LITERARY INFLUENCES ON CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Charles Brockden Brown, the American novelist of the late eighteenth century, has been called "The Father of the American Novel."¹ Brown combined Gothic and Sentimental traditions with the Revolutionary "novel of purpose" and became, by virtue of six novels—the first four a succession of lively tales of seduction and terror—the first professional writer in his young nation. Using native American settings, characters, and events, Brown developed a blend of terror and intellectuality whose influences on such nineteenth-century writers as Poe, Cooper, Hawthorne, and even Twain and James has been often suggested.

In general, European ingredients in Brown's writings have been attributed to the Richardsonian Sentimental Novel and its tradition, writings with themes of social betterment by William Godwin, and Gothic themes by both English and German novelists. This thesis proposes, then, to examine Brown's first four novels, Wieland, Crvncad,

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Arthur Hervyn, and Edgar Huntly, in an effort to determine which elements—including plots, characters, themes, and style—were borrowed from the three schools of European literature and to indicate how Brown reworked these elements into a form suitable to an American author with an American subject.

From Liberalism came William Godwin and his novel Caleb Williams. Brown was fascinated with the story of crime and detection and its probe into the psyches of the two main characters: one, a member of the landed gentry, and the other, true to Liberalism's concern with the common man, a member of the working class. The murder and the search for the culprit aligned Caleb Williams with others. Brown, interested in both of these movements in literature, has often been quoted as aspiring to write a novel like Godwin's.

From Continental novels, both English and the earliest American efforts, Brown took the epistolary structure for two of his novels. The familiar theme of virtue in peril was used to advantage in several of his works. Perhaps, too, a slimmer of the old seducer-character could be seen in Brown's character Charles, who also compromised definite characteristics of the independent Common Man of Liberalism. Ormrod and Welbeck, other Brown
villains, were more typical of the Richardsonian seducer.

Brown learned from Europe's Gothic writers to flavor his novels with the mysteries of occult sciences. He also took scenes of Gothic horror—murder, nocturnal prowlings, and violent struggles—and injected his own deep interest in the psychology of fictional characters. As a result, the bloody terrors of Gothicism were, in Brown's works, tempered by his rationalistic interest in reasonable explanations for mystery. In turn, his fascination with rationalism and didacticism as executed in the "novel of purpose" was lightened by his use of the emotional seduction scenes, fainting spells, and heroine-in-distress episodes of the Sentimental tradition. Perhaps the most rewarding insight that is to be gained from reading Brown's four major novels is the knowledge that his work "as emerged not as a jumble of others' ideas and techniques, but as an entertaining and thought-provoking union of at least three important literary traditions. That the unlikely combinations seem so plausible is to Brown's credit as an artist.

Just as America's people formed a melting-pot of national origins, Brown's work formed an amalgamation of the same type. An inquiry into the ingredients of his novels and the often surprising and effective combinations into which Brown brought these ingredients will provide the刺激 impression of this paper.
I. BIOGRAPHY

A glance at Brown's biography is basic to the success of this inquiry, since Brown's working knowledge of Sentimentalism, Liberalism, and Gothicism was obviously a result of the people and events which crowded his life. Material for this portion of the chapter was gathered from the two major modern biographies of Brown by Harry R. Warrick and David Lee Clark.¹ Of the two, Clark's biography is the more complete, including pertinent letters, journal entries, and little-known selections from Brown's early poetry and prose. In addition, Clark's book is the more recent and hence has the added advantage of the most up-to-date scholarship concerning Brown and his writing.

Charles Brockden Brown was born on January 17, 1771, of Philadelphia Quakers named Eliab and Mary Arnett Brown. Charles's father, descended from Quakers who had left England for America in 1672, had become a prosperous merchant. The Brown family consisted of five children besides Charles.

Young Charles was definitely the individual one of his brothers and sisters. For one thing, his health was continually frail; he was prone to constant cattiness.

while the other children turned to more physically demanding play. The Browns’ family membership in the Library Company of Philadelphia undoubtedly made wide reading possible for the boy. Furthermore, the Brown family home is described as having a sizeably library of its own. From Elijah Brown’s journal comes mention of books in which he took more than a passing interest: William Godwin’s An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, Mary Wollstonecraft’s An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution, Helen Maria Williams’s Letters on the War in France, Solcitatus’s Morals, Job Scott’s Journal, and Robert Lags’s novel Lay as He Is, a satire on existing society in England. Readers might well imagine that Charles read these works also, if William Dunlap’s affectionate description of him as an extremely precocious child, especially where his reading was concerned, can be taken as fact. One fact is certain: in post-revolutionary America, such liberal care was not uncommon; this was decidedly characteristic of Quaker families such as Elijah Brown’s. European sympathies as with the Trill threatmen—Frenchmen Dicrct and Rousseau and English writers such as Godwin, carp, and Thomas Halcrosta—and attracted Americans of similar liberal persuasion.

Charles’s formal education, as well as his voluntary reading, came under much the same influences. His education
consisted of five years (1781-1786) of Latin and Greek at Philadelphia's Friends' School, under the able tutelage of the well-known Robert Proud. Proud is said to have prescribed daily walks in the country for Charles, in the hope that the physical exercise would balance the effects of the long hours spent in reading and studying.

But Schoolmaster Proud could not temper young Brown's attraction to literature; neither could the Brown family's preference for a career in law sway his course. Yet for nearly six years Brown read law, from 1787 until 1792, when he left the law office in which he had been studying, determined to carve out a career as a writer.

During the years he had been employed by Alexander Wilcocks in his law office, many indications as to Brown's first love made themselves evident. He sometimes shirked his office duties while trying his hand at letters, essays, and verse. At this same time, he had helped to found and lead a literary society called the Belles Lettres Club. At the encouragement of its members, Brown wrote and secured publication during 1789 for a poem dedicated to Benjamin Franklin and mistakenly printed as a tribute to General Washington. The Belles Lettres Club sometimes met in the Franklin home; so Brown may have learned more about the Enlightenment in France from Benjamin Franklin, who
had recently returned from his stint as America's Ambassador to France. Also published in the Columbia magazine, under the influence of the Felles Lettres Club, was a series of four of Brown's essays collectively titled The Rhapsodist. He signed each essay with succeeding letters from his last name—F.R.O.W.—evidently planning to sign a fifth essay with it. During this time, also, he copied into his journal a series of letters to and from a mystery-woman known only as "Henrietta G." Whether these letters indicate an actual romance between Brown and "Henrietta" or an early attempt at writing an epistolary novel is a disputed point among Brown's biographers and critics.

While studying law and yearning after a writer's profession, Brown had remained in Philadelphia. After his decision to leave Gillock's office, however, he began to visit his patrons, visiting friends in Connecticut and New York.

One of Brown's friends, the physician Elihu Hubbard Smith, proved to have a great influence on Brown's career. Smith, as a graduate of Yale and a prolific writer of verse (and occasional orna), enjoyed close connections with the Connecticut elite. He later demonstrated his intense interest in Brown and his talent by undertaking to publish Brown's first book.

Brown was introduced to Dr. Smith at a weekly dinner given by the literary club in New York City.
during the summer of 1794. Here he met William Dunlap, the multi-talented painter and dramatist who was to become Brown's first biographer. Brown spent much time with both Smith and Dunlap, visiting in their homes during the summers of 1794 and 1795. Then, in 1796, he moved to New York City. He was supported by his family while he spent each day in reading—Goethe, Hage, and Darwin, to name a few of his favorites at this time—writing, and discussing his craft with Smith, Dunlap, and other sympathetic members of the Friendly Club.

Then, early in 1798, Brown's first book, Alcuin, written possibly a year previously, was published. This early effort took the form of a dialogue between a schoolmaster named Alcuin and a woman named Mrs. Carter in which women's rights—educational, economic, and political—were urged. During the same year in which he wrote Alcuin, Brown had completed a novel entitled Sky Walk, or, the Man Unknown to Himself, but it was never published and has not come to light. In rapid succession, the publication of his novels (also thought to have been composed while Brown was still living in Philadelphia) followed. In the spring of 1796, Meland was published—the story of inherited insanity which drove an educated, wealthy man to murder his wife and children, through his confusion over the murky messages of
a depraved ventriloquist. In February, 1799, there appeared Ormond, the tale of an intelligent young woman who, struggling to help her family survive after their financial ruin, became the intended victim of an evil seducer who feigned interest in her family's welfare. Part One of Arthur Mervyn was published in March of 1799, the novel being a long and involved story of a simple country boy who rapidly matured during a hectic visit to Philadelphia. Edgar Huntly appeared in the following August. This novel was an account of a young man's perilous adventures during his search for the murderer of his friend. Brown also edited a journal called The Monthly Magazine and American Review from April, 1799, until December of 1800. Published here was the unfinished "Memoirs of Stephen Calvert." Part Two of Arthur Mervyn appeared in 1800. During this year, also, the young author met Miss Elizabeth Linn of New York City, later to become his wife. In 1801, Brown returned to Philadelphia and joined his brothers' importing firm, the reason for this change being, at least in part, the failure of the Monthly Magazine. Also in 1801 were published Brown's last two novels, both romances, entitled Clara Howard and Jane Talbot.

From here ended his career as novelist and turned to the writing of political pamphlets expressing the Federalist point of view. His views had changed from the
liberal, Utopian vein to the more conservative. During his lifetime, he was probably better-known for his political writing than for his novels.

Another facet of Brown's writing--that of literary criticism--was brought to light when in 1803 he edited The Literary Magazine and American Register. In this journal were published the beginnings of a promised continuation of Wieland entitled "Memoirs of Carwin, the Biloquist." The work was never finished but has been included in at least one modern edition of Wieland.¹

In 1804, Brown married Elizabeth Linn and thereafter lived in Philadelphia with her and the children that were born to them: twin sons, another son, and a daughter. In 1806 he undertook what was to be his last sizeable writing effort: the editing of The American Register, or General Repository of History, Politics, and Science, a digest of the country's political and historical events. Although lately turned historian, Brown ensured a place for American literature in the Register; he included sections on poetry and literary criticism. Brown's own poem, an autobiographical piece entitled "Devotion: An Evisi," although composed earlier, was first published here.

