



universität  
wien

# DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

„Margaret Fuller’s  
Quest for Independence”

Verfasserin

Eva-Maria Berl

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2009

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:  
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:  
Betreuerin:

A 190 344 353  
Lehramtsstudium, 1. UF Englisch  
Gastprof. Dr. Carmen Birkle

## Danksagung

Ein besonderer Dank gilt in erster Linie meiner Familie, vor allem meinen lieben Eltern, die mir bereits meine zweite Ausbildung ermöglicht haben. Danken möchte ich auch meinem Lebenspartner und Freund Josef, der mir zu jeder Zeit hilfreich zur Seite stand.

Nicht zu vergessen, meine Betreuungslehrerin Frau Prof. Dr. Carmen Birkle, die mir während meiner Diplomarbeitsphase eine sehr große Unterstützung war.

Danke!

# Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE LIFE OF WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	2
2.1	Woman's Sphere and "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820 – 1860"	2
2.2	Women and Law	7
2.3	Women and Labor	9
2.4	Education of Women	12
2.5	Women and the Church	15
2.6	Westward Expansion and Immigration	18
2.7	Native American Women	20
2.8	African American Women	23
2.9	Women Traveling in the Nineteenth Century	25
3.	REFORMS AND REFORMERS OF THE TIME	27
3.1	The Declaration of Independence	27
3.2	Reform Movements	32
3.3	Seneca Falls Convention	37
3.4	Mary Wollstonecraft and Other Influential Women	41
3.5	Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar"	49
3.6	William Apess's Declaration of Independence for Native Americans	51
4.	BIOGRAPHY OF MARGARET FULLER	54
4.1	The Early Life of Margaret Fuller	54
4.2	Teaching in Boston and Providence	56
4.3	Boston Conversations	58

4.4	Transcendentalism and the <i>Dial</i>	59
4.5	Margaret Fuller's Works	62
4.6	Emotional Relationships	67
4.7	Traveling in Europe	69
5.	MARGARET FULLER'S DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENCE AND EMANCIPATION	72
5.1	America, a Young Independent Nation	72
5.2	Emancipation of Women	84
5.3	Native Americans	99
5.4	African Americans	110
5.5	Margaret Fuller's Personal Quest for Independence	118
6.	CONCLUSION	130
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	134
	INDEX	139
	ANHANG: DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG	143

## 1. INTRODUCTION

‘Expand! Grow! Do! Dare!’ (Warren, 72) were the slogans of the time in which Margaret Fuller lived. However, she saw that not everybody in America, including herself, could live according to these keywords. Being raised by her father to expand and grow, living by the motto of Goethe, “Extraordinary generous seeking”, as Allen points out (1), she struggled against the imposed constraints on women. Feeling the constraints upon herself, she also had an open heart for everyone else who could not live a free life. As she herself writes: ‘I can scarcely have felt the wants of others so much without feeling my own still more deeply’ (*Letters* II, 87). Thus, Margaret Fuller devoted her life to the fight for independence.

The aim of this paper is to find out how Margaret Fuller defined independence, if there were movements and people who influenced her in her way of thinking, and if she achieved independence herself, or was able to help others in their quest for independence. Therefore, I am going to analyze Margaret Fuller’s understandings of independence and emancipation as put forth in her works. The emancipation and independence for women is the most important point. However, Margaret Fuller also was concerned about the independence and emancipation of Native Americans and African Americans and all human beings in general.

Furthermore, I am going to present the life of women in the nineteenth century as a backdrop to Fuller, in order to better understand her life, beliefs, and wishes. Thus, the next chapter will give an overview of what it meant to be a woman in especially the first half of the nineteenth century. The following chapter will present the dynamic background of reform movements and reformers at this time, showing parallels between them and Margaret Fuller. The fourth chapter will provide more insight into the life of Margaret Fuller, starting with her childhood, then giving information on her work and love life, and ending with her life in Europe and her untimely death. In the final chapter, the main chapter of this paper, I will explore her writings to present her notions of independence, and, thus, show if and by what means she was able to find some freedom for herself, women in general, and other minority groups of the time.

## 2. THE LIFE OF WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Females in nineteenth-century America were affected by their class, their color, their vocations and skills. But black or white, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, single or married, homebound or wage earner, all women encountered the handicap of gender. (Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 20)

This quote already states that women had to deal with restrictions because of their gender, and in this chapter the life of women in the nineteenth century will be presented, with the focus being on the time before the Civil War. The points that are going to be discussed are the women's sphere and "Cult of True Womanhood", women and law, labor, church and education, as well as the Westward Expansion and immigration. The chapter will conclude with the life of the Native American and the African American women, and women's traveling in the nineteenth century. Thus, the aim of this first chapter is to give an overview of women's life, presenting especially the fields that were relevant to the life of Margaret Fuller.

### 2.1 Woman's Sphere and "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860"

In the first half of the nineteenth century with the beginning of industrialization and the spreading of capitalism, the world of women and men drifted apart. The domestic sphere became the domain of women, while men went out into the world. Women were now confined to their home, because those who left their home to go out into the public realm were said to leave the place that God and nature had intended for them, and these women, as can be imagined, were not regarded as proper ladies. The duties ascribed to women were the securing of culture and values, the supporting of her family, emotionally as well as economically, and moreover she had to morally support her husband. Since homemaking was now regarded as a new independent domain, more than one hundred magazines for women were founded.<sup>1</sup> The most popular magazine was *Godey's Lady's Book*, edited by Sarah Josepha Hale from 1837 to 1877. This magazine dealt with issues such as 'child welfare, sanitation, the education of women, medical missionaries, calisthenics, bathing, and organized charity' (Stearns, 85). Mrs

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 36-37.

Hale, besides being the first woman editor in the country, tried to change American life for the better, for example, by advocating women as teachers, striving for property rights of married women, proposing public playgrounds and day nurseries, and fighting for a rise of the wages of women.<sup>2</sup> Lydia Maria Child and Catharine Beecher were two other women writers and editors who honored and praised the work of a mother, wife, and housekeeper, but knowing about the flaws also tried to improve the domestic life of women. So not all women did see their new appointed role as an inferior job to that of men's, but also as an opportunity for them to present their merits.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, as it is pointed out in Isenberg's work, women in

this separate female world [...] developed a "consciousness" and "common identity of womanhood" that propelled them to understand the collective problems of their sex. (Isenberg, 9)

As a result some women committed themselves to help protect especially poor and dependent women. But women did not stop here; this was only a starting point from which women then stepped up onto the public platform to speak on women's behalf, having acquired some skills for speaking in public in voluntary and religious associations.<sup>4</sup>

Still, the ideal picture of a woman that society and especially men had in mind was not a woman standing on a platform, but a woman that was domestic, submissive, sexually pure and religious, knowing where her place was, namely, as mentioned before, at home and in church, taking care of her family and above all remaining dependent on her husband, while his life took place outside the domestic sphere, building a nation and earning money.<sup>5</sup> Barbara Welter wrote an article entitled "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" about this idea of the perfect American woman. In this article, she points out that a woman who did not adhere to the four virtues - piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity - society had assigned to her, would be disparaged, without considering her status or achievements. On the other side, if she did, she was promised a life of happiness and power.<sup>6</sup> Welter

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Stearns, 85-86.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Allen, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Welter, 152.

then goes into detail on each of these virtues, gives examples, and presents the opinion of other women and men.

Religion or piety was part of these four virtues. It was believed that religion was simply a part of women received from God as a gift, and there was no fear that it would take a woman away from her sphere. Irreligion was of course looked at disapprovingly so literary or intellectual women were warned not to let their intellect take them away from God. Concerning religion, Welter presents, among others, Sarah Josepha Hale's opinion on this subject, who was the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*. Welter argues in her article that Hale spoke unfavorably of women such as Margaret Fuller who, as Hale argued, opened the way for errors, by leaving the Bible aside (152-54).

As important as piety was purity, and if a woman lost it before being married she was said to be a 'fallen woman'. Women's magazines published essays on this subject, which were about women who had lost their purity and therefore turned mad or died. That is, society tried to convince women that it was a crime to lose purity, while they pointed out that men were not as strong as women in this respect, and, therefore, their sinning was accepted.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, a woman had to be submissive, and she was told that the order of the Universe was that

men were the movers, the doers, the actors [and that] [w]omen were the passive, submissive responders. The order of dialogue was, of course, fixed in Heaven. Man was "woman's superior by God's appointment [...]" (Welter, 159)

From magazines and books she furthermore received some advice regarding submission, such as approving of men's wishes even when she did not agree, and the advice to morally support and reform men, but that if she saw no change in her husband, she should simply give up and accept him as he was.<sup>8</sup>

The most prized virtue of women's magazines, as Welter points out in her article, was domesticity. The home was without doubt the place where she belonged, whether daughter, sister, mother, or wife. Moreover, home life

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Welter, 154–55.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Welter, 160–61.



would secure women from the outside world, as well as protect them from delusions and other errors. Besides, women learned from these magazines that it was important to know how to keep a house, which meant that she should be able to keep her house a cheerful place, nurse the sick, cook, and master needlework because 'when there was a hungry man to feed French and china painting were not helpful' (Welter, 167).<sup>9</sup> Concerning marriage, a woman's duty was to be her husband's friend and counselor, in other words, '[a] woman's whole interest should be focused on her husband' (Welter, 170).

Women who did not adhere to these notions but wanted to make use of their own capabilities, such as Mary Wollstonecraft or Harriet Martineau, who will be discussed in chapter 3.4, were looked at critically by the women's magazines and society did not regard them as women, but only as semi- or non-women. Harrington, an American newspaper editor, who also looked down on these women, asked some wives and mothers if they also wanted to step out of their sphere, and they answered 'No!' [...] 'Let the men take care of politics, *we will take care of the children!*' (Harrington, quoted in Welter, 173). This quote shows how strong the belief in gender differences and different spheres was imbedded in women. Welter concludes her article by pointing out that the American woman had the choice between staying in her sphere and stepping beyond it; however, society told women that if they chose the latter, the beautiful order of society would fall apart, and they would furthermore be doomed to live an unhappy life and lose all their power. So, women's magazines and books written on these subjects promoted this ideal of the true woman and tried to convince women that without their being the heart of their home the order of society would collapse. However, as a result of the changes taking place in the nineteenth century, such as the social reform movements, westward migration, and industrialism, women found out that there was more that they were capable of doing than the magazines had told them. Thus, women started to change their lives, and ironically even this cult of true womanhood contributed to this change, because it presented women as angel-like, and, thus, if women were almost like angels, they

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Welter, 162-67.

should clearly step out onto a platform in order to help change the world into a better place.<sup>10</sup>

By looking at the idea of the ideal woman, it becomes clear that in the nineteenth century American society had a very strong interest in maintaining gender differences by ascribing different behaviors, attitudes, and ideals to woman and man.<sup>11</sup> How powerfully the stereotype of a woman was imbedded in society will be shown by presenting Emerson's idea of women. Emerson, one would have thought, might have had a different view concerning women, since he not only supported the women's rights movement but also praised works by women writers such as George Sand or Madame de Staël. He also had a close connection with women such as Margaret Fuller and Harriet Martineau, who were far from presenting the ideal woman. Nevertheless, even he could not rise above the belief of his time and, thus, also ascribed the following characteristics to women, namely that women compared to men were affectionate and men intelligent, that they presented the heart and men the head, that women were unthinking and instinctive while men arrived at conclusions by reasoning; moreover, that women were passive and men creative, women weak and men strong. Furthermore, he also thought the home to be the best place for women, and he associated femininity with defectiveness, using the term 'effeminate' for people who were invalids. Since his first wife died of tuberculosis, and his second wife and his friend Margaret Fuller complained about their health, one could understand why Emerson associated sickness with women, however, there is no excuse for all the other points he makes.<sup>12</sup>

Although many women in the nineteenth century tried to overcome the stereotype that they were expected to embody, and several succeeded in it, one can imagine how difficult it must have been for a woman to leave her domestic sphere and, above all, to live a life outside the place that had been intended for her by society and supposedly by God.

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Welter, 172-74.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Warren, 45-47.

## 2.2 Women and Law

Concerning legal matters, women did not have any rights and were unfortunately not even referred to in the Constitution, but surprisingly Native Americans and slaves were included. In 1791, the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution was added, allowing the states to individually pass statutes concerning family law, property law, and franchise. However, Native American women and enslaved women were still excluded from these new rules.<sup>13</sup>

When a woman got married, it could be argued that from then on she simply did not exist in law. A married woman was the property of her husband, who could do whatever he wanted with her. He represented her in public matters, entered into contracts for her, and also controlled her earnings.<sup>14</sup> In the book *Sex & Citizenship in Antebellum America*, Isenberg, writes that

[t]he legal identity of the wife had been stripped of any means of subsistence or power of self-protection and self-preservation. She represented [...] a citizen without the basic rights of life, liberty, and property. (Isenberg, 155)

This status of women under common law was called 'coverture' or the concerned woman 'feme covert'.<sup>15</sup> A feme covert was denied the right to vote.<sup>16</sup> She not only lost her earnings and her property to her husband, but furthermore also had to endure a cruel husband, since there was the marriage vow 'till death'. Having no legal status, she could not do much about it. Men also controlled paternity and were by common law appointed the guardian of their children, which meant that married women also lost their authority over their children. In cases where the father for some reason lost his custodial rights, he nevertheless had a significant say concerning the destiny of his children, and he could also take his children away from their mother if he appointed someone else to be the guardian. In the case of death, the widow did not become the owner of her husband's land, but was only granted life interest, which made her a tenant on her own land.<sup>17</sup> Single

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 63.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Isenberg, 155.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Isenberg, 23.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Isenberg, 156, 180.

women on the contrary had the right to keep their earnings, sign contracts, and they could also choose the place where they wanted to live and wander freely from state to state. Moreover, although for only a short period of time, single women were granted the right to vote in New Jersey from 1776 to 1807.<sup>18</sup>

‘Coverture’ was of course not welcomed by the female society, and therefore women tried to improve their status by using, for instance, prenuptial agreements, which allowed a married woman to have her property under the control of a male relative instead of losing it to her husband. Moreover, they started to write their own wills, and the number of women demanding this right for themselves increased steadily from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards. As a result of the panic of men to lose their assets in 1837 because of a bank crisis, not because women had demanded it, the first Married Women’s Property Act was passed in Mississippi in 1839. This allowed men to secure their assets under their wives’ names. About ten years later in 1848, the first state law on women’s separate ownership of real and personal property was passed in New York.<sup>19</sup>

Concerning motherhood women, but especially white literate women, attempted to plan their pregnancies and were able to steadily reduce the birth rate.<sup>20</sup> Besides, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century a divorce could be carried through more easily in the North, while in the South getting divorced remained a rare event. Another fact was that a divorce was more often sought by a woman than by a man. Even though it became easier to get a divorce especially in the North, many women could not leave their husbands because it was simply not easy or possible to be a single mother, or because they had to leave their kids under the guardianship of their ex-husbands, since by law the father was granted the custody of the children.<sup>21</sup>

Although women achieved to win some legal improvements for women, such as the maintaining of their earnings by the end of the

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Isenberg, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 64-65.

nineteenth century,<sup>22</sup> social reformers still had a long way ahead of them to be granted what Elizabeth Cady Stanton proposed wryly: 'We ask no better laws than those you have made for yourselves. We need no other protection than that which your present law secures to you' (Stanton, quoted in Isenberg, 190).

### 2.3 Women and Labor

Women did not only have no legal existence, but the domestic labor they carried out was invisible as well. Thus, not only women themselves occupied an inferior status, but their labor, particularly domestic labor, was also devalued, especially after the beginning of industrialization. Moreover, female workers also earned less than their male workmates for the same job. Their wages were often half of a man's wage.<sup>23</sup> It should also be mentioned that a married woman lost her wages to her husband, because, as mentioned earlier, if a woman got married she lost her legal standing and, thus, her husband had the right to her earnings until the women's property acts for married women were passed later in the century.<sup>24</sup>

Looking at the different occupations that women could take up, the number one occupation until the middle decades of the nineteenth century was, especially for married women, the household management and family care, thus, remaining in the place intended for her.<sup>25</sup> The daily tasks they had to carry out were exhausting, especially for women who lived on farms. Women in cities sometimes had paid servants, but on the farms and the frontier this luxury was rare. The duties of a wife among other things included washing the clothes but also producing clothes, which they also sold or traded. Other products that they made themselves were, for instance, soap, butter, and candles. They often tended a garden, and were responsible for the family poultry. Working from morning until the sun went down, men then allowed themselves to rest, while women went on entertaining their children

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 65.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 31-32.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Cott, *Womanhood*, 43.

or spinning yarn, for example.<sup>26</sup> If a wife's husband fell sick, she also had to do work that was usually only carried out by men, such as the hitching of oxen. Although work and home were not so strictly divided in the agricultural sector, this, however, did not mean that gender conventions disappeared. Moreover, Clinton argues that women might have been more important than men for the maintaining of a farm (*Columbia Guide*, 35-36). In a study from the year 1862, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it was argued that

a farmer's wife, as a general rule, is a labouring drudge .... It is safe to say that on three farms out of four the wife works harder, endures more, than any other on the place. (Quoted in Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 35)

Thus, it is understandable that contrary to some critics, some scholars argue that within an agrarian economy, a woman's domestic labor or female labor in general was more fully acknowledged, because the woman was contributing to the family income. However, they also point out that the rise in factories for cloth- and shoe-making affected the value of women's work negatively; because that meant that the production of these goods fell off in households. For men, on the other hand, industrialization had a positive effect, enhancing their status. Of course, it had an influence on the nation in general, because patterns of consumption were shaped and domesticity was redefined, while the workplace and the household constantly drifted further apart.<sup>27</sup> The choices married women had to replace their lost work and to earn money were to either take in boarders, or to take up occupations that single women, who wanted to stay at home, carried out, namely to take in sewing or to work in given-out industries, enabling women to produce shoes and straw bonnets in their own homes.<sup>28</sup> Although they had work, the wages they received were so low that it was almost impossible for a single mother to secure a living for herself and her children. Moreover, because of the competition and the high number of women who sought jobs in given-out industries, factory owners could cut prices or withhold their earnings, knowing that these women would not argue but simply accept the conditions.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 187-88.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Cott, *Womanhood*, 45, 39.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 189.

The occupations that women, above all single women, carried out were usually tasks that women had carried out in the house before, namely teaching children, producing clothes, and domestic service.<sup>30</sup> Although women only received low wages for teaching, they regarded this occupation as respectable and intellectual work, and, thus, many women took up this job for some years.<sup>31</sup> This job could of course only be carried out by educated women; thus, uneducated women usually worked as domestic servants before textile mills were established.<sup>32</sup> The pay they received for their domestic services was low, their work hard, and they often worked the whole day, from five in the morning until late at night, six or sometimes even seven days a week. An advantage of this occupation was that besides room and board domestic servants also received a small salary, which could be spent on other things than products of necessity. However, the mistresses of domestic servants often led such tight supervision that many of the domestic servants also entered into another business, namely that of prostitution, in order to escape from the life of a domestic servant.<sup>33</sup>

Because of industrialization, the production of goods in the household was to a great part taken over by the factories, and the workplace of women moved from the household to the factory.<sup>34</sup> Soon, white single women dominated the textile industries, with 70 % of the 58.000 millworkers in the North being women in 1831.<sup>35</sup> The pay was higher than in other occupations, and besides, working at a mill allowed young women some independence from their families. They lived in boarding houses, which were watched to ensure appropriate behavior. However, as a result of competition, factory owners increased the rents of the boarding houses and cut the wages, and since the conditions did not improve the owners started to hire immigrant women, of which many were Irish, during the 1840s, because they accepted the poor pay and more work, while white native women started to fight against these conditions.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 187.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Cott, *Womanhood*, 34-35.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 189-90.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Cott, *Womanhood*, 35, 37.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 30.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 191-92.

African American women were discriminated against, since many mill owners did not hire them because of their race. Consequently, they sought occupations such as maid, cook or washerwoman. Some could raise their status if they had the chance to work in mills, or as dressmakers, but usually they became 'scabs', that is, black women filled the posts of white women while the latter were on strike.<sup>37</sup>

Slave women did not have the option of choosing an occupation, but were, leaving gender conventions behind, sent out into the fields like men, usually working in cotton fields. If they were lucky their mistresses decided to train them as midwives, and when they had finished their training and started to work, not only the mistresses benefitted from their work by receiving their pay, but also the slave women, because they enjoyed this job, and moreover, it provided status.<sup>38</sup>

Catharine Beecher and Harriet Stowe, who wrote domestic manuals for housewives, presented housewifery as a respected occupation, and claimed that women, if properly educated, could exercise their power at home, helping to support men morally and thereby also improve the life of American society. As a result, women reformers stressed the need for the education of women.<sup>39</sup>

## 2.4 Education of Women

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, and to make life sweet and agreeable to them – these are the duties of women at all times, and what should be taught them from their infancy. (Rousseau, quoted in Flexner, 23-24)

In the field of education, as can already be perceived in the quote, no higher education was intended for women. As Flexner points out, there was also the general belief that the 'woman's brain was smaller in capacity and therefore inferior in quality to that of a man' (Flexner, 23). However, many women at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century greatly

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 32.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 193.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 194-95.



wished for some education, arguing that they should receive some education since they were the ones that educated their children first. The statesmen allowed them to receive some education, arguing that it could be a benefit to the society, helping them to perform their duties as mothers and wives.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, they were only taught some social skills and ornamental arts in the so-called dame schools and finishing schools. Moreover, education was also a question of money, and if a family could afford it their sons were the ones that had the privilege to it. Despite that fact, some daughters also had the chance to receive some education, and although they were not granted a traditional education from the beginning on, it was an important step into the right direction. Not only did women, by receiving some education, start to long for more, but there were fortunately also people who simply believed that women should not only receive an education in order to be good mothers, but for their own sake.<sup>41</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, from 1790 to 1830, about four hundred female academies, which were also called female seminaries, came into existence in the South and North. Although many still concentrated on the topics that have been of interest in the finishing schools to make the girls a good 'catch' for men, there were also schools that offered a more rigorous training. However, before Emma Willard's seminary for females opened in the year 1821 in Troy, New York, and Mary Lyon founded the Mount Holyoke Seminary in 1837 in Massachusetts, being the first women's college in the United States, there had not been any higher education for women, because up to this time, only men had the opportunity to receive higher education at the already established universities of Harvard and Yale. Especially Emma Willard played an important role in female education, not only because she thought women to be able to achieve much more than what society thought them capable of, but also because in her institution women were trained to become educators. Her teacher's training was very crucial for the education of women, since the teachers of the former finishing schools were often not more advanced in their education than their own students. The female teachers of Willard's institution left their training with the

---

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 17-18.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 38-40.

belief that women had the same ability to learn something as men. And although Willard spoke in favor of 'true womanhood', being sure that her students would become wives and mothers, many of them entered into careers, not getting married or having children, and many of course, also started to work as a teacher.<sup>42</sup>

The women of the Mount Holyoke Seminary of Lyon received a rigorous training, including, for example, Latin, Greek, and human anatomy as well as issues of domesticity were covered, because Lyon believed that successful men were inevitably influenced to some degree by women and therefore she saw the need to prepare women for the greater social roles.<sup>43</sup> What Lyon hoped for her students was for them 'to be efficient auxiliaries in "the great task of renovating the world"' (Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 44).

Other colleges that were established before the Civil War were the Oberlin College in Ohio, the Georgia Female College, the Milwaukee Female College, Mary Sharp College, Antioch College, Western Reserve, Hollins College, as well as the two universities of Wisconsin and Michigan. All of these institutions were founded as women's schools or accepted women, and the Oberlin College in Ohio, which was founded in 1833, not only accepted women but also African Americans. However, the women here, students or teachers, were not treated equally to men. Elizabeth Blackwell, a student of the Oberlin College, decided to complete her studies with a degree in theology. At first, the college refused her request, but then they allowed her to take the theology courses; however, they denied giving her a theology degree. This example shows that although there was support for female education, women still had some obstacles in their way. Not only did some institutions expel them from specific courses, but they often had to take seats in the back and endure taunting attitudes of their professors and male colleagues.<sup>44</sup>

In the nineteenth century, as can be concluded from the previous passages, there was a steep rise in the foundation of schools, and female

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 40-42.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 44.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 44-45.

education was granted a more important role in society opening the way for women to become teachers. Looking at the first half of the century, especially the dame schools were of interest for female teachers, giving them also the chance to supplement their family income. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century about 25% of native-born white women worked as teachers, and in midcentury single women and also nuns took up this occupation. Soon after, only single women were allowed to work as teachers, because the male administrators established rules of conduct for women teachers, laying down that a woman who got married had to give up her teaching position. Another disadvantage for women was that they did earn less than their male colleagues did, and furthermore usually had no chance to receive an administrative position. Besides, the occupation of a teacher usually did not receive lots of respect. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century teaching had become a female domain. One reason for this development is the argument presented by Catharine Beecher, founder of the Hartford Female Seminary, who pointed out 'that teaching was a "natural extension" of women's maternal role' (Beecher, quoted in Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 43). It was not only Beecher's belief that women were well suited to be teachers, but a general belief of the people of America, who thought women better suited for this job, because they were regarded as purer, virtuous, and were not so easily influenced by the evils of the time. However, a more important fact for this development was that the wages were very low. Therefore, men left this field and tried to seek out other occupations where they could earn more money. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, teaching had become a female domain and 'stigmatized as poorly paid women's work' (Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 46).<sup>45</sup>

## 2.5 Women and the Church

A decline of religion had taken place after the American Revolution. This was followed by the Second Great Awakening, a rebirth of religion, which began at the end of the eighteenth century and went well into the first decades of the nineteenth century. This time also brought a rise in the

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 43, 45-46.

number of women being members of Christian congregations.<sup>46</sup> The number of female converts was significantly higher than that of male converts, probably since for a woman religious conversion granted her some autonomy, and by professing her faith publicly, she gained self-confidence because what she said was respected and honored. Thus, women had found a way to set themselves free to some degree from the confinements men had created for them, striving for more independence. As Hudson points out, the conversion of a woman 'could be something of a declaration of independence' (Hudson, 137).<sup>47</sup>

Harriet Martineau, an English feminist, even argued that women 'pursue[d] religion as an occupation' (Martineau, quoted in Cott, *Womanhood*, 138) because religion gave them the freedom to 'exercise their full range of moral, intellectual, and physical powers' (Cott, *Womanhood*, 138). In other words, the Second Great Awakening had created a new place for women outside their domestic sphere as well as a space where they could communicate their emotions and inner feelings.<sup>48</sup>

At the beginning of the century, meetings for women, where they prayed together, came into existence. However, women soon wanted more than that; they also wanted to have an active role in contributing to the revival of religion and to charitable causes. Therefore, they began to use the influence they had now gained in the churches to go out in public to present topics that were of importance for them. Their prayer meetings were converted into charitable associations or reform societies, and the establishment of these associations was especially a phenomenon of the nineteenth century. Since it was not usual for a woman to step beyond her sphere, it was important that women worked together in order to secure their position in the public realm, and as a result, this time brought forth female solidarity as well. Women started to promote reform, and they managed to establish good public institutions for the needy. One of these women was Rebecca Gratz, a Jewish woman, who succeeded in opening up, among other charitable societies, one of the first societies in Philadelphia city for

---

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 24.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Hudson, 137-38.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Hudson, 138.

female relief, called the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances.<sup>49</sup> Another well-known woman, Sarah Ripley Stearns, who as a young woman entered into a religious association in 1815, and in the same year helped to establish a charitable society, which gave poverty-stricken children the chance to attend school and church, said that helping to establish such a charitable society had been one of her highest enjoyments.<sup>50</sup>

In the year 1853, Antoinette Blackwell was the first woman appointed to a clerical post. Before the year 1853 women had already traveled the country as itinerant evangelical preachers, especially in the New England and Middle Atlantic regions. Although the majority of these preachers were white women, the first woman who became an itinerant evangelical preacher was a free African American woman who was, after two petitions, granted to hold prayer meetings in her own house in 1817, and soon after started to travel the country to preach. Clinton believes that Christianity was probably a key factor for opening the public platform to African American women.<sup>51</sup>

One theme often presented in sermons during the time of the Second Great Awakening was that one of the church's obligations was to improve the social standing of women. Since, as can be seen, women really could improve their life by entering into religious congregations, and because they outnumbered men and contributed to charitable societies, ministers were more or less obligated to look thoughtfully at the opinions and needs of their female church members when distributing church funds, for instance. However, leadership positions were usually reserved for men only.<sup>52</sup>

Because of their achievements, women became more conscious of their own situation, and therefore scholars labeled this time of growing female church membership 'the feminization of American religion'.<sup>53</sup> In the beginning, women were not concerned with their own status, but only worked for other charitable projects. However, soon women also looked at the

---

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 177-78.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Cott, *Womanhood*, 143.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 55-56.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 174-75.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 55.

restrictions that they themselves had to face, and this certainly led to the request for female education and the right to vote.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.6 Westward Expansion and Immigration

In the nineteenth century, the rate of immigration and westward migration rose to a number that had never been seen before.<sup>55</sup> After the War of 1812, the Atlantic seaboard and the places where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers meet were already settled, and, thus, a westward migration into the provinces of the Lake Plains and also the Gulf Plains began, and by 1850 these areas were also populated. In 1817, a man traveling on the National Road, a paved highway built by the federal government, noted that 'Old America seems to be breaking up and moving westward' (Billington, 295), and another man emphasized the high number of immigrants that came down the Ohio with their flatboats. The way into the new land over those trails was rough, and, thus, the opening of the Erie Canal for traffic in 1825 made migration easier. This Westward Expansion led to the removal of Native Americans from their traditional lands. The aim of the government was to control all the Native American tribes, and, thus, they offered them annuities if they signed a treaty, which said that they had to leave their territories and withdraw to prescribed reservations. By the year 1821 most of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan were under American control, and of course, Westward Expansion did not stop here but went on throughout the century. The Native Americans were then even expelled from their prescribed reservations into unwanted lands beyond the Mississippi, as the rapid peopling of these lands made it clear to the federal government that even more land was needed. In 1825, the policy of removal was introduced. Black Hawk, a Native American chief, wanted to return to the Rock River Valley in 1832, showing his peaceful intention by having his party made up of six hundred women and children. Nevertheless, his attempts ended in the Bad Axe Massacre, which is one of the bloodiest tragedies known in the history of the Native American. Because of Black Hawk's failure to win back his former

---

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Hudson, 138.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 22.

lands, other tribes also resigned, knowing that if they did not move west, their tribe would be exterminated.<sup>56</sup>

Westward Expansion had different influences on women depending upon their color and status. White immigrant women especially, although they might have been isolated and unhappy without their former family connections and friends, enjoyed the greater freedom they had in the West because they were in the minority.<sup>57</sup> Given that life in the West was harsh, moving to the West was unattractive for many women, and therefore men often went by themselves.<sup>58</sup> Since the talents of each individual were necessary in these new settlements, people left age, gender, and status aside, and this resulted furthermore in relaxed gender conventions. Concerning African Americans, both men and women's lives were positively influenced because the white settlers not only needed their skills but also collaborated with them in order not to fight alone against the Native Americans. Thus, they were granted some equality, and enslaved African American women also worked as midwives or herbal healers. Despite the fact that westward migration had some positive effects on women, because they gained more freedom and some equality, it also meant that women could be exploited as laborers or had to endure hard fieldwork. Especially slave women were furthermore exploited for their sexual capacities.<sup>59</sup>

As indicated before, in the nineteenth century immigration rates became higher than ever before. Until the year 1840, little immigration took place, but from then onwards the rate of immigration increased steadily, and by 1860, about 4 million immigrants had found their new home in America. They mostly came from the northern parts of Europe, with a major wave of Irish immigration, which was due to the failure of potato crops. 1.5 million Irish immigrants, many arriving in America without any money, settled in the cities along the East Coast and the Gulf Coast, because they could not afford to travel further. An effect of Irish immigration was that the first real ghettos in cities such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia came into being. The Irish not only had problems in finding jobs, as they possessed only few skills

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Billington, 290-301.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 100.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 22-23.

because of their agricultural background, but were furthermore discriminated against because the majority were Catholics. Many young single women came from Ireland since they had fewer opportunities than single men in Ireland, because of the laws of inheritance. They especially worked as servants and domestics and often remained single because with the money they earned they supported their families back home in Ireland. Irish women became dominant in the field of domestics as maids, cooks, and nannies in wealthy families, and so in the beginning of the twentieth century, when African Americans also started to occupy these fields, almost 50% of the domestic work was still carried out by Irish women. Another country from which about one million immigrants came to America was Germany. Since they were financially better situated than the Irish, they did not remain in the cities of debarkation but moved on into the cities and farmlands of the Midwest. Moreover, German women usually did not come alone, but they immigrated together with their families. A decrease in immigration was then caused by the Civil War,<sup>60</sup> but after that immigration continued until the beginning of the twentieth century, with immigrants then also coming from southern and eastern Europe.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.7 Native American Women

Concerning Native American women, the picture presented by captivity narratives is usually a rather sentimental one. However, other travelers leave us with a more valuable description of the life of Native American women. Depending on the tribe in which a woman lived, she either had to endure a life similar to that of white women, or, as it was the case in the majority of the tribes, she had liberties that her white sisters lacked. Thus, by looking at the story of a woman from the Fox tribe, it can be seen that women as well as men could get a divorce easily and could also decide themselves if they wanted children or not. This fox woman was married three times in her life, divorcing her first husband because he abused her and was lazy. In her second marriage, she had several miscarriages and therefore took some medicine, given to her by an older woman of the tribe, in order to

---

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 73-75.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 181.



prevent conception. After her husband died, she remarried and again had the wish to have children. This time she also took some medicine, and she then was finally able to give birth to several children.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, in Native American tribes clans were usually matrilineal, which meant that the property of a woman was passed on to her daughter, and this was usually also the case with the family name, which was totally in contrast to European practice, where children bore the name of their father and sons were granted the right to the property. In addition, the majority of married couples lived with the wife's clan, which not only gave her power but also had the advantage that a woman could count on the support of her clan after a divorce. Concerning the work that women carried out, it included housework, producing of crafts as well as farm work.<sup>63</sup> This maybe the reason why Native American women were thought to live a life inferior to that of white women because according to white society they worked outside the sphere intended for them.<sup>64</sup> White society believed that they did menial work and were abused and treated badly, while men left all the work to women and enjoyed their lives, hunting and fighting in wars.<sup>65</sup> However, not only the information presented on marriage contradicts this view, but also facts, of which one is that Native American women in many tribes played an important role in religion, often serving as priests or even leading important religious ceremonies. Men took up the leading positions in governance. Nevertheless, women sometimes served as chiefs, and besides there were special women's councils which were asked for advice, and sometimes they were even involved in decision making. The most important point however is that women were not treated as inferior beings, but in Native American tribes a balanced view of the sexes was supported. That is, they acknowledged that men were superior in some areas and women in others and understood that for the survival of the tribe men and women were of equal importance.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 98-99.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 44-45.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 99.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Isenberg, 138.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 45.

