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2002

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Homestead, Melissa J., "Behind the Veil? Catharine Sedgwick and Anonymous Publication" (2002).

*Faculty Publications -- Department of English*. 124.

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## Behind the Veil? Catharine Sedgwick and Anonymous Publication

MELISSA J. HOMESTEAD

Catharine Sedgwick's name appeared on the title page of only one of her books published during her lifetime, her 1835 *Tales and Sketches*, a volume collecting pieces that had originally appeared in the annually published "gift books" in the preceding nine years. Sedgwick is the earliest writer included in Mary Kelley's influential book on women's authorship, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America*, and Kelley claims that women writers published anonymously or pseudonymously because of the great anxiety that appearing in public through the medium of print caused them: "The literary domestics could write and, as it were, attempt to hide the deed. Psychologically as well as physically they could make the gesture of writing behind closed doors. They could write hesitantly for the world and try to stay at home. The invisible figure . . . could become the secret writer."<sup>1</sup> By simultaneously going public and denying it, Kelley claims, such "secret writers" "demonstrated that their social condition was powerful enough to cripple their efforts, if not prevent them."<sup>2</sup> In her remarks on Sedgwick's anonymity in particular, Kelley quotes a number of Sedgwick's letters to family and friends in which she makes such statements as "I have a *perfect horror* of appearing in print" and "I did hope my name could never be printed except on my tomb."<sup>3</sup>

*Private Woman* presents the most fully developed analysis of American women's anonymous publication in the nineteenth century and the one bearing most directly on Sedgwick, but Kelley is not alone in reading women's anonymous and pseudonymous publication as symptoms of gendered anxiety. The idea that women in past centuries withheld their names because they experienced their own authorship as shameful or scandalous has achieved the character of received wisdom. Ask a typical lower-level undergraduate what she knows about women's authorship in the United States during the years of Sedgwick's greatest produc-

tivity (the 1820s through the 1840s), and she will tell you: "It wasn't considered respectable for women to write back then, so they didn't give their names, or they took male pseudonyms."<sup>4</sup> I argue instead that Sedgwick's anonymity was a market strategy for constructing an authorial persona rather than an absence of an author or a denial of authorship, and her anonymity serves as a useful example through which we can reconsider the function of women's anonymous publication in the 1820s, '30s, and '40s.

Michel Foucault argues in "What is an Author?" that the name of the author serves to classify certain texts, grouping them together, defining them, and differentiating them from and contrasting them to others under the sign of the name of the author,<sup>5</sup> but reviewers of Sedgwick's books managed to perform this task of classification in the absence of the author's name. As Robert Griffin astutely notes in his analysis of anonymous publication practices in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, Foucault's "author function . . . can be shown to operate quite smoothly in the absence of the author's name,"<sup>6</sup> and the example of Catharine Sedgwick bears out this observation. My analysis of Sedgwick's authorship shifts the focus away from Sedgwick's privately expressed doubts about authorship and publicity (the basis of Mary Kelley's portrait of her) to the public record of her authorship available to her early-nineteenth-century readers. This record consists of three elements: her fictional texts (especially the self-effacing heroines of these texts, who function to construct a public persona for the author who created them), the "paratext" (as defined by theorist Gerard Genette, the "threshold" between the "inside" and the "outside" of a text: the materials such as title pages, dedications, and prefaces that "[enable] a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers"), and contemporary reviews of her fiction.<sup>7</sup> Sedgwick's withholding of her name from her books' title pages did not orphan her texts, leaving them without an author. Instead, those title pages and the reviews of those books construct the female body of an unnamed author behind the books.

Although her anonymity may not have functioned as received wisdom suggests, Sedgwick nevertheless clearly performed her anonymity as a "lady," and for her contemporary readers, gender provided an important key for decoding anonymous texts. A few examples of anonymous publication by Sedgwick's male and female peers (James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Lydia Maria Child) demonstrate that anonymity itself was not gendered exclusively female but was instead a variable practice that produced variable effects. Although some of Sedgwick's readers may have decoded a private history of pain and conflict in her anonymous publication, most would have perceived a very particular kind of authority and security in her public persona constructed in part through that anonymity. If we interpret Sedgwick's anonymous publication

strategies as her contemporaries did, Sedgwick emerges as a secure and authoritative figure rather than as a conflicted and defeated one, as a woman at the center of American cultural production rather than as a crippled figure at its margins.

At the center of Sedgwick's first novel, *A New-England Tale*, published anonymously in 1822, is the presentation of the local school prize for the best student composition. The name of the winner does not appear on the program for the academy exhibition. Instead, the winner's identity is kept secret until a curtain is withdrawn to show the winner seated on a "throne." Elvira, cousin to heroine Jane Elton, appears first on the throne, tricked out in a befuddled array of borrowed finery, but when a member of the audience reveals that her "original" composition is a plagiarism from an old newspaper, the curtain opens again to reveal Jane "seated on the throne, looking like the 'meek usurper,' reluctant to receive the honour that was forced upon her."<sup>8</sup>

