physically present in the institution, comes from the viewer’s recognition of the major disparities between her own life and her subjects. Her overall tone, though, leaves a residue of caution against a perspective that dehumanizes the institutionalized. It is easy, even for those who are willing to acknowledge the plight of the poor and the sick, to fall into the trap of the stranger’s gaze without realizing it. The fact that Fuller herself adopts this gaze at times is evidence that it is not always possible to avoid. Whether you are entering the institutions yourself or you are reading about these conditions through the medium of a newspaper, you are distanced from the authentic experience of institutionalized. There
is an insurmountable gap as long as the viewer approaches the problem from a different socioeconomic experience than the subject. However, this inevitable gap is widened and exacerbated by an unaware, ignorant voyeur who does not understand the problem of the imposition of values addressed by Steele. The danger of such a detached gaze is that it creates an impermeable boundary that prevents one from understanding any experience that is not one’s own. The voyeuristic gaze creates an image that is not reflective of the reality, but is aesthetically compelling enough to hold the audience’s interest and win its sympathies. To present the institutions as picturesque would exploit the pain of its inhabitants for the aesthetic pleasure of the viewer. Fuller challenges her readers beyond the viewpoint that fetishizes the suffering of the institutionalized and undermines their genuine experience. If her purpose in writing for the *Tribune* is to raise awareness of those who have been marginalized from society due to their class status, illness, or criminality, this barrier to understanding becomes detrimental to her work.

Additionally, though, Fuller’s writing suggests that, beyond writing on behalf of the institutionalized, she believes that heeding her advice regarding mediation will be for the betterment of her readers as well. While she has extended her work to include social reform and political journalism, this work is an extension of the work to raise awareness of social issues she began years earlier in her Boston conversations. For the sake of the subject and reader of her audience, Fuller maintains an awareness throughout her writing of the potential pitfalls of mediation. In so doing, she asks for
the same awareness from her readers so they do not widen the gap that is derived from differences of class, gender, and race. She challenges her readers to avoid further distancing themselves from the authentic experience as the disconnected stranger.

The Responsibility of “You”

Fuller continues her language of resistance in her May 31, 1845 article, “Prevalent Idea that Politeness is too great a Luxury to be given to the Poor.” In this article, Fuller narrates a story of a wealthy woman approaching a poor boy and openly chiding him for his dress. Fuller’s critique of this woman’s arrogance is not subtly transferred through the narration but is overt and direct. Furthermore, in addressing the woman with the story in the second person pronoun “you,” she positions her readers alongside the arrogant, wealthy woman and demands that they too ask these critical questions regarding status and rights. Fuller writes: “Woman! do you suppose, because you wear a handsome shawl, and that boy a patched jacket, that you have any right to speak to him at all, unless he wishes it, far less to prefer against him those rude accusations. Your vulgarity is unendurable; leave the place or alter your manner” (Bean & Myerson 128). According to this study’s emphasis on Fuller’s style of writing, it is worthwhile to consider her choice of narration and address here. Patricia O’Connor, in her book Speaking of Crime, analyzes the use of the second person pronoun “you” in the personal narrative of incarcerated persons. She notes several effects of using this term, one of which is the suggestion of a shared experience between speaker and listener, even when such a commonality is not immediately
obvious. If many readers of the *Tribune* share the socioeconomic experience of the woman in Fuller’s story, they are easily positioned as the recipients of this direct address. Even those readers who do not share this experience, though, are asked to adopt the issue of rights determined by socioeconomic status as if it was their own.

