

Charles Brockden Brown's Narrative Antidotes

Viviane Boileau

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of English at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

March 2008

© Viviane Boileau, 2008



Library and
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-40807-0
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-40807-0

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

ABSTRACT

Charles Brockden Brown's Narrative Antidotes

Viviane Boileau

Charles Brockden Brown's novels - *Wieland, Or the Transformation*; *Edgar Huntly, Or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*; and *Ormond, Or the Secret Witness* – tend to be dismissed for their narrative inconsistencies. Some critics, however, strive to justify recurring structural peculiarities and to accord more literary value to Brown's writing. This thesis, falling into the latter category, will study these three novels in terms of narrative diseases and antidotes. Indeed, their different exploitation of narrative breaks, switching verb tenses, and filter shifts demonstrate the use of narration in the search for effective cures. Influenced by the infection of story elements, the narrators of *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond* emulate ventriloquism, somnambulism, and metamorphism, respectively. This mirroring of story elements becomes crucial in experimenting with the concoction of narrative remedies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank Prof. Nicola Nixon for her invaluable feedback and advice and Profs. Manish Sharma and Omri Moses for agreeing to be my readers on such short notice.

This thesis would not have been possible without the constant support of Camille, André, Brigitte, Stanley, Lily and Marthe. Your faith in my potential keeps me afloat.

I also want to acknowledge the efforts of my cheerleading squad: Dan-Vi, Megan, Christina, Claudine, this process would have been quite dreary without you!

Finally, special thanks go to Camille for taking the time to help me out with the final edits and to Brigitte for always being there for me, even when that means keeping your distance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 1
Past Infection and Ventriloquism	Page 8
Narrative Somnambulism	Page 28
Breaking Away from Infection	Page 48
Conclusion	Page 66
Bibliography	Page 70

Introduction

Writing in America in the late-eighteenth century, Charles Brockden Brown dreamed of becoming a successful novelist, of making a living from his artistic production. His career was not quite what he imagined, and he was forced to rely on magazine editing for financial security. Of the six novels he published between 1798 and 1801, only *Edgar Huntly* was made into a second edition during his lifetime (Charvat 27). And with the rise of authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville in the nineteenth century, Brown's work was quickly forgotten. His four major novels, *Wieland* (1798), *Ormond* (1799), *Edgar Huntly* (1799), and *Arthur Mervyn* (Part One 1799, Part Two 1800), however, sparked a revival of scholarly interest in the twentieth century. Early critics were quick to dismiss the literary value of Brown's novels because of their obvious narrative inconsistencies. But more recent critics, whose footsteps I follow, have focused on justifying his major novels' recurring structural peculiarities.

Odd narrative structures are not the only elements that resurface in his novels. Indeed, his writing demonstrates an investment in certain thematic concerns which emerged for the first time in 1788. In "The Man at Home," a tale serialized in *The Weekly Magazine*, Brown introduces plots and tropes that will become central to the narratives of *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond*. The narrator of this bizarre early tale is, like Brown's subsequent narrators, concerned with disease, contending that the "same observation may be made of love as of sleep. They are equally diseases, that is, they are equally deviations from the truth of things and the perfection of our nature" (89). The representation of emotions as illnesses becomes important in *Wieland* where Clara

Wieland struggles to write down her encounters with Carwin, a scheming ventriloquist, and her brother's transformation into a murderous madman. In addition, considerations of sleep as disease are crucial in *Edgar Huntly*, a story whose eponymous character begins to sleepwalk after meeting a somnambulist, Clithero, during the investigation of his friend Waldegrave's murder. This novel also revolves around the theme of concealment, emphasizing the burial of documents – the kind of burial that Brown examines in “The Man at Home” where the narrator finds a valuable manuscript hidden beneath the false bottom of a locked chest (68). More importantly, in this tale Brown introduces the Baxter episode, which will eventually make its way, almost verbatim, into *Ormond*. While interesting but incidental to this early story, the paranoia that precipitates Baxter's death from yellow fever is much better supported in the later novel. Indeed, even though Sophia Courtland only includes a short episode of the epidemic in her narrative, her main focus on the life of Constantia Dudley, the trials and hardships the latter faces, culminating in a violent confrontation with the villainous Ormond, provides a rich environment for Brown to fully develop his favoured motif of disease.

From “The Man at Home” to *Arthur Mervyn*, Brown repeatedly demonstrates his fascination with the study and depiction of aspects of illness. Many critics incorporate the interest Brown has for disease in their political and social readings of his texts, especially for his first novel. Jane Tompkins, for example, views *Wieland* as a political tract “directed toward solving the problems of post-Revolutionary society” (44) while Christopher Looby sees it as a representation of the new nation's fragile social realm (149). Their interpretations, like many others, take for granted that Brown believes America's body politic to be ill. Brown's subsequent novels do not fail to be scrutinized

under the same historicizing lens. For instance, George Toles, following Leslie Fiedler's and Donald Ringe's readings of *Edgar Huntly*, more clearly links the violence of eighteenth century frontier life and Edgar's mental state with the novel's wilderness setting. And Ormond's connections to the French Revolution, coupled with Brown's marked interest in agents that can transgress the boundary between public and private spheres, leads many critics to discuss social diseases in *Ormond*.

Given this attention to representations of illness in Brown's writing, a few recent critics have opted to study disease in narrative terms. For his part, James Dawes uses Brown's writing as a case study of "what happens when readers read" (437), examining the "transmission of emotion [fear] through art" (440). In highlighting the novels's impact on audiences in terms of disease, Dawes establishes how crucial a role infection plays in narrative considerations. His clarification that "disease breaks down the distinction between cognition (as a willed experience) and automatic bodily processes (as a coercive, unwilled experience)," that "[d]isease is foremost an experience in irresistibility" (440) is important for any reader who wishes to study Brown's novels for their treatment of illness. Indeed, this link between mind and body resonates for a discussion of narrative bodies, their illnesses and antidotes.

Moving away from the emotional effect the novels have on their readers, Beverly Lyon Clark contends that Brown's lack of "traditional novelistic techniques... demonstrate[s] the unreliability of the senses in providing knowledge" (91) and that his intentional use of "the symbolic double, ...multiple perspectives, ...narrative breaks and shifts in mode... [produces a] contagious unreliability" (91). Her observations are decidedly useful, since they provide an understanding of how disease can function on a

narrower narrative level, a view of how story elements impact one another. However, her focus on unreliability is very limiting. Indeed, nobody can deny that Brown's narrators are untrustworthy but focusing on that fact as the major disease sidesteps many other representations of illness and valuable considerations of antidotes.

Brown's interest in science, or rather, as John Limon puts it, his "confidence in his compatibility with science" (30) reverberates not only in his appeal to physicians in *Wieland's* preface or his detailing of *Edgar Huntly's* landscapes in mathematical terms (98) but also in his tendency to experiment. While critics have remarked on Brown's experimentation with Gothic conventions particularly how he exploits the narrative instabilities generated by denying his readers endings that answer questions of the reliability of the senses, Brown is also invested in playing with depictions of disease. Indeed, each of his four major novels deals with disease and antidotes in a unique way while drawing on similar elements such as narrative breaks and filter shifts. Brown tests different ways of handling these components in each narrative, paralleling scientific methodology. And while he may have succeeded in finding a type of narrative cure through Arthur Mervyn – as Bryan Waterman demonstrates – Brown shows that Clara Wieland, Edgar Huntly, and Sophia Courtland all grapple differently with cures, uniquely exploiting breaks, switching verb tenses, and filter shifts in the search for antidotes.

Perhaps the reason why these narrators struggle with finding a potent narrative remedy, one that would completely stem infections and ensure that readers not be affected, is the form of their text. These three particular novels are epistolary. As Cynthia Jordan points out, this format is "an authorial decision that signals that the narrator's point of view should constitute a thematic concern and that also effectively frees an

author from the obligation to create, as Fielding pointed out, ‘regular beginnings and conclusions’” (155). By ostensibly relinquishing authorial control, Brown accords his narrators a crucial role in considerations of disease. Indeed, since they are responsible for “beginnings and conclusions”, an understanding of the source of narrative illnesses naturally starts with them. And whether the disease runs its full course or not is also up to Clara, Edgar, and Sophia. Unlike Arthur Mervyn’s, their narrations are highly influenced by the infection of story elements. In *Wieland*, Clara’s contact with Carwin’s ventriloquism taints her own way of telling events, while in *Edgar Huntly*, the narrator is infected by Clithero’s somnambulism and carries that through his narration. Finally, in *Ormond*, Sophia is also affected by and takes on the villain’s abilities of disguise and imitation.

Of course, exploring narrative infection in these three novels will necessarily rely on theories of narratology. Discussion of the many instances of narrative embedding requires at least a summary definition of the basic aspects of narrative fiction. Theorists propose different models to separate these aspects. Critics like Gerald Prince and Seymour Chatman base their analysis on a two-level model, while others opt for a three-level one. My project follows Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s three-level model of story, text, and narration: “‘Story’ designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order.... [Text] is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling.... [Narration is the] act or process of production” (3). She bases her definitions on Gerard Genette’s ‘histoire,’ ‘récit,’ and ‘narration’ which have often been translated as ‘story,’ ‘narrative,’ and ‘narrating.’ Given

the similarities in concepts, despite a slight shift in terminology, I consider that 'text' and 'narrative' are synonymous and that 'narration' and 'narrating' are likewise equivalent.

Furthermore, Daniel Punday's ideas on a corporeal narratology can help set up Brown's plots as diseased. While many critics remark on the inconsistencies in his writing, expressing those in terms of the body elucidates the potential curative elements present in his narratives. Indeed, as Punday argues, "although a narrative can create delay by positing one or more unruly bodies, the resolution at which the narrative will eventually arrive need not actually resolve these various bodies" (101). Brown's novels certainly force the reader to deal with numerous unruly bodies and do not resolve many of them. Yet, it is exactly because his writing offers unruliness that it lends itself to a search for cures.

A study of *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond* in terms of narrative antidotes also relies on how narrators mediate their respective stories. Many theorists discuss this mediation as focalization, something Patrick O'Neill summarizes as "a chosen *point*, the point from which the narrative is perceived as being presented at any given moment" (86). Genette's introduction of this concept through questions of 'who sees?' and 'who speaks?' (186) has been developed by numerous subsequent critics. However, Chatman's ideas on mediation, and his definition of filters especially, are most useful in analysing Brown's novels. For him, the filter is the function that allows the narrator to "tell a part or the whole of a story neutrally or 'from' or 'through' one or another character's consciousness" (196). The term filter encompasses more of the character whereas focalization is limited to vision. The added scope of the change in terminology is useful in examining Brown's novels for narrative diseases and antidotes.

By taking a closer look at the structural and vocal peculiarities of Brown's writing, I will demonstrate how each of his three novels concocts narrative antidotes to their specific illnesses – or tries to. The first chapter will argue that Clara's use of ventriloquism in attempting to deal with the threat of an infectious past has serious narrative repercussions. Then, in the second chapter, I will discuss how Edgar's narrative somnambulism walks the line between illness and remedy. In the last chapter I will examine Sophia's manipulation of narrative elements and her ability to morph into any character as countermeasures to the effect of the moral ills she must narrate, illustrating, finally, the ways in which *Ormond* succeeds on the terms Brown sets out for the novel, whereas *Wieland* and *Edgar Huntly* fall short.

Past Infection and Ventriloquism

The epigraph to *Wieland; or The Transformation* introduces the novel as being part of Brown's project to be a "moral painter" (3): "From Virtue's blissful paths away / The double-tongued are sure to stray; / Good is a forth-right journey still, / And mazy paths but lead to ill." At first glance, these lines herald a tale constructed around clear dichotomies: virtue and deception, good and evil, straight and meandering paths. They paint a moral landscape which foregrounds the side of Good. Yet this epigraph supplies the reader with more than a picture of morality. The use of the word "ill," instead of evil, alludes to disease. In a novel in which a character murders his family because a disembodied voice told him to, mental illness is a significant issue. The words of the epigraph ring true within the story. But how do they echo in the narration? Clara Wieland follows "mazy paths" in order to tell her tale. Is her narration ill? Yes. Is there a cure? Not a particularly effective one. While subsequent Brown novels provide stronger narrative antidotes, the numerous elements associated with disease in *Wieland* and Clara's use of ventriloquism undermine the viability of potential remedies, even though, I argue, such remedies are raised as possibilities.

Scholars who focus on disease in Brown's first novel usually examine mental illness as opposed to physical infection. Michael Davitt Bell and Bill Christophersen, among others, study the psychology inherent in the characters' and the narrator's predicaments. Few critics consider infection in *Wieland*, because the novel is most often studied in terms of the Gothic. However, an examination of the physicality of disease, of the potential for infection within the narrative – not only between readers and text, as Dawes argues – is useful in studying the novelistic oddities of this particular text. Early

on, Clara Wieland places the concerns about illness in both the mental and physical realms. Her frequent use of disease metaphors to describe emotions links mind and body. After having learned of her brother's madness, for example, she wonders if her destiny heralds a similar disorder and writes: "Grief carries its own antidote along with it. When thought becomes merely a vehicle of pain, its progress must be stopped. Death is a cure which nature or ourselves must administer" (165). The only way she can voice her sinister thoughts is through comparing grief to a disease.

