

Margaret Fuller and “the best living prose writer,” George Sand: A Revisionist Account

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Does it claim too much to say that George Sand galvanized Fuller’s mature literary aspirations? Fuller first read Sand in the late 1830s when, frustrated by the lack of social positions and literary forms sanctioned for women, she was casting about for a career or public role. Having entered the public forum a half-decade before with newspaper correspondence that debated George Bancroft’s history and politics and with a seduction tale,¹ Fuller had published book reviews and just brought out her first book – a translation of *Eckermann’s Conversations with Goethe*, a project related to her projected biography of Goethe. But circumstances increasingly discouraged that larger study. Her journal registers her excitement upon discovering new inspiration for writing in Sand:

These books have made me for the first time think I might write into such shapes what I know of human nature. I have always thought that I would not, that I would keep all that behind the curtain, that I would not write, like a woman, of love and hope and disappointment, but like a man of the world of intellect and action. But now I am tempted, and if I can but do well my present work and show that I can write like a man, [...] I think I will try whether I have the hand to paint, as well as the eye to see (qtd. Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossoli* 188).

Longstanding assumptions about the two women, combined with nationalist paradigms of literary study, obscure the ways that Fuller engaged Sand's writing in her own. As the New England friends who edited Fuller's personal writings for her *Memoirs* (1852) shaped a version of Fuller's career to conform with their own literary, moral, and ideological propensities (see Chevigny, "Edges of Ideology" 194-98), they simply excised her expression of her ambition to write like Sand. The Fuller they present is a discriminating reader of Sand, "disgusted" at "the sophistry of passion" in some of Sand's fiction, yet appreciative of her idealism and moral rehabilitation; this Fuller confesses to "lov[ing]" Sand on meeting her in Paris and finding her character "so *really* good" in "contrast to the vulgar caricature" of her. But this is hardly a writer who would think of emulating Sand (*Memoirs* 1:248; 2:195). The persisting influence of the *Memoirs* image of Fuller makes it hard to see the ways that Sand inspired Fuller's writing, and it is complicated by a narrow critical image of Sand as a novelist limited to one genre, as well as by critical approaches that largely segregate nineteenth-century American and French literature as independent fields. The scant modern criticism that does acknowledge Fuller's engagement with Sand as a writer follows her more sympathetic biographer, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who first published the journal passage, in assuming that Fuller's inspiration to "write, like a woman," indicates her intent to emulate the French writer by producing "romances" in a "project of fiction" (Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossoli* 187-88),² a temptation she largely resisted as she turned to a career in journalism. Yet Fuller's strongest initial appreciation of Sand's character painting and style comes in reaction not to her romances, but rather to other forms more readily linked with Fuller's own work: the dramatized philosophical dialogue of *Sept Cordes de la Lyre* (1838) and the epistolary journalism of *Lettres d'un Voyageur* (1834-36).

The present essay pursues an alternate view of Fuller's response to Sand. I propose that Fuller found most stimulating in Sand's writing her experiments with form, her literary style in those different forms, and, in a more challenging way, her progressive thought. Further, I will show that

Fuller's own writing develops in dialogue with these features in Sand's work, assimilating as well as reacting against them. First I survey Fuller's ongoing interest in Sand, then I look more closely at the sometimes cryptic evidence of Fuller's reading of Sand, and finally I suggest ways to see the impact of Fuller's engagement of Sand in the *Dial* fragments, *Summer on the Lakes* (1844), and the *Tribune* journalism.



It is not surprising that an ambitious young woman like Fuller would look to Sand as an inspiration. Sand commanded international status not merely as a novelist, but as the best woman writer of the day, even as critics derided her for departing from conventions of respectability in her life and writing. Her indisputable genius challenged stereotypes of women's limited abilities and, combined with the variety and sheer volume of her production, contributed to making her "perhaps the greatest phenomenon of the present day" in the international republic of letters (Janin 423). What drew Fuller in the works she admired is clearly Sand's emotional or psychological matter and the forms that mediate it – forms that Fuller refrained from labeling in conventional genre terms but understood as excluded from the male intellectual tradition, that man-like writing "of the world of intellect and action." Fuller considered Sand's more conventional romances, *Indiana* (1832) and *Leone Leoni* (1835), the "worst" "vein" of her writing (Hudspeth, *Letters* 2:99), and she did not call the experimental forms in which she first encountered Sand's writing, in *Les Sept Cordes de la Lyre* and *Spiridion* (1839), "novels" or "fiction" (*Memoirs* 1:248). Fuller imagined not writing novels, but that she might "paint" her own knowledge of "human nature," of emotions, into "such shapes" as Sand does in her "books" and her "piece[s] of character painting," "thought poured into a quite different mould [sic]" from text to text (journal qtd. Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossoli* 188; *Memoirs* 1:245). Even when Fuller referred to *Consuelo* (1842-43) as a novel, she remained uninterested in conventional novelistic features. She was fascinated rather with the "ideal forms" that Sand's inner life takes in her writing, and Sand's success in representing them – specifically how "we know, through

[Sand's] works, that there is in her a soul so capable of goodness and honor as to depict them most successfully in her ideal forms" (Review of *Consuelo*, *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 462). When Fuller later expressed her admiration of *Teverino* (1845) and *La Mare au Diable* (1846), she again ignored genre in recommending the originality, the "masterly [...] truth, and [...] free [...] invention" of these texts (*Memoirs* 2:198).

Equally with the "shapes" of Sand's experimental forms, her literary style increasingly arrested Fuller. Sand's "admirable style," in Fuller's opinion as a professional literary critic, finally stands as "the best [of any] living French writer, [...] in some respects the best [of any] living prose writer" (Review of *Consuelo*, *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 457). What Sand's style meant for Fuller changed throughout her recorded reactions, not surprisingly given the French writer's range and variety of modes. "The lyric effusion" of *Les Sept Cordes* first entranced Fuller: "it seems to me more and more beautiful, as I think of it more," she noted, and at first "missed" that style in reading the more austere *Spiridion* (*Memoirs* 1:245). Sand's passionate expression sparked even more enthusiasm. Even the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, which prompted Fuller's most expressed "disappoint[ment]" with Sand for its slippage into "shallow and hasty" observations "*à la mode du genre féminin*," evoked exclamation: "Yet her style, – with what a deeply smouldering fire it burns! Not vehement, but intensely, like Jean Jacques [Rousseau]" (1:250). That style in part made Fuller, as reviewer for the New York *Tribune* in 1845, rank Sand first among French novelists. Although her "best works are unequal," the "concentrated glow" of her style and thought is surpassed only by Rousseau: "Her nature glows beneath the words, like fire beneath the ashes, deep; – deep!" The "power" of her expression makes her "bear the palm above any" French novelist, Fuller wrote, her phrasing making Sand's novels appear to transcend their genre. Fuller itemized, "Her descriptive talent is very great, and her poetic feeling exquisite. She wants but little of being a poet"; "She has [...] that power of exact transcript from her own mind of which almost all writers fail" ("French Novelists," *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 60). On meeting Sand in 1847, Fuller delighted to

find her style of conversation "just like her writing – lively, picturesque, with an undertone of deep feeling, and the same skill in striking the nail on the head every now and then with a blow" (*Memoirs* 2:196). Into the last year of her life Fuller coveted Sand's unique style of word-painting and "would [have] give[n] much to be a George Sand to paint" the character of a friend (Hudspeth, *Letters* 6: 54).

