

Gothic Enlightenment: Contagion and Community in Charles Brockden Brown's "Arthur Mervyn"

Author(s): Siân Silyn Roberts

Source: *Early American Literature*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2009), pp. 307-332

Published by: [University of North Carolina Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27750129>

Accessed: 09-03-2016 05:38 UTC

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of North Carolina Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Early American Literature*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

## Gothic Enlightenment

Contagion and Community in Charles

Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*

The term “gothic” is surely one of literary criticism’s most elastic concepts. As either a generic category or a set of textual conventions, it can define the foundational crimes of the nation, unveil authorial intention in psychobiographical form, or relate a mythic struggle of Manichean proportions.<sup>1</sup> These theoretical paradigms, all of which identify the American gothic as an expression of guilt, have a common source in Leslie Fiedler, whose greatest legacy to the field of gothic criticism has arguably been his combination of depth psychology and historiography. Ever since Fiedler first turned Indian slaughter, revolutionary patricide, and the slave trade into the gothic novel’s privileged referents, American literary criticism has read gothic tropes as the gnawings of a guilty national conscience, where any fantasy of a cohesive narrative—whether that of history, the nation, or the subject—is interrupted by traumatic counternarratives. More recent criticism has updated Fiedler from multiculturalist and historicist perspectives.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, such criticism tends to reinforce his claim that the American novel “is most essentially a gothic one” because it projects the nation’s “special guilts” (142, 143). I would like to question the presumption of guilt on the grounds that psychologically inflected readings that tease out embedded allusions to an infamous and displaced past do little to explain why the gothic had such a strong and enduring appeal for an American readership.<sup>3</sup>

To address this question, I argue that Charles Brockden Brown’s *Arthur Mervyn; Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799–1800), written in the eighteenth-century language of empiricism and faculty psychology,<sup>4</sup> performs a series of revisions on Enlightenment models of the individual, sympathy, and contractualism in order to yield a citizen who can enter into contractual relations in a setting where disparate people of radically

diverse backgrounds and interests—including the American Mervyn and the Portuguese-Jewish-British Achsa Fielding—seek to unite as a social body. To devise such a model, Brown calls attention to the fact that John Locke’s society of self-governing individuals assumes that its constituent members all meet the criteria of rational individualism as laid out in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Likewise, he makes the reader versed in British letters aware of the limits of the community imagined by Adam Smith. Sympathetic exchange can only take place between individuals who are likely to respond to emotional display in approximately the same way—a community, in short, based on resemblance rather than on difference. These assumptions turn both sympathy and the contract into exclusive forms of community. Recognizing the limitations of Enlightenment models for a country built from diverse cultural, religious, and social traditions, Brown sets about reconfiguring these models to suit the interests of an American readership. Taking *Arthur Mervyn* as a test case, I want to show that gothic tropes effectively displace the Enlightenment individual with one that is porous, fluid, and projected beyond the metaphysical boundaries of the body.

The yellow fever, operating according to the principles of circulation and convergence, proves an apt metaphor for this alternative social organism. Just as the disease invades people and changes the way they are constituted, so this social body invades and transforms other models of community. In *Arthur Mervyn*, the plague spreads from Philadelphia to the homogenous country household of the Hadwin family, exposing sympathy as an absolute basis of collectivity that collapses when called upon to incorporate radical difference and diversity. Indeed, the ghastly fate of the Hadwins indicates Brown’s deep skepticism about the sentimental household, especially when it offers itself as a model of the community at large. Rather than pathologize the yellow fever for its ability to destroy this domestic space, I want to consider its potential as an alternative model of social relations precisely because it allows feeling to pass unimpeded between subjects.

According to my reading of Brown, the gothic offers a model of community that spoke to the interests of a diverse immigrant populace assembled in close proximity in urban centers at the turn of the eighteenth century. The inhabitants of such a space were part of what Jay Fliegelman describes as an eighteenth-century “culture of performance” (*Declaring*

*Independence*) where individual self-expression was only arbitrarily connected to some actual or essential identity. The gothic, with its spectral hauntings, secret histories, and the return of the dead, offers a world of ontological mobility in which a subject that can adapt and respond to such mobility might thrive. This urban subject, capable of performing or otherwise responding appropriately to the expectation of forming connections with people from different cultural backgrounds, is as much a product of late eighteenth-century American experience as the Alien and Sedition Acts, which sought to locate and discipline those indeterminate, foreign elements that require a model ensuring cosmopolitan sociability.<sup>5</sup>

This argument rests on the claim that Brown gives life to an ontological contradiction at the heart of John Locke's model of autonomous individualism.<sup>6</sup> On one hand, the autonomy of the individual mind, as mapped out in the *Essay*, is guaranteed by the operations of reflection and understanding that are internal to that mind. These faculties shape sensory information from the external world ("experience") into a reflection or idea within the mind (2.1.2). The subject's judgment maintains the distance between its ideas and the external objects they represent, thus ensuring the strict separation of subject and object. At the same time, the subject is mimetically formed in relation to a parental guardian or substitute who observes the categorical distinctions between subject and object, superior and inferior, one person's property and another's (*The Second Treatise: Some Thoughts Concerning Education* [1693]). In this way, Locke endows the modern family with the authority to reproduce citizens characterized by their voluntary submission to the law. As long as a parental guardian is responsible for the individual's rational development, however, the acquisition of reason that mandates that submission is only ever partly autogenic. The individual, in other words, is subject to external influences in the shape of a parent or tutor, and who is to say this guardian will be a rational one? The possibility that the individual's mind is open to its environment, thus susceptible to influences outside its control, is tucked away in Locke's model.

#### ADAM SMITH GOES TO THE CITY

In *Arthur Mervyn*, Brown breathes life into this paradox. With limited "experience" and only a belated capacity for reflection, the eponymous protagonist comes to us as the very personification of Locke's famous blank

slate.<sup>7</sup> Yet unlike those novels in which Ian Watt enjoins us to see the rise of the British novel—novels where the inexperienced individual achieves enfranchisement through experience—this protagonist is no less vacuous at the novel’s end than at its start.<sup>8</sup> Rather than read Mervyn as somehow deficient for his apparent failure to meet the conditions of exemplary citizenship, I contend that his “failure” to develop as an individual can be read as an adaptation of Enlightenment individualism to the American experience. In Mervyn, Brown crafts a cosmopolitan city dweller whose mind cannot maintain the absolute categorical division between subject and object presupposed by Lockean epistemology. By habitually prying into “other people’s concerns, [making] their sorrow and their joys [his]” (317), Mervyn appropriates his associates’ mental property as if it were his own. That Mervyn’s violation of individual boundaries gets him into trouble at certain points in the novel and proves beneficial at others tells us exactly where Brown asserts another model of the subject and the terms on which its porousness proves a genuine and viable alternative to rational individualism. This model necessarily changes the form of community proposed by the novel in that it exposes the limits of the family and the contract as the more conventional models of social relations.

