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Charles Brockden Brown: the man, his mind and his work

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THESIS

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN: THE MAN, HIS MIND AND HIS WORK

Submitted by

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OUTLINE

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Charles Brockden Brown, 1771-1810, is a fact recorded in every survey of American Literature. To be remembered in such fashion only would not have pleased C.B.B. His birth was relatively unimportant to him because he could not remember his sensations; his death equally so because he was unable to record and analyze them. The dates represent the least of him. Yet it was between the two, for a space not much longer than the dash which indicated it, that Brockden Brown lived in his devious world of imagination and loved his friends with the intensity of one who was all too conscious of the transitoriness of things.

The parents of Charles Brockden Brown were Philadelphians, people of virtuous, religious, Quaker stock. While this gray sect may not seem to be the proper atmosphere for the fostering of imagination, it did maintain a quiet home where the sensitive child was allowed to follow his own bent. His parents took no small pride in the precocious boy who preferred maps to marbles, and reading to the rough sports of boys of his own age. The one bit of excitement which entered this placid existence was supplied by an adventurous uncle, Brockden, by name who in later years became a "Skilled conveyancer and a great scrivener", but who, as a youth had been apprenticed to a barrister in England. This barrister, at odds with Charles II, found his apprentice in the chamber where plans that would have lost every man his head had been discussed. The men were all for putting the lad to death quietly, but the master insisted that he had too feeble a mind to cause any injury to anyone. As a safe-guard, however, they shipped him to America.
There were three older brothers in the family to whom Charles was an object of deep affection and to whom he was bound by closest ties. All three studied law and in later years found themselves somewhat at odds with their brilliant younger brother. But in his childhood, Charles was the idol of the household, permitted to do exactly as he liked. At the age of ten, anecdotes represent him as a priggish child with more than a usual taste for study, and a very ordinary fondness for being in the foreground.

Shortly after Charles began attending school his naturally delicate health declined visibly. The sight of this frail boy crouched in an ill-ventilated library had aroused no apprehension in his parents until Robert Proud, his school master, took a hand in affairs. This good man who combined common sense with his scholarly attainments recommended that the boy take long walks to improve his health.

To the curious imaginative boy these rambles opened the gates to the land of fancy. Often when he stopped to examine some pebble or the mosses on the edge of a stream he would lose himself in contemplation and remain motionless for hours. His long absences worried his parents but since the walking seemed to benefit his health he was allowed to continue. During these rambles thru the woodlands Charles saw everything. He possessed a sort of natural thoroughness which in childhood was applied to the trees, flowers, brooks, and rocky hills about him. But soon this surroundings were but the vehicle for his ardent imagination. Solitary wandering led to thoughtful musing, then to romantic enthusiasm. He peopled the wood with ideal beings until
the "barrier between himself and the world of spirits seemed
burst by the force of meditation." *

In his sixteenth year, Charles left the school of Mr. Proud
where he had received the usual instruction in the classics and
an unusual amount of praise from his teacher. Upon being relieved
of the routine of school work he planned three epic poems, one
on the discovery of America, one on the conquest of America, and
done on the conquest of Peru. # A number of essays and poems
were actually written. He versified parts of the Book of Psalms,
passages from Job, and selections from Ossian. Much of this
early work was painstaking imitation which followed one author
after another. For a time Virgil and Homer absorbed the attention
of the young writer, then Ossian, and later Milton.† His interest
in these great poets seems to have been transitory. At least he
did not absorb enough of them to overcome his pedantic tendency
which his fondness for Johnson fostered.

But even this activity could not absorb all his ingenuity.
He busied himself in inventing a system of shorthand which he
perfected to the point where he could transcribe a speech almost
as rapidly as it was given. As he had wandered alone in the

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# Dunlap. ibid

† Marble. Heralds of American Literature. Page 286
woods when other boys were playing or fighting so now the stripling was absorbed in pot-hooks when other youths were apprentices in their trades or professions.

Finally his parents decided that the law offered the surest road to competence and honor. The father, himself a lawyer, with three sons studying law wished Charles, his youngest and most brilliant son to follow in that profession. The lad was apprenticed to Alexander Wilcox, an eminent lawyer in Philadelphia. Brown applied himself diligently to the study of law, not because it was to be his profession but because it provided an unexplored field for his imagination.

During the day he read law or wrote up theoretical cases and at night retired to his room to write in his Journal a record of all the incidents and sensations which he had experienced that day. This added burden upon his time and strength was undertaken that he might acquire facility of writing and a correct and graceful style. * He studied English and French authors with the same end in view.

For his first circle of friends, Brown selected several young men of brilliant talents, amiable dispositions, and ardent minds. + These young men formed a society for debating questions of law. Drawn into the club by his liking for mental recreation, and stimulated by the ready praise of his friends, young Brown became one of its conspicuous figures. While

* Dunlap. Vol. I. Page 17
+ ibid Page 19
president of the society it was his duty to record his decisions on the debates. These decisions form an honourable testimony to his sagacity, sound judgment, and research. They were, likewise, delivered in a style of gravity becoming to a judge. A friend of the time records: "The most complicated judgment, embracing reported cases of unusual subtilty, with his reason at length, on a question by far the most difficult that fell to his province to decide, is delivered with more perspicuity than any of the rest, in a language destitute of all embellishment and with a peculiar nicety of detail. He was in fact a model of the grave, dry, judicial style of argument." No doubt Charles was the exact figure which he imagined a judge to be. In fancy he stood, gavel in hand, clad in the sweeping folds of his judicial robe, nodding his powdered wig with the earnest gravity of his discourse.

Brown's Journal of this period presents a striking contrast to his dry, judicious, legal writing. Here he vents his fancy in a rush of poetical effusion, in a wild and brilliant eccentricity. In such a mood he presents himself to the reading public as "Rhapsodist" in the Columbian Magazine for August, 1789. The name was assumed in polite compliance with the custom of the time but the quality of mind revealed was Brown's unique possession. At eighteen he was forever forsaking the stability of accomplishment and straining for perfection.

In his Journal of this period, he writes that his intercourse and conversation with mankind have wrought a salutary change;

Dunlap. Vol. I. Page 19. All quotations from Brown's Journal are taken from the excerpts in Dunlap.
that he can now mingle in the concerns of life, perform his appropriate duties, and reserve that higher species of discourse for the solitude and silence of his study. It is quite clear that he saw the danger of over-indulgence in the romantic vein but he made no effort to discipline himself. He went on making a name for himself as one of the most promising law students, and allowing his mind to indulge in wool-gathering. That some of the wool turned later into golden fleece is due more to the law of cause and effect than to any foresight of Brown's.

Somewhat before this time Brown had written to his friend, Davidson, requesting him to write his ideas concerning the relation, dependence, and connection of the several parts of knowledge. Instead of answering the letter Davidson suggested the formation of a Belles Lettres society which was to have for its object improvement in both composition and eloquence. The club was organized and Brown selected to give the initial address. The address which is preserved in full in Dunlap's biography of Brown is both interesting and remarkable. After the usual polite apology he begins to sketch "the leading features of our constitution, and to unfold the most obvious relations between the laws and those whose conduct they are designed to regulate; the more minute and imperceptible lines in which its specific nature consists may be reserved for future and more accurate investigation."

"The manners of youth," this erudite young man explains, "are fresh and pliant, and their deviation from the path of
rectitude and duty may more easily be recalled, and it is by no means difficult to accelerate their steps in the pursuit of knowledge."

Thus do the carefully constructed sentences flow on. For all the touches of fine writing, and here and there a bit of strain from the burden of polysyllables, the address shows that young Brown had acquired facility of writing and a correct if not quite graceful style. The mass of material testifies to the youth of the writer. Belles Lettres may, he tells us, be generally divided into three great departments, grammar, rhetoric, and poetry. On each of the three he discourses fluently. His sublimely youthful confidence which casually requested from a friend an opinion regarding the relation, dependence, and connection of the several parts of knowledge, was not not a whit daunted by the circumference of his speech.

When one remembers that the writer was a lad not yet seventeen, this speech seems a rather unusual piece of work.