Fuller's enthusiasm for Sand focused not only on literary style and form, but also on the progressive thought that characterized Sand's writing and that of other progressive French writers of her day, la jeune France. Reading and re-reading *Spiridion* helped Fuller to position some aspects of French progressivism relative to German writers and to her own American circle. The French "movement" in philosophy and *belles lettres* appeared to her to "approach the faith of some of my friends here, which has been styled Psychotheism"; the two schools explored without resolving some of the same theoretical tensions, including the conflict of "Free Will [...] with necessity and compensation" and that of "the life of the heart with that of the intellect [...] – these enigmas Sand and her friends seem to have solved no better than M.F. and her friends." The social thought of the French, however, surpassed the Americans. While their "practical optimism is much the same as ours, [...] there is more hope for the masses – soon" (*Memoirs* 1:246). Fuller appreciated the moral idealism, perfectionism, and mysticism in Sand's turn to philosophical and religious motifs with the phase of her career begun with *Sept Cordes* and *Spiridion*. Yet Sand's more progressive social thought and the modes of writing in which she expressed it appear less acceptable. Fuller censured the boldness of Sand's fictionalized philosophical inquiry in *Spiridion*, her earlier scandalous fiction (notorious for critical representations of the institution of marriage and violence against women), and the freedom from social convention Sand exhibited in her personal life, which Fuller described as having "better proved the need of some new interpretation of woman's rights, than any thing she wrote" ("Lawsuit" 29; *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* 130).

The French writer's social criticism consistently appeared to Fuller to outpace her prophecies for specific positive change (an assessment

Sand might have endorsed, as she repeatedly describes her writing as posing questions to her age rather than providing answers). The “heat” that Fuller so admired in Sand’s impassioned style yet seemed to her not an effective discourse for birthing a new “era” of human development: “Those who would reform the world must show that they do not speak in the heat of wild impulse” for society “must be taught by one who speaks with authority” rather than passion (“*Lawsuit*” 30; *Woman* 132-33). Fuller’s protofeminist theorizing grudgingly recognized only Sand’s *Mauprat* (1837) as a contribution to women’s movement. Her précis of the novel crediting Sand for “see[ing] at last, that the only efficient remedy must come from individual character,” understates Sand’s commitment to institutional change and underreads her symbolism in mirroring Fuller’s own transcendentalist emphasis on reform through individual “moral and intellectual” transformation. Fuller submerged the achievement of Sand’s writing on gender issues in concluding that “still the mind of the age struggles confusedly with these problems, better discerning as yet the ill it can no longer bear, than the good by which it may supersede it” (“*The Great Lawsuit*” 30, *Woman* 132).

In revising “*The Great Lawsuit*” in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller moved further away from the revolutionary social emancipation that Sand represented in her life and advocated in some of her writings. On reconsideration, Fuller maintained “the true spirit of reform as to women” was better embodied by the writing of Sand’s compatriot Eugene Sue and the “unblemished” and “pure” Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who “has precisely the qualities that the author of *Simon and Indiana* lacks” (*Woman in the Nineteenth Century* 186, 131). Sand’s emancipation from convention brought out a moralistic and racist reaction from Fuller, who claims that Sand “would trample on every graceful decorum, and every human law for the sake of a sincere life” yet, like “every other French writer,” lets her heroines “tell falsehoods” (*Woman* 186). Perhaps Fuller was responding also to a recent *Whig Review* article, which charged that she shared with Sand that “besetting defect [...] of most or all the Pleadings for the Rights of Women,” the lack of a “specific remedy,” yet allied her

with those "vulgar advocates" whose support of "political [and] civil equality" – in contrast to Sand's support of "moral [...] equality" – would make for "a *masculine* woman[,] [...] a moral monster" ("Modern Criticism" 629). Later, in treating of Sand as the best of France's progressive fictionists, Fuller still represented her as a liar in the French mold, but more flatteringly, as a better writer than Sue and someone who would "lay down her life for the sake of truth" ("French Novelists," *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 63).

As Sand continued to write and Fuller to read her work and that of other European writers,³ Sand's progressivism rose in her estimation. Fuller admired Sand's masterpiece *Consuelo* not only because the conduct of the female protagonist exemplifies conventional moral virtue – "inward purity" – as she transcends gender boundaries to "a genuine independence," but also because Sand advanced socialist association as a means of reform, "a great Idea, and sincere democracy, universal religion," ("Jenny Lind [...] *Consuelo*," *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 230). Fuller believed Sand's characterization of single women as "neither unsexed and depraved, or unresisting victims and breaking reeds" might lead "even very prejudiced men [...] to review their opinions, and, perhaps, to elevate and enlarge their hopes as to 'woman's sphere' and 'woman's mission.'" Women readers, Fuller thought, would find in Sand's title character, as she did, a progressive model of female character in contrast to that of such other European novelists as Bremer and Dumas, who "make women who have a tendency to the intellectual life of an artist fail and suffer the penalties of arrogant presumption in [...] a career to which an inward vocation called them in preference to the usual home duties" (462, 461).

Fuller ultimately depicted Sand as too conservative rather than too radical in her position on women's rights: "woman's day has not come yet" Fuller lamented at the end of 1848, as she reported gossip that "even George Sand" failed the cause (*Sad But Glorious Days* 245). "They hold their clubs in Paris, but even George Sand will not act with women as they are. They say she pleads they are [...] too treacherous. She should not abandon them for that," Fuller scolded. Yet Fuller's own uncritical

celebration of the extension of the male vote in Italy as “universal suffrage” positioned her nearer Sand, who did not share the clubwomen’s “concern that ‘universal’ suffrage excluded women” (Harlan 243), rather than in the solidarity she recommended with the socialist clubwomen, who were demanding full political equality for women. Given her reading of French newspapers and such mutual acquaintances as Giuseppe Mazzini and Pauline Roland, it appears unlikely that Fuller would be ignorant of Sand’s considerable role in the Revolution of 1848; yet her European dispatches make no other mention of Sand. In concluding this passage with an anticipation of what she would “have to say on [the] subject [of male violence against women] if I live [...] as it ought to be told!,” Fuller seems to forget or imply criticism of Sand’s earlier address on the subject in such works as *Indiana* and *Valentine* (1832) (245-46). She never did deliver the “memoir” of Sand, “this figure so important to our era,” which she promised to Mary Howitt for *The People’s Journal*, nor did she report in the *Tribune* her two meetings with Sand, where, she wrote privately, she “enjoyed” Sand’s “prolific, [...] ardent [...] genius” (Hudspeth, *Letters* 4:267; *Memoirs* 2:198). It would seem that Sand finally held more lasting importance for Fuller as a creative, rather than as a progressive, writer. Still, for Fuller, Sand’s progressive vision combined with her poetic, fiery style to make her not only influential in “her own country,” but also to place her at the head of French writers worthy of being “assimilate[d] to better substance” in Fuller’s country (“French Novelists,” *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 54).