Although the drawing aside of the curtain reveals Jane's identity as a prize-winning author, anonymous publication would seem to have kept the curtain drawn in front of Sedgwick. Sedgwick's name did not appear on the "program" for her literary debut, but that book and its paratext nevertheless staged the presence of its unnamed author. *A New-England Tale* carried no name on its title page, but the dedication—"To Maria Edgeworth, as a slight expression of the writer's sense of her eminent services in the great cause of human virtue and improvement"—signals the author's alliance with a clearly defined (and lady-like) authorial persona (5). Sedgwick and her publisher could have been slightly more direct by designating the author as "a Lady" or "an American Lady" on the title page, as was the case with other novels, but her dedication to Edgeworth is more subtle while still being effective. As Genette observes, although a dedication ostensibly addresses the dedicatee, the author "speak[s] over that addressee's shoulder" to the reader, using the dedication to proclaim "a relationship, whether intellectual or personal, actual or symbolic, and this proclamation is always at the service of the work, as a reason for elevating the work's standing or as a theme for commentary."<sup>9</sup> Reviewers obligingly followed Sedgwick's paratextual direction in the novel's dedication, taking up the relationship of her works to those of Edgeworth as a "theme for commentary" in their reviews, and this theme served to "elevate" the text and its author to Edgeworth's established level. A brief notice of *A New-England Tale* in the *North American Review*, for instance, reads, "If rumor has rightly attributed this excellent production to a female pen, we may with far greater confidence boast of a *religious* Edgeworth in our land, than of a wonder-working Scott."<sup>10</sup> Reviewers repeatedly return to this analogy to Edgeworth to define both Sedgwick and her works, sometimes finding her artistry inferior to Edgeworth's but generally praising her religious and moral tone as superior and as characteristically American (Sedgwick's para-

textual direction also shaped this literary nationalistic line of commentary—she begins her preface by stating, “The writer of this tale has made an humble effort to add something to the scanty stock of native American literature” [7]). In an unsigned review of *A New-England Tale* in the *Literary and Scientific Repository*, James Fenimore Cooper praises the author for being a true “historian” of American life, but claims (probably disingenuously) not to know the gender of the author, “whomsoever *he* or *she* may be.”<sup>11</sup> This is the only review, however, that indicates any ambiguity about the author’s gender. For the rest of her career of anonymous book publication, Sedgwick’s reviewers, taking a cue from this early dedication to Edgeworth (and, in some instances, relying on inside knowledge), expressed no doubt that they were reviewing the works of a “lady.”

Her second novel, *Redwood*, also appeared without a name on the title page, but reviewers obligingly began the process of constructing an author function to classify a growing body of texts. Helping this process along, in her preface to the novel Sedgwick adopts a similar pose to that in her *New-England Tale* preface, avowing her “reluctance to appear before the public” but claiming that the extensive “love and habit of reading” in America had persuaded her to attempt to fulfill the need for amusement and instruction. “We will, at least, venture to claim the negative merit often ascribed to simples,” she self-deprecatingly writes, “that if they can do no good, they will do no harm.”<sup>12</sup> Reviewers clearly felt that readers would want to know the gender of this self-deprecating author, and they present both their conclusions concerning the author’s gender and the bases for their common conclusion. A reviewer of *Redwood* in the *Port Folio*, who praises the novel as “the first *American* novel, strictly speaking,” cites inside knowledge and a reading of the novel itself as evidence of the author’s gender: “If we had not other evidence of the fact, we should have suspected the authoress to be a lady, from the partiality that is shown” to female characters in the novel.<sup>13</sup> In an unsigned review in the *North American Review*, William Cullen Bryant, who was an intimate friend of the Sedgwick family (and the person to whom the novel is dedicated), delicately identifies the author of *Redwood* as “the same lady to whom the public is already indebted for another beautiful little work of a similar character.”<sup>14</sup> A review in the *United States Literary Gazette* is more direct, stating, “Common fame attributes these works—*Redwood*, and the *New-England Tale*—to a lady.”<sup>15</sup>

The title pages of subsequent books continue this intertextual construction of their author: *The Travellers*, *The Deformed Boy*, and *Hope Leslie* are all “By the Author of *Redwood*”; *Clarence* is “By the Author of *Hope Leslie*”; *Home* is “By the Author of *Redwood*, *Hope Leslie*, &c.”; *The Linwoods* is “By the Author of *Hope Leslie*, *Redwood*, &c.”; and so on. Many of her tales published in the annuals in the late 1820s and early 1830s often follow the same format (e.g.,

“Romance in Real Life” in *The Legendary* for 1828 is “By the Author of Redwood,” and “The Berkeley Jail” in *The Atlantic Souvenir* for 1832 is “By the Author of Hope Leslie”). Although *A New-England Tale* never appeared in any of these title-page genealogies, the novel nevertheless had a secure status in reviews and biographical sketches as part of Sedgwick’s oeuvre.