Not long after this, Brown wrote a "Political Address to Dr. Franklin." It was published by the Edentown Gazette. "The blundering printer," writes the irate young poet in his Journal, "from his zeal or his ignorance, substituted the name of Washington. Washington stands therefore arrayed in awkward colors. Philosophy smiles to behold her darling son; she turns with horror and disgust from those who have won the laurel of victory on the field of battle, to this her favorite candidate who had never participated in such bloody glory. Every word of this clumsy panegyric was a direct slander on Washington
This idyllic existence was interrupted by the close of the course in law. Brown's mimic practise must now become a real struggle for common-place clients. He shrank from the change and neither persuasion nor argument could influence him to accept his profession. His decision cannot be regarded as a silent acknowledgement of ignorance or unfitness. Nor was it a reluctance to encounter the intensive application necessary to success in law. It seems rather that he had formed a world of his own in which he delighted to dwell, and with whose inhabitants he was habituated to commune to the exclusion of the dull and sordid beings of real life. # This preference for solitude combined with his consuming interest in writing lured Brown from the path which his parents regarded as the only one which led to competence and honor. Certainly the profession of an author carried with it nothing of competence. Brown's action was more of a shrinking than a decision, and at the same time was the direct result of his law study which he had used to develop his imagination.

A local historian writing after Brown's death comments on this period of Brown's life in a most illuminating way:

*#
# Dunlop. ibid
"Mr. Brown had received an education which qualified him for
the profession, from which proceeded our statesmen, legislators,
and rulers; yet he preferred the toilsome occupation of book-
making, from pure love of literature and a benevolent desire to
benefit his fellow-creatures." *

Unquestionably Brown believed himself to be right in his
conclusion, yet he was beset with misgivings. He was the
favorite of his parents, the most gifted member of the family,
and their disappointment was proportionately bitter. Loving
his family so intensely deepened Brown's sorrow in their
disappointment. To quiet and convince himself, he assailed
the practice of law, declaring that a lawyer became an in-
discriminate defender of right and wrong, the champion of in-
justice, and the very co-partner with the criminal. There was
something in his soul that warped his ideas of men and their
motives. something dangerously misanthropic. He resorted to
sophistry of all sorts to combat the arguments of his friends
and his own tortured mind. It appears that he almost lost
sight of the momentous choice in his enjoyment of arguing
about it. In later years he recognized the falsity of his
attack and wrote a highly appreciative estimate of the law to
a young student friend.

By nature and choice Brown was an exile from the pursuits of youth. He encountered nothing of their temptations, dined on vegetables, and wrote in his Journal, "I thank God for rendering me incapable of encountering severe trials." There was no natural buoyancy in him, no overflow of healthy animal spirits to lighten the gloom that closed in upon him. He could neither throw off the depression thru his own mental effort nor lose it in jolly companionship. His introspection became morbidity.

In a letter of this period he writes, "As for me, I long ago discovered that nature had not qualified me for an actor on this stage. The nature of my education only added to these disqualifications and I experienced all these deviations from the center, which arise when all our lessons are taken from books, and the scholar makes his own character the comment."* There crept into his writing from time to time dark hints of suicide and darker hints of melancholy. The curious inconsistency of youth which enjoys the idea of a blasted life added much to his sensations, which he always took great pleasure in analyzing.

Still brooding and dissatisfied, he set out for New York without anything definite in view. Shortly after his arrival there, he wrote in his Journal, "Reserve gloomy meditations and useless complaining for thy chamber, and at least show thy magnanimity by concealing that which thou canst not cure. And here drop the curtain."+ Upon that manly note the curtain fell.

Dunlap. ibid
Dunlap. ibid
There is a marked difference between the tone of this determination and that of the letter written to W---- a few weeks before, "Forget me, my friend, as soon as possible. At least forget that any latent anguish or corroding sorrow is concealed under that aspect of indifference which has become habitual." *

This is the last tinge of Byronic sadness to be found in Brown's letters to his friends. In another letter written shortly after the Journal entry quoted before, he gives this excuse for his delay in answering a letter, "I was determined to write nothing if I could not write pleasantly." + In his later correspondence there is little mention of himself. He writes of the things which intimately concern his friends. The few letters in which his melancholy does find expression are epics of dejection. When darkness threatened to overwhelm him he sought refuge in his Journal.

In New York, Brown was often the guest of Dr. Elihu Smith who with William Johnson, a lawyer, maintained a home in Pine Street. Dr. Smith had studied medicine in Philadelphia before this time and the indications are that he had met Brown there. Young Brown torn with emotions, overwhelmed by his own excessive thinking found in the kindly practical doctor the poising influence which he needed. These two were exact opposites. Smith was a strict economist of both time and money: Brown had no system in anything. The doctor was the perfection of neatness and propriety in dress: the young literatur often approached

ibid *

ibid +
slovenliness.

It was at the home of Dr. Smith that a group of young lawyers, physicians, and authors met and finally formed the Friendly Club. These young men welcomed Brown first because he was a friend of Dr. Smith's and later because of his own haunting, moody charm.

The Friendly Club was one of the many groups which were formed in various centers to promote interest in literature and to provide means for its expression. Usually the club started a magazine to provide a means of expression for its members. These periodicals disappeared after a few numbers had been published but they did serve to provide reading material in a form that had not been available heretofore, and also to interest the people in local writers.

At the insistence of his friends, Brown undertook the editing of "The Monthly Magazine and American Review. He began by requesting contributions in all branches of literature and ended by writing most of the magazine himself. The magazine was discontinued after the publication of three volumes between April, 1799, and December, 1800.

Previously he had contributed two essays, "The Man at Home," and "The Rights of Women" to The "Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence," which was published from 1798-99 in Philadelphia. Just what Brown's connection with this magazine was is difficult to determine. It is possible that he had a finger in the editing. A careful study of the contributions shows that Brown wrote a letter to the editor of the magazine and signed it "Separtus". The
letter was published in the magazine for March 17, 1798. An
extract from Sky-walk is found in the issue of March 24, 1798.
A series of original letters runs from April 21 to June 2 of
the same year. Arthur Mervyn; or, the Memoirs of the Year 1793
ran thru nine chapters between June 16 and August 1 of 1793.
The Rights of Women was published in book form by
Shields of New York under the title of Alcuin. The advertisement
which is dated March, 1796 is signed by E.H. Smith who says that
the material was put into his hands for publication by a friend.

On the cover of the Weekly Magazine Brown solicited proposals
for the publication of a novel, "Sky-walk; or, the Man Unknown
to Himself, and accepted the one which bore the greater part of
the expense for publication. When the book was almost finished
the printer died. His lawyers refused to sell the work for a
reasonable price or to finish it. For the time nothing was
heard of it. From an entry in Dunlap's Journal, "Call on
Brown who goes with me to the booksellers and gives me some
account of his Sky-walk. He says it is founded on Somnambulism—
—, it is quite evident that some of the material was later
worked over into Edgar Huntly.

After several fragments of tales and a number of essays had
been published Brown brought out his first novel, Wieland; or,
the Transformation: An American Tale in 1793. It was brought
out in New York.

If success is measured by the amount of praise heaped upon
an author and the number of sales of his books, Brown was
highly successful.

Wieland was followed within a few months by Ormond; or, The Secret Witness, Arthur Mervyn; or, The Memoirs of the Year 1793, published in 1799, Edgar Huntly; or, The Memoirs of a Sleepwalker, published in the same year. The criticism of Edgar's extravagant adventures led Brown to write two tame tales, Clara Howard; or, The Enthusiasm of Love, and Jane Talbot.

This imaginative bacchanal came to an end in 1803 when Brown accepted the editorship of the Literary Magazine and American Register in Philadelphia. He went about his magazine work solemnly and seriously. Political speculation sobered him. Often he had strained for perfection but now he became an ardent searcher for truth.

The address which accompanies the first number of the magazine is curiously revealing. One of his biographers professes to find in it an exhibit of Mr. Brown's modesty, his candor, and his sensibility to fame. It begins with an expression of humility concerning past achievements suavely coupled with an indication that these past endeavors cannot be compared with what is to follow. "I am far, however, from wishing that my readers should judge my exertions by my former ones--"

The closing paragraph illustrates an important change in point of view. It must be read with the sentiments expressed in Alcuin in the background of one's mind. "In an age like this, when the foundations of religion and morality have been
so boldly attack, it seems necessary in announcing a work of this nature to be particularly explicit as to the path which the editor means to pursue. He therefore avows himself to be, without equivocation or reserve, the ardent friend and the willing champion of the Christian religion. Christian piety he reveres as the highest excellence of human beings, and the ampest reward he can seek for his labour is the consciousness of having in some degree, however inconsiderable, contributed to recommend the practise of religious duties."