Unfortunately, the onset of Americanization<sup>67</sup> brought a decline in the condition of the Native American woman, who was pushed to adapt her life to the gender roles set out for white women.<sup>68</sup> In the year 1802, Jefferson wrote a letter to Brother Handsome Lake, a Seneca leader, saying:

Go on, then brother, in the great reformation you have undertaken. Persuade our red brethren then to be sober, and to cultivate their lands; and their women to spin and weave for their families. (Jefferson, *Writings*, 556)

Losing their standing in marriage, especially the ease of getting a divorce and also their political and religious status, Native American women clearly lost at this time, being reduced to subservient housewives.<sup>69</sup> The men also had to give up their former way of life, by being forced to stop fur trade and hunting to become farmers, because the United States wanted to use their hunting ground for white settlements. Although there were policies that established regulations for Native Americans, many Native American women, especially Cherokee women, continued farm work. Not being able to force all Native American women to become homemakers, they on the other hand managed to push the Native Americans off their lands, acquiring large areas of Native land.<sup>70</sup>

Confining the wife to the house and urging the husband to do farm work were not the only ways by which white society tried to civilize the savage Indians. They also tried to convert them to Christianity. Native American women who became Christian converts had to adjust to new values and beliefs and lost the possibility of taking up a leading position, because these were restricted to men. They also sent them to school<sup>71</sup> and separated Native American children from their parents to send them into special schools with the goal '[t]o kill the Indian and save the man' (Pratt, quoted in Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 100).<sup>72</sup>

Intermarriages were also promoted in a policy at beginning of the nineteenth century, and since the majority of the migrants and immigrants

---

<sup>67</sup> Native Americans were expected to give up their culture in order to meet European standards (Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 23).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 23.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 41-42.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 67-68.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 47.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 100.

were men, many of them chose to live with a Native American woman. Some Native American women even preferred to have a white partner, especially a fur trader, since they saw the opportunity for them to enter trade themselves. However, if this was not the case, they often had to endure exploitation and maltreatment, and could not go back to their tribes either.<sup>73</sup>

The decline of Native American women, unfortunately, went hand in hand with the decline of Native Americans in general. However, Native Americans did not simply give up their tribal traditions, but tried to preserve their customs, beliefs, and values for future generations, and women's efforts for the preservation of their culture were of great importance.<sup>74</sup>

## 2.8 African American Women

In the year 1820, about two million African Americans lived in the United States of America. Of these, more than 85 % were enslaved, and by the time of the Civil War, this percentage had even increased to almost 90%. Thus, only a small percentage of African Americans were free people of color, while the rest, men as well as women, were confined to slavery, which was above all prominent in the American South.<sup>75</sup>

The majority of slaves lived on small, family-operated farms and not on large plantations, as it is commonly believed. Another workplace where a substantial number of slaves could be found was the city household, where they worked as servants, craftsmen or tradesmen. Female slaves, whose life was harder than that of men, carried out the same tasks as men, and besides had to bear children and raise them. Even if they were pregnant or just had given birth to a child, they were not always exempted from punishment, and they were moreover sexually exploited and abused by their masters.<sup>76</sup> Since the international slave trade was closed in 1808, the children of slave women not only presented additional workers and property for a slave owner, but

---

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 39, 46.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Cott, *Courage*, 48-49.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 200.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Lerner, 14-15.

they were now the only means by which American slavery could be increased.<sup>77</sup>

The work in the plantations for women as well as men began with sunrise, and they worked out in the fields picking cotton until it got dark. Punishment for bringing in less cotton than the day before were feared by the slaves, and they also feared bringing in more, because this meant that they had to bring in at least the same amount the next day. After having finished their work in the fields they still had other tasks to fulfill such as feeding the mules or cutting wood, and back in their cabins they had to prepare their meals for the next day. Although pregnant women were usually not punished if they had not finished their work the last four weeks of their pregnancy, they still had to work. After the child was born, they often did not have to work in the field for four weeks, but then they had to take their child with them, and if there was a young child of four to six years, it looked after the baby. If not, because older children had to work in the fields as well, the mother had to leave it under a tree or by the side of the fence, coming back from time to time to nurse it.<sup>78</sup>

Like the Native American woman, the African American woman was essential for preserving their culture. She not only taught her children how to survive in slavery, but she also passed on family history and family names, tribal customs as well as other important traces of her origin. Moreover, she tried to raise her children to become proud and good people, while the majority of the white population degraded them.<sup>79</sup>

Although the education of slaves of any age remained illegal in the South up to the Civil War,<sup>80</sup> private schools for black children were established in the North. In Philadelphia ten private schools opened their doors to black children. One of these schools was founded by Sarah Mapps Douglass in 1820, who came from a prominent family of free African Americans and had herself received some education by private tutors. The

---

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 200.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Lerner, 15-16, 47.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 201.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 47.

school received financial support from The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society for several years.<sup>81</sup>

In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in the Confederate States, and two years later with the Thirteenth Amendment slavery became illegal throughout the nation.<sup>82</sup> However, although the emancipation of African Americans was achieved, that did not mean that racial discrimination vanished with it. A sad fact is that even nowadays African Americans still have to fight racial discrimination, since there are people in our world who still believe that African Americans are an inferior race.

## 2.9 Women Traveling in the Nineteenth Century

Because of new technologies developed in the nineteenth century, such as the rise of the steamship and the locomotive, a large number of Americans and Europeans started to travel as tourists, visitors, or emigrants.<sup>83</sup> In this time, because of the new possibilities for traveling, an increase in the publication of travel accounts took place, but Lawrence Buell also explained this increase by the growing interest in the experience of the individual, which came along with the rise of romanticism.<sup>84</sup> Although more women, especially in the 1840s, began to travel, traveling remained a male-dominated activity. Women who also wrote travelogues about their journeys into the west and mid-west usually tried to compete with the texts of their male colleagues. Hence, in Fuller's case, her travelogue *Summer on the Lakes* competes with Charles Fenno Hoffman's *A Winter in the West* or Eliza Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land* with Washington Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies*, which was published in 1835, eleven years before her book was published.<sup>85</sup>

For many women individual travel or tourism in general was extremely liberating. It was an adventure for them, and their memories were filled with

---

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Lerner, 85.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 201.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Fish, 1.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Birkle, 498.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Birkle, 500-01.

many new impressions, and their imagination was stimulated. They either kept journals or wrote letters to their families back home, which often circulated not only in the extended family, but also in the neighborhood, and the accounts of some women were even published, or women also had the intention to publish their travel accounts, as it was the case with Margaret Fuller and Eliza Farnham. The travel or tourist books that were published usually contained information on all typical topics, such as culture, landscape, climate, everyday life, encountering difficulties with the language of the country being visited, food and fashion, to name the most important ones. Either history was a topic of great importance for the author or she just filled some pages of her book with this topic. However, it was a topic that came up in every travel account. Margaret Fuller, for example, wrote for the *New York Tribune* while she was in Europe, sending reports from 1846 until 1850 that contained historical material. According to Baym, at least sixteen women, including Margaret Fuller, published tourist accounts of Europe and the Near East that provided information on the countries' history between the years 1832 and 1859. These women often read travel accounts or standard histories before they left for the journey to another country to prepare themselves for the trip. But the reading that motivated them to travel to other countries was especially the reading that took place in childhood, which often left them with a desire to also get to know the countries they had read about. They often brought books with them on their travels, and many times just copied what others had written, because that was just the easiest way to convey true information, and they did not regard this as plagiarism. However, they did not plagiarize the responses of others to historical sites, as they wanted to present their own responses, which were usually identical to the reaction of other tourists. It was important for the traveler that these were identical, because if they had not felt the same as other tourists, it would not have been authentic to them, thus leaving them disappointed.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Baym, 132-34.

### 3. REFORMS AND REFORMERS OF THE TIME

“What a fertility of projects for the salvation of the world!” (Emerson, quoted in Ginzberg, ix)

In the first half of the nineteenth century, America underwent tremendous changes. New technologies changed the industry; the beginnings of industrialization led to a movement out of the rural areas into more urban ones, a great number of people immigrated to America, and many moved to the western frontier where one could purchase land at a low price. Many Americans feared that these changes were a danger to their nation's virtue. These changes were accompanied by an intellectual enlightenment, in which human reason was the primary source for authority. Enlightenment thinkers believed that liberty and equality were the key to improve humankind. This all led to the desire to reform society, and projects and organizations arose, especially in the northern and western regions of America.<sup>87</sup> Margaret Fuller, born into this time of dramatic changes and reforms, like other women of her time, was not only influenced by these ongoing changes and movements, but was actively involved in trying to improve her nation. Since this paper focuses on the life of Margaret Fuller, attention is especially given to the role of women in reform. The Declaration of Independence, as the starting point in 1776, will be presented on the following pages.

#### 3.1 The Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 1776, the United States of America was born, after the members of the Continental Congress and about forty representatives of the provinces and colonies had debated on the issue of an independent state in Pennsylvania's brick State House, which became known as Independence Hall. The Declaration was signed by the President of the Continental Congress, John Hancock and his secretary Charles Thomason.<sup>88</sup>

The reason for a Declaration of Independence, scholars argue, was that the colonists that arrived in the new world could live a relatively independent life, except for some occasions where they suffered under royal

---

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, 1, 3-4.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Malone, 3, 79.

governors. Generally, they were not only used to having personal and political liberty but also accustomed to local self-government, and they did of course not want to lose their privileges. If they had never lived such independent lives, they might not have felt the urge for it. This may also be the reason why Margaret Fuller was eager to change the life of women to the better, because she herself was used to being responsible for herself, and although she felt the restrictions set upon women, one could argue that she nevertheless led an independent life. Moreover, since her father died when she was 25 years old, she became the one upon whom all the other family members depended.

At the end of the French and Indian War a man who was visiting Virginia, staying with some planters, noted that '[these planters] are haughty and jealous of their liberties and can scarcely bear the thought of being controlled by any superior power' (quoted in Malone, 6). And although they were subordinate to the British Empire, they did not really feel the power of it, and moreover did not feel committed to their mother country. After the British had conquered the French, they felt even more self-reliant and therefore did no longer see the necessity for being controlled and protected by their mother country. Not being aware of this, the British Empire enforced new restrictions on the colonies at just that moment. Higher revenues as well as imposed taxes led to revolt and attacking the colonial governments, of which, among others, some leaders were Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson; the situation could still not be settled. The stubborn King George III was not able to improve the situation either, but on the contrary even made it worse, and, thus, the Americans stood up to call for political liberty and personal rights.<sup>89</sup>

The public favored political independence, which was not only a consequence of the military and diplomatic situation of the time, but also of the pamphlet called *Common Sense*, which was published at the beginning of the year 1776.<sup>90</sup> The author, Thomas Paine, who remained anonymous in the beginning, was later on celebrated for his paper by the American Patriots. His text was a 'call for immediate independence' (Malone, 56), and one of his

---

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Malone, 5-8.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Malone, 55.



arguments for this independence was the following: 'A government of our own is a natural right' (Paine, 98). Another text that became a call for independence almost 70 years later in the year 1845 was Margaret Fuller's book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in which she points out that 'freedom for woman as much as for man shall be acknowledged as a right, not yielded as a concession' (*Woman*, 20).

In April and May of 1776, the two colonies North Carolina and Virginia adopted resolutions that authorized them as free and independent states. These resolutions were presented to the Congress in May. However, the delegates did not look at them, until Richard Henry Lee, an active Patriot Leader from Virginia, revised these resolutions at the beginning of June. Three proposals were fully and clearly expressed in this resolution, namely that the 'United Colonies [...] ought to be [...] free and independent States, [...] absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown' (Lee, quoted in Malone, 59). The importance of forming foreign alliances was also discussed, and the third proposal was that 'a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation' (Lee, quoted in Malone, 59). The majority of the colonies approved of the resolution, except for Pennsylvania, New York, and South Carolina, who according to Jefferson were not yet ready to let go of their 'mother', but soon would be. Since it was important to them to 'present a united front to the world' (Malone, 60), the delegates decided to wait for the approbation of all. However, there was no doubt that this would soon be the case, and, therefore, Congress appointed a committee that was instructed to draw a proper resolution. The five members of this committee were Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston.<sup>91</sup>

Thomas Jefferson was chosen to draft the document, because the committee believed that he would be the best man for this job, since he was a good writer with a pleasing manner of style.<sup>92</sup> After his work was finished, he said that he had tried

---

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Malone, 59-60.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Malone, 67.

to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so firm and plain as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we are compelled to take. (Jefferson, quoted in Malone, 71)

Moreover, he stated that he had not turned to other works, but scholars argue that he must have had the constitution in mind, which he had proposed at the beginning of June, but which was not accepted because it was not presented in due time. The main points of this constitution were the charges against George III, and the larger part of the Declaration of Independence contains similar charges against George III. Other works to which he may have turned could have been especially the Virginia Declaration of Rights by George Mason, which was about the universal rights of human beings. However, there was not really the need for him to turn to other works for arguments. Malone points out, 'it was an expression of the mind of the American patriots in his age and he was among the first of these' (Malone, 72).<sup>93</sup>

On July 4, 1776, the paper, which consisted of four parts, was then accepted by vote by Congress. In the first part, the preamble, Jefferson writes that if it becomes necessary in the course of time to separate politically from another country in order 'to assume [...] the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them' (Jefferson, quoted in Malone, 84), then the reasons that demand a separation should be stated. A philosophical paragraph was to come next, which includes the lines which are best known of the Declaration of Independence, namely:

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (Jefferson, quoted in Malone, 84)

Margaret Fuller uses part of this paragraph in her work *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* only slightly modified, because instead of 'all men are created equal' (Jefferson, quoted in Malone, 84), Fuller writes 'All men are born free and equal' (*Woman*, 13).

Jefferson then states that the governments elected by the people have the responsibility to protect these rights and that the people, if the

---

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Malone 70-72.

government does not fulfill its duties, have a right to set up a new government. He furthermore points out that human beings often endure abuses and encroachments as long as they can, but that if these lead to despotism, they have to abolish such a government, which is now the case in the Colonies. The next and main part of Jefferson's paper are the charges against the King of Great Britain. A summary of only a few charges will now be presented here.<sup>94</sup> Several charges are about laws, because the British King did either not assent to laws, or he forbid passing laws. Moreover, he had taken away the charters of the Colonies, suspended their legislature as well, had imposed taxes, and cut off their trade with the rest of the world without their consent. Two other charges are that during time of peace he also kept standing armies among the people of the colonies, and that he, as Jefferson called them, tried to bring the merciless Indian savages on the frontier inhabitants.<sup>95</sup> In the fourth part, he then comes to the appeal

[t]hat these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do. (Jefferson, quoted in Malone, 85)

The Declaration of Independence led to the repudiation of the king, and although it did not bring liberty and especially equality to all men living in the United States of America at the very moment, Jefferson had created the cornerstones for it to become reality one day.<sup>96</sup> Margaret Fuller does have a lot in common with Jefferson, because she also tried to bring liberty and equality especially to women living in the United States, and she did not achieve it right away either. However, like Jefferson, she had created a cornerstone. Reynolds points out in his preface to *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* that Margaret Fuller's book 'is now considered the foundational text of the women's rights movement in America' (Reynolds, ix).

The statement that 'all men are created equal' and that they have the right to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' (Jefferson, quoted in

<sup>94</sup> To read all the charges of the Declaration of Independence see Malone 84-85.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Malone, 84-86.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Malone, 88.

Malone, 84), set off a situation where many people of the new nation, especially those who were not granted the rights announced in the Declaration of Independence, began to fight for this statement to really come true.

### 3.2 Reform Movements

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the first half of the nineteenth century was a time of ongoing change, and the people of America feared that these changes could harm their nation. Therefore, a number of people joined different movements, hoping to

alleviate poverty, educate children, alter American's drinking habits, abolish slavery and war, establish socialist communities, and advance working people's, African Americans', and women's equal rights – in sum, to perfect the experiment in human government that [they] believed was destined to be the most democratic and virtuous in the world. (Ginzberg, ix)

Not only men committed themselves to social reform, but women as well, especially white, middle-class, Protestant women. However, working-class women, free blacks, ex-slaves, and immigrants were also active in reform. Women, being active in reform, found a new place in the world outside their home, and started to pose a challenge to their own situation. Moreover, they played an important role in reform movements and the area of charity. A reverend argued in 1836 that '[i]t is to female influence and exertion that many of our best schemes of charity are due' (quoted in Ginzberg, 1).<sup>97</sup> In the following, I will discuss some of the major reform movements of the time such as the abolitionist movement, the temperance movement, and moral reform movement.

### Abolitionism

From the beginning of the nineteenth century until 1865, the moral wrongs of slavery affected the life of the United States. Riots were part of the daily routine, leading to the abolitionist movement, which was according to Aptheker 'the second successful revolutionary movement in the history of the

---

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, ix-x, 1-2.

United States' (Aptheker, xi). The first revolution, the American Revolutionary War, although successful by ending in the Declaration of Independence, was the reason for the second revolution, because it did not abolish slavery. Nevertheless, although the Declaration of Independence did not set an end to slavery, many of the leaders of the American Revolution such as George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine showed their hostility to slaveholding. Some of them, such as Benjamin Franklin, even 'held leading offices in various emancipationist organizations' (Aptheker, 1).<sup>98</sup>

The abolitionist movement succeeded in its task, but, unfortunately, they could not end racism as well. Since the institution of slavery was part of the social order in the United States, the struggle against slavery presented a call for social change in general. Thus, amongst other ideas and movements it drew women's attention to their own oppression.<sup>99</sup>

The most prominent organization against slavery in the United States was the American Antislavery Society, which was founded by William Lloyd Garrison in 1833. The demand for an immediate emancipation of slaves and racial equality was presented in the society's Declaration of Sentiments. Women, such as Angelina Grimké, Sarah Grimké, and Lydia Maria Child, were actively involved in the society.<sup>100</sup> William Lloyd Garrison began to include women's rights into the organization which led to the division of the society, because many black and white male reformers did not want to spend time on anything else than the emancipation of slaves and racial equality. Nevertheless, the disunion did not threaten the success of the abolitionist movement, and, in 1865, a measure to abolish slavery was finally passed with the Thirteenth Amendment.<sup>101</sup>

Women started to establish their own societies, the female anti-slavery societies, especially in the time between 1832 and 1835. The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, whose founder was, besides others, Lucretia Mott, became the best-known of these organizations.<sup>102</sup> Maria Weston

---

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Aptheker, xiv, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Aptheker, xiv, xii, xvi.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. ch. 3.4

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 141-42.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Melder, 64, 67.

Chapman, an important figure in the abolitionist movement, was the editor of the magazine *The Liberty Bell*, a magazine supporting the antislavery cause. The income of this magazine was used to fund the movement. She, moreover, achieved to get support for the cause from important literary figures such as Margaret Fuller and Harriet Martineau.<sup>103</sup>

Margaret Fuller never joined any of these societies although she was against slavery. She published four articles on this topic in the *New York Tribune* and included it in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* as well. Kearns points out that the reason for her reluctance to support the movement personally was that the abolitionist movement was an extreme one. She objected to the tone of excess and exaggeration of the leaders and considered them lunatics. Moreover, she did not want to support a movement which had the only object of emancipating the African American, and did not as well work for the woman's rights cause.<sup>104</sup>

## Temperance

Another important movement was the temperance movement. Not only adults consumed alcohol, especially ale, on a daily basis, but children as well. Alcohol became a part of American life. The consumption of alcohol was already high in 1810, at seven gallons per adult a year. However, it still increased until 1820 to double the amount. Because of this alcohol misuse, which especially troubled family life, reformers began to worry and founded the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance in 1826. Since women were often confronted with the evils of excessive alcohol consumption in their home, many women became members of this movement. Their aim was the national prohibition of alcohol, which was established in 1833, at the first national conference on alcohol in Philadelphia. Although it took a long time to reach their goal, they finally achieved it in 1919.<sup>105</sup> However, the prohibition only lasted until the year 1933, because in the time of the Great Depression this law was repealed.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Other Civil War*, 69.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Kearns, 121, 123, 126.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 208.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition_in_the_United_States)

Women were of prime importance in the temperance movement. However, although they usually equaled or even outnumbered men, they were not treated as equal members. They were not allowed to hold office or vote, and when men were present at a meeting they were not allowed to speak as well. Still, without women the movement, most likely, would not have been successful. The focus of the temperance movement was on moral suasion; therefore, the influence of women as mothers and wives was decisive for its success.<sup>107</sup>

### **Moral Reform and Prison Reform**

The members of moral reform movements, like the members of the temperance movement, made the behavior of men responsible for ruining women's lives. Moral reform women argued that men's sexual behavior was the reason why women fell into prostitution. That is, according to them, prostitutes were not the guilty ones 'but the victims and byproducts of male vice' (Ginzberg, 40). Since the belief at the time was that women were morally superior to men, they believed that women could change the standard of behavior of men.<sup>108</sup>

Margaret Fuller did not only blame men for prostitution but the whole society. She was concerned about the welfare of the prostitutes and argued that society must help those who want to reform. However, she was aware of the fact that a prostitute, in the present society, could never restore full respectability.<sup>109</sup>

In 1834, some middle-class women in New York City set themselves the goal to root out prostitution and other unlawful behavior, and founded the New York Female Moral Reform Society. Ten years later, because more and more women entered the society also from New England, it became the American Female Moral Reform Society. Besides their major goal of eliminating prostitution, they tried to help prostitutes find their way back to a respectable life by providing places of refuge for them. Since the root of all evil was man, they directed their attempts at the male population, and, thus,

---

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Dannenbaum, 72-73.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, 39-41.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 51-52.

for instance, published the names of men who frequently were guests at brothels in the *Advocate*, a society publication. Although they did not obtain their goal of ending prostitution, they managed to lower the illegitimacy rate noticeably during the existence of their society, which unfortunately ended in the 1850s.<sup>110</sup>

Women who really believed that they were the nation's moral voice saw their duty not only in helping other women, but also in helping humankind in general. Thus, amongst other things, they also tried to improve the conditions in prisons, mental hospitals, and poorhouses. They turned society's attention to the mistreatment of women in the different asylums, and intended to reform and improve the conditions of these institutions by the 1840s.<sup>111</sup> Margaret Fuller, who wrote articles on prison and asylum reform and visited asylums, argued that a kind treatment, good living conditions, as well as education would improve the behavior of criminals, the insane, and the destitute.<sup>112</sup>

As in other movements, women were confronted with male members who did not approve of them being active in the reform. Moreover, male prison reformers did not care much about the women inmates' welfare and rehabilitation. However, the prison reform was successful in improving the conditions in American prisons, and like many other movements, especially the abolitionist movement, made women aware of the prejudices against women in general.<sup>113</sup>

All these movements paved the way for the woman's rights movement to become its own cause between 1847 and 1850. Before that time, women tried to achieve their acceptance as public speakers, writers, and wanted to have an equal stand with man in the different reform movements. In the late 1850s, they then extended their wishes. Amongst other things, they wanted to hold their own property and keep the authority over their children after marriage, vote and be active in government, and attain legal status. That

---

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 142-43.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, 44-45.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 77-78.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, 46-47.



finally led to the first convention for the rights of women in 1848, known as the Seneca Falls Convention.<sup>114</sup>

### 3.3 Seneca Falls Convention

Before the year 1848, as just mentioned, women had already participated in temperance and abolitionist movements, which had opened their eyes for their own situation. Female abolitionists had already begun to fight for the emancipation of women.<sup>115</sup> However, the problem was that they all struggled alone. Therefore, they needed to come together, find a leader, and draw up a plan.<sup>116</sup>

The desire to change their wretched position had been there already for some time, but the event that finally led to the convention was the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840. Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, among other women, were part of the American delegation. In this convention, although some American leaders objected to it, women were confined to the galleries, where they were only allowed to listen for the ten days that it lasted. Mott and Stanton met after the meetings talking about the injustice that they fell victim to.<sup>117</sup>

Lucretia Mott's childhood already paved the way for her future life as an activist. She was born on the island of Nantucket, of Cape Cod, in 1793, where she had the advantage of living in a place where female equality existed because of the whaling industry. Men were out on the seas for longer periods of time, and therefore the women took over their duties. Lucretia started to work as a teacher when she was a young woman, and thus was soon confronted with the fact that women did not receive the same wages as men for the same jobs, but far less. She got married to James Mott, and also taught for some time in a Quaker school, being a Quaker<sup>118</sup> herself. When

---

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Melder, 143.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Hoff, 135.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Flexner, 71.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Flexner, 71.

<sup>118</sup> In the religious organization of the Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, women were granted the same rights in church affairs. Thus, especially women active for social causes became Quakers. The other three women who helped to organize the Seneca Falls Convention together with Lucretia Mott were also Quakers (Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 201-02).

she was twenty-eight years old she was authorized to be a minister, which gave her the possibility to speak in public. Both Lucretia and her husband became active abolitionists, and she founded the first Female Anti-Slavery Society, which turned her into a public figure.<sup>119</sup>

Elizabeth Cady was born in 1815 in Johnstown, New York. Her father was a judge, and in her childhood she spent many hours in his office where she already learned that women did not have any rights. Because many of his clients were women, complaining that their husbands, for instance, spent their money on alcohol or that they had lost the guardianship of their children to their husbands after a separation, Elizabeth's father could only tell them that they had no legal redress. Her husband, Henry B. Stanton, whom she married in 1840, was a leading abolitionist. Apart from Lucretia Mott, whom she met in London, the Grimké sisters became friends of hers. She was also involved in the Married Women's Property Bill, which was passed at the beginning of 1848. When she moved with her family to Seneca Falls, a small town, she was confronted with isolation and the hard life of a housewife. Even if she could get a servant, which was rather difficult outside cities, she still had a lot of work to do.<sup>120</sup> She once wrote:

The general discontent I felt with woman's portion as wife, mother, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide, the chaotic condition into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women, impressed me with the strong feeling that some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general and of women in particular. [...] I could not see what to do or where to begin – my only thought was a public meeting for protest and discussion. (Stanton, quoted in Flexner, 73-74)

In the summer of 1848, Stanton was invited to a meeting by Mott in nearby Waterloo, where she convinced the other women, by expressing her dissatisfaction, that something had to be done. It actually really led to an announcement in the *Seneca County Courier*, where it said that a 'Woman's Rights Convention – A convention to discuss the social, civil and religious rights of woman will be held' (quoted in Flexner, 74). They now needed to put down a declaration, and for this task the Declaration of Independence just came in handy, because 'its ideas against British domination of the colonies

---

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Flexner, 72.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Flexner, 72-73.

[...] reflected nineteenth-century women's domination within the family and society' (Hoff, 138). Whole parts were taken from the Declaration of Independence and simply modified according to their needs. For instance, in the Declaration of Sentiments women were included in the following phrase: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal' (quoted in Flexner, 75). Another part of the Declaration of Sentiments reads:

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world. (quoted in Flexner, 75)

This Declaration became the first female legal text in the United States, and as this quote already shows, the Declaration was about the general subordination of women, especially of married women. The oppression of women in different fields, as in marriage, education, religion, labor, as well as moral oppression were presented. Of great importance to women was that they did have 'true and substantial happiness' (Hoff, 139) in marriage, and besides this they demanded equal treatment of women in the different fields. Moreover, problems that married women faced, such as divorce, child custody, control over property, wages, maltreatment or dual standards of morality were also emphasized.<sup>121</sup>

In the meeting, Lucretia Mott's husband served as the chairman, because none of the women felt equal to this task. In addition, there was the fear that the convention would only be attended poorly, but this was not the case. On the contrary, many people from as far as fifty miles came to be part of this event, in which a resolution demanding the vote for women would also be presented. This demand came from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whose husband had told her before, when she presented this resolution to him, that he would leave town if she would not remove it. Lucretia Mott also had her doubts about this resolution saying to Elizabeth Cady Stanton that '[t]hou will make us ridiculous. We must go slowly' (Mott, quoted in Flexner, 76). She nevertheless presented this resolution at the convention, knowing that she would receive support from Frederick Douglass, an African American

---

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Hoff, 136-39.

abolitionist leader. Elizabeth Cady Stanton also gave her first public speech at this convention.<sup>122</sup>

I should feel exceedingly diffident to appear before you at this time, having never before spoken in public, were I not nerved by a sense of right and duty, did I not feel that the time had come for the question of woman's wrongs to be laid before the public, did I not believe that woman herself must do this work; for woman alone can understand the height, the depth, the length and the breadth of her degradation. (Stanton, quoted in Flexner, 76-77)

About 300 people came to the convention, and although men had not been allowed to attend on the first day, other than Lucretia Mott's husband, the women finally decided to alter this restriction. The Declaration of Sentiments was signed at the end of the convention by sixty-eight women and thirty-two men, and the only resolution that Mrs. Stanton presented that was not passed unanimously was resolution number nine, asking for the right of women to vote. Although it took seventy-two years for women to be finally granted the franchise, the convention was a major step for women, and one of the women, Charlotte Woodward, who attended the Seneca Falls Convention and also signed the Declaration, still lived in the year 1920 and was therefore able to vote for the President of the United States.<sup>123</sup>

Margaret Fuller had clearly influenced many women that took part in the Seneca Falls Convention. Elizabeth Cady Stanton once said that she 'possessed more influence upon the thought of American women than any women previous to her time' (Stanton, quoted in Allen, 139). Her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, the scholar Marie Urbanski argued, was the catalyst for the first woman's rights convention, being published three years prior to the convention. However, Margaret Fuller could not attend the convention at Seneca Falls, because she was traveling through Europe at that time.<sup>124</sup>

With the Seneca Falls Convention, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton set a very important step indeed for all women. Fortunately, there were other influential women fighting for the equality of women, amongst

---

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Flexner, 75-76.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Flexner, 76-77.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 126.

other things, and some of these women will now be presented in the following chapter.