“When I first knew George Sand,” Fuller recorded in her notes, having read *Les Sept Cordes de la Lyre*, “I thought I found tried the experiment I wanted.” Instead of describing this “experiment,” Fuller contrasts Bettine Brentano’s balance of “*abandon*” and capability for “the extreme reverse” (*Memoirs* 1:248). She later would use the same language to indict Bettine’s own want of balance: her idolatry of Goethe demonstrated the need of “a counter-poising force” to the “free abandonment to a beautiful object” to “draw us back to the centre in

proportion as we have flown from it, [or] we learn nothing from our experiment" ("Bettine and Günderode" 315). As Fuller was researching and writing on Goethe preliminary for her projected biography, her attention may have been drawn to Sand's complex literary dialogue with him as a more successful response than Bettine's. Sand's criticism shows her ability to admire Goethe as "le plus grand artiste littéraire qui ai jamais existé" ("Essai sur le drame fantastique" 602), and at the same time to evaluate his shortfall in *Faust* from her own values of idealism and idealist representation, from principles of human and divine love, and from romantic heroic faith. *Les Sept Cordes* – which Sand called a "drame fantastique" as she also did his *Faust* – marks her creative reworking of the Faust legend in answer to such shortcomings. Sand's emendation focuses on Hélène as a "purified" Gretchen as Fuller has it, "raised above all past delusions, worthy to redeem and upbear the wise man who stumbled into the pit of error while searching for truth" (*Memoirs* 1:248).

The other titles Fuller names in admiring the "true Ideal" evinced in Sand's work also reference Sand's engagement of Goethe: *André* (1834) employs the conventions of the seduction tale to contrast the poetry of Goethe, which inspires destructive passion, with the nature-inspired life-as-poetry of a young flower-maker, which expresses the ideal harmony and innocence of universal love. In *Jacques* (1833), whose title character Fuller admired as her "ideal" of "the pure stoicism" of "the soul [...] capable of [...] the strongest emotions [...] but superior to pain" (qtd Capper 1:261), Sand manipulated the novel of adultery to rework Goethe's *Elective Affinities* (1809). She challenged what she saw as Goethe's inability to view man as other than "a victim of fate" ("une victime de la fatalité") with her portrait of a man's self-sacrificing love for his unfaithful wife, while detailing his struggle between the ideal and reality, what she felt was lacking in Goethe's enslavement to "vraisemblance" and "la vérité vulgaire" (*Memoirs* 1:249; "Essai sur le drame fantastique" 599). Sand's creative, idealist appropriation of Goethe may be part of the "experiment" Fuller desired, perhaps as an impetus or model for her own writing about him.⁴

The desired experiment has to do, too, with Sand's development of moral idealism – the “high morality,” a “true Ideal” – in *Les Sept Cordes*, *André*, and *Jacques*, that coexists with a “knowledge of the passions, and of social institutions,” which Fuller saw linked to both “the slough of [Sand's] past life” and to “the sophistry of passion” in some places “in these books” (*Memoirs* 1:248-49). “That would be my wish, also, to know all, then to choose,” Fuller wrote, as she saw Sand did in turning from telling stories of passion that violated social conventions to dramatizing a story of love that transcends them, as Hélène, the protagonist of *Les Sept Cordes*, chose an ecstatic love of the infinite over earthly loves. Fuller “revered” Sand's heroine and “hoped from [the] steadfastness” evinced in her “celestial choice,” uncertain whether she could herself make such a choice as Hélène does in electing God over embracing forms of finite love, both the philosopher's love – which would initiate a superior law of marriage and serve as example to earth's inhabitants – and that of the Spirit of the Lyre – which would satisfy the desires of the heart and taste earth's happiness (*Memoirs* 1:248-49; see *Les Sept Cordes* 425). Fuller read through *André* and *Jacques* a moral idealism that having tried “license” rejects it as counter to “freedom” and comes to “appreciate the liberty of the law,” and she interpreted this thematic development in Sand's characters as evidence that the author had herself “begun a new existence” (*Memoirs* 2:248-49). Perhaps Sand's later work failed Fuller in this regard.

The “experiment” Fuller wanted surely had to do as well with a capacity to combine strength of mind with both strength of feeling and stoicism, for Fuller makes clear that George Sand ultimately “disappoints” her in this regard. In the gender-coded terms of her culture, Fuller pointed to minor lapses in Sand's extraordinary “genius, and manly grasp of mind” (such “astonish[ing] [...] insight into the life of thought” in the “manly and masterful” *Spiridion* that Fuller speculated it must be mediated by “some man,” a philosopher-lover) (Hudspeth, journal 455; *Memoirs* 1:247). Slippages in Sand's writing into the “shallow and hasty” thought of “*la mode du genre féminin*” also

disappointed as Fuller read the *Lettres d'un voyageur* in serial in the *Revue des deux mondes*. But the want of "a manly heart!" most troubled, as Fuller saw in the *Lettres* "a frail woman mourning over a lot," "bemoaning her loneliness, bemoaning her mistakes, writing for money!" (*Memoirs* 1:249-50). Sand's narrator in the *Lettres* does lament his⁵ failure to become a true artist, explaining that economic pressures produce sadness, despair, even intellectual suicide in his writing ("Pressé, forcé de gagner de l'or, j'ai pressé mon imagination de produire, sans m'inquiéter du concours de ma raison; j'ai voilé ma muse. [...]. C'est le manque de pain qui m'a rendu malade et spleenétique; c'est la douleur d'être forcé à me suicider intellectuellement qui m'a rendu âcre and sceptique.") Viewing a play about Chatterton leads the narrator to weep at that poet's struggle with necessity, for it recalls his own torments and sacrifice ("j'ai versé des larmes abondantes en assistant à cette lutte de l'esprit indépendant contre la nécessité fatale, qui me rappelait tant de tortures et de sacrifices") (*Lettres d'un voyageur* IV, 724-25). Whether as lover, pilgrim, or slave to literature, he has lived alone and never had time to view his profession as anything better than a job ("J'ai vécu toujours seul au milieu du monde, amoureux, voyageur, ou serf littéraire; [...] je n'ai jamais eu le temps de regarder ma profession comme quelque chose de mieux qu'un métier") (727). But Fuller did not appreciate Sand's experimental confessional form, perhaps more a failure of her reading than Sand's writing. She overlooked not only Sand's representational persona, a man and poet of the age, and Sand's qualifying irony, but also the specific context of Sand's lament, a rededication of her art to a republican future and the great law of equality, the only reliable moral law ("la grande loi d'égalité et de partage [...] est la première et la seule invariable loi de morale et d'équité qui se soit présentée à mon esprit dans tous les times") (703). The emotionalism of Sand that so inspired Fuller, is finally too emotional for her; Sand in "her person" in the autobiographical *Lettres* falls short of her creature, the "ideal" Jacques with his strong emotions, strong mind, and stoic control.