In 1804 he married Miss Elizabeth Linn. They went to live in a house on Eleventh Street between Walnut and Chestnut Streets. Here the erstwhile disciple of Godwin wrote that he was enjoying "in an uncommon degree that domestic happiness which had always appeared to him as the consummation of human felicity."

Miss Linn was the daughter of a well known clergyman in New York. Her brother, Rev. John Blair Linn of Philadelphia was a man of literary tastes and the author of two forgotten volumes, *The Power of Genius*, a long poem, and a tale called *Bourville Castle*. A strong bond of affection existed between Linn and Brown. The biography of Linn which was written by his brother-in-law was considered, at the time, one of the best biographies written.

The elation of Brown after his marriage contrasts sharply with his dejection expressed in a letter written to Wm. Dunlap on January 1, 1793. The cause for the dejection seems to have been one Miss Potts, mentioned in Dunlap's *Journal* for May first, "Call with Smith & my wife to see Miss Potts, C.B.B.'s wished for." Later: May third, "Miss Potts drinks tea with us."
But in spite of his own ardor and his friend's assistance
C.B.B. did not attain his wished-for. The following is his
extravaganze of sorrow:

Philadelphia, Jan'y, 1796.

To William Dunlap, Care of Dunlap & Judah, Pearl St., New York.

It is nearly twelve months since I parted from you. I
believe I have not written to you nor you written to me since.
How shall I account for your silence. The task is an easy one.
I was not an object of sufficient importance to justify the
trouble. My infirmities & follies were too rooted for you to
hope their cure. Admonition & remonstrance under your own
hand, would be superfluous to this end. Hence your habitual
reserve & silence of the pen suffered no interruption on my
account. I lived with you six months. During that time,
you, no doubt, scrutinized my conduct and character with accuracy.

I think upon the life of last winter with self-loathing
almost insupportable. Alas! my friend, few consolations of
a self-approving mind have fallen to my lot .........I am
sometimes apt to think that few human beings have drunk so
deeply of the cup of self-abhorrence as I have----.

....As I am, you despise me, I shall die, as I have
lived, a victim of perverse and incurable habits. My progress in
knowledge has enlightened my judgement, without adding to my power."

Even in the joy occasioned by his marriage there was a haunting strain of melancholy. He cherished the glow of the present, half chilled by a fear that it would not last.

With the birth of twin sons a subtle change crept over the mind of Brown. During his whole life he seemed to have longed for warm human companionship which he knew others possessed but had been unable to attain it. The affection of his wife and of his growing family cheered and comforted him. In his home he became a part of the social order, a man whose interest began to center in people rather than in things. But the habit of abstraction was not to be easily overcome. His active mind turned from the machinations of imaginary villains to political problems yet he could not come to grips with the situation. His ready sympathy for his fellowmen in their suffering led him in his earlier years to plan fragmentary Utopias and in his early maturity to study the affairs of the nation.

In 1806 a group of friends influenced him to take up the publication of the Annual Register. Brown applied himself with customary diligence to the magazine which was to contain, "the annals of Europe and America, an abstract of laws and public acts, a review of literature, a chronicle of memorable occurrences, foreign and domestic scientific intelligence, American and foreign..."
state papers, and miscellaneous articles."

This was a period of capable, trenchant political writers. The political pamphlet was perhaps the most popular reading of the day. Bitter in its satire, often unfair, coarse in its humor, it nevertheless commanded the attention of the people.

In 1800 the anti-federalists had come into power under Jefferson. Brown had a bit of correspondence with him in which the author recommended Wieland to the attention of the politician and the latter replied abstrusely that he delighted in romantic fiction. It is barely possible that he had some idea of securing Jefferson's patronage but since Brown was an ardent Federalist this would not be possible.

There had been various attempts to muzzle the anti-federalist press which were entirely contrary to the general spirit of the Federalist party. The whole problem of licence of the press between 1776 and 1810 was a serious one. The pamphleteers in many cases imitated those of Milton's day and turned on the tap of their sarcasm for the party that paid the most and seemed most likely to win.

Brown's political pamphlets were as serious, as devoid of humor as his fiction. Were his imagination could do nothing because he was bent on telling the truth as he saw it for the benefit of his fellow creatures. His mind reveled in the tangles of trade and treaties but his judgment of men was not always sound. Mr. Madison, he writes, "is a man of genius, somewhat slow and much deficient in industry." "Mr. Jefferson is a polite scholar
and distinguished gentleman doubting received truths and extremely credulous as to whatever served to confirm his favorite theories, a man deficient in the science of politics but of great address in screening himself from danger and responsibility." Certainly something had entered into Brown's mind to set it against Jefferson. Brown is derrogative enough but not in a clever way. He could not command the wit of the true pamphleteer.

The British Treaty is an extensive pamphlet containing an astonishing amount of knowledge. An analysis of the situation between great Britain and America, a discussion of the benefits of trade, a prediction of the greatness of North America, developed in detail with a fifteen page preface on the author's political views make up this erudite work.

At the very time when it seemed that his mind might be adjusting itself to men and life, melancholy darkened his whole being. Aggravated by intense application, tuberculosis made swift inroads upon his strength. The zeal and enthusiasm with which he had gone about his editing vanished, leaving him a prey to morbid fancies and corroding thoughts.

He began a journey thru New York and Western New England but returned within a short time. Separation from his family and his intimate friends was more than he could bear. Feverishly he began work on additional volumes of The American Register or General Repository of History, Politics, and Science, which had been started two years before. The last volume was published in
1810, the year of his death.

The coming of two more children gave him added joy and added care. His income had never been large and his capital was inadequate for the support of his family. The thought of their situation after his death harried him.

Early in November of 1809 hemmorhages set in and from then until his death in February he had not one moment of ease. As his strength ebbed his mind grew more clear and active. He wrote and planned almost to the last day.

One afternoon while confined to his bed he fixed his eyes on the sky and desired not to be spoken to until he first spoke. In this position he continued for some moments and then said to his wife, "When I desired you not to speak to me, I had the most transporting and sublime feelings I ever experienced. I wanted to enjoy them and know how long they would last."

On the twenty-second of February he fell asleep.

His passing attracted comparatively little notice in the newspapers of either New York or Philadelphia. He was buried in the Friends' Burial Ground, Arch & Fourth Streets. The place cannot be located because the levelling of the mounds prevents any identification previous to 1858.

"So lived and died Charles Brockden Brown, a man of uncommon acquirements, superior talents, amiable manners, and exalted virtues." *

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Dunlap. Vol. II.
PART II
HIS WORK

I The Gothic Romance and the "terrorists"
A. The works of Mrs. Radcliffe
B. The works of Godwin
   1. Godwin's influence on Brown
   2. The differences between Godwin and Brown

II The Novels
A. Wieland; or, the Transformation.
   1. Brown's adherence to incident
   2. His ability in description
   3. His disregard for character development
   4. His absolute sincerity
B. Ormond; or, the Secret Witness
   1. Constantina Brown's noblest woman
   2. Introduction of incidents of the plague
   3. Awkward handling of the theme
C. Edgar Huntly; or, the Memoirs of a Sleep Walker
   1. Wilderness setting
   2. Treatment of the Indian
   3. Introduction of detective methods
D. Clara Howard; or, the Enthusiasm of Love
E. Jane Talbot.
When Brown was six years old, and according to tradition, absorbed in the maps on the study wall, Old English Baron: A Gothic Story (1777) introduced elements which presaged a new interest in romantic writing. A skeleton in a hermit's cowl walked the earth while the reader shuddered with delighted horror. This success, like all other successes, was quickly imitated. Copyists brought forth a throng of bleeding statues, which it may be worth while to notice have good Shakesperian ancestry, helmets which dropped from out the void, pictures that walked out of their frames, and wax dolls that spoke. Weird fantasticism replaced the delicate romanticism of Spenser's Faerie Queen with the supernatural, the marvelous, and the sentimental.

At twenty-three Brown must have read Mrs. Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho. He makes no reference to it in the fragmentary parts of his Journal which are in existence but the two have so much in common that it is unreasonable to think that such a widely read book escaped the notice of C.B.B. Mrs. Radcliffe's eye for say color, for the desolate scenes in the deserted country, and for masses of architecture confused in dim starlight must have attracted Brown.

The Mysteries of Udolpho was preceded by Halcraft's Anna St. Ives (1792) and followed by Lewis' The Monk (1795)
In addition to these notable examples there were hundreds of novels which, fortunately, did not demand a second printing.