This comparison reinforces not only the power of emotions in Clara's narrative but also the importance of illness and remedies in the novel as a whole. Reading her brother's confession to the murder of his family, for example, Clara contracts a malady that brings her "to the brink of the grave" (160). She relies on her uncle for help and his "skill as a reasoner as well as physician, [is] exerted to obviate the injurious effects of this disclosure" (160). She requires a combination of mental and physical remedies because the feelings generated by the news are so powerful that they weaken her body. History, too, takes its toll: she "sicken[s] at the remembrance of the past" (177), suggesting that the past and the feelings it generates are a disease. In another instance, emotions associated with a memory refuse to remain quarantined in her mind. When introducing the character of Carwin at the beginning of Chapter Six, she states: "I now come to the mention of a person with whose name the most turbulent sensations are connected.... My blood is congealed: and my fingers are palsied when I call up this image....this weakness cannot be immediately conquered" (45). This link between emotions and physical symptoms renders illness in *Wieland* not only more urgent but also more tangible, reversing Susan Sontag's idea that a "'physical' illness becomes in a way

less ... real so far as it can be considered a 'mental' one" (55). Since the focus of Clara's narrative is on mental illnesses, their physicality makes them more real because they undermine the usual balance between inner and outer, forcing what is inside to surface.

This process of the internal making itself externally manifest underlines, in Clara's narrative, all the weaknesses that threaten individual, family, or narrative health. It highlights how bodies can be destabilized. When Wieland first reports having heard his wife's voice near the temple at Mettingen, a place she could not possibly have been since she remained at the house with the rest of the family, Clara remarks: "I could not bear to think that his senses should be the victims of such delusion. It argued a diseased condition of his frame, which might show itself hereafter in more dangerous symptoms" (32). She is worried about the possibility that her brother is mentally ill, yet she alludes to the "diseased condition of his frame" rather than his mind. She postulates that his body contains weaknesses that allowed his sense to be deceived, that his frame is partly responsible for his faulty logic. This concern resonates for the text as a whole.

As a narrative body, *Wieland* is decidedly susceptible to illness. The frame, provided by Clara's narration, is weak. Critics do not fail to point out its numerous structural and novelistic problems. For Cynthia Jordan, *Wieland* is "governed by coincidence, 'contingencies'; as a result, unforeseen complications are ever imminent, and thus narrative closure, the tying together of all loose strands of a story, is impossible" (157-8). Elizabeth Hinds echoes Jordan and stresses the connection between madness and writing: "Clara's story, while attempting to structure events rationally, refuses to maintain any connection between random occurrences and a motivating force 'behind' the action.... [H]er telling serves to re-create the experience itself, complete with its

unexplained and unexplainable turns of events that proceed without cause” (118). The text lacks unification; holes and weaknesses in the novel render its body defective in the eyes of most readers. Rick Wallach sees “narrative consistency and complexity” but agrees that Clara’s narrative control results in an “irremediable cleft in her textual world’s sustaining fabric of delusion” (4). Consistency, while explaining some narrative flaws, cannot fix the frame. *Wieland* will never be whole.

However, instead of dismissing the text as sick, I want to study the novel explicitly in terms of illness because such a study offers intriguing explanations for the awkward narration and illuminates the ways in which Brown tests narrative diseases and antidotes in his first novel. Some of the techniques he uses here resurface in *Edgar Huntly* and *Ormond*, where they have a more significant impact on the creation of narrative antidotes. Clara’s tendency to give a similar weight to every episode (Hinds 119), for example, foreshadows Edgar’s ability to bury knowledge, to hide things in plain sight. But the main difference between *Wieland* and the other two novels, and one of the reasons why narrative antidotes are ineffective, is that in *Wieland* the origins and true nature of disease are consistently hidden, despite Clara’s attempt to understand its symptoms and trace them back. When it comes to her own family history, the narrator is, as Nina Baym points out, thoroughly invested in uncovering the source of illness: “Clara is like a detective protagonist, wanting to know what is happening to the family and who is responsible for it” (93). Her detective-like behaviour, her quest for knowledge, is very much akin to a doctor’s. However, her narrative fails to unearth a satisfactory answer to the question of the origins of the Wieland family’s seemingly hereditary illness.

One of the main unexplained events, Wieland Senior's death, becomes crucial in considerations of disease. The narrative never clearly answers whether Clara's father was murdered or whether he spontaneously combusted. William Manly sees this vagueness as the narrator's fault: "The peculiar irresolution of the elder Wieland's death is in part the irresolution of Clara's attitude toward it, an irresolution which the tale will demonstrate to have dangerous consequences" (314). Limon argues that a combination of Clara's speculation and Brown's authorial control leaves "[a]ll explanations – supernatural, psychological, and mechanical - ... open" (38). Regardless of how readers explain the source of confusion over Wieland Senior's unusual death, this event is clearly central to the narrative's understanding of disease. In keeping the option of spontaneous combustion alive throughout the narrative, Clara perpetuates the myth that the body can be assailed by anything coming out of nowhere: "the disease thus wonderfully generated betrayed more terrible symptoms. Fever and delirium terminated in lethargic slumber, which, in the course of two hours, gave place to death" (17). Her word choice in describing this event impacts the study of illness in the novel.

Indeed, the fact that the disease was "wonderfully generated" is quite significant. For one thing, the murky origins of disease parallel the uncertainty over the source of mysterious voices in the novel, creating a link between voice and illness. When characters hear disembodied voices, they naturally wonder if they are going crazy. And since actual causes often remain undisclosed, Clara finds a scapegoat: the senses. Her constant allusions to the "testimony of the senses" (30) pit sight against hearing. The very nature of ventriloquism demands such a contest. However, even finding one sense more trustworthy than the other will not reveal true origins and will only provide temporary

relief; such a conclusion does not really answer the question of insanity, only delays it. The ventriloquist's confession is the only thing that can put the question to rest. Yet Carwin's explanations still leave unanswered questions. Indeed, out of the nine instances of characters hearing disembodied voices, only the first eight are elucidated. The source of one disembodied voice remains a mystery. Brown's explanations, like Carwin's, reinforce, as Limon points out, perplexing origins: "Despite all the fantastic explaining Brown does, however, very little is explained. On the contrary, the rich excessiveness of the etiology indicates that Brown does not know himself what set off the chain reaction of madness. We seem to be failing utterly to get the depravity of the senses tidily quarantined" (38). The senses themselves are so wrapped up in the disease motif that they become useless in remedying the problem of illness and voices being "wonderfully generated."

Despite the fact that issues of the senses cannot clear up the confusion over the source of illness, Clara is still invested in finding answers, which leads her to describe her family's madness in terms of a process of infection. The example of her grandfather cements the reliance on consanguinity in considerations of illness in *Wieland*. As her uncle explains, his father "entertained the belief that his own death would be inevitably consequent on that of his brother" (163). Time seems to prove him wrong since he builds a life for himself and starts a family. However, he very suddenly changes, one summer evening, tells his friends "his brother had just delivered to him a summons, which must be instantly obeyed" (164), and jumps off a cliff. From then on, some of the *Wieland* males demonstrate a tendency for irrational behaviour, highlighting the role of family blood in infection.

Consanguinity indeed becomes a component of contagion in *Wieland*. But Clara makes a distinction between the illness that affects individual family members and the infection that promises suffering on her whole family. In other words, disease is specific to each character and can possibly be contained in that individual frame, and infection is the malignant fate that threatens to contaminate Clara's entire family. Nina Baym points out that "the narrator's account of family history ... goes to show [that] the group is shadowed by a calamitous past in which the threat to their happiness is both contained and predicted" (90). For Peter Kafer, "one generation's traits get passed down, transmogrified, to the next generation, which suffers accordingly" (124). Even though disease is "wonderfully generated" (17), there is a guarantee that it will affect the *Wielands*. Clara's descriptions of fires highlight the similarities in her family members' suffering. The assurance of infection, aggravated by the individual's beliefs, results in burning.

Shortly before his death, *Wieland Senior* confesses to his wife that he firmly believes that the "duty assigned to him was transferred in consequence of his disobedience, to another, and all that remained was to endure the penalty" (12). As Clara progresses in her narrative, it becomes obvious that the father's duty was passed on to the son, that the son was infected with his father's fate. By novel's end, Clara witnesses Theodore's madness and she draws a parallel between her father's punishment and her brother's: "His eyes were without moisture, and he gleamed with the fire that consumed his vitals" (211). He might not be literally on fire but Clara associates his madness with *Wieland Senior's* spontaneous combustion. The father believed that by not obeying God, he was to be punished. Shortly after, he burned. Theodore finally realizes that his senses

deceived him, so he does not carry out his plan to murder Clara. Shortly after, he “burns.” Clara constantly returns to her father’s death which provides the reader with the necessary pattern to conclude that she is likewise affected by the fire that haunts her family. She could burn at any moment.

However, she is the first of the Wielands to escape the flames. In her case, the fire is easily explained: a servant left some “unextinguished embers” in the cellar (217). This accident does not prompt questions like “Was this the penalty of disobedience? ... Or, was it merely the irregular expansion of the fluid that imparts warmth to our heart and our blood, caused by the fatigue of the preceding day, or flowing, by established laws, from the condition of his thoughts?” (18). Whereas her father and her brother’s flames are inevitably linked to their minds, Clara is freed from that fate: “My habitation was leveled with the ground, and I was obliged to seek a new one. A new train of images, disconnected with the fate of my family, forced itself on my attention, and a belief insensibly sprung up, that tranquility, if not happiness, was still within my reach” (217). There is a sense here that Clara escaped not only her family’s usual brand of suffering, but the disease altogether. Her disconnection from the fate of her family shows that she may have survived the infection. The past kept returning, infecting members of her family, but she seems to recover from it. As with any considerations of contagion, Clara’s survival leads to questions of why she was spared when others were not. The element that differentiates her from the other infected Wielands is belief.

In the very first paragraph, she warns that certain beliefs can lead to ill: “[My narrative] will exemplify the force of early impressions, and show the immeasurable evils that flow from an erroneous or imperfect discipline” (5). She holds up her brother and her

father as examples of the disastrous consequences that arise from following certain beliefs. She describes her father as eager to find a creed to subscribe to: "His mind was in a state peculiarly fitted for the reception of devotional sentiments. The craving which had haunted him was now supplied with an object" (8). Clara places blame on the religion her father adopts, and Wieland's investment in belief is similarly problematic. In his written confession, her brother says: "It is needless to say that God is the object of my supreme passion. I have cherished, in his presence, a single and upright heart. I have thirsted for the knowledge of his will. I have burnt with ardour to approve my faith and my obedience" (151). Wieland's and his father's eagerness to believe blinds them to the disastrous consequences that can arise from warped convictions.

Indeed, Wieland is unaware that his behaviour exhibits madness; he believes he is acting according to a divine plan. As Shoshana Felman states, "[w]hat characterizes madness is ... not simply blindness, but a blindness *blind to itself*, to the point of necessarily entailing an *illusion of reason*" (36). Clara's uncle understands Wieland's blindness. He asks her: "What is it that enables [Wieland] to bear the remembrance, but the belief that he acted as his duty enjoined?" (171). He argues that for his nephew to maintain the illusion of reason, while not ideal, is better than his being forced to face the consequences of his irrational conduct. Wieland walks a fine line between reason and madness, a line that renders any thought questionable: "madness as such is defined as an *act of faith* in reason, no reasonable conviction can indeed be exempt from the suspicion of madness" (Felman 36). If madness is faith in reason, how can we be sure that Clara is not following in her family's footsteps? Are her constant assertions that she clings to rationality enough to convince her readers that she truly escaped the fire?

As vital as that question may be to most readers, trying to determine whether or not Clara is insane becomes quite difficult. Sometimes, she addresses her readers in a rational fashion: “You will believe that calamity has subverted my reason, and that I am amusing you with the chimeras of my brain, instead of facts that have really happened” (60). But a look at her narrative structure highlights, as Hinds shows, that Clara’s writing is concentrated on recreating her irrational experience: “Clara’s manner of telling her story discloses further rents in the fabric of rationality” (118). In other words, a dichotomy arises between what Clara says and how she says it. Analyzing her claims to rationality can convince readers that her mind is sound. Yet her inability to structure past events properly can indicate madness. Hinds points out that Wieland’s narrative does not present this problem. He is clearly insane. His criminal actions prove that. But his narrative “provides a relationship of cause and effect” (Hinds 117), which is something Clara’s narrating lacks.

The link between narrative structure and individual rationality that Hinds emphasizes to question Clara’s sanity is, I want to argue, the very link that in fact proves her sanity. Apart from Wieland’s narrative, Carwin’s account of events is also structured according to causality. And like Wieland, Carwin indulges in questionable behaviour. When explaining his actions to Clara, he says, in relation to Pleyel: “To deceive him would be the sweetest triumph I had ever enjoyed” (192). Carwin’s psychopathic tendencies do not prevent him from providing a rationally constructed narrative. If both Wieland’s and Carwin’s accounts are properly structured while they demonstrate ill propensities, then, in the fictional world Brown has created here, it logically follows that the irrational nature of Clara’s narrative indicates that she is not mad. Readers find it

easier to associate her discursive behaviour with her mental state, equating rents in the narrative body with indications of Clara's insanity, an equation her words seem to support:

A few words more and I lay aside the pen for ever.... Every sentiment has perished in my bosom. Even friendship is extinct. Your love for me has prompted me to this task; but I would not have complied if it had not been a luxury thus to feast upon my woes. I have justly calculated upon my remnant of strength. When I lay down the pen the taper of life will expire: my existence will terminate with my tale. (202)

She clearly states that her narrative is her life which leads many critics to view the novel's structural flaws as evidence of her mental state.

