

ROUNDTABLE for ALA 2027: Responses to Justine Murison's *Faith in Exposure: Privacy and Secularism in the Nineteenth-Century United States*

The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society calls for scholars to participate in a roundtable discussion of Justine Murison's *Faith in Exposure: Privacy and Secularism in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022). We are seeking scholars at various career levels and from different institutional types to reflect on Murison's work. Participants need not focus on the discussions of Sedgwick in the book's second chapter but instead can address Murison's treatment of any of the central authors (including Royall Tyler, Charles Brockden Brown, Herman Melville, Frank Webb, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Henry James); the significance of this scholarship for Sedgwick studies, studies of antebellum American literature, or theories of privacy and secularism; and/or key issues in Murison's work, such as marriage, slavery, hypocrisy, infidelity (religious or sexual), and recent attacks on the legal right to privacy and bodily autonomy.

Here is a description of the book: *Faith in Exposure* shows how, over the course of the nineteenth century, privacy came to encompass central contradictions in U.S. legal and social life, both underpinning the right to sexual and reproductive rights but also undermining them in the name of religious freedom. *Faith in Exposure* tells two interlocking stories about the historical emergence of modern privacy. The first examines the legal and cultural connection of religion with the private sphere, showing how privacy became a moral concept that informs how we debate the right to be shielded from state interference, as well as who will be afforded or denied this protection. The second examines the development of the "secular sensibility" of privacy through nineteenth-century novels. The preoccupation of the novel form with private life, and especially its dependence on revelations of private desire and sexual secrets, made it the perfect vehicle for suggesting that exposure might be synonymous with morality itself.

Please send a brief abstract (100-200 words) outlining your intended focus in the roundtable to Ashley Reed, akreed@vt.edu, by January 5, 2027.

As the Sedgwick Society has two guaranteed panels at the ALA Conference, we also welcome paper proposals that address *Faith in Exposure* and/or the themes of privacy, religion, and secularism in relation to Sedgwick and/or her contemporaries. Scholars wishing to propose a paper should send an abstract (200-300) words to Ashley Reed, akreed@vt.edu, by January 5, 2027.