Additionally, the direct address of the second person pronoun accomplishes a demanding and forceful tone that is appropriate for Fuller’s topic. In the quotation I have copied here, Fuller challenges the assumption of entitlement that she recognizes to accompany an upper-class status. As a part of her consistent reporting of class disparities and injustices, Fuller demands that, although the upper-class woman can easily ignore the poor boy, or disregard him as worthless, or attack him with rude and inappropriate criticisms, she should instead check her own misplaced authority and recognize his humanity. If this sense of entitlement was as “prevalent” among the upper classes as Fuller suggests here, then her demands would no doubt come as a shock to that particular readership. But her purpose in these *Tribune* writings is, in large part, to dissolve the division between these classes that prevent them from truly seeing each other. Bell Gale Chevigny speaks to the idea of class denial in her article “To the Edges of Ideology: Margaret Fuller’s Centrifugal Evolution.” “The prevailing ideology of class was a simple denial of the existence of class. Middle-class ideology in Western Europe was also shaped by resistance to knowledge of class realities; but in the United States the heightened commitment to individualism elevated the notion of classlessness to an article of faith” (180). Chevigny’s account suggests that Fuller was
accurately tapped into the preference among the upper classes to overlook the conditions of poverty, which precludes the ability to truly see the reality of these lower classes of American life.

Rebecca Harding Davis attempts a similar unveiling in her 1861 novella, *Life in the Iron Mills*. Davis brings members of the upper classes - including the owner of the mine, an overseer, and a doctor - into the underworld of the laboring classes, though they fail to see the reality of that world, even when facing it directly. Davis brings the readers into the story itself, addressing them directly and demanding that they understand an experience that is not their own: “If you could go into this mill where Deborah lay, and drag out from the hearts of these men the terrible tragedy of their lives, taking it as a symptom of the disease of their class, no ghost Horror would terrify you more” (47 emphasis mine). Here, Davis echoes the direct call to arms that Fuller voices in her *Tribune* writing, and for the same purpose of a demand that readers truly see what their authors are showing them. Both writers use a kind of double address. On one level, they attempt to hold people accountable, like the arrogant woman of Fuller’s story, for their position in the world and what they do with that position. But a major part of their work in this type of social reform writing is to spread their message of social reform on a massive scale. Fuller broadens the worldview of her readership by bringing them face to face with a reality of American society that they have never had to see or understand. The use of the pronoun “you”
reflects this positioning of writer and reader and increases the likelihood that the reader will understand the direct demands that are being made of him or her.

Another example of Fuller’s direct audience address comes in the article “Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts,” published June 19, 1845. Fuller addresses the disconnect between the tragedy that “you” - the readers - are drawn to in fictional stories while remaining decidedly blind to the tragedies in reality:

You must have felt yourselves are not better, only more protected children of God than those. Do you want to link these fictions, which have made you weep, with facts around you where your pity might be of use? Go to the Penitentiary at Blackwell’s Island ... See in the eyes of the nurses the woman’s spirit still ... See those little girls huddled in a corner ... Think what ‘sweet seventeen’ was to you, and what it is to them, and see if you do not wish to aid in any enterprise that gives them a chance of better days. (Bean & Myerson 136)