However, her life does not terminate with her tale: "My destiny I believed to be accomplished, and I looked forward to a speedy termination of my life with the fullest confidence.... [Y]et here I am, a thousand leagues from my native soil, in full possession of life and of health, and not destitute of happiness" (214). Time proves her wrong. Three years after the events, when she is established at Montpellier, Clara demonstrates that she is separate from the narrative body. Even emotions are no longer as threatening. Grief, that could only be cured by death, becomes something that "will gradually decay and wear itself out" (214). And thus the writing Clara performed while still residing in America, although certainly sensational, is not necessarily insane. The fact that time divorces Clara from her narrative body highlights that her discursive behaviour is not madness. Rather it is an imitation of madness. In a technique that recurs in Brown novels, the narrator mirrors some story elements – in this case irrationality – rendering them more powerful.

Indeed, Clara possesses more narrative control than most critics are willing to accord her. In his preface, Brown writes: "It will be necessary to add, that this narrative is addressed, in an epistolary form, by the Lady whose story it contains, to a small number of friends, whose curiosity, with regard to it, had been greatly awakened" (3). Brown deliberately narrows down the illusion of authorial control, ostensibly placing it in Clara's hands. Richard Hood points out a similar narrative process in relation to Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*. Both Brown and Ford provide "a character who produces, word by word, the novel which we are reading" (459). This cements the idea that Clara creates the narrative body yet remains separate from it. Clara as a narrator (NC) is outside the narrative body yet Clara as a character (CC) is a part of it. Distinguishing between these two entities reinforces our sense of the narrator's control.

The shift between NC and CC, which is often present in "instances of time and new knowledge breaking into a reflective narrator's abstract present" (Hood 451), highlights another way the narration mirrors story elements. Just as Clara's text emulates madness through fragmented story lines, so, too, does the infectious past that haunts the Wielands translate into a contagious past tense on the narrative level. At the beginning of her narrative, Clara writes: "It suffices that the past is exempt from mutation. The storm that tore up our happiness, and changed into dreariness and desert the blooming scene of our existence, is lulled into grim repose" (5). But the past is not truly put to rest. By the very nature of Clara's narrative project, it comes to life again. The association of the disasters the family endured and the past tense renders the latter vulnerable to being viewed as less happy than Clara suggests. Naturally, the present and future tenses would counterbalance the past's ruinous effects. As Clara writes in her final chapter: "Time will

obliterate the deepest impressions” (214). However, excluding the last chapter, the narrator admits that “[f]uturity has no power over [her] thoughts” (5). Therefore, NC’s present becomes her best defence against CC’s past.

This hierarchy between past and present is reinforced by the narrator’s obvious control over story elements, over, for example, the way in which Carwin is represented. The first physical description she gives of him is striking but not necessarily menacing: “His form was ungainly and disproportioned. Shoulders broad and square, breast sunken, his head drooping, his body of uniform breadth, supported by long and lank legs, were the ingredients of his frame” (46). But then, she writes “A form, and attitude, and garb, were instantly created worthy to accompany such elocution; but this person was, in all visible aspects, the reverse of this phantom” (48-9). The sentence structure here is oddly choppy and passive; her switch to the passive which, as David Seed observes, “focus[es] the reader’s attention on objects and results while leaving origination unspecified” (106), indicates her narrative manipulation. Still, even though she is struck by Carwin, she does not quite know “whether he were an object to be dreaded or adored” (65). But as the narrative moves along, Carwin increasingly becomes a dreaded object and his physical description becomes more threatening: “Carwin’s frame might be said to be all muscle. His strength and activity had appeared, in various instances, to be prodigious. A slight exertion of his force would demolish the door” (91). That Carwin “is created,” that his frame “might be said” to be muscular, indicate Clara’s subtle abnegation of narrative responsibility, even while they emphasize her invisible control over the manner in which Carwin is perceived.

The control she exerts is designed to present events and characters through CC. When NC first introduces Carwin, she is assailed by a “flood of passion that would render [her] precipitate or powerless” (46), so for the sake of her story, she decides to restrain her perspective: “Let me tear myself from contemplation of the evils of which it is but too certain that thou wast the author, and limit my view to those harmless appearances which attended thy entrance on the stage” (46). She still speaks as NC but restricts her point of view to CC’s. Norman Grabo sees these instances in which Clara limits her perspective as troublesome and even awkward: “Clara knows at the time of writing that Carwin has confessed to being all these voices, yet she presents her own state of mind as if she did not know his explanation” (13). On many occasions, NC chooses to ignore her knowledge; but I would suggest that Clara’s cultivated ignorance is a narrative choice. Rimmon-Kenan, in her discussion of focalizers, explains that the narrator-focalizer (NC) “knows everything about the represented world,” while an internal focalizer’s knowledge (CC) “is restricted by definition: being a part of the represented world, [s]he cannot know everything about it” (80). However, in *Wieland*, the shifts between NC and CC turn out to be a little more than a trick of filters.

Narratological discussions of filters centre on the separation between vision and voice: “speaking and seeing, narration and focalization, may, but need not, be attributed to the same agent” (Rimmon-Kenan 73). It can be argued that NC focalizes through CC, as any narrator can filter through characters of his/her choosing. But if there is anything the extensive discussion of the senses accomplishes in *Wieland* it is “setting up hearing in the place of sight as the epitome of the senses” (Limon 41). This hierarchy prioritizes voice which weakens mediation in the narrative. Presenting events through another agent

normally renders the narrator more passive. However, Clara Wieland's narrative control is much more active, and perhaps more deceptive. She does not allow her readers to perceive events from a specific point. Rather, she gives them a specific voice, one that is not necessarily grounded. This subtle difference, that of presenting the story through an amplifier rather than a lens, influences potential narrative antidotes.

Wieland's tendency to favour voice over action reinforces the fact that filters are subdued. For Mark Seltzer, saying "supplants doing, but in this novel saying becomes a form (the only form) of doing" (85). This is true only for the characters who have an interest in controlling voice. Wieland's actions are not rooted in words. The murder of his family is an extremely physical deed. On the other hand, Carwin prefers words. Instead of engaging in murder, he chooses "to counterfeit a murderous dialogue" (185). And rather than carrying Clara into her brother's house when she faints on the doorstep, he decides to "put [his] lips to the keyhole, and [sound] the alarm" (186). Clara, like Carwin, favours speech. Her voice is so overwhelming that mediation becomes fruitless.

Once again mirroring story elements, Clara's vocal control parallels Carwin's. She is a ventriloquist. O'Neill describes the ventriloquism effect, "the inherently constitutive characteristic of all narrative discourse", as a mechanism that "essentially operates by disguising the point of origin of its discursive voice" (58). The first time reader of *Wieland* is faced with this issue. First of all, the narrator's identity is only revealed in Chapter Five: "They left Catharine, Louisa, and me to amuse ourselves" (37). Even though through this statement Clara reveals that she is the narrator, she still leaves the reader the work of deducing it. Consequently, the first few chapters come from an unknown origin. It is true that since *Wieland* is in epistolary form, Clara's "small number

of friends” (3) should know her identity. However, Brown’s larger project of making this novel “the first of a series of performances” (3) with one of the main actors obscured is unsettling, for the reader is unaware of who is performing the narration. The fact that Clara only discloses her identity in Chapter Five does not constitute ventriloquism for those friends for whom she ostensibly writes but it does for readers of Brown’s novel, making the vocal manipulations more destabilizing.

The location from which Clara is projecting her voice is also hidden, from both her friends and the novel’s readers. Until the story’s denouement, there is no indication of where her voice is coming from. She eventually reveals that the biggest part of the narrative was written in Pennsylvania and the last chapter in France. As Wallach points out, “these atomized narrative sites and stances inflect the novel’s crucial ventriloquism trope” (5). By hiding her identity and her location, Clara redirects the reader’s full attention to her utterances, to her voice. She possesses the same power Carwin does and it “enables [her] to mimic exactly the voice of another, and to modify the sound so that it shall appear to come from what quarter, and be uttered at what distance [she] please[s]” (181-2). From anywhere, or anytime, NC can convince readers that she speaks as CC. She controls the flow of events and regulates her tone, creating her own unique set of disembodied voices.

In addition, the fact that she can project her voice across space and time and can obscure the origins of that voice accentuates her power as narrator. She is in the strongest position to influence the narrative body and deal with the past tense. Of course, because her narration emulates madness and echoes the contagion inherent in the Wielands’ past, she is guilty of perpetuating narrative diseases. However, she is also, through

ventriloquism, closely linked to potential antidotes. Clara's involvement in both fuelling illness and curing it turns *Wieland* into a test site for evaluating how narrative elements behave in light of the disease motif. Clara's vocal manipulations have two functions: conflating the past and the present, and interrupting the flow of the narrative present by injecting it into the past.

The first function of Clara's ventriloquism is to imitate. In the instances when NC uses her abilities to speak as CC, she unifies her tenses. She sometimes shifts from narrating a past event to describing her present state without changing her voice: "In this state of mind, no wonder that a shivering cold crept through my veins; that my pause was prolonged; and, that a fearful glance was thrown backward. Alas! My heart droops, and my fingers are enervated; my ideas are vivid, but my language is faint" (135). Clara moves from a description of her trepidation at investigating a light that had been visible in her chamber while she was not home, to a description of her emotional and physical state as she writes without much more than a tense shift. This shows that rather than being filtered twice – through CC then through NC –, the narrative is filtered only through the narrator, who, by using ventriloquism, can make it look as though she were speaking from different points of view, from different locations. NC can imitate CC from anytime or anywhere.

Since the narrator controls the presentation of the past, she can manipulate disease and minimize its impact on the narration. In other words, ventriloquism provides the opportunity of mimicking disease but does not necessarily mean infection for the narrator. NC's position outside the narrative body shields her from illness. However, in one instance, Clara's time confluences have the opposite effect. Instead of leaving her

outside the narrative body, the tense shifts render her vulnerable because NC no longer simply performs CC but actually becomes her. When writing about her secret love for Pleyel, and her belief that her feelings are reciprocated, CC asks: "Is it not time, said I, to rectify this error?" (72). The following four paragraphs are written in the present tense. Except this time, the present tense is not NC's; it is that of the character-Clara. The narrator is not speaking here; Clara in the past is. In the surrendering of the present tense to CC, in the allowing of a merging of NC with the narrative body, does the narration then become vulnerable to disease? It normally would. However, the difference between this moment and any other past moment Clara describes is that this particular moment is non-threatening. This past is romantic and pleasing, which is why NC can merge with CC without sickening the narrative body. Consequently, in this sole instance, NC need not resort to ventriloquism. At all other times, she must rely on her vocal abilities to counteract the past's contagion.

The second function of Clara's ventriloquism is to directly inject the present into the narrative, resulting in interruptions to the action that many readers find tiring. Most of these breaks arise from Clara's tendency to remind readers of the difficulty she finds in the task of writing. For example, NC stops CC's investigation of the possibility of an intruder in her house to write: "Yet I will persist to the end. My narrative may be invaded by inaccuracy and confusion; but if I live no longer, I will, at least, live to complete it. What but ambiguities, abruptnesses, and dark transitions, can be expected from the historian who is, at the same time, the sufferer of these disasters?" (135). Much like Sophia Courtland's appeal to authenticity in *Ormond*, Clara's discussion of the difficulty of holding to narrative linearity while describing painful personal experiences offers an

excuse for the text's irregularities. However, to view her disruptions as deliberate is to see how she uses her voice in the quest for narrative remedies. As Seltzer points out, in "Clara's repeated concern that she is distorting events by her narration of them,... it is her voice ... that asserts itself as the ruling principle of the novel" (83). In this behaviour, Clara finds the potential for a narrative antidote, one that could, one she is unfortunately unable to administer.

The last major interruption in her narration of former events shows promise as a remedy against the infectious past. She breaks off from her description of the ominous scene between herself and her brother who is intent on murdering her and writes: "Here let me desist. Why should I rescue this event from oblivion? Why should I paint this detestable conflict? Why not terminate at once this series of horrors?" (209). The most effective antidote would be to forego narrating the past, thereby neutralizing the effects it could have on the reader, yet Clara chooses to proceed; she must inevitably complete telling her story because, she claims, she is "complying with [her correspondents'] request" (5). So instead of curing the infectious past, Clara uses ventriloquism to inject the present into the past in a manner that very much resembles the voice that "burst from the ceiling, and commanded [Wieland] – *to hold!*" (210). Ideally, the voice's command to stop would be effective. But Clara is divided against herself. NC injects the present into CC's past but then returns to imitating her past self. Clara is too invested in her narrative project and too close to the events to be able to successfully counteract the disease motif she perpetuates. Nevertheless, this opens up considerations of how to create narrative antidotes, of how to use narrative breaks in an attempt to slow illness's progress,

something that Sophia Courtland practises more extensively, and successfully, in *Ormond*.

