



The Catharine Maria SEDGWICK SOCIETY Newsletter

In This Issue

- 1 *Sedgwick Society Visions*
Remarks by Lucinda Damon-Bach,
Judith Fetterley, Deborah Gussman
- 2 *Membership Information*
- 3 *Pedagogy Roundtable*
- 5-7 *Teaching Hope . . .*
by Robert Daly
- 3 *Future Web Site*
- 3 *Recent Publications*
- 4 *Sedgwick's Influence*
by Patricia Larson Kalayjian
- 7 *Research in Progress;*
Notes and Queries
- 8 *Symposium 1997 and*
Future Symposium Plans

Welcome!

About this time two years ago, Victoria Clements and I were finalizing the name tags and programs for the first ever Catharine Maria Sedgwick Symposium, held at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, June 6-8, 1997, just a few doors down from Sedgwick's home. This gathering in Sedgwick's native town was a long-cherished dream of mine that began with a sign-up sheet I circulated at NEMLA in Boston, 1995 and another at the landmark conference 19th-Century American Women Writers in the 21st Century held at Trinity College in 1996, where Susan Harris introduced me to Victoria Clements. Thanks to Victoria's shared vision, shrewd intelligence, enthusiasm, and her incredible hard work, and the participation of most of you reading this newsletter, the Symposium was an exciting success, bringing together nearly 40 Sedgwick scholars and interested fans from across the nation to share research and interpretations of much of Sedgwick's work, including *A New England Tale*, *Redwood*, *Hope Leslie*, *The Linwoods*, *Married or Single?*, the first volume of her short stories, her letters, and didactic tracts such as *Live and Let Live*. At that time, many of us met to discuss the formation of a Sedgwick Society, and the production of an annual or semi-annual newsletter. We also declared our intent to organize another Symposium for 1999. Due to a variety of job-related challenges among several of us who volunteered to set up the society and newsletter (which have now been resolved), we are just now planning the next symposium. What follows is a compilation of various participants' reflections on the first Symposium, a glance at current work on Sedgwick (including the development of a Sedgwick web site), and thoughts for our future.

L L D B

The Future of Sedgwick Studies and the Sedgwick Society

A collage of thoughts from Lucinda Damon-Bach, Judith Fetterley, Deborah Gussman

In the spring of 1998, in anticipation of the first version of this newsletter, I sent out an E-mail survey to participants in the symposium asking for their vision of Sedgwick studies and the Sedgwick Society's future role. Here are scholars Judith Fetterley's and Deborah Gussman's responses to my questions.

Who Is Sedgwick and Why Should We Care About Her?

To lead off discussion, here are the words of **Judith Fetterley**, Keynote Speaker for the 1997 Sedgwick Symposium:

As to the question who is

Sedgwick and why should we care about her, I would say that I wrote my essay [*My Sister! My Sister! : The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick's Hope Leslie*] with those questions in mind, the ones that are always asked about 19th-century American women writers, and in an effort to answer them. It is like the question, but is it any good? They are questions with an answer already implicit in them, in the negative of course. She is nobody and there is no reason to care about her. So my essay comes out of a very pro-19th-century American women writers

context. But I really do think *Hope Leslie* is a major American novel and there is every reason for it to be as well known and as much read certainly as Cooper but I would argue as Hawthorne, that bete noir of all of us. As I argue in my essay, no one could have invented Sedgwick as Baym argues they would have invented Sigourney if she hadn't actually existed; she exceeds our imagination in her incredible effort to make women part of the construction of American literature in the 1820s and 30s. I haven't recently re-read her other novels except for *Redwood* which is

Membership Information

At this time, membership in the Sedgwick Society costs \$10.00, which entitles members to vote in Society matters and to a copy of this newsletter. Since we are still formulating our leadership and by-laws, this may change (or may not) stay tuned. The Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society would not exist without the enthusiasm and expertise of the Symposium presenters, especially the twenty-four participants and friends who became founding members. Thank you all. For information or to join (for now), send check made out to Sedgwick Society to Lucinda Damon-Bach, 36 Sherman St., Medford, MA 02155, or contact me via E-mail: lucinda.damonbach@salem.mass.edu Please pass along this information to any interested friends or colleagues.