The novel which influenced Brown more than the others was Godwin's *Caleb Williams*. Whether it interested him because of Godwin's former political writings or because of the intensely romantic element in it is a moot question. Brown's mind had been fired by the revolt of the French Revolution and by the radical thought as it was expressed thru Godwin. His first acquaintance with Godwin had been thru the latter's political work. Brown had attempted to imitate that as well as the fiction.

Although Brown read, wrote, and thought of Godwin and declared himself to be his disciple, it is quite evident that he reflected more of Godwin's doctrine than he absorbed. His method of living was in striking contrast to that of the Englishman. Godwin was in living as in thinking either owlishly remote from things or undignifiedly close to them.

In *Caleb Williams* Godwin's faculty for analysis of remorse and self torture is shown at its keenest. On this point Brown approached his master. No contemporary notice of Brown's work fails to state that he deals, as no other, in the deep emotions, delighting to trace each sensation to its source.

Godwin deals little in imagination and is seldom purely descriptive: his main object is man and his enemy, man. It is said that *Caleb Williams* was plotted backward. The third volume was meant to contain a merciless harrowing of a
a terrified victim thru a string of adventures. The second was
to give the motive for the persecution, a secret murder, to the
investigation of which the innocent victim of pursuit should
be impelled by an unconquerable spirit of curiosity. Therefore
in the first volume it was needful to create an interest in the
murderer and explain his power to do mischief.

In the introduction to the book Godwin writes: The follow-
ing narrative is intended to answer a purpose more general and
more important than immediately appears upon the face of it.
The question now afloat in the world respecting things as they
are is the most interesting that can be presented to the human
mind.......the spirit and character of the government intrudes
itself into every rank of society. But this is a truth highly
worthy to be communicated to persons whom books of philosophy
and science never reach."

The novel runs on in a pompous, desiring-to-do-good style.
Yet there are places where mental suffering is described in
which Godwin creates an atmosphere charged with utter terror.

Brown follows his master in the matter of introduction
at least. In the advertisement of Wieland he writes that his
purpose "is neither selfish or temporary, but aims at the
illustration of some important branches of the moral constitution
of man." Thus far he follows Godwin, than harks back to
Walpole's Castle of Otranto and like him professes to talk of
truth in the language of fiction. He insists that the happen-
ings are possible if not probable. Indeed there had been
recorded in the news of the time an instance of murder in which the man insisted that he was bidden by heavenly voices to do the deed. "The power which the principal person is said to possess can scarcely be denied to be real. It must be acknowledged to be extremely rare; but no fact equally uncommon is supported by the same strength of historical evidence."

Truth seems to have been the aim of all early American fiction writers if they are taken at their word. Stories of Indian raids and massacres, haunting tales of rescued captives masqueraded behind the sober cloak of thanksgivings to God for his deliberance. More than one Puritan father whose fingers would have burned at the touch of a novel folded his hands and thanked the Lord for the providential escape of Mrs. Ann Rawlinson. Partly because fiction was not in good social standing and partly because the human race loves to declare its fiction fact whether it concern elves or eaves-droppers, most of the novelists introduced their astonishing tales under the guise of truth and a few had humor enough to smile when the public took their gingerbread conceits seriously.

Brown wished to be taken seriously. He thought that he was a serious young man and his friends agreed with him, especially the one who wrote the following words which appear in a biographical introduction to Wieland in the second edition: "Brown's tone of solemnity and seriousness repels the ordinary reader of novels. His work is calculated only for those who indulge in deep and powerful emotions; who delight patiently to trace every action to its appropriate motive; and to mark
the ebbs and flows of passion, and follow them our to their fullest consequences. Few writers of fictitious narrative can be pronounced equal to Mr. Brown in the analysis of the thoughts and emotions of the soul, in exquisite skill in the arrangements and development of incidents, and in accuracy, extent, and variety of knowledge. He aimed to establish truth. If he failed, his judgment, not his intentions, must be called to question."

Wieland; or, The Transformation, the first of Brown's novels was welcomed as a work of unusual originality and power. There was enough of horror in it to set the readers gasping and nothing of the usual setting of castles and crypts deemed so necessary to the Gothid romance. Two unexplained natural phenomena, ventriloquism and spontaneous combustion, heightened the mystery to the point where it seemed more unnatural than that produced by ghosts and spectres. The reading public, accustomed to rattling chains, resounding groans, and dark-some dungeons was delightfully shocked to find that it could be horrified without them. Wieland gave then a new sensation. This first of a series of performances, as Brown designates the novel in his advertisement, was loudly proclaimed by the public.

The faults of Wieland are always with us, especially when the ability to pick flaws seems to be the chief asset of a critic. We are so much afraid of being thought gullible or dull, so very much afraid that some mistake will escape us, so desirous of that callow superiority which is expressed by
by the curled lip. This may be well enough if we wish to possess a mind filled with other men's mistakes, but as a manner of judgment it is unfair. No one acts to blunder. Man acts to achieve perfection for something close kin to it and it is by that attempted achievement that he should be judged. To be unconscious of an author's faults is to be blind indeed but to fail in appreciation is to lose the very thing which true criticism seeks, the constructive contribution.

In this first novel, Brown deals with the history, past and present, of one Wieland whose sister tells the story.

Three years before Schiller had written Seiestersehen. The German influence was strong upon the writers of the continent although their stories usually dealt with French or Italian scenes. The Germans were incurably romantic without being effervescent. Their excesses of imagination were few compared with those of the English and French writers. In all the German work there was a solemn beauty which could not be dissipated by the ugliness which marked the terrorist work. The German writers chose to present the struggles of the human soul rather than exhibit the antics of wax dolls. On the whole the romantic movement suffered less from the terrorists in German than in any of the other countries.

That Brown uses a German for his main character and that Wieland's religious and philosophical bent is responsible for his ruin may mean much or little but at least it is an interesting bit of information. One can imagine an Englishman fighting for a principle, an Italian dying in the accomplishment of revenge, or a Frenchman duelling to the death for a pretty face, but only a German could be led to distraction thru his philosophical and religious beliefs. The fact that Wieland is a German does much
does much to explain and relieve the extravagance of his actions. The experience of Wieland tries our credulity less when we remember the religious and scholarly tendencies which dominated him.

The scene of the action is laid for the most part in the home of Wieland near Mettigan in Pennsylvania. Of course time and place mean little to Brown: he skips a generation in a phrase and crosses the Atlantic in a single word but the setting is, in the main, in America.

The loose plot provides for the detailed histories of all of the characters and all of the histories are sad. After undergoing various difficult experiences Wieland's father meets death by self-combustion. In Chapter IV comes the full and affecting tale of Louisa Conway, a neat magazine story in itself, and half way thru the same chapter the mysterious voice enters. Having put forth the horrifying spectacle of self-combustion in the first chapter, Brown begins the fifth with the recounting of "another occurrence still more remarkable." There is enough of plot in the story to last the author for an entire lifetime if he were interested in anything more than telling a tale with as many horrifying incidents in it as possible. Brown disregards the opportunities for character development and finesse in plot and speeds on, indiscriminately adding incidents as he goes. There are murderers concealed in Clara's closet. Wieland murders his wife and children in obedience to the voice. Carwin attempts to justify
his action before Wieland’s sister. Wieland kills himself in the presence of this same distressed young woman. And on the last page there is a duel and a murder thrown in for good measure.

The whole ends in a quandary with this explanation from Wieland’s sister: “I leave you to moralize on this tale. That virtue should become the victim of treachery is, no doubt, a mournful consideration: but it will not escape your notice, that the evils of which Carwin and Maxwell were the authors owed their existence to errors of the sufferers. All efforts would have been ineffectual to subvert the happiness or shorten the existence of the Stuarts, if their own frailty had not seconded these efforts. If the lady had crushed her disastrous passion in the bud, and driven the seducer from her presence when the tendency of his artifices was seen; if Stuart had not admitted the spirit of absurd revenge we should not have had to deplore this catastrophe. If Wieland had framed juster notions of moral duty and of divine attributes, or if I had been gifted with ordinary equanimity or foresight, the double tongues deceiver would have been baffled and repelled.”

If the double tongued deceiver was not baffled, the chances are that the present day reader is. Yet the plots of grown must be judged by the tastes and standards of his time rather than by those of our own. There were no short
stories and the stories like that of Louisa Conway made a satisfactory evening's reading. More than that, novels or books of any sort were not plentiful and must be read and re-read. Indeed re-reading was necessary if one were to keep in mind all the digressions and still follow the hero. Novels of Brown's day had to be long, overloaded with gew-gaws, chilly with horror. People liked them that way. And after all it is the reading public and not the critics that determine the popularity of a book. There is a uniformity of digression which suggests that writers of that century were successfully concocting mixtures to the liking of their public rather than following the line of least resistance.