If Locke mapped out the modern individual, then Adam Smith provided a model of community that held such individuals together as an internally cohesive society and hence a model for the nation itself.<sup>9</sup> For Smith, sympathy is a strictly imaginative process that begins and ends within the individual. To experience a sympathetic connection with another individual, one must take an imaginative leap, as it were, putting oneself in the position of the individual or “agent” whose emotions are on display (83).<sup>10</sup> Or so Smith argues: “by the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations” (11–12). As Smith’s qualifications (“as it were,” “in some measure,” “some idea”) make clear, sympathy does not transmit emotion directly from one individual to another. The spectator never shares the emotions of the “agent” of emotion, for to do so would endanger the autonomy of each. Instead, he (and Smith’s spectator is always implicitly a “he”) experiences a compatible though lesser degree of feeling that is strictly imaginative: “these two sentiments, however, may, it is evident, have such a correspondence with one another, as is sufficient

for the harmony of society. Though they will never be unisons, they may be concords, and this is all that is wanted or required” (27). Reason ensures that “concord” does not yield to “unison,” much less the spontaneous and direct transfusion of emotion that Smith labels “contagion” (181). In this way, Smith’s model defends the concept of the individual against the possibility that emotions enter the body directly from an outside source.

We can see at this point that Smith tries to guard against the same contradiction that threatened to destabilize Locke’s model; namely, that the subject’s mind must be self-enclosed in order to be its own emotional property and yet requires an external source from which to derive sensations of pleasure and pain. To keep such a contradiction at bay, Smith creates an “internal spectator.” This monitor forms within each individual as he turns the gaze on himself and makes sure his own display of emotions measures up to the standard he brings to bear on others—to make sure, that is, he is deserving of sympathy. From histrionics to boorish insensibility, Smith insists, the unregulated display of emotion will not be dignified with sympathy. In controlling the emotions to suit standards of “propriety” (11), the internal spectator ultimately ensures a normative response.

Two years after its publication in 1759, Smith’s friend and colleague Adam Ferguson denounced *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as “a Heap of absolute Nonsense” (*Of the Principle* 228), taking particular issue with Smith’s claim that men want to be admired for their emotional control. Sympathy, Ferguson argues, is Smith’s term for social approbation.<sup>11</sup> When this approbation greets a well-regulated display of emotion, it merely gratifies the agent’s “vanity” and self-regard (A. Ferguson, *Essay* 56). Smith is thus found guilty of promoting not only the selfish passions but also the abuse of words.<sup>12</sup> A dyed-in-the-wool civic republican, Ferguson regarded the specter of self-interest as anathema. He located civil society in an active and closely knit community of politically minded citizens on the defensive against private, selfish drives. Ferguson’s ideal polity is grounded in such classic moral virtues as benevolence, charity, and martial valor—virtues he found wanting in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.<sup>13</sup>

Ferguson’s concerns arguably take on flesh in the con man Welbeck, whose self-expression is shrewdly calculated to manipulate the spectator’s feelings. His performative skill is so striking in this respect that, in witnessing one of these displays, Mervyn offers this reaction: “I could hardly per-

suade myself that it was the same person” (68). Welbeck contrives his emotional spectacles to elicit feelings that serve his particular interest, and the threat he poses to republican notions of civic virtue has been thoroughly documented.<sup>14</sup> But Brown’s critique of Smith goes well beyond its threat to civic virtue. While Ferguson took issue with sympathy on the grounds that it undermined the political and moral health of the polity, favoring instead the more organic affections of “generosity” and “friendship” consolidated through “acquaintance and habitude” (*Essay* 22–23), Brown challenges Smith’s use of spectacle on the grounds that we cannot trust what we see.

Smith’s notion of “propriety” requires the agent to regulate his emotional display in such a way that it never exceeds nor falls short of the social norm. A sense of propriety, in other words, detaches the expression of feeling from the emotion that arises strictly within the agent. As Welbeck clearly demonstrates, the social expression of feeling is always performative. Sympathetic exchange is therefore possible only in a community where everyone’s internal spectator is likely to respond to a given spectacle in approximately the same way, where both spectator and agent observe interpretative rules common to that community. This kind of sameness structures the household in domestic fiction, where people can trust each other’s emotions because there is not all that much difference between them to overcome. In *Arthur Mervyn*, this kind of community is exemplified in the sentimental Hadwin household. As Mervyn observes, the two Hadwin sisters Eliza and Susan “smiled and wept in unison. They thought and acted in different but not discordant keys . . . [and] this diversity was productive, not of jarring, but of harmony” (117). Bonds of feeling unite the group in “harmony” while maintaining the individuality of its “different but not discordant” members. In other words, the Hadwin household represents a community of like-minded but autonomous agents. In a culture of diversity, on the other hand, multiple interpretative standards expose the arbitrariness of a term like “propriety.” In such an environment, it is impossible—if not downright dangerous—to take any expression of emotion as a sign of authentic feeling. We enter a domain where expression is only arbitrarily related to actual emotion—where, moreover, the “internal spectator” regulating expression is not one we necessarily share.

For the sake of argument, then, let us assume that cultural differences in Brown’s Philadelphia displace the similarity between spectator and agent

necessary for sympathetic exchange. The diverse inhabitants of a city must be able to relate to one another, tolerate diversity, and cohere as a group on a basis other than the organic sameness that characterizes a Smithian community. In such an environment, Brown tells us, the sentimental conventions of domestic fiction will need to undergo radical reconfiguration. The gothic proves capable of performing such a task, as Brown sets about modifying sympathy to form a community where different interpretative strategies are in play.

Brown takes it for granted that one's social performance of suffering or joy is no reliable index to internal feeling. On the basis of a thoroughly superficial spectacle alone, a spectator can read people wholly unconnected with himself without making any claim to know, feel responsible for, or otherwise care about the agent involved. There is no intimate commonality between spectator and agent based on an ability to feel the same way about things. They agree to tolerate differences because neither assumes that any common ground actually exists. This is an expedient form of sympathy. A superficial cohesion bridges cultural difference while preventing difference from disrupting the social body.