¹Charles Brockden Brown, Wieland; or, The Transformation (New York: Darcourt, 1829 and Germany, 1926), a work often referred to, in all editions cited, as Wieland.
Brown's duties as husband, father, editor of the American Register, and a partner in the family firm demanded much of him. In spite of numerous summer trips taken with his renewed health as an object, in the autumn of 1809 his frail constitution broke under the strain of work and a chronic cough. The consumptive symptoms worsened, and tuberculosis claimed him on February 22, 1810, in his thirty-ninth year. Although he had married outside his sect and had therefore relinquished the privilege of burial with the faithful, he was nevertheless buried in the Friends' Burial Ground in Philadelphia.
In his novels, Charles Brockden Brown proved himself to be exceptionally fond of plots which dealt with domestic situations and emotional reactions. Parents are often portrayed as meddlers who jeopardize the happy marriages of their children. His heroines, although they are well-educated, rational young women at times, become hysterical, swooning girls when threatened with seduction. Several sub-plots demonstrate the terrible effects of seduction by means of inserting the "punishment" of illness or death which befalls the young lady who has been seduced.

Brown thus included a didactic strain into his sensational narratives. By these attempts at stated and implied morality, and by his use, in one of his plots, of an actual event which was undoubtedly well-known in its time, Brown endeavored to overcome the prejudices of ministers, teachers, and anxious parents against the dangers of this inflammatory fiction. An examination of this type of fiction, The Sentimental Novel, will provide explanations and sources for Brown's use of fantizing females, cruel seducers, greedy landlords, wicked parents, and the emotional upheavals which surrounded their adventures.
The novels of Samuel Richardson created the first sensation in this field; and they were widely imitated in America. Richardson's *Pamela*, or *Virtue Rewarded* and *Clarissa*, published during the 1740's, were exciting stories of young ladies who, by two very different methods, triumphed over their would-be seducers. Herbert Ross Brown defines Richardson's subject-matter as the "eternal preoccupation with problems of conduct and conscience."  

It was to this preoccupation that Brown and his American predecessors turned for much of their inspiration.

The outstanding American imitators of the Richardsonian novel, besides Brown's, were William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy*, America's earliest novel, published early in 1789; Susannah Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, published in 1791; and Hannah Foster's *The Coquette*, published in 1797, only a year before Brown's first novel was published. Two of these early novels, *The Power of Sympathy* and *The Coquette*, were written in the epistolary style which Richardson had originated in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.

Of Brown's novels, *Heland* and *Edgar Huntly* were written in epistolary style. Clara Heland's "letters"... 

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were addressed to an unnamed friend, as were the majority of Huntly's, but the letters in the last chapter of Wieland were shorter and were addressed to specific characters, as were the letters in The Power of Sympathy. Brown's departure, in Wieland, from the more traditional form of long, rambling letters, represents, perhaps, an early attempt by the young author at a modification of the standard epistolary style. The shorter letters at the close of Wieland serve to quicken the novel's pace and hasten its close, and the direction toward specific characters gives Clara Wieland's words a more intense focus.

In addition to the letter-form of Wieland and Edgar Huntly, traces of an epistolary style are evident in Ormond. A letter addressed "To J. E. Rosenberg" and signed "J. G." precedes the first chapter of the novel, stating, "You are anxious to obtain some knowledge of the history of Constantia Dudley. . . . I am willing, to the utmost of my power, to comply with your request."¹ Many chapters later, the reader discovers that "J. G." is Louisa (Westwyn) Courtland, a friend and former companion of Constantia, whose personality remains outside the narrative until the concluding chapters. Most of the story,

¹Charles Brockden Brown, Ormond; or, The Secret Witness (New York: American Book Company, 1831). The novel is also referred to as Ormond.
then, is related in the third person. This fact, added to the lack of direct conversation in the early chapters of Ormond, makes reading the novel much more difficult than reading Wieland and Edgar Huntly, whose stories are told in the first person. Arthur Mervyn is told in the first and the third person, the narrative passing from character to character until the story has been told from five different points of view; Mervyn's, Dr. Stevens's, Welbeck's, Mrs. Althorp's, and Mr. Wortley's. This multiple narration makes Arthur Mervyn the most difficult of all Brown's novels to read, because with each new narrator comes a new subplot. The most lucid portion of the novel is the concluding chapters which support to to Mervyn's entries in his journal (he refers to this section of the narrative as his "pen-trattle") and can be seen as another modification of the epistolary technique.

In addition to an epistolary style, or the modifications of it which Brown employed, these early American writers used various tales of seduction to give their novels a Sentimental flavor. The Power of Sympathy focuses on the tragic love-story of Harrington and Harriet, who try to elope (before Harrington accomplishes his planned seduction, fortunately) that they have the same father and

"Arthur Mervyn: or, Imagination of the Young 17th (New York: "Harley, Cumberland and Ilion, 1945), p. 146."
and therefore are half-brother and sister. The story ends in tragedy, with the illness and death of Herriet and the suicide of Harrington. In similar fashion, Charlotte Temple tells the story of an English girl who travels to America with a British army officer who has promised to marry her. When the couple arrive in America, the officer refuses to marry Miss Temple, who subsequently dies during the birth of their child. The Coquette was based on a widely known American tale: that of the seduction of Miss Elizabeth Whitman, the daughter of a Hartford, Connecticut clergyman. In the novel, Miss Whitman was given the thinly-disguised pseudonym of "Eliza Wharton." The story of Miss Whitman had aroused widespread concern because of speculation concerning the identity of her lover: he may have been either Aaron Burr or the son of Jonathan Edwards. Mention was also made of "Miss Whitman" and her seduction in a lengthy footnote to The Power of Sympathy.¹

Brown employed similar tales of seduction in Sie- land, Vroni, and Arthur Cervyn, the exception being Llaur Hulty, wherein the seduction motif was reduced to the capture of a young woman by a band of Indians. Of Brown's

seducers, Arthur Mervyn's villain, Welbeck, was by far the worst offender: he had seduced—and impregnated—three women, two of them married. Mervyn's description of Welbeck's latest conquest, Clemenza Lodi, and their child, clearly demonstrates the author's wish to impart a negative tone to this picture of the after-effects of seduction:

Sitting on a low chair by the fire, I beheld a female figure, dressed in a negligent, but not indecent, manner. Her face in the posture in which she sat was only half seen. Its hues were sickly and pale, and in mournful unison with a feeble and emaciated form. Her eyes were fixed upon a babe, that lay stretched upon a pillow at her feet. The child, like its mother, was meagre and cadaverous. Either it was dead, or could not be very distant from death.¹

Clemenza has been installed in a house of prostitution, a detail which Brown may have borrowed from Lovelace's treatment of Clarissa. Arthur Mervyn's best experience has made him sympathetic to Clemenza; his own sister died after her seduction by a man named Colvill. Brown seemingly brought the character of Colvill into the story solely for the purpose of another seduction, demonstrating his aesthetic interest in this facet of sentimentalism. Mervyn describes his heroine's misfortune in suitably melodramatic terms: "... I had a sister, whom the arts of a villain destroyed. Alas!"²

² Ibid., p. 328.
Seduction in Wieland is clearly stated: Carwin solicits the favors of Clara Wieland's maid in order to gain access to her house. He also warns Clara that similar behavior might have been directed toward her: "... I should long ere now have borne away the spoils of your honour."¹

Similar episodes were put into the narrative of Ormond. Felena Cleves plays the part of the discarded mistress; and she seizes the familiar recourse of suicide by poisoning herself with laudanum. When Ormond is rid of Felena, he makes his bid for the heroine of the novel, Constantia Dudley. She, like Pamela and Clarissa, repeatedly refuses, even though Ormond has given her large sums of money and has paid for surgery to be performed in the hope of restoring her father's eyesight. Ormond explains: "To snatch you from poverty, to restore his sight to your father, were expected to operate as incentives to love."² Then these strategic moves do not win Constantia's affections, Ormond has Mr. Dudley killed in order to remove Constantia's last bit of protection.

Finally he follows Constantia to the Dudley's country home, where he announces his purpose: "... that these refractory

¹Brown, Wieland, op. cit., p. 169.
²Brown, Ormond, op. cit., p. 231.
to bestow it is in my power to extort. I came for that
end. When this end is accomplished, I will restore thee
to liberty."

1 When Constantia threatens suicide to escape
his embraces, her seducer responds with a heinous threat
of his own: "Living or dead, the prise that I have in
view shall be mine." 2 Although the narrator Sophia
Westwyn boldly interrupts this breathless scene with "It
will be requisite to withdraw your attention from this
scene for a moment, and fix it on myself," 3 the reader
eventually learns that the resourceful Constantia has
administered the knife that was to be the instrument of
her suicide to Ormond, who lies dead at the end of the
novel.

Another ingredient that was typical of the Sentimen-
tal novel was the theme of misguided parents. Used in
Clarissa and The Power of Sympathy, it was also employed
by Mrs. Ann in Arthur Aervyn. The theme of "parental inter-
ference in marriage" 4 became popular through the episode
in Clarissa in which her father, for mercenary reasons,

1Ibid., p. 233. 2Ibid., p. 235.
3Ibid., p. 238.
4Mrs. R. Brown, The sentimental novel in America, cit., p. 34.
urges the heroine to marry a wealthy but otherwise unworthy suitor. In *The Power of Sympathy*, the sins of Harrington's father are the eventual cause of two deaths, as has previously been noted. Brown blamed parents for a certain amount of his characters' misfortune, as well. In *Arthur Claverton*, much of Arthur's immature attitude toward women stems from his father's misbehavior with a girl who was Arthur's age and more suited to him. Later in the novel, Arthur's friend Eliza Hadwin is placed at the mercy of her greedy uncle because of her father's lack of wisdom in making his will. In *Mieland*, the father's insanity is viewed as contributory to the son's similar illness. In *Edgar Huntly*, as Brown points out, "... the happiness of Mrs. Lorimer had been frustrated by the avarice of her parents and the machinations of a jealous brother."¹

The extent of the popularity in America of Richardson's novels is best illustrated by the fact that the first English novel printed in America was Benjamin Franklin's edition of *Pamela* in 1744.² Young American readers loved these stories and made the novels their special province, or the hero or heroine was invariably a young person. Added attractions for the young were the theme of parental interference and the forbidden excitement of sexual combat—

¹Ibid., ch. 36. ²Ibid., p. 23.
the virtue of the innocent young character being con-
stantly in peril. Upon this dubious material Puritan
adults looked with a jaundiced eye. Chief among their
objections was the fear that Sentimental Novels would
incite the passions of the susceptible young readers.
Writers endeavored to overcome this opposition by portray-
ing the innocent as entirely "white" and the wicked as
wholly "black" and by preaching against immorality at
every available point in the narrative. But these pre-
cautionary devices were seldom effective, as Cowie explains:

... novelists were not slow to learn that much
undesirable excitement could be conveyed beneath the
decorous drapery of didacticism. ... Frequently the
actions of the characters speak louder than the words
of the author. ... The Puritans often erred in
observing merely the appearances of things. They
insisted on the letter of morality. 1

In addition to his implied censure of his characters'
behavior, in the forms of the illnesses, natural deaths,
or suicides which visited many of the victims and the per-
nicators of seduction, Brown laced his stories with more
didacticism by means of stating a moral purpose for his
story, drawing a story to a close with a "moral," or lib-
erally interceeding didactic current in the narrative.