To the present day reader Brown's extravagance is irritating, almost disgusting because we place him against the background of technic which began with Poe a number of years later, instead of measuring him by his contemporaries. Under such procedure he does suffer. If however, he is considered in comparison with the terrorist writers and the followers of the Gothic romance, he appears reticent. His description of the death of Wieland's father in the hands of any one of a half dozen writers of his day would have taken on a hundred ghastly details. Brown's chief difference from the writers of his day lay in his selection of pseudo-scientific motivation and his choice of an American setting.

His skill in describing the setting which he had chosen
at times artistic, at times purely geographical. An example of the latter is found in the opening pages of *Wieland*. "At the distance of three hundred yards from his house, on the top of a rock whose sides were steep, rugged, and encumbered with dwarf cedars and stony asperites, he built what to the common eye seemed a summer house. The eastern verge of this precipice was sixty feet above the river which flowed at its foot. The view before consisted of a transparent current, fluctuating, and rippling in a rocky channel, and bounded by a rising scene of corn fields and orchards." The important thing to notice here is not the specific number of feet given or the lack of poetical expression but the one stray bit in the last line. Nowhere in the world except in America were there corn fields and orchards side by side. It is a line like that which confirms Brown's claim to originality.

His genius for description included characters when he chose. What pictures of contemporary life and manners he could have given if only his mind had centered on persons instead of incidents. The following description of Carwin is in his best style:

"One sunny afternoon I was standing in the door of my house when I marked a person passing close to the edge of the bank that was in front. His pace was a careless and lingering one, and had none of that gracefulness and ease which distinguished a person with certain advantages of
education from a clown. His gait was rustic and awkward. His form was ungainly, and disproportionated. Shoulders broad and square, breast sunken, his head drooping, his body of uniform breadth, supported by long lank legs, were the ingredients of his frame. His garb was not ill adapted to such a figure. A slouched hat, tarnished by the weather, a coat of thick gray cloth, cut and wrought as it seemed, by a country tailor, blue worsted stockings, and shoes fastened by thongs and deeply discolored by the dust, which brush had never disturbed constituted his dress."

"His cheeks were pallid and lean, his eyes sunken, his fore-head overshadowed by coarse straggling hairs, his teeth large and irregular, though sound and brilliantly white, and his chin discolored by a tether. His skin was of coarse grain and sallow hue. Every feature was wide of beauty and the outline of his face reminded you of an inverted cone."

Godwin acknowledged that "in a storybook called Wieland written by a person, certainly of distinguished genius, who, I believe was born and died in the province of Pennsylvania, in the United States of America, and who called himself Charles Brockden Brown" he found the inspiration for his own book Mandeville.

The publication of Wieland in September of 1793 gave Brown an immediate reputation. Instantly he began the writing of Arthur Mervyn; or, The Memoirs of the Year 1792, which was
published in part by the "Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces and Interesting Intelligence" for June 1798, but did not appear in book form until the end of the year.

Meanwhile Ormond; or, The Secret Witness modeled on Caleb Williams had appeared. In the introduction to Ormond Brown writes: "It will be little more than a biographical sketch, in which the facts are distributed and amplified, not as poetical taste would describe, but as the materials, afforded me, sometimes abundant and sometimes scanty will permit." Ormond is not a creature of fancy, the author assures us. He appeared on different occasions and at successive periods. One can but wonder that Brown did not recognize the similarity between Falkland and Ormond.

The novel is really a lachrymose history of Constance Dudley. Beauty in distress was a favorite theme of the day and Brown laid on the distress with a trowel. Constantina, as she is called in later editions, sees her father duped by an apprentice and reduced to dire poverty. She bears all trials and endures all temptations with angelic sweetness. In speaking of Craig, the apprentice who defrauded her father, Brown assures us in these words, "He had defrauded him, (Mr. Dudley) by most atrocious and illicit arts. On either count he was liable to prosecution; but her heart rejected the thought of being the author of injury to anyone."

There she stands, pure, persecuted, and priggish!
One cannot but wish that Brown could have written this novel twenty years later and escaped the excesses of the time. Constantina is built on noble proportions. The quality of her mind is clearly set forth and the beauty of her devotion of her father cannot be obscured even by her exaggerated trials. Her conversation is enlightening on many points of interest of that day. Her ideas on education for women were remarkably advanced and her steadfastness of moral character, if it were not continually bragged about, would be admirable.

As a picture of conditions it is scarcely overdrawn. The conflict between pride and necessity brings out vividly the unfortunate position of a gentlewoman in reduced circumstances. Brown, tender hearted realist that he was, no doubt knew families whose descent was quite as distressing as that of the Dudley's. Perhaps he felt too, the injustice of the extremely sharp distinction between those who laboured for their living and those who did not.

In Brown's day Philadelphia must have been a city of contrasts. A city which held the beautiful house of Ormond and the rickety tenement to which Constantina and her father removed. A city where strange people lived in retirement while their neighbors' tongues buzzed. A city of perfervid sermons and poor sanitation.

It is unfortunate that Brown clung to the popular plot idea of married misfortunes. His sympathies betrayed him into an excess of tribulation. It is unfortunate that he attempted to present Ormond whom he described as a being
who distinguished carefully between men in the abstract and men as they are. A creature of that mind belongs in a city with shadows of old sins over its arched palaces. Brown never could have understood such a nature. He was convinced that Ormond was wholly wicked and was secretly out of sympathy with him. Too much of a realist to present the man as other than a villain, Brown was not enough of a romanticist to be tolerant with him.

Loose living and immoralities were quite as popular then as now in fiction. Brown picks them up by the handful, juggles them about lest they burn his fingers, and never discovers what to do with them. Why he uses such intrigues is a puzzle. Certainly he had no personal contact with or interest in them. They do not possess his mind or inflame his fancy for when he writes of them he writes his very worst. His awkwardness in handling the theme of seduction in Ormond leads me to conclude that he uses these as he used the ever present sum of money, because it was the fashionable thing to do.

It was Ormond which "delighted and deeply affected" Shelley while he was under the influence of Godwin. "The tales of Godwin's American disciple in romance, C.B.B. (Wieland, Ormond, Edgar Huntly, Arthur Merwyn)Brown's four nobels, "says peacock, "Shiller's Robbers and Goethe's Faust were, of all the works with which he was familiar, those which took the deepest root in Shelley's mind, and had the strongest influence in the formation of his character." *

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The dreadful experiences with the yellow fever which Brown encountered in New York and which are mentioned in passing in Ormond form the basis for the novel Arthur Mervyn; or, The Memoirs of the Year 1793. In this novel Brown plunges into realism of a melodramatic and painful attractiveness. He wrote the novel with a purpose as he explains in the introduction:

"He that depicts in lively colors, the evils of disease and poverty, performs an eminent service to the sufferers by calling forth benevolence in those who are able to afford relief, and he who portrays examples of disinterestedness and intrepidity confers on virtue the notoriety and homage that are due it, and arouses in the spectator the spirit of salutary emulation."

The purpose is soon obscured by the variety of trials to which Brown's imagination subjects poor Arthur. Even Arthur himself becomes so muddled that he calls his father's house a hut, a cottage, and finally a mansion. This may be an oversight or it may be supreme artistry for Arthur had been long absent from home when he called it a mansion.

On the whole it did not fulfil the promise of the first novel. In Wieland we were left with the vague idea that Wieland was supernaturally removed from the scene of action yet upon rereading it was impossible to find any statement that he was. Really it did not matter. The speculation sent a prickling shiver down your spine and did not lessen the pleasure in the book. But in Arthur
Mervyn there is a constant disclosure of machinery that never runs. One instance will serve to illustrate. From incidents recorded it is evident to the reader that Brown points to Walbeck as the school master who seduced Mervyn's sister but the fact is not disclosed. The sister drops out of the story without any apparent reason for having been there.

In the description of the ravages of the plague Brown achieves literary merit of a decidedly realistic sort. The suffering of the victims of the yellow fever and the grief of their friends was burned into Brown's soul by the death of his closest friend, Dr. Elihu Smith. For once the young Quaker wrote from his heart rather than from his brain.