Founding members of the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society include:

- ✍ Jenifer Banks
- ✍ Michelle Bauer
- ✍ William F. Bell
- ✍ Victoria Clements
- ✍ Robert Daly
- ✍ Lucinda Damon-Bach
- ✍ Monika Elbert
- ✍ Judith Fetterley
- ✍ James Gallant
- ✍ Melissa Homestead
- ✍ Sarah James
- ✍ Patricia Kalayjian
- ✍ Paul Lewis
- ✍ Dana Nelson
- ✍ Susan Nyberg
- ✍ Norma Greer Ogden
- ✍ Patricia Porcarelli
- ✍ Karen Poremski
- ✍ Michael Pugh
- ✍ Lois Dellert Raskin
- ✍ John Sedgwick
- ✍ Stockbridge Library Association
- ✍ Karen Westwood

also extraordinary and so I don't know how they would hold up, but Hope Leslie is a major accomplishment and so is Sedgwick's insistence on women being able to produce a body of literature equal to any male contemporary. Long live our Catharine and good for you for keeping up the work of recovering her. Deborah Gussman, symposium participant, continues and extends the discussion:

There are so many reasons [why we should care about Sedgwick and her work] -personal and political, aesthetic and professional, etc. What drew me to Sedgwick's work initially was that it provided a counterpoint, both thematically and stylistically, to the work of the male writers I had been writing about, primarily Cooper and Hawthorne. What I wanted to find out, in 1990 when I began my dissertation, was whether it was possible, in the first part of the 19th century, for a writer to think differently than Cooper and Hawthorne did about America's national history, and in that context, about its non-dominant members. Hope Leslie, and subsequently other of Sedgwick's writings, showed me that it was indeed possible to have a complex and critical understanding of the gendered and racialized origins of the American nation. Her work also revealed to me that what I had learned about the 19th century was incomplete, and that a more inclusive literary history needed to be written (much of it has now been, though I think a great deal more remains to be done). What I continue to appreciate about Sedgwick's work, even as I recognize her ambivalence about the subject, is her interest in friendship and her attempts to understand and appreciate the significant role friendship plays in the lives of women and men.

Why should students care about CMS? I don't know, but they do seem to enjoy her work. I was very nervous teaching ANET in my

American novel course, as if somehow having them read what I liked was suspect. But, as the first novel we read for the term, the book did a tremendous job of opening up for the class so many of the themes and issues I wanted them to consider, including the gendered nature of the heroic journey in American fiction, the role of nature and religion in the novel, the pressures of the romance plot, the shift from romance to realism, and the social, economic and ideological forces that shape the novel, for starters. Plus, she tells some good stories. How are we different than scholars who have come before? I think that what made the symposium so unique, and what I hope continues to inform the society as it develops, is the sense of collaboration and camaraderie that emerged among the participants. While surely all of us had our own professional agenda, and while there were clearly quite different interpretations of Sedgwick's work that emerged in papers and discussions, there was also a lot of actual sharing going on, from references and resources, ideas about publishing and names of publishers, and discussions of revisions, to plans for jointly written articles and edited collections. It was as if, rather than viewing Sedgwick as a commodity over which we were vying to assert private ownership so that one of us could have the final word, we were attempting to open up the field of Sedgwick studies to a multiplicity of critical approaches and interpretative strategies in order to discover something new.

Lucinda Damon-Bach, symposium instigator:

Judith and Deborah articulate my main concerns: that Sedgwick works continue to be Sedgwick Future, continued, that scholarship and publication are fostered, and that a supportive and collaborative forum is created so that we can avoid treading water creating similar break-

Future Web Site

Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts, recently awarded newly hired assistant professor Lucinda Damon-Bach a Faculty and Librarian Research Support Fund Grant for \$3000, to be used toward three projects that will involve undergraduates:

✍ Sedgwick Web Site

✍ Sedgwick Society Newsletter

✍ Sedgwick Symposium

The web site will include an on-going bibliography of Sedgwick-related criticism, biographical information, summaries of her major works, possibly early reviews of her work, images of Sedgwick and of Stockbridge and vicinity, copies of the newsletter and conference program. If possible, the site will include a bulletin board for queries, and whatever else Sedgwickians wish that would complement or inform their work. The project is meant to be collaborative, and welcomes contributions by Sedgwick Society members, especially summaries of novels, brief annotations of yours or others' research, etc. Please feel free to E-mail Lucinda with your suggestions and contributions.