The "Advertisement" to Vieland states its purpose as "... the illustration of some important branches of the moral constitution of man."¹ Brown ended this novel on a similar note. The novel's last paragraph begins with this doleful admonition: "I leave you to moralize on this tale. That virtue should become the victim of treachery is, no doubt, a mournful consideration..."²

In like fashion, the preface to Arthur Mervyn told the reader:

... the author of these remarks has ventured to... weave into an humble narrative, such incidents as appeared to him most instructive... It is every one's duty to profit by all opportunities of inculcating on mankind the lessons of justice and humanity.³

A comment from Ormond on Stephen Dudley's excessive drinking exemplifies his sins in melodramatic language:

Mr. Dudley's education had entailed upon him many errors; yet we would have supposed it possible for him to be enslaved by a depraved appetite, to be submerged of low debauchery, and to grasp at the happiness that intoxication had to bestow!⁴

The narrator, Sophia Westwyn, reacts to the melodrama of this scene with: "My eyes nearly moist themselves dry over this sort of hero. [Constantia's] tale."⁵

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Another objection to the Sentimental Novel had its origin in the Puritan religion: since fiction was an untruth, and untruth a sin, fiction therefore was a sin. Authors circumvented arguments like these by assuring the public that their novels were based on true stories. And, in fact, the plots for many sentimental novels were taken from actual fact. However, while this maneuver hoodwinked many of the detractors of fiction, it often failed to achieve the desired effect; for the "true stories" on which the earliest American novels were based were widely-whispered New England scandals. In some instances, the public furor reached heights so great that books were suppressed at the request of the blushing families whose "stories" had been told.

Such were the circumstances which surrounded the publication of The Power of Sympathy, issued anonymously in Boston. The author was thought for many years to have been Mrs. Sarah (Apthorp) Wentworth Boston; but internal evidence and a related confession by her niece have convinced critics that the author was in all probability still in her prime. That Mrs. Boston would not have written such a story is supported by the fact that she was

the sister of Fanny Apthorp, the unfortunate woman who inspired Mill's sub-plot: the story of "Ophelia" and her suicide after having been seduced and discarded.¹

Concerning Brown's use of "truth" as a basis for his fiction, Vieland was the only one of his tales that claimed to be based on an actual incident. Brown admitted in the "Advertisement" to his first novel that "The incidents related are extraordinary and rare."² He proceeded to a confirmation of the truth of his plot with this statement:

If history furnishes one parallel fact, it is a sufficient vindication of the writer; but most readers will probably recollect an authentic case, remarkably similar to that of Vieland.³

The "authentic case," which Brown used in one of the central scenes of horror in his novel, was the murder, by a Mr. J____ Y____ of his wife and four children in Tewhavenock, New York, in December of 1791. Carl Van Doren first saw the similarities with the actual murder case, as it had been reported in the New York Weekly Magazine in 1796. Van Doren reported his findings in The Nation in 1914, including in his article several parallels between the cases of Mr. J____ Y____ and Theodore Vieland. As Van Doren

¹Ibid., p. 364. ²Brown, Vieland, op. cit., p. 7. ³Ibid., n. 9.
explains, both murderers performed their deeds in a religious frenzy, believing themselves to be directed by God. Each man attempted to sacrifice his sister as he had his wife and children, in each case two boys and two girls. In each case the attack on the sister failed; and the murderer confessed his crimes to the sister. Imprisoned after their confessions, both Wieland and Mr. Y____ managed to escape their confines more than once. For all these parallels, the most significant is the similarity in description of two of the murders: Mr. Y____ is reported to have said that he repeatedly struck his wife "... till I could not distinguish one feature of her face."1 The description of Wieland's murder of his foster-daughter, Louisa Conway, ends: "... such had been the merciless blow that destroyed her, that not a lineament remained!"2

Another article, published in 1936, deals even more specifically with the source for Wieland. In a clarification of Van Loenen's findings, J____ Y____ is identified as James Yates of Tommanick /sic/, New York. A letter from Tommanock, dated December, 1731, tells a story of religious mania: Yates's murder of his wife and four

2. ibid., Wieland, op. cit., p. 111.
children.  

In addition to his use of the New York murder case in Wieland, Brown's scenes in Ormond and Arthur Mervyn which contained descriptions of the plague must have carried the same weight of virtuous truth with his readers, since most of them, at least, remembered the recent horrors of the yellow fever epidemics.

Brown must have felt very strongly his duty to follow in the footsteps of the sentimental novelists by portraying the truth in his fiction. This requirement was important to the young author during the first part of his career as a novelist. A statement from "The Rhapsodist" confirms his purpose:

I speak seriously, when I affirm that no situation whatsoever, will justify a man in uttering a falsehood... Falsehood and dissimulation, however embellished with the softest colours, and touched by the most glowing and delicate hand, stamp an infamy upon the character hardly to be equaled by the perpetration of the blackest crimes... I am... careful to regulate my own conduct by the immutable standard...  

Brown further demonstrated his preference for Sentimentalism by maintaining the Sentimental novelists:

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method of determining titles for their novels. As Richardson and many of those who followed him had done, Brown titled all of his novels with the name of a prominent character from the novel. So, as their authors had done in Pamela and Charlotte Temple, Brown used six characters' names for his six novels. Because titles of this kind gave scant clues as to the stories themselves, Brown added provocative subtitles to his first four novels; they were: Wieland; or, The Transformation; Ormond; or, The Secret Witness; Edgar Huntly; or Memoirs of a Sleep-walker; and Arthur Nerwyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793. The titles of his last two novels were slightly more prosaic, being Clara Howard; In a Series of Letters and Jane Talbot, a Novel.

Another facet of Brown's Sentimentalism was his portrayal of weak, delicate heroines. Although their personalities seem to possess two sides, one being stalwart and rationalistic, Clara and Constantia are frequent victims of shrieks and fainting spells. When Floyd tells Clara of his suspicion that she has been induced by Carwin, Clara reacts with a solicitude worthy of any Sentimental heroine:

"He held me wild, wild, wild, grasping for breath, and my head already sinking on my bosom. A painful
dizziness seized me, and I fainted away.¹

When Constantia happens upon a friend whom she has not
seen for many years, her reaction is similar to Clara’s:

The torrent of emotion was too abrupt and too
vehement. Her faculties were overwhelmed, and she
sunk [sic.] upon the floor motionless and without
sense. . . .

In Sentimental Novels, swoons were deemed a suitable reac-
tion to a wide range of provocations, including Clara’s
shock and Constantia’s joy. Oddly enough, however, the
heroines withstand with remarkable fortitude the most
crucial moments of terror in both novels. Although they
faint with notable regularity during minor incidents, Clara
keeps her composure after discovering her sister-in-law’s
mutilated body and while witnessing her brother’s suicide;
and Constantia remains conscious after killing Ormond.
Violence ultimately takes its toll on the heroines, how-
however; Clara suffers a nervous breakdown after the murder
of the family, and Constantia recuperates in Ormond after
she has killed Ormond. Needless to say, all of Brown’s
battles at female frailty must have caused many a flutter in
the heart of his feminine readers.

Brown’s interest in the techniques of the Sentimental

novelists may have dated from 1790, when the entries in
his journal began to contain letters from Brown to a cer-
tain "Henrietta C." and replies from the woman to Brown. "Henrietta C." emerged in the context of the letters as a
beautiful, exceptionally well educated, and exceedingly
grown young lady. Clark characterizes the propriety of
her behavior thus: "In her conduct Henrietta conforms . . .
... to the ideal of the typical eighteenth-century heroine of
the sentimental novel."¹ An excerpt from one of her let-
ters exemplifies Henrietta's coy morality:

"Thou saucy and impudent creature! Best thou think
that our little property in my lips or that I will suffer
such insinuating and incessant interruptions from thy
kisses? In good sooth I will act with more discretion
for the future. I will banish thee, whenever thou
offendest, to the distance of a yard beyond the reach of
my eye, and my kisses shall be the pledges only of
fidelity and reconciliation. Thy lady will permit
thee on solemn and particular occasions to kiss the
hem of her imperial garment or to touch with thy lips
the end of her little finger, but greater favor will
be wholly disallowed. . . .²"

Another letter expresses Henrietta's admiration for the
"fetishism" of all sentimental heroines, Clarissa Harlowe:
"I have discovered that religion and philosophy of which
the precepts are to be seen in the conduct of Clarissa."³

The letters reveal differences in Brown's and Hen-
rietta's age, social status, and religious beliefs; and

¹Clark, p. cit., n. 2. ²Clark, p. 77.
the romance, which Clark is convinced "is autobiographi-
cal, representing an actual experience in Brown's life...
..."1 ended in the summer of 1793, when Brown visited
Elihu Hubbard Smith in Connecticut.2

In spite of Clark's certainty that the "Henrietta
C." letters represent an actual correspondence—that is,
that Brown's letters to his sweetheart and hers to him were
carefully copied into his journal—his evidence contains an
inconsistency which leads the present writer to doubt the
possibility of his assertions. Clark says that "Brown had
apparently made the acquaintance of the beautiful Henrietta
in the spring of 1792. . . ."3 However, the letters in his
journal began as early as 1790. These conflicting dates,
added to Brown's fondness for sentimental material and
declarations as demonstrated by the many examples of such in
his novels, suggest that the more reasonable supposition
regarding the letters would be Warfel's:

The correspondence flows along like that of a
typical sentimental romance; doubtless an interest
in fiction had already led him to try his hand
at this form of composition.4

Brown's early fondness for sentimentalism, as demon-
strated by the letters in his journal, continued throughout

1Ibid., p. 54. 2Ibid., p. 104.
3Ibid., p. 74. 4Warfel, op. cit., p. 36.
his career as a novelist. In fact, the evidence indicates that Brown's personal philosophy turned from the rationalism expressed in combination with the Sentimentality of his early writings to a more complete belief in the conservative morality and didacticism expressed by Sentimental literature. Brown's two minor novels, Jane Talbot and Clara Howard, both published in 1801, are "sentimental tales of love and marriage," told in epistolary style. That Brown dealt more fully with the domestic situations of the Richardsonian Novel in those two works is asserted by Cove:

In his next two novels he did not rid himself entirely of his "doeful tone"; indeed humor and mirth seem to have been entirely strangers to his temperament, but he did make some attempt to descend to the level of everyday affairs, and he succeeded in substituting, "moral causes" for the "prodigious or the singular."2

The early entries in his journal and his last two novels demonstrate conclusively that Brown retained the influence of Sentimentalism throughout his career, expressing the influence both privately and for publication.