Yet if Sand on first acquaintance failed Fuller as “heroic model” as her biographer observes (Capper 1:262), did Sand fail also as a literary model? ⁶ It would seem that Sand’s impassioned “style” of writing and some of her “shapes” of writing of “love and hope and disappointment” did satisfy, whatever shortfall there may have been from the larger “experiment” Fuller desired. “Never was a nobler conception of the lot of the Seeker,” she enthused as she “finished Spiridion”; “this writer” could even paint “the Maker[, who] is not so easily portrayed” (Hudspeth, journal 455). Sand in the end came closer than did Goethe to fulfilling Fuller’s aesthetic standards in some ways; Sand’s idealism and smoldering, burning style more resemble the writers Fuller most esteemed, “flame-like natures [...] of restless aspirations” who produce works “instinct and glowing with the central fire” (“Goethe” 2, 27). After reading Sand, Fuller’s writings began to talk back to the German writer, first in brief exclamation, then more in Sand’s devices of fictionalized character and dialogue used, as in *Sept Cordes de la Lyre*, to represent collisions and harmonies of ideas. When the “mainspring of action” in Goethe’s writing after *Faust* shifted away from “the impassioned and noble Seeker,” Fuller found him “pity[ing] more pious souls for being restless seekers,” and in her criticism chided him for writing that “‘Care is taken that trees grow not up into the heavens’”: “Ay, Goethe, but in proportion to their force of aspiration is their height!” (Goethe 23, 20).

In *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller dramatized in the figure of “Good Hope” her own “position” on the phenomenon “at present called animal magnetism, [...] this vital principle,” as open to evidence of “unseen powers” of “the supernatural” (79), and deployed the figure to argue not only against Goethe, unnamed in paraphrase, but also others who would depreciate the “visionary” and set limits to inquiry. Behind her fictional mask, Fuller spoke boldly: “I acknowledge no limit, set up by man’s opinion as to the capacities of man. ‘Care is taken,’ I see it, ‘that the trees grow not up into heaven,’ but, to me it seems, the more vigorously they aspire the better” (80). Against the cool caution of the Emersonian figure Self-Poise opposing “the manifold infatuations and illusions of this

world of emotion,” Free Hope champions “lyric inspirations” and “abandon” (81) and “truth. [...] Tested by life’s most fiery glow,” “full, free life” (82). Although *Summer on the Lakes* does not name Sand, the dialogue between visionary and philosopher that advocates aspiration toward the unknown evokes *Sept Cordes de la Lyre* in form and theme. *Summer*’s validation of “lyric inspirations” recalls how Fuller “loved” and “hoped” in response to Sand’s heroine (*Memoirs* 1:248), whose “lyric improvisation” in mystical trances Sand labels a “phenomenon” of the “state people today call magnetic” and describes as a marvelous phenomenon that the philosopher cannot explain away as merely natural (“son improvisation lyrique est un phénomène jusqu’ici inobservé de cet état cataleptique qu’on appelle aujourd’hui magnétique”) (*Sept Cordes* 225). As Fuller improvised verse in *Summer on the Lakes* that could sum up the main theme of *Sept Cordes*, much as she wrote that it does her own character – “Seeds of thought will never thrive/ Till dews of love shall bid them live” (82) – , it is clear that she had begun to write “like a woman, of love and hope,” like Sand, but in her own way.

And it would appear that Fuller, on more reading and mature reflection, did find in Sand a heroic model of the writer after all. Sometime before her September 1845 review of *Consuelo*, Fuller evidently reread the *Lettres* in the form of Sand’s revised collection, for she described an ongoing interest in the writer in terms that echo Sand’s self-presentation in her 1843 preface to that work; perhaps brought to an understanding of the representative value of the self-dramatization in the series, Fuller revised her notion of Sand’s want of “manly heart.” Beyond “doubts of the intellect” and “temptations of a sensual nature,” Fuller now testified, “we see too the courage of a hero and a deep capacity for religion” in Sand, an “upward tendency and growing light” in her work:

[*Consuelo* is] of deepest interest to those who have looked upon Sand, for some years back, as one of the best exponents of the difficulties, the errors, and the aspirations, [...] of the present epoch. The struggle in her mind and the experiments of her life have been laid bare

[...], with fearless openness [...]. With a bleeding heart and bewildered feet she sought the Truth, and if she lost the way returned as soon as convinced she had done so [...]. [Men] feel she knows their ailment, and, if she finds a cure it will really be by a specific remedy. ("Jenny Lind [...] Consuelo," *Margaret Fuller, Critic*, 227-28).

The phrasing of Sand's preface resonates here. Sand, directing readers away from interpreting the *Lettres* as literal autobiography and toward an empathetic understanding of the text ("qui doivent se rendre sympathiques au lecteur"; 3), explains that if her work may be read as opening her bleeding heart to psychological experimentation without fear ("ouvrant mon coeur sanglant à l'expérimentation psychologique [...] . sans effroi"; 3), it is because she well knows the trauma of the men of her time, their difficulties and their aspirations ("c'est que je connaissais bien aussi les plaies qui rongent les hommes de mon temps, [...] leurs maux et [...] leurs aspirations"; 3-4). The *Lettres* are nothing but the story of those who, like her, have wandered in darkness, with bloodied feet and "suffering from doubt, the sickness of the era, and in quest of a cure," of truth and faith ("Ai-je fait autre chose que l'histoire d'un chacun de nous? Non [...]. "comme moi vous avez erré dans les ténèbres" 3-4; "qui errent avec des pieds sanglants" 6; "Mon mal est le vôtre"; "doubt [...] le mal de notre âge"; "qui le guérissent") (5).