### 3.4 Mary Wollstonecraft and Other Influential Women

#### Mary Wollstonecraft

Mary Wollstonecraft, best-known for her work *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, was one of the first major feminists in England. Her book was published in 1792, sixteen years after the Declaration of Independence, in a time where the rights of man brought a revolution to the United States, France, and England. This may have caused her to argue for an equal treatment of women and hence her book became the first feminist declaration of independence. *Vindication* did not lead to a women's revolt, but it stirred the readers' emotion, either to enthusiasm and admiration, or to outrage and insults. Her ideas and beliefs were far ahead of her time, and, thus, contemporaries called her a shameless wanton, and even feminists turned away from her.<sup>125</sup>

Mary Wollstonecraft was self-taught and spared of a conventional female upbringing, which according to her 'resulted in physical, if not mental, infirmity in later life' (Brody, *Vindication*, 9). In contrast to other middle-class girls, she was free to play in the countryside with her brothers. Growing up more independently than other girls in a male-dominated and class-bound society definitely influenced her later life. She believed that God had created men and women equally and fought for her personal liberation and economic independence. Moreover, she tried to overcome the insecurity that she felt because she refused to get married at an early age only to have somebody to care for her. Thus, the first child that she had was illegitimate, being the result of a love affair with Gilbert Imlay, an American patriot and author. Although marriage was only an artificial bond for her, living in harmony and having a stable domestic life was important since only then, according to her, one could properly raise a child. However, Imlay did not make this possible. Because of his business, he could not spend much time with his family, and he was, moreover, unfaithful to his wife. Mary Wollstonecraft was a strong

---

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Brody, *Vindication*, 7-8.

woman and had overcome many obstacles that lay in her way in finding independence, but Imlay's behavior left her desperate, wanting to set an end to her life. Fortunately, her suicide attempt failed, because a passer-by rescued her, pulling her out of the water. She managed to forget Imlay and moved on with her life.<sup>126</sup>

In this time, her liberal and radical friends from a cosmopolitan London-based group, of which she had become a member in 1787, gave her the reassurance she needed. Among this group of intellectuals were besides others Thomas Paine, who had written the pamphlet *Common Sense*, and William Godwin, a political philosopher, whom she married in 1797. Although they got married, marriage was still an artificial bond for Wollstonecraft and for her husband as well. Nevertheless, they had a happy marriage, granting each other their freedoms. They might have lived happily together for a longer period of time, but Mary Wollstonecraft died after complications in childbirth in August 1797.<sup>127</sup>

The basic claim that Wollstonecraft sets forth in her most prominent work *Vindication* is that 'women should be treated as men are' (Brody, "Wollstonecraft", 57). However, to reach equality it is essential that women become reasonable beings, and that they reduce their passions and emotions to a minimum. Wollstonecraft writes that '[p]leasure is the business of woman's life [...] and while it continues to be so, little can be expected from such weak beings' (Wollstonecraft, 145). Yet, for her, the key to emancipation is education. Moreover, she argues that society will benefit from educated women, because they will be reasonable and virtuous.<sup>128</sup> She wants women to receive a proper education, and not only an education where they learn how to entertain their husbands. For her 'the most perfect education' is one that 'enable[s] the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent' (Wollstonecraft, 103). Her strongest argument, why women should be educated, is that most women become homemakers and mothers, and, thus, they could pass on their wisdom to their children; however, she does not see the home as the only place for women. Besides

---

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Brody, *Vindication*, 8-9, 19-22, 46.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Brody, *Vindication*, 14, 22-23.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Brody, "Wollstonecraft", 57-58.

the demand for a proper education of women, she also recommends the establishment of a national system of instruction, and wishes for all children, boys and girls, poor and rich, to receive the same education. That is, she also tried to advocate social reforms in education in general and in addition in family-life.<sup>129</sup> Thus, *Vindication* is not only a call for the emancipation of women, but also 'a universal call for reform of the whole society' (Brody, *Vindication*, 14).

There are many parallels in the life of Wollstonecraft and Fuller. To mention some, Margaret Fuller like Mary Wollstonecraft fought for the emancipation of women, and a proper education was a very important factor for Margaret Fuller as well. Mary Wollstonecraft worked as a journalist, translating texts and writing reviews, and so did Margaret Fuller. Wanting to improve her French and to get a closer view of the revolution in France, Wollstonecraft traveled to Paris.<sup>130</sup> Margaret Fuller traveled to Europe on similar grounds. Both women were members of male associations, married late, and had to endure being ridiculed for their beliefs and for not being a 'true woman'. Unfortunately, another thing that these two intelligent and brave women had in common was that their lives ended far too soon. Nevertheless, in the short time that they spent on earth, they both started an avalanche concerning women's emancipation. Other women who worked for the good cause were Sarah and Angelina Grimké.

### **The Grimké Sisters**

Sarah, born in 1792, and Angelina Grimké, born in 1805, were the daughters of a South Carolina slaveholder. After their father had died in 1819, rejecting slavery, they set all their slaves free.<sup>131</sup> Although other women fought for abolitionism, Sarah and Angelina Grimké were the only white Southern women ever to do so. Being active in the abolitionist movement, they became aware of women's shortcomings as well. In 1837, Sarah Grimké's pamphlet *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* was published, in which she points out that woman and

---

<sup>129</sup> Brody, *Vindication*, 56-58.

<sup>130</sup> Brody, *Vindication*, 15, 18.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 175-76.

man 'were both made in the image of God; dominion was given to both over every other creature, but not over each other' (Sarah Grimké). In *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, published a year before, Angelina Grimké writes that '[m]an [...] never was put under the feet of man [...] by God' (Angelina Grimké, quoted in Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 160). She argues that African Americans have a natural right to freedom and strengthens her argument by resting it not only on the Bible, but also on the Declaration of Independence.<sup>132</sup> Margaret Fuller did the same, writing in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, for instance, that '[a]ll beings are brothers, for they are his children' (*Woman*, 9) and that '[a]ll men are born free and equal' (*Woman*, 12), a line taken from the Declaration of Independence, slightly modified.

Because the religious organization of the Quakers had a strong antislavery position, Sarah and Angelina Grimké became members. Although the Quakers were against slavery, they did not want to sit next to their African American brothers, and so they had segregated seating. The Grimké sisters protested against this by seating themselves in the benches for African Americans. The Quakers did not approve of this behavior, and after Angelina Grimké married a man who was not a Quaker, they decided to expel her and her sister from the religious organization.<sup>133</sup>

In 1837 the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American women was held. Sarah and Angelina Grimké were active in leadership and presented their opinions at each of these conventions at which they were present. In the 1837 convention Angelina urged the white women to be active in the fight for abolitionism, telling them to 'treat [their African American sisters] as equals, [to] visit them as equals' (Angelina Grimké, quoted in Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 167). However, she did not only address her white sisters, but also her African American sisters:

We are aware of the prejudice you suffer daily, but entreat you to bear with us in our folly. You must be willing to mingle with us whilst we have the prejudice, because it is only by associating with you that we shall be able to overcome it. (Angelina Grimké, quoted in Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 167)

---

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 158-60.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 164-65.



As Lerner points out, Angelina Grimké was unfortunately only one of a few who understood the complexities of race relations so well at this time (*Feminist Thought*, 166-67).

Sarah and Angelina Grimké in their life-long struggle for the emancipation of slaves went as far as to write a letter to Queen Victoria in 1837. They even addressed her as “dear sister”, not doubting, because of their feminist standpoint, that this could not be appropriate, and asked for her help in the abolition of slavery. Presenting experiences they had with slavery, and pointing out that America in their opinion was guilty because ‘[s]he ha[d] assumed to be the freest nation in the world, whilst hundreds of thousands of her native born children are wearing the chains of hopeless bondage’ (Sarah and Angelina Grimké, quoted in Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 51-52), they tried to gain her favor. Margaret Fuller was of the same view, arguing that the way African Americans and also Native Americans were treated was not right, that ‘[t]hose deeds are the scoff of the world’ and that ‘freedom and equality have been proclaimed only to leave room for a monstrous display of slave-dealing and slave-keeping’ (*Woman*, 13). However, she did not go as far as the Grimké sisters who asked the Queen for her help and begging her to abolish slavery in her own dominions as well, arguing that if she would do so, America might follow her good example.<sup>134</sup>

Both women were pioneers in woman’s rights and abolition, and although their works were closely linked, the two women were different in so far that Angelina Grimké was an outstanding public speaker and that she focused her major works on antislavery, becoming, according to Lerner, ‘the heroine of the antislavery movement’ (Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 4). Sarah Grimké, in comparison, was a poor public speaker, and in Lerner’s view ‘a major feminist thinker’ (Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 5). The focus of her major works were the rights of women, and *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* ‘is the first book written by an American [Sarah Grimké] presenting a fully developed woman’s rights argument’ (Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 5).<sup>135</sup> Margaret Fuller, like Sarah Grimké, focused her works especially on the life of women. However, like Angelina Grimké, she

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 50-52.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Lerner, *Feminist Thought*, 4-5.

was a brilliant speaker. Her Boston Conversations, discussions for women held on a weekly basis, were very successful.<sup>136</sup>

In 1851, Sarah and Angelina Grimké had to open up a school and start to teach because they were caught in financial difficulties.<sup>137</sup> Since teaching was an appropriate employment for women, many middle-class women who had to earn a living started to work as teachers. After her father's death, Margaret Fuller also started to teach in order to support herself and her family. However, besides teaching she also wrote and translated texts.<sup>138</sup> Harriet Martineau, who will be presented in the next chapter, also tried to earn a living by writing, which eventually led her to financial liberation.<sup>139</sup>

### Harriet Martineau

Harriet Martineau's father died, like Margaret Fuller's father, when she was a young woman. Her father's death necessitated that she supported her family and earned a living, and, thus, she decided to write. Teaching was not really an option for her, because she was almost deaf. In the 74 years of her life, 1802 – 1876, she wrote 1,642 articles as a journalist for the *Daily News*, contributed to about 50 periodicals, and over 50 books and pamphlets carry her name. The series *Illustrations of Political Economy* that she published at the age of 30 helped her to achieve financial liberation, and at the same time made her nationally famous.<sup>140</sup>

Harriet Martineau was a feminist and supported the radical cause of her time, exerting influence with her writings. However, a woman, what is more, a single, middle-class woman, who sought a career as writer ran the risk of being regarded as an improper woman. Therefore, she tried to behave in a way that was accepted by society, whilst holding on to her beliefs; and she managed to do so. That meant that, although she was arguing for female education, she did not want to become too involved with women's issues. She criticized the way by which early feminists had tried to improve the

---

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Allen, 8.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 177.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Allen, 4, 7.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Weiner, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Weiner, 60, 67.

situation of women, and argued that Mary Wollstonecraft was 'a poor victim of passion with no control over her own peace, no calmness, content' (Martineau, quoted in Weiner, 62). Nevertheless, she knew that the status of women had to be improved and wrote: 'Nobody can be further than I from being satisfied with the condition of my own sex' (Martineau, quoted in Weiner, 62). Like Margaret Fuller, she argued that women should be educated, that they should have more opportunities for employment, and that the political rights of women should be extended.<sup>141</sup>

Harriet Martineau's parents were Unitarians,<sup>142</sup> and so she received a good and broad education. She went to school for two years, and then was educated at home. After her formal education had ended, she voluntarily spent entire days, from the morning until the late night, with reading and studying. However, looking back at her childhood Harriet Martineau described it as unhappy, being a sick, and pessimistic child, and full of fears, as well as having difficulties making friends. Margaret Fuller's early life<sup>143</sup> was very similar to Martineau's.<sup>144</sup>

The reason why Harriet Martineau committed herself to the social and political reform in later years was her conversion to necessarianism, 'a philosophy [...] which held that individuals must act according to the laws of their own natures' (Weiner, 65). After she had traveled independently to America, as one of the first English women, she wrote the book *Society in America*. Expecting to find the status of women improved in the young democracy she then writes that

the American civilisation appears to be of a lower order than might have been expected from some other symptoms of its social state. The Americans have, in the treatment of women, fallen below, not only their own democratic principles, but the practice of some parts of the Old World. (Martineau, 291)

For Martineau the women of America were invisible in politics.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, she argued that the only occupation that women could take up was being a mother and homemaker, the only alternative to it being religion.

---

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Weiner, 60-62.

<sup>142</sup> Most Unitarians educated their daughters, because they believed that women had the same intellectual capacities as men (Weiner, 63).

<sup>143</sup> Cf. ch. 4

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Weiner, 63-64.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Weiner, 67-68.

She draws the conclusion that women have to become aware of their situation in order to change it, and that until one of them stands up for their rights, 'the principles of the Declaration of Independence bear not relation to half of the human race' (Martineau, 307-08).<sup>146</sup> Like Angelina Grimké and Margaret Fuller, she refers to the Declaration of Independence when talking about the rights of women.

An issue that was as important to her as the situation of women throughout her whole life was slavery. She committed herself 'to the freedom of the individual and the removal of limitations on political representation, employment and social involvement' (Weiner, 69), and believed that

'real' freedom meant that individuals should be able to exercise control of their lives and destinies, and that if restrictions were removed from women, they would eventually achieve power and status within society. (Weiner, 69)

Trying to improve the life of women, even supporting female suffrage, she was still never willing to identify with any women's rights movement. Moreover, she did not have the time to take up a leading position in any of the movements she supported, because she constantly had to write in order to secure her living. Nevertheless, she was able to initiate national radical movements with her writings.<sup>147</sup>

Other women who worked for the good cause were, for instance, Catharine Beecher, who was an important figure in the female educational reform, or Lydia Maria Child, a friend of Margaret Fuller, who was active in the antislavery movement, and demanded that women should also have a place in society outside their home.<sup>148</sup> Fortunately, not only women committed themselves to good causes, but also men. In the next chapter, Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar" will be presented, a speech in which he points out that a scholar should think independently to help to build up the American nation free from European influences.

---

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Martineau, 301, 307.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Weiner, 71, 73.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Clinton, *Columbia Guide*, 149, 158.

### 3.5 Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar"

In 1837, Emerson was invited to speak in Cambridge, and accepting this invitation he gave his speech on August 31, 1837. The oration was about the scholar as creator, and his objective was to present to the students the functions of a scholar.<sup>149</sup>

"Man Thinking: The Nature of Emerson's American Scholar" is the title of a paper written by Taylor, which presents the important point of Emerson's oration, namely that of Man Thinking. Emerson argues that there is '[o]ne Man – present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty' (Emerson, *Essays*, 46). For him all men together form society, and each of them performs the function that is assigned to him. Thus, he then states that

[i]n this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking. (Emerson, *Essays*, 46)

So for him a true scholar, a Man Thinking would not imitate what others had said or written, but be original in what he creates.<sup>150</sup>

Taylor points out that in his speech, he presents three points that influence the mind of the scholar. The first one is nature, which helps the scholar, if he is able to understand it, to also understand himself better. Concluding the part of the first influence he thus presents two precepts that according to Emerson merge into each other, namely 'Know thyself' and [...] 'Study nature' (Emerson, *Essays*, 48).

Following the influence of nature, he presents the influence of the past, which for him comes above all from books. What is of importance to him is that scholars use books only to be inspired, and not to simply accept what others have written without looking at it from their own point of view, because then we would 'instead of Man Thinking, [...] have the bookworm' (Emerson, *Essays*, 49). According to Emerson, not only the process of writing can be creative, but also the process of reading. Moreover, the aim of colleges should be to help their students to become creators and not to drill them, and besides offering their students orations from various geniuses

---

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Sealts, 193.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Sealts, 194.

arouses the students' interest and curiosity.<sup>151</sup> Margaret Fuller wishes for women to have the chance to develop their mind and body freely, and, thus, writes in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* to '[g]ive the soul free course, let the organization, both of body and mind, be freely developed, and the being will be fit for any and every relation to which it may be called' (*Woman*, 56).

The third influence is that of action, which, like books, presents a resource for the scholar. The experiences that man makes during his life such as '[d]ruidery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom' (Emerson, *Essays*, 53), and without these man will not yet be man. Only the experiences that man gains from action will then turn into thoughts.<sup>152</sup> Because Emerson writes that he has heard that scholars are 'unfit for any handwork' and that the 'clergy [...] the scholars of their day [...] are addressed as women' (Emerson, *Essays*, 52), Taylor argues that according to Emerson only men could be scholars, because women occupied a low status in society, and society at this time believed that women did not possess the same intellect as men. As Taylor points out, this moreover leads to the fact that Emerson, who claimed to be a scholar, did himself not live up to what he said, namely to not imitate what others say or write, but to make up your own mind. Therefore, he himself 'bec[a]me a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking' (Emerson, *Essays*, 46).<sup>153</sup>

After having presented the different influences that a scholar will encounter, Emerson then speaks of the duties, which are beside the task of observation 'to cheer to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances' (Emerson, *Essays*, 55). So Emerson wanted American men, after having achieved political independence with the Declaration of Independence, to now also build up a nation according to their own beliefs and wishes. In the last part of the oration, Emerson argues:

We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic

---

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Emerson, *Essays*, 48-49, 51-52.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Emerson, *Essays*, 52-54.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Taylor.

consequences. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. (Emerson, *Essays*, 62-63)

In order to become a strong and free nation Emerson, thus, wants the American scholar not to

[speak] in the accents of tradition but as prompted by his own insight and revelation, actively leading men out of bondage to the faded past into a new relation to their own world of the living present. (Sealts, 193)

Like Emerson, Margaret Fuller believed that the people of America had to stop imitating Europe to build up their own nation. After traveling to the West, she wrote in her book *Summer* that the new settlers were still holding on to their European way of living, and that this

fatal spirit of imitation, of reference to European standards, penetrates, and threatens to blight whatever of original growth might adorn the soil. (*Summer*, 39)

A man, who also made an effort to improve the society in which he lived, focusing on the rights of his Native American brothers, was William Apess.

### **3.6 William Apess's Declaration of Independence for Native Americans**

Although the majority of the European-American population wanted the expulsion of the Native Americans from their lands, if necessary also by war, there were a few voices as well who wanted to civilize them. A small number of influential politicians, among them Thomas Jefferson, missionaries, and Quakers attempted to civilize their red brethren by leading them into Christianity, granting them private property, and by teaching them how to cultivate land. However, in May 1830, during the Jackson presidency Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. The result was that the vast majority of Native American tribes were driven beyond the Mississippi River. Those who resided near white settlements, such as the Pequots in Connecticut or the Wampanoags in Mashpee, Massachusetts, 'were socially degraded, culturally disorganized, economically exploited, and politically disfranchised' (McQuaid, 607). Nevertheless, even among these tribes, there

were reformers who tried to regain the rights and dignities they had lost. One of these reformers was the Pequot William Apess.<sup>154</sup>

William Apess, born in 1798, was the son of a mixed-blooded couple. His father was of mixed Pequot-white ancestry and his mother was a Native American. Because of his parents' separation, his maternal grandparents raised William and his siblings. They did not treat their grandchildren well, and the grandfather almost beat William to death when he was five years old. Therefore, he was contracted out to work as a servant for white families. The first family he worked for allowed him to attend school for six winters, and introduced him to religious observances. However, not all the families he stayed with treated him well. Nevertheless, at the age of fifteen, he became a member of the Methodist church, which was the beginning of his life as a reformer.<sup>155</sup>

In 1824, five years before the Methodist Society invested him with priestly authority, he started to travel in New England and New York to preach to his Native American brothers, as well as to African Americans and Whites. He believed that all men were equal, and that Whites should repent their sins against Native Americans.<sup>156</sup>

If black or red skins, or any other skin of color is disgraceful to God it appears that [God] has disgraced himself a great deal – for he has made fifteen colored people to one white, and placed them here upon this earth. (Apess, quoted in McQuaid, 613)

It was also Margaret Fuller's belief that God had created all men equal, and she argued that 'all beings are brothers, for they are his children' (*Woman*, 9). Like Apess she pointed out that Whites had sinned against their Native American brothers, being ashamed of the nation she lived in; 'But I need not speak of what has been done towards the red man [...]. Those deeds are the scoff of the world' (*Woman*, 13).

After a visit of the Mashpee tribe in Massachusetts in May 1833, Apess decided to help them regain some of their rights and was successful in it. What was of high importance to him, was that they had the possibility to send their children to school in order to

---

<sup>154</sup> Cf. McQuaid, 605-07.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. McQuaid, 607-08.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. McQuaid, 612-13.



give the rising generation all the advantages which the children of the whites enjoy in schooling. This will be one of the best means to raise them to an equality. (Apess, 76)

Highly educated Margaret Fuller was of the same opinion as Apess, namely that a good education would improve a person's life.

Apess published five books of which all dealt with the discrimination of his people, and he was the first Native American to publish an autobiography.<sup>157</sup> A device that he used at least in his work *Indian Nullification* was to address the reader, making him or her more involved.

As I suppose my reader can understand these laws [...] I will ask him how, if he values his own liberty, he would or could rest quiet under such laws. (Apess, 41)

Margaret Fuller also directly addressed her readers, hoping to win them over: 'Women of my country! [...] have you nothing to do with this! [...] If you will but think, you cannot fail to wish to save the country from this disgrace' (*Woman*, 98).

Unfortunately, William Apess disappeared from the social and cultural scene after his last book was published in 1837. Nevertheless, his efforts were rewarded, because although he disappeared, New England's Native Americans stayed.<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Gura, 652-53.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. McQuaid, 625.

## 4. BIOGRAPHY OF MARGARET FULLER

Margaret Fuller, born on May 23, 1810, in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, died in a shipwreck in 1850, after having lived a colorful life. She was famous not only in America, but also in Europe, and people either loved or hated her, but nobody remained unmoved by her.<sup>159</sup>

Allen points out that '[t]hough [she was] a product of her century, her country, her region, and her family, she transcended all these' (Allen, 1). She wanted to define herself, and find out where her place in life was. Moreover, she did not adhere to the notions presented by the cult of true womanhood, but was an active woman with the motto: 'Extraordinary generous seeking' (Allen, 1), a line which she followed throughout her whole life.<sup>160</sup>

### 4.1 The Early Life of Margaret Fuller

Margaret Fuller was the daughter of Timothy Fuller, a lawyer and politician. He was a Harvard graduate, Unitarian, and Jeffersonian, and combined politics with his profession, becoming a member of the Massachusetts senate. Although he believed in equality, he did not treat his wife as a partner. Mrs. Fuller, giving birth to nine children, did not have a great influence on her oldest daughter Margaret, because her husband decided to bring up his oldest daughter. Since his first-born was not a boy, he simply decided to give Margaret the education that he had planned to give his first son. Besides being her teacher, he oversaw the way she dressed, her manners and behavior. Margaret's education started very early, and by the age of six, she could already read Latin.<sup>161</sup> Her father was very strict with her, 'demanding accuracy and clearness in everything' (Wade, 7). That is, some years after she had started to learn Latin he expected from her to 'translate [...] without breaks or hesitations' (Wade, 7). He, moreover, did not allow her

to speak unless she could make her meaning perfectly intelligible, to express a thought unless she could give a reason for it, to make a statement unless she was sure of all particulars. (Wade, 7)

---

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Allen, 1.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Allen, 1.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Wade, 3-7.

Margaret often had to stay up late studying with her father, and when she was put to bed, her dreams were haunted by nightmares, because her father thought the Romans best to teach his daughter the virtues. Thus, Margaret read Virgil, Horace, and Ovid at the age of six and seven, which was simply too difficult to absorb for a young girl. She also dreamt about her mother's funeral. The reason for it, according to Wade, is that Margaret was more or less deprived of a mother since Timothy excluded her from her daughter's life, and Margaret was already confronted with death at a young age, when her younger sister died. Nevertheless, she did not stop reading those books, because after first presenting a burden, she soon read them passionately.<sup>162</sup>

Besides the rigorous education of her father, which at this time was 'rare enough for a boy, unthinkable for a girl' (Allen, 3), she did have some formal schooling. She spent a term or two at Dr. Park's genteel academy for young ladies in Boston, and two years, at the age of 13 and 14, at Misses Prescott's school in Groton. Meeting other girls at these schools, Margaret did not really make friends since the other girls found her strange on the ground of her intellectual powers, and she in turn thought them primitive, because for her they lacked education and knowledge.<sup>163</sup>

After this short time of formal schooling, Margaret began to find her place in society. Her father, being active in politics, gave a party for John Quincy Adams in 1826, who was campaigning for the Presidency at the time. Margaret was present at this party and impressed the company with her talent for conversation, and found friends among the young Harvard graduates, of which one was Frederick Henry Hedge, who was later one of the founders of the Transcendental Club.<sup>164</sup>

Because of her father's education, Margaret could develop and strengthen her mental powers; however, this had the price of lacking a normal childhood and feeling lonely, by being so different from the other girls of her time. Furthermore, although her parents were loving, she did not really feel loved by them, and, thus, she regarded her childhood as unhappy. Women who shared such an education with Margaret Fuller often looked at

---

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Wade, 5, 7-8.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Allen, 2-3.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Wade, 15, 58.

their fathers, as Margaret Fuller did, with mixed feelings, since they were the initiators of their 'unwomanly life', and, thus, many of these women were often obsessed 'with efforts to define women's nature and role' (Allen, 2).<sup>165</sup>

#### 4.2 Teaching in Boston and Providence

After her father's political defeat in 1832, when Jackson won the presidential election and not Adams, he decided to move to a farm in Groton with his family in 1833. Margaret, being '[g]regarious, talkative, [and] intensely curious' (Allen, 4), was not at all happy with her new situation. Being in such a remote place away from her Boston and Cambridge friends left her without any mental stimulation. It was not that she did not love nature, on the contrary, 'but she was a highly social and urbane woman' (Allen, 4), and therefore she preferred the life in cities.<sup>166</sup>

Two years after the Fuller family had moved to the Groton farm, Timothy Fuller suddenly died of cholera, leaving his large family with insufficient financial resources. Margaret, who had turned 25 that year, was the one who had to take care of the family. Because of the education that she had received, she did not feel prepared for such a duty. She also felt obliged to send all her brothers to Harvard, since all Fuller men had received a university education, and she did achieve it. Thus, about all her life she had to find ways to earn money to support her family. She left the Groton farm to earn money by teaching, writing and translating, while she never stopped educating herself.<sup>167</sup>

She started to teach Latin and French at the Temple School in Boston and, in addition, gave private lessons to pupils in Italian and German. At first, she felt lonely, but then she became friends with Bronson Alcott, the head of the school, Elizabeth Peabody, and Dr. William Ellery Channing. All three of them, as well as Margaret Fuller, became later members of the Transcendental Club. Her leisure time was filled with reading, and she especially spent considerable time on the life of Goethe, since German literature interested her strongly. Leaving no room for rest had the price of

---

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Allen, 2-3.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Allen, 4.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Allen, 4, 7.

weakening her health. Nevertheless, having a strong mind, her headaches and physical lassitude did not keep her away from reading and writing. However, she soon discovered that she had to restore her health in order to give a hundred percent. Thus, she stopped teaching at the Temple School. At just that moment, she got an offer to teach at the Greene Street School in Providence, Rhode Island. After hesitating for a moment, because she did not really want to leave Boston for Providence, she finally accepted the offer since they granted her a very high salary for that time, a thousand dollars a year. This was, moreover, the first time that a woman teacher received such a high salary. Besides gaining financial independence and being able to assist her family more easily, she could also spend more time on her own interests, since she only had to teach four hours a day. Margaret started to teach in the fall of 1837, staying at the Greene Street School for two years. She approved of the arrangement of the school, to have visitors come occasionally to lecture to the students. John Neal, a novelist, once held a lecture to her girls on 'the destiny and vocation of woman in America', and his talk 'started her thinking along Feminist lines' (Wade, 43). During her stay in Providence, she traveled to Boston as often as she could, because for her it was the center of intellect. There, she also found interest in new things, growing fond of music and art. Nevertheless, she did not turn away from her old passions, and in the second year in Providence, she published her translation of Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*. Working on her translation, besides fulfilling her role as a teacher and spending time on her other interests, was simply too much for her, and led to health problems again. She felt exhausted, and 'her mind longed for freedom from outward demands, for concentration and tranquil thought' (Wade, 49). Longing for rest, and knowing that being a teacher would not satisfy her, that there was something else for her to do out in this world, she resigned from her post at the Greene Street School. Although she had been a demanding teacher, she was beloved by her students, a feeling that gave her joy, weeping with her students when she bid farewell.<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Wade, 36-43, 46, 49, 58, 61.

### 4.3 Boston Conversations

Leaving Providence in 1839, she returned to the Boston-Cambridge area, moving with her family to Jamaica Plain near Boston. She wanted to find an occupation to earn money, but an occupation that would make use of her talents as well. Since life in the nineteenth century did not provide her with many choices, she came up with the idea to hold discussions for women. Thus, she started her Boston Conversations in 1839, discussions for women held on a weekly basis, with her as the leader.<sup>169</sup>

Before starting the conversations, she told her friend Bronson Alcott about it, looking for some reassurance. Alcott found her idea brilliant and was, moreover, sure that she was the right person for it and noted in his journals that

[s]he is the most commanding talker of her day, of her sex, and must sway society: such a position is worthy of her gifts. I trust those who shall hear her will reap a rich harvest of thought [...]. (Alcott, quoted in Wade, 68)

Besides providing the educated and intelligent women from the families of good standing of Boston with some stimulus, her goal was 'to aspir[e] women to free themselves from their traditional subservience' (Wade, 69). Among these women, whom she tried to emancipate, were, for instance, Lydia Maria Child, Elizabeth Peabody, Mrs. Emerson, Mrs. Ripley, and Sarah Clarke. Mrs. Ripley was the wife of one of the founders of the Transcendental Club and was herself a member of this association, and Sarah Clarke was an artist and the sister of James Freeman Clarke.<sup>170</sup>

Twenty-five women attended the first course of conversations, a series of thirteen discussions, on November 6, 1839. Because of its success, her conversations became an institution in Boston, held each year until 1844 when she moved to New York. The discussions were on various topics, such as Greek mythology, ethics, the fine arts, literature, creeds, woman, demonology, the ideal, health, culture, and vanity.<sup>171</sup> Margaret Fuller wished her participants to find their own voice, but she also 'invited [them] to envision

---

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Allen, 7-8.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Wade, 58, 69, 75.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Wade, 70-71, 74.

themselves in idealized roles', which taught them 'how to integrate their identities as public and private figures' (Elbert, 236). Helping the women to slip into the character of strong female role models, she herself presented a series of tableaux vivants to them. She achieved to make the women of her circle feel like goddesses, and they looked at her as the heroine that she herself felt she was.<sup>172</sup> Judith Mattson Bean argued in her essay of 1998 on Margaret Fuller that the public achievements of women who attended Fuller's conversations are evidence that 'women also heard in Fuller's eloquence their own potential power to engage in public intellectual vocations' (Mattson Bean, quoted in Elbert, 272).

However, her conversations were sometimes ridiculed, because especially conventional-minded people regarded those discussions on high questions of the fine ladies of Boston as pretentious. Harriet Martineau criticized them for discussing shallow things while slavery was such an important issue of the time. Although fanciful thoughts and ideas came up at the conversations, they thoroughly tackled some serious matters.<sup>173</sup> In fact, those discussions brought 'the moving force of the feminist movement of the fifties, and a higher concept of women' (Wade, 74). Not only did some women who attended the conversations become active in the feminist movement, paving the way for the first woman's rights convention, but the conversations, in addition, also 'served as a model for the later women's clubs and helped to assure support for the new colleges' (Wade, 79). Thus, Margaret Fuller achieved her goal to emancipate her sex at least to some degree by 'alter[ing] the status of her sex for the better than any other woman of the period', and in addition, became known as the 'most learned woman in the country' (Wade, 79).

#### 4.4 Transcendentalism and the *Dial*

Although she had made female friends, especially while performing her conversations, she felt that in the women's milieu of the early nineteenth century she could not grow, and, therefore, she entered domains of men.

---

<sup>172</sup> Cf. Elbert, 269-70, 274.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Wade, 73-74.