Sentimentalism suggested many of the powerful elements to work out into his fiction: colorful characters, such as heroines in distress, intellectual parents,
and sex-crazed villains; popular themes: the bungling of
parents and the dangers of seduction; exciting scenes of
suicide and death; and powerful "lessons" which preached
against all that was colorful, popular, and exciting.

Brown's own influence upon later authors in the
area of Sentimentalism seems to have been meager, possibly
because Richardson, as the originator of the Sentimental
Novel, was himself extremely popular in America. Ringo's
brief comment that Jane Talbot may have provided Cooper
with episodes for The Sea Lions and The Wing-and-Wing is
the only such critical suggestion.¹ The most powerful
American novel of the nineteenth century to deal with the
effects of seduction was, of course, The Scarlet Letter;
and Hawthorne gave his story of sin a treatment quite dif-
ferent from Brown's techniques. However, Hawthorne read
and admired the earlier author's work and could possibly
have been influenced by Brown.²

Although Brown did not pass much of his work with
the Sentimental tradition in fiction to other writers, his
own novels could have served to be quite dull without the
melodrama which the Richardsonian Novel bequeathed to
Brown. Sentimental stories provided one type of the

¹Tullo, op. cit., p. 127. ²Tullo, op. cit., p. 5.
"escape fiction" which the hard-working Americans must have found so entertaining. Brown, as one of the first literary artists in his country, achieved success by making Sentimentalism only a part of the abundant combination of traditions which he offered to the reading public.
CHAPTER III

MAJOR INFLUENCES: LIBERALISM

Several of the most salient features of Brown's novels cannot be attributed to the influences of Sentimentalism. Brown's villains, for example, were endowed with more than the Richardsonian seducers' personalities; the villains of Arthur Harvyn, Ormond, and Wieland had definite Utopian learnings and heroic qualities. Moreover, the leading feminine characters in Wieland and Ormond, while fully as loquacious as Pamela or Clarissa, were more articulate and better educated, bearing unmistakable characteristics of the Encouraged Female. These and other indications of the Enlightenment in Brown's fiction necessitate an inquiry into the attitudes of European Liberalism which helped to crystallize Brown's views and influenced his fiction.

Such an inquiry will be pursued by means of an examination of Brown's four major novels. The examination will be centered primarily on the areas of Liberalism in character and theme. Three character types will be examined: the romantic hero, the Encouraged Female, and the Curious Youth. In addition, the examination of Brown's
fiction will focus on such thematic elements as the
author's indictments of religious fanaticism in Wieland
and of the corruption of city life in Arthur Mervyn. But
first, the foundations of Brown's attitudes must be recog-
nized by examining the Liberalism of Europe that was trans-
mitted to Brown in the years before he began to write.

A look at Brown's biography indicates that the Lib-
eral influences on Brown were many. He was a child during
the Revolutionary War and therefore came into contact with
various illustrations of the colonists' desire for freedom
and equality in speeches, later in print, and certainly in
his home. His father's house was amply stocked with the
literature of the Enlightenment; moreover, the home was a
liberal one and therefore dedicated to liberal views such as
a rationalistic approach to religion and a belief in the
equality of all men. Brown's secular schooling under Robert
Brown, well known for his Liberalism, must have powerfully
determine his thinking, also; for Webster tells us that as an
intellectual Brown

--- the spirit of this time by
traveling (in the face of Lyttelton's
craftsmanship with its realist-
ernost-- 'now the age en- a... mean "American...
Brown's close friendship with Elihu Hubbard Smith, the Unitarian physician who so successfully mixed scientific pursuits with a great interest in literature, helped to move him even further in the direction of Liberal thought. With increased interest in the sciences, so much a part of rationalism, Brown's inclusion and careful documentation of "natural phenomena" in Wieland and Edgar Huntly testifies not only to Liberal interests as well as Gothic ones. The very fact that he used natural causes to explain seemingly supernatural events like spooky voices and disappearing letters demonstrates his Liberal turn of mind, relying as it did on education and the popular "sciences" of the day.

The Friendly Club, to which Smith introduced Brown, was known for its interest in Liberalism. Smith's diary is a record of the topics discussed at the meetings; these included Hobbes, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Priestley, to name but a few. The organization was made up of young, well-educated men who were eager to discuss current philosophical ideas in relation to their own situation. Among the topics discussed was William Godwin's An Inquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Moral Virtue and Happiness.¹

¹Published in 1793, Godwin's tract criticizes social conditions in England and argues that the "blessed...
government and social institutions in general had a negative influence on man's behavior.\textsuperscript{1} Political Justice is said to have influenced British poets who were close to Godwin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Blake.\textsuperscript{2} Similarly, Godwin's writings also attracted the young American who desired a career as a writer.

William Godwin was well qualified to expound on his radical views. Born in 1756, the son and grandson of dissenting Calvinist ministers, he came from a background of individualism. He graduated from the Dissenting College at Hoxton and served as a Calvinist minister for five years before giving up the ministry. Arriving in London in 1783, he became active—and increasingly vocal—in left-wing politics; he became the leading political theorist and novelist of his day. His inspiration had sprung from events surrounding the French Revolution.\textsuperscript{3} In 1797, Godwin married Mary Wollstonecraft, the feminist author of Liberal works similar to Godwin's, notably \textit{A Vindication}

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
of the Rights of Woman (1792) which attacked male supremacy and pleaded for improved educational opportunities for women. The two had lived together for nearly a year prior to their marriage, the union producing a child, born in 1797. The birth brought about Mary Wollstonecraft's death, five months after her marriage; but the daughter, also named Mary, inherited the mother's talents and way of living. She became the second wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, marrying him following the suicide of his first wife.¹ Mary Godwin Shelley became, in addition, the author of the well-known Gothic novel Frankenstein (1818). The foregoing comments, seemingly unrelated to Brown, provide an interesting sidelight: Prescott claims Brown's influence on Frankenstein, largely on the basis that both Shelley and his wife were known to have read and admired Brown's novels.² Eleanor Sickels provides further interest, suggesting that Brown influenced Shelley's choice of an insane religious murder, similar to that in Moby Dick, as one of his plots; later scenes similar to

¹ Prescott, op. cit., p. 77.
those in Arthur Mervyn in the same poem; and a character named "Constantia" for two other poems. It seems worthwhile to note, if only in passing, therefore, that influences not only came to Brown from Europe but also passed from him to prominent European writers.

Such Liberal authors as Godwin and the Shelleys had infused their doctrines with enough excitement, through murders and monsters, to begat a new strain of literature which might be termed entertainment-with-a-purpose. Diana Leill's assessment of Frankenstein explains Mary Shelley's purpose:

Inspired by the perfectionist philosophy of her father, William Godwin, Mary Shelley clearly intended the monster to be understood as an embodiment of the evil in man for which his creator cannot escape responsibility.

It was this image which the works of Godwin and the Shelleys projected that most clearly distinguished it from the other types of literature which had sprang up in the nineteenth century: many novels of purpose resembled sentimental novels in their bid for exclusive emotion; and the horror portrayed in these novels certainly approached the other. In fact, some critics discuss Mary Shelley

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and her father under the general topic of Gothicism. Granted that *Frankenstein*, *CalebWilliams*, and Brown's novels might be more simply categorized as "Liberal Gothicism," the previously used designation—that of the "novel of purpose"—should serve as the operative distinction. For it was "purpose" which Brown's novels took from Liberalism: pleas for a more perfect society, for higher education to be given to young women, for freedom from the "dangers of formalized religion.

Brown's fondness for Godwin's popular and controversial novel *Caleb Williams* most clearly demonstrates his interest in themes of social betterment. Godwin's didactic novel, published in 1794, was an extension of the doctrines of political justice, centering about a fierce struggle between the protagonist Caleb Williams, the orphaned son of a poor farmer, and his tyrannical landlord and employer, Ferdinand Wilkland, a wealthy country squire. Besides the attack on the injustice of England's social institutions, *Caleb Williams* contained another facet which undoubtedly captured readers' interest: that of a strange psychic link interdependence which exists between Williams and Wilkland, whose guilt in a murder case the employer has accidentally discovered and subsequently proved to his own satisfaction.

Caleb's spying is motivated by the love of 'ruth, a mysterious and overwhelming curiosity which Wilkland's
intrigues are concerned. Godwin described Caleb's state thus:

The instant I had chosen this employment for myself, I found a strange sort of pleasure in it. . . . To be a spy upon Mr. Falkland! That there was danger in the employment, served to give an alluring pungency to the choice. I remembered the stern reprimand I had received, and his terrible looks; and the recollection gave a kind of tingling sensation, not altogether unallied to enjoyment. The farther I advanced, the more the sensation was irresistible. . . . The more impenetrable Mr. Falkland was determined to be, the more uncontrollable was my curiosity.