#### THE CONTAGION MODEL

Brown's first step toward making a case for expedient sympathy is to imagine a scenario in which the spectacle of suffering is detached from its source. He does so by creating a rumor of the yellow fever and allowing that rumor to act instead of the disease itself as it spreads beyond Philadelphia and enters the country household of the Hadwins. Rumor acts as the plague's equivalent and extension in that it spreads from person to person and changes how each sees the world. With rumor, emotion no longer originates within an individual or individuals, but comes from an external source—language—that, like an infection, enters the subject from without. Its potency lies less in its putative truth than in its ability to grow and transform itself as it gains momentum by circulating through many different people. This exponential expansion creates an excess of meaning that allows for altogether different responses to the imagined spectacle. Emotion spreads as rumor repeats itself, and in the country domain outside Philadelphia



[its auditors] were very differently affected. As often as the tale was embellished with new incidents, or inforced [sic] by new testimony, the hearer grew pale, his breath was stifled by inquietude, his blood was chilled and his stomach bereaved of its usual energies. . . . Some were haunted by a melancholy bordering on madness, and some, in consequence of sleepless panic . . . were attacked by lingering or mortal diseases. (123–24)

Here we see rumor introduce diversity into a sentimental domain that has hitherto been characterized by its constituents' ability to think the same way about things. The operations of fiction ("as often as the tale was embellished") are held directly responsible for these varied reactions. In order to show that sympathy is no more normative or natural a response than any other, Brown includes an auditor who grows pale and breathes with difficulty—one, in other words, who experiences a lesser form of the disease itself. There are, on the other hand, the people who take the news too personally ("some were haunted by a melancholy bordering upon madness"). If these people are badly affected by the rumor, then those who experience sleepless panic experience the account of the disease-ridden city as if it were the city itself. They fail to distinguish fact from fiction, which, in Brown's view, amounts to contracting the disease.

When Mervyn responds to the news of the plague as pure spectacle, he, by contrast, displays the expedient form of sympathetic identification I have described:

This rumor was of a nature to absorb and suspend the whole soul. A certain sublimity is connected with enormous dangers, that imparts to our consternation or our pity, a tincture of the pleasing. . . . My own person was exposed to no hazard. I had leisure to conjure up terrific images and to personate the witnesses and sufferers of this calamity. This employment . . . was ardently pursued, and must therefore have been recommended by some nameless charm. (123)

Unlike those who react to the rumor as if it were the plague itself, Mervyn treats it as a fiction that allows him to aestheticize the sufferings of the plague victims without actually feeling them. According to Smith, anyone far removed from a spectacle of suffering—anyone like Mervyn and the other auditors who are "exposed to no hazard"—should either react to the

spectacle of suffering with sympathetic distance or not react at all. As he puts it, “whatever interest we take in the fortunes of those with whom we have no acquaintance or connexion [sic], and who are placed altogether outside our sphere of activity, can only produce anxiety to ourselves, without any manner of advantage to them” (161). But in a devastating critique of the Enlightenment model, Mervyn’s distance from the spectacle of suffering produces an avid sense of aesthetic “charm,” as opposed to the moderated suffering that supposedly accompanies disinterest. This in itself would invalidate Smith’s notion of sympathy, which depends on proximity to the spectacle, but Mervyn’s ability to take pleasure in others’ pain marks him as lacking any form of internal spectator, at least any form that Smith would recognize.

Rather than rush to condemn Mervyn as somehow deficient, though, let us pause to consider the implications of his response at the level of community. Insofar as he responds only to pure spectacle, Mervyn becomes the agent of disease that destroys the sentimental household. As the city extends its network of communication through rumor to incorporate the domestic domain, contagion and the gathering dysfunction of community itself erodes the boundaries of the sympathetic community. Once this happens, the sympathetic operations of the sentimental community likewise change. Like all the other country auditors, each Hadwin family member reacts to the same rumor in different ways, the most extreme form of which is Susan Hadwin’s “paroxysms of a furious insanity” (126). When, driven frantic with worry for her absent fiancé, she tries to kill herself, her feelings step out of line with the rest of her family. As the country becomes an extension of the city through the operations of the rumor, the natural bonds of sympathy are severed. Susan’s exaggerated reaction and eventual demise snap the fragile bonds of the Smithian community.

Mervyn, on the other hand, proves adaptable in the face of this paradigm shift. For all his nostalgic, unfounded longing that his sojourn with the Hadwins would prove “the return to a long-lost and much-loved home” (116), he cannot return to a community to which he never belonged. He remains a cultural outsider throughout the Hadwin episode, his full integration inhibited by such “obstacle[s]” as religion and economic status (118). Indeed, his own version of sympathy—performative, superficial, expedient—destroys this community. Consider his response to Susan’s suffering in the face of her fiancé’s absence. Susan’s hyperbolic dismay already dis-

qualifies her as the object of sympathy, so rather than engage in such an exchange by experiencing a lesser degree of the emotion, Mervyn reacts by imagining a purely fictional scenario in which he brings back the truant fiancé safe and sound from the city: “With what transports will his arrival be hailed? How amply will their impatience and their sorrow be compensated by his return! In the spectacle of their joys, how rapturous will be my delight!” (128). Like so many of Mervyn’s reflections, this series of purely conjectural statements has no foundation in anyone’s emotions but his own. There is no such spectacle to read, only his urge to produce one. He projects what his own reaction to such a scenario would be—transport and rapture—onto other members of this community. Mervyn has not responded with sympathy to their distress; rather, he has mistaken his own emotions for those of his friends.

As a fictional construct, this fantasy nevertheless has the power to change the world because it turns sympathy into a destructive force. Its artificial allure and the approval he stands to gain prompts Mervyn, in search of the fiancé, to disappear without telling anyone of his intentions. This decision triggers a disastrous chain of events: Hadwin follows Mervyn to the city and is fatally exposed to the yellow fever, a raving Susan dies of consumption, and the family farm falls to a brutish uncle who shares none of the Hadwin family feeling. In making his plans, Mervyn never considers that his actions may have dire consequences because he assumes that, were their situations reversed, the Hadwins would think and act the same way that he does. Once difference has intruded into the sentimental domain, those responses become unpredictable. What can really destroy a community, Brown suggests, is the assumption of sameness among its members.

