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Introduction: A TALE OF OUR OWN TIMES

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Introduction

Melissa J. Homestead

Catharine Sedgwick and the American Novel of Manners

In his preface to his novel of manners *Home as Found* (1838), James Fenimore Cooper repeats what were already commonplaces about American society as the subject matter for fiction. Lamenting “that no attempt to delineate ordinary American life, either on the stage or in the pages of a novel, has been rewarded with success,”¹ he admits *Home as Found* is another such attempt but professes he has “scarcely a hope of success. It would be indeed a desperate undertaking, to think of making anything interesting in the way of a *Roman de Société* [novel of social life] in this country; still, useful glances may possibly be made in that direction.”² Twentieth-century literary historians largely took Cooper at his word, citing his preface and accepting his judgment that *Home as Found* was the earliest “glance” in the direction of an American novel of manners. Proclaiming that realistic portrayals of social custom were the appropriate province of the early nineteenth-century European novel, but not the American, they argued that antebellum American authors resorted instead to the romance. In this literary historical trajectory, the full flowering of the American novel of manners occurred only late in the century, with the rise of Henry James and Edith Wharton.³ Taking account of Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Clarence* (1830) troubles this critical narrative on several grounds.

1 James Fenimore Cooper, *Home as Found*, ed. Lewis Leary (New York: Capricorn, 1961), xxvii.

2 *Ibid.*, xxviii.

3 Richard Chace, articulating his influential theory of the American romance, implicitly cites Cooper’s preface. See *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), 158. See also Lionel Trilling, “Manners, Morals, and the Novel,” *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: Viking, 1950), 213. James Tuttleton ignores Sedgwick and jumps from Cooper as founding figure to James. See *The Novel of Manners in America* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1972). Gordon Milne includes Cooper and Sedgwick but gives Cooper precedence as “genuine.” See *The Sense of Society: A History of the American Novel of Manners* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1977), 2. Cooper’s first novel, *Precaution* (1820), was a novel of manners set entirely in England.

The recent recovery of Sedgwick as an important antebellum American novelist has positioned her primarily in relation to the genre of historical fiction and to New England as a region.¹ *A New-England Tale* (1822), subtitled “Sketches of New-England Character and Manners,” is set in early nineteenth-century western Massachusetts, while *Hope Leslie* (1827) addresses white-Indian relations in the Massachusetts Colony in the seventeenth century. *The Linwoods* (1835), subtitled in homage to Walter Scott’s influential historical novel *Waverley* “Sixty Years Since,” is set in both New York and New England during the American Revolution. *Clarence*, subtitled “A Tale of our Own Times,” is set primarily in the New York City of Sedgwick’s own day, and in it Sedgwick proves herself to be an astute critic of the social world of the young nation’s most cosmopolitan city.

Claims to firstness in literary history are always problematic—Sedgwick’s second novel, *Redwood* (1824), set primarily in rural New England, is also arguably a novel of manners. In a review of *Redwood*, poet William Cullen Bryant, Sedgwick’s close family friend and colleague, praises her for succeeding at the “hazardous experiment” of writing “a novel founded on domestic incidents” in “our own time,”² despite the widely-held conviction that a novel “descriptive of the manners of our countrymen” could not succeed (see Appendix A1). This prevailing wisdom was based on a perception that American culture lacked the hierarchical class structure and leisured elites that featured prominently in British novels of manners. As Bryant writes, the “active and practical” pursuits of Americans and the absence of a moneyed class with leisure to pursue “intrigue, those plottings and counterplottings” left American authors without the raw materials from which British authors formed the plots of their novels of contemporary social life. Sedgwick, Bryant claims, succeeded by varying the formula, focusing instead on “quiet times and familiar manners” that

1 For notable exceptions, see Patricia Larson Kalayjian, “Disinterest as Moral Corrective in *Clarence*’s Cultural Critique,” *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Lucinda Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements (Boston: Northeastern UP, 2003), 104-17, and Charlene Avallone, “Catharine Sedgwick and the Circles of New York,” *Legacy* 23.2 (2006): 115-31. Susan K. Harris notes Sedgwick’s focus across her *oeuvre* on “manners,” and contrasts her approach to Cooper’s in *Home as Found*. See “The Limits of Authority: Catharine Maria Sedgwick and the Politics of Resistance,” in Damon-Bach and Clements, 272-85.

2 William Cullen Bryant, “Redwood,” *North American Review* 20 (April 1825): 246.

transpired in “the most ancient and tranquil parts” of the American nation of her day.

In *Clarence*, however, Sedgwick moved further into the traditional territory of the novel of manners, trumping the priority of Cooper’s *Home as Found* on precisely the grounds that mark it as an heir of the British tradition and as a precursor to Wharton and James. Like *Home as Found*, *Clarence* traverses New York City, a country estate, and resort areas. Sedgwick’s novel, also like Cooper’s, features a marriage plot, British travelers experiencing and critically evaluating American culture, and American characters drawn from urban social elites. Sedgwick does not merely imitate the British novel of manners, however; instead, she revises the genre to fit American culture and corrects perceived excesses of the society that engendered the British literary form.¹

Clarence originated both in Sedgwick’s reading of British novels and in social and epistolary encounters with British authors and travelers. These origins make *Clarence* a key text in the tradition of Anglo-American literary transatlanticism. Sedgwick’s novel has significance beyond its distinction as a pioneering American novel of manners, however. As Philip Gould argues, Sedgwick’s nationalism in *The Linwoods* is not parochial because she folds people and cultural materials from England and France into her plot and narrative frame of reference to depict the new nation as cosmopolitan.² In *Clarence*, Sedgwick does the same, balancing her nationalist critique of British culture with a cosmopolitan embrace of the foreign. Her frame of reference is even broader than in *The Linwoods*, however, encompassing immigrant and traveling characters not only from Europe, but also from Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba. She thus aligns her novel and the American nation hemispherically as well as transatlantically.

Gertrude Clarence, a young heiress, is the novel’s heroine, and its plot revolves around her negotiation of a perilous marriage market in New York City. Rather than plunging directly into the marriage plot, however, Sedgwick embeds her heroine in a decades-long Atlantic family history. In the first chapter, Gertrude

1 As Eve Tavor Bannet observes, imitating models was central to writing practices in the long eighteenth century, enabling “variation, correction, amplification, inversion or radical adaption of the model or models in use, to their ‘improvement’ and creative transformation” rather than sameness. See *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), xii.

2 Philip Gould, “Catharine Sedgwick’s Cosmopolitan Nation,” *New England Quarterly* 78.2 (June 2005): 232-58.

is young and her father a clerk of modest means in New York City. Subsequently, other characters recount events occurring back to the 1780s and 1790s in England and Jamaica. When Gertrude enters society, she and her father live in a grand country house in (fictional) Clarenceville, and a crucial series of events transpires at Trenton Falls, the (actual) popular tourist site. The masquerade ball at the novel's climax and the havoc it wreaks cap off a novel replete with cases of mistaken and misrepresented identities. Ultimately, true identities are restored, and Gertrude brings virtue and a genteel republicanism to the city, displacing urban corruption.

This introduction examines the origins of *Clarence*, including its relationship to Sedgwick's earlier career and life experiences, and its composition, publication, and reception, orienting the novel both transatlantically and hemispherically in Atlantic World contexts. In the absence of a modern Sedgwick biography or a complete edition of her letters or journals, the introduction is primarily biographical. I close by considering the 1849 revised edition of the novel, intended to be part of a standard edition of Sedgwick's works, and the revival of her reputation as a major novelist, positioning her 1830 novel of manners as an influence on the flowering of the American fiction in the 1850s.

***Clarence* in Transatlantic Context: Maria Edgeworth and Captain Basil Hall**

As Lawrence Buell observes in "American Literary Emergence as a Postcolonial Phenomenon," early nineteenth-century American authors had to "reckon with" "an extensive discourse of America" produced by Europeans who observed Americans with a kind of "colonial condescension."¹ Writing from within a recently colonial culture and sharing a language with their former rulers, American authors both "anticipat[ed] a transcontinental readership" and "imagin[ed] foreign as well as native opinion" in ways that had "textual consequences."² Buell's examples derive exclusively from works of male authors, such as "Cooper's rewriting of the trope

1 Lawrence Buell, "American Literary Emergence as a Postcolonial Phenomenon," *American Literary History* 4.3 (March 1992): 417.

2 Ibid., 424, 425. For a critique of the author-centered study of influence and reception in transatlantic literary studies embodied in Buell's work and in Robert Weisbuch's *Atlantic Double-Cross: American Literature and British Influence in the Age of Emerson* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), see Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor, "Introduction," *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2007), 6-7.

of the genteel protagonist cum vernacular sidekick in [Sir Walter] Scott's *Waverley* novels" by making frontiersman Natty Bumppo his hero. While the novelist known as the "American Scott" rewrote *Waverley* and anticipated and actively sought British readers, Sedgwick, the "American Edgeworth," revised *Belinda* (1801), by Anglo-Irish novelist Maria Edgeworth, and sought British readers for it. By arranging a British edition of her novel, Sedgwick simultaneously sought a broad audience in Britain and delivered a pointed rejoinder to the colonial condescension directed at her by Edgeworth and Edgeworth's friend, the British naval officer and travel writer Captain Basil Hall. Writing back to Edgeworth and Hall and their assumptions about the lack of manners, social distinction, and fashion in American society, Sedgwick launched the American novel of manners.