Recent Publications

Sedgwick publications continue, and we look forward to many more. Highlights include the expanded version of Judith Fetterley's keynote speech, Rebecca Faery's forthcoming book, and several exciting new dissertations congratulations to the new Ph.D. members! Excerpted below is Patricia Kalayjian's 1996 NWSA article "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, an important reminder of Sedgwick's complex role in helping to shape American literature.

Pedagogy Roundtable

The penultimate session of the 1997 Sedgwick Symposium "Teaching Sedgwick: Pedagogy Roundtable" was led by Michelle Bauer, who presented "It's As If She Were Speaking in Code: Student Responses to A New England Tale." Other presenters included Michael Pugh, on Shakerism (especially in Redwood and CS's short story "Magnetism Among the Shakers"); James Gallant, on Sedgwick's place in a course called "Heavens on Earth: 19th-Century New England Utopian Communities"; Karen Poremski, Brigitte Bailey, Dana D. Nelson, and Deborah Gussman's various strategies for teaching Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans" with Hope Leslie (including informal small group work and formal group presentations); Rick Keating's contrast method for teaching Hope Leslie; Lucinda Damon-Bach's paratextual approach to A New England Tale (focussing on the novel's epigraphs); and Robert Daly's presentation of "Sedgwick's Festive Comedy." Daly has written up his most recent experience teaching Hope Leslie in a graduate course, in which he draws upon Symposium participants Nelson, Bailey, Damon-Bach, and Bauer. Instead of beginning with all the Puritan background, I noticed that [Sedgwick] was constantly thematizing the act of interpretation, then setting little tests for her readers, then congratulating them on having figured it out so well, Daly notes. Some of her humor is the temporal humor of a teacher trying to get her students relaxed enough to learn. This resonates quite nicely with some recent suggestions made by Marjorie Perloff and Robert

Rebecca Faery Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation. University of Oklahoma Press, forthcoming, spring 1999.

Judith Fetterley "My Sister! My Sister! : The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick's Hope Leslie." *American Literature*, 70.3 (September 1998), 491-516. Special Issue: No More Separate Spheres! Editor: Cathy N. Davidson.

Victoria Clements "Dancing

Discourses: Subject/Object Relations in 19th-Century Woman's Fiction. Ph.D. Diss., 1998. In her dissertation, Clements extends her introduction to the Oxford UP edition of A New-England Tale, addressing the novel's paratext and "Crazy Bet" as sites of the struggle for authority between subject and object (from a more theoretist standpoint than was appropriate to the trade edition).

Victoria Clements and Etsuko Taketani included Sedgwick in their entry on "Historical Fiction" for the

(continued next page)

Encyclopedia of New England Culture, forthcoming from the University of New Hampshire s Center for the Humanities and Yale UP. They include Sedgwick in their discussion of writers such as Child and Cooper who interrogated the Puritan treatment of the Native American, identifying both reformist and conservative trends in these texts.

Melissa Homestead Imperfect Title: Nineteenth-Century American

Women Writers and Copyright. Ph.D. Diss. 1998. Homestead argues that the supposed failure of copyright law in 19th-century America actually enabled the development of female professional authorship and contributed to the dominance of women in the market. In their postures of authorial self-effacement and in their professed dedication to serving their readers, women authors such as Sedgwick, Stowe, Fern, and Jewett worked within the constraints

of a policy which privileged readers access to literature over authors claimed property rights.

Karen Woods One Nation, One Blood: Miscegenation in American Fiction, Scandal, and Law, 1820-70. Ph.D. Diss. June, 1999. Sedgwick is one of Woods s featured novelists.

Patricia Kalayjian Catharine Maria Sedgwick. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 1999.

Sedgwick s Literary Influence

by Patricia Kalayjian [excerpted from Revisioning America s (Literary) Past: Sedgwick s Hope Leslie, NWSA Journal 8.3 (Fall, 1996), 63-78.]