On the other hand, Mervyn’s obtrusiveness proves socially advantageous when we assume that community is made of different people, all of whom will respond in different ways to any given scenario. Mervyn treats everyone, from loved ones to enemies to mere acquaintances, with the same common geniality. This democratic approach to sociability may operate destructively in those sentimental spaces that presuppose intimacy at a deeper level, but it serves Mervyn extremely well in situations where cultural difference prevails. In his encounter with Hadwin’s brother Philip, the violent anger of this self-interested bully is kept at bay only by Mervyn’s unshakeable yet entirely staged affability. The apparently irreconcilable differences between Mervyn and Philip are suspended by a per-

formative stance that Mervyn quite consciously adopts for the purpose of self-preservation. As he acknowledges, “I was indebted for my safety to an inflexible adherence to this medium” (291). His performance of congeniality—that is, his “medium”—allows their differences to provide the basis for a functional unity. Mervyn’s superficiality works well in this scenario because he accepts the fundamental difference between two potential combatants and decides to leave those differences alone.

This kind of performativity adapts and responds to an altogether different model of subjectivity. With rumor, the source of emotion is not a single individual but an entire collective. To put it another way, feeling courses through the social body without apparent origin or destination. By generating different responses to a purely fictional spectacle, rumor undermines the notion that one can both have one’s own feelings and still share the feelings of others; those exposed to the rumor catch emotion as if it were the plague itself. With this in mind, consider Brown’s description of Philadelphia in the grip of the yellow fever: “Terror had exterminated all the sentiments of nature. Wives were deserted by husbands, and children by parents. . . . Men were seized by this disease in the streets; passengers fled from them; entrance into their own dwellings was denied to them; they perished in the public ways” (122–23). In a full-blown assault on Smith’s model, panic in the City of Brotherly Love destroys every emotional attachment and with it the sentimental family. In the place of a sympathetic community, Brown substitutes a social model whose dynamics resemble the contagion, using the passive voice (“men were seized”) to describe the plague as an entity that enters directly into the subject’s body and assumes control.

Mervyn’s emotional expediency qualifies him as a member of such a network. His superficiality may have destroyed the sentimental model of social relations but it proves ideally suited to his life in the city, where he is thoroughly indiscriminate in his attachments, paying no heed to either difference or commonality:

I was formed on purpose for the gratification of social intercourse. To love and to be loved; to exchange hearts and mingle sentiments with all the virtuous and amiable. . . . I felt no scruple on any occasion, to disclose every feeling and every event. Any one who could listen, found me willing to talk. Every talker found me willing to listen. Every one had

my sympathy and kindness, *without* claiming it, but I *claimed* the kindness and sympathy of every one. (379–80, italics in original)

Mervyn's emotional bonds are characterized by immediacy, spontaneity, and transfusion—he wants to “exchange” and “mingle” with others rather than preserve and distance himself. He may regard the be-all and end-all of social attachment as “to love and be loved,” but he repeatedly violates the foundational distinctions between subject and object implicit in that formula—to love as a subject and to be loved as an object. For him, there is no difference at all. Brown dramatizes this principle by having Mervyn habitually invade people's houses, bedrooms, parlors, even prison cells. This intrusion into private interiors reflects and produces a lack of social separation, analogous to his unwillingness to observe the imaginative boundaries that separate people's emotions. By refusing to observe these boundaries, Mervyn breaks the Lockean rule of one mind per body and introduces the possibility that one mind may exist across two bodies. The logic of individualism demands that such a possibility be foreclosed, and Mervyn consequently encounters violent reactions against his intrusions whenever he enters a domain in which that logic prevails. From being shot by a prostitute to being denounced as a thief, Mervyn is excluded because he represents a force that would destroy individualism. However, to grasp this notion of invasion—by Mervyn, rumor, or the plague itself—as another model of humanity altogether rather than as a disruption of Enlightenment categories, we should imagine Mervyn's model of social relations as something on the order of a network or circuit through which information, in the shape of emotions, can travel freely.

#### THE GOTHIC CONTRACT

Mervyn's intrusions come to us as violations of the contractual obligation to respect individual autonomy. Under the terms of the social contract, as spelled out by both Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, subjects agree not to encroach upon the rights and bodies of other members. As we have seen, this is not a novel in which the logic of individualism is allowed to go uncontested. Brown's version of porous subjectivity obviously wreaks havoc with this idea of contractualism, which is predicated on the notion of self-enclosure and personal sovereignty. Like sympathy, then, the

contract must be reconfigured to take into account that those with whom one is contracting may be fundamentally different from oneself. Accordingly, Brown puts the marriage contract to work in the final chapters of the novel when he unites Mervyn with the wealthy, widowed, and experienced immigrant Achsa Fielding. Like the social contract, the marriage contract can only perform its rhetorical operations if it unites two people whose individualism, in the Enlightenment sense of the term, is extended and completed by those operations, two parties, in other words, who share a notion of what an individual should be.

According to the logic of the social contract, the individual voluntarily gives up his anti-social tendencies and enters into a mutually beneficial agreement with other individuals who likewise relinquish their disruptive qualities.<sup>15</sup> The individual forfeits his acquisitive impulses in exchange for the protection and guarantee of his political and personal rights under the state's authority. In submitting to the authority of a group comprising individuals just like himself, the subject has, in effect, submitted only to his own authority. As an alternative to a government based on force, the civil state thus becomes an extension of the individual himself. As Locke argues elsewhere in *The Second Treatise*, the individual acquires the rights of a citizen as he learns the laws that govern the rational subject (122–33). While the logic of the exchange suggests that those rights are prerequisite, the rhetoric of the contract suggests that they are produced by it. The capacity for self-government that earns him protection is not only something he brings to the exchange. In entering the exchange (by which he agrees not to encroach upon others in order to earn some protection for his own person and property), the individual also acquires knowledge of those laws. At this point, the rhetorical behavior of the contract parts ways with its logic. The contract is not so much an originary moment as an *ex post facto* fiction of origin, creating rather than regulating the constituent parties involved.<sup>16</sup>

The sentimental novel attests to the powerful afterlife of this paradoxical construction during the very period when it fell out of favor in political and philosophical thought. Like the social contract, the marriage contract proceeds on assumptions of lack (where each constitutive party is fulfilled by the acquisition of some component in the other) and emotional equality (where each reciprocates the other's compassion and understanding). It is an exchange based on merit rather than status, where

the woman's sympathy, sensibility, and innocence is regulated by the man's experience, reason, and judgment, and vice versa.<sup>17</sup> The marriage contract therefore extends and perfects the individualism of the constituent parties by giving each something he or she did not have previous to the exchange that makes them, together, add up to a complete individual at the level of the household. Thus the developmental trajectory of the individual reaches its apotheosis in the contract, which transforms the inchoate subject into a citizen with all the accoutrements of self-government. Brown demonstrates clear awareness of the sentimental promise of individual fulfillment through marriage when he refuses to allow the union of Mervyn and Eliza Hadwin.