Sedgwick's transatlantic address to Edgeworth and British audiences began eight years earlier at the inception of her career. By dedicating *A New-England Tale*, her first novel, "To Maria Edgeworth, as a slight expression of the writer's sense of her eminent services in the great cause of humanity," Sedgwick signaled that she knew Edgeworth's body of work and modeled her own authorial persona on Edgeworth's. Sedgwick clearly found Edgeworth an admirable model. Born and raised in the western Massachusetts village of Stockbridge, Sedgwick remained single so she could devote her attention to her siblings and their families;¹ similarly, Edgeworth devoted herself to her father and her younger half-siblings on the Edgeworth estate in rural Ireland. The beginning of Sedgwick's career coincided with her conversion from Calvinist-inflected Protestantism to Unitarian Christianity, and Edgeworth's didacticism and promotion of rational morality in her works suited Sedgwick's embrace of an "enlightened, rational, and liberal" faith.² Sedgwick and other American read-

1 For contrasting views of this choice, see Mary Kelley, "A Woman Alone: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Spinsterhood in Nineteenth-Century America," *New England Quarterly* 51.2 (June 1978): 209-25, and Marshall Foletta, "'The dearest sacrifice': Catharine Maria Sedgwick and the Celibate Life," *American Nineteenth Century History* 8.1 (March 2007): 51-79.

2 Catharine Maria Sedgwick (CMS) to Susan Higginson Channing (SHC), 12 March 1821, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers (CMS Papers), I.7.1, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Boston. Some of the letters cited can be found, often in heavily edited form, in Mary Dewey, ed., *Life and Letters of Catharine M. Sedgwick* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871), but I cite the manuscript letters as more authoritative.

ers had easy access to Edgeworth's works because US publishers began reprinting them early in the nineteenth century. In 1814, the Boston firm Wells & Lilly published the first American edition of *Belinda* as part of a collected edition of Edgeworth's works, and S.H. Parker of Boston did the same a decade later (a London collected edition of Edgeworth's works would not appear until 1832).¹ Sedgwick likely first read *Belinda* in Wells & Lilly's edition. A borrowing from *Belinda* in Sedgwick's *The Travellers: A Tale Designed for Young People* (1825) provides evidence of her reading. Reminiscent of Edgeworth's works for children, *The Travellers* embeds as a back story for a minor character a truncated version of a striking subplot from *Belinda*, Clarence Hervey's quixotic plan to raise a young woman as an ideal wife for himself.²

By arranging a London edition of *A New-England Tale* with publisher John Miller, Sedgwick increased the likelihood that the novel would find its way into Edgeworth's hands so that she might respond to the dedication addressed to her.³ Initially, Edgeworth accepted Sedgwick's invitation: by the fall of 1823, Sedgwick had received a letter from Edgeworth (now lost), which circulated among Sedgwick's family and friends. As she wrote to her close friend and frequent correspondent Eliza Lee Cabot (later Follen) with assumed modesty, "I have received a letter from Miss Edgeworth—I had rather have one of your letters but still it is a very gratifying circumstance to such a humble personage as I am."⁴ By the time Sedgwick received Edgeworth's letter, composition of her second novel, *Redwood* (which specifically references, emulates,

1 Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick, "Select Bibliography," in *Belinda* by Maria Edgeworth (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), xxxiii.

2 Edgeworth's subplot was based on an incident in the life of her father's friend Thomas Day. Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1972), 39n. In Sedgwick's revision, the man loses interest in his intended wife when smallpox scars her. *The Travellers* (New York: E. Bliss and E. White, 1825), 111-12.

3 Her only documented contact with Miller is in relation to the London edition of *Clarence*, but that letter (discussed below) and the timing of Miller's volumes evidence a well-established practice. Miller's edition was based on the second American edition of 1822, and thus appeared very late in the year, accounting for Edgeworth's lateness in responding.

4 CMS to Eliza Lee Cabot (ELC), 12 November 1823, CMS Papers, I.8.2. Jennifer Elmore considers these letters and others documenting the relationship between CMS and Edgeworth in *Sacred Unions: Catharine Sedgwick, Maria Edgeworth, and Domestic-Political Fiction*, Diss. Florida State University, 2002, ch. 1.

and revises Edgeworth's Irish novel *The Absentee* [1812]), was well under way.¹ Once again, Sedgwick arranged a London edition, which appeared not long after the New York edition.

Both Edgeworth and Sedgwick maintained multiple transatlantic correspondences, so one might expect that Edgeworth's 1823 letter would have inaugurated a continuing epistolary relationship in the context of which Edgeworth would have responded to *Redwood*. Instead, she communicated indirectly, recording her response and conveying advice to Sedgwick in a letter to Rachel Mordecai Lazarus, a Jewish schoolteacher in South Carolina. Lazarus—a perfect stranger to Sedgwick—then copied these passages from Edgeworth's letter into her own letter to Sedgwick.² Lazarus had initiated her own correspondence with Edgeworth the previous decade, when she wrote to protest Edgeworth's stereotypical portrayal of Jews in her fiction.³ As their correspondence and long-distance friendship grew, Lazarus sent American books to Edgeworth, and she wrote to Edgeworth in 1824 about reading a positive review of *Redwood* (see Appendix A2 for excerpts from these letters). Several months later, she sent a copy to Edgeworth, along with her enthusiastic praise of it, demurring only against Sedgwick's portrayal of the condition of slaves in Virginia. Edgeworth took advantage of this opening to use Lazarus as an intermediary.

Edgeworth's choice of an indirect address to Sedgwick via Lazarus produced a distinctly passive aggressive result. Professing to Lazarus that she enjoyed *Redwood* and was "flattered"

1 For *Redwood*'s revision of *The Absentee*, see Elmore ch. 5; Cliona Ó Gallchoir, "Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Irish National Tale," in *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*, ed. Denise Kohn, et al. (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2006), 24-45; and Juliet Shields, "Pedagogy in the Post-Colony: Documentary Didacticism and the 'Irish Problem,'" *Eighteenth-Century Novel* 6-7 (2009): 465-93. My choice of "emulate" over "imitate" draws on Richard Gravil's distinction, in "Nature and Walden," in Manning and Taylor, *Transatlantic Literary Studies*, 106.

2 A mutual acquaintance, such as Mary Griffith (see below), would have been a more logical intermediary, but Edgeworth was stung when a Philadelphia newspaper reprinted her letter to Griffith conveying critical comments about Cooper's *The Spy*. See Eve Tavor Bannet, "Maria and Rachel: Transatlantic Identities and the Epistolary Assimilation of Difference," in *New Essays on Maria Edgeworth*, ed. Julie Nash (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 31-56.

3 Rachel Mordecai to Maria Edgeworth (ME), 7 August 1815, in *The Education of the Heart: The Correspondence of Rachel Mordecai Lazarus and Maria Edgeworth*, ed. Edgar E. MacDonald (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1977), 3-7.

by mentions of her works in the novel,¹ Edgeworth praises the character Deborah Lenox as “first rate, in Scott’s best manner, yet not an imitation of Scott.” From praise, however, she moves quickly to advice that smacks of colonial condescension. Advising that America, unlike Scotland, has no “tradition” that might be made the subject of historical fiction in the manner of Scott, she advises Sedgwick to write about the present rather than the past.² Although the present is also the domain of the novel of manners, she warns Sedgwick against portraying society and fashion, particularly European characters, because “English Criticks” and female readers will pass judgment on misrepresentations of the “shades” and “minute particulars” of fashion that will inevitably elude a “transatlantick writer.”

The sting of Lazarus’s letter conveying Edgeworth’s advice was likely soothed by a letter Sedgwick received virtually simultaneously from her friend Catherine Norton excerpting a letter from British poet Felicia Hemans. “Miss Sedgwick’s writings are most honourable to her sex; full of high feeling, of moral beauty,” Hemans wrote. Bestowing particular praise on *Redwood*, Hemans opines, “Miss Sedgwick’s lofty standard of morality might give an useful lesson to Miss Edgeworth, whose works, though excellent yet appeal far more to worldly prudence than to any nobler motive of action.”³ Bolstered by this transatlantic flattery, Sedgwick responded graciously to Edgeworth’s criticism, writing *via* Lazarus that Edgeworth’s sentiments rewarded her “past exertion” and would encourage her in the future when she felt inferior to the task of writing. Sedgwick explains that “some of [her] most intelligent friends” believed that America’s early history was the best subject matter for fiction, but she seemingly concedes that she lacked the necessary “touch of a magician to body forth the shadows of the past.” She further reinforced her ostensible concession by sending Lazarus a copy of *The Deformed Boy* (1826), “a pathetick little story, founded on fact,” as Lazarus wrote approvingly to Edgeworth, which Sedgwick had “written for the benefit of a Benevolent Society.” Sedgwick claimed to be “much impressed” with Edgeworth’s advice. However, her letter (which

1 Sedgwick’s reference to the *Absentee* in *Redwood* is not flattering, and the novel’s villain, a fortune-hunting Captain in the British Navy, likely spurred Edgeworth’s warning about fashionable British characters.