In the early years of Sedgwick’s career, reviews and title pages built the elaborate web of intertextuality supporting and suspending her as an author without mentioning her name, but eventually, Sedgwick’s name circulated in association with her anonymous publications.<sup>16</sup> Some of her tales published in annuals during the 1830s are identified as “By Miss Sedgwick,” but in 1827, before her name ever appeared on a title page or in a byline in an annual, the *New-York Mirror and Ladies Literary Gazette* (edited by the poet George Pope Morris) featured her in a series of “Sketches of Distinguished Females.” The *Mirror* identified “Catharine Sedgwick” as the “Author of two very popular novels, the ‘New-England Tale,’ and ‘Redwood’” in this sketch (a sketch placed, fittingly enough, next to a sketch of Maria Edgeworth). Two months later in a review of *Hope Leslie*, the *Mirror* identified the novel’s author as “Miss Sedgwick.” In the wake of this revelation, a review in the *Port Folio* more coyly refers to her as “Miss S.” and as “our *Fair Unknown*.” This allusion to Sir Walter Scott, who was known as “The Great Unknown” when he published *Waverley* anonymously and a subsequent series of novels as “the Author of *Waverley*,” seems to indicate a genuine mystery. However, Scott’s identity was always an ill-kept secret (recall the mention of him as a novelist in that 1822 review of *A New-England Tale*), and he publicly acknowledged his authorship in 1826, so the allusion acknowledges the transparency of the identity of “Miss S.” rather than a genuine continuing mystery.<sup>17</sup> By 1835, with the publication of her *Tales and Sketches*, which identified the author on the title page as “Miss Sedgwick, Author of the *Linwoods*, *Hope Leslie*, &c.,” reviewers were no longer even pretending to accord Sedgwick anonymity, although her books continued to appear without her name on their title pages.

Throughout Sedgwick’s career, there is a remarkable consistency in the public construction of Sedgwick as an “anonymous” author, spurred, I would suggest, by a consistent public performance of humility, genteel appropriateness, and (female) republican virtue. In one of the early reviews to identify Sedgwick by name (an 1828 review of *Hope Leslie* in the *Western Monthly Review*), the reviewer also notes approvingly that Sedgwick “appears to move onward, with a becoming modesty; and if her track is not distinguished by the splendor, which belongs to some among her predecessors, and cotemporaries [*sic*], it will at least lead no one astray.”<sup>18</sup> That very lack of splendor, the lack of obvious attempts at self-aggrandizement, gave Sedgwick moral authority and the right to true

fame. Even this praise for Sedgwick's seeming lack of authorial power evidences her carefully subtle deployment of that power. In claiming that Sedgwick's works have "led no one astray," the reviewer echoes Sedgwick's own statement in her preface to *Redwood* that her works at least will "do no harm." Thoroughly conditioned by Sedgwick's early prefaces and authorial modesty, this reviewer does not take umbrage at Sedgwick's much more combative tone in her preface to *Hope Leslie* (in which she defends the accuracy of her portrayal of her Indian characters) or to the character of her Puritan heroine, who spends much of the novel leading others astray.

Her novels proper as well as their paratexts produced this consistent public authorial persona. Through her heroines, she staged for herself the same sort of public character that she staged for Jane Elton. At the dawn of the age of self-promotion and publicity, Sedgwick appeared in public without appearing to seek publicity. In Sedgwick's second novel, *Redwood* (1824), Grace Campbell, a headstrong young society woman, tells Ellen Bruce, the modest, countrified heroine, that "the days are past when one might 'do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame'—this is the age of display—of publication" (II: 152). Nevertheless, both Sedgwick and her heroines manage to "do good by stealth" and thus achieve fame without appearing to seek it. In her third novel, *Clarence* (1830), Sedgwick again successfully negotiated her public authority through a virtuous, self-effacing heroine (Gertrude Clarence) who, significantly, performs a series of heroic and selfless good deeds on behalf of others while withholding her name. The male protagonist, Gerald Roscoe, witnesses Gertrude's first act of heroism at the dramatic moonlit location of Trenton Falls, where she tries to lead her feverish and mentally deranged art teacher, Louis Seton, down a treacherous rocky path so that he will not throw himself into the falls because of his unrequited love for her. Both Gerald (who is at the falls trying to prevent the forced marriage of Emilie Layton to the villainous Pedrillo) and Gertrude hide their identities because both are trying to prevent harm and embarrassment to others. Gerald's cloak, which he wraps around Gertrude, betrays his identity when she finds his name stitched inside, but Gertrude successfully maintains her anonymity through several more such episodes, including her attendance at Louis Seton's deathbed and her daring attempt to foil Pedrillo's abduction of Emilie at a masquerade ball. She indeed proves herself to be, as the narrator describes her, "a fit heroine for the nineteenth century; practical, efficient, direct and decided—a rational woman—that beau-ideal of all devotees to the ruling spirit of the age—utility" (I: 239–40), with the essential caveat that she is not, as Sedgwick was not, direct about her own identity. She acts directly so that others may be saved from evil and allowed to live and die godly lives, but she effaces her own agency in these dramatic rescues. Just as with Sedgwick's, Gertrude's ano-

nymity does not ultimately obscure her value, but instead, when her identity is inevitably revealed, her “audience” (Gerald Roscoe) only admires her more for her purity and disinterestedness.

To put a slightly different spin on Sedgwick’s performance of anonymity, we might turn to the words of Miles Coverdale, narrator of Hawthorne’s novel *The Blithedale Romance*, who says of a woman writer’s use of a pseudonym, “Zenobia . . . is merely her public name; a sort of mask in which she comes before the world, retaining all the privileges of privacy—a contrivance, in short, like the white drapery of the Veiled Lady, only a little more transparent.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Sedgwick’s brother Harry used exactly the same image of a veiled lady in a letter to a family friend describing the impending publication of *A New-England Tale*: “[W]e all concur in thinking that a lady should be veiled in her first appearance before the public.”<sup>20</sup> But although her brother stressed the need for absolute secrecy concerning her identity, his use of the figure of the veiled lady belies that intention. In specifying that the lady should be veiled for her first publication, he implicitly acknowledges the inevitability of the lady’s being revealed upon subsequent publication. And the veil itself both reveals and conceals—it conceals her identity, but it reveals that the person wearing it is not just a woman or a female, but a “lady.”