Here, Fuller addresses her readers’ ability to identify with dramatizations of underprivileged lifestyles, as long as these victims only exist in fictionalized accounts that readers turn to for entertainment. Fuller tries to capitalize on the public’s interest for these fictionalized accounts to garner interest in the actual injustices that are impacting New York City communities. Here, also, Fuller uses the metaphor of sight, which plays a powerful role throughout her writing in New York and Italy. Her emphasis on sight is particularly relevant to this study because it echoes the act of
unmediated seeing that is evoked by Transcendentalists. As stated in my introduction, an emphasis on direct, deep, and authentic sight, for Transcendentalists, helps to bring the removed viewer closer to that original source of genuine experience. Fuller’s repetition of the command to see reflects her goal to open the pathways between her readers and her subjects, allowing an uninterrupted exchange of experience. Fuller invokes the act of seeing to achieve multiple functions here. First, it allows her to speak out against a class denial that is masked as a democratic belief in upward mobility and class permeation, but is more accurately a deliberate choice to ignore the marginalized communities on which Fuller focuses her writing. It is more convenient for Fuller’s readers to remain blind to those who are poor, institutionalized, or incarcerated. Fuller seeks to disrupt this deliberate blindness by directly demanding that her readers enter the institutions and see what she sees. Secondly, Fuller also seeks to challenge the assumption that the less fortunate have met their life circumstances by their own fault. She pushes readers to see, beyond mere acknowledgment, in a deep and meaningful way; she encourages readers to avoid an immediate dismissal of the abject communities. Fuller anticipates the general assumptions made about her subjects and she asks her readers to see in a way that demands that they question everything they thought they knew about their circumstances. The metaphor of sight consistently falls in line with the emphasis on sight in definitions of mediation and resistance to it.
In “Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts,” Fuller continues her exposure of the prevalence of class denial, bringing it to the forefront of the discussion about class. “These pleading eyes, these angels in a stranger’s form we meet or seem to meet as we pass through the thoroughfares of this great city. We do not know their names or homes. We cannot go to those still and sheltered homes and tell them the tales that would be sure to awaken the heart” (Bean & Myerson 136). With this passage, Fuller seeks a point of connection that can open the eyes of her readers and bridge the gap they imagine to be insurmountable that keeps the lower classes of American society at bay. She remains convinced that, with a real chance to truly see the subjects of her writing and hear their stories, her readers’ hearts would “awaken” to a “deep and active interest in this matter.” In other words, Fuller recognizes a capacity for sympathy among her readers that has simply been misplaced and misdirected. They have no practical outlet for such a capacity and, as such, the boundaries dividing disparate classes remain uncrossed for lack of true seeing and understanding.

Fuller calls for the empathy and understanding of her readers:

And to all we appeal. To the poor, who will know how to sympathize with those who are not only poor but degraded...To the rich, to equalize the advantages of which they have received more than their share. To men, to atone for the wrongs inflicted by men on that ‘weaker sex’ ... To women, to feel for those who have not been guarded either by social influence or inward strength...” (Bean & Myerson 135)
This passage advises us, as contemporary readers, not to misclassify her readership as exclusively upper class. She identifies a reason for every group to invest in the issues of poverty, illness, and incarceration, even while members of each group could find a reason not to. Jeffrey Steele writes that the “ideological inertia was being kept in place by ‘a selfish indifference to the unfortunate’” (*Transfiguring America* 243). It is this inertia that Fuller is fighting to counteract among all of the classes, even those who have themselves encountered misfortunes. Her demand for the admission of the sufferings of the American poor sets the stage for the writing Fuller will come to produce over the final five years of her life as she travels throughout Europe and reports on the fight to unite the Italian states into one republic. Fuller’s work in New York City is only the beginning of her effort to grapple with the politics of socialism and their place in an American and global society.

*Increasing Visibility in European Revolutions*

In 1846, Margaret Fuller became the first female foreign correspondent for Horace Greeley’s *Tribune*. This assignment, along with employment by the Spring family, for whom she agreed to work as a governess and tutor, financed the trip across the Atlantic that she had been dreaming about for years. While many of her intellectual contemporaries were making trips to Europe, Fuller had always been restricted by her family’s financial situation, especially after the death of her father. Her travels throughout Europe put her in contact with many important scholars of the time, including Thomas Carlyle and George Sand, and provided inspiration for her
writing, which she sent back to Horace Greeley in her dispatches of cultural review. Additionally, and perhaps more significantly for her life and career, these travels also raised Fuller’s awareness of the political upheavals that were sweeping Europe at this time and drawing many nations into revolution. Her eventual settlement in Rome placed her at the heart of one of these revolutions.

If Fuller’s construction and use of the metaphor of sight is read as a form of resistance to the debilitating effects of mediation, then such resistance continues in her writing throughout Europe. In one of her dispatches for the *Tribune*, Fuller compiles an inventory of the social ills she has witnessed and relays that inventory to her American readers. Though they cannot see and experience what she has for themselves, she implores them to see by way of imagining and empathizing with the fight for political freedom. Writing to this American audience, she instructs them to see this hollow England, with its monstrous wealth and cruel poverty, its conventional life and low, practical aims; see this poor France, so full of talent, so adroit, yet so shallow and glossy still ... see that lost Poland and this Italy bound down by treacherous hands in all the force of genius; see Russia and its brutal Czar and innumerable slaves; see Austria and its royalty that represents nothing and its people who, as people, are and have nothing!” (*Essential Fuller* 407).