Confused, Caleb's solicitude of his master's

Caleb, in a continuance of admiration for Falkland, who, in a life of his, held many admirable qualities. In one episode of the novel, Falkland happened upon a fire in a nearby village and showed himself a hero, entering a burning house and saving a helpless girl. Godwin caused the

influential scene with this flattering description of the

event: "By his presence of mind, by the

infinite and human, by his

incessant exertions, he saved

three-quarters of the village from destruction."

Caleb's devotion to this, added to other indications of his

master's humanity, to evident;

"It is possible . . . . of Mr. Falkland . . . . the

satisfaction . . . . I collect the virtues of my

master, almost the whole, for human and . . . . and

still up to the spirit, beneficent . . . ."

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Brown had read Caleb Williams before he began to
write his first novel and at that time stated his wish to
emulate Godwin in a novel of his own.\(^1\) He may well have
been indebted to Godwin for his portrayal of a villain with
heroic qualities and a young man (or male character of
undetermined age) whose curiosity leads him and others to
disaster. Even cursory readings of Edgar Huntly and Arthur
Hervyn will convince their reader that in both novels,
curiosity is the primary motivation which leads each youth
into adventure after adventure. Huntly seeks a murderer;
Hervyn seeks his fortune. Into the escapades of both char-
acters Brown injected much of the same motivation that God-
win gave to Caleb Williams: like Caleb, Huntly and Hervyn
feel keen strains, unremitting attachment to older men whose
personalities represent such a mixture of heroism and vill-
iany that they instantly and continuously arouse strong
curiosity. As Caleb pursues Vollard, Huntly pursues
Mitho Kony over the countryside around Norwalk; and
Hervyn chases half of through Philadelphia (it must be
noted that to sustain this effect in Arthur Hervyn, Brown
not only sat Hervyn in a chair all kneelers; but also
allows taller to go back into the narrative after he had
supposed drowned). In all three novels, the young men

\(^1\) Brown, ed., op. cit., p. 275.
pursue not only the hero-villain but the solution to a mystery as well.

Brown's imitative treatment of the hero-villain as the key to the mystery made good fiction-sense. Suspense was maintained in two areas: that of the enigmatic older character as he appeared to the curious young man, and that of his mysterious past, of circumstances which took place before the youth's narrative began. The young man's overwhelming curiosity, then, was made to seem doubly plausible: he was intrigued by what seemed to be the villain's concealment of some unfortunate situation as well as by the striking combination of good and evil in the villain's personality.

Like Falkland, none of Brown's villains is completely evil: Carvin saves Clara Heland from her brother's attempt on her life, and Clithero has the excuse of insanity. Moreover, his motives toward his employer, Mrs. Loring, are loving and selfless; and his wish to kill her is portrayed as merciful. Ormond's scrupulous honesty gave him heroic qualities, as this passage demonstrates:

...was, in his eyes, hateful and absurd.

...Constantia was to be obtained by any means.

For this end, he resolved to himself, with a smile of the character of this lady.
secret of his sentiments and views. He avowed his love, and described, without scruple, the scope of his wishes. He challenged her to confute his principles, and promised a candid audience and profound consideration to her arguments.¹

Unfortunately, Ormond's honesty is part of a scheme by which to seduce Constantia; again, good and evil are curiously intermingled. Welbeck, although the most villainous of Brown's characters, is pictured as a highly cultured and intelligent being. One of the minor characters in Arthur Marvyn says of him, "This Welbeck must have powers above the common rate of mortals,"² echoing Caleb's description of Farkland as "too sublime for human nature."

Marvyn, who is lodged in Welbeck's splendid home as his secretary, describes his feelings with these words: "His whole figure impressed me with emotions of veneration and awe."³

More good amidst the villany of Brown's characters is provided by the fact that Carwin and Ormond are high-minded men who have topian creeds for society's future. Brown makes little mention of this side of Carwin's character in Miland; but in the unfinished fragment entitled "Carvin of Carvin, the Siloquist," he made Carwin the disciple of one Audley, who is said to belong to a secret

¹Brown, Ormond, op. cit., p. 143.
³Ibid., p. 49.
order dedicated to the improvement of society. Brown characterized Ludloe only briefly in Wieland, introducing him through the contents of a letter which is discovered by Clara; but the letter contains an exposé by Ludloe of Carwin's mysterious activities in connection with a secret organization:

Ludloe...describes him...as the most incomprehensible and formidable among men; as engaged in schemes reasonably suspected to be in the highest degree criminal, but such as no human intelligence is able to unravel; that his ends are pursued by means which leave it in doubt whether he be not in league with some infernal spirit; that his crimes have hitherto been perpetrated with the aid of some unknown but desperate accomplices; that he wages a perpetual war against the happiness of mankind, and sets his engines of destruction at work against every object that presents itself.  

It should be noted that although Carwin is denounced as a criminal, he is placed in the higher echelons of crime with such words as "the highest degree criminal." This technique further concentrates Brown's assignation efforts to produce a mixture of good and evil in his villains. Carwin is presented as a member of a similar group, as seen in his association with:

...Trend was engaged in schemes of an arduous and elevated nature. These were the topics of historic discussion among him and a certain

1 Brown, op. cit., p. 30.
number of coadjutors in different parts of the world. In general discourse it was proper to maintain a uniform silence respecting these, not only because they involved principles and views remote from vulgar apprehension, but because their success, in some measure, depended on their secrecy.

Osmund aspired to nothing more ardently than to hold the reins of opinion—to exercise absolute power over the conduct of others. . . .

Brown's interest in secret Utopian societies was influenced, as Clark explains, by his knowledge of the European Society of the Illuminati, founded in 1776 for the purpose of enlightening the ignorant majority of mankind. In organizations of this type was the same mixture of good and evil as in Brown's character: the purpose of enlightening mankind seemed to be a benevolent one; but the wish to control the minds of others was somewhat more selfish.

With the character of the Curious Youth and the
un-Villain still on consideration, a look at Brown's
first novel suggests that in neither Gilead, nor
alternately the major characteristics of Gilead and All-
land are seen in Ralph Allaine. In Gilead, perch
not utility the character of the Curious Youth;
 Instead, it clearly saw all of the curiosity to Gilead,
the un-Villain, which is seen to operate with a
similar. Brown ends with his inquisitive nature and

1 Clark, op. cit., p. 19.
2 Clark, id., cit., p. 19.
obvious with statements like these, in which the villain describes his folly:

Now my aversion to these means of escape was enforced by an unauthorized curiosity. ...

The temptation to interfere... was irresistible. In vain I contended with inveterate habits.

I cannot convey to you an adequate idea of the kind of gratification which I derived from these exploits.

I cannot justify my conduct; yet my only crime was curiosity.

I was desirous of seeing this book; and such was my habitual attachment to mystery, that I preferred the clandestine renewal of it.

Carvin's descriptions of his meekness and prying as "irresistible" and strangely satisfying furnish a remarkable parallel to Caleb's explanation for his staying on Walkland. Carvin's description of Carvin's strange condition displayed an interest in Caleb's zeal motivation, which was similar to that in his description of the emotional tone which linked Caleb and his master. Perhaps this was

... [Footnote: [Source, Walkland, etc., 1832, p. 38-1.]}
interest in the psychology of his characters caused Brown to split Curiosity and Villainy in Arthur Marvyn and Edgar Huntly, to pit the two characteristics against each other, and thereby to create not only clearer characterizations, but greater tension, in his later novels.

Further evidence of Liberalism in Brown's characterizations is his portrayal of Clara Vieland and Constantia Turley, the central figures in Vieland and Ormond, as Emancipated Females. Clara and Constantia are not devotees of Mary Wollstonecraft's views concerning freedom from the bonds of marriage, but they do reflect her plea (and that of Mrs. Carter in Alcune) for greater educational opportunities for women. Both young women, then, have been raised in comfortable circumstances and educated well. The education of Clara and her brother has been accomplished privately, since public schools were considered corrupt. As the novel begins, Clara, her brother Theodore, Theodore's wife Catharine, and Catharine's brother Floyd are spending their days in profound philosophical discussion and their evenings in rehearsing Brown drama, reading poetry, and playing violins and a harpsichord while facing on a bust of Cicero.¹ While rest young

¹Ibid., p. 24.
ladies in Clara's position would have possessed an extensive wardrobe, the closet adjoining her room is filled instead with books and manuscripts. Similarly, Constantia has been schooled in two languages, "the mathematical properties of light and sound... the structure and power of the senses... and... the principles and progress of human society."1

In order to reiterate his emphasis upon Constantia's intelligence, Brown established a basis for her comparison with Helena Cleaves by making both women the objects of Ormond's desire. Helena was pictured as untutored in the same areas in which Constantia was exceptionally talented, thus accentuating Constantia's mental powers:

Helena's intellectual deficiencies could not be concealed. She was a proficient in the elements of no science. The doctrine of lines and surfaces was disreputable with her intellect as with those of the rock-bird. She had not reasoned on the principles of human action, nor examined the structure of society. She was ignorant of the past or present conditions of mankind. History had not informed her of the one, nor the narratives of voyages nor the deductions of the minds of the other. The heights of eloquence and poetry were shut out from her view.2

With all their superior education, both Clara and Constantia seem to have been situated by Brown so that their rationalistic beliefs are to be tested. 7th year,

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2Ibid., p. 105.
women are alone and unprotected and must, in large part, work out their problems with only the aid of their intellects. Each girl is unmarried, and each girl has lost her mother as well. Clara, in addition, has lost her father as the story opens, and Constantia's father is killed during the course of the novel. In short order, disaster strikes the remainder of the Wieland and the Dudley families, further isolating each heroine and intensifying her dependence upon her own ingenuity. Clara's sister-in-law, nieces, and nephews are murdered, her brother is imprisoned for the crime, and Pleyel, her sweetheart, is alienated by his suspicions that Carwin has seduced Clara. Constantia's father withdraws through heavy drinking and ultimate blindness. Each heroine is left to be the only functioning member of her family; and thus, perhaps, Brown tested the efficacy of educating the eighteenth-century woman. Since both Clara and Constantia prevail at the ends of their novels, Brown's conclusions regarding higher education for women must have been favorable.