It is a commonplace to read Mervyn's rejection of Eliza in favor of Achsa Fielding as evidence of Brown's having thrown over his youthful Godwinian radicalism in favor of a more conservative politics, or, alternatively, as evidence of an emerging market capitalism to which Mervyn responds with what appears to be flagrant self-interest.<sup>18</sup> I would prefer to see what Mervyn's choice of a marriage partner can tell us about the principle of social cohesion in a cosmopolitan setting. Let us assume that Mervyn's prospective union with Eliza operates within a sentimental paradigm. As he puts it,

My thoughts have ever hovered over the images of wife and children with more delight than over any other images. My fancy was always active on this theme, and its reveries sufficiently extatic [sic] and glowing; but since my intercourse with this girl, my scattered visions were collected and concentrated. I had now a form and features before me, a sweet and melodious voice vibrated in my ear, my soul was filled, as it were, with her lineaments and gestures, actions, and looks. (278–79)

A true man of feeling in this regard, Mervyn has Rousseauian visions of domesticity that are wholly confined to a blooming young wife, offspring, and "an hundred acres of plough-land and meadow" (278). Eliza appears to be Mervyn's social equal and sentimental counterpart, but he changes his mind upon contemplating the mental qualities of his prospective bride. Although Eliza possesses the "thrilling sensibility and artless graces" (261) that would tempt most men into marriage, she also possesses a degree of inexperience that "gave her sometimes the appearance of folly" (271), prompting Mervyn to question the suitability of this match:

I considered my youth, my defective education and my limited views. I had passed from my cottage into the world. I had acquired even in my transient sojourn among the busy haunts of men, more knowledge than the lucubrations and employments of all my previous years had conferred. Hence I might infer the childlike immaturity of my understanding, and the rapid progress I was still capable of making. Was this the age to form an irrevocable contract; to chuse the companion of my future life, the associate of my schemes of intellectual and benevolent activity? (279)

According to his own self-assessment, Mervyn himself is still in the state of “immaturity” that makes him less than an individual. On the other side of the exchange, Eliza lacks the literacy that would allow her to complement her husband’s position and power with taste and affection.

Mervyn’s reluctance to contract with Eliza therefore stems from the logic of the contract itself, which would see the union of the constituent parties as supplying what is lacking in each. As Mervyn is well aware, neither of them has much of anything to exchange, as both are inexperienced, destitute, and uneducated. Their union consequently augments neither one. Mervyn rejects Eliza—wisely, one could argue—because the product of their combined deficiencies would only result in something less than a complete individual at the level of the household. By refusing their union on the grounds of deficiency in the constituent parties, Brown would seem to endorse the rhetoric of the contract. On the other hand, Mervyn’s rejection of Eliza draws attention to the logic of exclusion upon which the contract rests. Only individuals who meet certain exclusive standards of personal sovereignty are eligible to contract. Thus when Mervyn turns from Eliza to Achsa, Brown suggests that sentimental standards are not the only standards that qualify contracting parties to make a household. Insofar as the contract determines who can marry whom, nothing short of the principles of civil society are at stake in its operations. Having demolished the sentimental kinship unit as the basis for civil society, what does Brown propose as a substitute?

Brown initially presents Mervyn’s union to a racialized heiress as the realization of a national fantasy. Fleeing a disastrous marriage in Britain, Achsa comes to America for a chance at rewriting her history. Although Mervyn falls well short of masculine norms of selfhood and affect, he is



also, by the novel's end, something of a protocitizen in that he comes to possess many of the external attributes of American masculinity. Outwardly, he is autochthonous and has transcended the position assigned to him by birth. He is also a young man of remarkable good looks who has been acquiring cultural capital as an apprentice doctor welcome in the polite circles of Philadelphia. Thus he embodies the masculine qualities to make Achsa an American through marriage.

If we then turn this relationship on its head, so to speak, it becomes the mirror image of the sentimental exchange in which the constituent parties are inversely gendered. Mervyn is presented in feminized terms, possessing all the affective qualities of sensibility traditionally found in a sentimental heroine. Recall his weepy confession to being "a mere woman" (381). He may strike his contemporaries as an American man on the make, but the internal deficiencies of inexperience and a limited understanding that stood in the way of his marriage to Eliza are still very much part of his character. By way of contrast, Achsa is, figuratively speaking, a man in terms of the Enlightenment standard. As Mervyn notes, she has "experience" in the world and is "abundant in that very knowledge in which [he] was most deficient" (411). She is also wealthy, literate, and independent, considerably older than Mervyn, and acquires dependents who rely on her for patronage. Mervyn may like to call her "mamma," but she is hardly a maternal woman, having abandoned her eight-year-old son from her previous marriage. Moreover, she lacks the physiognomy of a traditional love object; she is as "unsightly as a *night-hag*, tawney as the moor, the eye of the gypsy, low in stature, contemptibly diminutive" (416). In terms of their emotional property, Mervyn brings to the contract the feelings and dependency of a female, while she brings the experience and property of a male.

This rather neat inversion at the level of gender cannot produce a sentimental couple. The split in Mervyn—presented along gendered lines as autochthonous American masculinity and vacuous British femininity—prohibits a sentimental union because Mervyn brings more than just inexperience and dependency to the contract. He also brings indigenous manhood. He has, in other words, a kind of excessive individualism that upsets the sentimental rhetorical of contractualism regardless of who actually gets to wear the pants in this relationship. Likewise, Achsa brings something to the union beyond her masculine attributes. When her unfavorable appearance is likened to that of a "night-hag," a "moor," and a "gypsy," we

are clearly in the presence of something in excess of both masculinity and femininity. This excess is presented in racialized terms; resembling both a moor and a gypsy, Achsa is a British Jewess of Portuguese descent who tries, unsuccessfully, to hide her mixed origins from Mervyn.

It is important to my argument that Mervyn spontaneously guess the secret of her essential difference without the aid of sensory clues. There is just something about her that tips him off, prompting him to interrupt one of their conversations:

As I live, my good mamma, those eyes of yours have told me a secret. I almost think they spoke to me; and I am not less amazed at the strangeness than at the distinctness of their story.

And pry'thee what have they said?

Perhaps I was mistaken. I might have been deceived by a fancied voice; or have confounded one word with another near akin to it; but let me die, if I did not think they said that you were — *a Jew*.