We can recognize the ways in which Fuller attempts to bring the world of Europe to those who cannot see it for themselves. She does this by using the same language and
rhetoric she used when writing in America, to Americans, about America. When writing in and about New York City, she faced the same deliberate and determined blindness among her readership that she necessarily faces when writing across the Atlantic Ocean. A similar class denial exists throughout her newly adopted community among European readers who choose not to see in the same way that her American readers have. Her grievances are fairly consistent throughout all of these European nations. She has witnessed poverty, wasted talent and skill or, worse yet, talent and skill that are oppressed by the hand of a tyrannical leadership. She fights in her European dispatches for the same struggling citizens that she found in the United States. Her work as the representative voice of this class of people becomes her passion and her trademark and, as such, forces her to expressively define her beliefs on the politics of socialism.

Divergence from Emersonian Self-Reliance

In the biography The Roman Years, Joseph Jay Deiss reflects on Fuller’s personal and political revolutions in Italy. While paying tribute to the extreme influence Emerson had on Fuller’s life - both personally and intellectually - he traces the patterns of her shifting away from Emerson as they begin to emerge in the context of the Italian Revolution. Deiss himself continues the imagery of sight while playing off of Emerson’s metaphor of the “transparent eyeball.” He writes that if Emerson represents the transparent eyeball, then Fuller represents the “universal eyeball” which allows her to see more expansively than Emerson’s view allows him to do (Deiss 148).
One of the ways I have proposed we evaluate the level of mediation resistance is by the extent to which self-reliance is encouraged and allowed. By this logic, Emerson would have objected to mediation that inhibits self-reliance among those at the bottom of the mediation hierarchy. Fuller’s work in her European dispatches, however, put her at odds with a philosophy that is contingent upon a demand for individual self-reliance. As Bell Gale Chevigny writes in *The Woman and the Myth*, “teaching self-reliance, Emerson instilled expectations, even dependencies, for which he was unable to take responsibilities” (76). If Emerson, an educated, privileged, American man, could not take responsibility for his concept of self-reliance, then many marginalized groups would have likewise been excluded from the ability to do so.

These unrealistic expectations began to draw Fuller away from Emersonian ideologies. The most obvious facet with which Fuller might have taken issue with was the fact that these expectations fail to account for women. Even the most fortunate of women, herself included, would have faced extreme challenges in Emerson’s demand for self-reliance. By the time she is writing in Europe, however, her objections are more rooted in politics than in gender issues. Her “universal eye” allows her to see the victims of oppressive governments and their living circumstances, which significantly impede their capacity for Emersonian self-reliance. Deiss has rooted much of his research in Fuller’s personal letters to friends and family members back home, as well as her dispatches to the *Tribune*, and the frequency with which Emerson and Fuller
correspond as her time in Italy progresses reflect the growing theoretical distance between their social and political beliefs.

Fuller takes issue, in particular, with an unrealistic demand for self-reliance among abject populations who have no means to achieve self-reliance. Additionally, she begins to devalue the need to encourage self-reliance among her readership. It becomes more significant to Fuller to portray her message of liberation than to allow her readers the most space to make up their minds for themselves. Leslie Eckel, in “Conversational Journalism,” argues that Fuller’s tone evolves as she becomes more invested in the cause: “Fuller intended to persuade her readers of the rightness of certain causes, and as she grew more radical in her opinions, her writing became even more didactic in tone” (Eckel 30). As Fuller becomes more entrenched in the revolution, and more invested in a united republic of Italy free from the rule of Austria and the papacy, she begins to adopt a more authoritative tone in her writing. This tone further suggests her movement away from Emerson and his valorization of self-reliance as this concept is increasingly poised against the European socialism she comes to support. Fuller’s evolving political beliefs allow, even depend on, her shift into the role of mediator, in which she takes more responsibility for the enlightenment of her readers than she ever had previously.