Friendships developed with men like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, George Ripley, James Freeman Clarke, or Henry Hedge, who were important figures in the transcendental movement. They treated her as an equal, and she became the first female member of the Transcendental Club.<sup>174</sup>

The roots of transcendentalism lie in the metaphysics of the ancient Eastern and Western world, and its immediate origin, Frothingham, author of the book *Transcendentalism in New England*, argued, can be found in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Transcending, according to Kant meant to

designate qualities that lie outside of all 'experience,' that cannot be brought within the recognized formularies of thought, cannot be reached either by observation or reflection, or explained as the consequences of any discoverable antecedents. (Frothingham, quoted in Urbanski, *Woman*, 97)

In other words, it is not about the objects themselves, but about accepting the possible realization of objects without questioning it or thinking about it. Theodore Parker, for instance, argued that the transcendental philosophy maintained that

the mind is not a smooth tablet on which sensation writes its experience, but is a living principle which of itself originates ideas when the senses present the occasions; that, as there is a body with certain senses, so there is a soul or mind with certain powers which give the man sentiments and ideas. (Parker, quoted in Urbanski, *Woman*, 98)

Urbanski points out that Margaret Fuller was strongly influenced by transcendentalism, since a study of Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* shows that Kant's epistemology builds the philosophic foundation of her work (*Woman*, 97-98).

The transcendental movement in New England, which had its peak in the 1840s and 50s, resulted from the religious climate of the time, and, thus, it is primarily regarded as a religious orientation. In New England, the Calvinism of the Puritans was replaced by Unitarianism, whose members 'found a new religious expression in forms derived from romantic literature' and 'German philosophical idealism' (Urbanski, *Woman*, 98). The quality of

---

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Allen, 8.



life in America was an important issue for transcendentalists, and Margaret Fuller 'accept[ing] the spiritual nature of reality emphasized the importance of the individual soul as opposed to the masses and the forces of materialism' (Urbanski, *Woman*, 98).

The transcendentalist movement is characterized by its diversity and lack of structure, and the members themselves even stressed that not even two of them shared the same ideas and thoughts. Nevertheless, there is at least one thing that they had in common, the central credo which 'was a faith in the boundless possibilities of human nature' (Buell, 1). Moreover, most of them believed that, as Emerson had argued, 'God exists within the individual soul' (Buell, 1). Thus, the core of this philosophy was individualism.<sup>175</sup>

Although transcendentalism is primarily regarded as a religious orientation, it also affected 'epistemology, art, social reform, and the philosophy of nature' (Buell, 2). Concerning social reform, transcendentalists specifically supported religious and educational reform, and abolitionism. However, it had the most enduring effect on literature,<sup>176</sup> and the chief emphasis of its journal, the *Dial*, was literary. The journal, moreover, 'was the first really independent and original journal to be published in America' (Wade, 82).

Margaret Fuller did not possess the metaphysical background of other transcendentalist members. However, what others lacked and she could offer was her knowledge on literature, especially foreign literature. Thus, already given the post of the mediator of discussions because of her great conversational talents, she was later on, just when she had started her Boston Conversations, asked to become the chief editor of their new journal, the *Dial*, in 1840. Emerson was, besides Fuller, involved in the editorial direction, and Ripley was the business manager of the journal. Margaret Fuller did most of the work, and had to write herself to fill the journal, besides gathering contributions. The salary was very small, with two hundred dollars a year, an amount that she eventually did not even receive. After working for the *Dial* with enthusiasm for two years, she resigned from her post as editor, because the journal was not received well by its readership and she needed

---

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Buell, 1-2.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Buell, 1-2.

to earn money. Emerson became the new chief editor, but could not improve the journal either. Thus, they stopped issuing it in 1844, when the movement itself was starting to vanish as well.<sup>177</sup>

During her time at the *Dial*, the writings of Margaret Fuller changed, because her texts now fulfilled a purpose. She contributed at least one essay to each issue. Nevertheless, she still preferred conversation over writing, since she herself felt that she had problems to put her thoughts down in writing. Thus, she preferred to translate texts, her most notable, according to Wade, being her translation of Bettina von Arnim's *Günderode*, in 1842,<sup>178</sup> and before her editorship of the *Dial*, in 1839, she had already published *Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe*. Although she preferred to translate texts, one of the essays that she had written for the *Dial*, in fact her longest, "The Great Lawsuit: Man *versus* Men, Woman *versus* Women",<sup>179</sup> would later become her most important work, about which more will be said in the following chapter.

The transcendental movement was very important for the life of Margaret Fuller, because, as Chevigny points out, she found some place for herself and did not feel so isolated anymore, gained more self-esteem, and being with the other members became aware of her differences, helping her to find her own direction in life (142).

The transformation of "self-consciousness" from a painful social experience into an exalted and creative condition must have had overwhelming appeal. Within such a movement a young woman who could only cut an outlandish figure in conventional New England might escape into a free realm where her extravagant ambition to grow and feel was sanctioned philosophically and seemed to be genuinely welcomed. (Chevigny, 143)

#### 4.5 Margaret Fuller's Works

Right after Margaret Fuller's death in 1850, 'her dramatic life as a revolutionary radical' (Urbanski, "Fuller", 337) became the center of attention. That she had been a literary genius was at that time overlooked or even denigrated. Denigrating Fuller's ability as a writer was the result of the fear of

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Wade, 60-61, 82-84, 86, 88-89.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Wade, 89-90.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Allen, 8.

traditionalists, who worried that the controversial subjects that she had dealt with could do harm.<sup>180</sup> Fortunately, her works did not disappear.

Literary works of Margaret Fuller included 'critical essays about social problems and the promise of American democracy, [...] her letters, poetry, experimental fiction, and German translations' (Urbanski, "Fuller", 337). She also wrote articles on art and music, 'but her literary criticism is the most significant' (Urbanski, "Fuller", 337). For the last chapter of this paper especially her two books *Summer on the Lakes* and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, as well as her articles from the *New York Tribune* will form the basis.

### ***Summer on the Lakes, in 1843***

*Summer on the Lakes* belongs to the genre of the travelogue, which was very popular in the mid-nineteenth century. The travelogue does not have a fixed form, which might have attracted Margaret Fuller,<sup>181</sup> who included in her travel book 'sketches, poems, stories, anecdotes, dialogues, reflections, and accounts of a leisurely journey to the Great Lakes' (Smith, xx). In this time, not only the new possibilities for traveling led to an increase in the publication of travel accounts, but also the growing interest in the experience of the individual, which came along with the rise of romanticism.<sup>182</sup> Although more women, especially in the 1840s, began to travel, traveling remained a male-dominated activity. Women who also wrote travelogues about their journeys into the west and mid-west usually tried to compete with the texts of their male colleagues, hence in Fuller's case, her travelogue *Summer on the Lakes* competes with Charles Fenno Hoffman's *A Winter in the West*.<sup>183</sup>

Throughout her life, Margaret Fuller had the wish for extensive travel. Since she could not afford a trip to Europe at this time, but needed to get away from her daily routine and have some rest, she accepted the invitation to travel with James Freeman Clarke and his sister Sarah to the western

---

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Urbanski, "Fuller", 337.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Smith, xii.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Birkle, 498.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Birkle, 500-01.

frontier in the summer of 1843. Her friends, James Freeman Clarke and Sarah Black Sturgis Shaw, financed the trip, so that she did not have to worry about the incurring expenses.<sup>184</sup>

Although she pointed out that she focused on the poetic impression of her travels, her book also contains instructional purposes and social criticism. Topics that received her attention were the plight of the Native Americans and the women at the frontier, social issues such as education, and the development of the new nation.<sup>185</sup>

Being a member of the Transcendental Club, not only the geographical journey was of importance, but also the journey within her mind. Therefore, she also decided to use an autobiographical form for writing *Summer on the Lakes*, since it was important for her to present to her readers the nature and the life at the frontier through her eyes, in the way that she had experienced it. Hence, her book provides 'an intensely personal account of Fuller's own inner life during the summer of 1843' (Smith, xviii), and, thus, it '[is] much more than mere travelogue – it [is] an expression of self-discovery' (Smith, ix).

Before writing her travelogue, she wanted to research what others had written about the western frontier, and to do so, she was the first woman allowed at the Harvard library. In 1844, her book was published, and although *Summer on the Lakes* was not as successful as she had hoped, it earned her a job offer as journalist at the *New York Tribune*.<sup>186</sup>

### ***New York Tribune***

Horace Greeley founded the *New York Tribune* in April 1841, because politicians of the Whig party wanted a newspaper that would present their viewpoints to working-class readers. A year later, in the winter of 1842, the paper already had a circulation of 10,000 a day, being the third most successful newspaper after the *Sun* and the *Herald*. By the year 1855, the *New York Tribune* had become the major American newspaper, and

---

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Smith, viii.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Smith, xiv-xvi.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Smith, xii.

remained in that position for most of the time during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>187</sup> Brockway, a journalist who worked for the *Tribune* in the 1850s, argued that the *Tribune* had

an influence such as no other paper has ever wielded in this country. Its earnest words went down to the popular heart, producing an impression that forced people to think and act. (Brockway, quoted in Mitchell, 8)

Margaret Fuller, in a letter to a friend in 1845, argued likewise that the *Tribune* was 'a journal as widely circulated as any in this country' (*Letters* IV, 58). Emerson even argued that westerners saw Horace Greeley as 'the right spiritual Father of this region' (Emerson, quoted in Mitchell, 8).

Horace Greeley hired Margaret Fuller not only because he was attracted by her work *Summer on the Lakes*, but also because she was already known for her intellectual abilities, possessed editorial experience, and, moreover, because his wife had recommended her, since she had attended a series of conversations in Boston. Margaret Fuller accepted the offer and started her work at the *Tribune* on December 7, 1844. Her field of work included especially American literature, about which she wrote at least 250 articles, which were usually bylined with a star. This led to the wordplay that she was the star of the *Tribune*, and Horace Greeley wrote in a letter that '[t]he \* of the Tribune is Miss S. Margaret Fuller, ... the most thoroughly learned woman on this continent and of capacious intellect' (Greeley, quoted in Mitchell, 3). However, since it was Horace Greeley's intention to 'advance the interests of the people, and to promote their Moral, Political and Social well-being' (Greeley, quoted in Mitchell, 16-17), Margaret Fuller wrote about social and political issues as well.<sup>188</sup>

Many scholars have argued that Fuller's job at the *Tribune* comprised only three articles a week. In fact, being in charge of the Department of Literature and Criticism her workload was much higher. Mitchell lists Fuller's work at the *Tribune*, which according to her included: editing the literary section, writing a regular column describing books, called "New Publication", 500-word book reviews, lengthy essays, excerpts from literary works, and translating articles from foreign language newspapers. The reason why many

---

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 8-10.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 3.

of her works were not acknowledged as hers is that not all of them were bylined with a star.<sup>189</sup>

Working for the *Tribune*, she improved her writing skills, because she started to think about the audience she wrote for. In addition, in her farewell letter she wrote that twenty months spent in New York City ‘have presented [her] with a richer and more varied exercise for thought and life than twenty years could in any other part of these United States’ (*Journalism*, 204). She turned from her outstanding literary criticism to essays on social problems, promoting ideas how to solve them. Especially the topics of education and woman’s role in society became very important for her.<sup>190</sup>

The salary she received as a journalist at the *Tribune* was far better than what other women earned at this time. She received \$ 500 a year, the same amount as male journalists. Compared to the salary of a female teacher, she earned about double the amount in one year. With this salary, and the offer to work as a European correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, she could at last fulfill her dream. Thus, after working for the *Tribune* in New York for two years she set sails for Europe in 1846.<sup>191</sup>

### ***Woman in the Nineteenth Century***

Just when she had begun to work as a journalist for the *New York Tribune*, her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was published by Horace Greeley. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was a reproduction of her earlier written essay “The Great Lawsuit: Man *versus* Men. Woman *versus* Women”, which she had published in the *Dial* in 1843. She finished her book in the fall of 1844, before starting her work at the *Tribune*, and in February 1845, it appeared on the market. Although the title of her book was rendered to be more straightforward, her book remained

an allusive, digressive, and challenging argument on behalf of the quest for human perfection, especially for women’s full intellectual and spiritual development (Reynolds, ix),

---

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 24-26.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 5, 31.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 5, 37-38.

and is today considered 'the foundational text of the women's rights movement in America' (Reynolds, ix).

Reynolds furthermore points out that by revising and adding to her text, Margaret Fuller tried to negotiate between her belief that everyone should have the same rights and opportunities and her intellectual elitism that she adopted during her life in the Boston-Cambridge area. Thus, besides being a reformer in her heart of hearts, treating 'the problems of abused wives, female slaves, prostitutes, old maids, and female factory workers', she also filled her book with 'historical and literary materials' (Reynolds, x). When she wrote about the shortcomings of the American women, she reflected on what she had experienced herself.<sup>192</sup> Her wish was to convince her readership with her book that 'the conditions of life and freedom [should be] recognized as the same for the daughters and the sons of time' (*Woman*, 5).

*Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was widely criticized since for many Americans equal rights for women were unthinkable. '[S]candalous, hysterical, revolutionary' (Deiss, quoted in Mitchell, 126) were adjectives applied to the book by many of its readers. Edgar Allan Poe, on the other hand, used the following words to describe *Woman*, 'nervous, forcible, thoughtful, suggestive, brilliant, and to a certain extent scholar-like' (Poe, quoted in Mitchell, 126), and Urbanski argued that it was 'the catalyst for the Seneca Falls Convention on Woman's Rights in 1848' (Mitchell, 126). Although many people criticized it, the book was very successful; selling out within the first week of its publication, and, thus, Margaret Fuller's fame comes above all from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.<sup>193</sup>

#### 4.6 Emotional Relationships

When Margaret Fuller was a young girl, she already knew that her looks were not the most winning. Suffering because of it, she longed for a beautiful and graceful appearance. Often, men, besides finding her unattractive, turned away from her because they simply felt intimidated by a

---

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Reynolds, x.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 126.

woman of distinction.<sup>194</sup> Thus, especially when she was a girl and young woman she had emotional relationships with other women, being drawn to them because of the feminine charms they possessed, and she lacked. In addition, they felt an attraction to her because of her superior intelligence, which they, in contrast, did not possess. However, these relationships were all on a platonic level.<sup>195</sup>

During her stay in New York she fell in love with James Nathan, but Allen points out that Margaret had been in love a couple of times before. Nevertheless, these romances often left her unhappy. Biographers of Horace Greeley assume that his feelings for Margaret were not only on a business level. However, Margaret was falling in love with James Nathan at that time.<sup>196</sup> He was a prosperous businessperson who had moved to New York in 1830. Margaret Fuller was probably attracted by his interest in a literary career and by his foreignness, longing for the new experiences he could offer her. Soon she confessed that she felt strongly attracted to him. However, their love affair lasted only for five months. For Nathan, Fuller never became more than a mere love affair, and although she at first held on to the belief that he returned her love, she finally accepted that he did not love her.<sup>197</sup> Since he left New York when they were still seeing each other, she had written him many letters, which she then asked him to destroy because of their very personal content. Unfortunately, he did not follow her wish, and her letters were published as *Love-Letters of Margaret Fuller*, in 1904.<sup>198</sup>

Before presenting her relationship with Ossoli, there is another man worth mentioning. They may have been in love, but were never officially joined by a romantic relationship; nevertheless, he was probably the most important man in her life. Ralph Waldo Emerson was her 'mentor, friend, coworker, and chief guardian of her reputation after she died' (Allen, 25). Margaret Fuller was often regarded to be not much more than a student of him. It is a fact that Emerson and Fuller had a strong influence on each other's life. Emerson's influence was, as she once pointed out herself, 'more

---

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Allen, 6-7.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Wade, 90.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. Allen, 9-10.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Von Mehren, 207-11.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. Allen, 10.



beneficial to [her] than that of any American' (Fuller, quoted in Allen, 44), but besides influencing her positively he also repressed her achievements. Margaret Fuller, being his intellectual companion, 'Emerson soon found her indispensable' (Allen, 26). Margaret was interested in more than friendship; he probably too, but being a married man, he could not offer her more than his friendship. Thus, Margaret decided to rise above their relationship. Nevertheless, they always kept in touch. However, Emerson was no longer the most prominent person in her life during her years in New York and Europe.<sup>199</sup>

After her unhappy love affairs, it seems that she had finally found love in her much beloved Rome. Visiting St. Peter's Basilica she met a handsome young Roman, the Marquis Giovanni Angelo Ossoli. Margaret received several marriage proposals from him, but did not accept them on the ground that she had never really wanted to get married, and, especially because she thought the marriage unthinkable since Ossoli and herself were quite different. She was an American Protestant woman, he an Italian Catholic from an aristocratic family. Moreover, she surpassed him not only in age but also in intellect, and his family did not approve of her. Nevertheless, after she had left Rome to travel around in Italy to get away from him, she decided to return to him in the fall of 1847. Despite their differences, they were happy together, and in September of 1848 their son, Angelo, was born. Scholars assume that the two got married after Margaret had discovered that she was pregnant, but a date of their marriage is not known. However, one thing that is known is that this time was a time of happiness, and Allen points out that '[h]er letters of this period reflect a tranquility and happiness seldom seen before' (Allen, 160).<sup>200</sup>

#### **4.7 Traveling in Europe**

In August 1846, Margaret Fuller finally had the chance to travel to Europe. Her family no longer needed her support, and offered the chance to travel with friends of hers, the Springs, a young Quaker couple, she was

---

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Allen, 25-26, 28, 30-31.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Allen, 11, 158-160.

ready to pack her bags and leave America. Moreover, it was not only a lifelong dream to go to Europe, but she also hoped to meet James Nathan there. In addition, she would earn money while being in Europe since Horace Greeley had asked her to work as a European correspondent for the *Tribune*.<sup>201</sup>

At this time, Europe was faced with currents of revolution, which soon became the sole interest of Margaret Fuller. However, before she was caught up in the revolutions, she spent her time on discovering the art and culture of Europe. During her time in England and France she moved about in the circle of artists, writers, and political figures, such as Wordsworth, Carlyle, George Sand, Chopin, and Mazzini, to name a few. Meeting with all these famous people, there was one person that she was not going to meet again. It broke her heart to finally accept that she would not see Nathan again. However, since he was still not answering any of her letters, her grief soon changed into annoyance.<sup>202</sup>

After spending about half a year in England and France, she traveled to Italy. Allen points out that in Rome 'she joyfully discovered her true spiritual home at last' (Allen, 10). There she met her future husband Giovanni Angelo Ossoli, and became deeply drawn into the revolution which developed in Rome and most of Italy. The Italians wanted their land to be unified, and, thus, started a revolution against the ruling Austrians. Although they were united by their wish for unification, the Italians were of different opinions when it came to the governmental form that Italy should take after the defeat of the Austrians. The nationalists were divided into two factions: 'the [...] moderates or liberals, who wanted a monarchy [...] and the [...] radicals, who wanted a republic' (Allen, 156). After the pope of Rome, Pope Pius IX, had encouraged the people in their wish for a united nation, he withdrew from his position and left Rome without a notice. Soon after Mazzini had thereafter assumed leadership of the new Roman Republic in 1849, the European Catholics wanted to restore the political system as it had been before the revolution, attempting to have a pope at the head of the city of Rome again. The French army fought against the rebels, and in July 1849,

---

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Allen, 10.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Allen, 10, 153.

the Roman republic fell. Ossoli, although coming from an aristocratic family, was an advocate of the Republic and fought with the rebels against the French army. While her husband fought as a captain in the Guardia Civica, Margaret Fuller directed a hospital for war casualties. Their baby was looked after in Rieti where it was born, being a safer place for him to be at. Separated from her husband and her baby son, facing the brutalities of war firsthand, she fulfilled her duties at the hospital, and also continued her job as a correspondent for the *Tribune*, all under great anxiety.<sup>203</sup>

After the victory of the French in July 1849, the young couple had to flee from Rome. With their baby they traveled to Florence, where they lived for some time with Robert and Elizabeth Browning, who were friends with Margaret. They had to live with them, because they were faced with financial difficulties, since her husband's family had expelled him. However, they did enjoy the time that they spent in Florence, and Margaret informed her family and friends about her marriage and motherhood. Besides writing letters to family and friends, Margaret finished a book that she herself regarded as her best work, a history of the Roman revolution.<sup>204</sup>

Although they enjoyed their domestic life in Florence, she finally decided to return to America with her family. Since they did not have much money, they had to travel on a slow cargo ship. Unfortunately, they never arrived in America, because all three of them perished in a shipwreck off the New York coast. As Allen points out,

Margaret Fuller's death was like the final act of some momentous tragic drama. She seemed almost an American Byron, another lacerated, impatient spirit who defied convention, attracted excitement, danger, and passion, fought in a revolution in a distant land, died prematurely, and became a romantic legend. (Allen, 12)

---

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Allen, 10-11, 156.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Allen, 11-12.

## 5. MARGARET FULLER'S DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENCE AND EMANCIPATION

After having presented the life of Margaret Fuller, which was atypical for a woman of that time when compared to the life of women in the nineteenth century, as well as some reforms and reformers of her time that may have influenced her, the final chapter will now deal with her ambitions to achieve independence and emancipation for humankind in general as well as for herself. She was born into a time of radical changes, which may have formed the ground for her to stand up and fight for the good cause, especially trying to improve the situation of women, since she experienced the constraints of womanhood herself. Allen argues that

[t]he expansive, bold quality of her ambitions seemed to spring from the expansive, youthful America she was born into, a country that could perceive no limitations on its divinely ordained progress. (Allen, 1)

Although she was often not happy in her life, the reason being, for the most part, the upbringing of her father, one should nevertheless be thankful for his rigorous education, without which she may not have become such an important figure in the struggle for women's rights. Allen points out that she lived by the motto of Goethe, "Extraordinary generous seeking" throughout her life (1). Living by this motto must have encouraged her to never stop improving herself and the world around her, wishing for everyone to have the chance to make the most out of his or her life.

### 5.1 America, a Young Independent Nation

Margaret Fuller was born at a time in which the young independent nation of America was still in the process of being formed. Her books *Summer on the Lakes* and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and her articles for the *Tribune* and the *Dial* as well as her Boston Conversations, show her interest in American society, and more important her suggestions on how to improve it. Moreover, she also presents her fears that the young nation of America could fail, especially when the United States incorporated the territory of Texas, because she saw in the annexation of Texas only a means of extension of slavery territory, writing that

[i]f this should take place, who will dare again to feel the throb of heavenly hope, as to the destiny of this country? The noble thought that gave unity to all our knowledge, harmony to all our designs; - the thought that the progress of history had brought on the era, the tissue of prophecies pointed out the spot, where humanity was, at last, to have a fair chance to know itself, and all men be born free and equal for the eagle's flight, flutters as if about to leave the breast, which, deprived of it, will have no more a nation, no more a home on earth. (*Woman*, 97)

However, although she sometimes doubted the direction into which her nation would go, she, nevertheless, '[t]o the end of her life [...] loved America, [and] believed in its principles and its greatness' (Allen, 114), as Allen points out.

One of the problems that she perceived was immigration. When traveling to the West 'to see a nation in the making' (Allen, 177), she afterwards writes in her book *Summer on the Lakes* about the mushroom growth in the West and that the motto of the settlers is only "go ahead" (18). She blames them for not 'talking [...] of what they should do, but of what they should get in the new scene' (*Summer*, 12). A man who spit into the fall, when she was visiting Niagara Falls, was for her a sign that the immigrants were only interested in the utility of the new place, by 'thinking [on] how he could best appropriate [the fall] to his own use' (*Summer*, 5). Fuller, as Birkle argues, saw this, moreover, as an 'attempt of human beings to control and subjugate nature, [and] as a continuation of the warring and inhumane mass invasions of the first Europeans' (Birkle, 502). Thus, they were only thinking about their own fortune, without even regarding to live a life in harmony with nature, as she had hoped. Seeing that the settlers were not going to adapt to the new life in the West, looking at everything from their own viewpoint, she writes that 'there is nothing real in the freedom of thought at the West' (*Summer*, 13). She had hoped to see, as she writes in a letter to Emerson in 1843,

some emigrant with worthy aims using all his gifts and knowledge to some purpose honorable to the land; instead of lowering themselves to the requisitions of the moment as so many of them do. (*Letters III*, 130)

Being disappointed by the way the immigrants made use of the country, there were also some settlers that gave her hope by their way of living.

A wood surrounds the house, through which paths are cut in every direction. It is, for this new country, a large and handsome dwelling; but round it are its barns and farm yard, with cattle and poultry. These, however, in the framework of wood, have a very picturesque and pleasing effect. There is that mixture of culture and rudeness in the aspect of things as gives a feeling of freedom, not of confusion. [...] This habitation of man seemed like a nest in the grass, so thoroughly were the buildings and all the objects of human care harmonized with what was natural. (*Summer*, 24)

Thereby she showed that it was possible to live in harmony with nature, and that it is not wrong to bring their culture with them, as she also points out that she saw 'Norwegian peasants at work in their national dress' (*Summer*, 24), and 'families [who] [...] had brought with them and planted the locust' (*Summer*, 25), about which she writes:

It was pleasant to see their old home loves, brought into connection with their new splendors. Wherever there were traces of this tenderness of feeling, only too rare among Americans, other things bore signs also of prosperity and intelligence, as if the ordering mind of man had some idea of home beyond a mere shelter, beneath which to eat and sleep. (*Summer*, 25)

She also writes about two young women that she had met there. They had been educated in a convent where they had learned to play musical instruments and speak French. Nevertheless, they did not recoil from working outside the house, having 'learned to take care of the milk-room, and kill the rattlesnakes that assailed their poultry yard' (*Summer*, 24). These young ladies presented for her the freedom of the West that she had hoped all women would enjoy. That is, they did not moan over their new situation, but accepted it and learned to live according to the wants of the new place.

In addition, she presents to her readers a man, who according to her 'is able to be a truly valuable settler in a new and great country' (*Summer*, 65). Morris Birkbeck, an Englishman

was an enlightened philanthropist [...]. He thought all the creatures of a divine love ought to be happy and ought to be good [...]. Freedom, the liberty of law, not license; not indolence, work for himself and children and all men, but under genial and poetic influences; - these were his aims. How different from those of the new settlers in general! (*Summer*, 65-66)

Such a man could have greatly benefitted the area he lived in, but unfortunately, as Margaret Fuller informs us in *Summer*, he died prematurely

(66). Another way, instead of having good men serve as examples for the rest, which could lead to a better future than the present day predicted, would be to educate the young properly, as she argues, that

[i]f the next generation be well prepared for their work, ambitious of good and skilful to achieve it, the children of the present settlers may be leaven enough for the mass constantly increasing by emigration. And how much is this needed where those rude foreigners can so little understand the best interests of the land they seek for bread and shelter. (*Summer*, 65)

Education, for her, is an important fact in improving life, and she writes that

American men and women are inexcusable if they do not bring up children so as to be fit for vicissitudes; that is the meaning of our star, that here all men being free and equal, all should be fitted for freedom and an independence by his own resources wherever the changeable wave of mighty stream may take him. (*Summer*, 77)

Seeing education of the young as a means to improve the life in the West, she, in addition, argues that it is necessary to educate immigrants for them to be able to adapt to the new life in a new country, from which the country itself would also benefit.<sup>205</sup> She devoted one of her *Tribune* essays to the Irish immigrants, which she generally regarded to be an ill-educated and depraved race, and that the Americans should aid them without waiting for their appreciation, urging them to help by writing, 'Do what you do for them for God's sake and as a debt to humanity' (*Journalism*, 170). They should help them to restore their self-respect, inform them about their way of life and the history of this country, provide food for their mind by making conversation with them or offering them good books to read, and '[t]hus the mind be prepared by development for a moral reformation' (*Journalism*, 172). This she saw as the duty of the American, which she argued 'is also a great patriotic work' (*Journalism*, 173). The idea of helping immigrants to find their way is similar to Emerson's belief that the duty of the American scholar is 'to cheer to raise, and to guide men' (Emerson, *Essays*, 55), which Margaret Fuller now asks all Americans to do for the immigrants.

However, it should be noted here that, as Mitchell points out, the Irish presented the 'one liberal blind spot' (Mitchell, 163) in Margaret Fuller, because she did not look at the Irish by their own standards, like she did with,

---

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Allen, 130-31.

for instance, the African Americans, but like most people of her time looked down at them as a degraded race, suggesting ways to reform them (163).

Reform was also an issue when talking about prostitutes, prisoners, the poor, or the insane. Living in New York, being confronted with these degraded groups, she became interested in social reform, and reformers, such as Lydia Maria Child, Harriet Martineau, or George Sand, may have furthermore inspired her in her work.<sup>206</sup> However, in contrast to the Irish, she did not look down at them and rather asked for reforming the institutions than the people themselves.

In her articles for the *New York Tribune*, she presents negative as well as positive observations that she had made in the different institutions. In the Bellevue Alms House, for instance, she criticizes that the poor who had found a refuge here did not have the possibility of any occupation beyond making clothes for themselves and raising vegetables for the Alms House. She argues that a range of different employments and education would aid them to overcome their present position. Besides practical and theoretical instructions, they should, moreover, be taught 'correct notions as to cleanliness, diet, and fresh air' (*Journalism*, 88-89). Alms Houses, according to her, should be 'places of rest and instruction, not of degradation' (*Journalism*, 89), since she believed that only then they would have a chance to improve their lives (*Journalism*, 88-89).

Insufficient instruction was also a problem that she perceived in the Farm School, an institution where children found refuge. She blamed the institution for not going beyond the mere task of taking care of them and teaching them the common English branches, which would not prepare them for common life. With a more varied education and the possibility to carry out some occupations, she argues, '[e]ven these children would expand more, and be more variously called forth' (*Journalism*, 90). For Margaret Fuller such a change certainly meant that these children would have new ways opened up for them, giving them the chance to live a more valuable life with the freedom to make something of oneself, which they would probably not have if ill prepared for their future lives. Nevertheless, she also made some positive

---

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Hudspeth, *Letters* IV, 15-16.



observations at the Farm School, pointing out that the sleeping rooms were arranged very well concerning neatness and ventilation, which offered the children a good night's sleep, and, thus, they would be fit for the next day (*Journalism*, 90-91).

Visiting the Asylum for the Insane, she complained about the insufficient space, which was for her the reason why 'here, insanity appeared in its more stupid, wild, or despairing forms' (*Journalism*, 91). Because, having visited other Asylums, such as the Bloomingdale Asylum, where the number of patients did not exceed the capacities of the institution, she saw that by treating a patient as an individual and not as one among many, they behaved well and 'felt no violent separation betwixt them and the rest of the world', giving them the feeling that they 'might easily return to it' (*Journalism*, 91). At the Bloomingdale Asylum, the insane had the opportunity to listen to lectures, and attend entertainments such as dances, keeping them interested and happy. Here they were not threatened and kept in solitary cells, but 'soothed by gentle care, intelligent sympathy, and a judicious attention to their physical welfare' (*Journalism*, 79), and lived in comfortable apartments, furnished like those of private families. She, moreover, writes about the use of corporeal restraints, which have been not used, except in two cases, in nearly two years. Since the patients' behavior has not gotten worse, she could show that it was not necessary to take away the patient's freedom of movement, and hopes that in other institutions people also lose the 'impression that persons of disordered mind can be governed only through fear' (*Journalism*, 83). Thus, according to her such institutions could receive better results in the long term by offering them a comfortable place to live in, entertainment as well as some instruction, and by treating them individually and with respect. Since this concept worked very well in the Bloomingdale Asylum for the Insane, she argued that in prisons they should also go away from threatening them to achieve any improvements in them, or corporeal restraints to punish them or calm them down (*Journalism*, 84, 86-87). Concerning the attendants of such institutions, she writes that

[i]t is highly essential that the qualifications of attendants should be such that they will be regarded by the patients as friends and companions. The advantages thus derived are greater than can easily be conceived by one unacquainted with the subject. (*Journalism*, 87)

In the Bloomingdale Asylum they have already started ‘to procure persons of intelligence, education and disciplined passions’ (*Journalism*, 87), which for her presented certainly a step forward. However, she hoped that the future attendants would not only be good-natured, intelligent, and educated persons, but that they would be specially educated for their work with the morally and mentally insane (*Journalism*, 87).