Throughout Sedgwick’s career, reviewers and others who wrote about her praised her for just the sort of genteel appropriateness in publication that the veiled lady suggests. Perhaps the best example is a biographical sketch of Sedgwick published in *The National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans* (1834), which demonstrates how her contemporary critics responded extremely positively to Sedgwick’s public authorial persona staged through the means of anonymous publication. In this sketch (a portion of which is reproduced above), the writer notes the difficulty inherent in describing a “lady” such as “Miss Sedgwick,” because it is not permissible to ask others to convey details of her person and her private life.<sup>21</sup> The article thus gives very few such details, but the writer nevertheless describes approvingly one “private” story, the story of the genesis and publication of *A New-England Tale*, including Sedgwick’s modest initial plan to write a tract and her reluctance to publish something as ambitious as a novel.<sup>22</sup> The story described correlates closely to the private manuscript record that is the basis of Mary Kelley’s portrait of Sedgwick in *Private Woman*, but by circulating this story publicly, the sketch transforms her reluctance to publish into a qualification for literary vocation. Although we might wish for a literary foremother who forthrightly proclaimed her own ability rather than one who apologized for appearing in public at all, such apologies ultimately underwrote rather than undermined her public authority.

Indeed, although the writer of the *Portrait Gallery* sketch does not comment



specifically on Jane Elton as a character or on the academy exhibition scene in the novel, he or she implicitly collapses the two authorial performances, writing about Sedgwick's "accidental" writing and publishing of her first novel as if she were its heroine. Sedgwick thus effectively staged her own entrance into an appropriately modest public role through Jane, and her contemporaries read Sedgwick's performance in exactly the same way that Sedgwick invites us to read Jane's. Echoing the praise of many reviewers, the *Portrait Gallery* essay also praises the beauty, purity, and appropriateness of her style. Drawing on the same image that Sedgwick used in *A New-England Tale*, language as dress, the reviewer praises Sedgwick for dressing appropriately (like plain Jane rather than ostentatious Elvira). Rather than displaying blue threads of pedantry to draw attention to herself (the same blue threads of which Alice Courland expresses a horror in "Cacoethes Scribendi"), she uses language to draw attention to the substance of her works. Clearly this biographical sketch (and passages from many reviews I have not quoted here) reflects gendered expectations for Sedgwick as an author, but the expectation is not that ladies should not appear in public through the medium of print. Instead, the expectation is that they should appear dressed "appropriately"—while making certain formulaic demurrers about their reluctance to so appear. The standards of appropriateness for ladylike publication placed limits on Sedgwick's literary production, but all authors, if they hope to be published and to communicate with their audience, must work within certain limits for their work to be intelligible. By working within certain limits, an author may also gain the authority to subvert others (see my remarks above regarding how critics responded to Hope Leslie as a character).

By the late 1830s and through the 1840s, Sedgwick shifted much of her energy from writing books to writing tales and sketches for the booming magazine market for American-authored works; her name almost always appears on these short works (most often as "Miss C. M. Sedgwick," but also as "Miss Sedgwick" and "Miss Catharine M. Sedgwick").<sup>23</sup> Despite the vestigial absence of her name from the title pages of her books in the 1840s, paratextual elements in the volumes, such as text printed on the cloth covers and in publisher's catalogs and advertisements bound into them, routinely undermined that absence by giving her name.<sup>24</sup> Some of the most popular monthlies of the 1840s, such as *Godey's Lady's Book*, *Graham's Magazine*, *Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*, and Sartain's *Union Magazine*, sought her out as a regular contributor, with *Graham's* and *Godey's* adding her name to the promotional list of "principal contributors" featured on their covers.<sup>25</sup> In 1838, the poet Emma C. Embury, one of Sedgwick's peers who published in the annuals in the 1830s and who became a prolific magazinist in the late 1830s and the 1840s, featured "Miss Sedgwick" prominently in an "Essay on American Literature" published in the

*Ladies' Companion*. At the height of Sedgwick's literary reputation, Embury returned to the analogy to Edgeworth that grounded Sedgwick's entry into the literary market in 1822 in order to repudiate it:

Who has not felt indignant at hearing Miss Sedgwick styled the Edgeworth of our country? Whether her hand portrays [*sic*] the sweet Hope Leslie, the stately Grace Campbell, the noble Magawisca, or the excellent Aunt Deborah, she is alike feminine, natural and American. Why then should we bestow on her the mantle which has fallen from the shoulders of another author? She is no copyist of another's skill; she has a name for herself—she is one of our national glories—our Sedgwick.<sup>26</sup>

In 1838, Sedgwick had emerged from behind the veil and was a “name” to be claimed for American literature, but despite Embury's complaint, the Edgeworth label had not been unjustly imposed on Sedgwick but taken up at her suggestion.