*Fuller and Fourierism*

Some of the earliest evidence of Fuller’s engagement with socialist-like policies comes years earlier in the limited time she spent at Brook Farm, the communal
living project started by George Ripley and modeled after Charles Fourier’s design of the phalanx in France. While she was interested enough in such a project to spend time in the community, she was not completely sold on its ideals and she was never, in fact, a resident member. Of Fourier and his philosophy, she said that she appreciated his “large and noble views” but opposed his “gross materialism” which did not show proper attention to “spiritual and intellectual factors” (Steele 264). She does, however, engage in associationism, following William Henry Channing’s example in modifying Fourierism to include elements of Christianity.

As much as Fuller’s response to Brook Farm reveals about her attitudes toward socialism, it is her move to join Horace Greeley and the New-York Tribune that thrusts her into a practical exploration of political policies that tend toward socialism. The connections Fuller develops in New York provide the foundation for her political perspective that is fed by the revolution in Italy. Greeley, along with Albert Brisbane of The Phalanx, establishes associationism in the New-York Tribune. Greeley uses the Tribune as a platform to express his views against slavery and the annexation of Texas. Adam-Max Tuchinsky traces the political leanings of the Tribune community in his article, “The Bourgeoisie Will Fall and Fall Forever’: The New-York Tribune, the 1848 French Revolution, and American Social Democratic Discourse.” Tuchinsky writes:

by midcentury, liberal political economy diverged into two streams, one social democratic, and the other individualist, and the basis of the split was
how each understood markets and characterized the relationship between
capital and labor ... the *Tribune* and its socialist allies were clearly social
democratic and even used a version of the term to distinguish their reform
hopes from the ‘merely political’” (472).

Tuchinsky contextualizes the sociopolitical reform movements within the revolutions
that were sweeping through Europe at this time. He also effectively distinguishes
between those “social democrats,” with whom Fuller was associated through the
*Tribune* from the “individualists” who would have been more likely to support
Emerson and his philosophy of self-reliance. The political leanings of the *New-York
Tribune* are underscored by the fact that Karl Marx was another foreign correspondent
for the *Tribune* early in his career. Additionally, Margaret Fuller’s translations of
Marx represent the first time his writings were ever published in English in the United
States. When Fuller is positioned in the middle of these prominent scholars of socialist
thought, we can begin to understand her work with the *Tribune* as foundational to the
writing that would come later in Italy, in which she claims the role of the mediator
more whole-heartedly than ever before in order to speak out against the unrealistic
demand for self-reliance.

In an excerpt from her “Thoughts from Europe,” Fuller again makes use of the
second person pronoun “you” while simultaneously presenting American readers with
her most overtly demanding and political writing yet. Fuller writes:
To you, people of America, it may perhaps be given to look on and learn in time for a preventive wisdom. You may learn the real meaning of the words FRATERNITY, EQUALITY: you may, despite the apes of the Past, who strive to tutor you, learn the needs of a true Democracy. You may in time learn to reverence, learn to guard, the true aristocracy of a nation, the only real noble - the LABORING CLASSES” (*The Essential Fuller* 412, 413).

With this quote, Fuller expresses her anger and frustration at the same injustices she has been writing about for years. Here though, she takes a unique perspective as an American writing in a foreign space, one that is plagued by an oppressive and unjust government. In such a position, she is able to juxtapose the conditions of her homeland, which had been independent for over seventy years, with those in Italy, where common people were just beginning to fight and die for their liberties. She looks back on America, then, with frustration at the opportunities the country has gained by the mid-nineteenth century, and how many of these opportunities for freedom have been wasted. She argues that the promise of democracy has yet to be fulfilled and cannot be achieved with an American government that upholds slavery and encourages a westward expansion that is based on the exploitation of Native Americans. It is particularly telling that, while enmeshed in the extreme political turmoil of the Italian revolution, it is American society and politics to which she returns in her writing, as if the injustices of an oppressive Italian government
underscore her understanding of the shortcomings the United States, the supposed leader in sociopolitical liberty, have yet to overcome.