Margaret Fuller was even as courageous as to show concern for the welfare of prostitutes, in a time where upper-middle-class women, like herself, usually ignored the fact that prostitution existed, because by talking about it they could risk their social standing.<sup>207</sup> In her article “Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts” she shows that the aim of such an institution is to help these women to be able to start a new life after they leave this refuge, by ‘instruct[ing] them how to break up bad habits and begin a healthy course for body and mind’ (*Journalism*, 94). However, this asylum needed financial support, since it could offer neither furniture nor food or intellectual diet to its convicts. Thus, Margaret Fuller hoped, appealing to everybody, that they would make donations in the form of furniture, clothes, and books that they no longer needed to the asylum (*Journalism*, 94). A year before, when she visited some prostitutes at a prison, writing that the interview with them ‘was very pleasant’ (*Letters* III, 237), she afterwards wrote a letter to them telling them that they would receive books from some women from Boston, whom she had asked to do so. She believed that reading some good books would morally improve them.

Should you acquire a habit of making good books your companions they will form your minds to a love of better pleasures than you have hitherto possessed. In those cases – and they are the greater number – where a naturally good disposition has been obscured by neglect in childhood and a want of proper food for the mind and heart, the wheat will have a chance to grow up and the tares to be choked by acquaintance with pure thoughts and the better purposes for which life was intended by its Giver. (*Letters* III, 238)

Margaret Fuller, which this quote also indicates, did not hold those women reliable for their own plight, but saw the failure of their lives among other things in the way they were raised. This becomes more obvious in the following quote where she urges women to ‘[s]eek out these degraded

---

<sup>207</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 51-52.

women, [to] give them tender sympathy, counsel, employment. Take the place of mothers, such as might have saved them originally' (*Woman*, 87).

She did not only believe in the goodness of these female convicts, but as Mitchell states, she 'argued the goodness of all people' (Mitchell, 54), because for her, sin 'may be traced back to hereditary taint, bad education or corrupting influences of a half-civilized state' (*Journalism*, 106). Thus, even if a man be 'sick, brutalized, contaminated', he should 'be esteemed and cared for as men, and all possible chance of self-recovery allowed them' (*Journalism*, 106). Education, books, employment, entertainment is however not all that she asks for, but she also asks for the help of every man

feel[ing] that the time is come which not only permits, but demands, a wider statement, and a nobler action. The aspect of society presents mighty problems, which must be solved by the soul of Man "divinely intending" itself to the task, or all will become worse instead of better, and ere long the social fabric totter to decay. (*Journalism*, 55)

Moreover, for these institutions to work well, it was extremely important for her that they were led by people suited for it, not appointed to these offices because of their political standing.

The Country, the State, should look to it that only those fit for such officers should be chosen for such, apart from all consideration of political party. Let this be thought of; for without an absolute change in this respect no permanent good whatever can be effected. (*Journalism*, 93)

Criticizing the defects of those institutions, she did not only reserve this right to make others aware of shortcomings for herself, but wrote that '[a]ll criticism, however imperfect, should be welcome' (*Journalism*, 93). Seeing that only by publicly declaring the fault of the institutions, things could be improved, hoping, and seeing 'no reason why New York should not become a model for other States in these things' (*Journalism*, 93).

Margaret Fuller must have certainly known that without her education she would not have been able to live the life she did, taking care of her family, not feeling forced to marry, writing books, working as a journalist, and traveling through the West and later to Europe, and, thus, the importance that she laid on a good education becomes clear. Women should have the possibility of a good education as well as the insane, prisoners, prostitutes,

the poor, simply every American. Therefore, the plan of preparing teachers for their task before sending them to a school was warmly welcomed by her, for example, having a school in Cincinnati for that purpose. Offering a good education to everyone throughout the nation, she was sure would benefit the country.

The plan is offered as the most extensive and pliant means of doing a [sic!] good and preventing ill to this nation, by means of national education, whose normal school shall have an invariable object in the search after truth and the diffusion of the means of knowledge, while its form shall be plastic according to the wants of the time. (*Journalism*, 132)

Educating the students 'according to the want of the time' showed that she was also aware of the fact that a good education alone would not be satisfactory, but that it was necessary that the education they received would prepare them for life (*Journalism*, 132). In her farewell essay for the *Tribune*, before she left for Europe, she writes that in 'the superlative importance of promoting National Education [...] [she] [has] received much encouragement, much instruction, and the fairest hopes of more' (*Journalism*, 204), leaving America probably with a good feeling about the future of its national education.

Traveling in Europe, she also visited social institutions, such 'as the French night school for working classes; [...] or day-care centers, where working mothers could leave their children; and the School for Idiots' (Warren, 83), a school where despite the fact that the inhabitants were mentally deficient, they still tried to educate and train them. Hoping that her nation would become an example in moral questions, she naturally hoped that such institutions would be soon established in the United States.<sup>208</sup> However, what she was still more interested in was the struggle of Italy to become an independent nation.

Coming from a nation that now enjoyed being an independent state for more than 50 years, after being subordinated to the British Empire, she felt united with the people of Italy who were now fighting for freedom from Austrian rule.<sup>209</sup> She had observed that in her country, men were

---

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Warren, 83.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Hudspeth, *Letters* V, 11.

willing to sell shamelessly, the happiness of countless generations of fellow-creatures, the honor of their country, and their immortal souls, for a money market and political power. (*Woman*, 98)

Not thinking about the future of the young nation of America or how they could aid it, for it to become a great nation, but only thinking about their own advantages, living by the slogan 'More money – more land!' (Fuller, quoted in Allen, 130), the people of America had disappointed her. Therefore, she wrote in a letter to her friend James Freeman Clarke in 1849 that there was no reason for her to come back to the United States, because the Italians in contrast to America offered her not only a great past, but also a way of living at the present to which she agreed.

Here is a great past and a *living* present. Here men live for something else beside money and systems, the voice of noble sentiment is understood, nor are they catiff in action. 'Tis a sphere much more natural to me than what the old puritans or the modern bankers have made. I would not have been born in this age other than an American for America is the land of promise but I was somewhat tired of so much promise. (*Letters V*, 174)

Although life in Italy appealed more to her at that time, she still believed in her country. However, observing the Italians, the wrongs of her own country became evident. In a dispatch for the *New York Tribune*, from April 1848, she wrote:

My friends write to urge my return; they talk of our country as the land of the Future. It is so, but that spirit which made it all it is of value in my eyes, which gave all of hope with which I can sympathize for that Future, is more alive here at present than in America. My country is at present spoiled by prosperity, stupid with the lust of gain, soiled by crime in its willing perpetuation of Slavery, shamed by an unjust war, noble sentiment much forgotten even by individuals, the aims of politicians selfish or petty, the literature frivolous and venal. In Europe, amid the teachings of adversity a nobler spirit is struggling – a spirit which cheers and animates mine. I hear earnest words of pure faith and love. I see deeds of brotherhood. This is what makes *my* America. I do not deeply distrust my country. She is not dead, but in a time she sleepth, and the spirit of our fathers flames no more, but lies hid beneath the ashes. But it is not the making [*sic!*] a President out of the Mexican War that would make me wish to come back. Here things are before my eyes worth recording, and, if I cannot help this work, I would gladly be its historian. (*Dispatches*, 230)

Being drawn into the revolution for freedom and unity of Italy, she hoped that her country, which had been in the same situation as Italy, and, therefore, should feel with the people of this country, would

at least aid[...] by private contributions'. [...] It would make me proud to have my country show a religious faith in the progress of ideas, and make some small sacrifice of its own great resources in aid of a sister cause, now. (*At Home and Abroad*, 361)

Margaret Fuller believed that nations in the future would be governed by their people and that monarchies would come to an end, as she writes 'all Europe, including Great Britain, where the most bitter resistance of all will be made, is to be under Republican Government in the next century' (*Dispatches*, 278), and, therefore, she asks not only her countrymen who already enjoyed being a free and united nation, but everyone else who believed in such a system, not to turn their heads away, but to help in the struggle for freedom.

Friends, countrymen, and lovers of virtue, lovers of freedom, lovers of truth! Be on the alert; rest not supine in your easier lives, but remember "Mankind is one, And beats with one great heart." (*At Home and Abroad*, 421)

Unfortunately, Margaret Fuller's fear that the Italians would not be successful in their fight for independence turned out to be true.<sup>210</sup> Nevertheless, one could argue that she still believed that there would be an independent Italy in the future, since her belief in the freedom of nations from the rule of foreign governments was deeply rooted in her. The reason for this argument is that in a dispatch from Rome from May 1849 she writes that she told the people of Italy that she had hope for their country to become a free and united nation, because being born in the young American nation, 'freed by eight years' patient suffering, poverty and struggle', she writes that '[i]t is natural that [she] should have some faith' (*Dispatches*, 283-84). In addition, feeling disappointed about the defeat of the Italians, she writes in a dispatch from Florence in November 1849 that she was happy to find out 'how cordially America sympathized' with Italy 'lov[ing] her country for the spirit she has shown; it proves that the lust of gold, her peculiar temptation, has not yet cankered her noble heart' (*Dispatches*, 316). Being strengthened in her faith

---

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Hudspeth, *Letters* V, 9.

that America could become a great nation, she writes that ‘America is the star of hope to the enclaved nations’ (*Dispatches*, 316). The following quote presents her strong faith in America and love for America even more clearly.

“Long live the Republic, and may God bless the cause of the People, the brotherhood of nations and of men – the equality of rights for all.”  
*Viva America!*  
 Hail to my country! May she live a free, a glorious, a loving life, and not perish, like the old dominions, from the leprosy of selfishness.  
 (*Dispatches*, 284)

Concluding this chapter, it should be mentioned that although Margaret Fuller admired the European countries, she, as Birkle points out, ‘wish[ed] for a culturally independent America’ (Birkle, 509). Moreover, as this chapter makes clear she ‘want[s] national and individual independence without violence for all social groups, with the individual as the basis for a form of democracy in which freedom stands at the center’ (Birkle, 509). Her belief that the individual forms the basis, leads to her belief that the individual must also be active for the good cause, writing that she ‘feel[s] that every man must struggle with these enormous ills in some way’ to ‘get free from all they deprecate in society’ (*Letters II*, 205). This must have been also the reason why she had ‘had in view to let all kinds of people have freedom to say their say, for better, for worse’ (*Letters III*, 58), when working for the *Dial*, because she believed that the individual could make a change. Because she felt that she herself could reach and help some people by working as a journalist for the *Tribune*, ‘enabling [her] to speak effectually some right words to a large circle’ (*Letters IV*, 39), she highly valued her position.

Summing up, her aim was to emancipate American society from all its moral ills, presenting ideas on how it could achieve to become the “moral nation” that she saw for its destiny.

We doubt not the destiny of our country – that she is to accomplish great things for human nature, and be the mother of a nobler race than the world has yet known. (Fuller, quoted in Allen, 129)

Trying to improve the social situation in America in general, she was above all concerned with the emancipation of women, the situation of Native

Americans, and the emancipation of African Americans. These three groups will now be presented in the next three chapters respectively.

## 5.2 Emancipation of Women

Heaven, I think, must have some important task before us for women, it sends so many little girls. (*Letters IV*, 126)

Margaret Fuller believed in the equality of the sexes, and, therefore, she argues that the 'conditions of life and freedom' should be 'recognized as the same for the daughters and the sons of the time' (*Woman*, 5), whose welfare was of equal importance to her. Man and woman were for her two halves that belonged together, moreover, which needed each other in order to develop (*Woman*, 5), which was clearly one of the reasons for Margaret Fuller why women should be emancipated.

In the preface to *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, she informs her readers that '[b]y Man [she] mean[s] both man and woman' (*Woman*, 5). In addition, she asks her female readership to 'ascertain what is for them the liberty of law', and urges them to follow her suggestions if interested in them, moreover, 'to search their own experience and intuitions for better, and fill up with fit materials the trenches that hedge them in' (*Woman*, 5). She not only tells women what they ought to do, but also men, asking of them 'a noble and earnest attention to any thing that can be offered on this great and still obscure subject', adding that she has already seen such a noble and earnest attention 'from many with whom [she] stand[s] in private relations' (*Woman*, 5-6). She may have added this, not only because it was true, but because she knew that it was probably more difficult to win a man over for this subject, and in order to open up their hearts for the plight of women showed them that, although a man, they could sympathize with this topic, in other words, telling them that what other men could do they could do too. However, even though her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is her most important work concerning the emancipation of women, her few articles on this subject in the *New York Tribune* as well as her Boston Conversations were platforms from which she tried to convince women that there was more to life than they had been told.



Margaret Fuller was not the first woman to demand equal rights for women. Women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Martineau, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were prominent in the cause for women's rights as well, and may have influenced Fuller in her thinking. Except for her predecessor Mary Wollstonecraft, she may have also influenced the other women that have just been mentioned. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for instance, who had attended a series of Fuller's conversations, once said that these conversations were 'a vindication of woman's right to think' (Stanton, quoted in Kelley, 195). This quote shows that Margaret Fuller must have had an influence on Elizabeth Cady Stanton, but also on other women, if she had opened them the way to think freely for themselves. Such a wish had already been presented by her friend Emerson, who had argued that men should form their own ideas and not imitate others, and if a man followed this principle, he would be a '*Man Thinking*' (Emerson, *Essays*, 46). Thus, according to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Fuller has created a "Woman Thinking". Fuller's intention was to show them that they had a mind of their own by involving them in discussions on various topics, which, as Von Mehren points out, dealt especially later on in her series of conversations with topics concerning woman's life (118). She also brought up questions that were for her 'the great questions. What are we born to do? How shall we do it?' questions that, she argued, 'few ever propose to themselves 'till their best years are gone by' (*Letters* II, 87). By these questions, she demonstrated that there were no limitations to what they could think and talk about, as profound as they might ever be. These are questions which are relevant for everyone, male and female. Thus, she not only offered them intellectual input, but also liberated them to think more freely about the various topics that life afforded. Ednah Dow Cheney, who had attended Fuller's conversations, was truly inspired by them, writing of Margaret Fuller in 1902 that

[t]o this day, I am astonished to find how large a part of 'what I am when I am most myself' I have derived from her. [...] I was eager enough for any intellectual advantage, [...] and although I believed that I should learn from her, I had no idea that I should esteem, and, much more, love her. I found myself in a new world of thought; a flood of light irradiated all that I had seen in nature, observed in life, or read in books. Whatever she spoke of revealed a hidden meaning, and everything seemed to be put into true relation. Perhaps I could best express it by

saying that I was no longer the limitation of myself, but I felt that whole wealth of the universe was open to me. It was this consciousness of the illimitable ego, the divinity in the soul, which was so real to Margaret herself, and what she meant in her great saying "I accept the universe," which gave her that air of regal superiority which was misinterpreted as conceit.

Perhaps I can best give you an idea of what she was to me by an answer which I made to her. [...] [S]he said, "Is life rich to you?" and I replied, "It is since I have known you." Such was the response of many a youthful heart to her, and herein was her wonderful influence. She did not make us her disciples, her blind followers. She opened the book of life to us and helped us to read it for ourselves. (Ednah Dow Cheney, quoted in Chevigny, 230-31)

This quote clearly shows what an impact Margaret Fuller had on other women. Writing that she no longer felt limited by herself, becoming conscious about the illimitable ego, and that Margaret Fuller had opened the book of life, not denying them to use all the new information freely for themselves, shows that this woman really felt liberated. This influence which Margaret Fuller had on Ednah Dow Cheney must have also been the foundation-stone for her future life, in which she became active in different reforms, and the rights of women in the fields of suffrage and education became her central focus after the Civil War.<sup>211</sup> Thus, with her conversations, Margaret Fuller had already managed to emancipate some women, opening up 'a new world' for them, and giving them the courage to leave their passive lives and become active in reforming American society.

In an article for the *New York Tribune*, she defended herself against an attack made by a rival newspaper, who argued that as a woman she should not take up subjects that were out of a woman's reach. She countered their offensive writing that

[she was] not aware that the Bible, or the welfare of human beings were subjects improper for the consideration of 'females,' [...]. On occasions where the theme is purely intellectual we had supposed that, in all civilized communities, the question was, Is the mode of treating the subject noble, the statement commanding, the thought just? or the reverse? and that, in either case, it mattered not whether the mind from which a statement originated was placed here on earth, as man or as woman. (*Journalism*, 161)

---

<sup>211</sup> Cf. Chevigny, 230.

As Mitchell points out, Margaret Fuller believed that it was ‘a woman’s right to think and debate independently,’ because ‘a woman’s mind had the same power as a man’s. Therefore, a woman had the intellectual capacity to take on any topic’ (Mitchell, 127). ‘They have intellect which needs developing’ she writes in *Woman*, and, thus, argues ‘that the aim certainly is, now, in arranging school instruction for girls, to give them as fair a field as boys’ (*Woman*, 56). In order to improve the education for girls the person who gives the instruction has to be changed. She points out that women only taught what they had learned themselves, and, thus, in order for girls to receive a more profound education, they should be taught by men. Until then, women were usually only taught to become good housewives and ‘the ornaments of society’ (*Summer*, 39). In the article “The Wrongs of American Women, The Duty of American Women,” she writes about this problem as well.

Her youth is to be passed partly learning to keep house and the use of the needle, partly in the social circle where her manners may be formed, ornamental accomplishments perfected and displayed, and the husband found who shall give her the domestic sphere for which exclusively she is to be prepared. (*Journalism*, 128)

Especially when traveling to the western frontier, she perceived how ill such an education had prepared women for their new life, a life they often only led because they followed their husbands’ wishes. She had expected to find women that took advantage of the freedom of the West, but was confronted with discontented women who were holding on to their former lives.<sup>212</sup> She points out that ‘their part is the hardest, and [that] they are least fitted for it’ (*Summer*, 38), and that she only met one content woman and all the others ‘found themselves confined to a comfortless and laborious indoor life’ (*Summer*, 72). Nevertheless, Margaret Fuller noted that the problem that they were not prepared for their new lives was not the only thing that kept them from living a better life. As she writes in *Summer on the Lakes*, ‘It is always thus with the new form of life; we must learn to look at it by its own standard’ (*Summer*, 22), and these women failed to do so, by not being able to leave their European way of living behind. Thus they, for example, brought their pianos with them instead of bringing a guitar with them, as she suggested

---

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Von Mehren, 179.

would be more suitable, since they could not tune their pianos themselves anyway (*Summer*, 40). This is only one suggestion made by Margaret Fuller, but it shows that women could improve their lives. However, they did not even try to adopt to the new circumstances, maybe because they feared that they, thus, would leave the sphere intended for them and become unwomanly.

Everywhere the fatal spirit of imitation, of reference to European standards, penetrates, and threatens to blight whatever of original growth might adorn the soil. (*Summer*, 39)

She argued that they were not even aware of the fact that this spirit of imitation caused their own unhappiness, which they were passing on to their daughters, because they gave them the same education that they had received, thus, making them also unfit for life at the frontier.<sup>213</sup>

[...] but methods copied from the education of some English Lady Augusta, are as ill suited to the daughter of an Illinois farmer, as satin shoes to climb the Indian mounds. (*Summer*, 39)

Margaret Fuller wished for the little girls to 'grow up with the strength of body, dexterity, simple tastes, and resources that would fit them to enjoy and refine the western farmer's life' (*Summer*, 39). Therefore, she argued that it would be necessary to change the education of the young girls in order to be able to enjoy this new life, and take advantage of the new possibilities that they might have in the West.

I earnestly hope that, ere long, the existence of good schools near themselves, planned by persons of sufficient thought to meet the wants of the place and time, instead of copying New York or Boston [...]. (*Summer*, 39)

She also writes that it is the duty of the parents to raise their children in a way that they could be able to live at the frontier, and also points out that 'the meaning of our star' is 'that here all men being free and equal, all should be fitted for freedom and an independence by his own resources' (*Summer*, 77). Besides the fact that girls 'have intellect which needs developing' (*Summer*, 56), Margaret Fuller, as so often points to the Declaration of Independence, according to which they, moreover, have a right to receive the same

---

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Blanchard, 203.

education as boys. And a proper education for girls would then enable girls and women to emancipate themselves.

The situation of the women in the West reminded her of 'how unfit she sometimes felt for the life she longed for', blaming women's education and the set out gender roles for making it difficult 'to adapt to their time and place' (Fish, 121). Experiencing the life of women in the West, Margaret Fuller must have certainly been disappointed, since, as Baym points out, she had imagined the emerging nation to be a place

in which nations in time exemplify the unfolding of ideas, and in which the mental emancipation of women, the increasing recognition that they are human beings and individual souls, signifies a world progress identified particularly with the United States, where the doctrine that all men are created equal 'cannot fail sooner or later to be acted out' (Baym, 229)

Unfortunately, she found out that America did not become a nation of freedom and a nation where women were equal to men, not even in the West.<sup>214</sup> Thus, it can be argued that her experiences on the trip to the West reinforced her in her wish to help to liberate women. Writing about education for girls in her book *Woman*, that appeared on the market two years after her trip to the West, she also points out that what is important of an education is that it must meet 'the wants of the time' (*Woman*, 56). She clearly perceived that without a proper education, women would not have a fair chance regarding equality. Thus, education was an important factor for her in the emancipation of women.

Give the soul free course, let the organization, both of body and mind, be freely developed, and the being will be fit for any and every relation to which it may be called. (*Woman*, 56)

This quote also shows that Margaret Fuller looked at women as souls. As Crouse points out, 'Fuller grounds her argument on the transcendentalist understanding of the primacy of spirit over matter' (Crouse, 269), and looking at women as souls, was for her an argument that they should be allowed to vote (259). In her book *Woman* she writes that '[i]f the negro be a soul, if the woman be a soul, apparelled in flesh, to one Master only are they accountable. There is but one law for souls' (*Woman*, 20). This, moreover,

---

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Fish, 100.

indicates that men do not have the right to dispose of women, or any other human being. As Davis points out,

Fuller carries transcendentalist thought beyond where any of the other followers were willing to go, because in identifying the spirit as primary, biological differences become secondary and inconsequential, thus laying the ground for seeing men and women with similar natures rather than different. [...] Although she did not have the theoretical vocabulary that modern feminists have, her language implies a surprisingly modern understanding of gender as constructed rather than essential. (Davis, quoted in Crouse, 270, 273)

Her own upbringing had shown her that gender roles are constructed and do not simply exist, since she was brought up like a boy. Crouse states in her article, 'Fuller herself became a living experiment in the social construction of gender' (Crouse, 273). Fuller writes in her book *Woman* 'there is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman' (*Woman*, 68-69).

The growth of man is two-fold, masculine and feminine. [...] These two sides are supposed to be expressed in man and woman, that is, as the more and less, for the faculties have not been given pure to either, but only in preponderance. [...] There cannot be doubt that, if these two developments were in perfect harmony, they would correspond to and fulfil one another [...]. But there is no perfect harmony in human nature; and the two parts answer one another only now and then. (*Woman*, 99-100)

She argues that the reason for it is that man 'was developed first', and that instead of teaching woman, he made her his subject, not knowing that 'he could never reach his true proportions while she remained in any wise shorn of hers' (*Woman*, 100). In order to become a complete human being it is necessary for men to start to view women as their counterparts and not their subjects. Therefore, she argues that 'improvement in the daughters will aid in the reformation of the sons of this age' (*Woman*, 12). However, in order to achieve complete existence women must also contribute to it. For instance, she sees that women often degrade themselves into being mere bodies by dressing improperly according to season and place, only to gain the attention of men. She, moreover, presents a letter written by John Quincy Adams, in which he writes that young ladies should 'not take the flattery of men as proof of perfection' (*Woman*, 85).<sup>215</sup> Women must stop reducing themselves to mere bodies and longing for the attention of men, because such behavior

---

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Woman*, 86, 84.

only confirmed the belief of men who already entertained a low opinion of women.<sup>216</sup> What she asks of women is that they become independent of man, and to do so they should

lay aside all thought, such as she habitually cherishes, of being taught and led by men. [...] I would have her free from compromise, from complaisance, from helplessness, because I would have her good enough and strong enough to love one and all beings, from the fullness, not the poverty of being. (*Woman*, 71)

As Blanchard points out, here Fuller's transcendentalist notion of self-reliance comes into effect (215). As she writes herself at the end of her book *Woman*:

I have urged upon the sex self-subsistence in its two forms of self-reliance and self-impulse, because I believe them to be the needed means of the present juncture. (*Woman*, 103)

With an invented story about a woman called Miranda, with whose life she mirrored her own, she showed women that they could reach self-reliance and independence in their lives if they wanted to, writing that

[o]f Miranda [she] had always thought as an example, that the restraints upon the sex were insuperable only to those who think them so [...]. She had taken a course of her own, and no man stood in her way. (*Woman*, 21)

However, her character Miranda acknowledges that not all women had the privilege of having a father who regarded them as intellectual beings, equal to men. She, moreover, points out that her self-dependence, although honored in her, was usually something disapproved of in women, holding men reliable for this wrong. The reason why it was accepted in her was that

the position [she] early was enabled to take was one of self-reliance. And were all women as sure of their wants as [she] was, the result would be the same. But they are so overloaded with precepts by guardians, who think that nothing is so much to be dreaded for a woman as originality of thought or character, that their minds are impeded by doubts till they lose their chance of fair free proportions. The difficulty is to get them to the point from which they shall naturally develop [sic!] self-respect, and learn self-help. (*Woman*, 22)

Margaret Fuller understood that it was difficult to rise above the life that society, their families and husbands had set up for them. Nevertheless, she tried to raise awareness in women that they could, if they would allow

---

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Woman*, 86.

themselves to find out what they themselves wanted, be able to live a life such as Miranda, or she herself, did: 'The world was free to her, and she lived freely in it' (*Woman*, 21). However, it should be noted that Margaret Fuller did not always feel herself as free as her character Miranda did, struggling herself with the strict gender roles of her time.

Especially in her book *Woman* she showed her readership, both female and male, where improvements in the lives of women could be carried out, where the faults in the relationship between man and woman lay, and what women are capable of doing, by presenting them some successful women of past times and also the present time, trying to build women's self-reliance.

For Fuller, marriage was one of the main problems, since the institution of marriage helps men to keep women under their control. She writes that it '[i]s the very fault of marriage, and of the present relation between the sexes, that the woman does belong to the man, instead of forming a whole with him' (*Woman*, 103). Women, instead of being equal partners, are treated like children by their husbands, as the common phrase 'Tell that to women and children' (*Woman*, 18) shows. The fact is that women have not been raised to live according to their own beliefs. On getting married their husbands then try to keep them from rising above their sphere. Thus, lacking self-reliance and self-dependence, they simply did not have the chance to become equal partners. As Fuller points out, '[n]ow there is no woman, only an overgrown child', therefore, a necessary step is that they learn that they 'must be able to stand alone' (*Woman*, 103). Not allowing them to develop their powers freely had led to this dilemma. She writes that a father wishes the best for his daughter, and that between father and daughter 'the right relation between the sexes seems established, and you feel as if the man would aid in the noblest purpose, if you ask him in behalf of his little daughter' (*Woman*, 71). Nevertheless, even a man who only wished the best for his daughter was so strongly influenced by society that his aim was to prepare his daughter for marriage only.

"I shall not have Maria brought too forward. If she knows too much, she will never find a husband; superior women hardly ever can."



“Surely,” said his wife, with a blush, “you wish Maria to be as good and wise as she can, whether it will help her to marriage or not.”

“No,” he persisted, “I want her to have a sphere and a home, and some one to protect her when I am gone.” (*Woman*, 71)

Although he only wants to secure his daughter’s future life, he fails to notice that he would best aid her if he would help her to become a strong and intelligent woman, giving her the chance to live a life according to her wishes, without the need for a husband to be her guardian. Thus, like other men, he forgets that a woman, as Margaret Fuller has pointed out, is a soul like man, and identifies her as a mere body that is in need of protection by man. Thus, a girl was raised ‘into the belief that she must marry, if it be only to find a protector and a home of her own’ (*Woman*, 41). Even if a father, looking at women as bodies rather than souls, gives his daughter away to a bad man, she does not rebel against such a union, because she simply does not know any better.

The daughter is ignorant; something in the mind of the new spouse seems strange to her, but she supposes it is “woman’s lot” not to be perfectly happy in her affections; she has always heard, “men could not understand women,” so she weeps alone, or takes to dress and the duties of the house. (*Woman*, 90)

What Margaret Fuller wants her readers to become aware of is that women were so taken up by the belief that marriage was a necessity that they accepted a man as a husband whether he treated her well or not. If women were raised to become strong and independent women and able to build up self-reliance, women would only get married if they themselves wished so, but not because they felt they needed to.

Margaret Fuller presents to her readers four different kinds of marriages in which equality of the partners is achieved, showing them that not all husbands treat their wives as if they were their property, and, moreover, that it does not have to be that way. The first one she calls ‘the household partnership’, in which man and woman support each other, understanding that this would make life easier for both of them. ‘The wife praises her husband as a “good provider;” the husband, in return, compliments her as a “capital housekeeper.” This relation is good as far as it goes’ (*Woman*, 42). Although Margaret Fuller knows that a marriage could be more, she does not regard it as poor, since women in such marriages are

regarded as equal partners by their husbands. The second kind of marriage, the marriage of 'mutual idolatry,' she believes keeps them from developing their powers, while in the marriage of 'intellectual companionship' man and wife do not hinder each other, but become 'companions and confidants in thought no less than in feeling' (*Woman*, 42), because they 'meet mind to mind' (*Woman*, 46). The marriage of Mary Wollstonecraft, who had written the book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, and William Godwin serves her here as an example, showing that men could love women of intellect, and that men did understand women. She writes that '[h]e believed he saw of what soul she was [...]. He loved her, and he defended her for the meaning and tendency of her inner life' (*Woman* 43-44). She adds here that women such as Mary Wollstonecraft or George Sand were born into 'a place so narrow, that, in breaking bonds they become outlaws' (*Woman*, 44). Such women, she argues, show that it was time that the rights for women were revised.

After presenting the marriage of intellectual companionship, she presents '[t]he fourth and highest grade of marriage union, [...] the religious.' This marriage is the complete one, combining all others in it; 'home sympathies and household wisdom' and 'intellectual communion' (*Woman*, 48). To show that such a union truly exists, she tells her readers about the marriage of the Count and Countess Zinzendorf. He, as Fuller points out, saw in his wife an equal partner who was there for him in every part of life, and

[s]he was not made to be a copy; she was an original; and, while she loved and honored him, she thought for herself, on all subjects, with so much intelligence, that he could and did look on her as sister and friend also. (*Woman*, 49)

This shows how, according to Fuller, marriage should be, and her wish that women should strive to become the companions of men, not less. As she writes in her article "The Wrongs of American Women, The Duty of American Women", she trusts that in the

coming time, the minds of women will be formed to more reflection and higher purposes than heretofore – their latent powers developed, their characters strengthened and eventually beautified and harmonized. [...] Men will be no less the gainers by this than women, finding in pure and more religious marriages the joys of friendship and love combined – in

their mothers and daughters better instruction, sweeter and nobler companionship, and in society at large an excitement to their finer powers and feelings unknown at the present [...]. (*Journalism*, 130)

If woman pursued becoming an equal partner in marriage, the ideal that Goethe had in mind of married women could become reality. For him, as Fuller writes, 'the excellent woman is she, who, if the husband dies, can be a father to the children', and she adds, '[a]nd this if read aright, tells a great deal' (*Woman*, 65). That is, if a woman can care for her children as a father does, she must have an equal stand in marriage, and be able to live without a man as a guardian; thus, Goethe's view was welcomed by her.

A great number of women, as she points out, often had to find their way through life by themselves, since not all women, 'if not the better half, do not, CANNOT, have this domestic sphere' (*Journalism*, 129). She may have written that those women might be the better ones, since she herself at that time belonged to the group 'contemptuously designated as old maids' (*Woman*, 57). However, she did not look at this group with pity, but points out their advantages, arguing that such a position 'may be of inestimable benefit. The person may gain, undistracted by other relationships, a closer communion with the one' (*Woman*, 57). Besides the belief that such persons are closer to God, she writes that living a single life, a woman does not

need[...] to care that she may please a husband, [...]her thoughts may turn to the centre, and she may, by steadfast contemplation entering into the secret of truth and love, use it for the use of all men, instead of a chosen few, and interpret through it all the forms of life. (*Woman*, 58)

Maybe this was also a reason why she herself only got married late in life, because, as this quote shows, she therefore had the chance of living a more profound life, independently of man.