A brief detour through the anonymous publication practices of some of Sedgwick's contemporaries highlights just how carefully and consistently Sedgwick (and her publishers) staged her anonymity and her subsequent emergence as a sought-after “name” contributor to magazines. Sedgwick's transparent and consistent anonymity created an unanxious public authority for her, but anonymous and pseudonymous publication are complex practices that produce varying effects. The prevalence of anonymity and its gender dynamics are necessarily difficult to quantify—the authors of many anonymously published novels remain unidentified, and quantifying anonymous publication in periodicals is a practical impossibility—but one scholar who bases her calculations on books included in Lyle Wright's *Bibliography of American Fiction* finds that from the 1820s to the 1840s, men were more likely than women to “veil” their authorship through anonymity or pseudonymity.<sup>27</sup> While Sedgwick's anonymity in the 1820s informed her readers about the character of the unnamed republican lady author, male fiction-writers also took up anonymity as an informative tool, and other writers, male and female, used anonymity in a way that misinformed and obfuscated.

The most closely related example to Sedgwick is her contemporary and competitor, James Fenimore Cooper. Like Sedgwick, he published his first novel, *Precaution*, anonymously in the early 1820s, and then published a string of other novels that omitted his name from their title pages. As in the case of Sedgwick, his anonymity did not remain true anonymity for long. Planning for the publication of his first book, Cooper found anonymity to be a pleasurable game and hoped it would pique public interest in his novel (he thought it might be good for sales if readers thought Washington Irving might be the author).<sup>28</sup>

American readers and critics virtually ignored *Precaution*, but it was so derivative of its British models (the works of Amelia Opie and Jane Austen) in both style and subject matter that it passed for the work of a British author in the British reviews, where it received considerably more attention than it did in the United States.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Cooper did not attempt to disavow the novel: The title page of his first successful “American” novel, *The Spy*, identifies the author as “the Author of *Precaution*.” By 1824, reviewers routinely mentioned Cooper’s name in their reviews despite its continuing absence from his title pages. The greater speed, relative to Sedgwick, with which his name publicly circulated most likely has less to do with public deference to a lady’s modesty than to Cooper’s extraordinary level of productivity—in four years, he published four novels, whereas Sedgwick took eight years to publish the same number. In 1823, however, after his authorship of *Precaution*, *The Spy*, and *The Pioneers* was established and his fourth novel, *The Pilot*, was being widely noticed as “in press,” Cooper published *Tales for Fifteen* under the pseudonym “Jane Morgan” (once again, his model was Amelia Opie, but his scenes and characters were American). Cooper effectively created a separate (and never repeated) authorial identity, and reviewers never caught on to the game.<sup>30</sup> More sustained attention to Sedgwick’s career may uncover similar charades, but the likelihood seems low.<sup>31</sup> With the exception of Cooper’s brief masquerade, then, both Cooper and Sedgwick built consistent public reputations in the 1820s through anonymous book publication.

Nathaniel Hawthorne’s anonymous publication practices during the 1820s and 1830s provide a particularly telling contrast to Sedgwick’s and highlight Sedgwick’s consistency and transparency in opposition to Hawthorne’s fragmentation and opacity. Like Sedgwick and Cooper (but a few years later, reflecting his relative youth), Hawthorne began his public authorial career by publishing a novel anonymously. *Fanshawe* (published in 1828) received positive reviews, but it languished in obscurity. Seemingly embarrassed by its poor literary quality, its autobiographical character, and its failure to find an audience, Hawthorne asked his friends to destroy their copies and refused to acknowledge his authorship of the novel for the rest of his life.<sup>32</sup>

Rather than building a reputation as “the author of *Fanshawe*,” Hawthorne allowed his tales to be published in annuals and magazines during the 1830s in a way that prevented readers (except for his editors and close associates) from classifying them together under the sign of a single author, named or unnamed. His publications in *The Token* (and later the merged *Token & Atlantic Souvenir*) under the editorship of Samuel Goodrich provide a particularly stark contrast to Sedgwick, whose works appeared in the same venues during the same years. When Hawthorne first sent Goodrich the manuscript for a group of tales, hoping that Goodrich could help him publish them together as a book, Goodrich

countered with an offer to publish a few of them in *The Token*. Hawthorne suggested that they appear as “by the Author of the *Provincial Tales*,” an interrelated collection of tales that he had not yet (and never) succeeded in publishing together as a book. He reasoned that “an unpublished book is not more obscure than many that creep into the world, and your readers will suppose that the *Provincial Tales* are among the latter.”<sup>33</sup> Rather than follow Hawthorne’s suggestion, which would have at least classified the *Tales* as the work of a single author, Goodrich instead created over the course of several years the fiction of multiple anonymous authors to disguise his heavy reliance on one author for his annuals.<sup>34</sup>

Consistently identified as “Miss Sedgwick” in Goodrich’s annuals, Sedgwick used the annuals to continue to build and consolidate her reputation and market identity, but Nathaniel Hawthorne, his works published with no attributions, under pseudonyms, and under many different “by the author of” tags, had no public identity. Whereas “Miss Sedgwick” was a market presence in the early 1830s, as far as ordinary readers were concerned, no single author function classifying the works produced by the man we know as Nathaniel Hawthorne existed, a situation only partially remedied by the publication in 1837 of many of his gift-book contributions as *Twice-Told Tales* with his name on the title page.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the public record of Sedgwick’s authorship demonstrated a consistent will and desire to appear in print and to claim her literary productions as her own.