At this sound, her features were instantly veiled with the deepest sorrow and confusion. She put her hand to her eyes, the tears started and she sobbed. (398)

Achsa's reaction to Mervyn's conjecture suggests that her Jewishness is a mark of exclusion. She had hoped, she tells Mervyn, "that [he] should know nothing of [her] but what [he] see[s]" (398). That Mervyn simply guesses her origins suggests that her secret history continues to govern her social performance even after she left her original identity behind in Europe. There is an excess to Achsa's character, something "outside" her position within the contractual exchange, that forces her out of sentimental discourse and into the register of the gothic.

Achsa's excessive—even monstrous—individualism meets its match in Mervyn, who likewise enters the gothic register as he manifests a sharp division within himself—something like two minds in one body: "When with [Achsa], I was not of myself. I had scarcely a separate or independent existence, since my senses were occupied by her. . . . [T]he being called Mervyn is not the same in her company and in that of another" (412–14). In Achsa's company, "the being called Mervyn" divides in two. What is this if not the very case of anti-individualism that John Locke went out of his way to invalidate? Here is his well-known example of the sleeping man who thinks while asleep and is not aware of doing so:

[I]f it is possible, that the Soul can, whilst the body is sleeping, have its Thinking, Enjoyments, and Concerns, its Pleasures and Pain apart, which the Man is not conscious of, nor partakes in: It is certain, that *Socrates* asleep, and *Socrates* awake, is not the same Person; but his Soul when he sleeps, and *Socrates* the Man consisting of Body and Soul when he is waking, are Two Persons. (*Essay* 2.1.11)

Locke relies on the self-evident absurdity of this example to dispel the uncomfortable prospect of two minds cohabiting the same body. But even as he relegates this aberration to the realm of impossibility, such double-mindedness finds a gothic afterlife in the trope of sleepwalking, where the subject does indeed find himself split in two when his nocturnal activities are not even recalled by his waking self (a mode of anti-individualism that Brown exploits more fully in *Edgar Huntly*). As if to demonstrate that he is not fulfilling his desires himself but is rendered another person by his prospective marriage, Mervyn takes to sleepwalking on learning that Achsa loves him. His somnambulism shows us that two minds have indeed come to occupy his body.

In what might be viewed as another case of excessive individualism, Mervyn reacts to Achsa with equal parts horror and joy organized along the same line that divides the two minds of “the being called Mervyn”: “I was half-delirious, and my delirium was strangely compounded by fear and hope, or delight and terror” (418). The masculine part of Mervyn wants nothing to do with the equally masculinized Achsa. This half of Mervyn is still governed by the sentimental logic of the marriage contract, which recognizes Achsa as a monstrously inappropriate choice. In a sentimental register, Achsa’s masculinity, elevated social status, racial identity, and lack of personal beauty disqualify her several times over as a match for the newly minted American citizen.

Indeed, the novel insists upon presenting Mervyn’s reaction to their union in gothic terms. On recognizing that he is on the verge of marriage, Mervyn is “lunatic” (415) and “possess[ed]” (418) by “a nameless sort of terror” (419); his “unhallowed” (419) ideas leave him with “a mind lost to itself; bewildered; unhinged; plunged into a drear insanity” (420). He experiences “a temporary loss of reason” (425), is overcome with “panick,” “confusion and horror” (425), and is seized by a sense of “infamy” and “guilt” (426). He is, moreover, haunted by the prospect of Achsa’s deceased

former husband returning from the dead for the sole purpose of murdering his rival. This phobic reaction hardly constitutes the rapture of a sentimental lover caught up in adoration for his future wife. Here, gothic tropes are the aesthetic by-products of a contractual alliance between two individuals whose excesses render them less than human in the Enlightenment sense. The gothic union of such excesses displaces the sentimental version of the social contract represented by the idyll of domesticity. The novel takes a gothic turn, in other words, when the sentimental rhetoric of the contract conflicts with the excesses, represented in terms of gender and race, of its constituent parties. The novel ends with Mervyn laying up his pen in anticipation of becoming “the happiest of men”—an appropriation of sentimental language that shifts the terms of contractual relations in the new United States.

As we have seen, Mervyn cannot fit into a sentimental community because his porousness endangers the affective bonds that govern such an environment. Achsa’s excess, presented in racialized and masculinized terms, likewise disqualifies her as a participant in the sentimental community. To imagine a contract capable of uniting disparate people of uncertain origins and profound cultural differences, the novel challenges the preconditions for contractual relations. The gothic contract neither continues a lineage (both Achsa and Mervyn are detached from their familial origins) nor authorizes the politics of paternalism (both parties trade themselves in the absence of male kin). Rather, the new logic replaces the static sentimental model with a civil society predicated on the mutually constitutive potential of radical difference. By authorizing this contractual model over sentimental union, Brown suggests that an alternative political fantasy capable of incorporating difference is far more suitable to a cosmopolitan setting than one that labors under the Smithian assumption of essential sameness.

#### THE GOTHIC OFFENSIVE

We are now ready to revisit Leslie Fiedler’s claim that the American novel “is most essentially a gothic one.” Brown’s use of the gothic form calls for reconsideration of the psychoanalytic grounds on which Fiedler made this claim. As a national literary style, the gothic form has less to do with repression and return, according to my reading of Brown, than with reimagining the conditions of subjectivity and citizenship for a population

that was just beginning to think of itself in urban, commercial terms.<sup>19</sup> If late eighteenth-century British gothic worked hand-in-glove with the British sentimental tradition to modernize kinship relations at the level of the household,<sup>20</sup> then something rather different happened to novels written and read in the new United States. To agree with Fiedler that the American novel is “most essentially” gothic, then, we must qualify the claim that the gothic form flourished here by suggesting that it imagined alternative ways of making a nation out of disparate and diverse parts. In order to authorize alternative forms of modern subjectivity, the American gothic puts the Enlightenment individual on the defensive.

John Locke himself put the individual on constant guard against all alternative manifestations of its humanity. Those passages when *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* seems to take a gothic turn—talking parrots, perpetually dancing men, convulsive arms—are all attempts to represent viable alternatives to his formula of one mind enclosed in a single body as monstrous, fantastic, absurd, or otherwise phobic. The gothic goes on the offensive when it brings these negated forms of consciousness back to life in fiction. Rather than render these forms strictly phobic, *Arthur Mervyn* explores the social potential suppressed by European models, while still acknowledging the hostility of these new forms to norms of reason and sympathy based on self-enclosure at the level of the individual or community. Smith’s internal spectator is flawed, Brown insists, because that concept assumes that every individual interprets feelings in approximately the same way. There can be, Brown demonstrates, no shared emotional ground when individuals bring different interpretative codes, or notions of “propriety,” to the exchange.