2 CMS’s “The Catholic Iroquois” (published late 1825 in the *Atlantic Souvenir*) was her first historical fiction, but it did not appear in England until Mary Russell Mitford’s *Stories of American Life* (1830) anthology.

3 Catherine E. Norton to CMS, 7 August 1826, CMS Papers, II:1:6.

Lazarus predictably copied and sent to Edgeworth) deployed a pointed irony invisible to Lazarus and Edgeworth, who had no way of knowing that Sedgwick was nearly done writing her first historical novel, *Hope Leslie*, in which she emulated and revised Scott's *Ivanhoe*.¹ Its critical and popular success would prove Edgeworth wrong about American history as rich subject matter for fiction. Edgeworth's condescending "advice" of 1826 became as notorious in Sedgwick's family and social circle as Edgeworth's letter of 1823. Well over a year after she received Lazarus's letter, Catharine referred to it in a letter to her brother Harry, with which she forwarded a letter from Swiss economist and historian Jean Charles Léonard de Sismondi praising *Hope Leslie*: "Such a letter to an obscure unknown individual from a man so distinguished & so occupied in the career of letters is a proof of a most kind & generous disposition—how different from Miss Edgeworth! She certainly belongs to the class of egotists."²

In late 1827, Sedgwick was also smarting from an encounter with another British egotist who found American culture "vulgar," Captain Basil Hall. In his American travels of 1827-28 (undertaken with the intention of writing a travel book), Hall, his wife, and young daughter met the Sedgwick family on a visit to Stockbridge.³ As he described his purpose in the preface to *Travels in North America* (1829), he wanted "to see things with my own eyes, in order to ascertain, by personal inspection, how far the sentiments prevalent in England with respect to that country were correct or otherwise."⁴ Despite his posture of open-mindedness, he was, as Alice Hiller points out, a conservative Tory who "slanted his reportage the better to discredit the practice of democracy in

1 On CMS's transformation of *Ivanhoe*'s Jewish Rebecca into a Native American Magawisca, see Alide Cagidemetro, "A Plea for Fictional Histories and Old-Time 'Jewesses'," in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford UP, 1989), 14-43. As Gary Dyer argues, Scott created his "Jewess" out of the Pocahontas legend, making CMS's appropriation of Scott an uncanny return to Scott's source. See "The Transatlantic Pocahontas," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 30.4 (2008): 301-22.

2 CMS to Henry Dwight Sedgwick (HDS), 19 December 1827, CMS Papers, III.3.7.

3 Una Pope-Hennessy, ed., *The Aristocratic Journey: Being the Outspoken Letters of Mrs. Basil Hall Written during a Fourteen Months' Sojourn in America, 1827-1828* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 39-40, 77-78.

4 Basil Hall, *Travels in North America, in the Years 1827-1828* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1829), iii.

the run-up to political reform in England.”¹ When, in the course of his travels, Hall complained of the excesses of American democracy and lack of social cultivation he had seen in eastern seaboard cities, his acquaintances exhorted, “Go to our flourishing villages, sir ... and talk to our farmers; there you will see our character—there you will find the high-minded and intelligent citizens of our country” (See Appendix A5).² In his account of his visit to Stockbridge, he writes admiringly of “the more wealthy class of the village residents,” including “the accomplished author of several admirable works of fancy—‘Redwood,’ ‘Hope Leslie,’ and others,”; however, he devotes far more space to lampooning a celebration of the “fourth anniversary of the Agricultural Society.”

Despite this flattering published mention of Sedgwick, on the evening of his departure from Stockbridge, Hall sent her a letter cataloging the “vulgarisms” in *Hope Leslie*’s language and criticizing her depiction of immoral characters, scenes and incidents (he particularly objected to the character of Rosa, rejected paramour of Sir Philip Gardiner, who disguises herself as a boy in order to travel with him as his page. (See Appendix A4 for Hall’s letter and Sedgwick’s response.) Sedgwick responded to his criticism by vigorously defending her American idiom and the morality of her fiction. Significantly, Hall (a Scotsman) was Maria Edgeworth’s friend, and he carried letters of introduction from her to Rachel Lazarus (whom he did not meet) and Philadelphia author Mary Griffith (whom he did).³ Notably, Griffith was both Edgeworth’s transatlantic correspondent and Sedgwick’s friend. As Sedgwick wrote to her brother Harry in the same letter in which she characterized Edgeworth as an egotist, “I wish you could see [Edgeworth’s] letter of introduction for Capt Hall to Mrs. Griffith, & a subsequent one—‘Capt H. does me the honor & pleasure to permit me to introduce him to you’—& ‘have you seen the Capt?’—‘have you heard him talk?—have your friends heard him,’ & then quite a rant about his fine powers—Miss E must think the Americans just up to the level of Dr Johnson’s requisitions for a

1 Alice Hiller, “The Perverse Tourism of Captain Basil Hall,” *Studies in Travel Writing* 3 (1999): 82.

2 The failed quest for the “American gentleman” was a defining characteristic of the British travel account of America. Christopher Mulvey, *Transatlantic Manners: Social Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Travel Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 19, 25.

3 Frances Anne Beaufort Edgeworth, *Memoir of Maria Edgeworth* (London: Joseph Masters, 1867), II:285, and ME to Basil Hall, 9 April 1827, in *Ibid.*, 285-88.

female travelling companion. One would think Hall equal to Mad de Stael & Napoleon.”¹

The Origins and Composition of *Clarence*: Observing American Manners and Revising *Belinda*

Sedgwick left no definitive traces of the origins and composition of *Clarence*, in contrast to the research for and writing of *Redwood*, *Hope Leslie*, and *The Linwoods*, all clearly traceable in her letters and journals. In the late 1820s, her complaints of an inability to write and her brother Harry's descent into mental illness take center stage in family letters, with *Clarence* first referred to in March 1830, when she had already finished writing it.² Nevertheless, one can glimpse the seeds of *Clarence* in her letters and journals of 1827, entangled with her encounters with Edgeworth and Hall and the British literary culture they represented. In July 1827, she traveled with family and friends to the fashionable resort of Saratoga Springs (setting for an incident in *Redwood*), staying through August. In her journal entries about this trip (see Appendix A3), she tested her skills in describing and critiquing upper-class American society. Using her journal to record impressions of “the characters that figured on that gay scene,” she tries out converting members of the actual American *haut ton* into literary types, simultaneously comparing what she saw to the social atmosphere in similar circles in England. She records the presence of “maneuvering mothers” managing their daughters, but also notes with approval the lack of “debasement—the heartlessness, and depravity of the same class described in England.” Recognizing that the people at the springs were “our people of fortune our idlers, our Fainéants,” she similarly praises the lack of excess, scandal, and maneuvering typical of “fashionable society.” Sedgwick did not encounter England in person until 1839, so she necessarily compares the American scene to aristocratic society in England as “described” in literary texts. Indeed, her use of the word “maneuvering” twice (the presence of maneuvering mothers and the relative absence of the social vice) suggests that Sedgwick was thinking of Edgeworth's novella *Maneuvering* from her *Tales of Fashionable Life* series. While professing that American society features fewer distinctions and fashionable excesses, she nevertheless

1 CMS to HDS, 19 December 1827, CMS Papers, III.3.7.

2 CMS to Charles Sedgwick (CS), 7 March 1830, CMS Papers, I.1.13.

acerbically anatomizes the “great show of fine faces, fine dancing, fine dresses, and fine jewels.”

Soon after her return to Stockbridge, Sedgwick encountered Captain Hall, and her satire of him in *Clarence* confirms that the novel originated in her experiences of 1827. The fictional Mr. Edmund Stuart (like his prototype, proud of his aristocratic ancestry) appears in Clarenceville as part of six months of US travels preliminary to writing a travel book. At every turn, Stuart displays colonial condescension, even though he (like Hall) is a Scotsman and a British provincial (Hall and Edgeworth, despite being provincials, positioned themselves as cosmopolites in relation to Sedgwick as a resident of a former colony). In *Clarence*, Stuart is sure that American-born painter Benjamin West is purely English. “[H]is name is known throughout Europe,” he opines, “though it may not have reached America yet, owing probably to the ignorance of the fine arts here” (161). He pontificates about British inheritance law (particularly entail and primogeniture), which “fosters genius by preserving in families the chef d’œuvre of the arts,” and laments that the American abolition of these practices “will for ever retard your advance in the sciences, arts, and manners” (161). After this statement, Sedgwick includes a disclaiming footnote: noting the “striking coincidence between the opinions of our traveller and those announced in Captain Basil Hall’s travels,” she explains that she is not alluding to his writings because “This chapter was written a year before their appearance” (161). If accurate, the footnote dates the composition of the chapter and the completion of the novel’s first volume to summer 1828, when Hall’s tour was drawing to a close and the American newspapers were widely reporting his movements. Sedgwick’s disclaimer fails to disabuse readers of the impression, however, that Sedgwick derived the character and opinions of Mr. Stuart from her in-person encounter with Captain Hall.