The figure of the seeker is a favorite type in Sand's work and in Fuller's criticism of it. *Lettres d'un voyageur* and *Lélia* (1833), another of Sand's experimental texts in which this figure commands central interest, may have afforded particularly suggestive patterns for Fuller's writing. The seeker of the *Lettres* is a traveler, one of the "contemplative walkers" by contrast with tourists; under various personae, he appears as a wanderer through nature, museums, and cathedral; as an exile; as a lost soul; as the pilgrim-poet who writes these letters; as a fictionalized figure of the author herself ("*Lettres d'un voyageur*" 409 "des promeneurs contemplatifs"). Here the seeker and travel motif function as much as tropes as they do as a

narrative structuring device for Sand's series of epistolary journalism. The disillusioned wanderer in *Lélia*, a dark female antitype of the seeker in *Spiridion* and in *Consuelo*, also debuted in the *Révue des Deux Mondes*, in segments labeled as "fragment[s]." The journal introduced these fragments as participating in genres of both romance and poem, described them as psychological (their mysterious drama developed in the folds of human consciousness rather than in external events), and anticipated they would usher in a "revolution" in contemporary literature (Planche 460). Sand extended her repertoire of fictional devices – "character-painting," dialogue, and fable – in these two hybrid works to achieve a complex expression of philosophical, psychological, and religious significance, relatively unhampered by the codes of more conventional fiction. The patterns that Sand established in these works may well inform what have been viewed as Fuller's most visionary experiments in writing, her *Dial* fragments, as well as her most socially engaged ones, *A Summer on the Lake* and her newspaper journalism.

Lélia, one of Sand's most controversial experimental hybrids and "one of the most theoretical in its efforts to articulate a new kind of prose" (Naginski 107), abandons traditional plot codes and weaves a visionary, dreamlike discourse in its fragmented monologues and dialogues of abstract type-characters. Mazzini, among contemporaries who offered glosses of these types, found in the title figure "the woman-faust," "a wandering spirit on the search" who dialogues with other characters representing reason, passionate imagination, and sensuality (33).⁷ The love, hope, and disappointment that Sand writes of in this form assume cosmic dimensions beyond the romance varieties of such emotions as the book explores questions of love and its power through the transformation of Lélia's aspiration toward God into disappointing sexual liaisons and back again. Fuller's *Dial* fragments work creatively with tropes and themes from several of Sand's texts. But what especially enabled Fuller to produce what have been called "the only real examples of literary experimentation" published in the *Dial* (Rosenthal 35) is her engagement of the Sandienne fragment form to expand sketches of

character-painting – of the Queen of the South (the Magnolia), the Saint of Knowledge (Leila), and the Queen of the Night (the Yuka) – into explorations of forms of the self, consciousness, and writing that she did not find available in the tradition she understood as masculine. “Leila” in particular, “a tale of psychological self-investigation of an order attempted only by such [American] contemporaries as Melville, Hawthorne, and Poe” (Rosenthal 35), rewards reading for what it has to hint of the inner life and its transformations.⁸ Fuller’s Leila, like Sand’s *Lélia*, is a “mystery” (“Leila” 462; *Lélia* [3]), and “one that can only be indicated by being reproduced,” not recorded as an “object” of knowing (“Leila” 462, 467). Both writers offer fragments of description and dialogue with *Lélia*/Leila to come at this mystery that appears as a spirit sometimes masked, a mystery that Sand focuses on desire, its impotence and frustration, and Fuller on a mode of perception, of knowing all, being nothing, that her epigram from Wordsworth places ““In a deep vision’s intellectual scene”” (463).

In a fragment that appeared in the *Révue des Deux Mondes* around the time Fuller was reading the *Lettres* there, Sand explored the character of contemplation through the night-walking of a first-person narrator (identified as *Lélia* by the title). Here Sand painted the seeker descending a precipice at night, suspended between heaven and the abyss and contrasting the domain of will and its link to a faith that touches the boundaries of the infinite against the domain of imagination and its link to sensual pleasures and a self-destructive urge. Sand’s walker arrives at an inconceivable malaise in confronting an extinct volcano that images chaos and a power that seems inimical to the human, and recalls her own earlier intense desires and a God of anger and force. But contemplation of sublime night prompts her to view the earth in a different light with the coming of dawn (a subtle metamorphosis not describable in human language), to praise order and calm as also divine attributes, and to envision the possible realization of the age’s poetic hopes for the creation of sympathetic rapport among humans in the abyss of space (“Contemplation” 565-66).

Fuller similarly employed the fragment to figure a mode of perception related to spiritual quest and night wanderings ("my chosen name,/ My name of Leila," Fuller says elsewhere, "stands for night"; "To Sarah" 232) and allied to "a perception of boundlessness, depth below depth" and to "elemental powers of nature" that touch on "the infinite" ("Leila" 462-63). Like Sand's narrator, Leila, despite her feminine name and pronoun, is painted with small reference to the external: "to the mere eye almost featureless," Leila "ever transcends sex, age, state and all the barriers behind which man entrenches himself from the assaults of Spirit" (462, 463); in her eye is not "the object sought" but "the call to search" (467). In a series of ecstatic visions, whose imagery of quest, abyss, and volcano recall Sand's and whose movements are directed in part through conjuring and wishing while observing Leila, Fuller's narrator calls up Leila when she "is in the vasty deep" (463) and as she "searchest and searchest" and "aspires for her purest self," "an abyss to me" (465). The narrator hears Leila as a volcanic burst of fire, an apocalyptic "new, strange voice" that frees (465), feels her touch as Demon of conscience and as redeeming Genius, "the moving principle," and experiences "immortal births of her unshrinking love," "my divine children" (466). Finally, the narrator prophesies Leila taking human form as "all my thought" is absorbed in her and anticipates going forth into nature with "still deeper trust" as Leila's "fellow pilgrim" (465, 467). The mysterious revelation of Leila remains ineffable: "Could I but write this into words of earth, the secret of moral and mental alchymy [*sic*] would be discovered, and all Bibles have passed into one Apocalypse; but not till it has all been lived can it be written" (467). Fuller's vision is uniquely hers. Like Sand's, her fragment turns to the hope of a love that exceeds romance relations – "immortal love," a love "only for the all" (466, 463) – but Fuller's focus remains more exclusively psychological than Sand's, which links love to dreams of social reform.