With the Smithian community exposed as a radically exceptional rather than natural form of community, the traditional social contract loses ground because it too functions only when its constituent parties already share cultural notions, for example, of masculinity or femininity. There is simply no room in the social contract for foreign or excessive elements. As an alternative, the union between Achsa and Mervyn proposes a variation on the traditional contract that has the power to incorporate the foreign and strange in the absence of traditional rules of kinship and exchange. The novel’s pedagogical imperative therefore insists on the need to read people and things as if they possess a secret history or hidden meaning—that is, as if ontological mobility is the only sure ground on which a culture

of diversity might imagine a social body. In his effort to build this social body from the literary materials of the gothic, Brown's revision of Enlightenment theories of affect updates the form of the novel in new, arguably American, terms.

## NOTES

1. As examples of these three fairly representative approaches to the study of the American gothic, see Goddu, Watts, and Savoy.
2. This body of criticism, running from Fiedler to Toni Morrison to the more recent work by Teresa Goddu, reads the American gothic as the psychological expression of ruptures in America's liberal history, where a little digging through the works of authors like Charles Brockden Brown will unearth the ugly truths of America's political, social, and territorial experiments— independence, democracy, expansion, slavery—that American gothic writers sought to channel and sublimate in the tropes of horror or fantasy. This approach still tends to read gothic literature as the return of America's repressed, or the expression of a tortured nation coming to terms with its own violent past. It must be noted, however, that the multiculturalist and historicist revisions of scholars like Morrison, Goddu, Philip Fisher, or Jared Gardner have contributed significantly to the recovery of unarticulated histories of the disenfranchised in American literature—a welcome counter to the essentialism and continualism of the cold war era of American literary studies.
3. The post-Revolutionary appetite for gothic fiction has been extensively documented by Ringe and Punter.
4. Consider, for example, the strictly Lockean terms in which Brown accounts for Mervyn's incomprehension in the face of a conversation he cannot follow: "Much conversation passed between [Clemenza] and Welbeck, but I could comprehend no part of it. I was at liberty to animadvert on the visible part of their intercourse. I diverted some part of my attention from my own embarrassments, and fixed it on their looks. In this art, as in most others, I was an unpractised simpleton. . . . I could not interpret these [appearances]" (50). Locke's subject, as mapped out in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, takes in sensory information from the object world that it turns into ideas through the process of reflection. Through such empirical "experience," it accrues an archive of thoughts against which it can measure subsequent information. Here, Mervyn can receive surface information from the "visible" elements of this conversation, but his inexperience (he is "an unpractised simpleton") prevents him from turning over these sensations in a way that produces ideas about the world he has entered.
5. I take the term "cosmopolitan" from its eighteenth-century context to mean a culture of tolerance based on a common humanity, or what Immanuel Kant calls "universal hospitality" (112n) in his 1795 essay "Perpetual Peace." Written only a

few years before the publication of *Arthur Mervyn*, Kant's essay makes a claim for tolerating difference in a cosmopolitan context of "close proximity" (118). All humans, according to Kant, are fundamentally the same by nature but potentially different by culture. He therefore imagines a cosmopolitan, transnational system of "communication" that will bring different people into contact with one another. "Visitor[s]," as he puts it, "[have] the *right to visit*, to associate . . . by virtue of their common ownership of the earth's surface; for since the earth is a globe, they cannot scatter themselves infinitely, but must, finally, tolerate living in close proximity, because originally no one had a greater right to any region of the earth than anyone else" (118).

6. As it stands, it is a critical commonplace to note—in passing—Brown's engagement with Locke's philosophies of faculty psychology and empiricism. See, for example, Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims* 237; Looby 188–92; and Thomson 77, 79. There is a strain of Brown criticism that might be termed "epistemological," beginning with Larzer Ziff's "A Reading of *Wieland*," in which Ziff reads the conflict between "enlightened psychology" and the Calvinistic conviction of human depravity and deceived senses. Brown's engagement with—and gradual disaffection from—the political thought of William Godwin has also been widely considered, while more recent work by W. M. Verhoeven reappraises the complex transatlantic American philosophical and historical influences that informed Brown's writing, many of which, as he notes, "had a common ancestor in Locke" (19).
7. Locke accounts for the empty mind awaiting inscription with perhaps his most well-known analogy: "Let us suppose the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters, without any *Ideas*; How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless Fancy of Man has painted on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of Reason and Knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, From *Experience*: In that, all our Knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives it self" (*Essay* 2.1.2). Lest we miss the point, Brown repeatedly draws attention to Mervyn's "inexperience" in the world—see 7, 8, 11, 31, 40, 66, 67, 80, 208, 258, 279, 293, 410, 418.
8. Despite his now considerable exposure to the world, Mervyn still describes himself in the novel's penultimate chapter as "a boy in age; bred in clownish ignorance; scarcely ushered into the world; more than childishly unlearned and raw; a barn-door simpleton; a plow-tail, kitchen-hearth, turnip-hoeing novice" (418). Whether we read this statement as truthful or disingenuous, clearly the novel does not take the Lockean developmental trajectory (inexperience to experience) as the basis for subjectivity.
9. A strictly Smithian concept of sympathy has proven a particularly durable model for the American nation in literary criticism. See, for example, Tompkins, Samuels, Barnes, and Stern. Indeed, criticism's debt to Adam Smith for this paradigm is arguably nowhere more evident than in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Anderson's model of the nation, where an imagined simultaneity

in the act of reading produces a cohesive community, draws on a Smithian model for the way it relies upon the cohesive bonds of affect, or shared and imaginative feeling across a group of people.