In *Clarence*, Sedgwick synthesized elements of her life experiences in the antebellum US, including her encounter with Hall, and her reading of literary works, including Edgeworth’s *Belinda*. As Janet Egleston Dunleavy observes in her analysis of *Belinda* as a novel of manners, Edgeworth similarly “synthesized” her “fictional fashionable world ... in part from literary antecedents, in part from observations of real life.”¹ By adopting and transforming the name of a significant character in *Belinda*—the given

1 Janet Egleston Dunleavy, “Maria Edgeworth and the Novel of Manners,” in *Reading and Writing Women’s Lives: A Study of the Novel of Manners*, ed.

name of Edgeworth's male protagonist, Clarence Hervey, becomes the surname of Sedgwick's female protagonist, Gertrude Clarence—Sedgwick invites readers to connect the novels and reinforced her reputation as “the American Edgeworth.” Sedgwick's novel also employs fictional devices familiar to *Belinda's* readers and the British novel of manners tradition of which it is a part: the masquerade and disguised and mistaken identities; a heroine negotiating a perilous marriage market; upper-class mothers unable to parent their children; upper-class men who drink, gamble, and duel; and, finally, the potential for redemption through the heroine marrying a man worthy of her goodness and character.

The masquerade ball in *Clarence* finds its precedent in *Belinda* or in any number of eighteenth-century British novels, but also in Sedgwick's attendance at a famous March 1829 masquerade ball celebrating the inauguration of Andrew Jackson as President, the first public masquerade in New York after many years of legal prohibition.¹ Sedgwick also drew on her own experiences to develop the marriage market motif characteristic of the novel of manners. In the fifteen years leading up to writing *Clarence*, Sedgwick declined several marriage proposals. She also watched her older sister Frances suffer as a result of her marriage to the abusive and financially irresponsible Ebenezer Watson and observed her younger brothers, Harry, Charles, and Robert, negotiate the marriage market in Boston and New York. Young Harry and Robert joked often in their correspondence about the desirability of marrying a wealthy woman. They recognized “the native repugnance” their sister Catharine would feel towards financial motives for marriage, but they resolved this conundrum in a way Catharine echoes in the statements of D. Flint, her Yankee lawyer in New York who courts Gertrude Clarence: a man should not marry a woman because of her wealth, but he

Bege K. Bowers and Barbara Brothers (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research P, 1990), 59.

- 1 On her attendance (coily writing about herself in the third person), see CMS to Katharine Sedgwick, 24 March 1829, CMS Papers, II.1.7. An advertisement for the masquerade appears in Appendix C4. On the eighteenth-century literary tradition and masquerade's disruptive potential that drove Americans to such prohibitions, see Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986).

should not let a woman's wealth obscure her genuine charms as a romantic partner.¹

In *Clarence*, however, Sedgwick does not simply repeat family stories, nor does she merely imitate Edgeworth's novel. Instead, *Clarence* qualifies as an American anti-text to Edgeworth's novel, much, as Jenifer Elmore argues, *Redwood* serves as anti-text of Edgeworth's Irish novel the *Absentee*.² Sedgwick strikingly revises *Belinda*'s eponymous heroine in Gertrude, whose strong female agency contrasts with *Belinda*'s passivity. And although Edgeworth designed *Belinda* Portman as a rational heroine who could make informed choices about her own life based on reason rather than sentiment, even the author expressed frustration with her creation. When revising *Belinda* for publication in Hannah Letitia Barbauld's "British Novelists" series, she observed that she was "provoked by the cold tameness of that stick or stone" character.³ *Belinda* exerts her influence to reform Lady Delacour, but she seldom acts for herself. In a notable exception, she breaks her engagement to Mr. Vincent, the Jamaica-born son of a planter, but Edgeworth's revision removed all traces of their engagement, further muting *Belinda*'s agency. Although *Belinda* holds firm to her rational principles and lets them guide her actions, her financial status constrains her agency and mobility: she is virtually penniless, and her aunt, acting as her guardian, sends her to Lady Delacour's house in London so she can marry money. Sedgwick, by making her heroine Gertrude a wealthy heiress, a "prize lady" sought by multiple suitors, reverses these polarities and mobilizes her heroine. Gertrude acts—most often for others, but also for herself. Gertrude's expressions of agency, especially when her aims are benevolent, establish her as a model American heroine, "a fit heroine for the nineteenth century; practical, efficient, direct, & decided—a rational woman—that beau-ideal of all devotees of the ruling spirit of the age—utility" (197).⁴

1 See Timothy Kenslea, *The Sedgwicks in Love: Courtship, Engagement, and Marriage in the Early Republic* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 2006), 85–86. Kenslea also narrates the marital fates of all the Sedgwick siblings, including Frances's abusive marriage and Harry's descent into madness.

2 Elmore, *Sacred Unions*, 14.

3 Butler, *Maria Edgeworth*, 494.

4 As Nina Baym observes, Gertrude's strength of character enables her to claim "the conventionally male prerogative of rescue," as well as making her less subject to manipulation than Isabel Archer, the similarly situated heroine of Henry James's late nineteenth-century novel of manners, *The*

Not only does Sedgwick give her heroine more agency than Edgeworth's, her virtuous characters avoid the morally corrupt behaviors of both men and women in European fashionable life. As Sedgwick notes of Gerald Roscoe's friendship with the older and married Mrs. Layton (a friendship paralleling Clarence Hervey's with Lady Delacour), it was "an intimacy, that might have degenerated into a *liaison* of more doubtful nature, in circumstances where moral restraints are less salutary, and severe, and pervading; and the eye of the public less vigilant, than in our fortunate country" (240). While Pedrillo is an outsized villain, Roscoe remains firmly virtuous and moral throughout, unlike Edgeworth's hero, Clarence Hervey. *Clarence* also features no equivalent to *Belinda*'s most outrageous female character, Harriet Freke, who dresses as a man and engages in a duel with Lady Delacour (also cross-dressed for the occasion). Sedgwick revises even her clearest borrowing from Edgeworth, Mrs. Layton (a borrowing so clear that one British reviewer called her a "Transatlantic copy" of Lady Delacour—see Appendix D5). Like Lady Delacour, Mrs. Layton is a middle-aged woman of fashion married to a man she once loved, but whom she now despises. Similarly, she spends her time in the company of a younger single man, while she seems incapable of loving and properly mothering her own children. In both novels, the heroine, on entering metropolitan society for the first time, is put under the (dubious) supervision of this fashionable married woman. Notably, however, Sedgwick, unlike Edgeworth, refuses to redeem her fashionable matron, although at every turn Gertrude provides Mrs. Layton with opportunities to reform.

Sedgwick, *Clarence*, and the Hemispheric Imaginary

Much of the first volume of *Clarence* turns on the discovery and reclamation of an English and West Indian family history and inheritance for Charles Carroll, who becomes Charles Clarence when his title to his father's estate is confirmed. Indeed, by devoting so much space to Gertrude's family history, Sedgwick departs notably from the precedent of *Belinda*, which plunges its heroine into the whirl of London fashion in the first chapter after providing only an "indistinctly sketched domestic background."¹

Portrait of a Lady. See *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-70* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1978), 60.

- 1 Heather MacFadyen, "Lady Delacour's Library: Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* and Fashionable Reading," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 48.4 (March 1994): 427.

Edmund Clarence (Charles's father), the second son of a British aristocrat, must make his own way because the family estate is entailed to his older brother. He chooses Jamaica, Britain's lucrative sugar colony, as a place to make his fortune. Wealth deriving from the slave economy of Jamaica plays a similarly important role in the plot of *Belinda*: the heroine's suitor Mr. Vincent is the son and heir of a wealthy Jamaican planter, who on his deathbed arranges to send him to England to be educated. Through a plot about the fate of West Indian assets, then, Sedgwick tackles the problem of her literary inheritance from Edgeworth's *Belinda*.

By relocating her marriage plot from London to New York City, Sedgwick also reorients her novel's engagements with cultural and economic forces in the Atlantic World. While Jamaica was Britain's transatlantic colony, the US engaged the West Indies through trade, and, as Rodrigo Lazo argues, the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 promoted the idea of the "separation of the Americas as a hemisphere" from the European nations across the Atlantic.¹ Furthermore, New York City, Sedgwick's home for part of the year and the setting of much of *Clarence*, was a major port for hemispheric trade with French and Spanish colonial possessions. Sedgwick's evocations of the West Indies in *Clarence* thus testify to her participation in what Kirsten Silva Gruesz characterizes as a "hemispheric imaginary" that emerged in the early nineteenth-century United States, created by "itineraries of the circulation of texts and persons [and] closely bound to material and political developments."² In her earlier novels, Sedgwick also engaged this hemispheric imaginary, although more peripherally: in *A New-England Tale* and *Redwood*, off-stage deaths in the West Indies from climate and disease initiate and resolve key subplots, and villains in *A New-England Tale* and *Hope Leslie* emerge from and escape to careers in West Indian piracy. Not until *Clarence*, however, do hemispheric plots and characters take center stage.

