

# fiction in the age of jefferson: the early american novel as intellectual document

robert hemenway

Thomas Jefferson seldom read novels, but his opinions about fiction were definite; he once wrote:

A great obstacle to good education is the inordinate passion prevalent for novels, and the time lost in that reading which should be instructively employed. When this poison infects the mind, it destroys its tone and revolts it against wholesome reading. Reason and fact, plain and unadorned, are rejected.<sup>1</sup>

Although usually deplored by literary historians, Jefferson's antipathy to fiction—at least American fiction—was perhaps justified. No one can defend the native novels available for his perusal. The sobs of *Charlotte Temple*, the Long Island Gothic of *Alonzo and Melissa*, or the somber silliness of *The Algerine Captive* make for notoriously unsatisfactory reading. However, the Jeffersonian era roughly coincides with the beginnings of the American novel; between William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821), the novel was established in America as a literary form. As feeble as this beginning is, it has value for the student of American thought. Although rejected by Jefferson and most of his contemporaries, the early American novel has great importance as an intellectual document illustrating significant changes in the history of American ideas.

The fledgling American novel illuminates a contemporary tension between Neo-classical values and an incipient, unfulfilled Romanticism;<sup>2</sup> moreover, the two novelists of most interest in the Jeffersonian era, Charles Brockden Brown and Hugh Henry Brackenridge, best record this tension. Although their esthetic merits are often doubtful, Brown and Brackenridge have a special value as delineators of a changing world view. Both struggled in their novels with a world which was tentatively rejecting a Neo-classic, rational system of absolute, unchanging order for a Romantic, often non-rational, organic system of uncertain order.

The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth were characterized by difficult tensions in the United States. The country

had successively transformed itself from colony to Revolutionary coalition, to Confederacy, to Federal Republic, each mutation attended by controversy. Even after the establishment of a Federal government, the Hamilton-Jefferson, Federalist-Republican disputes seriously threatened the governmental structure. Americans were in wide disagreement about states rights and individual rights, relations with England and relations with France, embargoes and impressments. Traditional Calvinism had declined ungracefully amidst bellicose quarrels with Unitarianism and Deism, but its influence was still pervasive, as proven by the attacks on Jefferson's suspected Deism. Americans were slowly becoming aware of certain radical suggestions from Europe: the Kantian challenge to Lockean empiricism had upset traditional standards of perception, Wordsworth had ridiculed the very language of established literature. Despite an "Era of Good Feelings" following the War of 1812, the Jeffersonian epoch was a period of philosophic and political uncertainty when men were uneasy about their world; the well-oiled, well-explained, finely running watch of the eighteenth century mechanical universe was falling apart. When Brown and Brackenridge begin to write in this atmosphere, their writings dramatically inform these tensions: their novels polarize the extremes of American ideas by documenting the encroachments of Romanticism upon established Neo-classicism. Brackenridge, remarkably cognizant of the threat to his Neo-classical ideas, fights a losing battle against the onslaught of unreasonable, unchecked Romantic individualism, yet never swerves in his support of democratic government. Brown, intuitively aware of a Romantic emphasis upon the non-rational processes of the imagination, exploits irrational individualism. By examining these novelists' attitudes towards the individual's capacity for rational thought, the mind's ability to reason by ordering experience, we discover the value of their novels as intellectual documents of a philosophically changing age.

i

Hugh Henry Brackenridge has been said to represent "more completely and more vitally than any other [writer of his period] the classical and eighteenth century ideals of sanity and moderation."<sup>3</sup> Born in Scotland in 1748, Brackenridge lived and wrote by eighteenth century ideals; the rambling, often unreadable *Modern Chivalry* frequently sounds like a Joshua Reynolds discourse: "The great secret of preserving respect, is the cultivating and shewing to the best advantage the powers that we possess, and not going beyond them. Everything in its element is good, and in their proper sphere all natures and capacities are excellent."<sup>4</sup> Such a statement of the Neo-classical doctrines of proportion and subordination makes clear why the book has been called the "most complete . . . expression of the neo-classical spirit in the new nation."<sup>5</sup>