Clara Wieland's narration is doomed to be diseased. She may have escaped the fire and her family's curse, but her narrating cannot be free of illness. The power of a contagious past combined with her propensity to emulate madness on the narrative level ensures the failure of any narrative antidote. Still, *Wieland* shows Brown's interest in medical and narrative disease, which resurfaces in both *Edgar Huntly* and *Ormond*. For his part, Edgar Huntly demonstrates narrative behaviours similar to Clara's and a tendency to provide elements that can both fuel or stem disease. However, where Clara tries to cope with the irrationality of her family's fate, Edgar must find antidotes while dealing with the repercussions of sleepwalking.

Narrative Somnambulism

The narrator of *Edgar Huntly* begins to tell his tale in a frame of mind close to Clara Wieland's at the end of her own narrative project. Whereas her observation that time cures the ill effects of a traumatic experience comes in the last chapter of *Wieland*, Edgar's similar observation appears at the beginning of his narration: "Time may take away these headlong energies, and give me back my ancient sobriety: but this change will only be effected by weakening my remembrance of these events" (5). Unlike Clara, who constantly seeks to quell the torrent of emotions assaulting her, he does not want to "lose dominion over sentiments" (5), believing that the closer he is to them, the more accurately his tale will be rendered. Indeed, for Edgar, the past is not as menacing or as infectious as Clara Wieland sees it. The fact that he is less reluctant to write down his story arguably provides him with an increased narrative control. However, disease in the novel diminishes his apparent command, creating an erratic narration that many readers find disturbing.

In the advertisement to the novel, Brown writes: "It is the purpose of this work ... to exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country, and connected with one of the most common and most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame" (3). The subtitle of the tale, *Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, suggests that the disease Brown is referring to is somnambulism. The 1793 yellow fever epidemic that inspired some of his other novels claimed more than five thousand victims in Philadelphia alone, and yet he terms sleepwalking "one of the most common" diseases. This is certainly intriguing because somnambulism hardly affects a high percentage of the population. Sufferers of sleepwalking are unaware of their actions or the motivations

behind them; they are forced to deal with the consequences of unconscious behaviour, having to decipher their own logic as if it were someone else's. In his preface, Brown maintains that the disease of somnambulism is more pervasive than people might think, affecting anyone who cannot fully justify his actions. With that in mind, he produces a novel rife with instances of sleepwalking. So much so that even the narration mimics the symptoms of this "most common" of afflictions, simultaneously perpetuating the disease and hinting at the possibility of its having an antidote.

Brown links *Edgar Huntly* explicitly with somnambulism but he does not rule out other forms of disease, contagion, or infection. While infection is not as prominent here as it is in *Wieland*, where a malignant past threatens Clara's present, or in *Ormond*, where simply looking on evil seems to guarantee illness, *Edgar Huntly* nevertheless reveals Brown's ongoing fascination with contagion. For Paul Witherington, evil or sin can be transferred in the novel "with all the randomness of a plague" (165) – a plague that ultimately ends up infecting the narrator and sparking a chain reaction of suspicious behaviour. Lyon Clark, on the other hand, sees the narrator's unreliability as the major, and indeed incurable, illness. Readers would be hard pressed to deny Edgar's unreliability or the fact that his conduct – his forcing of Clithero to reveal his secrets, his killing of numerous Indians, his suspicious hiding of information pertaining to Weymouth's fortune – demonstrates his affinity with the criminal Clithero Edny. However, evil and unreliability are not the only contagious elements in the text.

Here, as in *Wieland*, certain beliefs are potentially dangerous. Whereas they rendered Wieland and his father vulnerable to madness, in *Edgar Huntly* they do not have quite so devastating an effect. Directing his epistolary narrative to his fiancée, Mary

Waldegrave, Edgar explains her brother's conversion to beliefs that "to deify necessity and universalize matter" leads to dissolving "the supposed connection between the moral condition of man, anterior and subsequent to death" (125). Waldegrave eventually reverts back to his former faith; his story, unlike Wieland's and his father's, cannot be held up as an example of "the immeasurable evils that flow from an erroneous or imperfect discipline" (*Wieland* 5). In *Edgar Huntly*, certain religious beliefs are presented as "poison" (126), but the fact that Waldegrave is saved from his unhealthy conversion and actively involved in trying to eradicate any traces of the poisonous creed in the people around him effectively dissociates belief from narrative disease.

Consanguinity is another element that hints at illness, but it informs the disease motif slightly differently than it does in *Wieland*. Like Clara's grandfather, who believed that his life would naturally end with his brother's, Mrs. Lorimer, Clithero's former benefactress, is convinced that deadly fate runs in the blood: "Exempt as this lady was from almost every defect, she was indebted for her ruin to absurd opinions of the sacredness of consanguinity" (116). Of course, as the novel reveals, her belief is unfounded: she goes on to live for many years after Clithero kills her brother, Arthur Wiatte. Yet in a way, it is her very belief in consanguinity that ensures a constant threat on her life. Clithero latches on to the idea of blood ties spelling doom and justifies his plan to kill her by saying that it will, in effect, spare her the shock of hearing of her brother's fate: "It is in my power to screen thee from the coming storm: to accelerate thy journey to rest. I will do it" (78). Even when Edgar tells him Mrs. Lorimer is still alive, Clithero once again focuses on a belief in consanguinity, viewing himself as the crucial link between Wiatte's death and hers. In his second letter to Sarsefield, Edgar writes:

“He talked of a deed, for the performance of which, his malignant fate had reserved him” (280). But the fact that Mrs. Lorimer manages to cling to life prevents the novel from firmly yoking consanguinity with disease.

Still, the novel expands on this particular idea in a way that becomes useful in understanding Edgar’s narrative behaviour. After waking up in the middle of the wilderness, Edgar slowly and painfully makes his way back to civilization. He eventually comes to a house that looks “the model of cleanliness and comfort” which leads him to think that he can “claim consanguinity with such beings” (217). Edgar’s musing ascribes a close tie, a blood tie, between himself and the occupants of the house. Ironically, the owner of the dwelling turns out to be a violent drunkard. While this episode does not, as *Wieland* does, clearly set up consanguinity as vulnerability to specific forms of disease, it does point out Edgar’s propensity for imitating other characters’ – mainly criminals’ – behaviour. As a sleepwalker, he is just as isolated as the drunk who proves that it is useless “to reason him into humanity and soberness” (219). Both men, the inebriated and the sleeper, embody states that dictate actions according to a completely different, sometimes unfathomable, logic.

In this novel, concerns for consanguinity extend into problems of doubling between characters who share no blood. Many critics, Michael Davitt Bell, Donald Ringe, and Dana Luciano, to name a few, argue that Edgar’s emulation of Clithero creates a doppelganger effect. Such an exploration of how the doubling between these two men functions can be very fruitful narratively. Luciano points out that “the effect that storytelling has on Edgar within the narrative itself [is] an effect of compulsory mimicry” (6), something that acts in fact very much like disease, like “an experience in

irresistibility” (Dawes 440). Once Edgar is infected, any disease has access to the narrative level, and is no longer quarantined within the story. As Peter Bellis shows:

If Huntly’s daylight investigations have led him to follow in Clithero’s footsteps, his own sleepwalking signals his entry into a realm of unconscious repetition. And it is at this point, when his story begins to imitate Clithero’s, that the form of his narration does so as well. Repetition thus comes to dominate both the diegetic and the extradiegetic levels of the text. (46)

However, while the form of his narration repeats Clithero’s – or Clithero’s narration mirrors Edgar’s, since the latter influences the overall narrative – Edgar’s narrative control clearly mimics sleepwalking, something Clithero’s account does not do.

Demonstrating how narrative sleepwalking functions in *Edgar Huntly* requires a closer look at how somnambulism is described in the story. For one thing, as Christophersen highlights, the uneasy sleepers have a burdened conscience: “The problem is that the secrets Edgar and Clithero conceal by day drive them from their beds at night. This, Brown suggests, is the nature of guilt – an ever-shifting cargo, continually upsetting the soul’s equilibrium” (139). The guilt these men carry leads to what Brown terms a common illness, one that is very much a silent affliction. In the opening chapter, Edgar does describe the sleepwalker he encounters as producing sounds, sobs that increasingly became “louder and more vehement” (10). However, this wordless expression of pain is the closest thing to voice a somnambulist can have. Indeed, the disease is more physical than verbal, since it produces “a body run away with itself” (Luciano 11). With somnambulism, then, actions are the words.

One of the sleepwalkers' most telling actions is burial. *Edgar Huntly* is rife with instances of concealment; even names, as Limon points out, serve as constant reminders of this particular deed: "It is impossible to miss puns in the dead man's name – Waldegrave – and the name of the place – Solebury – where he is killed and Huntly and Clithero are almost interred... [O]nce Brown makes naming a source of significance, we can hardly know where to stop projecting significance into the novel" (64-5). Indeed, the importance of burial resurfaces in the actions of the two sleepwalkers who conceal documents while out on their unconscious rambles. Edgar catches Clithero burying something under the elm where Waldegrave died – a burial that leads him to believe that the somnambulating Clithero is responsible for Waldegrave's murder. After forcing Clithero to narrate his life story, Edgar realizes that "[t]he secret, which [he] imagined was about to be disclosed, was as inscrutable as ever" (86). The secret Clithero hides is not his culpability in Waldegrave's death but the hand he played in killing Wiatte and then threatening Mrs. Lorimer and her daughter. What he buries during his nocturnal excursion is Mrs. Lorimer's unpublished yet widely circulated manuscript (71), the one she wrote to explain her behaviour with regards to her criminal brother, and to affirm her virtue. As Clithero confesses to Edgar, he "read in it the condemnation of [his] deed, the agonies she was preparing to suffer, and the indignation that would overflow upon the author of so signal a calamity" (71). The knowledge contained in the manuscript, the knowledge of Mrs. Lorimer's character, is buried because it further condemns Clithero and amplifies his guilt.

Clithero is not the only sleepwalker guilty of concealing documents. Edgar eventually realizes that, for him, somnambulism not only translates into unconsciously

walking into the wilderness but also in hiding knowledge. At the beginning of Chapter Thirteen, Edgar goes to great lengths to describe the locked cabinet and the secret drawer where he hid Waldegrave's letters, which makes his realization that the letters are gone all the more intriguing (128). It is not until the end of the novel that he realizes that he was himself the culprit. As Sarsefield tells him: "Men have employed anxious months in search of that which, in a freak of Noctambulation, was hidden by their own hands" (250). Still, the novel does not clearly explain why Edgar's sleepwalking state leads him to conceal Waldegrave's letters. As a matter of fact, the narrative never clearly explains why he has an unconscious desire to take the documents he has already hidden in a drawer "whose existence none but the maker was conscious" (128) and place them "between the rafters and shingles of the roof ... where ... they would have remained till the vernal rains and the summer heats, had insensibly destroyed them" (250). Edgar's propensity to try to better conceal already hidden documents suggests that he is as guilty as Clithero.

The text indeed hints that Waldegrave's letters could contain evidence that would put Edgar's financial security in jeopardy. As Christophersen points out, "the neighbors seem convinced the reason Mary Waldegrave is away is that she is pregnant ... Since Edgar is her fiancé, this development would further explain the onset of a desperation great enough to allow Edgar to contemplate theft and murder" (133). Of course, Brown permanently buries Waldegrave's documents, whether or not they contained proof that his fortune in fact belonged to Weymouth. And "[a]ll other evidence... which might attest [his] veracity... [is] *buried* in the ocean" (emphasis added 143). In the end, after spending a lot of time trying to convince Weymouth and the reader that Waldegrave's holdings

should remain in Mary's hands, Edgar decides that the right course of action is for her to give back the money and be in Weymouth's debt for that portion of his fortune she already spent (149). Edgar could have stayed his course and kept the money but he bizarrely decides to admit his guilt and give it back. He writes: "The non-appearance of any letters or papers connected with it is indeed a mysterious circumstance, but why should Waldegrave be studious of preserving these?...Perhaps, indeed, they still lurk in some unsuspected corner" (149). If the proof may never be found, what makes him give up a chance at wealth? Possibly Edgar realizes that he is cornered and, like Clithero, he buries the greatest reminder of his criminal activity.

However, the narrative also presents the possibility that Edgar hides Waldegrave's letters because of his friend's wish to restrict access to the knowledge contained in them. After coming back from his first search in the wilderness for the ever-evasive Clithero, Edgar dreams about Waldegrave, whose apparition, he claims, came to remind him of "[s]ome service or duty" he has failed to perform (124). Edgar is planning on transcribing Waldegrave's writing as per Mary's request, but he has some qualms about sharing the knowledge in these documents. For one thing, "[i]n transcribing these letters [he] should violate pathetic and solemn injunctions frequently repeated by the writer" (125). The guilt that leads him to bury them while he sleepwalks could simply be connected with the fact that he is going against his late friend's wishes. Both men agree that the knowledge contained within these documents could be dangerous to an untrained mind, which is why Edgar plans on selecting "for [Mary's] perusal such as were narrative or descriptive" (127). Still, it is possible that his subconscious disagrees with this course of action, hence his sleepwalking concealment.