Lydia Maria Child’s first novel provides yet another example of the variability of anonymity as an authorial practice and the interpretive conventions through which readers deciphered (correctly or not) the gender of an anonymous author. Child published her first novel, *Hobomok*, in 1824. The first novels of Sedgwick, Cooper, and Hawthorne bear no authorial designation at all—the space under the title on each title page is simply blank. The title page of *Hobomok*, in contrast, designates its author as “an American” (not “an American Lady” or “an American Gentleman”). All of Catharine Sedgwick’s prefaces are what Gerard Genette calls “authorial prefaces,” in which the author writes as the author addressing the reader. Child’s preface to *Hobomok*, however, is part of an elaborate fictional game, the rules of which were not decipherable to many of her readers in 1824 in the absence of an author’s name on the title page. In Genette’s taxonomy, the preface to *Hobomok* is both allographic (purporting to be written by “Frederic” rather than by the “author,” whose production of the book “Frederic” describes) and “fictive” (both “Frederic” and the unnamed male author, designated “\*\*\*\*\*,” are fictional characters created by Child).

Even literary critics, whom one might designate “professional readers,” were confused by the status of the preface, believing (quite reasonably) that the author of a tale thus prefaced was a man.<sup>36</sup> One review that groups Sedgwick’s *Redwood* and *Hobomok* together as novels treating American subject matter illustrates

clearly the grounds for such confusion. The reviewer correctly identifies the unnamed author of *Redwood* as “she” and an “authoress,” but identifies the author of *Hobomok* as male. “[T]he author,” writes the reviewer, “as he informed us in his preface, was induced to write it, by reading the eloquent article by Mr. Palfrey, in the *North American Review*.”<sup>37</sup> Not only does the reviewer mistake the fictive status of the preface, even within that fictional world, but the “author” of the novel is not the “author” of the novel’s preface. Instead, “Frederic” reports a conversation in which “\*\*\*\*\*” claims the *North American Review* article as his inspiration.<sup>38</sup>

While Sedgwick began and ended her career consistently publicly identified as “lady author,” Child’s beginning was more tentative and her ultimate trajectory far different. *Hobomok* did not remain orphaned or misattributed to an unnamed American gentleman because Child’s identity as a “lady author” eventually became known and because she included the novel in her “by the author of” genealogies in annuals and on title pages. Unlike Sedgwick, who continued to keep her name off the title pages of her books, Child’s name (usually as “Mrs. Child”) appears on many of her title pages in the 1830s and afterward, including the title page of her controversial antislavery treatise, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833). In the eyes of many of her contemporaries, her abolitionism unsexed her, undermining her status as a “lady author” and the authority that came with that status.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps if Sedgwick had completed and published her intended antislavery novel during the early 1830s, she would have suffered a similar fate.<sup>40</sup> Instead, she avoided direct intervention in political controversy and became “a name for herself . . . one of our national glories—our Sedgwick.”

In the one book on whose title page Sedgwick’s name appeared, *Tales and Sketches*, Sedgwick includes a story about women’s authorship, “Cacoethes Scribendi.” The story features dual female protagonists, one who seeks the publicity of print and one who refuses it. The widowed Mrs. Courland is inspired to take up authorship by reading an annual. She picks up a new volume and finds “the publisher had written the names of the authors of the anonymous pieces against their productions,” and among those names, “she found some of the familiar friends of her childhood and youth.”<sup>41</sup> Her daughter Alice, however, resists the entreaties of her mother and her aunts to take up the pen because, as the narrator tells us, “she would as soon have stood in a pillory as appeared in print” (55). When her mother and aunts publish her school composition in a magazine without her knowledge or consent, Alice, prefiguring Jo March in the second book of *Little Women*, throws the volume “into the blazing fire” and chooses marriage over authorship (59).

Although Sedgwick was still nominally anonymous when she first published

this story in 1829 (it was “by the author of Hope Leslie”), we should resist the temptation to equate Sedgwick with either Alice or Mrs. Courland. When the story first appeared, “the author of Hope Leslie” was a thrice-published American novelist, dividing her time between the Berkshires and New York City, whose presence lent luster to the *Atlantic Souvenir* rather than the other way around. In private (and perhaps ironically), she may have claimed that she had “a perfect horror of appearing in print,” but what eventually grew to a long record of publication (some of it anonymous, some of it not) testifies that print was not a pillory she sought to avoid. Alice Courland throws her essay into the fire because it was published against her will, but Sedgwick clearly wanted to publish and to have her works publicly recognized as hers. The fact that she kept her name off the title pages of most of her books speaks only a partial truth about her relationship to print. That absence—maintained even as Sedgwick changed publishers, crossed genres, and survived many shifts in market practices over decades of active publication—suggests a certain ladylike reticence, but it also suggests a consistent and carefully staged authorial presence.

#### NOTES

Thanks to Victoria Clements, Barbara Ryan, and Karen Woods Weierman for comments on earlier drafts of this essay. Research for this essay was funded in part by a Mellon Post-Dissertation Fellowship at the American Antiquarian Society.

1. Mary Kelley, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 125.

2. *Ibid.*, 128.