Yet *Modern Chivalry*, published in various installments between 1792 and 1815, has too often been misread as a treatise of Neo-classic principles;

the novel also confirms the existence of a Romantic attack upon Neoclassic rationalism, an attack which, surprisingly, almost always succeeds within the rhetorical pattern of the novel. Instead of writing a novel in praise of those eighteenth century ideals which he considered essential to a successful democracy, Brackenridge composed a Swiftian satire in which he despairs of a triumph for reason and common sense. Although it has been claimed that there is "no principle of plot construction" controlling *Modern Chivalry*,<sup>6</sup> a very clear principle becomes manifest, and it is not necessarily a principle supporting the "ideal of sanity." The book's consistent narrative sequence is: (1) the humorous description of an absurd, irrational proposal, (2) an appeal to reason in argument against that irrational proposal, (3) the failure of reason to change men's minds or to ridicule the situation, (4) a capitulation to irrationality through a new mode of unreasoned argument which (5) does change men's minds, and ironically, defeats the absurd proposal, and (6) a chapter of authorial commentary discussing the folly of the previous sequence. Paradoxically, it is only by forgetting to be reasonable that Brackenridge's advocate of reason, Captain Farrago, is able to effect change. Although obviously Brackenridge did not intend it, *Modern Chivalry* documents the efficacy of *non-reason* in dealing with a world where the unexplainable, irrational act can be successfully proposed. The novel argues, despairingly, that the democratic process usually supports the non-rational solution to political problems. While Brackenridge's despair is never absolute, since he continues to find solace in the ideals of democratic theory, *Modern Chivalry* serves more to prove his bewilderment when confronted by a seemingly insane world than to affirm his faith in a reasoned, ordered system of human government.

Alexander Cowie remarks accurately that the "pretense of fiction becomes extremely shadowy toward the end" of *Modern Chivalry*,<sup>7</sup> and the novel's reputation rests largely on the first two volumes published in 1792. Captain Farrago, a man "of good natural sense" (p. 11), begins a journey across the countryside accompanied by his servant, the Irish bog-trotter, Teague Oregon; the Captain's purpose is "to see how things were going on here and there and to observe human nature." (p. 6) From his very first encounter, what Captain Farrago discovers "going on" is irrational: he is unable to convince a group of country jockeys that the common plough horse serving as his mount "can scarce go beyond a trot." (p. 6) They insist, since a horse race is about to commence, "that the horse was what they called a bite and that under the appearance of leanness and stiffness there was concealed some hidden quality of swiftness uncommon." (p. 7) This disturbing evidence of absurdity, of people refusing to recognize the truth when it stands in front of them, is quickly confirmed by a series of episodes which the Captain can only interpret as arising from a world gone mad. In short order, the uneducated, illiterate Teague Oregon *almost* becomes a member of the state legislature, a member of the American

Philosophical Society, a Presbyterian minister and a bogus chief of the Kickapoo Indians.

Brackenridge establishes in these first volumes a narrative strategy for his novel, and the famous episode in which Teague is proposed as a candidate for the legislature illustrates the pattern well. Coming upon a number of people meeting to elect a state legislator, the Captain is appalled to find they prefer an ignorant weaver over a man of education. He logically points out that:

There is no analogy between knotting threads and framing laws. It would be a reversion of the order of things. Not that a manufacturer of linen or woollen, or other stuff, is an inferior character, but a different one, from that which ought to be employed in affairs of state. (p. 14)

Concerned for "the order of things," he argues for the Neo-classical principle of subordination by telling the weaver: "You are not furnished with those common place ideas with which even very ignorant men can pass for knowing something. There is nothing makes a man so ridiculous as to attempt what is above his sphere." (p. 14) To the Captain, the reasonableness of his discourse has been self-evident: "It is unnecessary to enlarge on this subject; for you must all be convinced of the truth and propriety of what I say." (p. 14) But the people are *not* convinced; indeed, they remain so unconvinced that before the Captain realizes the danger, the fickle public with an alarming "disposition to what is new and ignoble" has proposed Teague as a candidate. (p. 15) Again the Captain appeals to reason:

