

Margaret Fuller Society
American Literature Association 2024 Conference CFPs

Deadline for Submissions: 31 December 2023

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The Margaret Fuller Society will sponsor two panels on **relationality** at the 35th Annual Conference of the American Literature Association, to be held 23–26 May 2024 at The Palmer House Hilton in Chicago. Please help circulate our CFPs far and wide across your circles of shared interest.

Send 250-word proposals (indicating AV needs) that respond to the calls below, along with brief biographical statements, to Jana Argersinger, 1st Vice President, at argerj@gmail.com. Submissions from graduate students and folks in non-academic fields are very welcome.

For conference details, go to <http://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/>. To learn more about the Fuller Society, visit <https://margaretfullersociety.org/>.

“Matters of belonging,” to quote two theorists of affect—matters of integration and dis-integration, to echo the founder of interpersonal neurobiology—run through all branches of relationship science, a discipline with “growing coherence and influence . . . on myriad scholarly fields” in both soft and hard sciences (*Annual Review of Psychology*, 2017). Belonging, being in secure relation, it seems increasingly clear, is at the core of human nature. And as the 2017 report points out, “poets, novelists, and philosophers have long recognized the centrality of relationships to human existence” (383), while scientists lag behind. According to Robin Wall Kimmerer, who dances gracefully across these disciplinary boundaries, “All of our flourishing is mutual” (*Braiding Sweetgrass*).

Both of our ALA panels will explore this topic in relation to Margaret Fuller and other women of the nineteenth century—the second panel focusing on pedagogy.

1) “Matters of Belonging” I: Relationality and Feeling in Fuller and Other 19C Women Writers and Reformers

Margaret Fuller, the much-acclaimed intellectual and supposed loner, lived and wrote throughout her years in the ambit of relationality and feeling. Her *Autobiographical Romance* constricts with complex grief in remembrance of her lost father and thrums with the travails of young friendship, the sting of alienation, the joys of attunement. Letters agonize over what she feels as her friend Emerson’s coldness and proclaim, “All the souls I ever loved are holy to me.” Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony speaks to her of the “tearful sweetness of the human heart.” The record of her Conversation series for women sets

collaborative learning at its foundation. As a foreign correspondent and active witness to Italy's Risorgimento, she sees "deeds of brotherhood" and a "spirit" that "cheers and animates" her own—in transatlantic relation to a "spoiled" US that may reawaken to its founding vision. And she writes, at length, with protective tenderness of her partner Giovanni Ossoli and their small son just months before drowning with them in shipwreck off Fire Island.

The Fuller Society invites ideas about these and other movements of relationality and feeling in the work of Fuller and other 19C women both within and beyond her cohort. Among an abundance of possibilities, papers could address the following:

Reciprocity, competition
Rupture, reconciliation
Family bonds, romantic partnership
Collaboration toward social justice
Indigenous experience
Lived experience of race, gender, economic condition
Applications of relationship science (attachment theory, interpersonal neurobiology, interdependence theory, affect theory, affection exchange theory)
Interpersonality in the process and products of writing
Collective experience of art, music, literature
Community storytelling
Autobiography in relation
Aesthetics/matters of form
Relationship with other-than-human beings
Health/well-being
Surprising/non-traditional kinships and alliances
Intellectual relation
Hierarchies, lateral relation
Varieties of feeling in relation:
- feeling in common with others as fomenting collaboration/revolution
- feeling the body-in-transcendence
- feeling as fact/knowledge
- affect (feeling before cognition)
- feeling as in physical sensation
- feeling and spirituality

2) "Matters of Belonging" II: Learning and Teaching in Relation—Fuller's Conversations and Beyond

What do Fuller (in her Conversations, journalism, varied reform projects) and other women educators of her era suggest to us about modes of relationality and feeling in our efforts to teach and learn together, both inside and outside the classroom?

Potential points of contact:

Feeling as medium and/or content of learning

Building community in the learning environment

Learning collectively, challenging hierarchies

Conversation as an often-neglected learning outcome—and as urgent civic education

Perspective of grad student teachers

Public humanities

Social justice pedagogy

Restorative justice practices, including circle work

Community engagement and service learning

Learning venues outside the traditional classroom (for example: prisons, websites, museums, nature centers)

Marginalized populations reclaiming their stories

Mentoring

Autobiographical elements

Role of technology

Fertile challenges and problems