Fuller's *Dial* fragments resemble Sand's *Révue* fragments and the fragmented chapters of *Lélia* not only in form and thematics but also in style. The features of dithyrambic emotion and tone, grandiosity,

symbolic density and apocalyptic moments that led the critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve to pronounce *Lélia* a poem reappear in Fuller's pieces (499). Emerson applied the same phrase, "fervid eloquence," in qualified appreciation of both writers and compared both to Madame de Staël's improvisational poet, Corinne (Rusk 2:378). Later, both Sand and Fuller turned away from the most lyrical and enigmatic impetuses of their *Lélia*/*"Leila"* experiments. Over the next decade, Sand experimented with other forms of fiction and journalism to express her growing commitment to socialist sentiments, including the view of literature as a vehicle for the moral education of the people that she shared to some extent with such fellow travelers as Pierre Leroux. A similar arc may be traced in Fuller's career. Yet the later work of both writers retained something of the lyric voice, figurative density, and emotional intensity of the style they developed in these early, idealist pieces. As I hope to show, Sand's experimental hybrid *Lettres d'un Voyageur* proved an especially fruitful precursor for Fuller's writing of travelogue and journalism in such a style.

When Sand pursued the seeker into the travelogue with the *Lettres*, she suspended the traditional narrative and descriptive framework of that form for long segments, even entire letters, demanding freedom for her digressive and subjective mode (see "Lettres d'un Voyageur. II" 185). She explained in the preface to the *Lettres* that the attraction of a work of this sort lies in the inner life, "l'émotion" and "la rêverie," which she represented in the "costume" of her fictionalized, wandering first-person narrative personae (Préface 3, 2). Through the figures of this complex wayfarer ("ce problématique voyageur"), she "painted" not an account of her sensible life ("existence matérielle") but rather a "reflection" of her soul at different times, an epitome of the "movements of the heart personified" ("la suite d'émotions [...] pas le récit, mais le reflet"; "je n'ai fait autre chose que de peindre mon âme sous la forme qu'elle prenait à ces moments-là"; "les mouvements de ce cœur *personnifié*"; 2-3). Contemporary readers described Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes* in ways that position her travelogue closer to this Sandian form of character-

painting than to the American sketch-book tradition of travel-writing in which later critics commonly place it (see "Intro." xiv). Fuller's is "a book of travels with all the scaffolding struck away" (Evert A. Duyckinck qtd. Capper 2:155). The author "is much more occupied with what is passing in her own soul, than with the objective realities which present themselves to the senses"; her book is "in a high degree subjective. [...] a record of her own impressions and of the recollections they called up. [...] she writes not from without, but from within" (Stetson).

Fuller sometimes justified lengthy digressions that take her far from her actual travels, as in presenting her summary of Kerner's *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, or noted her narrative departures from her travels to treat other experiences that "inspired similar emotions" (42). For the most, however, she simply assumed the romantic mode of subjective, digressive travelogue, such as she encountered in Sand, from the first where she welcomed her reader "to share with me such foot-notes as may be made on the pages of my life during this summer's wanderings" (3). Fuller, like Sand before her, expanded the wandering, idealist mode of travel into a hybrid form that includes fictionalized autobiography, letters, polemic debate, philosophical reflection, analyses of books, and picturesque descriptions that put traditional travel discourse in the service of subjective impressions. Like Sand, Fuller drew on fictional devices of story, characterization, and dialogue, most famously in "the slight sketch" of Mariana (51), conventionally read for what it says of Fuller's life, not for what it might say of her effort to paint, like Sand, human character, love and hope and disappointment. Fuller's style, while less colloquial, less emotional, and more overtly allusive than that of the *Lettres*, recalls Sand's, too, not in replicating her voice, but rather in replicating the structure of multiple voices that make the Sandienne traveler "a palimpsest of voice" and her text "a field of experimentation" for a dialogic "style in process" (Diaz 51, 52 "palimpseste de voix"; "un champ d'expérimentation"; "un style en devenir"). While Fuller's painting of the inner life of her traveler focuses more narrowly on the individual than Sand's, she brings into play an extraordinary number of other voices –

from those of her traveling companions in the dramatized scene aboard the steamboat that opens Chapter 2; to the numerous stories and anecdotes related by other passengers and correspondents from back east; to the voices in debate over the Indian question that centers Chapter 6, a debate that includes not only the authorities often cited in public discussion, but also voices less often heard: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Mrs. Anna Grant, fastidious white ladies, and Indians of different regions and tribes, among others. All alternately fuse and clash with the voices in which Fuller herself speaks, the lyrical tones of her verse, her irony against “the fat old priest,” her impassioned jeremiad against “Our people and our government [who] have sinned alike against the first-born of the soil,” her fervent pleading for recording of Native culture (114), and more.

At this point in Fuller’s career, it would appear that she had assimilated features of Sand’s romantic travel mode without conscious effort to emulate the *Lettres*. Perhaps most tellingly, while Fuller’s reading notes earlier referred to the fourth *Lettre*, *Summer on the Lakes* does not emulate Sand’s stirring use of the traveler trope there to promote progressive utopian politics. Where Sand’s poet-narrator mixes metaphors of travel – the return from slavery in Egypt, an army’s march to victory, the threat of exile with the growing despotism of Louis Philippe – to paint transnational socio-political progress and his place in it, Fuller’s commitment to nationalism seems to circumscribe the purpose of her account: “by reverent faith to woo the mighty meaning of the scene” in her travels through the American west “where ‘go ahead’ is the only motto” (18). Sand’s poet-narrator enrolled himself in the cause of the moral law of equality (“la grand loi d’égalité et de partage, [...] la seule invariable loi de morale et d’équité” 703) (that same moral law “The Great Lawsuit” presented as a particularly American cause), and in a transnational march toward a more equitable future, calling others to the journey: whatever the banner, he wants to go along, so long as the phalanxes are always on the road to a republican future, whether in the name of Washington and Franklin, Jesus and his sole true apostle [Lamennais], or Saint-Simon. (“Allons! Quelle que soit la nuance de

votre bannière, pourvu que vos phalanges soient toujours sur la route de l'avenir républicain; au nom de Jésus, qui n'a plus sur la terre qu'un véritable apôtre: au nom de Washington et de Franklin [...] qui nous ont lessé un tâche à accomplir; au nom de Saint-Simon, dont les fils vont d'emblée au sublime et terrible but du partage des biens [...] pourvu que ce qui est bon se fasse, [...]. Je ne suis qu'un pauvre enfant de troupe, emmenez moi"; 720). Fuller pitched her progressivism rather on a sentimental note. As she ends her account of travel not with a utopian trope but with an observation of fact, she laments the "pity" that the travelers she hears discussing Fourier are heading east, "not going to, rather than from, the rich and free country where it would be so much easier [...] to try the great experiment of voluntary association" (155).

Lettres d'un Voyageur stands behind Fuller's *Tribune* columns as well, but here as a prototype of journalism.⁹ Fuller regarded her commission as a journalist as a public and national role. After she read, and apparently re-read, the *Lettres*, however, her style moved away from the argumentation of her earliest periodical writing with its format grounded in the male tradition of American public rhetoric and toward the form of colloquial journalism that Sand raised to an art. Fuller also moved away from her initial social and political conservatism that would "check" any "tendency" toward "levell[ing]" to an ultimate advocacy of romantic democratic socialism ("Brutus" qtd. Capper 1: 145). She developed an emotional style of nationalist and cosmopolitan discourse to discuss social, political, and cultural issues and expressed her progressivism especially in terms of "hope."