The following quotation illustrates the vivid picture which is given of the plague:

"The rays of a sultry sun had a sickening and enfeebling influence beyond any which I had ever experienced. The drought of unusual duration had bereft the air and the earth of every particle of moisture. --------

I fought against my dreary feelings, which pulled me to the earth. I quickened my pace, raised my drooping eyelids, and hummed a cheerful and favorite air.  "

I went from one tavern to another. One was deserted; in another the people were sick, and their attendants refused to harken to my inquiries or offers.

I have no perfect recollection of what passed till my arrival at the hospital. My passions combined with my disease
to make me frantic and wild. In a state like mine, the slightest motion could not be endured without agony. What then must I have felt, scorched, and dazzled by the sun, sustained by hard boards, and vorn for miles over a rugged pavement?

I know not how or by whom, I was moved from this vehicle. Insensibility came at length to my relief. After a time I opened my eyes, and slowly gained some knowledge of the situation. I lay upon a mattress, whose condition proved that a half decayed corpse had recently been dragged from it. The room was large but covered with beds like my own. Between each, there was scarcely an interval of three feet. Each sustained a wretch whose groans and distortions bespoke the desperateness of his condition.

The atmosphere was loaded by mortal stenches. A vapor suffocating and malignant, scarcely allowed me to breath. —

You will scarcely believe that, in this scene of horrors the sound of laughter should be overheard. While the upper rooms of this building were filled with the sick and the dying, the lower apartments are the scenes of carousals and mirth. The wretches who are hired at enormous wages, to tend the sick and convey away the dead neglect their duty, and consume the cordials which are provided for the patients, in debauchery and riot.

A female visage, bloated with malignity and drunkenness occasionally looked in. ------

The visitant had left the banquet for a moment to see who was dead. If she entered the room blinking eyes and reel­ing steps showed her to be totally unqualified for administering the aid needed.
Edgar Huntly; or, the Memoirs of a Sleepwalker followed before the public had decided whether they liked Arthur or not. Brown was certain that they had and proceeded with the following introduction to his new novel:

"The flattering reception that has been given by the public to Arthur Mervyn, has prompted the writer to solicit a continuance of the same favor, and to offer to the world a new performance.

America has opened new views to the naturalist and the politician, but has seldom furnished themes to the moral painter. That new springs of action, and new motives to curiosity should operate; that the field of investigation opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe, may be readily conceived. The sources of amusement to the fancy and instruction to the heart, that are peculiar to ourselves are equally numerous and inexhaustible. It is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these sources; to exhibit a series of adventures growing out of the condition of our country, and connected with one of the most common and wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame.

One merit the writer may at least claim; that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader, by means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors.

Puerile superstitions and exploded manners; Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western
wilderness, are far more suitable; and, for a native of America to overlook these, would admit of no apology."

In setting the novel is distinctly American. In Wieland Brown had deserted the turrets and moats of a Gothic castle for the country estate of a transplanted German aristocrat: in Edgar Huntly he strikes out boldly into the forest where Cooper followed him.

The descriptions of the landscape are painstaking, almost topographical in character:

"The hollows are single, and walled around by cliffs, ever varying in shape and height, and have seldom any perceptible communication with each other. These hollows are of all dimensions from the narrowness and depth of a well to the amplitude of one hundred years. Winter's snow is frequently found in these cavities at mid-summer. The streams that burst forth from every crevice are thrown, by the irregularities of the surface, into numberless cascades, often disappear into mists or in chasms, and emerge from subterranean channels, and, finally either subside into lakes or quietly meander thru the lower and more level grounds.

Wherever nature left a flat it is made rugged and scarcely passable by enormous felled trunks, accumulated by the storms of ages, and forming by their slow decay, a moss covered soil, the haunt of rabbits and lizards. These spots are obscured by the melancholy umbrage of pines, whose eternal murmurs are in unison with vacancy and solitude, with the reverberations of torrents and the whistling of the blasts. Hickory and poplar
which abound in the lowlands, find here no fostering elements."

The introduction of the Indian marks an original contribution to American literature. The Indian has been used as a fictional character before but under cover. Now he stalked about or sneak-ed thru the underbrush of the Pennsylvania mountains, a character in his own right, a character which was to become one of the most fascinating in American fiction.

Whether Brown knew anything of the Indian from first hand is a matter of conjecture. Critics have generally supposed that he did not. Certainly there was nothing in Brown's nature which would have led him to seek the primitive except in imagination. His lack of practical knowledge would make little difference if he chose to write of them. He must have heard all the current stories and no doubt saw numbers of the red men. Though there is nothing ideal about Brown's Indians he does not approach them with the idea that they are poor heathen who should be converted to the wearing of tall hats. They are quite dirty, cruel, and very human. They are more a part of the realistic setting than they are individuals. In absence of fact Brown's imagination served him with remarkable accuracy.

Edgar, himself, enjoyed a varied career in which he tracks a sleep-walker, becomes a sleep-walker himself, escapes from a wild cat, kills a cougar with a tomahawk and proceeds to a bloody banquet, searches for a waterfall where Clithero is hiding and finds a girl captive of Indian raiders, rescues the girl, and is left for dead by his relatives.

In this, the most readable of all his novels, from the present view point at least, Brown proves himself a master of
suspense. The first few pages of the story will repay careful study. The manner of description produces the same eerie effect which we find in Poe's Fall of the House of Usher. Edgar decides to visit the scene of the murder of his friend, Waldegrave.

"In a short time I descried thru the dusk the wide spread branches of the elm. This tree, however faintly seen, cannot be mistaken for another. My pulses throbbed as I approached it.

My eyes were eagerly bent to discover the trunk and the area beneath the shade. The trunk was not the only thing which appeared in view. Somewhat else, which made itself distinguishable by its motions, was likewise noted. I faltered and stopped.

To a casual observer this appearance would have passed unnoticed. To me, it could but possess a powerful significance. All my surmises and suspicions instantly returned. This apparition was human, it was connected with the fate of Waldegrave, it led to a disclosure of the author of that fate. What was I to do? To approach unwarily would alarm the person. Instant flight would set him beyond recovery and reach.

I walked softly to the roadside. The ground was covered with rocky masses scattered among the shrub-oaks and dwarf cedars, emblems of its sterile and uncultivated state. Among these it was possible to elude observation and yet approach near enough to gain an accurate view of this being.

At this time, the atmosphere was somewhat illuminated by
by the moon, which, though it had already set, was yet so near the horizon as to benefit me by its light. The shape of a man, tall and robust, was now distinguished. Repeated and closer scrutiny enabled me to perceive that he was digging in the earth. Something like flannel was wrapped around his waist and covered his lower limbs. The rest of his frame was naked.

--------Before my resolution was formed, he ceased to dig. He cast aside his spade and sat down in the pit that he had dug. He seemed wrapped in meditation: but the pause was short, and succeeded by sobs, at first low and at wide intervals, but presently louder and more vehement."

Edgar Huntly has Brown's own contemplative disposition draped over the sinews of a sure-enough-red-blooded hero. A man who could sever the sinews of a catamount at a distance of sixty yards and then dine on its gore rather out-Nicks Nick Carter.

Because Brown does enter into such close sympathy with Edgar, he is the most interesting character of all of the novels. For one thing he gets a good start. No one could read the first three chapters of *Edgar Huntly* without willingly wading thru the rest. There are a number of places where the plot is more or less involved but there is always an adventure ahead which repays any trouble you may have had in reaching it. Olithero is a pitiable villain. I do not think Brown ever decided whether he was actually guilty of the murder of Waldegrave or not. His sorrowful history occupies a proportionately small space and as a sleep walker he is fascinating.
There is in this novel all the paraphernalia of the modern mystery story, the chest with the secret spring, a buried book, the huge brass key, a wild man with shaggy locks and an air of melancholy wildness who peeps thru the foliage to set an example for hermits and spooks thereafter, and several obliging thunder storms.

Perhaps after reading some ten terrorist novels my taste has been perverted but I enjoyed Edgar Huntly. The manner in which he attempts to solve the mystery by questioning the household is in the best detective manner. "These circumstances were related to me by Inglefield and corroborated by his house-keeper." Even Sherlock Holmes could do no more.

There are so many bits of effective writing that it is difficult not to speak of them all but the description of the old Indian woman's hut to which Edgar took the rescued girl, of the fight there, and Edgar's being left for dead, shot at by his own party and all, is corking.

The excesses of Edgar, although he apologized for dining on the catamount, brought a flood of adverse criticism. The public did not like it.