However, as Blanchard points out, 'she is not advising women en masse to remain celibate all their lives, only until they are strong enough to choose freely whether to marry or not' (Blanchard, 219). It is her belief that if they first live 'for God's sake', listening to their inner voice, they would choose a husband more carefully. Moreover, she tells women that they do not need to fear that by following their own needs and wishes they become unwomanly, writing that '[b]y being more a soul, she will not be less woman, for nature is perfected through spirit' (*Woman*, 103).

In order to live an independent life, another important thing that needs to be improved in the life of women is their place in the world of work. In an article for the *Tribune* she writes ‘that there is an imperative necessity for opening more avenues of employment to women, and fitting them better to enter them, rather than keeping them back’ (*Journalism*, 130). Here the importance of a good and profound education comes in, being a crucial point in emancipating women, since the common education for women at that time did not provide them with the means to take up other occupations than that of teacher and nurse. These were two professions, for which, as Fuller points out, ‘they are naturally better fitted than men’ (*Journalism*, 131). Nevertheless, she still saw a need for educating them properly for these jobs, so that they could perform them even better.

But Fuller does not reduce their possibilities for occupation to these two jobs, but writes that to an answer concerning

what offices they may fill; I reply – any. I do not care what case you put; let them be sea-captains, if you will. I do not doubt there are women well fitted for such an office, and, if so, I should be glad to see them in it. (*Woman*, 102)

She views employment for women as especially important in their emancipation, since many women only live their lives according to their husbands’ wishes, not having another possibility. She criticizes this fact by telling the readers of her book about an old woman who had lived with her husband in a remote place. When asked why she had chosen such a place she answered that ‘[s]he “did not know; *it was the man’s notion*”’ (*Woman*, 102).

Employment would not only help women to become independent, but it would, moreover, if they practice something that they really like, satisfy them, as she noticed when observing some young girls.

In families that I know, some little girls like to saw wood, others to use carpenter’s tools. Where these tastes are indulged, cheerfulness and good humor are promoted. Where they are forbidden, because “such things are not proper for girls,” they grow sullen and mischievous. (*Woman*, 102)

‘If nature is never bound down, nor the voice of inspiration stifled, that is enough’ (*Woman*, 47), she writes. Thus, all she asks for is that women have

the chance to find out what best suits them, without any restrictions laid on what occupations they are able to take up.

As mentioned before, Margaret Fuller argues that there is no pure man, and no pure woman, but that men can also display characteristics that are rather associated with women, and the other way around. Therefore, she did not see any barriers to what job a woman, but also a man, could carry out. She presents Fourier's view on the topic of women's employment, who 'in proposing a great variety of employments, [...] allows for one third of woman, as likely to have a taste for masculine pursuits, one third of men for feminine' (*Woman*, 102). This clearly matches Fuller's notion.

Even though she tells women that they could take up any job they like, does not mean that she does not respect the work of a mother and housewife. The only thing that she criticizes about this job is that many women carry it out not because they like to, but because they have to.

[W]e have high respect for those who cook something good, who create and preserve fair order in houses, and prepare therein the shining raiment for worthy inmates, worthy guests. Only these "functions" must not be a drudgery, or enforced necessity, but a part of life. (*Woman*, 24)

However, she overlooks that in a family somebody needs to take care of the children and the house, that they do not have a choice unless they have money enough to employ somebody for these duties. Nevertheless, it certainly was important to show that women could take up other occupations as well, and, thus, breaking up this domestic sphere as the only place for women. On the other hand, she knew that many women might still go on being housewives, since many of them did enjoy it, as she writes:

I have no doubt, however, that a large proportion of women would give themselves to the same employments as now, because there are circumstances that must lead them. Mothers will delight to make the nest soft and warm. Nature would take care of that; no need to clip the wings of any bird that wants to soar and sing, or finds in itself the strength of pinion for a migratory flight unusual to its kind. The difference would be that *all* need not be constrained to employments, for which *some* are unfit. (*Woman*, 103)

Women who were 'fit' to speak in public, such as Angelina Grimké and Abby Kelly, who like Angelina Grimké was an abolitionist and besides also a women's rights lecturer, were examples given by her to show that women

could take up other occupations as well. However, she also points out that they had to endure being 'a centre of rude eyes and tongues' (*Woman*, 66), because not everyone was willing to acknowledge that women could be public speakers, for instance. Nevertheless, being true to her readers about the situation of women that already had the courage to leave the domestic sphere, she also shows them that there were men who were in favor of an emancipation of women. Such a man was her friend Dr. Channing, who had been in contact with women such as Angelina Grimké and Harriet Martineau. He understood their 'indignation at the base injustice, in many respects, and in many regions, done to the sex' (*Woman*, 67), and he 'regarded them as souls, each of which had a destiny of its own, [...] whose leading it must follow, guided by the light of a private conscience' (*Woman*, 66). This was also the belief of Charles Fourier, who hoped that 'freedom for individual growth [...] shall exist', and who like Dr. Channing 'place[d] woman on an entire equality with man' (*Woman*, 73). Even though there were men like Dr. Channing and Charles Fourier, who wished for women to have the same rights as men, she saw that it was up to women in the first place to change their situation.

I believe that, at present, women are the best helpers of one another. Let them think; let them act; till they know what they need. We only ask of men to remove arbitrary barriers. Some would like to do more. But I believe it needs for woman to show herself in her native dignity, to teach them how to aid her; their minds are so encumbered by tradition. (*Woman*, 101)

Moreover, she argues that women do have the power to become active for their own cause, writing that 'woman has always power enough, if she choose to exert it' (*Woman*, 35). Indeed, there were women who did use their power and were successful, showing that they were equal to men. By presenting such women throughout her book,

[she] [had] aimed to show that no age was left entirely without a witness of the equality of the sexes in function, duty, and hope. Also that, when there was unwillingness or ignorance, which prevented this being acted upon, women had not the less power for their want of light and noble freedom. (*Woman*, 101)

To conclude this chapter, what Margaret Fuller tried to achieve especially with her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, with which, Rosenthal

argues, '[she] introduced to America the genre of women's liberation books' (Rosenthal, vii), was to show women that they had the power and intellectual capacities to liberate themselves, and were equal to men. Her wish for herself and all other women was that they could live a life as free as men, since she believed that it was the 'birthright of every being capable to receive it, - the freedom, the religious freedom of the universe, to use its means; to learn its secret as far as nature has enabled them' (*Woman*, 36), and that 'the inward and outward freedom for woman as much as for man shall be acknowledged as a right, not yielded as a concession' (*Woman*, 20). In addition, living in a nation that held as a principle that 'all men are created equal', and living in a time of change, seeing that other women stood up for women's rights hoping for their emancipation as well, she believed that the time was right in which an improvement of the life of women could be achieved.

I have believed and intimated that this hope would receive an ampler fruition, than ever before, in our land.

And it will do so if this land carry out the principles from which sprang our national life. (*Woman*, 101)

### 5.3 Native Americans

In 1843, Margaret Fuller went on a trip to the West, which in the mid-nineteenth century included the states and territories of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan, also referred to as the Great Lakes region. Only after her first encounter with Native Americans did she have the 'feeling that [she] really approached the West' (*Summer*, 12). In the West she had the chance to get an insight into the life of Native Americans, 'the first-born of the soil', against whom, she states, '[o]ur people and our government have sinned alike' (*Summer*, 114). William Apess had already presented such a statement a few years before. He may have influenced Margaret Fuller in her point of view of Native Americans. However, in contrast to Apess who tried to find ways to help his red brothers and improve their situation, she did not go beyond describing the life of Native Americans, and criticizing the behavior of the white man towards them.

Although the Native Americans had lost their freedom, being controlled by whites, one could argue that they nevertheless represented freedom for Fuller to a certain extent. Reasons for this assumption are that Native Americans for her were part of nature, and being in nature always gave her a feeling of liberation. In *Summer on the Lakes* she writes that 'it seemed not necessary to have any better heaven, or fuller expression of love and freedom than in the mood of nature here' (*Summer*, 28).<sup>217</sup> Hence, nature and, therefore, Native Americans represented freedom. She regarded them as the children of the land,<sup>218</sup> and nature also as emerging from them, by stating that 'the mysterious purple flower [...] springs from the blood of the Indians' (*Summer* 41). Moreover, they were free for her, in that they did not depend on money or, for example, steamboats to be able to travel. She argues that 'their habits ma[d]e travelling easy and inexpensive to them, neither being obliged to wait for steamboats, or write to see whether hotels are full' (*Summer*, 105), things that were necessary for her travel. Above all, they represented freedom for her, because they were free from European standards,<sup>219</sup> and she herself wanted to be free from European influences, in short, to be more American.<sup>220</sup> Thus, one could argue that for Margaret Fuller the Native American was more 'American' than the white man who had set foot on this country about 300 years ago. The Native American, who, according to Margaret Fuller, lived in harmony with nature and free of European influences, hence, represented freedom for her. Therefore, one may argue that freedom equaled being American. This is probably a reason why Margaret Fuller wished to be more American herself. However, she did not achieve this wish, because although she wanted to look at the landscape by its own standards, and also argues herself in *Summer on the Lakes*, 'It is always thus with the new form of life; we must learn to look at it by its own standard' (*Summer*, 22), she could not free herself from her European education and the influence of national ideas. As it is stated by Fish, she compared Native Americans to, for instance, Greek warriors (19): 'I can believe that an Indian brave [...] might be mistaken for Apollo' (*Summer*, 33).

---

<sup>217</sup> More on Margaret Fuller and nature will be presented in chapter 5.5.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Von Mehren, 173.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Blanchard, 203.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Fish, 120.



While Native Americans were free in that sense, they were becoming an extinct people, and although she expressed sorrow about the idea of the vanishing Indian, she could not liberate herself from that idea and simply took it for granted. Writing in a letter to James Freeman Clarke, she reports:

I am desirous to remain till the payment of the tribes at Mackinaw this [*sic!*] takes place early in Septr; there are then four or five thousand Indians assembled and I should have an opportunity to see this remnant of a great past, such as may never occur again. (*Letters* VI, 347)

However, as Birkle points out, she argues that if a history is written about Native Americans, they themselves should write it, and that it is essential that they are looked at by their own standards (505). Fuller writes that '[t]he historian of the Indian should be one of their own race, as able to sympathize with them, [...] and with his eye turned to the greatness of the past' (*Summer*, 142). This shows that she is aware of the fact that a true history of the Native Americans could not be written by white people, but only by Natives themselves. Moreover, she hopes that 'there will be a national institute, containing all the remains of the Indians' (*Summer* 143).

Margaret Fuller did not try to improve the situation of the Native American, like Apess, who, amongst other things, argued for a good education for Native Americans. This is somewhat strange, since Margaret Fuller was always advocating a good education for everyone. On the other hand, an explanation why she did not suggest such means of improvement is that she believed that the Native Americans were definitely going to vanish. She tells her readers that

[she has] no hope of liberalizing the missionary, of humanizing the sharks of trade, of infusing the conscientious drop into the flinty bosom of policy, of saving the Indian from immediate degradation, and speedy death. (*Summer*, 121)

Therefore, although she had ideas on how to improve their situation, she simply believed that it was too late. Even if she did not attempt to emancipate Native Americans, she at least tried to show them in their correct light, and do away with racist stereotypes.

She points out that Native Americans knew how to live in harmony with nature, in contrast to most of the new settlers, who were according to her going to deform nature.

[A]fter seeing so many dwellings of the new settlers, which showed plainly that they had no thought beyond satisfying the grossest material wants [...], [and] the rude way in which objects around it were treated, when so little care would have presented a charming whole, were very repulsive. Seeing the traces of the Indians, who chose the most beautiful sites for their dwellings, and whose habits do not break in on that aspect of nature under which they were born, we feel as if they were the rightful lords of a beauty they forbore to deform. But most of these settlers do not see it at all; [...] and their mode of cultivation will, in the course of twenty, perhaps ten, years, obliterate the natural expression of the country. (*Summer*, 29)

In a letter to her brother Richard she tells him about the loveliness of the country, and that it is '[n]o wonder they poured out their blood freely before they would go' (*Letters III*, 133).

The white settler, in her opinion, did not only spoil the countryside, but also the culture of the Native American. Fuller read travel accounts of other authors during and after her trip to the West, and Zwarg points out that 'in Catlin [...] Fuller found reinforced the idea that the contact with the white man had contaminated Indian cultures' (Zwarg, 626). The white man had driven the Native Americans away from their former lands farther west, and had thus made beggars out of them since they did not find the means to sustain their families, and, thus, came back and started to beg.<sup>221</sup> Margaret Fuller met a tribe of which she had once observed a begging dance and wrote that '[t]hey seemed indeed, to have neither food, utensils, clothes, nor bedding' (*Summer*, 75). But the white man did not really feel any pity for them, even a man whom she described as a 'gentleman [...] of most kindly and liberal heart' could not hold back his aversion for the Indian, and told her that '[t]hey ought not to be permitted to drive away [their] game' (*Summer*, 72), forgetting that it had been the Native American's game in the first place, to which Margaret Fuller responded cynically '[THEIR] game – just heavens!' (*Summer*, 72).

---

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Von Mehren, 176.

One thing that especially led to the degradation of Native Americans was alcohol. In *Summer on the Lakes* Fuller presents a few incidents with alcohol. For instance, a story where Native Americans drink some alcohol mixed with pepper, given to them by a white man who presented himself as their friend, and simply 'view[ed] his barbarity as a joke' (*Summer*, 131). This joke, as Margaret Fuller informs her readers, ended with one of the Indians committing suicide since '[t]he burning liquor so highly inflamed [his] bod[y]' that 'rather than bear the ridicule of the people, and the inward fire [...] [he] drowned himself' (*Summer*, 132). Moreover, she writes that

the felon trader [...] has been besotting and degrading the Indian with rum mixed with red pepper, and damaged tobacco, kneels with him on Sunday before a common altar, [...] to listen to sermons in praise of "purity"!!

My savage friends, cries the old fat priest, you must, above all things, aim at *purity*.

Oh, my heart swelled when I saw them in a Christian church. Better their own dog-feasts and bloody rites than such mockery of that other faith. (*Summer*, 114)

Thus, the white man did not only break the Native American with alcohol, but also by trying to convert him to Christianity. This quote shows that according to Margaret Fuller, the white man was the one who should aim at purity, and that Native Americans should be allowed to keep their own faith, in which she, although she called it 'dog-feasts' and 'bloody rites', saw religion. Moreover, she understood the Native American who could not understand or have faith in Christianity, if this faith really welcomed slave drivers and Indian traders (*Summer*, 114). Furthermore, she states that

[she] know[s] that the Europeans who took possession of this country, felt themselves justified by their superior civilization and religious ideas [but] [h]ad they been truly civilized or Christianized, the conflicts which sprang from the collision of the two races, might have been avoided. (*Summer*, 143)

Margaret Fuller presents the opinion a missionary had on Native Americans. He had attempted to Christianize and civilize Native Americans, but came to the conclusion that it was useless, since even those who had converted did not improve, because 'they were as selfish, as deceitful, and as indolent, as those who were still heathens', and he besides argues that Native Americans 'have no constancy of purpose; and are, in fact, but little superior to the

brutes, in point of moral development' (*Summer*, 120). She then notes that 'the whole experience of his intercourse with them, seemed to have convinced him of the irremediable degradation of the race' (*Summer*, 120). She, on the other hand, simply argues that this is not the right way to pursue and believes that '[a]malgamation would afford the only true and profound means of civilization' (*Summer*, 120). However, like others she believes that

[t]hose of mixed blood fade early, and are not generally a fine race. They lose what is best in either type, rather than enhance the value of each, by mingling. There are exceptions, one or two such I know of, but this, it is said, is the general rule. (*Summer*, 120)

This shows that Margaret Fuller was not always able to overcome the general beliefs of her time, and, thus, in this case took over this general assumption. Nevertheless, she did not believe that Native Americans were heathens and without moral values; on the contrary, she argues that

[t]he Indian is steady to that simple creed, which forms the basis of all this mythology; that there is a God, and a life beyond this; a right and wrong which each man can see, betwixt which each man should choose; that good brings with it its reward and vice its punishment. Their moral code, if not refined as that of civilized nations, is clear and noble in the stress laid upon truth and fidelity. And all unprejudiced observers bear testimony that the Indians, until broken from their old anchorage by intercourse with the whites, who offer them, instead, a religion of which they furnish neither interpretation nor example, were singularly virtuous. (*Summer*, 128)

Reading what others had written about Native Americans and the West, she, for instance, presents Carver's view, which is especially valuable for her, since, although he had experienced how they acted against their enemies 'drinking [their] blood and eating [their] hearts', he still argued that '[t]hey are in every feature Romans, [and that] patriotism [is] their leading impulse' (*Summer*, 134). Thus, according to her he understood the mind of the Native American, and looked at them by their own standards, as she had argued one should do. She herself justifies that they had fought against the whites, arguing that

[a]t a distant day, he will no doubt be considered as having acted the Roman or Carthaginian part of heroic and patriotic self-defence, according to the standard of right and motives prescribed by his religious faith and education. Looked at by his own standard, he is virtuous when he most injures his enemy, and the white, if he be really the superior in enlargement of thought, ought to cast aside his inherited

prejudices enough to see this, – to look on him in pity and brotherly goodwill, and do all he can to mitigate the doom of those who survive his past injuries. (*Summer*, 144)

As Warren points out, she did not regard her race as superior to that of the Native American, and, thus, did not look down at them, but for her they were ‘human beings with individual thoughts and feelings’ having their own culture, and ‘she rightly predicts that the perspective of history will confirm her observation’ (Warren, 81). She, thus, defends the Native American, and, furthermore, having had the chance to spend some time with them, tells her readers about their good nature, wanting to ‘show [her] readers the peaceful side of domestic Indian life’ (Smith, xv).

She and the party she was traveling with had to take refuge in the lodges of the Natives because of an upcoming shower. She notes the Natives’ ‘gentle courtesy which marks them towards the stranger, who stand in any need’ and that although the lodges were small and they were poor, ‘they made [them] as comfortable as their extreme poverty permitted’ (*Summer*, 74). At Mackinaw Island, where two Native American tribes came together to receive their government payments, she observed them from her hotel room and got into contact with them as well. She writes that she ‘liked very much to walk or sit among them’, and that the Native American ‘is anything but taciturn with his own people’ (*Summer*, 108), even if he is rather uncommunicative among whites. She points out that when a Native American family comes together after the work of the day ‘the Indian Wigwam [becomes] the scene of the purest domestic pleasure’ (*Summer*, 109), and that the father has a very dear relationship with his children, as she states that

[she has] witnessed scenes of conjugal and parental love in the Indian’s wigwam from which [she has] often, often thought the educated white man [...] might learn a useful lesson. (*Summer*, 109)

Concerning the appearance of the Native American man, she writes that because of their degradation their visual aspect ‘bear[s] but a faint impress of the lost grandeur of the race’ (*Summer*, 113). Attributes that she ascribed to the Native American, of being tall, strong, and finely proportioned, could no longer be ascribed to them. However, she argues that their movements ‘still remind [...] of what was majestic in the red man’ (*Summer*, 113).

Nevertheless, she met Native American men, of whom one looked like ‘a noble Roman figure’ (*Letters* III, 135) for her, and another one whose face according to her

[was] much more intellectual than almost any other. But in becoming so, it loses nothing of the peculiar Indian stamp, but only carries these traits to their perfection. (*Summer*, 140)

Thus, some men of this race still had a fine image for her, although the last quote suggests that she did not think of the Native American as a very intelligent being, pointing out that although he became intelligent he still had the facial features of a Native American. This, moreover, suggests that she probably meant that a Native American who became intelligent, might then look more like a white man. Hence, it can be argued that she herself regarded the white to be superior, and she herself points out that ‘the civilized man is a larger mind, but a more imperfect nature than the savage’ (*Summer*, 136). Most likely, this was a reason for her to have no doubt that this race was going to vanish.

The situation of Native American women was of high interest to her, having just published her article “The Great Lawsuit: Man *versus* Men. Woman *versus* Women” in the *Dial*. She expected their status to be low, because of what she had heard and read. After spending some time with them, while she stayed at the hotel on Mackinaw Island, she concluded that as a fact they occupied a low status, because they had to do most of the hard physical work, and she furthermore sees the inferiority of Native American women to Native American men in their appearance.<sup>222</sup>

They are almost invariably coarse and ugly, with the exception of their eyes, with a peculiarly awkward gait, and forms bent by burdens. This gait, so different from the steady and noble step of the men, marks the inferior position they occupy. (*Summer*, 108)

Thus, the low status of these women is furthermore suggested to Margaret Fuller by their ‘looks and gestures [...] convey[ing] [...] a condition of servitude’ (Blanchard, 207), which she also observed in the white women settlers; nevertheless, to her the life of Native American women was more

---

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Blanchard, 207.

inferior than that of the white women,<sup>223</sup> as can be seen in the following quote.

More weariness than anguish, no doubt, falls to the lot of most of these women. They inherit submission, and the minds of the generality accommodate themselves more or less to any posture. Perhaps they suffer less than their white sisters, who have more aspiration and refinement, with little power of self-sustenance. But their place is certainly lower, and their share of the human inheritance less. (*Summer*, 111)

Margaret Fuller also points out that the white women could not understand 'how [she] could endure the dirt, the peculiar smell of the Indians, and their dwellings' (*Summer*, 113), because they looked at the Indians with disgust. She, however, enjoyed spending time with them, communicating with them by sign language, and letting them inspect things that she had brought with her.<sup>224</sup> In the time that she spent with them, she noticed and pointed out that

[a]nything they took from my hand, was held with care, then shut or folded, and returned with an air of lady-like precision. They would not stare, however curious they might be, but cast sidelong glances. (*Summer*, 111)

She furthermore states that '[t]heir decorum and delicacy are striking, and show that when these are native to the mind, no habits of life make any difference' (Fuller, *Summer*, 111). Thus, it can be argued that she tried to do away with the prejudices about Indians, namely that they are wild beasts or a savage people, and furthermore emphasized this view by quoting Lord Edward Fitzgerald, according to her a noble and lovely man, who argued:

"Notwithstanding the life they lead, which would make most women rough and masculine, they are as soft, meek and modest, as the best brought up girls in England." (Fitzgerald, quoted in Fuller, *Summer*, 112)

Pointing out that he was a noble and lovely man, she must have believed that what he said was true. This quote, however, is again an indication that Margaret Fuller could not stop comparing things to a European standard, by regarding the manners of white women to be the desirable ones, although, as has been pointed out before, she had argued that the young girls at the frontier should not be educated to imitate the manners of girls in New England. Blanchard argues that Margaret Fuller even thought that Native

---

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Blanchard, 207.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Summer*, 108, 111.

American women, who according to her were not at all beautiful in their appearance, would probably be thankful if they, like the white women, could be the ornaments of society (203-04); a position that she usually completely disapproved of women to long for. On the other hand, as Warren points out, she did not make any disparaging remarks about the dirt and odors she had experienced at their camps, or about their dog feasts, but simply accepted the situation the way it was (81). Thus, although she made comparisons, she was still able to look at their way of life by its own standards.

She also looked at how other writers depicted Native American women,<sup>225</sup> and, for example, states that Carver wrote about a tribe where a woman was the head of the tribe 'instead of a sachem' (*Summer*, 110), and that he had furthermore come across some tribes where 'a sister's son [...] succeeded to the authority, rather than a brother's son' (*Summer*, 110). She, besides, informs her readers, as Carver had mentioned in his book, that it was easy to obtain a divorce, and that in contrast to white society the woman remained the guardian of her children, and that even if married the children always bore the name of the mother (*Summer*, 134-35). Fuller did not write anything against it, thus, it seems that she accepted it to be true. Nevertheless, she argues on the following page that 'it is impossible to look upon the Indian women, without feeling that they do occupy a lower place than women among the nations of European civilization' (*Summer*, 111). However, in *Summer on the Lakes* there are no indications of Native American women that were unhappy with their lives. Although their work might be harder than the work of the white women, they seemed to be happy, according to Margaret Fuller who writes that '[s]ome girls were cutting wood, a little way from me, talking and laughing' (*Summer*, 107), or she also writes about an 'old squaw [...] sitting gravely at the door of her lodge, with an old green umbrella over her head happy for hours together in the dignified shade' (*Summer*, 111-12). Since the Native American women nevertheless occupied an inferior place for her, it can be argued that she simply could not imagine that they were happy with their life, a life so different from her own, the life of a white woman. This again shows that she could not completely divest

---

<sup>225</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Summer*, 19.



herself from her European influence, not being able to look at their form of life 'by its own standard[s]' (*Summer*, 22).

Another author whose ideas and findings she presented in *Summer on the Lakes*, was Mrs. Schoolcraft. In contradiction to Margaret Fuller's view of the Native American women Mrs. Schoolcraft, according to Fuller, also points out that the Native American woman's position, 'compared with that of the man, is higher and freer than that of the white woman' (*Summer*, 108-09). Although she could not accept this idea of the Native American woman, she agreed with Mrs. Schoolcraft on the point that both white and Native American women 'have great power at home' (*Summer*, 112), since their husbands are dependent on them in this field (*Summer*, 112). However, Margaret Fuller argued that '[t]his power is good for nothing, unless the woman be wise to use it aright' (*Summer*, 113).

Having had the chance to travel to the West, observing the life of the Native American, Margaret Fuller believed that it was too late to restore total independence for the Native American. However, feeling well-disposed towards her red brothers and sisters, the accounts of the Native Americans present them as domestic and moral beings. She, as Warren points out, did strongly object to the view that white men justified their conquest 'by their superior civilization and religious ideas' (*Summer*, 143). In addition, as McKinsey points out, she hoped that the whites were going to 'recognize the inhumanity of their treatment of the Indians' (McKinsey, 222). In her opinion, the failure of the white man was that he was not able to understand the Native American way of life, and, thus, did not respect them as human beings. She, moreover, argued that they did not need the white man to tell them how to live their lives, but that '[c]ould their own intelligent men be left to act unimpeded in their behalf, they would do far better for them than the white thinker, with all his general knowledge' (*Summer*, 144). Although, she was not completely free of her European influences, 'she accepted the Indians as they were. [...] she saw the Indian not as an abstraction – "noble savage" or "fiend" – but as a person like herself' (Warren, 81).<sup>226</sup>

---

<sup>226</sup> Cf. Warren, 80-81.

As Warren, moreover, points out, Margaret Fuller had the ability to look at a person of a minority group as a human being, a human being like herself, no more and no less (81). Therefore, in contrast to the majority of the people of her time, she felt well-disposed towards the African American as well.

#### 5.4 African Americans

As has been pointed out before, Margaret Fuller was never actively involved in the abolition movement although she grew up in a family with strong anti-slavery feelings.<sup>227</sup> Her grandfather, for instance, did not approve of the United States Constitution on the ground that it recognized human slavery, and, thus, voted against it. In her transcendental circle the abolitionist cause was also of high importance, since the transcendentalists believed in the dignity and equality of all individuals,<sup>228</sup> as she did. Moreover, she knew that the woman suffrage movement arose directly from the abolition movement,<sup>229</sup> as she writes:

Of all its banners, none has been more steadily upheld, and under none have more valor and willingness for real sacrifices been shown, than that of the champions of the enslaved African. And this band it is, which, partly from a natural following out of principles, partly because many women have been prominent in that cause, makes, just now, the warmest appeal in behalf of woman. (*Woman*, 15)

Nevertheless, she never joined the movement. Reasons why she did not join any of the societies working against slavery were, as has been mentioned before, that she regarded abolitionists as madmen and madwomen. She did not like their exaggerated way of expressing themselves. She even went as far as criticizing her own friend Harriet Martineau, arguing that she should not have written exclusively about slavery in her book *Society in America*.<sup>230</sup> In a letter, she writes to her:

I do not like that your book should be an 'abolition' book. You might have borne your testimony as decidedly as you pleased; but why leaven the whole book with it? It *is* a great subject, but your book had other purposes to fulfill. (*Letters III*, 309-10)

---

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Kearns, 120-21.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Allen, 1, 36.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. Kearns, 120.

<sup>230</sup> Cf. Kearns, 120, 123-24.

She denied the wish of Maria Weston Chapman, editor of *The Liberty Bell*, to assign the topic of slavery to one of her conversation classes in Boston, telling her that

a conversation on the subject would interrupt the course adopted by my class. [...] The Abolition cause commands my respect as do all efforts to relieve and raise suffering human nature. [...] The late Convention I attended hoping to hear some clear account of your wishes as to religious institutions and the social position of women. But [...] I heard nothing that pleased me. (*Letters II*, 197-98)

This actually presents the main reason why she was never active in this cause, that is, the only aim of the abolitionists was to liberate African Americans, and not women as well. As Kearns points out, woman's rights advocates and abolitionists were often rivals. Women were not always welcome in the abolitionist movement. For instance, in the world anti-slavery convention in London women delegates were denied a seat. When the American Antislavery Society allowed women to become committee members, this led to a break up of the association. Female abolitionists such as the Grimké sisters had to deal with much opposition, because they addressed mixed audiences on the subject of slavery. Thus, Margaret Fuller, although always in favor of the anti-slavery principles, felt that if she joined the abolitionists she had to give up her fight for the emancipation of women. In contrast to many of the abolitionists, she wanted to liberate both of them, African Americans and women.<sup>231</sup>

However, although she did not actively work against slavery, she may have influenced the students of her Boston Conversations to become active for the good cause, since these women often were in leading positions in social reform movements, especially in the abolition movement.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, while staying in Rome, she started to see the abolitionists in a new light, being confronted with the unfortunate situation of the Italians, who were dominated by the Austrians. She now regretted that she had met them with disapproval before, starting to understand that 'the cause of tyranny and wrong [are] everywhere the same' (*At Home and Abroad*, 255). The scholar Edmund G. Berry argued that the situation in Italy influenced her so much

---

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Kearns, 125-27.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Allen, 116.

that she may have become active, even a leader, in the abolition movement, had she returned back safely to America.<sup>233</sup>

How it pleases me here to think of the Abolitionists! I could never endure to be with them at home, they were so tedious, often so narrow, always so rabid and exaggerated in their tone. But, after all, they had a high motive, something eternal in their desire and life; and if it was not the only thing worth thinking of, it was rally something worth living and dying for, to free a great nation from such a terrible blot, such a threatening plague. God strengthen them, and make them wise to achieve their purpose! (*At Home and Abroad*, 255)

In addition, her former abhorrence of the abolitionists did not keep her from writing articles on the topic of slavery for the *New York Tribune*,<sup>234</sup> and she argued for the liberation of African Americans in her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* as well. In *Woman*, she argues for the emancipation of African Americans, by stating that ‘All men are born free and equal’. This was actually not one of her proper lines, but a line that she had derived from the Declaration of Independence. However, the line ‘all men are created equal’ from the Declaration of Independence was not more than a mere phrase, since African Americans did not have an equal standing with white men. In contrast, Margaret Fuller really believed in the equality of all human beings, and the following poem that she presented in *Woman*, a poem by the Italian poet Manzoni, shows this clearly.

“All made in the likeness of the One,  
All children of one ransom,  
In whatever hour, in whatever part of the soil,  
We draw this vital air,  
We are brothers; we must be bound by one compact,  
Accursed he who infringes it,  
Who raises himself upon the weak who weep,  
Who saddens an immortal spirit.” (Manzoni, quoted in Fuller, *Woman*, 14)

For her every human being was equal, and, thus, since the Declaration of Independence did not achieve what it had actually proclaimed she looked at her country in disdain.

[M]y country! the darkest offender [...]; no champion of the rights of men, but a robber and a jailer; the scourge hid behind her banner; her

---

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Kearns, 122-23.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Allen, 117.

eyes fixed, not on the stars, but on the possessions of other men. (*At Home and Abroad*, 255)

Nevertheless, although the line 'all are created equal' was not realized, and she moaned about the present situation of the United States, she was still hopeful that this line would become reality one day. Americans had to free themselves from the control of the British Empire, and, thus, knowing how it felt to be deprived of personal rights and political liberty, Margaret Fuller saw this as a chance that they would understand the situation of the African Americans and finally liberate them.