Adherence to religion was also to undergo a severe test in Wieland. Brown's exposure to Liberal attitudes toward religion—through his own Quakerism and the Deism of his friends—must have left him well equipped to pose such questions in his fiction. Theodore Wieland's insanity,
together with the inexplicable death of his father, were presented as being consequences of religious convictions which included much supernaturalism. As Carrow puts it, "The disastrous character transformation of young Wieland proceeded then from the same cause as that of his father—acceptance of one belief in the tenets of a 'creed' religion." 

Added to his rationalistic criticism of creed religion in Wieland was Brown's condemnation of the evils of life in the city, effected by his sharp contrasts of city and country in Arthur Mervyn. To emphasize the contrast, Brown made Philadelphia the scene of disease—a portrayal of the yellow fever epidemic which he had witnessed as a youth—thievery, prostitution, forgery, and murder. While Arthur Mervyn does not participate in these evils, he is a direct observer of the immorality; and he is finally infected with the fever. As a direct observer, Mervyn learns rapidly to see his fortune in more effective ways. When he is attracted to a woman—and he is attracted to a large number of them during the course of the novel—he views her in terms of how much money and property she is worth. All this unfortunate embrace with the future—embraced by Mervyn on his father's farm—is vital.

(Carrow, "Character from Novels in Wieland," Scribner's Monthly, 16 (April, 1873), 312.)
toward all women are tinged with mild suspicion. The fact that he ultimately becomes engaged to a wealthy Jewess indicates that his adventures in city and country have taught him much about survival in the world of urban greed.

The contrast between Philadelphia and the surrounding countryside is accentuated by comments like these:

I saw that the city was no place for me. This night's perils and deceptions gave me a distaste to a city life, and my ancient occupations rose to my view enhanced by a thousand imaginary charms. I resolved forthwith to strike into the country.

The country was my sole asylum. . . . It would be prudent to regain the fields, and be far from this fetid city before the rising of the sun.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . on leaving the city and inhaling the purer air of the fields and woods, salubrity had been, in a wonderful degree, invigorated and refreshed. An instantaneous and total change appeared to have been brought to him. He no longer languished with fatigue and fear, but became full of joy and talk.

However, rural life, while it is presented in many instances as a refuge from the terrors of the city, is not portrayed in completely idyllic terms. Browne added realism to Dervyn's stay with the kindly Madvin family by including

1Browne, Arthur Dervyn, op. cit., op. h3, 112, 216.
a villainous character: the uncle, Philip Hadwin, a heartless man who tries to take the Hadwin farm for himself after his brother has died.

The manner in which Brown used Liberalism has been disputed by many. Two recent critics comment on Brown's use of Liberal philosophy while offering different explanations concerning other beliefs that Brown may have utilized or rejected. Vanly sees the dramatic tension in Midland as being generated by Brown's use of his avowed interest in rationalism, truth, and purpose; and his equal fascination with the disruption of these qualities in the bizarre, the Gothic, and the sentimental.¹

The ways in which Clara's consciousness is confronted with rational and irrational stimuli create the story's tension.²

Miff's article sees Brown's affinity with the rationalistic novel of purpose as having more prominence; in fact, Brown is said to have turned Sentimentalism aside in favor of wrestling so vigorously with rationalism that he in turn discarded it in recognition of Calvinism's

¹Miff 1938, "The Importance of Point of View in 'Midland' or 'Midland' " American Literature, XXXV (1933), 211.

²Ibid.
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¹Manly, "The Importance of Point of View in European 'Brown': Ireland," American Literature, XXV (1963), 98.

²Ibid.


"Doctrine of inherited depravity."¹ A change in Brown's thinking such as the one Ziff suggests would place Brown in a position much closer to such writers as Hawthorne and Melville who, like Jonathan Edwards, could not use the rationalism of the Enlightenment to answer their questions concerning evil.² This sort of change would account, for example, for Theodore Wieland's succumbing to an inherited illness, and for the failure of the novel's most rational character, Pleyel, to effectively deal with Clara's fears of ghostly intruders. For the most part, however, Ziff is alone in these views.

Liberalism in Europe, allied with the beginnings of the romantic movement in literature, contributed much to Brown's development as a writer. Although Brown added realistic touches to soften his contrast between city and country, Arthur Vervyn obviously contained a Liberal's criticism of urban life and a Rousseauistic view of rural existence. Brown's novels also contained characters who displayed many of the characteristics of enlightened men and women of the revolutionary period. Since Arthur Vervyn, countless young heroes in American literature have

²Ibid., p. 46.
found it necessary to escape from the restraint of life in the city and to "light out for the territory." From Natty Bumppo to Ishmael to Jake Barnes and beyond, a great part in America's Romantic Movement was played by characters who could more easily comment on the world and its problems through a communication with nature. Furthermore, the great-grandfather of characters like Captain Ahab, Huckleberry Finn, and Jay Gatsby may have been Carwin, Welbeck, or Ormond, whose evil nobility had proved so irresistible to countless readers. The growth of the Romantic or Byronic Hero in American literature may have been nurtured by the initial portrayals, by Brown, of heroes in whom a compelling mixture of good and evil was skillfully presented.
CHAPTER IV

MAJOR INFLUENCES: GOTHICISM

Gothic novels gave Brown the inspiration for the violence which, more than any other trait, made his fiction memorable. It was this aspect of Brown's fiction, too, which attracted and inspired other nineteenth-century American writers such as Cooper and Poe. Fiedler has called Brown "the father of American gothic [sic]," creating recent interest in the beginnings of Gothicism in literature.¹ The tradition came into being, primarily in England and Germany, as a reaction against the extreme rationalism which marked the age of the Enlightenment.²

Of the outstanding efforts in England—Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho, and Matthew Gregory Lewis's The Monk—it is safe to assume only that Brown had read novels by Mrs. Radcliffe. He recognized her importance in the field of Gothic literature with these words: "Ann Radcliffe is, without doubt, the most illustrious of the picturesque writers."³ Although Brown's letters and journals do not

¹ Fiedler, op. cit., p. 50.
² Ibid., op. cit., pp. 104-6.
give specific titles, he must have read many other Gothic novels, since his primary occupation in later years was that of literary criticism, and because he read voluminously from boyhood.

Mrs. Radcliffe's work is known for two primary aspects, both of which are thought to have influenced Brown. Crew's article explains that Walpole and Lewis used elements of the supernatural to frighten the reader, while Mrs. Radcliffe used logical explanations to account for her ghastly effects. This same distinction can be applied to a discussion of German Gothicism. Schiller's The Ghostseer, translated into English in 1795, and Kahler's The Necromancer, translated into English in 1794, were the prime examples of a branch of the Gothic tradition which specialized in "disordered supernaturalism... more lurid and primitive than English Gothicism..."  

Crew's article merely places Brown in the Gothic tradition  and does not specify whether he used the supernatural or the rational variety of Gothicism. Surely Brown can be seen, however, to have been closer to Mrs. Radcliffe's use of the theme. In Gottfried and Ador

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2Ibid., op. cit., p. 117.
3Ibid., op. cit., p. 24.
Huntly, the mysteries began to unravel only when the natural causes—Carwin's talent for ventriloquism and Huntly's and Clitheroe's sleep-walking—were explained. That Brown delayed these explanations until the concluding chapters of each novel is excellent testimony in itself that he wished to create the suspense and fear which were prerequisites of Gothic fiction.

Brown's other debt to Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, besides his use of the rationally explained supernatural, was his use of scenery. Many early Gothic novelists used no natural scenery but employed only the stock trappings of the horror story to create an atmosphere. McIntyre says that most critics have agreed on Mrs. Radcliffe's unique gift for writing with an emphasis on landscape.1 Bernard states that she was one of Brown's "... most direct sources of influence for scenery."2 Brown's comment on Mrs. Radcliffe's writing, already quoted above, displays admiration for this particular quality of her work.

The article by Kinnard deals with Brown's modifications of Mrs. Radcliffe's scenic descriptions, saying that while her scenery was merely decorative, Brown's was functional or symbol.3 For instance, in Edgar Huntly, Brown...
described Huntly's apprehensions and his descent into madness in the symbolic terms of the mountains, steep cliffs, and the black pit into which he wanders.¹ This marked the first attempt of an American author to mirror a character's mental or emotional state in his surroundings. Other examples of Brown's achievements in symbolism will be mentioned at a later point in the chapter.

While evidence of German Gothicism is much less apparent in Brown's fiction, with discussions of Brown and the Gothic tradition usually centering around Mrs. Radcliffe and her use of Gothicism, some mention has been made of Brown's debt to the German writers. That he was familiar with the popular German literature of this type, Warfel asserts in an article dealing with Brown's German sources.² Warfel's argument is that Cjeteran Tschink's Geisterscher, translated in 1795, was Brown's source for the plot of Wioland. Geisterscher, or The Victim of Magical Delusion, is the story of a young man who was forced by an evil Irishman to take part in a revolution. The Irishman used tricks to ensnare the young man, one of the tricks being sending his voice through tubes. Brown's villain in Wioland was of Irish nationality, and the ventriloquism

¹Ibid.

used by Nieland's villain was similar to the Irishman's trick in Geisterscher. As in Nieland, the moral of the story was reason's victory over the weakness of the senses. 1

Although Tarbol's is the only recent article to point out parallels between Nieland and Geisterscher, another article by Frank points out that Brown's use of the surname "Nieland" probably came from the name of the German writer Cristof Martin Nieland. 2 Other evidence of Brown's touchstone for Germany seems to have been concentrated in his first novel: the Nieland family was of German origin, and one of their arrangements was the oral reading of contemporary German drama.

Gothicism contributed a characteristic atmosphere and a distinctive type of action to Brown's writing. The atmosphere was invariably dark and mysterious; the action was usually violent. From this practice came fightsto-the-finish between man and man, man and beast, man and disease, or man and his environment. Nocturnal visits by the villain to the heroine were also prescribed by Gothicism, as was a strong pull in the atmosphere—a perfect setting for mystery.

