

**Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society**

**Call for Proposals for the American Literature Association Annual Conference, May 23-26, 2024**

**Sedgwick and her Contemporaries in Context**

Despite her minimal formal education, Catharine Maria Sedgwick was highly self-educated and unusually well-read for a woman of her era. Her writings are rife with references to major bodies of knowledge—literature, history, philosophy, social science, art—which she employs strategically to contextualize her ideas. Her breadth of reading, as displayed through epigraphs, analogies, allusions, etc., establishes her as a writer with authority, one who is familiar with the long view of history, art, nature and the law, as well as the trends of her contemporary culture, both American and Transatlantic. How did Sedgwick and her contemporaries employ their learned references as a means of winning the confidence of educated readers? Were these references religious, classical, scientific, artistic, literary, political, philosophical? What weight did these contexts give to their writings? What effect were they intended to produce? What affinities do these writers attempt to establish with their readers? Why were these contexts so important to 19<sup>th</sup>-century audiences?

Please submit proposals of around 250 words to Maureen Tuthill ([Maureen.tuthill@liu.edu](mailto:Maureen.tuthill@liu.edu)) by January 15, 2024.