Of the three areas of Margaret Fuller’s writing that I have covered here, this is by far the most fluid category. Evidence can be found in many of her Tribune articles in support of, and simultaneously in opposition to, her role as a mediator. There is a trend, however, of a correlation between her movement away from New England, Transcendentalism, and Emersonian self-reliance and the amount of space she allows herself to function as a mediator. The more entrenched she becomes in the political upheavals in Europe, the more unsatisfactory the solutions offered by her philosophical roots prove to be. As she meets soldiers, politicians, and artists while traveling through the social circles of the republicans in Italy, these figures replace those who influenced her back home, as she begins to have more in common with European revolutionaries. Her shift away from Transcendentalist philosophies indicates a similar shift in her willingness to assume the role of a mediator, as it becomes necessary for her to portray her cause to her American audiences passionately and accurately. When she does slip into this role, it is not an unconscious lapse in the discipline of a writer, but a deliberate choice to prioritize the cause of the revolution and the liberties of the overlooked laboring classes over the chance to instill in her readers a capacity for self-reliance and self-education.
Conclusion

My earliest studies of the American Romantic period compelled me to research the literature of the genre further. After reading the foundational texts of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, and considering this writing within its historical context, I developed an interest in the intersections of Transcendentalism and the women’s rights movement, particularly in locating the conflicts between them and investigating possible resolutions to those conflicts. In some ways, the point of intersection for me came to be located in Margaret Fuller. As one of the younger members of the circle of Transcendentalists, she was simultaneously a product of the movement and a major contributor to it. Early in her career, her frequent correspondence with figures like Emerson and Alcott progressed her thinking along the lines of Transcendentalist philosophies. The limited opportunities she suffered as a woman, however, were at times perpetuated by Transcendentalists, and she demonstrates her independence in carving out a new space for women’s education in America.

Fuller’s organization of the Boston conversations symbolizes a step toward equalizing education for men and women in the United States. She works throughout her career to encourage self-reliance, not just among women, but among all those who seek to learn. Her use of conversation in education allows students’ voices to be heard and provides a learner-centered pedagogical practice in which students learn to trust themselves as legitimate creators of meaning and understanding. My interest in
 Fuller’s career grew exponentially in light of her work in education; I see the challenge of overcoming a teacher-based approach to learning as being still pertinent today. Her practice of giving students the responsibility and authority of learning in order to empower them is one that I look to bring to the classroom as well.

I looked to Emerson’s public address on women’s suffrage for the intersection of Transcendentalist philosophy and the nineteenth-century struggle for gender equality. I found a complicated positioning of women as mediators and students dependent on mediation. Emerson’s framing sparked my interest to research Fuller’s attitudes toward this necessary, but dangerous, act of mediation. Furthermore, it prompted me to consider how Fuller was received in Transcendentalist circles as a woman and potential mediator. Many biographers have commented on the complicated relationship, not just between Fuller and Emerson, but between Fuller and many Transcendentalists. For me, this reflects the conflicts between Transcendentalist philosophy and some causes that became increasingly important for Fuller, such as women’s rights. Her willingness to shift her position regarding the role of mediation reveals the causes to which she was most committed as well as her desire to redefine the role of mediation as it applied to women and education.