In his justification for the burial of Waldegrave's writing, Edgar deploys the metaphor of disease: "With regard to me, the poison had been followed by its antidote; but with respect to others, these letters would communicate the poison when the antidote could not be administered" (126). Edgar's contact with the written exposition of his friend's new creed is remedied when Waldegrave comes to reside with him. Conversation is the cure. Since dialogue is not always a possibility, both men are reluctant to infect others with the knowledge contained in these particular letters. However, Edgar's rationale seems slightly suspect. It stands to reason that, since he was cured, he might be in a position to administer the antidote if anyone else were to read Waldegrave's writings. If conversation were impossible, he could send his own writing to counterbalance the poison of the letters. Yet, he does not consider this option mainly because he places face to face dialogue above writing. As he explains to Mary at the beginning of his narrative: "Accents can scarcely be too rapid, or that which words should fail to convey, my looks and gestures would suffice to communicate" (6). By privileging conversation, Edgar leads readers to question written communication. In other words, he admits that writing is conducive to hiding knowledge, while conversation is conducive to revealing truth.

Still, by the very nature of his correspondence, the only thing Edgar produces is writing. And his narration is clearly untrustworthy. In fact, the one thing critics all agree on is that Edgar can be relied on to be unreliable. However, they disagree on what makes him so – his character or the simple fact that he is the narrator. While his character might explain why he makes certain narrative choices, ultimately his position as narrator gives him the most power. Of course, his emotions sometimes get in the way of clear narration, which leads readers like Peter Bellis to conclude that Edgar repeatedly calls "his own

narrative ... ability into question” (44). Indeed, he asks himself at the beginning of his letter to Mary if “emotions will not be re-awakened by [his] narrative, incompatible with order and coherence” (5). He is worried that the structure of his text will make little logical sense, something Bellis regards as “evidence of flaws in Brown’s technique, the [byproduct] of his own frenzied and obsessive storytelling” (55). However, sentiments do not prevent Edgar from exploiting structural peculiarities, apparent inconsistencies that begin to make sense when viewed in light of narrative sleepwalking. Edgar takes advantage of breaks and shifts whenever he can and uses them to mimic the very disease his story describes.

Seeing Edgar as fully in control of his narration is a highly debated issue yet certain clues definitely reveal his narrative command. While the opening to his letter to Mary suggests that emotional instability threatens his narrative ability, Edgar’s word choice hints at control: “let me struggle for so much composure as will permit my pen to trace intelligible characters” (6). The characters here are either the letters he is tracing on the page, or the people who populate his story; this double sense in Edgar’s choice signals his awareness of his narrating control, something his exploitation of embedded narratives and filters certainly supports.

Unlike Clara Wieland who hides behind ventriloquism to control narrative elements, Edgar relies more heavily on filters. For example, his statement on sleepwalking in Chapter Two reveals more than a simple opinion as to the nature of the disease:

The incapacity of sound sleep denotes a mind sorely wounded. It is thus that atrocious criminals denote the possession of some dreadful secret. The thoughts,

which considerations of safety enables them to suppress or disguise during wakefulness, operate without impediment, and exhibit their genuine effects, when the notices of sense are partly excluded, and they are shut out from a knowledge of their entire condition. (13)

Edgar's description here is crucial to an understanding of narrative sleepwalking and how it can function as both a disease and a cure. On the one hand, his depiction of "a sorely wounded mind," of a guilty conscience, implies that somnambulism is a psychological disease, prompted by a moral illness. The somnambulist thus has a tendency to disguise knowledge and to suppress the truth, which will eventually turn into a narrative disease. On the other hand, his description of the sleepwalking state contains the suggestion that it is curative. While it is true that disease, as Arnold Weinstein states, is "the darkness that impedes knowledge of our own bodies" (106), the very fact that the sleepwalker is unaware of his body leads to an exposition of "genuine effects," to a truth beyond concealment, to a kind of cure. Edgar implies that sleepwalking is beneficial, bringing to light knowledge any sinful conscious man wishes to hide. In light of the fact that Edgar not only turns out to be a sleepwalker but also, as a narrator, already knows he is one, his almost contradictory description of somnambulism suggests two distinct possibilities. He either considers himself a criminal, which his unreliability would support, or he establishes a filter, differentiating himself as the truth-revealing Narrator-Edgar (NE) from truth-disguising Character-Edgar (CE). In doing so, he imitates the very behaviour he describes, that of disguising or suppressing information in "considerations of safety" (13).

Arguably, this tendency could be quelled by the novel's embedded narratives. Given *Edgar Huntly's* hierarchy between verbal and written communication, Clithero's, Weymouth's, and Sarsefield's verbal accounts would logically be more trustworthy than Edgar's written account. However, they are not addressed directly to the reader; they are filtered through the narrator. When it comes to Clithero's account, Narrator-Edgar (NE) at times tries to remedy this mediation, to provide written details of how the narrative was delivered orally. For example, he interrupts the flow of Clithero's account to write: "At this period of his narrative, Clithero stopped. His complexion varied from one degree of paleness to another. His brain appeared to suffer some severe constriction" (60). Since he has narrative control, Edgar could easily have chosen to forego describing the other man's state of mind but he decides to do so in an attempt to present written communication that is as close to its verbal counterpart as it possibly can.

However, the case is very different in embedded narratives – and Weymouth's and Sarsefield's, in particular – that could contain information contrary to what Edgar wants to present. He makes a distinction between desirable and undesirable knowledge. In the case of Clithero, Edgar seeks answers, in an effort to learn the other man's story. He even says: "Curiosity is vicious, if undisciplined by reason, and inconducive to benefit. I was not, however, to be diverted from my purpose. Curiosity, like virtue, is its own reward. Knowledge is of value for its own sake, and pleasure is annexed to the acquisition, without regard to any thing beyond" (16). While Brown may, as Dawes points out, figure "curiosity as blameworthy" (444), his protagonist holds it up as a virtue. Nevertheless, when it comes to knowledge he does not seek, or knowledge that

might not suit his purposes, Edgar is quick to use filters to imitate the sleepwalker's wakeful state and to disguise his guilt.

The case of the Weymouth account is especially telling. "[His] long tale of shipwreck, imprisonment, and illness" is not merely, as Bellis argues, "another of Brown's authorial misjudgements." While it can seem "clearly excessive, for Weymouth will never again appear in the novel" (47), this particular embedded narrative is key in highlighting Edgar's editing practices. If there is one thing Weymouth's detailing of woes shows, it is that he would have the right to fight to reclaim his money. Going through numerous trials to find his fortune and ending up admitting that he realizes that "[n]o one but [he] can be conscious to the truth of [his] own story" (145), Weymouth seems to play almost too much in favour of Edgar. When Weymouth says, "However I decide upon your conduct in withholding or retaining it, I shall make suitable allowance for my imperfect knowledge of your motives and wants, as well as for your unavoidable ignorance of mine" (146), the suspicious reader wonders if Edgar is not embellishing the other man's dialogue.

Indeed, NE clearly plays with filters here. However, he is reversing the usual practice of using another character to screen his narration and is instead using himself to filter the character's narration. Even though Edgar tries to disguise the truth, the whole conversation between these two men most likely happened very differently. At the beginning of the exchange, Edgar writes: "While thus speaking, Weymouth fixed his eyes upon my countenance, and seemed anxious to pierce into my inmost soul. I was somewhat surprised at his questions, but much more at the manner in which they were put" (135). Weymouth's suspicion of Edgar's appearance paints a different portrait than

the filter and the narration do. The behaviour Edgar describes suggests that Weymouth believes that Edgar is concealing something dire under the guise of innocence. Later on, Edgar writes: “His interest in the fate of Waldegrave ought to have made the information he had received, a source of satisfaction rather than of regret” (135), again hinting at Weymouth’s prioritizing the recovery of his fortune above all else. For a man desirous to collect his dues, he seems overly calm and composed.

And Edgar seems to not only edit the other man’s behaviour, but also moderate his own anger and aggression; he insists: “I have told you among my friend’s papers your name is not to be found. I must likewise repeat that the possession of this money by Waldegrave was wholly unknown to us till his death” (144). The tone here is emphatic, drawing attention to Edgar’s previous denial of having heard of Weymouth and over protesting his ignorance of Waldegrave’s finances. For Grabo, “[w]e...cannot be too misled by the rational tone of voice in which Edgar tells his tale, for, as the story shows us, character has no distinguishing voice in a Brown fiction. Only reason speaks, madly, criminally, tenderly, viciously, and in a uniform voice” (57). This uniform voice of reason seems to characterize Weymouth’s dialogue: “The evidence on which I build my faith, in this case, is that of my own memory and senses; but this evidence cannot make itself conspicuous to you. You have nothing but my bare assertion, in addition to some probabilities flowing from the conduct of Waldegrave” (145). Weymouth is overly rational, clearly highlighting how Edgar plays with filters, though perhaps imperfectly, for Weymouth slips in: “What facts may exist to corroborate my claim, which *you have forgotten*, or which *you may think proper to conceal*, I cannot judge” (emphasis added 145).

Sarsefield's letter demonstrates that Edgar edits his mentor's dialogue as well. Indeed, in his letter, Sarsefield writes: "I know better than you the character of Clithero.... [He] is a madman whose liberty is dangerous, and who requires to be fettered and imprisoned as the most atrocious criminal" (283). However, at the end of his own narrative, Edgar reports that Sarsefield has a very different view of Clithero: "It is true. A tale like this could never be the fruit of invention or be invented to deceive. He has done himself injustice. His character was spotless and fair: All his moral properties seemed to have resolved themselves into gratitude, fidelity and honour" (264). Either Sarsefield has significantly changed his opinion of Clithero, which is unlikely, or Edgar is again exerting his control to twist the narration in his favour.

Edgar's editorial practices clearly mirror the guilty sleepwalker's tendency to "suppress or disguise [knowledge] during wakefulness" (13); and his use of the text to bury knowledge imitates the somnambulist's propensity to conceal information. Narratively, his behaviour mimics sleepwalking. But, while the novel's fragmented structure could hint at deeper somnambulism, Edgar's control denies that possibility. If Edgar's tale is a narrative body, then the embedded accounts of Weymouth and Sarsefield function almost as dream bodies who perform until Edgar wakes up, so to speak, and his narrative body coheres once again. However, because Edgar is always in control and only imitates sleepwalking, the embedded narratives are manipulated in the same way Luciano describes for character bodies: "Absorption into a well-told story produces a state like sleepwalking, in which the body runs away with itself, is outside all conscious control" (19). In effect, every consciousness is submerged in Edgar's, denying his narrative the possibility to sleepwalk. Nevertheless, his command of the text does demonstrate a desire

to imitate sleepwalking, to pretend to lose consciousness for a spell and let actions take over.

And what the focus on actions highlights is the constant burials. While narrative embedding is in itself a type of burial, Edgar goes one step further and problematizes the reader's sense of the importance of story components. As Hinds argues, "[f]or Edgar as narrator, all story elements have equal priority, the mundane as well as the metaphysical" (111). For her the break from the action to Waldegrave's background information is only one example of why in *Edgar Huntly*, "digressions in the strict sense of the word [are more important than the embedded narratives]" (111). However, in light of the recurrence of buried knowledge, the narrative breaks are as important as the instances of narrative embedding, because both contribute equally to confusion over which story elements are more significant. The length of Weymouth's narrative, the similarities between Clithero's story and his own, the frequent breaks from the action to extended background stories or philosophical discussions all become indicators of Edgar's active involvement in burying knowledge on all the narrative levels. He has, like the Minister D— in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter," learned how to hide things in plain sight.

Another way Edgar Huntly conceals knowledge is through paraphrase. When he unearths the buried manuscript, he replicates Clithero's behaviour and denies the reader access to its immediate contents. He only expands on what Clithero previously said: "No wonder that a soul like Clithero's, pervaded by these proofs of inimitable excellence, and thrillingly alive to the passion of virtuous fame, and the value of that existence which he had destroyed, should be overborne by horror at the view of the past" (116). The reader is not given any more information than Clithero has already given. In her discussion of

Poe's "The Purloined Letter," Barbara Johnson examines the way in which, at the point at which the letter's contents could be revealed – when Dupin has given it to the Prefect and he has opened it up – the narrator shades in to paraphrase:

[W]hereas it is generally supposed that the function of paraphrase is to strip off the form of a speech in order to give us only its contents, here the use of paraphrase does the very opposite: it withholds the contents of the Prefect's remarks, giving us only their form. And what is swallowed up in this ellipsis is nothing less than the contents of the letter itself. (216)

This is exactly what Edgar achieves in his text. While the Character-Edgar unearths knowledge, the Narrator-Edgar ensures that that knowledge remains buried in the story; NE decides to only give a second-hand account of what his past self read, effectively concealing the full truth of what he discovered. At this point, the act of burying knowledge becomes more important than the contents of the document. The act is a remedy, pointing out knowledge that can be beneficial in dispelling a guilty man's tendency to disguise. But Edgar's inclination to conceal knowledge underlines the fact that potential cures cannot be erased, only suppressed. Since concealment and disguise come from the same person, the remedy is not as effective as it could be.