This is making the matter still worse, gentlemen: this servant of mine is but a bog-trotter; who can scarcely speak the dialect in which your laws ought to be written; but certainly has never read a single treatise on any political subject; for the truth is, he cannot read at all . . . he is totally ignorant of the great principles of legislation . . . A free government is a noble possession to a people . . . Though doubtless, in such a government, the lowest citizen may become chief magistrate; yet it is sufficient to possess the right; not absolutely necessary to exercise it. (p. 15)

But again, the Captain's sensible appeal fails. In the face of absurdity, he is forced into an irrational appeal. Describing what will happen when Teague takes his office, the Captain foregoes the reasonable argument, capitulates to the same sort of public irrationality that could propose Teague as a candidate, and tells his servant:

When a man becomes of a public body, he is like a racoon, or other beast that climbs upon the fork of a tree; the boys pushing at him with pitch-forks, or throwing stones or shooting at him with an arrow, the dogs barking in the mean time . . . For I would not for a thousand guineas, though I have not the half of it to spare, that the breed of the Oregans

should come to this; bringing on them a worse stain than stealing sheep; to which they are addicted. (p. 17)

The Captain has not become irrational himself, of course, but sarcastic; his conclusions, however, are irrational, and these conclusions are accepted *as rational* by Teague, the public's representative. Convinced that public office would be a more odious occupation than sheep stealing, Teague declines the nomination, and almost immediately the "implied narrator,"<sup>8</sup> the fictional "observer" who is obviously Brackenridge himself, steps forward to offer a chapter of "reflections" about the nature of democratic government and the perils of electing unqualified men to office.

The narrative pattern in this episode is clear: confronted with an absurd proposal, the Captain appeals to reason and common sense; this appeal fails and he resorts to irrational arguments (state office is a worse stain than sheep stealing), and, ironically, is effective. The narrator's "reflections" make it especially obvious, of course, that this pattern operates within the structure of satire, and that Brackenridge deplores such a nonsensical world. But the irrational world is consistently revealed as the *dominant world* in *Modern Chivalry*, and through the rest of the novel it is only by irrational appeals that Captain Farrago is able to keep Teague from positions he is unsuited for. Farrago's argument against Teague's joining the American Philosophical Society leads directly to an irrational conclusion, but it seems the only way to convince Teague to reject his membership:

It is a fine thing at first sight to be a philosopher and get into this body . . . But do you think it is to make a philosopher of you that they want you? Far from it. It is their great study to find curiosities; and because this man saw you coming after me, with a red head trotting like an Esquimaux Indian, it has struck his mind to pick you up, and pass you for one. Nay, it is possible, they may intend worse; and when they have examined you awhile, take the skin off you, and pass you for an overgrown otter, or a musk-rat; or some outlandish animal, for which they will themselves, invent a name. (p. 26)

In a similar fashion, after his logical arguments have failed, the Captain persuades Teague not to become a Presbyterian minister, for when he finally goes to hell, he can "expect but little quarter [from the devil] after abusing him in this world," (p. 39) and he counsels Teague against becoming a bogus Indian Chief in the employ of an unscrupulous treaty-maker, not because the act would be dishonest, but because Teague's red-headed scalp will become a tobacco pouch for some rival chief. Finally, only an irrational argument can convince Teague that he should not marry an ugly, middle-aged inn-keeper; the Captain tells him that she "is the greatest witch that ever run . . . It is God's mercy, that she has not

changed herself into an alligator, and eat you up before the morning.” (pp. 96-97)

Even if this rhetorical pattern affirming a pervasive irrationality were not so obvious in *Modern Chivalry*, additional evidence proves that the irrational is the book's major concern. Time after time, the world is referred to as a madhouse, inhabited by madmen; the Captain asks the electorate, “What can be the madness that possesses you?” (p. 333) A preacher, observing the operations of popular democracy, cries out “Oh; monstrous! The folly, the fury, the madness of the populace!” (p. 373); a group of peace officers tell the Captain, “A madness prevails at present . . . When the people get a thing into their heads, the best way is to let them go on. They will come to themselves by and by.” (p. 375) Captain Farrago, as a governor in the 1805 volume, must periodically wait for people to come to their senses:

The governor considered all this as but madness and fanaticism, yet he did not discourage the bog-trotter in his freaks; nor interfere with the people in their visions, and extacies; knowing that the phrenzy after a time will always dissipate. . . . (p. 609)