What is consistent about Margaret Fuller is her passion. Her fervor for education began at an early age and, even under the oppressive instruction of an overbearing father, began a pattern of complete immersion in the learning process that remained consistent throughout her life. As the movement of Romanticism in America
began to take shape in the 1830’s, Fuller’s desire join the Transcendentalists’ circles put her in contact with some of the most influential thinkers of her time and, significantly for the movement at large, gave her the chance to influence their thinking as well. While she was never completely comfortable with her writing skills, she became an expert at using the medium that was available to her and making it her own. As a talented conversationalist, she appropriated the form known to belong to women into a literary collection that included poetry, essays and journalism. In so doing, Fuller made a successful career as a writer, using the page as her platform to address the controversial questions being asked of the country and reaching a broad and diverse American public. She understood the inadequacy of women’s opportunities to fulfill the potential of their capabilities. She was passionate in her mission to expose these inequalities and explode the prevailing assumptions regarding women’s natural abilities.

Throughout her career, her work reflects her desire to empower women and learners. Her lifelong dream of traveling to Europe brought her to the final struggle for liberty in her lifetime. In much of Fuller’s work, this passion to allow individuals to claim their own agency manifests itself in her visible resistance to filling the role of the mediator for her audiences. In many instances, such as the Boston conversations and her approach to nature, she sees evidence that mediation of the original experience weakens the experience for the learner and creates a kind of dependency that Fuller aims to thwart. Other times, such as the Italian Revolution, she recognizes that she
must adopt the position of mediator in order to allow for the opportunity of
independence among the Roman citizens. In all cases, her ultimate priorities are to
find and reveal the most honest experience and allow that honesty to give agency to
those who need it. Under most circumstances, this prioritization of honest depictions
in writing cause her to encourage her readers to develop their own self-reliance and
challenge them to reject the notion that they must depend on a mediator to provide and
translate information in order to acquire knowledge.

Fuller’s overarching goal of honesty and authenticity in her writing drives her
to constantly evolve in the role of the mediator. It is this priority that motivates her to
present the raw depictions of marginalized communities that have been adversely
affected by the rapid growth of American society and by the political unrest
throughout Europe. She assumes many different voices throughout her career,
working in many different forms, to call for revolutions in education and social reform
that will empower all those who have been denied equality and agency. Fuller left
Rome in 1850, hoping to return to the United States to continue her writing on the
unification of Italy. Though she would not survive that journey, her life’s work calls
on readers to continue her struggle against complacency with any promise of social
equality left unfulfilled.
Notes

1 Sarah Robbins explores the conflation of the gendered identities of mother and teacher in her book *Managing Literacy, Mothering America*.

2 Lawrence Buell describes the development of Transcendentalist belief in response to Lockean philosophy that suggests learning is empirical. See *Literary Transcendentalism*, page 4.

3 Claude Levi-Strauss describes women’s role as the object of exchange between men in the context of marriage customs in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*.

4 See Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in Jeffrey Steele’s anthology *The Essential Margaret Fuller*.

5 Jeffrey Steele’s *Transfiguring America* gives a detailed account of Fuller’s relationship with her father. Also helpful for their biographical information are Perry Miller’s *The Transcendentalists* and Charles Capper’s *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*.

6 “Margaret Fuller and the Transcendental Ethos: Woman in the Nineteenth Century.”

7 Barbara Cross and George E. Haefner provide historical accounts of the tradition of rote learning in *The Educated Woman in America* and *A Critical Estimate of the Educational Theories and Practices of A. Bronson Alcott*, respectively.

8 See Jeffrey Steele’s *Transfiguring America*.

9 See Annette Kolodny’s “Inventing a Feminist Discourse.”

10 Dana D. Nelson addresses issues of women’s private sphere and the market economy of the antebellum period in “Women in Public.”

11 See Lance Newman’s “Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* and the Condition of America.”

12 See Charles Capper’s “Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer.”

13 See Charles Capper’s *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*.

14 See examples taken from Emerson and Whitman in the introduction, pages 5-7.

15 James Welch depicts this imagery of emptiness that dominates the American imagination of the frontier in the novel *Fools Crow*.

16 O’Connor considers many functions of the pronoun “you” throughout the chapter “Pronouns and Agency” in *Speaking of Crime*.
Bibliography