With so many instances of disease in the novel, one wonders where, and if, strong antidotes exist. As the sleepwalkers in the story reveal, the very act of burial can lead to a cure: when they bury knowledge, it is like a red flag leading others to the heart of the secret these men want to hide. Edgar even worries about the morality of gaining knowledge through another's illness. As he states in relation to his fellow sleepwalker, "[w]hat Clithero thought proper to conceal, it was criminal for us to extort from him"

(109). Yet he quickly forgets such considerations when he thinks that uncovering knowledge can help his fellow man. While investigating Clithero's room, Edgar chances upon a mysterious box no one seems able to open. He decides its contents will be invaluable to him: "I desire to restore him to peace, but a thorough knowledge of his actions is necessary.... It was possible that this box contained the means of this knowledge" (111). He feels so strongly about this potential opportunity to know Clithero that his narration does not betray hesitation. However, after opening the box and realizing that not only did it hold nothing that could answer his question but Clithero had rigged it so that it could not be locked once again, Edgar admits that he "had been tempted thus far, by the belief that [his] action was without witnesses, and might forever be concealed" (113). For Edgar, uncovering knowledge becomes so wrapped up in secrecy that it undermines the strength of antidotes. Ideally, the simple act of discovering what is hidden would lead to a cure, but by so carefully controlling information buried and unearthed, the narrator becomes ineffective in arriving at a cure.

So it is up to the reader to find remedies for Edgar's often disembodied narrative body. Despite his command of the narrative, we can still uncover some elements that escape his control. Notably, since he buries knowledge in the very fact that he does not attribute priority to narrative elements, the reader is left with the task of ranking them, of trying to locate "causal connection or motivation" (Hinds 111). Still, even if a reader is able to locate the knowledge Edgar buries within the text, the priority attributed to it will be subjective. The act of discovering what is concealed can be an antidote to Edgar's imitation of narrative sleepwalking, but without clear indications as to what that knowledge exactly means, the remedy is inefficient. And the different narratives

embedded within *Edgar Huntly* do not necessarily “undermin[e] instead of consolidat[e] narrative coherence and closure” (45) as Bellis argues, but instead delay unity. The only way to finally achieve that coherence, would be to locate a trustworthy source of knowledge seemingly outside the text and therefore outside Edgar’s control – a source disconnected from sleepwalking.

The one thing outside of Edgar’s power is Sarsefield’s letter. As Lyon Clark points out, “it is the only place in the novel where an alternate point of view is introduced without being incorporated into and therefore subordinated to Huntly’s narrative” (92). The contents of Sarsefield’s letter are accessible and dispel some of the confusion created by Edgar’s narration. Edgar’s mentor “attempts to put an end to...narrative transferences by giving Edgar back his own story, albeit in a more complete and more objective form” (Luciano 6). Since Edgar’s tale has already been written, the letter cannot change it. Whatever he learns from his mentor’s letter he cannot transfer narratively. Only Brown’s external readers can benefit from Sarsefield’s writing as an antidote, because even Mary Waldegrave, the putative recipient of his narrative, does not have access to Sarsefield’s letter as a narrative antidote, for she never sees the document. For her, only the knowledge buried within Edgar’s text can effect a cure to problems arising from somnambulism, but the only effective remedy is knowledge that remains untouched by the narrator.

In the end, since the narrator is not the one delivering the strongest antidote, the complex nature and representations of disease in *Edgar Huntly* become overwhelming. With a physical infection, treatment is more straightforward but here, the web of disguises, lies, truths, and burials evades any cure. But the novel’s attempts to balance

narrative disease and its antidote highlight important tools and techniques that demonstrate how, like *Wieland* and *Ormond*, *Edgar Huntly* serves as a testing ground for the effectiveness of combining narrative breaks and filter shifts in creating narrative antidotes. In *Ormond*, Sophia Courtland, whose privileged position as an observer and third person narrator increases the antidote's potential, manipulates narrative elements so as to have a different effect on a narrative disease that, instead of paralleling ventriloquism and somnambulism, parallels yellow fever.

Breaking Away from Infection

Unlike his other major novels, Brown's *Ormond* does not revolve around the eponymous character. Instead, it focuses on Constantia Dudley and how she fares against the evils of "[p]overty, disease, servile labour, [and] a criminal and hapless parent" (248). In depicting how her purity is threatened by such misfortunes, Brown wields the brush of the "moral painter" he describes in his prefaces to *Wieland* and *Edgar Huntly*, whose "business" it is "to exhibit [his] subject in its most instructive and memorable forms" (*Wieland* 3). The subject of *Ormond* is not only Constantia's morality but also the varied forms of evil she and the other characters encounter – forms that converge, for Brown, in the symbol of disease. The construction of disease as evil and evil as disease is crucial in this particular novel. Yet *Ormond*, rampant as it is with infections, also offers possible antidotes.

The representations of disease in this novel differ from those in *Wieland* or *Edgar Huntly*. Here, illness is much more aggressive and slightly less selective. Many critics have focused on Brown's interest in sickness and its transgressive potential. Mary Chapman clearly highlights Brown's obsession "with the risks and benefits of boundaries and borders" (23). In combining this interest with his view that "[p]lague operates by invisible agents, and [that] we know not in what quarter it is about to attack us" (qtd in Clark 156), Brown creates an environment in which characters are vulnerable to infection from agents whose traversal of barriers cannot always be easily remedied. Critics of *Ormond* have tended to highlight the links between disease, morality, and narration in the novel. Christophersen, for example, shows that Brown keeps the symbol of disease alive through "diction and imagery (67), while Limon argues that "[t]he yellow fever is a

metaphor of human behavior” (45). Both accentuate the importance of contagion in the novel – the contagion of evil specifically, that, as Christophersen suggests, is so profound that “to look on it is to be stricken by it” (83).

Ormond's preoccupation with disease on the linguistic and imagistic level is, according to other critics, mirrored on the level of narrative structure, which is plagued with flaws. Donald Ringe excuses the novel's narrative breaks and fragments as a product of Brown's pressure to keep up with the press (33). And Hinds sees the novel's digressions as “discursive chaos” (122), arguing that “the shifting narrative voice...and framed narratives...complicate any clear sense of...plot” (121). Indeed, Brown even seems to lay the groundwork for such objections early on in the novel, when Sophia begins her letter to Rosenberg half-apologetically:

My narrative will have little of that merit which flows from unity of design. You are desirous of hearing an authentic, and not a fictitious, tale. It will, therefore, be my duty to relate events in no artificial or elaborate order, and without that harmonious congruity and luminous amplification which might justly be displayed in a tale flowing merely from invention. (37)

The appeal to authenticity to excuse an awkward narrative structure sounds as though it could simply be a cover up for hasty workmanship. Frequent deviations from Constantia's story certainly try the patience of anyone who is “anxious to obtain some knowledge of the history of Constantia Dudley” (37). Yet, narrative digressions and shifts, I suggest, serve a very specific purpose in *Ormond*. They attempt to lay out a treatment plan against the progression of evil.

In trying to deal with infections and evil, the novel tests remedies on as many narrative levels as possible. William Scheick argues that “Sophia’s [religious] belief...is sorely tested by the seemingly malignant destiny of the characters in her story, and the incidents she recounts suggest that her notions amount to a protective fiction” (129). In other words, Sophia’s narrative tries to cope with depicting events and characters afflicted by unfortunate fates. In some instances, events provide relief. For example, when Constantia is at a loss as to where to find money to pay rent, she turns to an old acquaintance of her father’s, Mr. Melbourne. He helps her find work as a seamstress and, with this steady source of income, the Dudleys are able to survive. In this case, the narrator writes: “To what entire and incredible reverses is the tenor of human life subject! A short minute shall effect a transition from a state utterly destitute of hope, to a condition where all is serene and abundant” (123). Instant cures such as Melbourne’s help are, however, rare and sometimes short lived, but they nevertheless signal the narrative’s interest in establishing a counterpoint between disease and remedy.

Ormond’s treatment of antidotes relies heavily on Constantia. She is the character who shows the strongest resistance to infections, both physical and mental. First of all, she survives the devastating yellow fever epidemic, even finding the disease to have been beneficial by “affording her a respite from toil, supplying leisure for the acquisition of a useful branch of knowledge, and leading her to the discovery of a cheaper, more simple, and more wholesome method of subsistence” (94). Her ability to find advantages in such a devastating event underlines her immunity. The narrator also intimates that Constantia’s resistance is grounded in her rational thinking. Unlike Baxter, she demonstrates strength of character in fighting off her own imagination: “She endeavoured to stifle the

conviction that some mortal sickness had seized upon her own frame. Her anxieties of head and stomach she was willing to impute to extraordinary fatigue and watchfulness, and hoped that they would be dissipated by an hour's unmolested repose" (78). Her instinct is to fight off any potentially damaging thoughts or elements.

Resistant to yellow fever, Constantia is able to withstand infections of the mind. Even though she comes into contact with many characters who can influence her, she can identify which ones are beneficial and reject others. Notably, her neighbour Whiston is, as Grabo highlights, "the bearer of a 'tainted atmosphere' that not only destroys others after his death, but also infects them much earlier with images of terror" (38). Stephen Dudley falls victim to this contagion, while his daughter "endeavoured to remove the impression which had been thus needlessly made. She urged her doubts as to the truth of Whiston's representations, and endeavoured, in various ways, to extenuate the danger" (64-5). Not only is she immune to Whiston's tainted atmosphere, but she also acts as an antidote to try to dispel the mental infection her father has contracted. When it comes to Mr. Dudley, Constantia is acutely aware of the effect she has. As she points out to Helena, his "mere belief of [her] presence seems to operate as an antidote to the dreariness of solitude" (152). More than once, Sophia demonstrates her friend to be a possible cure for many evils, and she makes a point of observing that Constantia's "heart rejected the thought of being the author of injury to any man" (109). Constantia is both immune to evil and incapable of carrying an infection that could be detrimental to others.

However, her immunity and role as antidote sometimes appear to be ineffective. When Helena Cleves asks her to plead her case to Ormond, for example, Constantia realizes that her mere presence at her friend's side and the influence of her words cannot

be effective antidotes. Ormond is the only one with the power to cure his mistress's fate. Constantia tells him: "There is one method of repairing the evil. It lies with you to repair that evil" (160). She entreats: "Make Helena your wife. This is the unequivocal *prescription* of your duty" (emphasis added 170). Her intentions to plead for Helena are pure, yet the more time she spends with Ormond, the more he shifts his passion onto her. In the end, Helena kills herself when he tells her quite bluntly: "This is the first night that you will spend in dreary solitude. I know it will be sleepless and full of agony; but the sentence cannot be recalled. Henceforth regard me as a brother" (169). Ironically, she ends her life by taking laudanum, a remedy against insomnia. Too much of the antidote spells her demise. And Constantia's intervention, which is meant to remedy Helena's unrequited love sickness, ends up convincing Helena that the only cure for her situation is death.

Helena's death is of course more a result of Ormond's actions than Constantia's. She is constant in her position as an antidote, but when it comes to him, her curative potential is subdued. Ormond has a very strong presence to counteract. "[O]f all Brown's characters," Bell writes, "[Ormond is] the most sexually aggressive and the most clearly linked to ... depraved idealism, sexual passion and political radicalism" (149). His villainy is overpowering and his ability to manipulate people's opinion is an element very difficult to remedy. As Sophia observes: "In listening to his discourse, no one's claim to sincerity appeared less questionable. A somewhat different conclusion would be suggested by a survey of his actions" (129). She is in a position to compare Ormond's actions and his words, but very few other characters are. Even Constantia, with her resistance to mental infection and propensity for "examining, comparing, and

deducing...conclusions as to the coincidence between mental and external qualities" (97), finds herself swayed by Ormond's words.

Indeed, when it comes to Ormond, both Mr. Dudley and Sophia are able to see that he is a bad influence on Constantia, and yet she cannot seem to free herself from that influence without help. When her father proposes that they travel to Europe so Constantia can, among other things, cut off her ties to "the dubious character of this man, the wildness of his schemes, and the magnitude of his errors" (209), she eventually accepts the proposal. She then wonders why her father's earnest reasoning had, surprisingly, "not been suggested by her own reflections" (210). Unfortunately, after her father's death, Constantia falls under Ormond's sway once again, and Sophia predicts darkly: "Hence, my friend had decided without the sanction of experience, had allowed herself to wander into untried paths, and had hearkened to positions pregnant with destruction and ignominy" (243). For all her rationality and virtue, Constantia is on the verge of allowing herself to be infected forever.

While Sophia rescues her friend, and thus accomplishes what Mr. Dudley failed to do, the novel still seems to indicate that Constantia is somehow tainted. The very fact that she kills Ormond offers a sort of proof that she is part of the disease and not the remedy. But killing him is an act of self-defence, to prevent him from raping her, and it is depicted as a cure. Sophia writes: "Not to deplore the necessity which had produced this act ...; but, since this necessity existed, it was surely not a deed to be thought upon with lasting horror, or to be allowed to generate remorse" (274). Both the narrator and Constantia abhor the violence needed to end Ormond's poisonous influence, but because the young lady was "menaced with an evil worse than death" (274), her actions are not

represented as evil. In short, Constantia is assailed by numerous hardships yet her character remains virtuous. For her, looking on evil equals being stricken by it only in as much as her destiny is clearly an unlucky one; as Sophia points out: “I could not but discover a sort of incurable malignity in her fate” (252). Constantia’s fate may be infected but Constantia herself remains immune. The damage from Ormond’s contagion is merely superficial.