Clearly, Brackenridge is saying that often the excesses of popular democratic government are insane, that the people are seldom coaxed out of their madness by voices of common sense. Indeed, the novel's repository of common sense is not primarily Captain Farrago, who constantly capitulates to the irrational method, but the “implied narrator” of the many chapters labeled “Concerning Reflections,” or “Concerning Observations.” Always a voice of reason, this figure usually feels compelled to comment on irrational scenes, and his commentary, surprisingly free of irony or satire, presents the rational, orderly solution to each episode; it is this figure who offers Neo-classical principles, and he is never a part of the fictional narrative, perhaps because he speaks for Brackenridge himself.<sup>9</sup>

*Modern Chivalry* is a novel in which fiction argues for one kind of truth—the Captain never succeeds on rational terms, and at book's end has given up and permitted Teague to become a judge—and authorial commentary suggests another. Intended to plead for the desirable, Neo-classical ideal of a stable, coherent existence, Brackenridge's novel exposes an irrational world, a world where a bog-trotter can be a statesman, philosopher and judge, all through the consent of the rabble. Brackenridge seriously attacks the pretensions of the uneducated masses, and he interprets those pretensions in terms of a changing world view. *Modern Chivalry* illustrates the apparent failure of Neo-classical rationalism to check uninhibited, unreasonable democratic individualism. This undesirable individualism, lampooned and yet confirmed as the dominant voice of the new America, is primarily a Romantic individualism; while Wordsworth was asserting the inherent dignity of Cumberland peasants, Brackenridge

was assailing American egalitarians who held that Pennsylvania frontiersmen were capable of enlightened legislation. Brackenridge felt that he was exposing an irrational world, but he really only confronted, and despaired of, that nineteenth century Romantic world which was confounding Western civilization in his time. His countrymen had begun to define themselves differently toward a whole set of supposedly inviolable principles inherited from English Neo-classicism: decorum, subordination, rationality, proportion; Brackenridge felt strongly that such redefinition constituted a threat to the orderly processes of living and the reasonable functioning of democratic government. Charles Brockden Brown, writing at almost the same time, recognized this same irrational, rather frightening world, but he welcomed its irrationality. He created the American novel's first investigation of the new, Romantic forces which offered hope of a different kind of order for a changing, uncertain world.

## ii

It is a commonplace to describe the difference between Romanticism and Neo-classicism as a difference in cosmography.<sup>10</sup> The writers of the eighteenth century "had been able to assume as their frame of reference a concept of an ordered and stable universe"<sup>11</sup> and this concept of order was apprehended by the reason, the principal human faculty. But at the end of the eighteenth century this stable universe no longer sufficed. As R. A. Foakes says: "By the end of the eighteenth century the disparity between the ideal order and the world in which men lived had become so great, the ideal so meaningless, as to destroy its usefulness even as a myth."<sup>12</sup> Reason no longer functioned as the defining faculty for a world which so often proposed non-rational dilemmas, and the quest of the writer was to make "order out of chaos."<sup>13</sup> Brackenridge recognized this chaos and sought a return to the stable, mechanical universe of Neo-classicism; his contemporary, Charles Brockden Brown, unsuccessfully searched for a new system of order. In four major novels, Brown sought for some explanation of individual mental aberrations, for motivations in irrational acts. In the process, he too documented Romantic intrusions upon the Neo-classical position.

All of Brown's novels were written between 1798 and 1801; they have often been called somewhat "Romantic" by literary critics,<sup>14</sup> but no one has really explained why this label should be attached. I believe that Brown's novels are "Romantic" because he creates dilemmas which are insoluble through Neo-classical principles of coherence and rationality. Brown's novels are Romantic because he implies that *irrationality* is the governing force in human affairs, and that man's efforts at ordering existence, his presumptions of an ability to reason, are self-delusive. In each of his major novels, Brown's characters cannot rationally explain what has happened to them; they consistently try, since they subscribe to a Neo-

classical value system, but their attempts are foiled by the nature of reality itself.