Engaging these Caribbean spaces in the Western hemisphere, Sedgwick drew on both literary precedent and her own experiences and family history. Sedgwick's Puritan ancestors had ties to both the New England colonies and Jamaica. As she wrote in

1 Rodrigo Lazo, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2005), 5.

2 Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002), 37. See also Anna Brickhouse on a "transamerican literary imaginary." *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 6.

her 1853 autobiographical narrative addressed to her great niece, “The first of our Sedgwick ancestors of whom I have any tradition was Robert Sedgwick, who was sent by Oliver Cromwell as governor or commissioner ... to the island of Jamaica.” Her claim, while only partially accurate, is still telling—a Massachusetts colonist of long standing, Robert Sedgwick led “a military that Cromwell dispatched to fortify the occupation after the English had seized the Island of Jamaica from the Spanish,” dying there in 1656.¹ Catharine Sedgwick never traveled to the West Indies, but in both New England and New York she regularly encountered people and goods circulating between the islands and the United States. The US had strong economic and cultural ties to Cuba (still a Spanish colony) in the 1820s²—so although “Pedrillo” makes a romantic and exotic spectacle of himself, befuddling the judgment of those he meets, the appearance of wealthy Cubans traveling for pleasure or business was commonplace enough to cause no alarm.

Sedgwick likely encountered Cuban immigrants living in New York through William Cullen Bryant, now a key figure in hemispheric American studies. After Bryant moved to New York to become an editor in the mid-1820s, he boarded with the Salazar family, usually characterized (much like Pedrillo) as “Spanish,” but with strong ties to Cuba. The mastery of Spanish Bryant acquired while boarding with them enabled him to translate hispanophone texts, most notably the poetry of Cuban exile poet José María Heredia, and stories he heard from his landlords led to his composition of a gift book tale, “A Story of the Island of Cuba,” which Sedgwick read.³ Before boarding with the Salazars, Bryant boarded with the Evrards, “a French Catholic family that had owned a plantation in Haiti and had escaped the revolution there.”⁴ On several occasions, Sedgwick’s brothers similarly

1 Mary Kelley, ed., *Power of Her Sympathy: The Autobiography and Journal of Catharine Maria Sedgwick* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), 45.

2 On these ties, see Gruesz; Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1990), ch. 1; and Lazo, *Writing to Cuba*, ch. 1.

3 On Bryant as translator of Heredia, see Gruesz, *Ambassadors*, Chap. 1. On the Cuban-ness of the Salazars and the gift book tale, see Brickhouse, *Transamerican*, Chap. 2. CMS implicitly references Bryant’s tale as “the account of the Cuba Indians in one of the annuals.” CMS to SHC, 17 March 1829, CMS Papers, I.7.3.

4 Gilbert H. Muller, *William Cullen Bryant: Author of America* (Albany: State U of New York P, 2008), 47.

boarded with "French" families in order to improve their French language skills.¹ Sedgwick's affectionate portrait of the Abéille family in *Clarence*, "French" planter-class refugees from the Haitian revolution who take in lodgers, including "an old bachelor, bitten with the mania of learning French, and a clerk qualifying himself for a supercargo" (172), makes one suspect that her brothers' "French" landlords were similar refugees.

Sedgwick also encountered West Indian travelers in the social world of women of her own class. In an epistolary account of an 1820 visit to Saratoga, she writes of "rival belles of all degrees, kinds, and colors, from our fair Northern beauties to the questionable hues of the West Indies. Wealth, you know, is the grand leveling principle, and every body nowadays understands the philosophy of colors too well to give in to a vulgar prejudice against a dark complexion."² Knowing that wealthy planters often sent their children to the United States for schooling and that some of those children may have been of fractional African descent, she sought out such children as pupils for her sister-in-law Elizabeth Sedgwick (Mrs. Charles) when Elizabeth decided to open a school for girls in her home in Lenox, Massachusetts in 1827.³

Sedgwick became even more closely concerned in the circulation of West Indian children as a consequence of the business and romantic entanglements of the brother of her friend Eliza Lee Cabot. The Cabots were a distinguished Boston merchant family, and during the War of 1812, Stephen Cabot, like many other ocean-going merchants, became an American-sponsored privateer when the war made his normal business impossible.⁴ After the war, he continued trading in the West Indies, settling on the Island of St. Thomas. In late 1828 Cabot was accused of benefiting financially from a piratical enterprise, and he fled St. Thomas for his life (piracy—legally distinct from privateering—was a hanging offense). Catharine Sedgwick felt deeply Eliza Cabot's

1 Kenslea, *Sedgwicks in Love*, 177-78.

2 CMS to SHC, 10 August 1820, CMS Papers, I.7.1.

3 CMS to Lucy Russell, 24 September 1827, Sedgwick Family Papers, MHS, IV.4.21.

4 The great age of piracy was long over, and privateering highly regulated and, despite Cabot's later troubles, was not the seamy threshold to lawlessness it had been. See Faye Kert, "Cruising in Colonial Waters: the Organization of North American Privateering in the War of 1812," in *Privates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century*, ed. David J. Starkey, et al. (Exeter UK: Exeter UP, 1997), 141-54.

distress and shame, writing in her journal that “My friend Eliza has been bowed down to the earth” by the news.¹ The Cabots soon received more surprising news from Stephen: he was not alone in Haiti, where he had sought sanctuary, but had with him a family he had never told them about, consisting of Zamie Féche (a native of Port Au Prince), their son, and Zamie’s older child, a daughter from a previous relationship. Explaining that he was legally unable to marry Zamie—seemingly because she was a mixed-race Haitian creole—he explained that he had adopted his own son and had also adopted Zamie’s daughter.² In March 1829, Stephen and Zamie sent their children to his brother Samuel in Boston to be educated. Joseph Cabot remained in Boston, but Eliza and Samuel sought to place Zamie’s daughter in a boarding school. In late 1829, as her writing of *Clarence* was nearing its end, Catharine Sedgwick found herself asked to advise whether her sister-in-law Elizabeth should take Eliza’s Haitian quasi-niece, a “belle” of “questionable West Indian hue,” into her Lenox school. “The only objection that there can be to taking her,” she wrote to her brother Charles, “arises from the fear of giving pain to Eliza & her family—but sweet and benevolent as she is, I cannot but think she would be glad that a human being so young and so unfortunate should have such an opportunity in securing her virtue.”³ She discounts, however, the value to Elizabeth and the school of the girl being fluent in French because “It is *Creole* French [and] I do not think that worth any thing.” Elizabeth Cabot was ultimately placed in another school, but the incident nevertheless demonstrates that even the most seemingly derivative or fanciful elements of *Clarence*, such as Pedrillo’s history of West Indian piracy and Edmund Clarence’s interracial family in Jamaica, intersected with Sedgwick’s hemispheric reality.

1 CMS Journal, 31 December 1828. See also CMS to ECF, 7 December 1828, CMS Papers, I.8.6.

2 On Stephen Cabot, see Vernon L. Briggs, *History and Genealogy of the Cabot Family* (Boston: C.E. Goodspeed, 1927), 598–637, including many letters. The Samuel Cabot Papers (MHS) include letters reproduced in Briggs and additional ones, but Stephen Cabot’s letter in which he first disclosed his relationship with Féche and her children and explained fully the basis for his contention that he could not legally marry her is absent from both sources. Although her race remains unspecified in extant letters, no other explanation for the legal prohibition other than African descent seems likely.

3 CMS to CS, 17 December 1829, CMS Papers, I.1.12.

Although *Clarence* is set in the early nineteenth century, Edmund Clarence's Jamaican residence takes place in the 1790s. As Sean Goudie observes in his analysis of the West Indies in American literature and culture of the Early Republic, for the new nation "the West Indies function as a surrogate, a monstrous double for urgent political, cultural and economic crises, not least among these slavery."¹ The islands of the West Indian archipelago remained European colonies through the early nineteenth century, with the notable exception of the French colony of St. Domingue, which became the black republic of Haiti as a result of a successful slave revolt and revolution. The inhabitants of the US and the West Indies shared a status, Goudie argues, as creoles, the native-born descendants of voluntary or forcible emigrants to distant colonies. Making an "unclean break from" its colonial past, the US "labored to repress the inter-American cosmopolitanism of many of its leading citizen-subjects" by claiming "a pure, uncorrupted white creole identity."²

In *Clarence*, Sedgwick conjures up the "monstrous double" of British colonial enterprise in Jamaica, including Edmund Clarence's interracial liaison with a free woman of color, 'Eli Clairon, whose father is a white French merchant. Sedgwick's treatment of this history is complex, however. She could have damned the West Indies and claimed the excellence and purity of the American republic in contrast, but her novel's plotting foregrounds rather than represses inter-American cosmopolitanism. Given the opportunity to revise *Belinda*, Maria Edgeworth edited out most traces of serious romance and marriage between Jamaican creoles (whether white or black) and English women that had figured prominently in the novel as first published.³ The American