3. *Ibid.*, 129–30. In her work on Sedgwick since *Private Woman*, Kelley has shifted her focus to emphasize Sedgwick’s agency as an author and how Sedgwick achieves that agency by “negotiating . . . highly charged gender conventions and designing a readily identifiable persona from those conventions” (*The Power of Her Sympathy: The Autobiography and Journal of Catharine Maria Sedgwick*, ed. Mary Kelley [Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society and Northeastern Univ. Press, 1993], 36). Rather than seeing Sedgwick as unable to imagine herself as a producer of culture, Kelley more recently has argued that Sedgwick reconceptualized what it meant to be a producer of culture—my claims concerning Sedgwick’s authorship thus share a strong affinity with Kelley’s more recent work. Kelley’s account in *Private Woman* remains enormously influential, however, shaping critical readings both of Sedgwick’s works and of female authorship in nineteenth-century America, even though Kelley has subsequently modified that interpretation. See, for example, Andrew J. Scheiber, “Master and Majesty: Subject, Object, and the Power of Authorship in Catharine Sedgwick’s ‘Cacoethes Scribendi,’” *American Transcendental Quarterly* 10 (1996): 41–58, and T. Gregory Garvey, “Risking Reprisal: Catharine Sedg-

wick's *Hope Leslie* and the Legitimation of Public Action by Women," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 8 (1994): 287–98, two readings of Sedgwick's texts that rely heavily on Kelley's psychological portrait of Sedgwick in *Private Woman*.

4. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is probably the first twentieth-century articulation of what has become the received wisdom concerning the nineteenth century: "Currer Bell, George Eliot, George Sand, all the victims of inner strife as their writings prove, sought ineffectively to veil themselves by using the name of a man. Thus they did homage to the convention . . . that publicity in women is detestable. Anonymity runs in their blood. The desire to be veiled still possesses them" (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 50. For a persuasive refutation for this claim as applied to Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, see Catherine A. Judd, "Male Pseudonyms and Female Authority in Victorian England," in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*, ed. John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 250–68.

5. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 107.

6. Robert J. Griffin, "Anonymity and Authorship," *New Literary History* 30 (autumn 1999): 879. Griffin's specific example is a series of Victorian novels published with "by the author of" claims on their title pages, the same practice that links Sedgwick's novels together (see below).

7. Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), 1–2.

8. Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *A New-England Tale; or, Sketches of New-England Character and Manners*, ed. Victoria Clements (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 54. Subsequent page references are cited in the text.

9. *Paratexts*, 124, 135.

10. Review of *The Spy*, *North American Review* (July 1822): 279 (the notice of Sedgwick's book appears in a footnote to a review of this Cooper novel). [James Fenimore Cooper], Review of *A New-England Tale*, *Literary & Scientific Repository* (May 1822): 336–70. Review of *Redwood and Hobomok*, *Atlantic Magazine* (July 1824): 234–36. Review of *The Travellers*, *New York Review* (June 1825): 34–38. Review of *Hope Leslie*, *Western Monthly Review* (September 1828): 289–95.

11. [Cooper], Review of *A New-England Tale*, 337.

12. Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Redwood*, 2 vols. (New York: E. Bliss and E. White, 1824), 1: ix. Subsequent page references are cited in the text.

13. Review of *Redwood*, *Port Folio* (July 1824): 67.

14. Review of *Redwood*, *North American Review* (April 1825): 245.

15. Review of *Redwood*, *United States Literary Gazette* (15 July 1824): 101.

16. Kelley acknowledges this fact of the literary market in her analysis of anonymity in *Private Woman*, but in keeping with her thesis, Kelley sees this process as unintentional and painful and "dramatiz[ing] in public the private subjugation of [women writers'] lives" (128). Again, I am arguing that the drama visible to readers was not one of Sedgwick's subjugation but of her ascension.

17. "Sketches of Distinguished Females," *New-York Mirror* (21 April 1827): 310–11. Review of *Hope Leslie*, *New-York Mirror* (23 June 1827): 383. Review of *Hope Leslie*, *Port Folio* (July–Dec. 1827): 29, 41. The first gift-book publication to bear the name "Miss Sedgwick" is "Mary Dyer" in *The Token* for 1831. After this publication (which was, as was the custom, actually released in the fall of 1830), all of her tales and sketches published in *The Token* and the subsequent merged *Token & Atlantic Souvenir*, both published under the editorship of Samuel G. Goodrich, appeared with a "Miss Sedgwick" byline. For interesting recent discussions of Scott's anonymous publication practices, see Genette, *Paratexts*, especially 43–46, 248–49, 284–88; Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 123–41; and Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1984), 59–65, 107–9. Instances in which European translators erroneously attributed *Redwood* to James Fenimore Cooper might seem to point to Sedgwick's obscurity (these European attributions are apparently the source of Judith Fetterley's claim that "Since [*Redwood*] was published anonymously . . . and since it was both American and good, many took *Redwood* to be the work of James Fenimore Cooper." See Judith Fetterley, ed., *Provisions: A Reader from Nineteenth-Century American Women* [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985], 43). However, these instances instead testify to the fact that some Europeans encountered the novel apart from the broader para- and extratextual context in which American readers encountered the novel (no American reviews attribute *Redwood* to Cooper).

18. Review of *Hope Leslie*, *Western Monthly Review* (Sept. 1828): 286.

19. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, ed. Seymour Gross and Rosalie Murphy, *Norton Critical Editions*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 8.

20. *Private Woman*, 129.

21. *National Portrait Gallery*, 2. Sarah Josepha Hale reprinted the essay without attribution in her *American Ladies' Magazine* ([Dec. 1835]: 656–65) under the title "Caroline [*sic*] Maria Sedgwick."

22. *National Portrait Gallery*, 3. Actually, despite the reference to the preface of the novel as authority for these statements, the writer apparently possesses and conveys information concerning the genealogy of the book that was not previously publicly available. In the Preface, Sedgwick writes that the "original design" for the book was "if possible, even more limited and less ambitious than what has been accomplished," which was "to produce a very short and simple moral tale of the most humble description," but she makes no reference to "religious tracts" or an unwillingness to be published.