Brown's first novel, *Wieland*, best illustrates his achievement. Theodore Wieland, a religious fanatic, murders his wife and children under the influence of a (presumed) divine command; he also attempts to slay his sister, and finally commits suicide. His sister, Clara, is left to tell his story and attempt to make sense out of the horrible events. Her conclusions are, however, that none of these mysterious happenings can be explained, that rationality cannot order these events into a logical sequence of cause and effect.

Clara Wieland, as often noted, is a product of Neo-classical, Lockean empiricism.<sup>15</sup> A student of reason, she is initially confident that her brother's delusions have a rational explanation: her brother hears voices, and Clara is convinced that the voices have come from the sinister ventriloquist, Carwin. She is partially right, but Carwin's confession of his biloquial deeds at the end of the novel includes a denial of the death command (which the facts of the novel confirm),<sup>16</sup> and his ventriloquism does not explain why Theodore attempts to kill Clara, why Theodore commits suicide, why Clara has incoherent dreams about her brother, or even why Carwin himself seems so committed to evil designs.

Lockean psychology postulated the validity of sense experience as the means to knowledge. The mind as a *tabula rasa* discovered truth through sensory encounters, and digested by the understanding, these sense impressions became the basis for rational action. But Clara Wieland's discovery is that the senses cannot be trusted, that they are often delusive. Her reasoning faculties become virtually useless when confronted with abnormal events, and the philosophical implications to her quandary are significant. If one can no longer depend on the senses as the means to knowledge, then the world is full of improbable and incomprehensible phantoms. Clara's belief in the utility of the senses dies hard because its alternative requires such a difficult assumption, yet the inadequacy of the senses as a means to knowledge is confirmed by every experience she has.

The assault upon the efficacy of her senses as the source of knowledge, upon the foundation of Clara's reason itself, is the dominant narrative motif in *Wieland*. Time after time she asks "can my senses deceive me," and the answer is almost always that they can and have; moreover, the deception is not due to any depravity in her senses, but to the very nature of her experience. The senses, operating through the understanding, should posit knowledge of an ordered, non-chaotic world, but in the bewildering denouement of *Wieland*, when events defy a "reasonable" explanation, Clara's world has become irrational—incapable of imposed order. Confronted by a mysterious man of evil, Carwin, and a raving lunatic who was once her gentle, loving brother, Clara admits the "impotence" of her reason for dealing with either one:



My reason taught me that his [Carwin's] conclusions were right; but conscious of the impotence of reason over my own conduct; conscious of my cowardly rashness and my criminal despair, I doubted whether any one could be stedfast and wise.<sup>17</sup>

Her psychic shock is so great, in fact, that she no longer cares what the explanation for their actions might be. She tells her readers that they must place their own interpretation upon events, for her reasoned efforts to do so have failed:

Talk not to me, O my revered friend! of Carwin. He has told thee his tale, and thou exculpatest him from all direct concern in the fate of Wieland. This scene of havock was produced by an illusion of the senses. Be it so: I care not from what source these disasters have flowed; it suffices that they have swallowed up our hopes and our existence. (p. 261)

This final attitude of Clara Wieland is the dramatic reversal of the preconceptions with which she began her tale, and it marks her realization of irrationality in the human condition. From a belief in the supremacy of reason she comes to the alarming, but enlightened awareness that the “established laws” of Neo-classicism are inadequate for this irrational world: “Ideas exist in our minds that can be accounted for by no established laws.” (p. 99)

Clara’s experiences are non-rational, delusive to her senses and confusing to her reason. They are the feminine, secular analogs to Theodore’s male, religious mania, and they reveal Brown’s recording of changing world view. No longer do the philosophical premises of the eighteenth century explain the real world, for human nature has become a strange, mysterious, unknown quantity. Man does not confront reality through reference to stable, universal laws of “human nature,” but through an investigation of the individual imagination, an investigation which is consistently stymied by the irrationality of that very same faculty. In Brown’s other novels, *Ormond*, *Arthur Mervyn*, *Edgar Huntly*, it is the examination of the individual mind, especially the unique causes of the abnormalities of the imagination, which becomes Brown’s subject. In *Ormond* a befuddled Constantia Dudley cannot understand the irrational demands of a demonically insane Ormond. Towards the end of that novel, Ormond raves that he had the *right* to kill Constantia’s beloved father, since he had given money for an operation to cure his blindness. He perversely argues that he committed the murder to prove his affection for her, and that for killing her father he should have her gratitude, rather than her hate:

My motive was benevolent; my deed conferred a benefit. I gave him sight and took away his life, from motives equally wise . . . For killing him, therefore, I may claim your grati-

tude. His death was a . . . offering on the altar of your felicity and mine.<sup>18</sup>

Arthur Mervyn, a country boy attempting to fathom the city, is constantly bewildered by a Philadelphia in the grips of yellow fever, a plague which cannot be rationally explained. And Edgar Huntly, perhaps Brown's most successful single character, readily admits that the tale he tells may make no sense:

Yet am I sure that even now my perturbations are sufficiently stilled for an employment like this? That the incidents I am going to relate can be recalled and arranged without indistinctness and confusion? That emotions will not be reawakened by my narrative incompatible with order and coherence?<sup>19</sup>

An intermittent sleep-walker, Edgar can only promise a glimpse of the truth:

One image runs into another; sensations succeed in so rapid a train, that I fear I shall be unable to distribute and express them with sufficient perspicuity . . . I shall furnish thee with little more than a glimpse of truth. With these glimpses, transient and faint as they are, thou must be satisfied. (p. 152)

In fact, his misfortunes take him beyond time and normality into a peculiar existence of his own, an existence apparently on the boundary between reason and lunacy: "Passage into new forms, overleaping the bars of time and space, reversal of the laws of inanimate and intelligent existence, had been mine to perform and witness." (p. 228)

In each of these novels, the events arising from the individual's actions are non-rational, incapable of explanation by Neo-classical standards. The well-defined "laws of inanimate and intelligent existence," the eighteenth century laws, have been reversed, and a new, strange, chaotic, irrational world has been revealed. It is Brown's tragedy as an artist that he could not manage to create "order out of chaos," that he could not find a system which would explain this irrational world he found so energizing for his fiction. One result was his failure to create an esthetic form: all of Brown's novels are without any real order, and his final two novels, *Clara Howard* and *Jane Talbot*, indicate a retreat from the difficult struggle with an irrational chaos into the safety of traditional, sentimental assumptions of novel design.

If Brown could have formed a new "order out of chaos," we might date American literary Romanticism from 1801 instead of 1836; Emerson offered America an answer to a world that no longer existed as a carefully running watch, that had become increasingly irrational by eighteenth century standards. It is undoubtedly correct to describe the American Romantic movement as largely a Transcendentalist phenomenon, but we should not forget the extensive documentary of Romantic-Neo-classical

tensions recorded by the early American novel; the two most significant novelists of the Age of Jefferson document a state of flux in American ideas at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

University of Kentucky

## footnotes

1. Jefferson to Nathaniel Burwell, March 14, 1818: *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. P. L. Ford, XII (New York, 1905), 91. William Peden's "Thomas Jefferson and Charles Brockden Brown" in *The Maryland Quarterly*, I (1944), 65-68, prints an exchange of letters between Brown and Jefferson in which Jefferson's attitude toward fiction is not quite so disapproving; his usual opinion, however, is expressed in the quotation cited.

2. I am assuming, perhaps naively, that the Neo-classical complex of ideas has a fairly standard meaning. Arthur Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936) gives a comprehensive account, as does Walter Jackson Bate, *From Classic to Romantic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946); also, M. F. Heiser, "The Decline of Neo-classicism 1801-1848," *Transitions in American Literary History*, ed. H. H. Clark (Durham, 1953), 91-161. All of these writers agree on certain general principles of the Neo-classical mind: an emphasis on reason, a belief in a stable, ordered watch-like universe, a faith in general laws of human nature, the acceptance of a self-evident hierarchy of society, knowledge, and government. For an interesting account of the Classical and Neo-classical mind in architecture and furniture see Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living* (New York, 1964).

Romanticism, of course is a much more difficult term; see note 10 below. For interpretations of the simultaneous decline of Neo-classicism and rise of Romanticism in the United States compare Heiser's essay with another essay in Clark's volume: G. Harrison Orians, "The Rise of Romanticism 1805-1855," 161-245.