Brought closer by her position at the paper to evidence of the realpolitik compromise of national principles – the extension of slavery, imperialist expansion, violent constraint of freedoms of the press and religion – and to the Indian, immigrant, poverty, and reform questions, Fuller found herself repeatedly disappointed in the American system and subsequently relocated hope to different sources or another time. At first, even in the face of disappointing national events, Fuller wed hope to notions of American exceptionalism ("the ark of human hopes [...] [is] in

our charge”), for otherwise “the Past would be inexplicable” and “the Future without hope.” Increasingly, she linked hope rather to the promise of socialist movement, “the means by which the heart of mankind may be made to beat with one great hope, one love.” Finally, the diffusion “of Associative and Communist principles, both here and in Europe,” encouraged her anticipation of new “hopes” that America might, contrary to all current evidence, “lead the van” of nations to the coming time of “Democracy” (“New Year’s Day,” *Margaret Fuller, Critic* 17, 16; “French Novelists,” *Ibid.* 62; “1st January, 1846,” *Ibid.* 328-29, 332). Fuller included herself among those who saw the need for “radical reform” but did not embrace a specific system of radical reorganization or liberal reform. Rather the ideals and “grander forms” of romantic socialism appealed to her, as they did to Sand in the *Lettres*. “[W]hile the new measures are ripening and new men educating” for social transformation, Fuller continued to ground her hopes in the individual (“The Rich Man,” *Margaret Fuller, Critic* 359; see Chevigny, “Ideology” 184): “There is still hope, there is still an America, while private lives are ruled by [Protestant] conscientiousness”; “our hopes as to national honor and goodness are almost wearied out, and we feel obliged to turn to the Individual and to the Future (“New Year’s Day,” *Margaret Fuller, Critic* 17; Review of Thomas L. McKenney, *Memoirs*, *Ibid.* 471). Her focus on the individual as the agent of change made journalism, dedicated to the diffusion and exchange of thought, for her “The most important part of our literature” (“American Literature” *Papers on Literature and Art* 138).

Fuller’s domestic *Tribune* journalism, shaped by the demands of deadline, an American popular audience, and her professional position as the paper’s cultural critic, appears on the surface quite different from Sand’s more reflective, often confessional mode. Where Sand’s *Lettres* show her commitment to progressives’ belief in the role of literature in the intellectual and moral elevation of the people, they speak most often in the metaphoric voice of the poet, often lyrical or impassioned, and tend toward experimental form, rather than speaking in the tones of the

teacher and the preacher, as Fuller's columns often do out of a similar commitment to what she calls "the great work of popular education" (*Memoirs* 2:164). Still, Fuller deployed figurative discourse and lyric voice in the style of Sand more than she wrote in the dominant style of American journalism, with its sensationalism and partisan politics (see Edwards 69, 80). Fuller relied more than Sand on conventional forms of journalistic prose, such as the essay and book review. Yet she also experimented with fictional devices that evoke Sand's writing, such as dialogue and fable, parable, or "picture" of a "type" or "Ideal of Human Nature," ("The Poor Man, – An Ideal Sketch," *Margaret Fuller, Critic* 380-81; and see, e.g., "What fits a Man to be a Voter?"; "The Rich Man, – An Ideal Sketch"). In contrast to Sand's more personal style, Fuller eschewed "[the] secrets of the confessional" even when publishing a "record of the private mind"; instead she generalized behind the editorial "we," as in idealizing her "Love and Hope for all human beings" and her tears for friendships "unable to endure the light of an ideal hope" ("1st January, 1846," *Margaret Fuller, Critic* 326). Yet this subjective "ideal point of view" that shapes her journalistic perspective on political, economic, social, and cultural issues bears similarity to the subjective idealism of Sand's more personally inflected epistolary mode. It contributes to the distinctive style that readers find "blur[s] the lines of public and private discourse" in Fuller's columns and makes them "seem to be letters" (*Margaret Fuller, Critic*, "Introduction," xxxiii). Although Fuller's domestic *Tribune* columns do not draw on specific conventions of the letter as does Sand's epistolary journalism, Fuller made this subjective perspective serve the functions of the interpellation and apostrophe that inform Sand's epistolary mode. Throughout it shapes her "address" to the audience of the newspaper as she conceives it – "the ideal presence of human nature as we feel it ought to be and trust it will" develop in her country, "America rather than Americans" ("American Literature" *Papers on Literature and Art* Pt. 2: 140); and it appears in the invocations that punctuate her columns when she rises to her most fervent pitch: "ye, sable bands," "oh All-Wise," "O our Country," "Oh poor man!," "oh Father!," "Ah [...], bright genius of America."

Fuller's European *Tribune* dispatches reflect yet more features of Sand's hybrid form of journalism than her earlier essays for the paper. The epistolary mode Fuller deployed in the dispatches enables the more direct and conversational address of her ideal audience and a more personal closeness to the reader she calls "my old friend" by the time she arrives at "my Italy," the locus where experience begins to answer to ideal expectation (*These Sad but Glorious Days* 129). The letter in Fuller's hand, as in Sand's, makes for a flexible structure, expanding to discussion of "the personal, cultural, and political" in a way Charles Capper finds unique among "American travel writer[s]," and makes her dispatches more engaging than the earlier columns (*Margaret Fuller* 2: 281). Fuller drew on some of the same devices that make for Sand's thoroughly dialogic form of epistolary journalism, portraying fictionalized dialogues, as well as invoking more the epistolary repertoire of "apostrophe, interpellation, [and] invocation" (Diaz 50).

As Sand's letters shifted away from the conventions of the travel letter from Italy in which she wrote the first three of her *Lettres* and increasingly expanded the significance of travel as a trope, so Fuller increasingly subordinated description of literal travel to subjective description of her sojourn in Rome. Like Sand, she became a contemplative wayfarer who can really "see and feel" by contrast with the unthinking tourists from England and from their own countries that both writers satirized (*These Sad but Glorious Days* 168; and see 129). Although the dispatches occasionally offer memorable descriptions of places and people, art and institutions (see, e.g. Russo 145), the early dispatches repeatedly struggle against descriptive and narrative conventions of the travelogue. As Fuller settled into Italy and relinquished the generic compulsions of the "traveler passing along the beaten track" (131), she deployed her travel motif instead, as Sand before her, in tropes and images that bear witness to the ideals of progressive movements. Fuller reported Tuscans' creation of the National Guard as "the first step toward truly national institutions and a representation of the people" (158); although she doubted "the present road" sufficient "to

lead Italy to her goal," she stressed it "is an onward, upward road, and the people learn as it advances" so "their hopes cannot be baffled" (161). Fuller painted Rome, as Brigitte Bailey observes, as progressive movement, as "defined by citizens in motion, by political processions, funerals, troop movements, and religious festivals whose meaning is increasingly political" (180-81). She represented the French Revolution of 1848 and the ousting of Louis Philippe as France's declaration that "to stop her march is a vain attempt, though her onward path be dangerous and difficult" (211). Even in the failed revolutions, Fuller figured a progression of thought that she prophesied would end over the century in the extension of Republican government and equality throughout Europe: "the New Era is no longer an embryo; it is born; it begins to walk – [takes] its first giant steps" (321).