Because of Catharine Maria Sedgwick s now marginalized position, we tend to discount the influence she had in her contemporary world. The literary frontier of the 1820s existed as a temporal and temporary site of opportunity for women writers because the development of an American literature demanded the efforts of men and women alike. This frontier parallels any geographical borderland where necessity enables social and cultural flux to occur until a new hierarchy is enforced. Hence Sedgwick, Lydia Maria Child, Caroline Kirkland, and others were originally welcomed. We forget that Sedgwick was considered not a dilettante or a scribbler but an artist deserving of serious review by peers such as Cooper, Bryant, and Edgar Allan Poe. She was an innovator in terms of both short and long fiction, as in the example of her regionalism and her nascent novels of manners (*Redwood*, *Clarence*) and her didactic narratives (*Home*, *The Poor Rich Man* and *the Rich Poor Man*), and in the directing of fiction toward specific audiences such as children, working women, and families. We forget that her residence was a meeting place for persons of literary import or that the famous meeting between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville

occurred there. More difficult to document are the less quantifiable influences such as how her fictive depictions of women, who, like herself, chose to remain single and relatively free of societal restrictions and limited expectations made possible the career and life choices of Louisa May Alcott or Sarah Orne Jewett. . . . Sedgwick s centrality to the early United States literary community, her originality of genre and subject, her engagement in contemporary issues, the complexity and intelligence of her work, and her multiple connections to women writers before and after her make Sedgwick important to any real integration of women s writing into the study of American literature. Placing Hope Leslie with and against already canonical texts of the period illustrates that American literature has never been a monolithic structure but a site of radical (and fascinating) disputation. The voices of America s outsiders are always contesting cultural constructs of race and gender and critiquing the applied virtues of religion, government, capitalism, and democracy. What we currently label multiculturalism is not a new challenge but a named iteration of an ongoing contest to the dominant culture as it would be canonized. Recentring Hope Leslie and Sedgwick s other work recognizes the inherent dialogism of literature and normalizes not white maleness but the ongoing struggle to be heard and recognized within America s dream of democracy.

Teaching Hope to Postmoderns, with Help from CS and Others

by **Robert Daly**, Distinguished Teaching Professor of English and Comparative Literature, SUNY/Buffalo

I had taught Hope Leslie many times, but always toward the end of a course on early American literature. In that context, classes focused on such aspects as Indian removal, patriarchy, Puritanism, Enlightenment, Romanticism, palimpsest, and the creation and critique of national myth. Then this spring I blundered into teaching it at the beginning of a graduate course on visions of America and saw, too late as always, trouble on the horizon. Postmodern credibility, when it exists at all, is radically contingent on local knowledge, and time constraints prevented my opening the discussion of this one book with detailed consideration of at least two centuries of American and European precedents. Had I tried that, my students could have sued for false advertising. Since I wanted to contribute to our seminar discussions something rather more and better than your guess is as good as mine, I turned to some scribbled notes from our symposium (happy memories), put several suggested teaching techniques into practice, and stumbled upon some aspects of Sedgwick's writing that I'd like to share with you.

From Lucinda Damon-Bach I used the focus on paratext, all the written matter that surrounds the actual narrative, from title and dedication to footnotes. Since this paratext sets up a complex intertextuality with writings from many cultures, I used Dana Nelson's suggested focus on intercultural relations, especially as they relate to national identity, and Brigitte Bailey's focus on those moments when identity is most fluid (disguise, cross-dressing, fictive sto-

rytelling by the characters themselves) and ways in which this fluidity relates to construction of readers as national subjects. Finally, from Michelle Bauer I borrowed the technique of having the students engage in the conversation among Sedgwick and some scholarly works, in my case some theoretical works before they read the book and critical works afterward.

Several theorists gave us new ways of reading that seem particularly appropriate for Sedgwick. Marjorie Perloff argues that the what of literature . . . doesn't matter nearly as much as the how, and she suggests that we replace what she calls

Gotcha! literary criticism in which we are informed, with a fair deal of one-upping and gloating, that, in her examples, Dickinson was a classist, Joyce a capitalist, and Conrad an imperialist with literary literacy (B4), a consideration of what reading is or does (B5).

Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick suggests that we replace paranoid reading, the use of the hermeneutics of suspicion to resist the supposed seductions of the text, with reparative reading, an exploration of the many ways in which selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them (35). Jonathan Culler suggests that we focus less on coverage and more on literary competence (62), Robert Scholes that a canon of methods, unlike a set of texts, must be conceived in terms of competence (148), and Geoffrey Hartman that the literary classics . . . are not representative so much as hermeneutic (Higher 731), affording us instruction and practice in the arts of interpretation, that the capaciousness and excitement of interpretive reading can be taught (Fate 386), indeed have always been taught to the ruling classes, and that teaching slow reading to oth-

ers can transform the elite mystery . . . into a conscious endowment (Fate 386).

That, we decided, is exactly what, among other things, Sedgwick was up to, disseminating to her readers the hermeneutic competence, interpretive skills, and Foucauldian power-knowledge that had formerly been reserved for her own class. She was cultivating and constructing her audience and the republic. This is not in any sense to argue that she was innocent of class and power. Far from it. In the new democratic republic, such knowledge has to be disseminated. Geoffrey Hartman notes that without analytic reading and viewing skills, democracy does not long prevail but succumbs to propaganda and demagoguery (Fate 386) and Barbara Herrnstein Smith that, even in our current society, those with cultural power and commonly other forms of power as well are those with competence in a large number of cultural codes (51). Though these contemporary theorists are not all saying the same thing and do not form a school, the resonances among their writings suggest that the relations between literature and other aspects of life may be epistemological rather than ontological or narrowly political. Competence in many cultural codes may enable us, like Polymetis Odysseus, to take the measure of the world and then, in our own phrase, to take measures. Our relation to the larger polis and the larger culture may then become more reciprocal. We may then stage our own interventions and help to alter and determine the cultural forces that help to determine us.

Text and paratext offer readers the opportunity to develop such competence in many cultural codes. Pequots, Puritans, Anglicans, Catholics, pirates, pedagogues, Greeks, Romans, and others hold hermeneutic conversations and com-

petitions throughout Hope Leslie, in which race, class, and gender are important but are not the only orderings of power and knowledge. Despite obvious differences, Cradock is like Chaddock in more than the spelling of their names, though that textual similarity alerts us to the comparison. Both have traveled widely and learned from many cultures. In Padua, Cradock has learned both fideism and Italian and taught them to Hope. Though often comic, Cradock is sometimes the only one of the groupe (sic), not even excepting Everell, whose sympathy masted his curiosity (175). His teaching puts her in touch with a cultural multiplicity that has both obvious and subtle advantages. Obviously, she can speak Italian and understand Antonio Batista, that Roman Catholic who offers another point of view and undercuts the easy binarism of both the English and the Indians, who think they divide the world between them. But Batista sees from yet another perspective, one that can view America as this land of heathen savages and heretic English (242) and can worship the blessed lady Petronilla (241), who became a saint precisely because of her refusal to marry. That her intended was named Flaccus merely adds more comic irony for those who know the codes. Cradock does not know all. Magawisca, whose waistband is ornamented with a text that looks like hieroglyphics, suggests a cultural range beyond his. In Sedgwick's time, Champollion and others had only recently (1822) deciphered the Rosetta Stone, opening up a new code and a wealth of concomitant new knowledge. In Sedgwick's books, as in postmodernism, one gains wisdom not by learning any single master code but by knowing several. Both Magawisca and Cradock enable Hope and us to see beyond Madame Winthrop's notion that the deferential manners of youth, which were