23. On the general shift to named publication in the magazines in the 1840s, see Susan Barrera Fay, "A Modest Celebrity: Literary Reputation and the Marketplace in Antebellum America" (unpublished dissertation, George Washington Univ., 1992), chap. 6. I discuss Fay's statistical analysis of anonymous and pseudonymous book publication below, and although I do not agree with all of her findings, her broader analysis of "veiled" authorship during the period has been crucial to my own analysis of Sedgwick's practices.

24. I have found the following examples (which may not be duplicated in all extant



copies, especially if they have been rebound): in *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home* (1841), a brief catalog of new works bound into the front of the volume identifies *Letters* as “by Miss C. M. Sedgwick,” and a full Harper’s catalog bound into the back includes an entry for “Miss Sedgwick’s Works”; catalogs for two Harper’s School Library Series that reprinted Sedgwick’s works identify them as “by Miss Sedgwick,” and these catalogs are bound into series editions of Sedgwick’s works; and some editions of her works issued by Harper’s independent of the library series include her name on their spines (e.g., an 1845 edition of her *Tales & Sketches*, Second Series, identifies her as “Miss Sedgwick,” and the spine text for *A Love Token for Children* identifies the author as “Miss C. M. Sedgwick”). Late in her career, when Sedgwick returned to the novel with the publication of *Married or Single?* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857), Harper’s kept her name off the title page, using the “by the author of” formula, but put “by Miss C. M. Sedgwick” on the spine. Also note that though several European translators misidentified *Redwood* as by Cooper (see bibliography), an 1822 English edition of *A New-England Tale* (London: John Miller) includes “Miss Sedgwick” on the spine, if not on the title page.

25. See the bibliography included in this volume for Sedgwick’s magazine contributions.

26. Emma C. Embury, “Essay on American Literature,” *Ladies’ Companion* 9 (1838): 84.

27. “Although men continued to outwrite women by large margins in each of these three decades, publication patterns indicate that men, rather than women, were more likely to resort to literary veils and were slower to part with these disguises” (Fay, “Modest Celebrity,” 70—the statistical tables appear on pp. 327–30).

28. James D. Wallace, *Early Cooper and His Audience* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986), 79.

29. See George Dekker and John P. McWilliams, eds., *Fenimore Cooper: The Critical Heritage*, in *The Critical Heritage Series* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), and additional reviews collected on microfilm by the American Antiquarian Society, which houses Cooper’s papers.

30. See James Franklin Beard’s preface to a facsimile edition, *Tales for Fifteen (1823) by James Fenimore Cooper. A Facsimile Reproduction* (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1959).

31. The appearance of “Le Bossu” in the *Tales of Glauber Spa* collection, which consists entirely of anonymous contributions from American authors, might appear to be such a charade, but the authorship of individual pieces in the volume seems to have been an open secret. The *Portrait Gallery* identifies Sedgwick as the author of “Le Bossu” without even mentioning the supposed anonymity of its authorship.

32. Fredson Bowers, Introduction to *The Blithedale Romance and Fanshawe*, vol. 3, *Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1964), 301–16; James R. Mellow, *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 41–50; Arlin Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne, a Biography* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), 50; and Edwin Haviland Miller, *Salem is my Dwelling Place: A Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1991), 77–78.

33. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson, eds., *Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Letters, 1813–1843*, vol. 15, *Centenary Edition* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1985), 205.

34. For the complex (and contested) history of Hawthorne's pre-*Twice-Told Tales* publications, see Mellow, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 46–48, 69–76; Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 49–54, 69–79; J. Donald Crowley, "Historical Commentary," in *Twice-Told Tales*, vol. 9, *Centenary Edition* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1974), 485–533. For complete bibliographical information, including bylines, see C. E. Frazer Clark, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), 376–83, 411–18.

35. Ironically, two Massachusetts newspapers reprinted his "A Shaker Bridal" (first published in *The Token* for 1838 as "by the Author of The Twice-Told Tales") and attributed it to "Miss Sedgwick" (Clark, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 382–83).

36. For Child's literary celebrity in Boston, see Carolyn Karcher, *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1994), 16–17; Deborah Pickman Clifford, *Crusader for Freedom: A Life of Lydia Maria Child* (Boston: Beacon, 1992), 47–50.

37. Review of *Redwood* and *Hobomok*, *Atlantic Magazine* (July 1824): 234.

38. The first review of *Hobomok* in the *North American Review* similarly misgenders Child and confuses the fictional status of certain elements ([July 1824]: 262–63). The second review of *Hobomok* in the *Review* ([Jared Sparks], "Recent American Novels" [July 1825]: 78–104) avoids misgendering Child by avoiding all pronominal references to the author of *Hobomok*; but Child indirectly solicited this second review through George Ticknor, so Sparks had inside knowledge (Clifford, 44–45). The nine other novels included in this omnibus review, authored about equally by men and women, were all published anonymously or pseudonymously.

39. On the effects of her abolitionism on Child's authorial career, see Karcher, *First Woman*, chap. 8.

40. Karen Woods Weierman's essay in this volume persuasively dates the composition of this manuscript fragment to the early 1830s.

41. In Fetterley, *Provisions*, 53. Subsequent page references are cited in the text.