10. "Spectator" and "agent" are the names Smith gives, respectively, to the witness of suffering or joy and the person who experiences those emotions within himself.
11. "Of the Principle of Moral Estimation" is an imaginary dialogue between Hume, Smith, and Ferguson (going by the name "Clerk"). Here Smith defends his model of sympathy on the grounds that "a man who participates in the Passion of another cannot but approve of it." Clerk's disagreement is strong: "When we pity a beggar we do not admire him for begging" (229).
12. The deliberate obfuscation of language was regarded as a cardinal sin in common sense circles. The origins of this distrust can be found in ch. 10 of Locke's *Essay*, entitled "Of the Abuse of Words."
13. If I am right that Brown is arguing against sympathy as a basis of a cosmopolitan society, it would be tempting to read Ferguson as his chief philosophical animus, given that Ferguson likewise took issue with Smith's model. As fellow contrarians, they nonetheless argue against Smith on entirely different grounds and to very different ends. I believe there is also some question as to whether Ferguson was as important to an American readership as Smith. While Ferguson's moral philosophy received a large following on the Continent, and especially in Germany, he was better known in America and Britain for his *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* (see *An Essay* xxiv). Indeed, many studies of the Scottish Enlightenment in America continue to regard Ferguson as a comparatively minor player (see May, R. Ferguson, and Fleischacker, for example). I think this view is upheld by the bibliographic statistical information gathered by Lundberg and May on the reception of major Enlightenment authors in America. According to Lundberg and May, Smith and Locke stand out as consistently popular among American readers while Ferguson remains less so. As the editor of the Cambridge edition of *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* points out, Ferguson's opposition to the Smithian perspective in favor of the strong moral prescriptions of civic republicanism puts him somewhat at odds with the "main current in the Scottish Enlightenment" (xvii), a view shared by Lisa Hill, who regards Ferguson's stance as "eccentric" (76). For further reading on the topic of Ferguson's debate with Smith and also Hume, see King and Devere, and Hill.
14. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, for example, reads Welbeck as the locus of "the deep-seated fears about the dangers commercial and fiscal capitalism pose to civic virtue" in the new republic (258). For Cathy Davidson, Welbeck so blatantly threatens the "very essentials of American democracy" that he comes across as little less than a "caricature" of self-interest (237).
15. See Locke, *Second Treatise* 133–41.
16. On the rhetorical power of the contract, see Althusser, Armstrong, and G. Brown.



17. In the marriage between Worthy and Myra in William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), for example, Worthy—a man of well-regulated feeling—is characterized by his capacity to recognize in Myra the qualities of taste that match his own.
18. According to Leslie Fiedler, Mervyn's rejection of Eliza "infuriated" Percy Shelley for what he interpreted as a renunciation of Brown's earlier political idealism. Fiedler himself regarded Brown's authorial choice as deeply symbolic: "as surely as the death of Ormond had signified Brown's rejection of the demonic, his abandonment of Eliza represented his turning away from a Romantic commitment to art to an acceptance of the responsibilities of bourgeois life" (152). In a more recent interpretation of the novel's end, Ostrowski reads Mervyn as a market speculator who regards Achsa as a more secure "investment" than Eliza. See also Baker's account of "the potentially toxic effects of burgeoning commerce [in *Arthur Mervyn*]" (120).
19. Philip Gould imagines this period in a similar way when he replaces the static model of the nation-state with the fluid, mobile circulations and exchanges of a transatlantic commercial culture founded on the slave trade. In Gould's model, commerce dissolves nations and individuals alike into nodes on an international network of exchange.
20. See Tennenhouse 100.

#### WORKS CITED

- Althusser, Louis. *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Marx*. Trans. Ben Brewster. London: Verso, 1982.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Baker, Jennifer. *Securing the Commonwealth: Debt, Speculation, and Writing in the Making of Early America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005.
- Barnes, Elizabeth. *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel*. New York: Columbia UP, 1997.
- Brown, Charles Brockden. *Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793*. Austin: Rinehart Library Classics, 1965.
- Brown, Gillian. *The Consent of the Governed: The Lockean Legacy in Early American Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001.
- Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Ferguson, Adam. *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. Ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.
- . *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Library, 2005.
- . "Of the Principle of Moral Estimation: A Discourse between David

- Hume, Robert Clerk, and Adam Smith': An Unpublished MS by Adam Ferguson." Ed. Ernest Campbell Mossner. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960): 222–32.
- Ferguson, Robert A. *The American Enlightenment: 1750–1820*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994.
- Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Criterion, 1960.
- Fisher, Philip. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Fleischacker, Samuel. "The Impact on America: Scottish Philosophy and the American Founding." *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*. Ed. Alexander Broadie. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. 316–37.
- Fliegelman, Jay. *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993.
- . *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.
- Gardner, Jared. *Master Plots: Race and the Founding of an American Literature, 1787–1845*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998.
- Goddu, Teresa. *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*. New York: Columbia UP, 1997.
- Gould, Philip. *Barbaric Traffic: Commerce and Antislavery in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003.
- Hill, Lisa. *The Passionate Society: The Social, Political, and Moral Thought of Adam Ferguson*. New York: Springer, 2006.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace, and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*. Trans. Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983.
- King, Preston T., and Heather Devere. *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975.
- . *The Second Treatise: Some Thoughts Concerning Education and the Conduct of the Understanding*. Ed. Ruth Weissbourd Grant and Nathan Tarcov. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996.
- Looby, Christopher. *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.
- Lundberg, David, and Henry F. May. "The Enlightened Reader in America." *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 262–93.
- May, Henry. *The Enlightenment in America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1976.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.
- Ostrowski, Carl. "'Fated to Perish by Consumption': The Political Economy of *Arthur Mervyn*." *Studies in American Fiction* 32 (2004): 3–20.
- Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1996.

- Ringe, Donald. *American Gothic: Imagination and Reason in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1982.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on Political Economy and The Social Contract*. Trans. Christopher Betts. New York: Oxford UP, 1994.
- Samuels, Shirley. *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Early American Nation*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.
- Savoy, Eric. "The Face of the Tenant: A Theory of American Gothic." *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*. Ed. Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1998. 3–19.
- Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Ed. Knud Haakonssen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "Black Gothic: The Shadowy Origins of the American Bourgeoisie." *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*. Ed. Robert Blair St. George. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000. 243–69.
- Stern, Julia. *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.
- Tennenhouse, Leonard. *The Importance of Feeling English: Transatlantic Literary Relations, 1750–1850*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007.
- Thomson, Douglass H. "Charles Brockden Brown." *Gothic Writers: A Critical and Bibliographical Guide*. Ed. Thompson, Jack A. Voller, and Frederick S. Frank. Westport: Greenwood, 2001.
- Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Verhoeven, W.M. "'This blissful period of intellectual liberty': Transatlantic Radicalism and Enlightened Conservatism in Brown's Early Writings." *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic*. Ed. Philip Barnard, Mark L. Kamrath, and Stephen Shapiro. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2004. 7–40.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1957.
- Watts, Steven. *"The Romance of Real Life": Charles Brockden Brown and the Origins of American Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994.
- Ziff, Larzer. "A Reading of *Wieland*." *PMLA* 77 (1962): 51–57.