1 This, op. 362-3.

Settings characteristic of the Gothic novel were tombs, ruins, haunted castles complete with portraits with moving eyes, and hidden rooms and passages. Characters included a maiden in distress, as in the Sentimental novels; but in many instances the Gothic heroine feared for her life instead of her virtue. The villain frequently had a high intelligence similar to that of the Romantic Hero or Hero-Villain; but his cunning was usually portrayed as a part of his madness or criminal ability. The heroine usually visited a haunted castle and was quickly plunged into a scene of terror wherein chains rattled, ghosts walked, and the heroine, by virtue of her eagerness to unravel the mysteries of the castle, unwittingly became the object of the villain's evil designs.\(^1\)

In Edgar Allan Poe's "Note to the Public," which preceded the story, "Tamerlane," admitted that he wrote in the Gothic tradition; he also indicated that as an American writer, he "intended to modify that tradition with some innovations of his own:

One might select as at least claim: that of calling forth the most vivid and enlisting the sympathy of the reader by means hitherto unemploed by preceding authors. "Gargle superstition and exploded commonplace, Gothic castles and primroses, and the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility, and the scenes of the western wilderness, are

\(^{1}\)Poe, ed. cit., p. 243-4.
far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology. 1

In Edgar Huntly, Brown combined a picture of the "Western wilderness"--the countryside surrounding Norwalk, Pennsylvania--with colorful, if not detailed, portrayals of Indian characters, to gain the first narrative of this type before the novels of Cooper. Huntly's exit from a cave in which he has been lost is obstructed by a sleeping party of Indians. The brave young hero, with the aid of a hatchet which he has found in the cave, single-handedly fights and kills most of the party and rescues a girl whom the Indians have taken prisoner. The surviving members of the band follow Huntly and the girl to a cabin usually occupied by an old Indian woman called "Queen Ann," where Huntly withstands another attack and dispatches--although not neatly--his rest of his enemies. One death scene in particular has a poetic flavor: Huntly thinks he has killed the last Indian, only to discover that the man is not dead but only wounded, and suffering horribly. A final chop of the hatchet finishes the Indian; but the scene has been delayed long enough to inject a richly picturesque of the dying man.

The reader can identify many other elements of Goethe in Brown's novel. Clara Virland and Constantia

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Dudley spiritually qualify as the maiden who fears for her life, as do, in minor degree, Clementina Loddi, Welbeck's unfortunate mistress, and Mrs. Fielding, both kept against their wills in a house of prostitution (an interesting and more realistic variation of a Gothic haunted castle, perhaps); Ilka Badwin, left alone by the plague; and the unnamed girl in Edgar Huntly's Indian episode.

Moreover, the previously-mentioned isolation in which Brown's heroines are situated serves to intensify their peril. The climactic seduction-murder scene in Gwendola takes place in a deserted country home, far from the crowded city which has served as the background to all the action leading up to the climax. In Midlands, Clara lives alone in one room with only a servant girl; she is virtually alone and unprotected, this fact making the path easy to hostile horrors such as Garwin's and Graydon's maternal visits.

"Leatherhead" brings to mind another facet of catharses in Brown's novels: the major scenes are invariably linked at mid-act. In Midlands, the disembodied voice first appears to Clara in the dead, to Clara and to Clara and Clara, at mid-act. Clara describes the separate visits of the voice as a "self of conversational tone.
"midnight interview," suggesting the truth of Preu's observation that midnight was the favorite hour of Gothic writers. Other events which take place at night in Wieland are: Clara's second hearing of the voice, on the river-bank near her home; Carwin's first visit with the family; his concealing himself in Clara's closet; Clara's discovery of Catherine's body; her confrontation by Wieland, now insane; Carwin's last visit to Clara's room and his confession to her; Wieland's escape from prison; and Clara's rescue from her burning home, in an episode similar to the one in Caleb Williams. Brown had so obviously set the stage in darkness for his major scenes that many chapters—or the episodes within the chapters—begin with words like those:

At the evening; advance, my father's inquisitives increase.

To soon an evening arrived, I performed my visit.

In the midnight was someone in, or had passed, I knew not. I was... alone and defenseless.

Torn I reached the city it was dark.

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1Pur., p. 12.
---, p. 21.
I perceived by the clock that stood against the wall that it was near eleven. The lateness of the hour startled me.

I have said that the window-shutters were closed. A feeble light, however, found entrance through the crannies. A small window illuminated the closet, and, the door being closed, a dim ray streamed through the keyhole. A kind of twilight was thus created, sufficient for the purposes of vision, but, at the same time, involving all sinister objects in obscurity.

Note should be taken that, in several of the passages, the character's fear is mentioned in close connection with the darkness, as if the fear were a consequence of the gloomy atmosphere. Brown doubtless wished to invoke fear in the reader with his descriptions of nocturnal scenes, even before the reader had encountered the actual violence in such scenes.

Nighttime scenes in Edgar Huntly were a foregone conclusion, since all walking would reasonably take place after dark, as the author tells us. Hence Huntly’s slumbering in a closet at night, as he follows Clithero about. The wilful error, a lapse in which Huntly finds himself lost in the obscurity of a cave is described as “sin, horrible, mainly” one of the circumstances: “I stretched dry my eyelids, and...”
exerted every visual energy, but in vain. I was wrapped in the blackest and most impenetrable gloom." Hently describes his nervousness following his adventure in the cave in terms of darkness, emphasizing the impression which the atmosphere has made upon him:

... a tribe of ugly phantoms, famine, and blindness, and death, and savage enemies, never fail to be conjured up by the silence and darkness of the night.

... My cowardice requires the perpetual consolation of light. My heart droops when I mark the decline of the sun, and I never sleep but with a candle burning at my pillow. If, by any chance, I should awake and find myself immersed in darkness, I know not what act of desperation I might be suddenly impelled to commit. 2

Henty's equation of fear and anxiety with darkness marks another attempt to reflect his characters' moods in their surroundings.

Nighttime scenes in Ormond occur in the same manner. In fact, Ormond's visit to Constantia is quite similar to Otranto's visit to Clara. The chapter containing Ormond's visit opens with descriptions of the darkness and Constantia's fear in close association, as in Henty and Edgar:

While occupied with these reflections, the light flicker discoloured, and darkness, rendered, by a cloudy atmosphere, unequally, intense, succeeded. 

... the torch around her with some degree of fascination...

1 From, Edgar Hently, op. cit., p. 15.
2 Ibid., p. 156.
It was night. She was immersed in darkness. She had not the means, and was unaccustomed to the office, of repelling personal injuries.\(^1\)

Again, Brown's equation of Constantia's fear and helplessness with the darkness that surrounded her can be clearly seen.

Some of the most entertaining scenes in *Arthur* Hervyn and Edair Henty are set in the darkness, as well. Brown must have hoped that the settings in these novels would have the same effects on his readers as did the nocturnal scenes in *Wieland* and *Ormond*; but he could not have expected his male characters Hervyn and Henty to react with the same fright as did his frail heroines. It may be proposed, therefore, that although darkness is used as frequently to set the stage for scenes of violence in *Arthur* Hervyn and Edair Henty, the characters' reactions involve not fear but the more calmly feelings of discomfort and horror. Hervyn's first adventure in the city takes place in a locked closet at night; his reaction is this: "What a condition was mine? Immersed in velvety darkness! shut up in this unknown recess!"\(^2\) In darkness and


\(^2\) ibid., *Arthur* Hervyn, op. cit., p. 35.
the enclosure of this setting may serve as a microcosmic foreshadowing of another frightening episode in which Nervyn finds himself lost in the darkness of the cellar beneath Welbeck's house. After soliciting Nervyn's help in the burial of a man he has killed, Welbeck leaves Nervyn alone in the cellar, saying that he must go in search of a spade with which to dig the grave. As a young man, even a horrified one, should do, Nervyn attempts to find his way out of the dark cellar:

I extended my hands and went forward. I had been too little attentive to the situation and direction of these vaults and passages, to go forward with undeviating accuracy.

In a moment, I was repelled by a jutting angle of the wall, with such force that I staggered backward and fell. The blow was stunning, and when I recovered my senses, I perceived that a torrent of blood was rushing from my nostrils.

I now proceeded with greater wariness and caution. I had lost all distinct notions of my way. By motions were at random.¹

This episode is effectively described and could have served as a climactic one; however, Browning chose to frustrate his readers' expectations by killing the scene with Nervyn's late realization that he has merely taken a wrong turn in the cellar:

¹Misc., p. 109.
I now perceived that the darkness had misled me to a different staircase from that which I had originally descended. It was apparent that Felbeck intended me no evil, but had really gone in search of the instrument which he had mentioned.

Brown's description of Mervyn's imprisonment in the closet and his similar experience in the cellar probably served as the source for Huntly's adventures in the cave, in which he awakens after waking in his sleep to the spot. Passages from this episode demonstrate the similarity of the scenes:

I stretched out my hands on all sides, but met only with vacancy. I advanced forward.


... My hands at length touched a wall. I followed this wall. An advancing angle occurred at a short distance, which was followed by similar angles.

The superiority of the cave episode in Edgar Huntly, compared to the relatively undeveloped horrors of Mervyn's adventures in the dark, was gained by Brown's attention to his character as well as his setting in the later novel. Mervyn's scenes in the cellar fail because he does not act on his environment other than to discover that he has made a mistake. Huntly scenes in the cave proved worthy of Brown because a turning-point in the novel ultimately formed in Huntly's actions. Because he uses his reasoning.

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owers to discover the size and shape of his prison and obtains food for his survival, Huntly finds his way out of the cave—and a way, also, out of the mental obscurity of which the darkness in the cave is a symbol. Brown's use of darkness in Edgar Huntly integrated character and environment in symbolism; and because of the integration, his last major novel represents a distinct advance beyond similar scenes in Hieland, Ormond, and Arthur Mervyn.

Gothic descriptions of insanity and death—deaths as a result of horrible illness, murders, suicides, and contemplations of suicide—were plentiful in Brown's novels. He used yellow fever in Ormond and in Arthur Mervyn to bring about the lingering illnesses and deaths of major characters who were close to the principal characters, Constantia and Mervyn; in so doing, he not only created characters who were best suited to aid and advise their own people, but also made the environment in which they were forced to act a more frightening and dangerous one, filled with an atmosphere of death, and threatening death to them. Passages from Arthur Mervyn will suffice to show the intimacy of Brown's descriptions of the epidemic:

The atmosphere was loaded by mortal stenches. A vapour, so fetid... and malignant, scarcely allowed us to breathe... in suitably susceptible... rooms... the evolutions produced by sickness... disease... by hospitals... labour was struggling...
death, and my bed, casually extended, was moist with the detestable matter which had flowed from his stomach.