the fashion of an age, had their foundation in immutable principles (206). Cradock puts Hope in conversation with other times and places and enables Hope to recognize fashion and convention for what they are, and she wisely installs Master Cradock as a life member of her domestic establishment (349). No one character performs this cultural work, and the limitations of each are made either comically or tragically clear. But together they afford us hermeneutic knowledge and interpretive skill. Even Aunt Grafton has read enough romances to notice that Sir Philip Gardiner had nothing of the puritan but the outside (167). As an Anglican, she approves, but the point is that she notices, she reads him better than the others. Like her characters, Sedgwick's readers are becoming more perceptive, more open to surprise, and better at making sense of the surprises. The older theories tended to be so deterministic that one student could argue that, with them, you did not really need to read any particular text, since you already knew what it was going to say. The more recent theories mentioned above enable us to learn new things, not just the same things over and over again. Sedgwick works that way. In her many parabases, she addresses her readers directly, and these passages read so much like her letters to friends that we look in the corner for the CS, the monogram on her stationery. She assures us that by a single clew an intricate maze may be threaded (338). Like a good teacher, she even congratulates us prematurely on having done what she hopes we shall learn to do: OUR READERS SAGACITY [her capitals] has probably enabled them to penetrate the slight mystery . . . (247). But she ends with one more surprise, Esther Downing's refusal to marry. It is likely that no one, on first reading, saw that one coming, but in ret-

pect it makes sense. Since freedom and power derive not from the absence of convention but from the multiplicity of convention, it makes sense that Esther, that czarina of convention, would make the unconventional choice, that she would, like Sedgwick, choose dissemination over a narrow focus and not Give to a party what was meant for mankind (350). The book ends, not with Hope's wedding, but with that splendid aporia. It does not force upon us a single code or interpretation. It increases our interpretive powers and leaves us to emulate Sedgwick's ancestors and do our own thinking. Like Esther and Sedgwick, it shares the wealth.

Works Cited

Many thanks both to those named and to the rest of the colleagues at the symposium, sage Sedgwickians all.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 1997. See especially the discussion of poetics (61-63, 65, 70-82, 84-94) and literary competence (62).

Delaney, John J. *Pocket Dictionary of Saints* New York: Image, 1983. 407.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. *The Fate of Reading Once More*. PMLA 111 (1996): 383-89.
-. *Higher Education in the 1990s*. *New Literary History* 24 (1993): 729-43.

Perloff, Marjorie. *A Passion for Content: Restoring Literary Literacy to the English Curriculum*. *Chronicle of Higher Education* 9 May 1997: B4-B5.

Scholes, Robert. *The Rise and*

Fall of English: Reconstituting English as a Discipline. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998. See especially the discussion of rhetoric (8-10, 64-68, 73-76, 84-91, 111-31, 141-49) and competence (148). Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. Hope Leslie: Or, Early Times in the Massachusetts. 1827.

Ed. Mary Kelley. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1987. Sedgwick, Eve Kosovsky. Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is About You. Novel Gazing:

Queer Readings in Fiction. Ed. Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. 1-37.

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.

Research in Progress *and* Notes and Queries

Kudos and thank-yous to **Patricia Kalayjian** for launching the first Sedgwick Society affiliated panel at the American Literature Association conference May 27-30, 1999, featuring panelists who all met at the Sedgwick Symposium in Stockbridge.

Patricia will be presenting an essay entitled A New England Tale: Sedgwick's Distopic Village. **Ivy Schweitzer** will read Imaginative Conjunctions on the Imperial Frontier: Catharine Sedgwick reads Mungo Park.

Rebecca Faery will present Colonizing Captivity: Hope Leslie and the Tradition of the Indian Captivity Tale. And **Melissa Homestead** will contribute her essay,

Without haranguing like a magnificent Corinne: Catharine Sedgwick's Clarence and Female Authorship in Ante-Bellum America. **Victoria Clements** and **Lucinda Damon-Bach** will chair the session. Again, thanks to **Patricia Kalayjian**, we will also be having our first formal Sedgwick Society organizational meeting at the ALA (and I have a deadline for finishing this newsletter!).

Paul Lewis, Chair of the English Department at Boston College, recently completed the essay Lectures or a Little Charity: Poor Visits in Antebellum Literature

and Culture. The first part of Lewis's title refers to Whitman's Song of Myself, which hints at the sweep of this essay. In addition to Whitman, Lewis considers works by Alcott, Rowson, Sedgwick, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Child, Emerson, and Melville, as well as various tracts, letters, and 19th-century works of social reform. In particular, the essay examines Sedgwick's A Poor Rich Man and a Rich Poor Man and Melville's satire of the above, Poor Man's Pudding, Rich Man's Crumbs. Watch for it.