Although Fuller reported specific facts about the leaders, events, and documents of the European revolutions, the discourse she employed in advancing progressive movement and "radical reform" depends on vocabularies of emotion and faith, much as Sand's does (*These Sad but Glorious Days* 155). Fuller proclaimed that democratic movement would come from "the aspirations of the general heart" (156), "the spirit of true religion" that animates the Tuscan people just as it grounds the "sublime assertion" of the American political "value" of "equal rights [...], birth rights derived from God alone" (159). Yet she looked in vain to both Europe and the U.S. for "the genuine Democracy to which the rights of all men are holy" (164). From the French Revolution, she thought her compatriots could learn "preventive wisdom," "learn to reverence [...] – the LABORING CLASSES" (211); yet "It is to the youth that Hope" for political and social equality "addresses itself" (166). Fuller's romantic socialist faith in "that of which the cry of Communism, the systems of Fourier, &c. are but forerunners" (225) is as indiscriminate as Sand's "love" of "systems" for "the salvation of humanity" – Fourier's scheme equally with the saint-simonian "faith" (*Lettre VII*, 429-30: "J'aime beaucoup les systèmes, le cas d'applications excepté. J'aime la foi saint-simonienne, j'estime fort le système du Fourier [*sic*]; "le salut de

l'humanité”). Some of Fuller’s hymns to progressivism and her laments for her own country’s apostasy rise to lyrical or impassioned intensity in a style that recalls her early appreciation for Sand’s – a style that critics often esteem as her best.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson credited Fuller, along with Lydia Maria Child and Grace Greenwood, with creating what he calls the “modern school of newspaper correspondence.” This mode departs from men’s rhetorical traditions of journalism in a distinctively feminine form with “something of the charm of women’s private letters, – a style of writing where description preponderates over argument and statistics make way for fancy and enthusiasm” (“Lydia Maria Child” 127). Fuller’s journalistic style may indeed be seen to rely on descriptive devices more than on dispute, to voice a more intimate tone and conversational relation to her essay’s addressee, to approach social and political issues through discourses of religion or literature and sentiment, and to favor “fancy” in using imaginative dialogues and characterizations, a fictionalized autobiographical narrative stance, and appeals to emotion. But as we begin to look more beyond the borders of nationalist literary paradigms, it is possible to see this mode and others mediated by the precedent of the French writer that Fuller, like Child and Greenwood, so admired.

To isolate a connection between Fuller and Sand’s writing risks overstating a simple “influence,” for the engagement of any single predecessor by so allusive a writer as Fuller needs careful contextualizing. At the same time, detailed attention to the patterns of assimilation and rejection in the reading of individual authors, such a dynamic as Fuller herself sketched in her review of “French Novelists,” can yield insight into transnational dialogue. Fuller’s sustained interest in “the best living prose writer” merits attention for itself and for what it suggests about the value of questioning critical conventions that have prevented careful investigation of these two writers and other nineteenth-century writers in the U.S. and France.

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Notes

¹ "Brutus," *Boston Daily Advertiser* (4 December 1834), 2; "Lost and Won: A Tale of Modern Days and Good Society," *New England Galaxy* 8 (August 1835); see Capper 1:144-45, 155-56.

² Higginson concludes, "The project of fiction went no farther," with the possible exception of "her fragment of an 'Autobiographical Romance.'" See also Capper 1:262; Hudspeth 455, n. 14; Meyer; Williams. Feminist critics struggle with Fuller's conservative response to Sand; see Ellison, and Zwarg. Another line of criticism stresses the impact of Sand on Fuller's personal life; see Capper, Murray, and Boyd. Bell Chevigny is certainly right to suggest the liberalizing "personal" influence of the meeting with Sand on Fuller's sexual ethic (*Woman and Myth* 301); this line of criticism does not, however, claim any linked impact on Fuller's writing.

³ While Charles Capper may be correct that German ideas are the "most radical" Fuller encountered as an editor in cosmopolitan New York ("Getting from Here to There" 18), Fuller continued to find French radicalism personally significant. Robert Hudspeth's observation of Sand's centrality as "France supplanted Germany as Fuller's intellectual touchstone" merits greater attention ("Preface," *Letters of Margaret Fuller* 4:16).

⁴ Like Sand, Fuller rejected biographical evaluations to credit Goethe's artistry, while at the same time acknowledging in his writing a want of feeling, a slighting of moral concerns and idealism, and other limitations that make him fall short of an ideal poet. Sand stresses more that Goethe's aestheticism prevents him from being a philosopher, an idealist: "c'est un poète sans idéal" and thus not a real poet (603, and see 605), whereas Fuller finds him sometimes an idealist in spite of himself (23).

⁵ Sand largely maintained her persona's male identity in the letters and corrected any lapse in that fiction when she revised them. Here she represents her poet-narrator ironically as a "femmelette" or sissy (719). In Lettre 6 she laments that the misfortune of being a woman denied her a heroic destiny (525), a slippage that justifies more than does the revision in the collected *Lettres* Fuller's sense of being brought "close to her person" (*Memoirs* 1:250).

⁶ Gary Williams argues that Fuller desired a moral model, “specifically a model for how to pursue, as a woman, a ‘purified life,’” and specifically not “a literary experiment.”

⁷ Williams, who speculates this was one of two most influential reviews for Fuller, does not discuss *Lélia*. Murray names Sand as a possible “source” but does not explore the link (172). No mention of this title survives in Fuller’s writing on Sand, but Moncure Conway states that the copy of *Lélia* that Emerson gave him had been a gift from Fuller (238).

⁸ Scholarship is just beginning to interpret Fuller’s dense psychological discourse. For example, see Jeffrey Steele.

⁹ Marie-Ève Thérenty views the *Revue des deux mondes* as a school where Sand developed the hybrid forms and literary style of her journalism, including the *Lettres d’un Voyageur* (9; and see 19). Jane Chapman explores Sand’s “uniquely hybrid literary style” as a journalist in her later newspaper writing (“The personal is the political” 45; and see “George Sand” 480).

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