A female visage, bloated with malignity and drunkenness, occasionally looked in. Dying eyes were cast upon her, invoking the boon, perhaps, of a drop of cold water, or her assistance to change a posture which compelled him to behold the ghastly writhings or dreadful smile of his neighbour.

This section of Brown's narrative obviously gains clarity as a result of the author's first-hand knowledge of yellow fever epidemics. Not only did he create many horrible sights—the smile of a dying man adds a hideous note which any Gothic writer might envy—Brown also involved the readers' tactile and olfactory senses with his descriptions of the "malignant vapour" and the damp bedclothes.

The form of death most prevalent in Brown's novels is unaccountably murder. Murder in Arthur Pervyn is confined to Thaddeus's killing of Amos Watson, the brother of one of the women whose reputation he has ruined. Killing in Edgar Luntly includes Luntly's single-handed massacre of a band of Indians; Clitheroe's killing of Mrs. Lorimer's brother, Arthur Stellite; and the murder of Luntly's friend Walegrave, more the story he is. Beyond bequeathes a chain of violent deaths: beyond Beaufort's murder, under Beyond's command, of
Stephen Dudley, Constantia's father; Ormond's subsequent murder of Thomas Craig, in an attempt to destroy evidence; and Constantia's killing—in self defense—of Ormond. But Brown never surpassed the deaths, and the horror surrounding them, that he wrote into his first novel: Theodore Tieland's insane slaughter of his wife, his four children, and his foster-daughter. In addition, Tieland tries to sacrifice his sister Clara in the same manner; and when he fails, he commits suicide.

Other suicides, or the contemplations of such an act, add excitement to Brown's novels. Hunsly, Clara, and Constantia all consider suicide by stabbing. Welbeck attempts it by jumping from a moving boat; and Clithero accomplishes his suicide by the same method.

As evidenced by an examination of Brown's picture of the above, his powers of description are especially superior in his death scenes. A part of the episode of Catharine's death in Tieland will suffice to demonstrate Brown's considerably talents in describing not only a gruesome murder, but also a terrifying picture of an abnormal mentality. Brown's "action" scenes, his portrayals of the characters' speeches and movements, are brilliantly visual and above a rules:
The darkness required some caution in descending the stair. I stretched my hand to seize the balustrade by which I might regulate my steps. How shall I describe the lustre which at that moment burst upon my vision?

I was dazzled. . . . My eyelids were half-closed, and my hands withdrawn from the balustrade. A nameless fear chilled my veins, and I stood motionless.

I opened my eyes and found all about me luminous and glowing. It was the element of heaven that flowed around. Nothing but a fiery stream was at first visible; but, anon, a shrill voice from behind called upon me.

. . .

(to Clara) 'I am appointed thy destroyer, and destroy thou must!' Seizing this, I seized her wrists. She shrieked aloud, and endeavoured to free herself from my grasp. . . .

'Surely, surely, gentle, thou dost not mean it. . . spare—spare—help—help—'

Till her breath was stopped she shrieked for help,—for mercy. Then she could speak no longer, her gestures, her looks, appealed to my compassion. . . .

Thrice I clenched my grasp, and life kept its hold, though in the midst of pangs. Her eyeballs started from their sockets. . . .

. . .

I lifted the corpse in my arms and laid it on the bed. I gazed on it with delight. Such was the elation of my thoughts, that I even broke into laughter.

I clenched my hands. . . .'

While one must admit that Browning’s action-filled scenes are not a rarity—for instance, "so revenged to free herself"

and "her gestures, her looks, appealed to my compassion" do not employ energetic verbs—his use of words which appeal to the reader's senses is for the most part excellent, thereby increasing the reader's share in Wieland's and Catharine's experiences. The verbs "stretched," "seize," "burst," "chilled," "flowed," "shrieked," "started," "listened," and "clapped" all involve either visual, tactile, muscular, or auditory senses to engage the attention. Not only does the murder itself grip the reader's senses, but the description of Wieland's insanity is realistic and frightening. The alliterative use of the 'l' sound in the phrase "world's lustrous and glowing" makes the vision of heaven that "flowed around" gives Wieland's vision a liquid quality which makes it palpable. The laughter and the clenching of hands add to this image of a maniac. Wieland is hardly as ferocious as the fantastic monsters in earlier Gothic novels—and perhaps more horrifying because he is simply a human being, and prior to this episode, a normal husband and father, similar to those in the reader's own experience. In this respect, From Beyond improved on Hackett's "horrible" and "wondrous" and triumphed over supernaturalism.

Hackett in Hackett the animal instead of human; men rather than men's progress through the ages. His turn to own a right to kill a monster, cat
its flesh, and drink its blood; the description of this
action, although brief, is loaded with experiential con-
tent for the reader: "... I did not turn from the yet
warp blood and peeling fibres of a brute." With the words
"warp" and "peeling," the readers' tactile and olfactory
senses are instantly aroused. To the extent that the
Gothic tradition had as its purpose the creation of horror
and fear in the reader, Brown gave an admirable performance
in his death scenes.

Brown's use of occult sciences added to the Gothic
flavor of his novels. In all probability, these inclusions
also enabled his novels to gain greater popularity; for
both ventriloquism and somnambulism were enjoying public
admiral, "in advertised as "mysteries" to themselves.

Note 1: Ventriloquism in Holand as the art of the Nerc-
Hilton. It's a talent adds to Carwin's eccentricity and
strength his character as the real culprit who tries
fiercely adhered to his trick... Carwin finally
admonished Rogers for the damage his experiments have
caused of: "could to God I had died unknowing of the so-
... It was an evil thought of degradation and solace." This
would, of course, be in Brown's time, ventriloquism:
was not a form of entertainment but an unknown phenomenon.

subject to much speculation and fear.

Brown also used ventriloquism in Arthur Morey. Again, he gave this talent to the villain and thereby added to the aura of mystery which surrounded him. Whereas Morey's tricks with ventriloquism were performed as experiments, attesting to the villain's curiosity to know how the diabolical family would react, Colbeck's use of the same illusion was more deliberate. He later confessed to Morey: "I desired to escape detection. . . . I deemed it useful to assume a voice different from my own." 1

Brown used another mysterious phenomenon, somnambulism, in Edgar Hurtle, to emphasize Clithero's insanity and to signal Hurtle's mental breakdown; for when Hurtle became too deeply entangled in the search for his friend's murderer, he, too, begins to walk in his sleep.

In "The Alchemist" and "Edgar Hurtle," Brown gave his "realistic" verisimilitude by carefully documenting his own research and footnotes which hinted at scholarly investigations of other similar mysterious cases, similar to those in "By the Will." He was "always interested in science," 2 as Clark relates, and one may speculate that his long friendship with Mr. Dyer gave access to medical journals available to

\text{footnote 2: ibid., p. 14-15.}\]
him. Brown's wide reading undoubtedly aided him in his research in the popular sciences, and his use of natural phenomena demonstrated his admiration for the rationally explained theism of writers like Mrs. Radcliffe.

As the nation's first professional writer, Brown may be expected to have influenced later writers. From a discussion of the theism in his writings come suggestions concerning his influence on Cooper and Poe. Brown's use of the American frontier and the American Indian in Edgar

Pretty has been seen as an important influence upon Cooper's use of the same elements in the Leatherstocking Tales.

Brown's mystery stories and murder episodes have received considerable attention as forerunners of Poe's similar ones. Death and mystery in his Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque. Like Brown, Poe used ventrilo-

quing and other popular sciences in his fiction. His descriptions of the dead and the dying were remarkably close to Brown's, with their emphasis upon the grisly and

the grotesque. Stories like "The Pit and the Pendulum"

have an uncanny similarity to Tantivy's adventures in the

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cave in Chapter Sixteen of Edgar Huntly; critics are confident that Poe borrowed this scene directly from Brown, whose novels he read and admired.¹

¹ Iver L. Howe, "The Sources of Poe's 'The Pit and the Pendulum,'" Modern Language Notes, LXVII (June, 1952), 341-96.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis has been to enumerate the European literary traditions which served as sources for the major novels of Charles Brockden Brown. Further purposes were: to suggest the writers from each tradition whose work particularly attracted Brown, and to demonstrate how he combined these European elements and modified them by adding methods and materials of his own invention. The procedure followed was the identification of particular elements, in the novels which influenced Brown, that provided parallels with Brown's writing; and the discussion of their relative similarities and differences, with the purpose of demonstrating the ways in which Brown developed his craft and emerged with a style and a subject-matter that were uniquely his, and uniquely American.

To the Liberal, or Romantic tradition, Brown probably added fewer of his own ideas. Godwin's Caleb Williams was so obviously the focus of his emulation that Brown may have feared that he could not improve upon it. Hence, he turned to a secret European society for his addition of mystery to the Hero-Villain. The Hero-Villain himself was usually portrayed as a native of a European country or an
admirer of old-country philosophies. Europe, therefore, remained as the source for much of Brown's Liberalism.

To his use of the Sentimental Novel and its characteristic plots and personalities, Brown added an American story, providing the plot of *Wieland* with a native example of respectability gained through representing the truth. Furthermore, his experimenting with the epistolary style resulted in a faster pace for his novels and a more individual style for their author.

Without a doubt, Gothicism provided Brown with his greatest opportunity for invention. While he had retained Liberalism's aspect of purpose and Utopianism, and Sentimentalism's themes and stock characters, he changed the moods and the episodes of Gothic novels to features which possessed an identity that was distinctly American. His use of native events--Indian fights, the yellow fever epidemics, and the story of a multiple slaying in Tomhannock, New York--gave his stories exciting action with which his native audiences could identify and which European readers like Shelley could admire for their originality. Added sympathy from American readers was gained by Brown's use of European villains and native heroes and heroines.

Because Brown's Gothicism was so definitely his own, his work in this area was more consistently copied by succeeding American writers. Brown was praised by Poe and
Hawthorne, Whittier and Longfellow; and Poe's and Cooper's imitations of his work have been well established. Perhaps future studies will determine other influences. In any event, the "Father of the American novel" certainly deserves continued study of the substantial foundations that he laid, and admiration for his dedication to the first career of its type in America.
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