Jenifer Banks, from Michigan State University, is eager to return to her book project on Sedgwick's letters. If anyone is having difficulty deciphering Sedgwick's handwriting, Jen is a good person to ask! Also keep in mind **Lois Dellert Raskin**, SUNY/Albany, whose dissertation includes study of Sedgwick's letters; she, too, is helpful with the Sedgwickian scrawl.

Symposium presenter **Karen M. Woods** has just received an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship to work with an unfinished antislavery novel found among the Catharine Sedgwick Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society. She will spend a month at the MHS in order to learn more about this abandoned project when it was written, under what circumstances, and why it was discon-

tinued. She'll be moving to Boston in the fall, and is eager for any leads or suggestions Sedgwick Society members may have for her. She's convinced that her research will alter our image of the reluctant abolitionist.

Lucinda Damon-Bach and **Victoria Clements** are continuing their collaboration on a collection of recent Sedgwick criticism culled from the first Symposium.

Lucinda Damon-Bach also dreams of editing a reprint of her favorite novel, Redwood.

QUERIES

At the Symposium, several participants indicated that they were at work (or would like to be) on a variety of projects. How are you doing? I know first hand the multiple challenges of job searching while commuting to several jobs at once, so please think of these queries as gentle, supportive nudges. Melissa Homestead, any progress on the informal, annotated Sedgwick bibliography? Patricia Kalayjian, can we congratulate you on your book? John Austin, have you defended your dissertation? Still interested/working on reprinting Sedgwick's short stories?

Symposium 1997 and Future Symposium Plans

Without **Victoria Clements**, the first symposium would have been a different event. While I had had a pretty clear vision in my mind for several years, I met Victoria at just the right time: my dissertation was finished, others had expressed interest in such a gathering (at NEMLA and at Trinity), and I knew there were more Sedgwick scholars out there who would love such an event but who didn't yet know each other except through the printed page. Case in point: Susan Harris, whose work I admired and whom I had met briefly and immediately imposed upon (to read my chapter on ANET), introduced me at the Trinity conference to Victoria, whose work I had read and envied from afar. Victoria had just edited *A New England Tale* for Oxford UP (she did it before she had finished her dissertation) and thus had the necessary gumption that made her the ideal compatriot in the Sedgwick Symposium project. Thus was our collaboration born. Victoria's steadfast commitment, enthusiastic energy (even long-distance!), and reliable leadership helped make this event even better than I had imagined.

The comments from participants were overwhelmingly positive. Dana Nelson expressed her gratitude by writing a public letter of appreciation for each of us, calling the event path-breaking and lauding the structure of the program for foster[ing] the best possible spirit for such an

event it was participatory, collaborative, intellectually exciting and just plain fun. She sensed what we had been through the e-mail, phone calls, and Priority Mail deliveries, sometimes all in a single day. Her comments, as well as those of many others, made us willing to do it all again: In planning and execution, this symposium was professionally and graciously managed. I know such projects are usually more burdensome than one ever expects, and often under-recognized as contributions to the profession. I am positive that I am not alone in my sense that this was not just an exciting and intellectually satisfying conference: it was an IMPORTANT event that will have an impact on future scholarship and scholars. Thank you, Dana.

Her remarks were, in fact, echoed by other participants, who appreciated the high quality of all the presentations and the very cordial and mutually supportive atmosphere and especially the time for discussion of the papers. Overall, participants loved the setting of The Red Lion Inn (built just before Sedgwick was born), as well as other unique features, like the slide show of some of Sedgwick's literary sites (Lucinda) and the Reader's Theatre performance of scenes from Hope Leslie (Victoria) during the banquet. One participant suggested that the Reader's Theatre be made its own panel.

Most of all, participants appreciated the intimacy of the conference, and the fact that there were no concurrent sessions, which created the opportunity for a sustained, high-quality conversation: Great discussion, give and take, warm and supportive atmosphere. DON'T change the fact that sessions happen one at a time stressed one participant, while another added, I loved that there were no concurrent sessions, forcing choices. But while all appreciated the opportunity to hear

all the papers, and many thought the panels were scheduled perfectly, several said the timing was a bit tight and almost everyone wished for more time to go to the library or to sightsee around the Berkshires. We'll just have to make the event longer!