Though the national independence be blurred by the servility of individuals, though freedom and equality have been proclaimed only to leave room for a monstrous display of slave-dealing and slave-keeping; though the free American so often feels himself free, like the Roman, only to pamper his appetites and his indolence through the misery of his fellow beings, still it is not in vain, that the verbal statement has been made, "All men are born free and equal." There it stands, a golden certainty wherewith to encourage the good, to shame the bad. The new world may be called clearly to perceive that it incurs the utmost penalty, if it reject or oppress the sorrowful brother. And, if men are deaf, the angels hear. But men cannot be deaf. It is inevitable that an external freedom, an independence of the encroachments of other men, such as has been achieved for the nation, should be so also for every member of it. That which has once been clearly conceived in the intelligence cannot fail sooner or later to be acted out. (*Woman*, 13-14)

It was also her belief that it was the destiny of America to become known and to be looked up to as 'the' moral nation, in the way that Europe, according to Fuller, was the country of culture and intellect.<sup>235</sup> Therefore, it was necessary to indeed become the nation of freedom. Even though many people had raised their voice against slavery, newspapers published articles on the topic of slavery, and 'a growing liberality on this subject' (*Woman*, 15) could be noted, she knew that the moment had not yet come, since many people still looked at the African Americans as a radical and violent group.<sup>236</sup>

According to the society of the time, the place for women was at home and not in the public sphere, arguing that a woman was too delicate for it. However, as she pointed out, this was only so for the white woman.

Those who think the physical circumstances of woman would make a part in the affairs of national government unsuitable, are by no means

---

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Woman*, 13.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Woman*, 15-16.

those who think it impossible for the negresses to endure field work, even during pregnancy. (*Woman*, 19)

African American women may have wished to have the same status as white women, although white women were not fully emancipated either. Nevertheless, they certainly had more freedoms than female slaves did. In addition, as Margaret Fuller noted, slave-dealers and slave-keepers did not make a distinction between man and woman, but both were regarded as the same, as mere work-tools, as she informs her readers, '[i]n slavery, acknowledged slavery, women are on a par with men. Each is a work-tool, an article of property, no more!' (*Woman*, 36). Although white women had a better standing than slaves, they both lived under the rule of the white man. This, as Fuller points out, was against the natural right to freedom. Freedom is not something granted to a human being by another person, but every human being is born with a right to freedom.

[I]nward and outward freedom for woman as much as for man shall be acknowledged as a right, not yielded as a concession. As the friend of the negro assumes that one man cannot by right, hold another in bondage, so should the friend of woman assume that man cannot, by right, lay even well-meant restrictions on woman. If the negro be a soul, if the woman be a soul, appareled in flesh, to one Master only are they accountable. There is but one law for souls, and if there is to be an interpreter of it, he must come not as man, or son of man, but as son of God. (*Woman*, 20)

In her article "First of August, 1845", published in the *New York Tribune* on the same day she writes about a holiday of England, the anniversary of the Emancipation of Slaves in the West Indies, a holiday that some people in the United States borrowed from England. This holiday is not celebrated like others, but 'solemnly, yet hopefully, in humiliation and prayer for much ill now existing – in faith that the God of good will not permit such ill to exist always' (*Journalism*, 139). Margaret Fuller acknowledges that England's emancipation of the Slaves in the West Indies was an important step, but she also knows that it was only a small contribution to the emancipation of slaves in general, and therefore regards her boasting about being the liberator of slaves as inappropriate. Nevertheless, she is aware that the United States have to look up to her as an older sister. She points out that other nations have acted sinfully, but according to her, the United States have sinned the

most, because they have betrayed the principles on which their nation was founded (*Journalism*, 139-41).

Other nations have done wickedly, but we have surpassed them all in trampling under foot the principles that had been assumed as the basis of our national existence and our willingness to forfeit our honor in the face of the world. (*Journalism*, 141)

She also does away with the stereotypical belief that the African race is a violent race. Thus, she argues that these previous fears can no longer be used to subjugate the African race. She bases her stand on the fact that after the English have liberated the Africans in the British West Indies, they have shown

a degree of goodness, docility, capacity for industry and self-culture, entirely beyond or opposed to the predictions which darkened so many minds with fears. Those fears can never again be entertained or uttered with the same excuse. (*Journalism*, 143)

She dedicated one of her articles to Frederick Douglass, who had been an American slave and later a member of the abolition party. She admired him, because in his autobiography he did not shrink from exposing himself to danger, giving the names of persons, places and times, in order to be truthful. Moreover, she prized his literary work, which was another indication for her that the African race did possess the same powers as the white race. Thus, she receives the rise in literary productions by African Americans with pleasure. However, Soulié, an author who only had one quarter of black ancestry, left America, because he did not enjoy the same privileges as whites. Following this information she writes, 'Leaving the Land of Freedom, he found himself free to develop the powers that God had given' (*Journalism*, 136). With this line she sarcastically points out to her readers how absurd it is that somebody has to leave a country whose basic principles include that 'all men are created equal', in order to be free. Knowing that the American society must be aware of that fact, she writes that slavery is

a crime for which neither man below nor God above can much longer pardon thee. For ignorance may excuse error, but thine, it is vain to deny it, is conscious wrong. (*Journalism*, 144)

Having read Frederick Douglass's book she writes that those who have treated him badly were white men, but that 'there [was] no whiteness except

of the skin, no humanity except in the outward form' (*Journalism*, 138). For her, not the color of the skin matters, but a person's soul, which she tried to communicate to her readers with her article "What Fits a Man to Be a Voter? Is It to Be White within, or White Without?" In this story a group of men come together to decide what kernel they should plant in their deforested country. After a first discussion, they decide to plant the English walnuts and not the butternuts, since the outer appearance of the butternut disgusts them because of its black coat. Then Margaret Fuller lets two people of darker complexion appear on the scene, of whom the man had a banner in his hand which read 'PEACE AND GOOD WILL TO MEN' (*Journalism*, 148), and he says to the group of white men that

[he] came hither [...], an uninvited guest, because [he] read sculptured above the door – 'All men born Free and Equal,' and in this dwelling hoped to find myself a home [...]. (*Journalism*, 148)

Being informed about their dispute, he tells them that they should find out how the nuts look inside, thus, he breaks open both the English walnuts, which were mouldy, and the butternuts, which were 'fresh within and white' (*Journalism*, 148), arguing that it would be best to plant them together. Moreover, he tells them that there is no reason for being so reluctant to plant the butternuts, and says to them, 'Has not Heaven permitted them both to grow on the same soil? and does not that show what is intended about it?' (*Journalism*, 148). However, the white men are still unwilling to change their minds, telling him that according to what they have heard the Holy Book says that they have to 'keep in exile or distress whatsoever is black and unseemly in [their] eyes' (*Journalism*, 148). Because of this statement, he replies to them in sorrow and pity, 'Have I been so long among ye and ye have not known me?' (*Journalism*, 148-49). Margaret Fuller then writes that '[t]he woman turned from them, the majestic hope of her glance, and both forms suddenly vanished, but the banner was left trailing in the dust' (*Journalism*, 149). One of the men then argued that maybe they should not attach so much significance to the color, and follow the idea of the young visitor.



However, this suggestion arouses so much discontent in the group that it was impossible to hear their final decision.<sup>237</sup>

Using kernels, Margaret Fuller shows in a very simple way that the appearance of something does not inform somebody about the inner life, arguing that one should have a closer look and get to know somebody, breaking him up like a nut, before somebody judges another person. She also brings religion into her story, showing that people simply believe everything that they are preached at, such a thing as that the color black presents evil. Therefore, she blames the church for presenting African Americans in a bad light. Moreover, as she writes in *Woman*, they find themselves an easy way out of their wrongs by uttering the words, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (*Woman*, 13). The young man of darker complexion, who, one could argue, presents Jesus, felt devastated when he found out that white men had not improved in character. She here wants to point out that the white man is so narrow-minded that he cannot overcome his fears and accept the African American as his brother, even if God sends his son himself to show that all are his sons, no matter what color their skin is. The woman, probably presenting his mother, loses her hope in the goodness of humankind, leaving the banner behind which read 'PEACE AND GOOD WILL TO MEN' (*Journalism*, 148), a line that Fuller had taken from the Bible. This banner the young man had held in his hands when he had entered their house. Margaret Fuller uses the house as a synonym for the United States, since she writes that on its door it said 'All men born Free and Equal'. With this, she again raises awareness towards the principles of the young nation, a principle that, although held up high by Americans, is not followed by all of them, since these principles are only valid for white men. Moreover, besides arguing that the United States should grant everybody the same rights, she reasons that white and African Americans should live in harmony, because they could each improve the other, like the butternut the English walnut. The article then ends with an open end. She does not tell her readers whether the group of men decide for the butternut or the English walnut, or to plant them both, as she suggests would be the best. Maybe she did not put an end to the story, because she herself was not sure if slavery

---

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Fuller, *Journalism*, 147-50.

would be ended one day, or maybe because she wanted to get her readership to think about the future, asking them what their decision would be, and, thus, involving them in the question of slavery, clearly hoping that they would make the right decision.

In another article she writes about the Lyceum of New-Bedford in Massachusetts, making no secret of her contempt for the citizens of New-Bedford, who show their antipathy towards the African Americans openly, by allowing them to listen to a lecture only if they confined themselves to a particular part of the house, and they, moreover, did not grant them membership; all because of their color. Her friend Ralph Waldo Emerson and another person did not hold their lectures because they did not want to 'address[...] an audience whose test of merit, or right to the privileges of a citizen consists not in intelligence or good character, but the color of the skin' (*Journalism*, 151), as she puts it. She could simply not understand why people could be so narrow-minded, and certainly agreed with the decision of her friend Emerson.

It took about 20 more years until slavery was abolished. Margaret Fuller did not have the chance to celebrate this moment. However, although she had never been actively involved in the abolitionist cause, she certainly supported the movement. Her achievement may be that at least some people saw African Americans in a new light, understanding that they were human beings as well, and that they deserved to live a life in freedom.

### 5.5 Margaret Fuller's Personal Quest for Independence

In a letter from Rome from November 17, 1847, she writes:

There is a Polish countess here, who likes me much. She has been very handsome, still is, in the style of the full-blown rose. She is a widow, very rich, one of the emancipated women, naturally vivacious, and with talent. This woman *envies me*; she says, "How happy you are; so free, so serene, so attractive, so self-possessed!" I say not a word, but I do not look on myself as particularly enviable. (*Letters IV*, 311)

This woman had seen Margaret Fuller in a light that she herself had not. Living an independent life in Italy, working as a journalist for the *New York Tribune*, having published two books and worked as the editor of the *Dial*,

she had achieved much more than the majority of the women in this time, but she was still not content with herself. Perhaps because what she longed for - the freedom to be herself without any restrictions – was something she probably never received fully throughout her life.

I wish to be free and absolutely true to my nature, and if I cannot live so I do not wish to live. [...] From infancy I have foreseen that my path must be difficult. (*Letters* IV, 262-63)

As Allen points out, she struggled all her life against the antifeminism of her society of this time, feeling isolated and dissociated emotionally from her earliest childhood on, due to her intellectual powers (132-33). She once wrote that she knew that she 'was an odd and unpleasing girl to people generally' (*Letters* VI, 59), and she did not easily build up relationships when she was a girl, although she had wished for friendships. About Emerson's daughter, who was born on her date of birth, she writes:

I had a fancy the child was born that day, and hoped it would have been a boy. However my star may be good for a girl, educated with more intelligence than I was. Girls are to have a better chance now I think. [...] She will have friends such as I wanted, when a child. (*Letters* III, 197)

This moreover shows that she must have sometimes wished to be a boy herself, since then life would have been more open and free to her. Feeling isolated and different as a child, her mother's backgarden in Cambridgeport was for her the only refuge, where she could also spend some time away from her father's strict education.<sup>238</sup> At the age of 32 she writes that in childhood she 'had nothing except the little flower garden behind the house' (*Letters* III, 81). Chevigny referring to Fuller's *Memoirs* presents what she had written about this time in her mother's back garden.

Our backdoor opened [...] into a little garden, full of choice flowers and fruit-trees, which was my mother's delight, and was carefully kept. Here I felt at home. [...] How exquisitely happy I was in its beauty [...]. Of late I have thankfully felt what I owe to that garden, where the best hours of my lonely childhood were spent. (Fuller, quoted in Chevigny, 42)

Maybe she therefore felt liberated in the nature of the West, because as a child nature, the back garden, meant freedom for her. Besides, critics have argued that since especially her mother's garden was like a refuge, she,

---

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Kolodny, 117-18.

therefore, also presents nature as feminine, since the 'emotional center of that refuge' had been 'her mother' (Kolodny, 120). In *Summer* she writes that

it was delightful to look upon a scene where nature still wore her motherly smile and seemed to promise room not only for those favored or cursed with the qualities best adapting for the strifes of competition, but for the delicate, the thoughtful, even the indolent or eccentric. (*Summer*, 38)

Describing nature as a mother, who opens up her arms for all her children, shows why Margaret Fuller loved to be in nature, because nature allowed her to be the way she was, loving her unconditionally, like a mother.

[I]t seemed not necessary to have any better heaven, or fuller expression of love and freedom than in the mood of nature here. (*Summer*, 28)

Margaret Fuller also imagined living in one of the places that she had traveled to herself, but despite all the facts that reveal Fuller's love for nature, she did not overlook that the settlers were also faced with difficulties in starting a new life at the frontier.<sup>239</sup> Furthermore, as Fish points out, she was aware that like other women she was, because of her education, not prepared for a life in the West (101).

Another situation for which she found herself unprepared was being the head of the house after her father died.

I have often had reason to regret being of the softer sex, and never more than now. If I were an eldest son, I could be guardian to my brothers and sister, administer the estate, and really become the head of my family. (*Letters I*, 237)

She went on writing that she not only did not know how to do such things, but that she never liked them either. Nevertheless, she was willing to learn them, although it would keep her from her wish 'to find a life-long refuge in the serene world of literature and the arts' (*Letters I*, 237). Thus, having to take care of her family imposed another constraint on her. However, one thing which gave her some freedom from her domestic obligations in New England for some time, was traveling. As Fish points out, traveling for Margaret Fuller, as for many others at this time, was liberating (1, 3). In her book *Summer on the Lakes* she writes that here in the West she spent days of 'spotless

---

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Fish, 8.

happiness' (*Summer*, 29), and in a letter to Emerson she tells him that the way they traveled 'left [them] perfectly free to idle as [they] pleased, to gather every flower and to traverse every wood [they] fancied' (*Letters* III, 137).

Her poor health presented another burden, besides the obligation to take care of her family. In a letter to her brother Richard F. Fuller she tells him that her

health will never be good for any thing to sustain [her] in any work of value. I must content myself with doing very little and by and by comes Death to reorganize perhaps for a fuller freer life. (*Letters* V, 40)

Knowing that her poor health hindered her from being as productive as she could have otherwise been, she appreciated the times in which her health was better. For instance, as she points out, writing her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* ran smoothly when she was in good health: 'I have been happy now in freedom from headach [*sic!*] and all other interruption and have spun out my thread as long and many-colored as was pleasing' (*Letters* III, 243).

Her physical problems, one could argue, were probably resulting from her psychological strains.

From a very early age I have felt that I was not born to the common womanly lot. I knew I should never find a being who could keep the key of my character; that there would be none on whom I could always lean, from whom I could always learn; that I should be a pilgrim and sojourner on earth, and that the birds and foxes would be surer of a place to lay the head than I. [...]

I mourned that I never should have a thorough experience of life, never know the full riches of my being; I was proud that I was to test myself in the sternest way, that I was always to return to myself, to be my own priest, pupil, parent, child, husband, and wife. [...]

I think I may say, I never loved. I but see my possible life reflected on the clouds. As in a glass darkly, I have seen what I might feel as child, wife, mother, but I have never really approached the close relations of life. A sister I have truly been to many; - a brother to more, - a fostering nurse to, oh how many! [...] Yet those who live would scarcely consider that I am among the living, - and I am isolated, as you say. (*Letters* VI, 134-35)

This shows that although she was proud that she did not need anybody, but could be her own 'priest, pupil, parent, child, husband, and wife', she, nevertheless, expresses her deep regret for not being able to experience life fully. Being different, feeling alone, and isolated, not knowing where she

really belonged, telling her friend William H. Channing once in a letter, 'My friend, I am deeply homesick, yet where is that home?' (*Letters* III, 142), must have obviously been very hard for her to cope with, since it left her with the impression that she was rather dead than alive. The reason for this dilemma were the restrictions that the antifeminism of the time laid on women, leaving no room for women such as Margaret Fuller. James F. Clarke, who accompanied her on the trip to the Great Lakes region, once wrote:

The circumstance in which Margaret lived appeared to her life a prison [...]. She had no room for utterance, no sphere adequate; her powers were unemployed. With what eloquence she described this want of a field! (Clarke, quoted in Allen, 133)

The antifeminism of her time, in Margaret Fuller's case, caused, moreover, an identity crisis in her. Not knowing where she belonged, she, in addition, felt torn within herself: 'The Woman in me kneels and weeps in tender rapture; the Man in me rushes forth, but only to be baffled' (Fuller, quoted in Allen 151). Thus, not fully belonging to the women's sphere nor the men's, she hoped that one day she would be granted a sphere where she could be herself.

I have wished to be natural and true, but the world was not in harmony with me – nothing came right for me. I think the spirit that governs the Universe must have in reserve for me a sphere where I can develop more freely, and be happier. (*Letters* V, 66)

The lines that she had written to James F. Clarke indicate clearly that she was torn two ways, apart from her struggle between the masculine and feminine.

I have often told you that I had two souls and they seem to roll over one another in the most incomprehensible way – All my tastes and wishes point one way and I seem forced the other. (*Letters* VI, 195-96)

Searching for some identity was probably the reason why she was always restless, as she herself writes, 'I am dejected and uneasy when I see no results from my daily existence but I am suffocated and lost when I have not the bright feeling of progression' (*Letters* VI, 216). She rarely ever was content with herself, writing at the age of thirty:

But in truth I have not much to say, for since I have had leisure to look at myself I find that, so far from being a great original genius, I have not yet learned to think to any depth, and that the utmost I have done in my

life has been to form my character to a certain consistency. (*Letters II*, 131)

Therefore, although she was very successful with her Boston Conversations and her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* some years later in her life, she lacked self-confidence. She always feared that she would be misunderstood, dismissed or simply not good enough. However, although her book *Summer on the Lakes* was taken seriously, her fears were justified, since her own brother removed the digressions in *Summer on the Lakes* after she had died.<sup>240</sup> Fish states that before Margaret Fuller wrote her travel book she spent some time in Harvard library to read the other travel accounts that had been written about the Great Lakes region in order to make sure that she knew everything that others had written about this region, which shows that she was lacking confidence in herself and doubting her writing skills (101). Thus, one could argue that she did not feel free to simply start off writing her travel book because she feared she was not good enough. Birkle states that she furthermore passed on her voice to others in *Summer on the Lakes* by using many digressions, and hence she was able to put her criticism in this travel book without losing her modesty (501): 'I am a woman, and unlearned in such affairs; but, to a person with common sense and good eyesight, it is clear [...]' (*Summer*, 154).

In a letter to Emerson, she tells him to not 'expect any thing from the book about the West' because she 'cant bear to be thus disappointing [him] all the time' (*Letters III*, 159-60). *Summer on the Lakes* was the first book published under her own name,<sup>241</sup> and she feared that society in large would not accept her, telling Emerson in another letter that she felt

a little cold at the idea of walking forth alone to meet that staring sneering Pit critic, the Public at large, when I have always been accustomed to confront it from amid a group of 'liberally educated and respectable gentlemen.' (*Letters III*, 196)

Margaret Fuller knew that she was not confident in herself, or content with herself. Longing for a feeling of self-complacency, and hoping that all her powers would be set free, she writes in a letter to James F. Clarke:

---

<sup>240</sup> Cf. Fish, 19-20.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Von Mehren, 181.

Pray that I may go through all with cheerful spirit and unbroken faith – that any talents with which Heaven has endowed me may be ripened to their due perfection and not utterly wasted in fruitless struggles with difficulties which I cannot overcome. Pray that I may deserve to feel self-complacency – If I could only have that! (*Letters VI*, 221-23)

Trying not to get hurt, she protected herself by, for instance, acting 'lofty', which people around her, such as William H. Channing misinterpreted as arrogance. Although she did not regard herself as arrogant, she admitted herself, thus throwing off her mask, that

[i]n an environment like [hers], what may have seemed too lofty or ambitious in [her] character was absolutely needed to keep the heart from breaking and enthusiasm from extinction. (*Letters VI*, 100)

Concerning men that stood in close relation with her, some of them truly respected her as being equal to men, such as James F. Clarke.

[Y]ou in your worst estate, can think, and learn, and do more things than I in my best. You envy me my situation without which your powers are useless. I envy you your abilities without which I cannot fulfill the demands of my situation. (Clarke, 77)

However, usually men could not admit and accept that Margaret Fuller was as intelligent as men were, or even more intelligent. In contrast to Clarke, Emerson, although her friend, could not look at her in the same way as Clarke did. As Allen points out, women who were intelligent and used their intelligence were considered masculine. In her book *Woman*, Margaret Fuller herself points out that men 'when they admired any woman [...] were inclined to speak of her as "above her sex"', and that one of her male friends once said to her that she 'deserved in some star to be a man' (*Woman*, 22). This friend may have been Emerson, who like other male friends of hers could not accept that a woman could produce intelligent works, and therefore called her works 'manly or masculine' (Allen, 25). He, however, did influence her positively, yet not exclusively so.

[I]t sometimes seems, as if the work of my own life would have been more simple, and my unfolding to a temporal activity, more rapid and easy, if we had never met. But when eternal growth is thought of I am conscious of having become far larger and deeper for his influence. He has been to me a lofty assurance and sweet serenity. (*Letters VI*, 336)

Von Mehren argues that one conversational episode in *Summer on the Lakes*, where she represents herself as Free Hope and Emerson as Self-



Poise, could have been intended by her 'to serve as a declaration of independence from his influence' (Von Mehren, 180); however, she certainly told him what she thought of him (180).

You, Self Poise, fill a priestly office. Could but a larger intelligence of the vocations of others, and a tender sympathy with their individual natures be added, had you more of love, or more of apprehensive genius, (for either would give you the needed expansion and delicacy) you would command my entire reverence. As it is, I must at times deny your full, free life. We must be content when you censure, and rejoiced when you approve; always admonished to good by your whole being, and sometimes by your judgment. (*Summer*, 82-83)

Emerson had never regarded her as an equal being, feeling superior to her, as he wrote after her death, 'I have lost in her my audience' (Emerson, *Journals*, 258). Moreover, he did not only acknowledge her as unequal to him during her lifetime, but also after her death. Writing her *Memoirs* he changed her texts according to his wishes, by 'substitut[ing] words, modifying her lava-hot style, [...] chang[ing] places and dates, [...] blue-pencill[ing], delet[ing], scissor[ing] whole sections of letters and journals' (Deiss). Emerson achieved, as Deiss points out, that '[in] the end some vital part of Margaret had been amputated' (Deiss). Although Emerson and the other editors of her *Memoirs* had treated her with kindness, 'they distrusted her because she was a woman intellectual who dared acknowledge her sexuality' (Deiss). This shows how difficult it must have been for Margaret Fuller among men, if not even the men who were her friends could display the respect towards her which she deserved, and fully acknowledge her as a women intellectual.

Perry Miller, headlining his article with a phrase by Margaret Fuller, which reads 'I find no intellect comparable to my own' (Fuller, quoted in Miller), argues that this utterance of her was probably really true. He, moreover, points out something essential, namely that although the literary men of the age, as Deiss had pointed out, could not fully accept her the way she was, they admired her nevertheless (Miller). The sentence 'I find no intellect comparable to my own' shows that she felt that nobody really understood her, as she was intellectually superior to everybody else. However, there was one exception; this was Goethe, of whom she was a great admirer.

[I]t is a relief after feeling the immense superiority of Goethe. It seems to me as if the mind of Goethe had embraced the universe – I have felt that so much lately in reading his lyric poems – I am enchanted while I read; he comprehends every feeling I ever had so perfectly, expresses it so beautifully, but when I shut the book, it seems as if I had lost my personal identity. (*Letters VI*, 187)

Arriving in Europe, especially in the country of Italy, she found out that men here, in contrast to men in America, accepted her the way she was. Here, 'it was possible' for her 'to be an individual *and* woman!' (Warren, 84).

[T]he Italians sympathize with my character and understand my organization, as no other people ever did; they admire the ready eloquence of my nature, and highly prize my intelligent sympathy [...] with their suffering in the past and hopes for the future. (*Letters IV*, 299-300)

She had wanted to travel to Europe earlier in her life, but because of her father's death, she had to wait until the year 1846. The reason why she had wanted to go to Europe at about the age of 25 was that she believed that in Europe she could grow into a more perfect being, unhindered by the constraints that she felt in America.

It is now ten years, since I was forced to abandon the hope of going at the time when I felt that my health and mind required it as they never could again. [...] At every step I have missed the culture I sought in going, for with me it [was] not scheme of pleasure but the means of needed development. It was what I wanted after my painful youth, and what I was ready to use and be nourished by. It would have given my genius wings and I should have been, not in idea indeed, but in achievement far superior to what I can be now. (*Letters IV*, 192)

And indeed, Margaret Fuller felt that in Europe she could be herself and develop more freely, as she writes, 'I like living here. All flows freely; [...] My own individual life is easy to lead' (*Letters IV*, 51). Moreover, she writes in a letter to her friend Caroline Sturgis:

I find how true for me was the lure that always drew me towards Europe. It was no false instinct that said I might here find an atmosphere needed to develop me in ways I need. (*Letters IV*, 239)

Although she did not come to Europe at the time that she had hoped to, she at least now found a place where she could live freely and where she felt at home, telling Elizabeth Hoar: 'Italy receives me as a long lost child and I feel

myself at home here' (*Letters IV*, 293). How happy she was in Italy, and how much she loved the place the following quotes are going to demonstrate.

A flood of joy came over me when I was able at last to see Rome again. To live here, alone and independent, to really draw in the spirit of Rome, Oh! what joy! I know so well how to prize it that I think Heaven will not allow anything to disturb me! (*Letters IV*, 302)

My life at Rome is thus far all I hoped. I have not been so well since I was a child, nor so happy ever as during the last six weeks. [...] The air of Rome agrees with me as it did before and Rome is so dear I do not know how I can ever be willing to live anywhere else.' (*Letters IV*, 312)

She had finally found a place where she felt she belonged and could be herself, being so happy that nothing could disturb her. However, even then she was still not content. She always needed to financially support herself, and because she did not have enough money to go to Europe earlier she now regretted it, arguing that 'a little money would have enabled [her] to come here long ago, and find those that belong[ed] to [her]' (*Letters IV*, 311). Moreover, in a letter to Emerson from December 1847, she tells him:

Nothing less than two or three years, free from care and forced labor, would heal all my hurts, and renew my life-blood at its source. Since Destiny will not grant me that, I hope she will not leave me long in the world, for I am tired of keeping myself up in the water without corks, and without strength to swim. I should like to go to sleep, and be born again into a state where my young life should not be prematurely taxed. [...] Had I only come ten years earlier! Now my life must be a failure, so much strength has been wasted on abstractions, which only came because I grew not in the right soil. (*Letters IV*, 314-15)

Seeing that life could have been different, with less struggle, she was frustrated and exhausted that even here in her true home, where she was, as she wrote, happy, able to develop and lead a free life, she was not free to enjoy her new life, mourning over the losses of her past life.

Yet, it could be argued that one man finally helped her to at least accept and love herself and the life she lived to a great part. This man was Giovanni Ossoli. It seems that he added to her feeling of finally having everything come into its place. However, as Allen points out, she did not enter into this relationship without being urged by a man, Mickiewicz, who was a great epic poet from Poland, whom she had met in Paris. This again shows her lack of confidence, namely that 'she needed the approval of a male authority figure' (Allen, 160), such as she had often needed Emerson's

in intellectual and spiritual matters, and Mazzini's in political matters. Allen argues that Mickiewicz saw that she was an independent and self-possessed woman, but that concerning love she was inexperienced (160). As Hudspeth points out, although Mazzini and Mickiewicz were both involved in the political revolution of Italy, Mazzini 'had a vision of a free Italy' while 'Mickiewicz envisioned a free self for Fuller' (Hudspeth, *Letters* IV, 12). He writes in a letter to her:

The relationships which suit you [...] are those which develop and free your spirit, responding to the legitimate needs of your organism and leaving you free at all times. You are the sole judge of these needs. (Mickiewicz, quoted in Hudspeth, *Letters* IV, 12-13)

As Allen points out, he 'urge[d] her frankly to develop relationships that satisfied bodily as well as spiritual needs, to be a "liberated" woman in every sense' (Allen, 160), and it seems as if Ossoli was really able to help her in her quest for liberation.

My love for Ossoli is most pure and tender, nor has any one, except little children or mother, ever loved me as genuinely as he does. [...] [O]thers have loved me with a mixture of fancy and enthusiasm excited by my talent at embellishing subjects. He loves me from simple affinity; he loves to be with me, and serve and soothe me. Our relation covers only a part of my life, but I do not feel any way constrained or limited or that I have made any sacrifice. (*Letters* V, 300)

So she had found a person, a man, who truly loved her, and who, moreover, left her free to follow her own aims and wishes, not setting up any restrictions to her life. Moreover, the child that she had with Ossoli brought even more happiness and fulfillment into her life.

I never felt so near happy as now, when I find always the glad eyes of my little boy to welcome me home. I feel the tie between him and me so real, so deep-rooted, even death shall not part us. [...] I wish you had a child [...]; nothing else can take the worst bitterness out of life: nothing else can break the spell of loneliness. Yet these treasures shall somewhere somehow be given to each heart pure enough to prize them. (*Letters* VI, 69)

Being urged to go back to America after the defeat of the Italians, she hoped that her 'life [would be] free and not too much troubled,' and that her family could live a content life for the next couple of years, asking herself, 'Can we find this much for ourselves in bustling America [...]?' (*Letters* VI, 53).

Unfortunately, she never had the chance to find out, dying in a shipwreck at a moment in her life, where she had finally come to peace with herself.

Her life, although it ended too early, according to an admirer 'did more for the intellectual enfranchisement of American women than was done by even her book on the subject' (quoted in Melder, 138). As Melder himself argues, 'no other woman of her time so embodied the quest for personal autonomy' (Melder, 138).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Having analyzed what independence means for Margaret Fuller, I conclude that for her independence, in a few words, means that every person enjoys the same rights, and has the freedom to be him- or herself, without any constraints whatsoever.

That is, for instance, that everybody should have a right to good education. Concerning women, to teach girls how to do needlework or play the piano only, will not allow them to be independent from men in their later lives, for example. Education for Margaret Fuller presents an integral part in the quest for independence, because she notices that only if a person, white or black, woman or man, is prepared for the wants of the time, he or she will be able to live an independent life. Education could also improve the insane, prisoners, and prostitutes, and give them the chance, when free again, to live a better life than before, according to Fuller. Moreover, witnessing the mass invasion into the West of the United States, and the way the immigrants made use of their new home, she also argued that they should be educated, and that thus, life in the West could be improved.

Besides a good education, women, she argued, should be allowed to take up any occupation that they want and are capable of carrying out, since this would also help them to become independent. They should free themselves from the belief that their only aim in their life is to be a mother and wife, and an ornament of society. In addition, she hoped that women would become more self-reliant, because without believing in themselves they would not be able to rise above their present position in order to become equal to men. Freedom of mind as well as freedom in marriage, being equal to men and still able to follow one's own wishes, were two other points that should be achieved in order to be an independent woman. To sum it up, what she wished for was that women would be granted the same rights as men.

Meeting Native Americans on her trip to the West, she found some freedom in them, because they lived in harmony with nature and free from European influences. However, since she saw no future for the true inhabitants of this country, as she called them, she did not present any

means by which they themselves could become independent of the white man again, but simply accepted that they had lost their freedom.