She is of course not the only antidote in *Ormond*. Remedies against the yellow fever, and more importantly how Brown presents them, are helpful in understanding the novel’s treatment of cures. Constantia’s survival of the epidemic is attributed to “[a]bstinence from food, and the liberal use of cold water” (83) which seem to “have a medicinal operation on the sick” (83). However, Brown does not offer such remedies as a definitive cure against yellow fever. In describing the history of the Dudleys, Sophia shows that lack of food and availability of cold water were realities Constantia and her father dealt with even before the epidemic. In other words, it is unclear what exactly saved them from the yellow fever but the fact that they survived is retroactively attributed to the forced deprivation in their lives.

Brown also alludes to more specific medical cures. When Constantia finds herself the only one left willing to care for the sick Mary Whiston, she asks her father for help. Mr. Dudley, an apothecary by trade, tells Constantia that “[t]here [are] certain complicated remedies which might possibly be beneficial, but these [are] too costly, and the application would demand more strength than [she can] bestow” (76). For economic reasons, Constantia can only provide Mary with “some of the most powerful evacuants” (76), which unfortunately do not help cure her. The antidote becomes whatever is on

hand and is not seen as worthy of being clearly identified. The reader does not get a precise description of what the evacuants consist of, but to counteract this vagueness the narrator relates that the treatment met with the physician's approval (77). This reluctance to delve more fully into the scientific aspect of cures is intriguing, especially considering that Brown does not shy away from expanding on scientific issues in *Wieland* or *Arthur Mervyn*. However, the novel's reliance on a doctor's approval instead of scientific detailing of the cure accomplishes something similar to what *Wieland's* "testimony of the senses" (30) does. Indeed, by focusing the reader's attention on another related issue, the narrator in effect masks the fact that the real source of the disease – in *Wieland* – or the remedy – in *Ormond* – is never disclosed.

Both the tendency to identify remedies once the disease has been eradicated and the reluctance to name the specific components of antidotes parallel the fact that the true source of the disease is never established within the narrative. Medical explanations of the yellow fever's advent are not provided, because they were quite unclear at the end of the eighteenth century. As a result, all the narrator can do is describe the source of an infection – for example, Baxter's imagination, or Mary's contact with Whiston – but leave greater elucidations vague. The closest the reader comes to the origin of the yellow fever is a paraphrase of Whiston's verbal account of terror: "His tale of the origin and progress of the epidemic, of the number and suddenness of recent deaths, was delivered with endless prolixity" (64). Whiston's story is probably full of inaccuracies but his is the only account the narrative offers that addresses the disease's source. The fact that the novel cannot explain the genesis of disease mirrors the way that it complicates locating the sources of narrative events and understanding character motivations.

For Scheick, the “diffusion of narrative focus, in combination with the management of repetition, character trait doubling, and naming, makes the reader respond to the text in the same way Constantia reacts to Ormond: ‘the task [of comprehension is] always new, [is] always in the point of being finished, and always to be recommenced’” (135). While Scheick’s argument focuses on shifting identities and causalities in the novel as evasions of origins, his formulation is nevertheless useful for considering the novel’s representation of disease and antidotes. Not only does repetition supplant origination (Scheick 134), making the act of contagion more important than the origin of the disease, but the constant shift from answers to questions demonstrates that, for a novel invested in a disease motif and in the presentation of potential antidotes, diagnosis holds very little importance.

In presenting a diagnosis and laying out a treatment plan, “[t]he physician’s task [is] to tell the story of the disease, to ‘say what has happened, recognize what is happening, foretell what will happen’” (Percy 601). This task is decidedly not a priority in *Ormond*. Sophia, as the narrator, would be in the best position to diagnose the story, to clarify how infections started, to provide clear indications of how to cure disease. However, she uses her narrative control quite differently: “The circularity characteristic of Ormond’s explanations applies as well to Sophia’s narrative manner. Sophia’s revelations frequently clarify little for the reader; rather they generate more questions” (Scheick 133). Her narration, while leading to more enquiries than conclusions, presents more similarities with case studies than with strictly diagnostic accounts. Indeed, she emphasizes description and exploration as opposed to cause and effect relationships. This approach provides Sophia with the leeway to introduce accounts and anecdotes anywhere

within the narrative proper. The novel's five major narrative breaks offer her the opportunity to set up her own narration as an antidote to the infectious evil she inevitably describes.

In the first break, when Constantia is recovering from yellow fever, the narration stops and shifts to the Baxter anecdote: "The tale, on its own account, as well as from the connection of some of its incidents with a subsequent part of these memoirs, is worthy to be here inserted. However foreign the destiny of Monrose may at present appear to the story of the Dudleys, there will hereafter be discovered an intimate connection between them" (86). Sophia justifies this embedded narrative not only because of the information it provides that will clarify future story elements, but also because of its description of a worst-case scenario of infection comparable to Constantia's case. Baxter, the husband of one of Constantia's acquaintances, spies on his neighbours and when he sees what he believes to be the daughter burying her father who died of the yellow fever, he becomes ill. He clearly does not share Constantia's mental immunity: "His case may be quoted as an example of the force of imagination. He had probably already received, through the medium of the air, or by contact of which he was not conscious, the seeds of this disease. They might perhaps have lain dormant, had not this panic occurred to endow them with activity" (93). By allowing this anecdote to make its way into her narrative, Sophia shows a desire to instruct her reader on the possibilities of infections, providing greater knowledge as a remedy.

The second major narrative break in *Ormond* serves to provide more information on the titular character. Here, however, the placement of the embedded narrative is somewhat odd. Where the Baxter anecdote comes right after a meeting between

Constantia and Sarah Baxter, the chapter on Ormond's character is inserted right when Mr. Melbourne is briefing Ormond on the Dudleys's history. However, this narrative break is strategically placed because Sophia's reader has already been told the history Melbourne is about to recount, and the chapter following the break focuses more fully on Ormond. Sophia is desirous of providing her reader with as much information as possible in order to prevent his infectious nature from convincing us he is not evil. She states: "A fortunate concurrence of incidents has unveiled his actions to me with more distinctness than to any other. My knowledge is far from being absolute; but I am conscious of a kind of duty, first to my friend, and secondly to mankind, to impart the knowledge I possess" (126). In a novel where looking on evil equals being stricken by it, Sophia offers a ray of light to dispel the darkness brought on by Ormond's character; she gives the reader the antidote in advance – an antidote against Ormond unavailable to Constantia.

Of course, the source of Sophia's knowledge is never disclosed, something Scheick presents as highly problematic (137). He expands on this idea to show that Sophia's credibility is undermined by how, like Ormond, she "exhibit[s] or hid[es], or shift[s information] according to [her] purpose" (243). While readers are more inclined to trust her narrative than they are Edgar Huntly's, Sophia's manipulations can seem suspect. Accusations of unreliability are simply a reality any narrator faces. However, in *Ormond*, it is much more fruitful to focus on how beneficial Sophia's control can be, rather than to question it. She has an advantage Clara and Edgar do not: she did not live through most of the events. Sophia is free of the painful emotions that influence Brown's other first-person narrators, and the distance between herself and what she is recounting contributes to her narration being an antidote.

In her description of Ormond's character, Sophia devotes some time to detailing his unusual abilities:

In early youth he discovered in himself a remarkable facility in imitating the voice and gestures of others. His memory was eminently retentive.... He was delighted with the power it conferred. It enabled him to gain access, as if by supernatural means, to the privacy of others, and baffle their profoundest contrivances to hide themselves from his view. It flattered him with the possession of something like omniscience. (129-30)

Sophia, as a narrator, demonstrates the same propensity to imitate others and of course she demonstrates an omniscience peculiar for "a character who simply is not there to witness, either to see or hear, the events of the narration" (Limon 44). This creates a division between Character-Sophia (CS) and Narrator-Sophia (NS), a distinction instrumental in the narration being considered as an antidote.

For Hinds, "the narrative voice of *Ormond* is confused at best" (121), yet there is a sense that Sophia capitalizes on what appears to be confusion. While the narration remains third person for most of the novel, NS adopts different filters quite easily. For most of the narrative, NS presents the story through Constantia. Many accounts are seen through her eyes. For example, the epidemic is introduced and discussed via Constantia's thoughts: "That a pest equally malignant had assailed the metropolis of her own country...had something in it so wild and uncouth, that she could not reconcile herself to the possibility of such an event" (64). In detailing Constantia's story, NS adopts this character's rational and virtuous filter. Yet, Sophia also demonstrates that she is capable of aligning her narration with other characters— with Ormond among others. When

describing Ormond's justifications for the use of his abilities, Sophia writes: "It was defensible on no other principle than necessity. The treachery of mankind compelled him to resort to it. If they should deal in a manner as upright and explicit as himself, it would be superfluous" (130). The narration is clearly filtered through Ormond here, presenting his rationalizations in a more favourable light than any other character would.

At other times, NS avoids character filters, claiming a wholly logical ignorance. A paragraph after presenting Ormond's justifications through his filter, the narrator states: "It is obvious how many singular conjectures must have grown out of this propensity. A mind of uncommon energy like Ormond's, which had occupied a wide sphere of action, and which could not fail of confederating its efforts with those of minds like itself, *must have given birth to innumerable incidents*" (emphasis added 131). Whereas, the narration is aligned with Ormond a few lines earlier, here, NS infuses the writing with her own slant. Not only will readers of Brown novels recognize in this statement an allusion to the evils that may flow from "an erroneous or imperfect discipline" (*Wieland* 5) but Sophia's comment also serves as a reminder of her presence, of her ability to comment on events and character beliefs, something which can contribute to antidotes.

If Clara Wieland breaks her narration to impress on her readers the difficulty of her writing process, Sophia incorporates her views more seamlessly. She frequently uses what Chatman calls "the slant": "Though only characters perceive events and existents in the story-world, narrators may join them in having *attitudes* about things in that world (and, of course, in the real world)" (197). Sophia's attitudes are sometimes very explicit which makes it easy for the reader to differentiate her commentaries from the way characters are "seeing, thinking, and judging events" (Chatman 197). For example, while

describing the interviews between Ormond and Constantia, she writes: "Ormond was partly right. Madness like death can be averted by no foresight or previous contrivance. This probably is one of its characteristics. He that witnesses its influence on another with most horror, and most fervently deprecates its ravages, is not therefore more safe" (166-7). General comments about humanity such as this one remind the reader that Sophia is in control and can interrupt the narrative at any moment to add information she deems important. And the slant in this particular statement also reinforces the fact that some ills are more difficult to prevent or remedy than others.

Yet Sophia's ability to morph into any character and her impulses to add her own slant cannot be combined into a successful antidote. These two elements require more support in order to effectively stem the progress of evil in the narrative. The narrator's slant can provide temporary relief by injecting new knowledge, but because Sophia only adds short commentaries, she cannot hope to cure the evils through that knowledge alone. In addition, her ability to disguise herself as, and imitate, any character becomes too broad to effectively constitute a cure. Indeed, her being able to impersonate anyone demonstrates a kind of neutrality. By mediating her narration through various filters, NS allows narrating to be exposed to contagions as well as remedies. Mediation is simply a carrier.

However, combining manipulations of voice and mediation with embedded narratives points towards potentially successful cures. Breaks in Sophia's narration become tests in whether tightening or relinquishing narrative control could tip the scale towards infection or remedy. While the Baxter anecdote, filtered through the simplistic Sarah, offers a worst-case infection scenario, the third major break, focusing on

Martinette de Beauvais, offers the success story of a character who remained uninfected by the evil she witnessed. The novelty of this narrative is that Martinette is not only the filter but also the narrator, relegating Sophia to the position of scribe. This break is a way for Sophia to study what would happen if she were not in control of the narrative. Indeed, if the narration is not under her control, it can be free of both disease and antidote. However, the problem with relinquishing narrative control is that Sophia becomes powerless to affect the rest of the story. If a new narration is the antidote, it has no way of being delivered to the rest of the narrative elements. Because *Ormond* is her epistolary project, Sophia must deliver the narrative remedy.

The last two of the five major narrative breaks are the most promising in effecting a cure. The fourth one starts off with Sophia introducing herself. The letter at the beginning announces that the narrative is private, directed only towards Rosenberg, who already knows the identity of the narrator. So why is it necessary for her to write: "I must be forgiven if I now introduce myself on the stage. Sophia Westwyn is the friend of Constantia, and the writer of this narrative" (219)? There is something awkward about this moment and especially about how she presents herself in the third person. Sophia has not previously shown an aversion to using the first person, especially when discussing Ormond: "I have already said that Ormond was engaged in schemes of an arduous and elevated nature" (180). Why does she not hesitate to use the first person, yet refuse to rely on it to introduce herself? The answer is clear: since Sophia's narration can carry either an infection or a cure depending on the filter she adopts, she needs to create a filter that will guarantee her full control. She can only achieve that control by creating herself as a

character within the story. The fact that she develops CS in Chapter Twenty-Three leads her to the successful – if somewhat short-lived – use of her narration as an antidote.