1 Sean X. Goudie, *Creole America: The West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2006), 10.

2 Ibid., 9.

3 On the significance of ME's revisions, see Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens* (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), chap. 1; Kathryn Kirkpatrick, "'Gentlemen Have Horrors upon this Subject': West Indian Suitors in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 5.4 (1993): 331-48; Susan B. Iwanisziw, "Inter-marriage in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Literature: Currents in Assimilation and Exclusion," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31.2 (Spring 2007): 56-82; and Susan C. Greenfield, "'Abroad and at Home': Sexual Ambiguity, Miscegenation, and Colonial Boundaries in Edgeworth's *Belinda*," *PMLA* 112.2 (March 1997): 214-28.

edition of *Belinda* Sedgwick likely read during the decade preceding her own emergence as a novelist, however, was the unrevised original. Given the opportunity to revise *Clarence* in 1849 (see below), Sedgwick kept Edmund Clarence's interracial liaison in Jamaica in place.¹

Nevertheless, Edmund Clarence's creole mistress and son die, sending a devastated Clarence to the US alone to escape. Although a few unnamed black servants flit through *Clarence* and the Marion family are Virginia planters, no West Indians of African descent make the short ocean crossing to the North American continent. However, the novel's engagements with slavery in the West Indies leave a residue.² The fortune that makes Gertrude a "prize lady" on the New York marriage market descends, in part, from her grandfather's Jamaican enterprises. Similarly, Henriques Pedrillo's true identity connects the Cuban slave economy to New England. I leave a full interpretation of Sedgwick's engagements with the Caribbean to future critics, but *Clarence* merits the same attention that Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* (1826) has received as a novel with a "transamerican" genealogy.³

The Publication and Reception of *Clarence* in the United States and Britain

Clarence was Sedgwick's first book published by Carey & Lea of Philadelphia, but her arrangements with Henry Carey (negotiated by her brother Robert) attest to her well-established reputation as a novelist and her market power. In early March, Catharine reported to her brother Charles that she was recopying the first volume of her novel for the printer and that Robert "sold the

1 Although the revision supplanted the original in England, Wells & Lilly of Boston used the 1801 first edition for its 1814 edition. S.H. Parker used the 1810 revision for his 1824 edition.

2 On the evolution of Sedgwick's thinking on slavery and abolition, see Karen Woods Weierman, "A Slave Story I Began and Abandoned": Sedgwick's Antislavery Manuscript," in Damon-Bach and Clements, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick*, 122-38. Charlene Avallone argues Sedgwick's approach to race, slavery, and nation in *The Linwoods* is conservative. See "Catharine Sedgwick's White Nation-Making: Historical Fiction and *The Linwoods*" in *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 55.2 (2009): 97-133. Five years earlier, however, Sedgwick had entertained more progressive possibilities.

3 Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations*, ch. 1. See also Goudie, *Creole America*, Epilogue.

copy right of an edition of 2000 to be printed uniform with Hope Leslie for \$1200." She was "quite satisfied" with the pay and the reputation of the publisher, although Carey had argued that "the cheap reprints of popular English novels has reduced the value of copyright productions as much as Hope Leslie has raised the reputation of mine."¹ Notably, Carey published only one other new American novel in 1830, John A. McClung's *Camden: A Tale of the South*, printed in an edition of only 500 copies, while the firm's list is liberally sprinkled with reprints of British fiction. In 1830, *Clarence's* edition size was respectable and returned to the author a sum in excess of fifty cents per copy, more than half of Carey's \$2,188.40 cost for the edition.² Despite the large payment and edition size, Sedgwick's experience with Carey was mixed. Carey contracted the printing to a fledgling New York printing firm, and she complained to her brother Harry in mid-May, "I don't know when my book will be out. I am so heartily sick of these printers that I am tired of the whole concern." The printers "loitered admirably" and ignored repeated requests to provide her with proof sheets for revision and correction.³ Two days later, she hastily sent the last proof sheets back to the printers,⁴ and in late May complained to Harry about further unaccountable delays. "Carey was here [in New York City] on Tuesday," she reported, and "He said my book would not be out in less than a fortnight." She suspected that the delay served his interests but would hurt sales of the book.⁵

When the book finally appeared in June, she sent fellow novelist Lydia Maria Child a copy and complained, "I am not just now at all in love with novel-writing," was, indeed, "heart sick" about the "irretrievable errors" in the printed text caused by "a new printer, ignorant & careless workmen" who failed to allow her the proof revisions "essential to the correct printing of a book." Imaginatively putting herself into the scene of the New York promenade that opens her novel, she confided, "I ... feel just now pretty much as I should if I were walking through Broad-way with holes in the

1 CMS to CS, 7 March 1830, CMS Papers, I.1.13.

2 David Kaser, ed., *The Cost Books of Carey & Lea, 1825-1838* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1963), 252, 83. On antebellum edition sizes, see Susan Geary, "The Domestic Novel as Commercial Commodity: Making a Best Seller in the 1850s," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 70 (1976): 365-93.

3 CMS to HDS, 12 May 1830, CMS Papers, III.3.11.

4 Kelley, *The Power of Her Sympathy*, 126.

5 CMS to HDS, 24 May 1830, CMS Papers, III.3.11.

heels of my stockings.”¹ The 1830 edition of *Clarence* was, indeed, full of careless errors, especially inconsistencies in spelling (see “Note on the Text”). The reviewers, however, did not notice them and responded mostly positively, praising her delineation of character and her venturing into New York City of “the present times” as a setting (see Appendix D).

The difficulties with the Carey edition of *Clarence* also complicated Sedgwick’s arrangements for a British edition, which, despite her complaint to her brother about the lack of international copyright, she aggressively pursued. She forwarded proof sheets to John Miller in London, continuing the pattern she established for *A New-England Tale*, *Redwood*, *The Travellers*, and *Hope Leslie*. In 1830, the copyright status of works not authored by British subjects was unclear, but the general understanding among publishers (soon confirmed by the courts) was that copyright would protect such works as long as publication in Britain was first or simultaneous with elsewhere.² As Miller wrote to her in late June (less than two weeks after US publication), her “new work” had reached him safely, but the “first copy of Volume 1” (the proof sheets) never made it to London. Because of this failure of transatlantic communication, he was not “able to dispose of [*Clarence*] for a specific sum because [he could] not convey a copy-right.” Nevertheless, he was able to persuade “Messrs Colburn & Bentley—our great Publishers” to “put it to press” and “make [Sedgwick] such a fair compensation as the sale of the work may justify.”³ Colburn & Bentley’s London edition appeared on 23 July 1830,⁴ and although Miller worried about other London publishers bringing out an edition of *Clarence* when the August “packet ships” arrived carrying “perfect copies from the Booksellers of New York,” Colburn & Bentley’s was the only London edition published in 1830 (in 1839 and 1846, much less expensive unauthorized editions did appear).⁵

1 CMS to Lydia Maria Child, 12 June 1830, Boston Public Library.

2 James J. Barnes, *Authors, Publishers, and Politicians: The Quest for an Anglo-American Copyright Agreement, 1815-1854* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1974), 153.

3 John Miller to CMS, 24 June 1830, CMS Papers, III.3.11.

4 Richard Bentley & Son, “Corrigenda et Addenda,” University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Special Collections Library.

5 In two newspaper format series, *The Novelist: A Collection of the Standard Novels* (London: Foster and Hextall, 1839) and *The Parlour Novelist: A Collection of Works of Fiction by the Most Celebrated Authors* (Belfast: Simms and M’Intyre, 1846).

Sedgwick may have chosen the surname for the novel's central family in part for its resonance with another British genealogy connected to the novel's British West Indian back-story and America's colonial past. In 1789, King George III created the title Duke of Clarence for his son William. In his younger days, naval service transported the future Duke to Jamaica, where he was rumored to have a black mistress, and to New York City, anticipating the geographic trajectory of Sedgwick's Edmund Clarence. Once appointed a peer, the Duke served in the House of Lords, where he vocally opposed the abolition of the slave trade.¹ Sedgwick could not have predicted, however, that her novel would appear in the US and England nearly simultaneously with the death of King George III and the ascension of the Duke to the throne as King William IV. Some British reviewers suspected intentional fraud on the part of publisher, author, or both, an attempt to capitalize on the royal succession. "Who would imagine that 'Clarence, a Tale of our own Time,' was an American story, and the hero, Clarence, a clerk in a Yankee insurance office," protested the *Ladies Museum* on behalf of readers seeking "royalty for a repast" (see Appendix D6).

