

Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society
Call for Papers
American Literature Association Conference
San Francisco, CA May 24-27, 2018

SESSION 1: Roundtable: Sedgwick and *American Enchantment*

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society calls for 5-7 scholars to participate in a roundtable discussion of Michelle Sizemore's recently published *American Enchantment: Rituals of the People in the Post-Revolutionary World* (Oxford UP, November 2017). Participants do not need to focus on the discussions of Sedgwick in the final chapter but instead can address Sizemore's treatment of any of the central authors (such as Hawthorne, Irving, Brackenridge, and Brown); the significance of this scholarship on Sedgwick Studies; and/or key issues in Sizemore's work, such as thinking of "the people" as a process rather than as a substance or understanding "enchantment" as a contingent state of embodied cognition.

A description of the book is as follows: The demise of the monarchy and the bodily absence of a King caused a representational crisis in the early republic, forcing the American people to reconstruct the social symbolic order in a new and unfamiliar way. Social historians have routinely understood the Revolution and the early republic as projects dedicated to and productive of reason, with "the people" as an orderly and sensible collective at odds with the volatile and unthinking crowd. *American Enchantment* rejects this traditionally held vision of a rational public sphere, arguing that early Americans dealt with the post-monarchical crisis by engaging in "civil mysticism," not systematic discussion and debate. By evaluating a wide range of social and political rituals and literary and cultural discourses, Sizemore shows how "enchantment" becomes a vital mode of enacting the people after the demise of traditional monarchical forms. In works by Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, Catharine Sedgwick, and Nathaniel Hawthorne--as well as in Delaware oral histories, accounts of George Washington's inauguration, and Methodist conversion narratives--enchantment is an experience uniquely capable of producing new forms of popular power and social affiliation. Recognizing the role of enchantment in constituting the people overturns some of the most common-sense assumptions in the post-revolutionary world: above all, that the people are not simply a flesh-and-blood substance, but also a mystical force.

Please send a brief abstract (200 words) outlining your intended focus in the roundtable to Lisa West, lisa.west@drake.edu, by January 15, 2018.

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SESSION 2: Panel: Sedgwick (and others) Beyond Unitarianism

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society seeks papers that invite discussion of religion in Sedgwick's life and writing. In particular, the society hopes to complicate an understanding of Sedgwick's Unitarian beliefs; call attention to her use of a variety of religious affiliations and doctrines; consider the role of secularism in her work; and investigate connections between religion, education, morality, and fiction. Papers that address contemporaries of Sedgwick, particularly other women writers or religious theorists, will also be considered.

Please send an abstract of 250 words to Lisa West, lisa.west@drake.edu, by January 15, 2018.