This criticism led to the writing of Clara Howard; or, the Enthusiasm of Love, a rather tame correspondence between a lad destitute of property, of parents, of paternal friends: full of rustic diffidence, that inveterate humility which alone is sufficient to divert from us the stream of fortune's favors. Two maids and a man are pathetically stupid about straightening up their affairs. The piece is rather sticky with sentiment.
Jane Talbot, the last of the romances, is based solely on an obscure conflict of ideas. It seems that the young lady's benefactress was distressed by the somewhat Godwinized ideas of the lover. Objections were finally removed and the lovers reunited. As Jane confesses at the beginning she is "far from being a wise girl."

The appearance of Jane Talbot in 1801 marked the end of Brown's fiction work. From then until his death he was absorbed in the editing of several magazines and the writing of political pamphlets.

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PART III

HIS ACCOMPLISHMENT AND INFLUENCE
With his plunge into pamphleteering Brown disappeared temporarily from the stage of fictional interest. The fame of his novels continued but only one edition was printed during his lifetime. In 1807 Goodrich of Boston printed a limited edition, in 1857 Polack of Philadelphia and in 1867 David McKay of Philadelphia printed complete editions. In 1822 Carwin, the Biologist, and Other American Tales & Pieces was published in three volumes in London.

At the time of Brown's death and during the next few years a number of articles, poems, and brief biographies were written but as early as 1824 the pen of John Neal streamed with accusations against the American public for forgetting this author. Neal's enthusiasm led him a little astray for he pictures Brown and his family living in squalor during the writing of the novels. He refers to the family as consisting of a number of daughters. Both of these statements are contradicted by Dunlap. Brown was not married until 1804 and he had at least two sons. However Neal's article is worth quoting because of its keen analysis of Brown's literary characteristics. In the October number of Blackwoods' for 1824, Neal writes: "This was a good fellow: a sound and hearty specimen of Trans-Atlantic stuff. He was a novelist; an imitator of Godwin, whose Caleb Williams made him. He had no poetry; no pathos; no wit; no humor; no pleasantry; no poetry; no passion; little or no eloquence; no imagination except where panthers were concerned, a most penurious and bony invention, meager as death, - yet- lacking all these natural powers
and working away in a style with nothing remarkable in it — except a sort of absolute sincerity, like that of a man, who is altogether in earnest, and believes every word of his own story he was able to secure the attention of extraordinary men, as other people (who write better) would that of children; to impress his pictures on the human heart, with such unexampled vivacity, that no time can obliterate them: and, withal, to fasten himself, with such tremendous power, upon a common incident, as to hold the spectator breathless.

His language is downright prose, very sober and very plain. Nobody ever remembered the words of Charles Brockden Brown, nobody ever thought of the arrangement, yet nobody ever forgot what they conveyed. He wrote after his peculiar fashion because he was unable to write otherwise. There was no self denial in it: no strong judgment: no sense or propriety: no perception of what is the true source of dramatic power. While hunting for a subject he had the good luck to stumble on one or two (having had the good luck before to have the yellow fever) that suited his turn of expression, while he was imbued, heart and soul, with Godwin's thoughtful and exploring mind: and these he wore to death."

In the September number of the Fortnightly Review for 1878, C.B. Smith writes: "It is no affront to our readers to assume that to most of them the name at the head of this paper is wholly unfamiliar." Thus had C.B.B. of whom Joseph Dinnie
wrote in the _Portfolio_ of February 11, 1804, "a man whose talents are acknowledged to be of a superior order --" lost his appealing individuality.

It is interesting to note that this same Joseph Dinnie while Shelley and Godwin were reading Brown's fiction with pleasure wrote in the _Portfolio_ that the Pennsylvanian novelist wrote "uncommonly well" for an American. The _North American Review_ for June, 1815, referred to Brown as being, "far from a popular author" admitting however that he was obliging enough to introduce foreigners in his tales, and Americans polished by residence abroad. Of a truth, a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. By taking the sons of Chester County farmers for his heroes and the Pennsylvania mountains for his setting, Brown had laid himself open to the serious charge of provencialism and at the same time carved his niche in the history of American literature.

Distance lends enchantment and the Europeans read with delight the romantic presentation of the new and then, far-away land of America. The introduction of the American landscape was Brown's unique contribution. While other authors were busily writing of castles and crypts which they had never seen, Brown described the country which he had known from childhood. This may have been partiality brought about by his tendency toward realism. His seriousness led him to find his material in the world about him and his imagination quickly removed it to the land of romance and interpreted it in
romantic language which is not the happiest medium of expression for a realist. His love of geography may have entered into this too. As a boy, maps fascinated him, as a man he worked upon systems for the teaching of geography which were left unfinished. Added to these likings and tendencies was his intense love of country. Patriotism was in the air. Everyone was thinking, writing, taking about "My Country." Interested as he was in the French Revolution, Brown easily caught the tremendous enthusiasm of the young republic of America. But more of his patriotic fervor later. What I wish to show is this, that with his tendency toward realism, his familiarity with and love for his country side, and his fervent patriotism, he could not have written of anything but America and American life.

In so doing he not only established a place for himself but blazed a trail which has grown into a high road travelled by Cooper, Hawthorne, Poe, and all of those who write of American places and peoples. Brown wrote the first Indian tales, he wrote the first local color stories, he wrote the first stories of pseudo-science.

What Cooper owed Brown is largely a matter of conjecture. It is rather easy to find whatever you are looking for. A solemn German student once wrote a thesis proving that Carroll's Through the Looking Glass was a political satire. To trace any definite connection between Brown and Cooper is difficult. The boy in the border settlement was ten years old when Edgar Huntly was written. Brown was dead before Cooper's tales were dreamed of. Not being a bookish lad it is probable that Cooper owes
his material to his early life in the frontier settlement and not to Brown's novels. However that may be, Brown had prepared the reading public. It is doubtful whether anyone ever labored more conscientiously than Brown to elevate the public taste and to provide what he considered wholesome reading. While the reading public is always looking for a new sensation, it delights in the kinship of an author who has enough of the old to give a feeling of familiarity without being boresome. Brown had introduced the Indian, he had introduced the rough, rugged landscape and the public had decided that they were very entertaining and readily accepted a return to them. There had been little fiction written between the time of Brown and Cooper. Stirring adventures with Indians a-plenty were welcomed.

If Brown had read Cooper's tales, and Cooper had read Brown's romances their comments would have been interesting. I imagine the adventures of Edgar Huntly would have amused Cooper and I can also imagine the snort which would greet a passage like the following: "Every sentiment has perished from my bosom. Even friendship if extince. Your love for me has prompted me to this task; but I would not have complied with it if it had not been a luxury thus to feast upon my woes."

Harvey Birch would have delighted the soul of Brown with his mysterious appearances and disappearances and his tried heroic heart, only I fear Brown would have attempted to explain how and why Harvey escaped. Indian John corrupted by the settlements would have passed censure but Uncas and
Chingagooch certainly would have met with disapproval. Brown was essentially a realist and never more so than in his treatment of the Indian. The idealization would have disgusted him. It is said that when someone spoke to Cooper about the character of Uncas he admitted that he had idealized him and modestly added that even Homer had his heroes.

A strict comparison of the method of the two men in presenting the Indian cannot be made, for Brown uses them as a part of the setting, Cooper uses them as characters usually heroes. He had seen all the vivid, fascinating, colorful life of a border settlement as a child and as a writer he retained the figures of the Indians and the early settlers beautified by memory and enlivened by a rushing romantic enthusiasm. Brown on the other hand, had been reared in an atmosphere which stressed the cruelty of the Indian rather than his picturesque traits.

The difference in the treatment of the Indian lies not only in the early environment but also in the fundamental difference in the nature of the two men. There was nothing introspective about Cooper. He wrote as he waged law suits, to prevent himself from exploding with surplus energy. He wrote for the sake of the stirring tale without much thought about uplifting the world thereby. Brown wrote with a purpose except when the tale ran away with him and then he wrote with true art.

Poe declared that Cooper depended first upon the nature
of the theme, second, on a Robinson Caruso-like detail in its arrangement, and, thirdly, upon frequently repeated portaiture of the half civilized Indian. "Among American writers of the less generally circulated but more worthy and artistic fictions we may mention Mr. Charles Brockden Brown, John Neal ------, at the head of the more popular class we may place Mr. Cooper." There can be no question that Poe considered Brown superior to Cooper.