Sedgwick was less interested in royalties from British editions (she received a modest payment of £20 from Colburn and Bentley for *Clarence*)² or positive reviews, however, than in the power to negotiate transatlantic personal relationships conferred by them. While she was disillusioned with Edgeworth and Hall, she used her arrangements for the London edition of *Clarence* as a pretense for introducing herself to another British author, Mary Russell Mitford. In an early June 1830 letter, she addressed Mitford informally as one already a friend because of her sympathetic reading

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- 1 On the suspected black mistress, see J.R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 173. Young William's time in New York is referenced in Francis Herbert (joint pseud. of William Cullen Bryant and Gulian Verplanck), "Reminiscences of New York," *The Talisman for MDCCCXXIX* [1829] (New York: Elam Bliss, 1828), 320-21. On the collaboration, Muller, *William Cullen Bryant*, 72. See also Michael Brock, "William IV (1765-1837)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, Sept 2004, online edition, January 2008; Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).
 - 2 General Author's Ledger, vol. 1, Bentley Archives, British Library, in *The Archives of Richard Bentley & Son 1829-1898* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1976), reel 54.

of Mitford's works.¹ Praising Mitford as a benevolent author who had done "great good ... to our race," Sedgwick characterizes herself as "humble artisan" offering a "specimen" of her wares (*Clarence*) to Mitford. Characteristically self-effacing in her description of her new novel, she is also preemptively defensive, suggesting that her encounters with Hall and Edgeworth still rankled: "It is not professedly a delineation of our scenery or manners, but, wherever they are incidentally introduced, I have endeavored to make the portrait accurate, neither exaggerating beauties nor veiling defects."² Mitford responded with all of the warmth and approbation missing from Edgeworth's communications of 1826. Although the promised copy of *Clarence* had not yet arrived and thus Mitford had not read it, she let Sedgwick know she had "seen the highest possible character" of Sedgwick's works generally in a respected British magazine and expressed satisfaction "that it is not merely reprinted but published in England, and will contribute, together with the splendid novels of Mr. Cooper, to make the literature and manners of a country so nearly connected with us in language and ways of thinking, known and valued here."³ Cataloging the popularity and influence of various American authors in England and their equivalence to various British figures, she praises (unaware of the irony) "a lady, whom I need not name, [who] takes her place amongst these great men, as Miss Edgeworth does among our Scotts and Chalmerses."⁴

The friendship that developed out of this initial correspondence satisfied Sedgwick and Mitford for a decade,⁵ but the published writings of British travelers who believed American society lacked "manners" briefly produced some friction between them. Captain Basil Hall set the pattern for travelers and travel books after him, but his reputation was eclipsed by Frances Trollope and her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832). Sedgwick, like many Americans, felt compelled to read Trollope's account, and

1 CMS to Mary Russell Mitford (MRM), 7 June 1830, in *Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford*, ed. A.G. L'Estrange (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882), 155-56.

2 Ibid., 156.

3 MRM to CMS, 6 September 1830, in L'Estrange, 116.

4 Ibid., 117.

5 Sedgwick's published account of meeting Mitford in England in *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home* (1841) offended Mitford. See W.J. Roberts, *Mary Russell Mitford: The Tragedy of a Blue Stocking* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1913), 303-35 and Vera Watson, *Mary Russell Mitford* (London: Evans Brothers, 1904), 237-79.

she took Trollope's published acknowledgment of her friendship with "Miss Mitford" as a warrant for writing to Mitford about it. While conceding some of the justness of Trollope's criticism of the crudeness of society in the Western frontier settlements, she complained, "she ... has for the most part caricatured till the resemblance is lost." Vigorously defending American culture and presenting English misunderstanding of it as nearly inevitable, she concedes that it is "difficult, almost impossible, for a foreigner to comprehend" class distinctions in the US.¹ After receiving a "very fine account" of Trollope as a person from Mitford, Sedgwick still expressed sensitivity and frustration about British judgments of Americans: "It must be confessed that we are nationally ridiculously sensitive on this matter of opinion. It is a kind of new-small-townish feeling, an anxiety to be known, a determination to be admired when known."²

The 1849 Author's Revised Edition of *Clarence* and Its Influence on American Fiction of the 1850s

Sedgwick has often been characterized as self-effacing and unsure of herself as an author and her career after the publication of *The Linwoods* as evidencing a retreat from literary ambition. The "determination to be admired" in her letter to Mitford and her determination to keep her novels in print bely such a characterization, however: until the end of her long career as a publishing author, she continued to think of herself as a novelist and took steps to ensure that the public knew about the scope of her body of work and could purchase copies of her novels. The 1830 *Clarence* was not stereotyped, making it unavailable for purchase not long after publication. Although stereotyping enabled publishers to keep a book in print indefinitely, few routinely undertook the expense for novels until the 1840s.³ Early in that decade Sedgwick clearly realized that her earlier novels were at a disadvantage, as indicated by her arrangement with Harper & Brothers to stereotype and reissue *Hope Leslie* when they published her *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home* (1841).⁴ George Palmer Putnam's 1849 edition of *Clarence* marked

1 CMS to MRM, 12 December 1832, in L'Estrange, 173.

2 CMS to MRM, 17 May 1833, in Ibid., 178.

3 Michael Winship, "Printing with Pates in the Nineteenth Century United States," *Printing History* 5.2 (1983): 15-26.

4 Contract between CMS and Harper & Brothers, 16 April 1841, Harper Bros MS Collection, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

another such moment of reflection and consolidation in Sedgwick's career, as she embarked on an ambitious plan to revise much of her *oeuvre* for a uniform, stereotyped edition of her collected works.

The year before, Putnam created and marketed a standard edition of the works of Washington Irving, notably helping Irving become the first nineteenth-century American author to achieve canonical status while still alive. Indeed, Putnam explicitly modeled his edition of *Clarence*, intended to launch a collected edition of Sedgwick's works, on his edition of Irving (see Appendix E1). In early 1849, he also brought out new editions of Sedgwick's works for children published earlier under his imprint, *Morals of Manners; or, Hints for Young People* (1846) and *Facts and Fancies for School-day Reading* (1848). Two other revised Sedgwick novels followed, *Redwood* in 1850 and *A New-England Tale* (accompanied by selected short stories) in 1852. Simultaneously with his collected edition of Sedgwick's works, Putnam commenced a similar revised author's edition of Cooper's.¹

In 1830 the subtitle of *Clarence*, "A Tale of Our Own Times," emphasized Sedgwick's shift from historical romance to contemporary novel of manners. By 1849, *Clarence* had itself become a kind of historical fiction. Putnam's earliest advertisements rechristened the novel *Clarence; or, Twenty Years Since* (see Appendix E1), echoing Sedgwick's echoing of Scott in the subtitle of *The Linwoods; or, Sixty Years Since*. Between 1830 and 1849, the United States' posture towards its hemispheric neighbors also shifted significantly. As far back as the founding of the American republic, some suggested that the West Indian islands, and particularly Cuba, should be annexed to the new nation, but no action was taken and these ideas remained muted. The revised *Clarence*, however, came out during the era of the US war with Mexico and filibustering expeditions to the Caribbean and Central America, putting Pedrillo in the company of a host of Cuban characters in pro-imperialist print culture.² And although the Duke of Clarence

1 See Ezra Greenspan, *George Palmer Putnam: Representative American Publisher* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2000), 216-31.

2 Goudie, Brickhouse, Lazo, and Gruesz all trace the emergence of US imperial designs in relation to the Caribbean. US designs on the Caribbean were ambiguously imperial in 1830, but shifted to explicitly imperial by 1849. See also Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham: Duke UP, 2005). On Cubans in 1840s popular fiction, see Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Construction of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2002).

had opposed abolition of the slave trade while serving in Parliament, early in his reign as King William IV, Britain abolished slavery in its colonies, including Jamaica.¹

In preparing *Clarence* for republication, Sedgwick did not reflect on these particular developments, but she did revise her novel significantly and reflect on the distance between New York of the late 1820s and the late 1840s.² She added a new preface and a note at the conclusion of chapter one commenting on “the local and notable changes in our city in the nineteen years since.” She removed much of the untranslated French, and in response to a review in *The North American Review* that criticized Gertrude’s unchaperoned ramble with Gerald Roscoe at Trenton Falls (see Appendix D4), she added a passage excusing Gertrude’s behavior. Most notably, rather than closing with Gertrude’s letter describing her new domestic arrangements in New York, she cut the letter entirely, concluding the novel instead with Emilie Layton’s letter preceding it. The omitted letter implicitly responded to earlier British critiques of American culture (including Basil Hall’s) by picturing a cultured social elite that valued place and inheritance. Sedgwick also eliminated the footnote about Basil Hall’s travel book, converting Edmund Stuart into a generic type rather than a lampoon of the man who had become her friend during her 1839 English travels.³ By 1849, it seems, she was ready to let go of her “sensitiv[ity] on this matter of [British] opinion.”

As her preface notes, *Clarence* was the first title published in “Miss Sedgwick’s Works,” but the series was to be comprehensive, including her works for children and didactic novellas in addition to her novels proper. However, in 1849, Harper & Brothers—not Putnam—controlled the stereotype plates and accompanying copyrights for eight Sedgwick titles, including two novels (*Hope Leslie* and *The Linwoods*). A comprehensive “Miss Sedgwick’s Works” was economically and legally feasible only with cooperation from Harpers. In April 1849, Sedgwick scrambled to arrange a meeting between Putnam and Fletcher Harper, but by June, she wrote resignedly to Harpers, “I have concluded

1 Michael Craton, *Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery* (Garden City, NH: Anchor/Doubleday, 1974), chap. 5.