The last major break occurs right when Ormond has trapped Constantia in a New Jersey house and threatens her with rape:

Whatever thou intendest by way of prevention or cure, it behooves thee to employ with steadfastness. Die with the guilt of suicide and the brand of cowardice upon thy memory, or live with thy claims to felicity and approbation undiminished.

Choose which thou wilt. Thy decision is of moment to thyself, but of none to me.

Living or dead, the prize that I have in view shall be mine. (269)

Ormond is depicted in his most heinous light here and Constantia's predicament is even worse than before. He forces her into a position "pregnant with destruction and ignominy" (243), a position in sharp contrast with many novel endings of blissful unions and peaceful bedroom scenes. Setting the threat of rape in a location "where many of [Constantia's] infantile days had been spent" (253), Brown effectively demonstrates "the vulnerability of the private space" (Chapman 24). It is in the private sphere that Constantia needs saving. And true to her friend, Sophia once again comes to her rescue; only this time, she does it narratively. Indeed, after the description of this ominous episode, the action grinds to a halt and Sophia opens the next chapter by declaring: "It will be requisite to withdraw your attention from this scene for a moment, and fix it on myself" (269). In essence, NS withdraws the reader's attention from the rape scene and focuses it on CS.

NS goes on to narrate how CS's actions brought her to the New Jersey house where she finds Constantia trapped in a room: "Her hands were clasped on her breast, her

eyes wildly fixed upon the ceiling and streaming with tears, and her hair unbound and falling confusedly over her bosom and neck” (272). The reader is forced to follow CS and denied access to a continuous description of what exactly happened between Constantia and her tormentor. Of the five major narrative breaks in *Ormond*, this one is unique in averting the reader’s gaze from a full disclosure. All previous breaks are embedded in such a way that the narrative picks up right where it left off. In this instance, the scene is not only fragmented but part of it is obliterated. Of course, since Sophia’s project is to detail the life of Constantia, to be, as she says, a ‘faithful biographer’ (37), she has no choice but to reveal to the reader what happened in that room. But by splintering the rape scene, by filtering the narration through CS, she slows down the progress of the narrative’s disease. In forcing the reader to look away from evil, she demonstrates that narrative occlusions can have a curative effect for the reader, stemming the full force of moral ills. Unlike Edgar Huntly’s narrative concealments – which have a very different relation to the disease of somnambulism – Sophia’s narrative action here injects a short-lived antidote.

By creating a character of herself, Sophia is able to present a potentially viable cure. Unfortunately, given the very nature of the story she is writing, the narrator has no choice but to let the disease run its course. The malignant fates she is describing are in the past; where evil’s progress stops has already been decided by the story and her narrative cannot fully remedy that. Yet through her narration, she has the opportunity of balancing the progression of evil in *Ormond*. The simple fact that she is a third person narrator gives Sophia a greater advantage over narrative diseases than Clara or Edgar could ever have. Not being forced to deal with emotions arising from traumatic or puzzling

experiences grants the narrator more power to manipulate narrative elements, to stem infection. Still, even though *Ormond* presents a more effective antidote, the overwhelming presence of disease in these novels demonstrates that Brown had an easier time representing illness than he did cures. However, his use of *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond* to test how to combine narrative elements to arrive at remedies shows the importance of trying to balance illness, of providing a counterpoint to sickness.

Conclusion

Even though Brown clearly shows a desire to present antidotes to balance the somewhat uncontrollable diseases and infections in *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond*, the success of his narrative remedies is limited. Since so much rides on the narrator's control, separating elements that carry illness from those that can effect a cure is difficult. Much like the scientist who tries to isolate a specific component of a virus to create the anti-virus, Brown highlights certain narrative behaviours that can be useful in arriving at an antidote. These three narratives demonstrate the importance of having the right remedy, at the right time, for the right sickness. Indeed, luck can play a significant role in curing disease – or in any other human endeavour for that matter – as it does in bringing on ill.

A character's fortune is often described as malignant, linking disease and luck in *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond*. Clithero considers himself guided by a malignant fate while Sophia sees Constantia's life as a constant struggle against the "incurable malignity" (252) of her destiny. And Clara's descriptions of her family tree show that fate is not in the business of sparing the Wielands. The events presented in these three novels operate under Brown's desire to be a "moral painter" (*Wieland* 3) which conflates disease, luck and morality. The frequent discussions of malignant fates can shift the responsibility away from characters. Indeed, luck depicts a "conflict between believing we are determined and believing that we are morally responsible" (Andre 203). In providing a more extensive focus on his characters's fortunes, Brown seemingly takes away from their agency, something which is open to debate because many of his characters are depicted as striving for greater control of their destinies.

Still, a case could be made for seeing Brown's various representations of disease as metaphors for morality and social order. Obviously, the yellow fever epidemic serves that purpose, perhaps even more so in *Arthur Mervyn* than in *Ormond*. But more importantly, Brown's treatment of sickness, and of its origins, seems to inform such comparisons. Diseases "thought to be multi-determined (that is, mysterious)," Sontag states "have the widest possibilities as metaphors for what is felt to be socially or morally wrong" (60). If there is one thing Brown's novels accomplish it is complicating the search for a disease's source. His play between infection and illness often confuses characters and readers into thinking origins have been identified. His disease motif could indeed be said to be informing his project to depict the moral conditions of his country.

Furthermore, the sometimes uncertain cause of an individual's disease in Brown's narratives leads to considerations of luck in an attempt to find answers. As Sontag argues, any "disease whose causality is murky, and for which treatment is ineffectual, tends to be awash in significance" (57). When it comes to some more mysterious diseases, such as cancer, the lack of cures inevitably leads to a closer examination of the patient's life to try to find what caused the sickness. Often, resorting to luck is the only thing that can quiet a fruitless search for answers. A correlation establishes itself between a person's character and fortune: "[w]idely believed psychological theories of disease assign to the luckless ill the ultimate responsibility both for falling ill and for getting well" (Sontag 57). In *Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Ormond*, the uncertainty about the true source of madness, somnambulism, and evil can shift significance onto luck. Indeed, illness and fortune are so intertwined that they share a common language. As Nicholas Rescher points out: "Luck is a matter of our condition being affected, be it for good or ill, by

developments that are neither intended nor foreseen, but lie substantially outside the domain of our control” (7). So much of the same vocabulary is involved when we try to describe how luck and disease function that sometimes, the two become indistinguishable.

A lack of clear causation that conflates luck and disease naturally results in a merging of good luck and antidotes. Brown’s novels seem invested in presenting such instances. For example, Constantia’s good fortune in finding work with Mr. Melbourne turns into a cure. And Clara’s timely escape from her house fire temporarily remedies the ill feelings she had been wrestling with up to that point: “This incident, disastrous as it may at first seem, had, in reality, a beneficial effect upon my feelings. I was, in some degree, roused from the stupor which had seized my faculties” (217). In addition, Edgar’s chance at opening Clithero’s mysterious box seems designed to counteract the guilty sleepwalker’s constant burials: “No event could be supposed more fortuitous than this. An hundred hands might have sought in vain for this spring” (112). His luck in being the one to be able to access the box’s contents not only advances the story but paints Edgar as a potential site of a remedy’s location.

It would be interesting to further study the relationship between ill luck and disease, between good luck and antidotes, in Brown’s novels. While the definition, the influence, and the impact of luck have been debated extensively in philosophical, social, and ethical circles, a closer look at how narrative elements function under the scope of luck could be quite fruitful. It might be possible to arrive at an understanding of narrative luck in Brown’s writing, one that would extend considerations of moral luck into choices of narrative structures, characterizations, or mediation. Given the tendency *Wieland*’s,

Edgar Huntly's, and *Ormond's* narrations have of mirroring story elements, is it possible for luck to make its way into the narrative level or does it remain confined within the story?

Bibliography

- Andre, Judith. "Nagel, Williams, and Moral Luck." *Analysis* 43.4 (1983): 202-7.
- Baym, Nina. "A Minority Reading of *Wieland*." *Critical Essays on Charles Brockden Brown*. Ed. Bernard Rosenthal. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1981. 87-103.
- Bell, Michael Davitt. "'The Double-Tongued Deceiver': Sincerity and Duplicity in the Novels of Charles Brockden Brown." *Early American Literature* 9 (1974): 143-63.
- Bellis, Peter J. "Narrative Compulsion and Control in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*." *South Atlantic Review* 52.1 (1987): 43-57.
- Brown, Charles Brockden. *Arthur Mervyn; or Memoirs of the Year 1793*. 1889. Champaign: Book Jungle, 2006.
- . *Edgar Huntly; or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1988.
- . *Ormond; Or the Secret Witness*. Ed. Mary Chapman. Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 1999.
- . "The Man at Home." *The Rhapsodist and Other Uncollected Writings*. Ed. Harry R. Warfel. New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1943. 27-98.
- . *Wieland; Or the Transformation, and Memoirs of Carwin, the Biloquist*. Ed. Emory Elliott. New York: Oxford World's Classics, 1998.
- Chapman, Mary. Introduction. *Ormond; Or the Secret Witness*. By Charles Brockden Brown. Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 1999.
- Charvat, William. *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870: The Papers of William Charvat*. Ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1968.
- Chatman, Seymour Benjamin. "Characters and Narrators: Filter, Center, Slant, and Interest-Focus." *Poetics Today* 7.2 (1986): 189-204.

- . *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978.
- Christophersen, Bill. *The Apparition in the Glass: Charles Brockden Brown's American Gothic*. Athens: Georgia UP, 1993.
- Clark, David Lee. *Charles Brockden Brown, Pioneer Voice of America*. New York: AMS Press, 1966.
- Dawes, James. "Fictional Feeling: Philosophy, Cognitive Science and the American Gothic." *American Literature* 76.3 (2004): 437-66.
- Felman, Shoshana. *Writing and Madness (Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis)*. Trans. Martha Noel Evans and Brian Massumi. Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 2003.
- Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Stein and Day, 1966.
- Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980.
- Grabo, Norman S. *The Coincidental Art of Charles Brockden Brown*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1981.
- Hinds, Elizabeth Jane Wall. "Charles Brockden Brown and the Frontiers of Discourse." *Frontier Gothic*. Ed. David Mogen, Scott P. Sanders, and Joanne B. Karpinski. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1993. 109-25.
- Hood, Richard A. "'Constant Reduction': Modernism and the Narrative Structure of *The Good Soldier*." *Journal of Modern Literature* 14.4 (1988): 445-64.
- Johnson, Barbara. "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida." *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida & Psychoanalytic Reading*. Ed. John P. Muller and William J. Richardson. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1988. 213-51.

- Jordan, Cynthia S. "On Rereading *Wieland*: 'The Folly of Precipitate Conclusions'." *Early American Literature* 16 (1981): 154-74.
- Kafer, Peter. *Charles Brockden Brown's Revolution and the Birth of American Gothic*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2004.
- Limon, John. *The Place of Fiction in the Time of Science: A Disciplinary History of American Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Looby, Christopher. *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1996.
- Luciano, Dana. "'Perverse Nature': Edgar Huntly and the Novel's Reproductive Disorders." *American Literature* 70.1 (1998): 1-27.
- Lyon Clark, Beverly. "Charles Brockden Brown's Contagious Unreliability." *The International Fiction Review* 8.2 (1981): 91-7.
- Manly, William M. "The Importance of Point of View in Brockden Brown's *Wieland*." *American Literature* 35.3 (1963): 311-21.
- O'Neill, Patrick. *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory*. Toronto: Toronto UP, 1994.
- Pearcy, Lee T. "Diagnosis as Narrative in Ancient Literature." *The American Journal of Philology* 113.4 (1992): 595-616.
- Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: The Form and Function of Narrative*. The Hague: Mouton, 1982.
- Punday, Daniel. *Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Rescher, Nicholas. "Luck." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 64.3 (1990): 5-19.

- Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Ringe, Donald A. *Charles Brockden Brown*. New York: Twayne, 1966.
- Seed, David. "The Mind Set Free: Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*." *Making American / Making American Literature*. Ed. A. Robert Lee and W.M. Verhoeven. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996. 105-22.
- Seltzer, Mark. "Saying Makes It So: Language and Event in Brown's *Wieland*." *Early American Literature* 13 (1978): 81-91.
- Scheick, William J. "The Problem of Origination in Brown's *Ormond*." *Critical Essays on Charles Brockden Brown*. Ed. Bernard Rosenthal. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1981. 126-41.
- Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Wallach, Rick. "The Manner in Which Appearances Are Solved: Narrative Semiotics in *Wieland, or the Transformation*." *South Atlantic Review* 64.4 (1999): 1-15.
- Waterman, Bryan. "Arthur Mervyn's Medical Repository and the Early Republic's Knowledge Industries." *American Literary History* 15.2 (2003): 213-47.
- Toles, George. "Charting the Hidden Landscape: *Edgar Huntly*." *Early American Literature* 16 (1981): 133-53.
- Tompkins, Jane P. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Witherington, Paul. "'Not My Tongue Only': Form and Language in Brown's *Edgar Huntly*." *Critical Essays on Charles Brockden Brown*. Ed. Bernard Rosenthal. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981. 164-83.