3. Claude M. Newlin, "Introduction," *Modern Chivalry* (New York, 1937), ix.

4. Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry*, ed. Claude M. Newlin (New York, 1937), 11. All subsequent citations from this edition will be included within parentheses in the text of the article.

5. Heiser, "Decline of Neo-classicism," 96.

6. Alexander Cowie, *The Rise of the American Novel* (New York, 1948), 53.

7. *Ibid.*

8. The term "implied narrator" is from Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961), 70-76. Booth (p. 70) defines his term as an author creating "not simply an ideal, impersonal 'man in general' [to narrate the story] but an implied version of 'himself.'"

9. These final "reflections" are in the tradition of Neo-classical satire, the literary antecedent being Swift's use of digressions in *A Tale of a Tub*. But Swift's satiric mask, the Grub street Hack, continues in the satiric strategy during his digressions (cf. "The Digression Concerning Madness"). Brackenridge's implied narrator is not usually satiric; he feels compelled to give straightforward condemnations of the proposed irrationalities, thereby revealing Brackenridge's lack of confidence in the reader's powers of interpretation and his alarm over the threat such apparent irrationality poses for the established order.

10. Romanticism has become a much debated word; I offer no new definition, but I argue that Brown's unsuccessful attempt to find ordering processes in the imagination is a kind of Romantic assertion, and that his extended use of the irrational and mysterious indicates Romantic trends. Modern scholarship has tended to reject Professor Lovejoy's claim that "Romanticism" as a term has no reference or meaning: "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," *PMLA*, XXXIX (1924), 229-253. See Morse Peckham, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," *PMLA*, LXVI (1951), 5-23, and "Toward a Theory of Romanticism: II. 'Reconsiderations,'" *Studies in Romanticism*, I (1962), 1-8. Also see Rene Wellek, "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," *Comparative Literature*, I (1949), 1-23, 147-172; and R. A. Foakes, *The Romantic Assertion* (London, 1958). Parts of these studies have been collected and edited by R. F. Gleckner and G. E. Enscoe in *Romanticism: Points of View* (Englewood, N.J., 1962). Invaluable for "American Romanticism" is Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: third edition, 1964), 225-250.

11. Foakes, *The Romantic Assertion*, 39.

12. Foakes, 41.

13. Foakes, 39.

14. Many critics have made this claim; see Cowie, 53; and Carl Van Doren, *The American Novel, 1789-1939* (New York, 1940), 12. Harvey M. Craft has pointed out many organic (i.e. Romantic) elements in Brown's fiction in his dissertation (unpublished, Tulane, 1964), "The Opposition of Mechanistic and Organic Thought in the Major Novels of Charles Brockden Brown." However, Harry Warfel's biography tends to place Brown with the eighteenth century and Neo-classicism: *Charles Brockden Brown* (Gainesville, 1949). Brown's other modern biographer, David Lee Clark, argues somewhat ingenuously that Brown is a "realist": *Charles*

*Brockden Brown: Pioneer Voice of America* (Durham, 1952). Such polarity of opinion is perhaps evidence in itself of tension between Romanticism and Neo-classicism in Brown's novels.

15. Numerous studies of *Wieland* have discussed this matter in different ways; see Larzer Ziff, "A Reading of *Wieland*," *PMLA*, LXXVII (March, 1962), 51-57; William Manly, "The Importance of Point of View in Brockden Brown's *Wieland*," *AL*, XXV (1963), 311-321. See also the unpublished dissertation (Harvard, 1954) of Warner Berthoff, "The Literary Career of Charles Brockden Brown," 116-139; and the unpublished dissertation (Columbia, 1962) of Kenneth Bernard, "The Novels of Charles Brockden Brown: Studies in Meaning," 10-24.

16. It can be conclusively proven that Carwin does not tell Wieland to kill, and that the delusion of a divine command arises from Wieland's religious mania. Proofs for Carwin's innocence of the death command are found in Bernard, 14-18, and Berthoff, 120.

17. Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland*, ed. F. L. Pattee (New York, 1926), 252. Subsequent citations from this edition will be included within parentheses in the text itself.

18. Charles Brockden Brown, *Ormond*, ed. Leslie Merchand (New York, 1937), 231.

19. Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1963), 5. All subsequent citations from this edition will be included within parentheses in the text of the paper.