Several had suggestions, in addition to Deborah Gussman's wish to make the pedagogy roundtable more central, including:

- † Promote a focus on out of print works and give people the opportunity to get copies in advance so we have a common text
- † Circulate papers (or at least abstracts) among panelists ahead of time so we don't repeat citations and points more collaboration
- † More historicization, more comparison to other writers
- † More on texts other than Hope Leslie
- † A book sale table

All in all, several said they had been saturated with Sedgwick and simply loved it! and one claimed that the conference had given her the energy Symposium, cont.

to go on and try to figure out what the heck I'm going to do with the dissertation!

We had hoped for a fall Symposium (to stay close to an alternate-year cycle), but when I checked with The Red Lion Inn this May for our proposed dates in mid to late October (to celebrate the great fall colors in the Berkshires) I learned that the Hitchcock Room (the one we need), as well as most of the bedrooms had already been booked. So it looks like

spring for the next Symposium. We will discuss these issues of timing at

our Sedgwick Society meeting at the ALA this May. Watch your mail (both snail and electronic) for further information.

Sedgwick's future, cont.

through arguments and instead build upon and ride the wave of the work that's come before (converting survival swimming to surfing!). Deborah Gussman put it beautifully: My vision for the society is that it will offer greater visibility and legitimacy for Sedgwick Studies within the profession (the end result being more

of Sedgwick's works and writing about Sedgwick in print). It will offer a forum for bringing together established and emerging scholars,

as well as others who are interested in Sedgwick, for the exchange of ideas, research and pedagogical strategies. It's exciting to know that we've begun. Next steps: Executive Committee, Advisory Board, and By-Laws.

About the Contributors

Victoria Clements is Associate Professor of English and Communications at the Community College at St. Mary's County, Leonardtown, Maryland. Clements and Damon-Bach are currently collaborating on an edition of Sedgwick criticism, as a result of the first symposium.

Robert Daly is Distinguished Teaching Professor of English and Comparative Literature at SUNY/Buffalo, and already at work on his essay for the next Sedgwick Symposium. Working title: *Insanity, Memetics, and Agency in The Linwoods*.

Lucinda Damon-Bach, acting editor, is now a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English at Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts. Her

essay *To Be a Parlor Soldier: Susan Warner's Answer to Emerson's Self-Reliance*, just went to press as the lead chapter of the forthcoming collection *Revitalizing the Canon: Separate Spheres No More*, ed. Monika Elbert, University of Alabama Press. (Expected date of publication, December, 1999. Title may change.) Salem State College is actively supporting Damon-Bach's research and work with Sedgwick projects such as this newsletter and the upcoming Sedgwick web site.

Judith Fetterley, internationally renowned scholar and long-time champion and recoverer of 19th-century American women's writing, is the author of crucial works of criticism such as *The Resisting Reader*, and the anthology *Provisions*. She is also one of the founding members of the 19th-Century American Women's Writers Group which spearheaded the

American Women Writers in the 21st Century, cosponsored by Trinity College and The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, in Hartford, Connecticut, May 30-June 2, 1996. Fetterley was the keynote speaker at the first Catharine Maria Sedgwick Symposium, June 7-9, 1997.

Deborah Gussman is Assistant Professor of English at George Washington University. An enthusiastic Sedgwickian, her well-received Symposium essay was titled: *Equal to Either Fortune: Sedgwick's Married or Single? And Feminism*.

Patricia Kalayjian is a professor of English and American Literature in southern California. At last notice, she was finishing her book on Sedgwick, as well as organizing this spring's Sedgwick panel for the American Literature Association meetings in Baltimore.

conference 19th-Century

Call for contributions to the Sedgwick Society Newsletter

If you have or would like to propose an article for the newsletter, please feel invited to contribute. The article should be 8 pages or less, that is, under 2000 words (counting notes and works cited). Please e-mail me with your ideas and queries: lucinda.damonbach@salem.mass.edu. Thank you in advance!