John Neal expresses himself in no uncertain terms. He remarks that Cooper "played the devil with Brown's Indians, steals the broom out of his fingers," and finishes by stating that the only catamount Cooper ever ventured upon was a tame one that had escaped out of Brown's clutches with its nails pared.

Whether in the end Cooper's novels will be neglected by readers as Brown's are, remains to be seen. May I add however, that Cooper's treatment of the Indian in connection with the frontier life is so much more colorful and romantic that it appeals to popular taste more than Brown's incidental treatment.

Brown's preoccupation with the crimes and morbid sensibility attracted Hawthorne as much as it would have repelled Cooper. Like Brown he was much alone and given to thought and introspection. Like Brown he wrote of instances and places which were very familiar to him. Coming later he escaped many of the younger writer's excesses. The melancholy of Hawthorne is more gentle
and does not approach terrorism. Brown never achieves passion: Hawthorne is seldom sentimental. Contrast if you will the treatment accorded poor old Hepzibah and her cent shop with the picture of Constantina as she goes to sell her father’s lutes. One may shed a tear for Constantina but wrinkled Hepzibah with her crazy head gear leaves an unforgettable ache in the heart and one is forever kinder to people who appear to be very queer.

Hawthorne’s vocabulary was boundless. His thoughts are expressed so fully that they require no cooperation from the reader. All his sentences are framed to produce a most complete and most perfect picture of the idea. Brown is valuable or niggardly by turn. When is is writing consciously he turns up something like “these deadly and blood suffused orbs but ill resembled the azure and ecstatic tenderness of her eyes.” When he forgets himself he is rewarded with a bit such as this, “Footsteps thronged upon the stairs and presently many faces showed themselves within the door of my apartment. These looks were full of alarm and watchfulness. They pried into the corners as if in search of some fugitive; next their gaze fixed upon me, and betokened all the vehemence of terror and pity.”
The way in which these two searchers after sin set forth their findings is very different. Brown always emphasizes the incident; Hawthorne a salient character trait. Both of them fasten upon a taint in the character and magnify it but the latter succeeds in building a consistent character about the trait. The characters of the former seldom achieve a middle ground. When they are good they are very good and when they are bad they are horrid. Hawthorne's characters are designated for a practical end. He sets forth both sides of their life and their dominating motive. With characters that are real he manages to obtain an effect quite as supernatural as Brown's without ventriloquism or self combustion. He leaves no chance for question as to what the thing is that he has conjured up. Chillingworth is a sharp faced hunch-back, drawn and dark. There is thrown over him an air of mystery but there is no doubt that he is the devil of revenge incarnate.

Brown means to be mysterious but succeeds in being confusing. He apparently did not make up his own mind about the characters or their exact behavior. Did he know whether Clithero was really the murderer? Was Wieland responsible for the murder of his wife and children? Brown teases you on with a half promise of explanation and when he does attempt to explain so rends the veil of mystery that we wish he had not touched it. Hawthorne was wise enough to leave a few questions unanswered but never does he promise explanation without giving it.

To study sin and present its effects as a warning was
Hawthorne's aim, his sole aim. Brown's aim may have been serious but his undisciplined imagination ran away with his quill. If Hawthorne can be justly called a dark lantern shining in only one direction, Brown was a pin wheel sputtering in a circle.

Brown's theology was in the unfinished state of many of his Utopias. To his mind destruction inevitably followed sin. Sin was sin and as such had no use in the world except to set in relief the virtues of others. The sinners were inexcusable people with no redeeming traits. He treats physical sins with a hand done up in a white cotton glove and naturally treats them clumsily. "The Scarlet Letter" is a much more thoughtful consideration of the problem of sin than can be found in Ormond, Walbeck, or Carwin. Constantina Dudley the best of Brown's women cannot be compared with the noble Hester Prynne. It is true that Hawthorne placed himself in an antinomous position. He presents at once the terrible effects of sin and the growth of character which may be achieved thru it. In Roger Chillingworth the sin of the spirit blackens and blots out life, in Hester and Dimmesdale the sin of the body purges the soul. This was a conclusion which Brown could not reach.

Another point of similarity between these two writers is their use of locale. Hawthorne drew largely upon the early history and legend of Massachusetts for his material. "The House of Seven Gables", "The Scarlet Letter," could not be what they are without the stories of the black-man in the forest, the crackling and gibbering of the witches of Salem, and the curses on houses, wells, and humans. The point of difference
in that these happenings had been turned over and over in Hawthorne's mind until they became an essence of experience and interpretation. Brown, on the other hand, used current happenings hot off the reel. His imagination fired by a newspaper account of a murder due to ventriloquism begat Wieland. Nothing lay fallow in his mind long enough for him to make any definite conclusions about it.

What Poe owes to Brown no one knows. Even when Poe wrote confidentially, he wrote with his tongue in his cheek. That he was thoroughly acquainted with Brown is certain from his comparison of Brown with Cooper and his estimate of the former.

An early tale of Poe's *A Tale of the Ragged Mountains* published in 1856 resembles Brown's work. The main character is described thus -- "This young gentleman was remarkable in every respect, and excited in me a profound interest and curiosity. I found it impossible to comprehend him either in his moral or physical relations." The plot of the story introduces magnetic somnolency with the following explanation, "It is only now in the year 1845, when similar miracles are witnessed daily by thousands, that I dare venture to record this apparent impossibility as a matter of serious fact."

*Mesmerism - In Articulo Mortis*, an astonishing and horrifying narrative which first appeared in the *American Magazine* is close kin to the story of death by self combustion. The experiment of mesmerizing a dying man was conducted to determine whether in such condition there existed in the patient any
susceptibility to magnetic influence; secondly, whether, if any existed it was impaired or increased by the condition; and thirdly, to what extent, or for how long a period, the encroachments of death might be arrested by the process. The experiment was conducted while the patient suffered all the pangs of dissolution and finally crumpled, rotted and repulsive.

Poe took the pseudo-science in which Brown had dabbled and made an art of it. The Adventures of One Hans Pfall, The Gold Bug, Von Kempfer and His Discovery are all surrounded with an artistically perfect scientific atmosphere and enlivened by sly humor, plenty of puns, and ludicrous descriptions. Pseudo-scientific tales in the deft fingers of Poe became a recognized literary form. He told it not as a dry fact but as an enchanting experience.

The use of suspense which Brown began Poe perfected. The position of Poe with regard to literary development and public taste was such that he could give his attention to technique. The thrilling melancholy and repressed mystery of The Fall of the House of Usher and The Cask of Amantallido had their beginning in Edgar Huntly.

Poe had a sense of beauty, of artistry, of the sheer joy of youth which Brown never experienced. As a lad Poe delighted in athletic games, in swimming, in capping Latin verses, thrilled with devotion for the mother of one of his friends, reveled in the sorrow which drove him to sit in the
rain beside her grave. Brown would have been terrified by such a sweep of emotion. Undoubtedly he would have taken himself severely to task and felt that he had disgraced himself. Melancholy seems to have been his one emotional indulgence.

Certainly there was nothing in him which could have put a head on a puncheon, armed it with bottles, and named it the Angel of the Odd. The King Pest and the Archduchess Anabeat would have had no appeal to him.

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SUMMARY

BROCKDEN BROWN'S CONTRIBUTION
TO
AMERICAN LITERATURE

As this study has progressed, one thing has become increasingly clear, that Brockden Brown both lost and won thru his chronological position. Caught in the fervor of the romantic school he had all its faults and few of its virtues. At heart he was a realist, his style was the style of a realist, but his expression attempted romanticism. Had he arrived later in the field his imagination would have been spared the excesses which deny his work lasting currency. His very accomplishment lost him personal fame. Coming as he did in the midst of the terrorist popularity his work was colored by it but his originality survived long enough to point out a new path for American writers. In view of the scorn which was heaped upon American attempts in literature it was necessary that someone combine enough of the terrorist to attract the attention of the public with enough originality to entice the younger writers. Whatever we may think of Brown's fiction now, he did win the attention of his public and the allegiance of the next generation of authors.

Brown's contribution of American literature may be summed
up briefly:

1. He gained the attention of the English literary people.
2. He introduced the American landscape to Americans as well as to Europeans.
3. He introduced the American Indian as a character in fiction.
4. He gained the respect of the American reading public for native genius.
5. He introduced pseudo-science as a motivating force in fiction.

The amazing thing is that Brown with all his "deviations from the center" accomplished as much as he did.