In contrast to her belief that the freedom of Native Americans could not be restored, she did not give up her hope that African Americans could enjoy freedom one day. Moreover, ending slavery would free the young American nation of one of its biggest moral ills. Thus, for her an independent nation was not only a nation that was free from the control of others and governed by its own people, something she hoped other nations, especially Italy, would achieve too, but a nation whose principles also included social equality. The line 'All men are created free and equal' from the Declaration of Independence certainly encouraged her in everything she did. Believing not only that this line was true, but also that it could become reality one day, she exerted herself for the improvement of American society, by fighting for better treatment and equality of all human beings, wishing that everyone could live a free and independent life. As Warren points out, 'Margaret Fuller diagnosed the sickness of her day as the result of repression, and her prescription was freedom' (Warren, 73).

Now, concerning her quest for independence, could we say that she was successful? I would say she was. She did not achieve independence for women, African Americans, and Native Americans, and she was not able to free the nation of all its moral ills. However, that does not mean that she was not successful, because she greatly aided in the struggle for independence. She certainly helped some women to become more self-reliant, and inspired women to fight for the rights of women, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who once said that she 'possessed more influence upon the thought of American women than any women previous to her time' (Stanton, quoted in Allen, 139). Without people like her, independence for women would have never been achieved. Raising the awareness of the people to the problems of the society, elaborating the faults of the American nation, and how institutions for the insane or prisoners, for instance, could be improved, was also an important step. Thus, I argue that her fight for independence was not in vain, but that she was an important figure in America's quest for independence. Thanks to her and other people who always believed in the equality of all human beings, and who like Margaret Fuller never stopped fighting for it, it

was possible last year, in the year 2008, that for the first time in the history of the United States, an African American was elected president of the United States. Moreover, that an African American woman, Ann Nixon Cooper, at the age of 106 years, who has also lived in a time when African Americans and women were not allowed to vote, could now vote for Barack Obama, whose inauguration took place on January 20, 2009.<sup>242</sup>

Concerning her own life, her own quest for independence, she never felt fully independent, which was probably not yet possible in the time in that she lived, because of the antifeminism of her time. The constraints of her time, she believed, kept her from developing all her powers fully; society never accepted her completely the way she was, since even some of her friends had problems accepting her, and she never led a financially independent life, depending on the money that she earned or on the money that she received from friends. However, for a woman who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century, she definitely lived an independent life, achieving more than most women of her time. She was, for instance, the first woman to enter Harvard library, the first female member of the Transcendental Club, the editor of the *Dial*, the author of two books and many articles since she worked as a journalist for the *New York Tribune* and as a foreign correspondent for the *New York Tribune* when she was in Europe. Moreover, she established the so-called Boston Conversations for women, and supported her family after her father's death, traveled to the West of the United States and to Europe, and lived a life independent of a husband, believing that marriage would present another constraint on her life. Thus, looking at what she achieved and how she lived her life, she certainly lived an independent life, although she did not see it in this way. The antifeminism of her time of course put constraints on her life, and she was never able to live life as freely as men did. However, I believe that she herself, by setting herself high goals and always wishing to be perfect, sometimes was herself the reason why she felt miserable and, thus, overshadowed her own successes. Nevertheless, I think that at least at the end of her life she had some feeling of being an independent and free human being. The reason for this assumption is that her husband Giovanni Ossoli

---

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Steiner-Gashi.



loved her and accepted her the way she was, probably the first person who ever did so, and, thus, maybe helped her to see herself in a different light.

Freedom to be herself, living a complete life without any constraints, not having to change in order to be accepted or loved, was maybe the most important thing for her to achieve. This was something she had wished for every human being to enjoy: a free and independent life, a life for which many people still have to fight today.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

Fuller, Margaret. *At Home and Abroad, or Things and Thoughts in America and Europe*. 1856. Ed. Arthur B. Fuller. Port Washington: Kennikat P, 1971.

Fuller, Margaret. *Margaret Fuller's New York Journalism: A Biographical Essay and Key Writings*. Ed. Catherine C. Mitchell. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1995.

Fuller, Margaret. *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*. 1844. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1991.

Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume I. Ed. Hudspeth Robert N. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1983.

Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume II. Ed. Hudspeth Robert N. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1983.

Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume III. Ed. Hudspeth Robert N. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984.

Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume IV. Ed. Hudspeth Robert N. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987.

Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume V. Ed. Hudspeth Robert N. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1988.

Fuller, Margaret. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume VI. Ed. Hudspeth Robert N. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1994.

Fuller, Margaret. *These Sad But Glorious Days: Dispatches from Europe, 1846-1850*. Ed. Larry J. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1992.

Fuller, Margaret. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. 1845. Ed. Larry J. Reynolds. New York: Norton & Company, 1998.

### Secondary Sources

Allen, Margaret V. *The Achievement of Margaret Fuller*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1979.

Aptheker, Herbert. *Abolition: A Revolutionary Movement*. Boston: Twayne, 1989.

- Baym, Nina. *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790-1860*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1995.
- Billington, Ray Allen. *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*. New York: Macmillan, 1954.
- Birkle, Carmen. "Travelogues of Independence: Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau." *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 48.4 (2003): 287-305.
- Blanchard, Paula. *Margaret Fuller: From Transcendentalism to Revolution*. New York: Delacorte P, 1978.
- Brody, Miriam. Introduction. *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. By Mary Wollstonecraft. London: Penguin Books, 1992. 7-78.
- Brody, Miriam. "Mary Wollstonecraft: Sexuality and Women's Rights." *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers*. Ed. Dale Spender. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. 40-59.
- Buell, Lawrence. "The Transcendentalist Movement." *The Transcendentalists: A Review of Research and Criticism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. Joel Myerson. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1984. 1-36.
- Chevigny, Bell Gale. *The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994.
- Clarke, James Freeman. *The Letters of James Freeman Clarke*. Ed. John Wesley Thomas. Hamburg: de Gruyter, 1957.
- Clinton, Catherine. *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Columbia UP, 2000.
- Clinton, Catherine. *The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1984.
- Cott, Nancy F. *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Cott, Nancy F. *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1977.
- Crouse, Jamie. "'If they have a moral power': Margaret Fuller, Transcendentalism, and the Question of Women's Moral Nature." *American Transcendental Quarterly* 19.4 (2005): 259-79, 319.
- Dannenbaum, Jed. "The Origins of Temperance Activism and Militancy among American Women." *History of Women in the United States: Historical Articles on Women's Lives and Activities – Vol. 17 Social and Moral Reform, Pt 1*. Ed. Nancy F. Cott. Munich: Saur, 1994. 71-88.

- Elbert, Monika M. "Striking a Historical Pose: Antebellum Tableaux Vivants. Godey's Illustrations, and Margaret Fuller's Heroines." *The New England Quarterly* 75.2 (2002): 235-75.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Ed. Brooks Atkinson. New York: Random House, 1940.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. 1848-1851. Ed. William H. Gilman. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1975.
- Fish, Cheryl J. *Black and White Women's Travel Narratives*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2004.
- Flexner, Eleanor. *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*. Cambridge: Belknap P of Harvard Business School P, 1982.
- Hoff, Joan. *Law, Gender, and Injustice: A Legal History of U.S. Women*. New York: New York UP, 1991.
- Hudson, Winthrop S. *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: MacMillan, 1987.
- Hudspeth, Robert N. Preface. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume IV. By Margaret Fuller. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987. 5-16.
- Hudspeth, Robert N. Preface. *The Letters of Margaret Fuller*. Volume V. By Margaret Fuller. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1988. 5-15.
- Isenberg, Nancy. *Sex & Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: UP of North Carolina, 1998.
- Jefferson, Thomas. *Writings*. Ed. Peterson Merrill D. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1984.
- Kearns, Francis E. "Margaret Fuller and the Abolition Movement." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 25.1 (1964): 120-27.
- Kelley, Mary. "A More Glorious Revolution: Women's Antebellum Reading Circles and the Pursuit of Public Influence." *New England Quarterly* 76.2 (2003): 163-96.
- Kolodny, Annette. *The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630 – 1860*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984.
- Lerner, Gerda. *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

- Lerner, Gerda. *The Feminist Thought of Sarah Grimké*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Malone, Dumas. *The Declaration of Independence*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975.
- Martineau, Harriet. *Society in America*. 1837. Ed. Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- McKinsey, Elizabeth. *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- Melder, Keith E. *Beginnings of Sisterhood: The American Woman's Rights Movement, 1800-1850*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.
- Mitchell, Catherine C. *Margaret Fuller's New York Journalism: A Biographical Essay and Key Writings*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1995.
- Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense*. 1776. Ed. Isaac Kramnick. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Reynolds, Larry J. Preface. *Margaret Fuller: Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. By Margaret Fuller. New York: Norton & Company, 1998. ix-xi.
- Sealts, Merton M. "Emerson on the Scholar, 1833-1837." *PMLA* 85.2 (1970): 185-95.
- Smith, Susan Belasco. Introduction. *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*. By Margaret Fuller. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1991. vii-xxii.
- Stearns, Bertha-Monica. "The Lady of Godey's by Ruth E. Finley." *American Literature* 4.1 (1932): 85-87.
- Steiner-Gashi, Ingrid. "Obamas Miss America." *Kurier* 23 Nov. 2008: 10.
- Urbanski, Marie M. *Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century: A Literary Study of Form and Content, of Sources and Influence*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1980.
- Urbanski, Marie M. "Fuller, Margaret." *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*. Ed. Cathy N. Davidson and Linda Wagner-Martin. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. 336-37.
- Von Mehren, Joan. *Minerva and the Muse: A Life of Margaret Fuller*. Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1994.
- Wade, Mason. *Margaret Fuller: Whetstone of Genius*. New York: Viking P, 1940.
- Warren, Joyce W. *The American Narcissus: Individualism and Women in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1984.

Weiner, Gaby. "Harriet Martineau: A Reassessment." *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers*. Ed. Dale Spender. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. 60-74.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18.2, Part 1 (1966): 151-74.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. 1792. Ed. Miriam Brody. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

Zwarg, Christina. "Footnoting the Sublime: Margaret Fuller on Black Hawk's Trail." *American Literary History* 5.4 (1993): 616-42.

### Electronic Sources

Apress, William. "Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts Relative to the Marshpee Tribe: or, The Pretended Riot Explained." Project Gutenberg 24 September 2008.  
[http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk\\_files=58850&pageno=1](http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=58850&pageno=1).

Deiss, Joseph Jay. "Humanity, said Edgar Allan Poe, is divided into Men, Women, and Margaret Fuller." 23.5, August 1972. American Heritage.com. 20 November 2008.  
[http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1972/5/1972\\_5\\_4\\_2.shtml](http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1972/5/1972_5_4_2.shtml).

Grimké, Sarah. "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, 1837." 19 September 2008.  
<http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/book-sum/grimke3.html>.

Gura, Philip F. "On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apress, a Pequot by Barry O'Connell: William Apress." *The New England Quarterly*, Inc. 1 October 2008.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/365827>.

Miller, Perry. "I find no intellect comparable to my own." 8.2, February 1957. American Heritage.com. 20 November 2008.  
[http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1957/2/1957\\_2\\_22.shtml](http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1957/2/1957_2_22.shtml).

"Prohibition" [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition_in_the_United_States)  
(January 24, 2009)

Taylor, Judd. "Man Thinking: The Nature of Emerson's American Scholar." 1999. 26 June 2008.  
<http://www.geocities.com/fidelio1st/literature/theamericanscholar.htm>.

## INDEX

- A Tour on the Prairies* 25  
*A Winter in the West* 25, 63  
 Abolitionism 32-34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 43, 44, 45, 61, 97, 110, 111, 112, 115, 118  
 Adams, John 28, 29, 33  
 Adams, John Quincy 55, 90  
 African American women 2, 12, 17, 19, 23, 24, 114, 132  
 African Americans 1, 14, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 32, 34, 39, 44, 45, 52, 76, 84, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 117, 118, 131, 132  
 Alcott, Bronson 56, 58  
 Allen, Margaret V. 1, 3, 40, 46, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 81, 83, 110, 111, 112, 122, 124, 127, 128, 131  
 American Antislavery Society 33, 111  
 American Female Moral Reform Society 35  
 American Revolution 15, 33  
 American Revolutionary War 33  
 "The American Scholar" 48, 49  
 American Society for the Promotion of Temperance 34  
 Americanization 22  
 antifeminism 119, 122, 132  
 Anti-Slavery Convention 37, 44, 111  
 Apess, William 51, 52, 53, 99, 101  
*Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* 44  
 "Asylum for Discharged Female Convicts" 78  
 Asylum for the Insane 77  
 asylum reform 36  
 Bad Axe Massacre 18  
 Beecher, Catharine 3, 12, 15, 48  
 Bellevue Alms House 76  
 Birkle, Carmen 25, 63, 73, 83, 101, 123  
 Black Hawk 18  
 Blackwell, Antoinette 17  
 Blackwell, Elizabeth 14  
 Blanchard, Paula 88, 91, 95, 100, 106, 107  
 Bloomingdale Asylum 77, 78  
 Boston 19, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 65, 78, 88  
 Boston Conversations 46, 58, 61, 67, 72, 84, 111, 123, 132  
 Calvinism 60  
 Cambridge 49, 56, 58, 67  
 Cambridgeport 54, 119  
 captivity narratives 20  
 Carver 22  
 Channing, Dr. William Ellery 56, 98  
 Channing, William H. 122, 124  
 Chapman, Maria Weston 33, 111  
 Cheney, Ednah Dow 85, 86  
 Chevigny, Bell Gale 62, 86, 119  
 Child, Lydia Maria 3, 33, 48, 58, 76  
 Christianity 17, 22, 51, 103  
 church 2, 3, 15, 16, 17, 37, 52, 103, 117  
 Civil War 2, 14, 20, 23, 24, 86  
 Clarke, James Freeman 58, 60, 63, 64, 81, 101, 122, 123, 124  
 Clarke, Sarah 58  
 Clinton, Catherine 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 33, 34, 36, 37, 43, 46, 48  
*Common Sense* 28, 42  
*Conversations with Goethe* 57, 62  
 Cooper, Ann Nixon 132  
 Cott, Nancy 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23  
 Coverture 7, 8  
 "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" 2, 3  
*Daily News* 46  
 dame schools 13, 15  
 Declaration of Independence 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39, 41, 44, 48, 50, 88, 112, 131  
 Declaration of Sentiments 33, 39, 40  
 Dial 59, 61, 62, 66, 72, 83, 106, 118, 132  
 domestic sphere 2, 3, 6, 16, 87, 95, 97, 98  
 Douglass, Frederick 39, 115  
 Douglass, Sarah Mapps 24  
 Dr. Park's genteel academy 55

- education 2, 12, 13, 14, 18, 24, 36, 39, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48, 53, 54, 55, 56, 61, 64, 66, 72, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 86, 87, 88, 89, 96, 100, 101, 104, 119, 120, 130
- emancipation 1, 25, 33, 37, 42, 43, 45, 72, 83, 84, 89, 96, 98, 99, 111, 112, 114
- Emancipation Proclamation 25
- enlightenment 27
- equal rights 32, 67, 85
- equality 19, 27, 31, 33, 37, 40, 42, 43, 45, 53, 54, 83, 84, 89, 93, 98, 110, 112, 113, 131
- Europe 1, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 40, 43, 48, 50, 51, 54, 63, 66, 69, 70, 73, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 88, 100, 103, 107, 108, 109, 113, 126, 127, 130, 132
- Farnham, Eliza 25, 26
- female academies 13
- Female Anti-Slavery Society 25, 33, 38
- Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances 17
- feminist movement 59
- “First of August, 1845” 114
- Fish, Cheryl J. 25, 89, 100, 120, 123
- Fitzgerald, Edward 107
- Flexner, Eleanor 12, 37, 38, 39, 40
- Fourier, Charles 97, 98
- Franklin, Benjamin 28, 29, 33
- freedom 1, 16, 19, 29, 42, 44, 45, 48, 57, 67, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, 84, 87, 88, 89, 98, 99, 100, 113, 114, 115, 118, 119, 120, 121, 130, 131, 133
- French War 28
- frontier 9, 27, 31, 64, 87, 88, 107, 120
- Fuller, Margaret 1, 2, 4, 6, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 130, 131
- Fuller, Richard F. 102, 121
- Fuller, Timothy 54, 56
- Garrison, William Lloyd 33
- gender 2, 5, 6, 10, 12, 19, 22, 89, 90, 92
- Godey's Lady's Book* 2, 4
- Godwin, William 42, 94
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang 1, 56, 57, 62, 72, 95, 125, 126
- Gratz, Rebecca 16
- Great Lakes 63, 99, 122, 123
- “The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men, Woman versus Women” 62, 66, 106
- Greeley, Horace 64, 65, 66, 68, 70
- Greene Street School 57
- Grimké, Angelina 33, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 85, 97, 98
- Grimké, Sarah 33, 43, 44, 45
- Günderode* 62
- Hale, Sarah Josepha 2, 3, 4
- Hancock, John 27
- Harrington 5
- Hartford Female Seminary 15
- Harvard, 13, 54, 55, 56
- Harvard library 64, 123, 132
- health 6, 57, 58, 78, 121, 126
- Hedge, Frederick Henry 55, 60
- Herald* 64
- Hoffman, Charles Fenno 25, 63
- Illustrations of Political Economy* 46
- Imlay, Gilbert 41, 42
- immigrants 11, 18, 19, 20, 22, 32, 73, 75, 130
- immigration 2, 18, 19, 20, 73
- independence 1, 11, 16, 28, 29, 41, 42, 50, 51, 57, 72, 75, 82, 83, 88, 91, 109, 113, 118, 125, 130, 131, 132
- Independence Hall 27
- Indian Nullification 53
- Indian Removal Act 51
- Indian War 28
- international slave trade 23
- Irish 11, 19, 20, 75, 76



- Irving, Washington 25  
 Isenberg, Nancy 3, 7, 8, 9, 21  
 Italy 69, 70, 80, 81, 82, 111, 118, 126, 127, 128, 131  
 Jackson, Andrew 51, 56  
 Jefferson, Thomas 22, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 51  
 journalist 43, 46, 64, 65, 66, 79, 83, 118, 132  
 Kant, Immanuel 60  
 King George III 28, 30  
 labor 2, 9, 10, 19, 39, 87, 127  
 law 2, 7, 8, 9, 20, 30, 31, 34, 47, 53, 74, 84, 89, 114  
 Lee, Richard Henry 29  
*Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* 43, 45  
 liberty 7, 27, 28, 30, 31, 53, 74, 84, 113  
*Liberty Bell* 34, 111  
*Life in Prairie Land* 25  
 literature 56, 58, 60, 61, 65, 81, 120  
 Livingston, Robert R. 29  
*Love-Letters of Margaret Fuller* 68  
 Lyceum of New-Bedford 118  
 Lyon, Mary 13, 14  
 Mackinaw Island 105, 106  
 Madame de Stäel 6  
 Malone, Dumas 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32  
 "Man Thinking: The Nature of Emerson's American Scholar" 49  
 marriage 5, 7, 20, 21, 22, 36, 39, 41, 42, 69, 71, 92, 93, 94, 95, 130, 132  
 Married Women's Property Act 8  
 Married Women's Property Bill 38  
 Martineau, Harriet 5, 6, 16, 34, 46, 47, 48, 59, 76, 85, 98, 110  
 Mason, George 30  
 Mazzini, Guiseppe 70, 128  
 Melder, Keith 33, 37, 129  
*Memoirs* 119, 125  
 Mexican War 81  
 Mickiewicz, Adam 127, 128  
 Miranda 91, 92  
 Misses Prescott's School 55  
 Mitchell, Catherine C. 35, 36, 40, 65, 66, 67, 75, 78, 79, 87  
 moral reform 32, 35, 75  
 Mott, Lucretia 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 85  
 Mount Holyoke Seminary 13, 14  
 Nathan, James 68, 70  
 Native American tribes 18, 21, 51, 105  
 Native American women 7, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 106, 108, 109  
 Native Americans 2, 51, 52, 53, 100, 103, 106, 109  
 nature 2, 30, 47, 49, 56, 61, 64, 73, 74, 83, 85, 90, 95, 97, 99, 100, 102, 105, 106, 111, 119, 120, 125, 126, 130  
 necessarianism 47  
 New England 17, 35, 52, 53, 60, 62, 107, 120  
 New York 8, 13, 19, 29, 35, 38, 52, 58, 66, 68, 71, 76, 79, 88  
 New York Female Moral Reform Society 35  
*New York Tribune* 26, 34, 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, 71, 72, 75, 76, 80, 81, 83, 84, 86, 96, 112, 114, 118, 132  
 Niagara Falls 73  
 Obama, Barack 132  
 Oberlin College 14  
 Ossoli, Giovanni 68, 69, 70, 71, 127, 128, 132  
 Paine, Thomas 28, 29, 33, 42  
 Parker, Theodore 60  
 Peabody, Elizabeth 56, 58  
 The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society 25, 33  
 political reform 47  
 Pope Pius IX 70  
 Pratt, Richard 22  
 President of the United States 40, 132  
 prison reform 35, 36  
 prostitution 11, 35, 36, 78  
 Providence, Rhode Island 56, 57, 58  
 Puritans 60, 81  
 Quakers 37, 44, 51, 69  
 race 12, 25, 45, 48, 75, 76, 83, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106, 115  
 racism 33  
 reform movements 1, 5, 32, 35, 36,

- 111  
relationships 67, 68, 69, 92, 95,  
105, 119, 127, 128  
religion 4, 15, 16, 17, 21, 39, 47,  
103, 104, 117  
Reynolds, Larry J. 31, 66, 67  
Ripley, George 58, 60, 61  
romanticism 25, 63  
Rome 69, 70, 71, 82, 111, 118,  
127  
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 12  
Sand, George 6, 70, 76, 94  
Second Great Awakening 15, 16,  
17  
*Seneca County Courier* 38  
Seneca Falls 38, 40  
Seneca Falls Convention 37, 40,  
67  
*Sex & Citizenship in Antebellum  
America* 7  
Shaw, Sarah Black Sturgis 64  
Sherman, Roger 29  
slavery 37, 38, 43, 44, 45, 48, 59,  
72, 81, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114,  
115, 117, 118, 131  
Smith, Susan Belasco 63, 64, 105  
social reform 5, 9, 32, 43, 61, 76,  
111  
Society of Friends 37  
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady 9, 37, 38,  
39, 40, 85, 131  
Stearns, Sarah Ripley 17  
Stowe, Harriet Beecher 12  
suffrage 48, 86, 110  
*Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* 25,  
51, 63, 64, 65, 72, 73, 74, 87,  
100, 103, 108, 109, 120, 123,  
124  
*Sun* 64  
Taylor, Judd 49, 50  
teaching 11, 15, 46, 51, 56, 57, 76,  
81, 90  
Temperance 32, 34, 35, 37  
Temple School 56, 57  
Thomason, Charles 27  
Transcendental Club 55, 56, 58,  
60, 64, 132  
transcendentalism 59, 60, 61  
traveling 2, 18, 25, 40, 51, 63, 69,  
73, 79, 80, 87, 105, 120  
Travelogues 25, 63, 64  
Unitarians 47, 54, 60  
United States Constitution 110  
United States of America 13, 22,  
23, 27, 31, 32, 33, 39, 40, 41,  
66, 72, 80, 81, 89, 113, 114,  
117, 130, 132  
Urbanski, Marie 40, 60, 61, 62, 63,  
67  
*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*  
41, 42, 43, 94  
Virginia Declaration of Rights 30  
Von Mehren, Joan 68, 85, 87, 100,  
102, 123, 124, 125  
Wade, Mason 54, 55, 57, 58, 59,  
61, 62, 68  
War of 1812 18  
Warren, Joyce W. 1, 6, 80, 105,  
108, 109, 110, 126, 131  
Washington, George 33  
Welter, Barbara 3, 4, 5, 6  
Westward Expansion 2, 18, 19  
“What Fits a Man to Be a Voter? Is  
It to Be White within, or White  
Without?” 116  
Willard, Emma 13, 14  
“The Wrongs of American Women;  
The Duty of American Women” 87,  
94  
Wollstonecraft, Mary 5, 41, 42, 43,  
47, 94  
*Woman in the Nineteenth Century*  
29, 31, 34, 40, 44, 50, 60, 63,  
66, 67, 72, 84, 87, 89, 90, 91,  
92, 98, 112, 113, 117, 121, 123,  
124  
women’s rights 6, 31, 33, 34, 45,  
67, 72, 85, 97, 99, 111  
woman’s rights convention 38, 40,  
59  
women’s rights movement 6, 31,  
36, 48, 67  
women’s college 13  
Woodward, Charlotte 40  
Yale 13

## ANHANG: DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Arbeit „Margaret Fuller’s Quest for Independence“ beschäftigt sich mit Margaret Fuller’s Suche nach Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit für Menschen generell, vor allem aber für Frauen, amerikanische Ureinwohner sowie Afroamerikaner und auch für sie selbst.

Margaret Fuller wurde im Jahr 1810 geboren, in einer Zeit, die von Neubeginn und Umbruch gekennzeichnet war, da Amerika zu diesem Zeitpunkt gerade erst seit 24 Jahren eine eigenständige Nation unabhängig von der Britischen Krone war. In der Unabhängigkeitserklärung von 1776 wurde festgelegt, dass alle Menschen gleich sind, doch in Wahrheit genossen nicht alle dieselben Rechte. Frauen, amerikanische Ureinwohner und Afroamerikaner wurden diskriminiert. Eine starke und intelligente Frau wie Margaret Fuller es dank der strengen Erziehung Ihres Vaters war, wurde nicht geschätzt, sondern als unweiblich bezeichnet. Aber gerade diese Einstellung der damaligen Gesellschaft gegenüber Frauen in einer Nation, welche als Grundlage ihrer Entstehung schriftlich festgelegt hatte, dass alle Menschen gleich seien, war möglicherweise der Grund für Margaret Fuller, sich vor allem für die Rechte und die Unabhängigkeit der Frauen einzusetzen. Darüber hinaus wurde sie selbst immer wieder mit dem Anti-Feminismus ihrer Zeit konfrontiert. Sie stieß auf Hindernisse, die sie davon abhielten ein unabhängiges Leben zu führen, in dem Sie sich verwirklichen konnte.

In Boston hielt sie Diskussionsrunden für Frauen, die sogenannten Boston Conversations. Sie versuchte den Frauen vor allem zu zeigen, dass es mehr im Leben gab als Hausfrau und Mutter zu sein, und dass sie für sich selbst denken und entscheiden konnten. In ihrem Werk *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* beschäftigt sie sich mit dem Leben und der Ausrottung der amerikanischen Ureinwohner, mit der Besiedelung des Westens und auch mit dem Leben der Frauen im Westen. Im Jahr 1844 beginnt sie ihre Arbeit als Journalistin für den *New York Tribune*. Mit ihren Artikeln versucht sie auf die Probleme der Gesellschaft aufmerksam zu machen, zum Beispiel auf das Problem der Sklaverei oder die schlechten Verhältnisse in Gefängnissen. Sie bietet Verbesserungsvorschläge an und ruft die Bevölkerung auf auch aktiv

mitzuarbeiten. Ihr bekanntestes Werk ist *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in welchem sie sich mit der Unterdrückung der Frauen beschäftigt und zu einem Umdenken in Hinsicht auf die Befreiung und die Unabhängigkeit der Frau aufruft.

Die letzten Jahre ihres Lebens verbringt Margaret Fuller in Europa, wo sie in Rom endlich ein zu Hause findet, in dem sie ihre persönliche Suche nach Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit zu einem großen Teil beenden kann, denn hier fühlt sie sich unabhängig und akzeptiert. In Rom lernt sie auch ihren zukünftigen Ehemann Giovanni Ossoli kennen. Im Jahr 1850, nachdem die Unabhängigkeitsbemühungen von Italien gescheitert waren, kehrt Sie mit Ihrem Mann und ihrem gemeinsamen Sohn nach Amerika zurück. Leider nimmt ihr Leben frühzeitig ein tragisches Ende, denn Margaret Fuller und ihre junge Familie erleiden Schiffbruch vor der Küste New Yorks, den sie nicht überleben.

Mit ihren Diskussionen, Artikeln und Werken konnte sie sicherlich die Sicht der Dinge einiger Leute positiv verändern, welche sich möglicherweise dann auch aktiv für Gerechtigkeit in Amerika einsetzten, zum Beispiel im Bezug auf Afroamerikaner oder Frauen. Darüber hinaus ermutigte Sie Frauen, an die Öffentlichkeit zu treten, um für ihre Rechte zu kämpfen, was unter anderem zur Declaration of Sentiments, der ersten rechtlich anerkannten schriftlichen Erklärung für die Rechte der Frauen im Jahr 1848 führte. Ihr ganzes Leben lang versuchte sie dem Grundsatz der Unabhängigkeitserklärung näher zu kommen. Auch wenn sie keine Gleichberechtigung für Frauen, für amerikanische Ureinwohner oder Afroamerikaner erreichen konnte, und Amerika auch nicht zum Vorzeigeland in Bezug auf Moral erheben konnte, so hat sie doch vieles in ihrem kurzen Leben bewirkt. Es muss immer einen Anfang geben und Margaret Fuller hat in vieler Hinsicht sicherlich eine gute Basis geschaffen.

# Lebenslauf

## Persönliche Daten

**Name** Eva-Maria Berl  
**Adresse** 2620 Neunkirchen, Wartmannstetten 24  
**Geburtsdatum** 15. September 1980  
**Nationalität** Österreich

## Berufserfahrung

*seit Oktober 2003* Helen Doron Early English Teacher  
(Bezirk Neunkirchen, 2620 Neunkirchen)

### Tätigkeiten:

- Englisch Unterricht mit 3 – 10 jährigen Kindern in Gruppen - privat (4 – 8 Kinder)
- Buchhaltung, Kursplanung, Elterninformation, Stundenvorbereitung

*Februar 2003  
bis Juli 2003*

Sales&Marketing Assitant im Rogner Bad Blumau,  
Hotel&Spa  
(8283 Bad Blumau, 100)

### Tätigkeiten:

- Schriftverkehr (Deutsch u. Englisch), Ablage
- Erstellen von Angeboten
- Führungen durch Hotel&Spa mit Gästen und Journalisten

*September 2002  
bis Jänner 2003*

kaufmännische Angestellte in der Firma Reinhard Di  
Lena GmbH – Endoskopietechnik  
(2340 Mödling, Bahnstrasse 4)

### Tätigkeiten:

- Schriftverkehr (Deutsch u. Englisch), Ablage
- Erstellen von Angeboten

*Juni 1997 bis  
September 1997*

Praktikum im Ferienhotel Schönruh, Helmut Hinterleitner  
(9580 Drobollach am Faaker See, Seeblickstraße 40)

### Tätigkeiten:

- Service, Zimmermädchen

## **Schulbildung**

*seit Oktober 2003* **Studium an der Universität Wien:  
Lehramt Englisch und Spanisch**  
(1090 Wien, Universitätscampus AAKH)

### ***Zusatzausbildung:***

ESP-Modul (English for Specific Purposes / Englisch als  
Arbeitssprache)  
(1090 Wien, Universitätscampus AAKH)

*2001 bis 2002* **International Institute of Tourism and Management**  
(2680 Semmering, Hochstraße 32c)

Abschluss: Diplom (ausgezeichneter Erfolg)

*1994 bis 1999* **Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe**  
(2700 Wiener Neustadt, Burgplatz 1)

Abschluss: Matura (ausgezeichneter Erfolg)

*1990 bis 1994* **Hauptschule Neunkirchen Schoellerstraße**  
(2620 Neunkirchen, Schoellerstraße 7)

*1986 bis 1990* **Volksschule Wartmannstetten**  
(2620 Wartmannstetten, 3)

## **EDV-Kenntnisse**

MS Office-Grundkenntnisse

## **Sprachen**

**Muttersprache: Deutsch**

**Fremdsprachen: Englisch** – sehr gute Sprachkenntnisse aufgrund des Studiums und eines 1 ½ jährigen Aufenthaltes als AuPair in Florida (Juli 1999 bis November 2000); zusätzlich gute Kenntnisse in den Bereichen Business English und Legal English aufgrund des ESP-Moduls

**Spanisch** – sehr gute Sprachkenntnisse aufgrund des Studiums und eines 3-wöchigen Aufenthaltes in einer Sprachschule in Málaga (2005).

**Französisch** – Schulkenntnisse

Wartmannstetten, Februar 2009