2 See Victoria Clements, “Note on the Text,” in *A New-England Tale* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), [xxix]-xxx, for CMS’s considerably less substantive revisions to that novel.

3 She defends Hall as “the English bull-dog” who “bark[s] at his neighbour’s door” but “will caress you at his own” in *Letters from Abroad* (New York: Harpers, 1841), I:44.

with Mr Putnam our arrangements to publish *Clarence* and *Redwood*, which, as they are not included in my contracts with your house, can I presume, be so published without at all interfering with our mutual relations," which she had decided to "leave undisturbed for the present."¹

Even though reviews of the 1849 *Clarence* were uniformly positive, endorsing the revival and marketing of Sedgwick's *oeuvre* in this way, the splitting of her works between two competing publishers undermined the project of making Sedgwick, like Irving and Cooper, a living "classic" American author. Putnam's financial difficulties in the mid-1850s² further undermined these canonizing aims. After printing a second edition of *Clarence* in 1852, he was forced to lease his plates for it, *Redwood*, and *A New-England Tale* to J.C. Derby, who issued one printing of all three in 1854, but failed thereafter to comply with the contractual obligation "to publish, keep on hand, & sell" Sedgwick's novels.³ Sedgwick tried to control the subsequent disposition of Putnam's plates, badgering him and suggesting to Harpers that they might purchase them and thus offer a "uniform edition" of her works.⁴ Putnam briefly regained control of his plates of the three novels in 1856, printing editions from them. However, he went into receivership in 1858,⁵ and the plates and the potential they carried of additional printings disappeared.

While the failure of the planned "Miss Sedgwick's Works" and the disappearance of the revised *Clarence* is poignant, it did, for a time, gain the novel a new readership, including authors half a generation or more younger than Sedgwick. In December 1850, a year and a half after the revised *Clarence* had first appeared, Susan Warner's *Wide, Wide World* quietly appeared under Putnam's imprint. Underestimating its potential, he printed only 750 copies,⁶ less than half the number of copies of *Clarence* Carey printed twenty years before. An unexpected bestseller,

1 CMS to George Palmer Putnam (GPP), 30 April 1849, Miscellaneous MSS, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

CMS to Fletcher Harper, 10 June 1849, University of Virginia.

2 Greenspan, *George Palmer Putnam*, 323-34.

3 CMS to Mr. Harper, 20 March 1856, Morgan Library, New York.

4 CMS to GPP, 22 February 1858, Stockbridge Library Association, Stockbridge, MA. CMS to Harper & Brothers, 24 March 1858, Morgan Library.

5 Greenspan, *George Palmer Putnam*, 381-90. Putnam's plates were sold at public auction as a result of the receivership.

6 Greenspan, *George Palmer Putnam*, 253.

The Wide, Wide World inaugurated the boom in women's fiction. Warner lived a wealthy and privileged childhood in New York in the 1820s,¹ in the same social circles as the New York branch of the Sedgwick family. Indeed, the news of Maria Edgeworth's 1823 letter to Catharine Sedgwick circulated in the Warner family. "Catherine [sic] Sedgwick has received a letter from Miss Edgeworth," Susan's father Henry wrote to his wife in the Spring of 1824; "Think of that."² As an orthodox evangelical in desperate economic straits after her family's fall from affluence, Susan Warner contemplated Sedgwick's precedent with ambivalence. As a guest at the Putnam residence on Staten Island while she was reading proofs of *The Wide, Wide World*, she read books she found around their home, including Irving, Cooper, and Sedgwick, undoubtedly in Putnam's collected editions of each. She initially dismissed Sedgwick's works, writing to her sister that *Redwood* and *Clarence* were "dismally poor."³ Nevertheless, Sedgwick's novels drew her back; she reported to Anna that she "dilectate[d] with *Redwood*," concluding a few days later, "Miss Sedgwick's novels are *inexpressible*."⁴

Maria Susanna Cummins, whose best-selling first novel the *Lamplighter* (1854) inspired Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous denunciation of the "d——d mob of scribbling women" over-running the American market,⁵ was educated at Elizabeth Sedgwick's boarding school. Scholars have suggested that Cummins's contact with Catharine Sedgwick as an adolescent fostered her literary ambitions,⁶ but an encounter with Sedgwick's works in print at a later stage of her life would have been equally formative. Surely, she would have read Sedgwick's urban novel of manners in its newly available edition while considering how to depict urban life and manners in *The Lamplighter*.

Carolyn Karcher has argued that Sedgwick influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe, and in particular that *Redwood's* portrayal of

1 Jane Tompkins, "Afterword," *The Wide, Wide World* (New York: Feminist P, 1987), 587-89.

2 Henry Warner to Anna Bartlett Warner, 1824, in Anna Warner, *Susan Warner* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 65.

3 Susan Warner to Anna Warner, 2 October 1850, in *Ibid.*, 305.

4 Susan Warner to Anna Warner, 4 and 8 October 1850, in *Ibid.*, 307, 313.

5 Nathaniel Hawthorne to William D. Ticknor, 19 January 1855, in *Letters, 1853-56. The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. 17 (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1987), 304.

6 Heidi L.M. Jacobs, "Maria Susanna Cummins's London Letters: April 1860," *Legacy*, 19.2 (2002): 242.

the martyrdom of the slave Africk influenced *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹ Sedgwick's portrayal of hemispheric characters and West Indian slavery in *Clarence* also echoes in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and in both Sedgwick and Stowe, French names predominate in relation to this history. To take just one example, the "Spanish" Pedrillo of *Clarence* has a French-sounding given name, Henriques, that echoes in the name of Henrique St. Clare in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The young nephew to Augustine St. Clare, Henrique mercilessly beats an innocent slave and sparks a discussion between Augustine and his brother (Henrique's father) about the Haitian Revolution. These names suggest that Sedgwick's novel contributed to what Anna Brickhouse calls the "Franco-Africanism" of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a literary configuration that enables Stowe simultaneously to call up "a partially erased story of racial ambiguities" in the US and displace it onto Haiti and other Francophone regions in the hemisphere.²

Sedgwick's readership was never exclusively female, of course, and male authors also encountered her novels in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Shortly after the revised edition of *Clarence* appeared, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville spent a year as neighbors in the Berkshires, making Catharine Sedgwick their neighbor as well. What if we were to imagine Melville and Hawthorne reading their neighbor's novel *Clarence* in its new edition, just as her reputation was undergoing a revival?³ Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener," serialized in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* in November and December 1853, depicts its narrator wandering the same lower Manhattan streets that figure prominently in *Clarence* and in Sedgwick's long footnote reflecting on the changes

1 Carolyn Karcher, "Catharine Maria Sedgwick in Literary History" in Damon-Bach and Clements, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick*, 8-9, 13. See also Karcher, "Stowe and the Literature of Social Change," *Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe*, ed. Cindy Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 203-18, and Ó Gallchoir, "Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Irish National Tale."

2 Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations*, 244.

3 Melville critics have largely seen women authors, including CMS, as a target of Melville's parody rather than as an influence. See Charlene Avallone, "The Company of Women Authors," in *A Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Wyn Kelley (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 313-26, and "Women Reading Melville/Melville Reading Women," in *Melville and Women*, ed. Elizabeth Schultz and Haskell Springer (Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2006), 41-59. The latter essay suggests CMS's *The Linwoods* and "The Country Cousin" as intertexts for Melville's *Pierre*.

in that cityscape. *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), Hawthorne's first novel published after his Berkshire years, also suggestively echoes *Clarence*. At the masquerade ball in *Clarence*, Mrs. Layton "personate[s] the Sybil," wearing "a richly wrought white lace veil" over her face (376), while Hawthorne's Veiled Lady is covered from head to foot in a silvery veil, and is also (falsely) "sybilline."¹ Just after her forcible unveiling on stage, Hawthorne shifts the scene to an outdoor masquerade, at which the residents of Blithedale, like the maskers in *Clarence*, have donned boundary-crossing costumes, such as an Indian chief, a "Jim Crow" black man, medieval foresters, a Kentucky woodsman, a Bavarian broom-girl, and a Shaker elder.²

The appendices to this edition situate *Clarence* in relation to a variety of nineteenth-century contexts, tracing Sedgwick's sources and influences and documenting responses to her novel and her influence on others. *Clarence*'s nineteenth-century life was cut short by the business failures of her publisher, and it was largely ignored by twentieth-century literary historians, but it is more than a period piece. It is as engaging for twenty-first-century readers as the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novels of manners of Henry James and Edith Wharton. Its plot twists and turns and the unraveling of mistaken identities still surprise and delight, and Gertrude Clarence's struggles to reconcile moral and economic imperatives in the boom and bust economy of New York City often feel contemporary. By bringing *Clarence* back into print, we seek a place for it in the history of America's literary past, but we also seek to make it live for readers in the present and the future.

1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, ed. Seymour Gross and Rosalie Murphy (New York: Norton, 1978), 6, 3.

2 *Ibid.*, 193.