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# Walking With A Ghost: Sodomy, Sanity and the Secular

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WALKING WITH A GHOST: SODOMY, SANITY, AND THE SECULAR

A Thesis Presented

by

Kyle Joseph Campbell

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of

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## ABSTRACT

In the last twenty-five years there has been a boom in scholarship on Charles Brockden Brown that connects his work to social developments that occurred in the early American republic. Brown scholars often read him as a man ahead of his time as his writing addresses, hints at, or even inverts social mores. The scholarship around Brown's novel *Edgar Huntly* has concentrated on how the narrative addresses westward expansion and white settlers' relationship with Native Americans or the ways in which *Edgar Huntly* connects to Revolutionary society. Kate Ward Sugar engages with this narrative in a different way, exploring the dynamic of sleepwalking as a way to address male homosocial bonds. Scholars though continue to side step the eroticism within this narrative and the implications of somnambulism's status as a mental illness being tied to an unnamed desire. My thesis will therefore address this gap in the scholarship by integrating a queer and historicist reading of *Edgar Huntly* to suggest that Brown's use of sleepwalking is done to reflect a social fear of the homoerotic.

It is the goal of my thesis to explore *Edgar Huntly* as a narrative that weaves the danger of sodomy to sleepwalking, suggesting an implicit relationship between madness, illness, and same-sex desire. In order to fulfill this goal this thesis will employ a queer historicist approach, which aims to engage with the ambiguity of Brown's work to reveal insights into the early American republic. After all as Brown wrote in *Edgar Huntly*, "There are two modes of drawing forth the secrets of another, by open and direct means and by circuitous and indirect" (4). To develop this paper's argument, I will need to explore the casual relationship between the loss of Waldegrave's letters and Edgar's emotional distress as the cause of his sleepwalking. Brown himself described this as, "... a supposition not to be endured. Yet ominous terrors haunted me", as Edgar's dread is fixated upon the potential of an unauthorized reader seeing these texts (91). Furthermore, close readings of Brown's description of Edgar's fixation on Clithero will highlight his unspeakable desire. This relationship will also allow us to later compare their fates as Clithero becomes, "a madman whose liberty is dangerous, and who requires to be fettered and imprisoned as the most atrocious criminal," while Edgar leaves for Europe with his fiancé (193). Finally, drawing upon medical and legal texts from this period will show how *Edgar Huntly* suggests a pathologization of sexuality within the time period, in particular the developing figure of a secularized sodomite. This reading of *Edgar Huntly* not only expands the scholarship on sexuality in Brown's writing, but also the history of sexuality, pointing towards a social development currently unexplored by scholars of the early American republic.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1800 an anonymous author published the essay “What is Love?” in *The Monthly Magazine and the American Review*, declaring: “Love is often an error; an evil; it murmurs at obstacles that cannot be removed; it desires what cannot be obtained.”<sup>i</sup> This essay was published in the midst of a dynamic social, political and ideological reconfiguration, as American society labored to reconcile with the enlightenment ideology that both underpinned and undermined its social order. Democratic ideology, unleashed by war, reshaped the public sphere and produced a new form of popular politics that threatened the power and hegemony of social elites.<sup>ii</sup> Published under the alias of L.D., this essay was most likely written by the periodical’s editor, Charles Brockden Brown. Scholarship has shown that Brown often contributed to his publications under different pen names, maintaining the façade that his magazines were the result of compiling numerous individuals instead of being produced by one mind.<sup>iii</sup> This small article proves to be rather unique, considering Brown labors to shift this study of love from anecdotal evidence to empirical analysis, exploring the traits and dynamics that characterize this emotion. Despite this implementation of an empirical analysis, though, Brown remains unable to connect cause to effect, writing, “Events take place, and emotions are produced *unaccountably*”(1). This constitutes a causal conundrum, and Brown further reflects that “Love is never the same thing in the same mind for any perceptible duration,” yet it is never mistaken for any other sentiment. Love becomes for Brown a shifting signifier, which evolves and changes over time. He explains, “Love in one age, in one nation, in one sex, in one person, is different from love in another age, nation, sex, or person. It is mutable, capricious, deceitful; it can never be foreseen,

prevented, or, by any medical and expeditious process, be cured” (2). Therefore, love, despite being socially constructed, remains unique to the individual; thoughts and actions constantly enact and redefine eros. Brown’s insight into love reveals a highly modern understanding of not only love, but also sexuality. Brown interjects that “Love is inseparable from sex; sex is the property of all; all therefore are liable, and all have experienced the influence, some how modified, of love; for all impulses and cravings, joys and sorrows, flowing from sex, varied as they are by customs, habits, and opinions, must still be resolved into love” (4). Brown pushes his reader towards a more complex understanding of sexuality, and he also challenges them to reflect on love, “not narratively or ludicrously, but gravely and scientifically” (4). After all, Brown began this analysis by explaining, “Some call [love] a passion. Some term it a disease,” denoting a deep divide over the meaning and power of this emotion (1). Love was understood in the eighteenth century as a force that could overthrow reason, which was hailed as a universal force within humanity that would lead the American people towards developing a more perfect social and political union.

Due to this unique exploration of eros, one can see why the essay “What is Love?” can be read as a rather queer piece of writing.<sup>iv</sup> It thrusts the topic of love into the public realm to be publically dissected by rational thought. This desire to study eros scientifically, though, not only opens up the possibility for divergent and heterogeneous understandings of sexuality and love, but also reveals the limitations of reason. Brown makes this point apparent as he explains “[love] unsettles the thoughts; hurts the understanding; preys upon the health,” capturing the difficulty to rationalize an irrational force that infects and thus influences its observer’s perceptions and cognitive functions

(1). This exploration of human reason and its limitation is a key characteristic of Brown's writing, which Gordon S. Wood described as "intellectual explorations into causality, deception, and the moral complexity of life."<sup>v</sup> Whether it was yellow fever or ventriloquism, Brown's gothic narratives always blur the boundaries between fantasy and reality, leaving his readers as unsure as their protagonists as to what exactly had befallen them in their search for illumination. Written a year before "What is Love?" Brown's novel *Edgar Huntly: Or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* shares many similarities with his essay, as both the lover and the somnambulists are inflicted "with one of the most common and most wonderful disease or affections of the human frame," without even knowing it.<sup>vi</sup> Thus love and sleepwalking both exist within Brown's writing as afflictions that influence not only the psyche, but also the body as well. Furthermore, somnambulism and love share similar ambiguities as to what caused these abnormalities, which in the case of the sleepwalker in *Edgar Huntly* is connected either to demonic possession or to an unspeakable secret. I believe that it is by exploring these conflicting understandings of sleepwalking that one can begin to unravel a homoerotic potential that lies beneath the actions and causes of Edgar Huntly's somnambulism. After all, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argued in *Between Men*, homoeroticism in the gothic genre often is reduced to an unspeakable trope, which demarcates a homophobic discourse used to control male relations.<sup>vii</sup> Sedgwick explains, "Not only must homosexual men be unable to ascertain whether they are to be the objects of 'random' homophobic violence, but no man must be able to ascertain that he is not (that his bonds are not) homosexual," creating a discourse that policed and regulated male behavior, producing at the same time a gothic sense of paranoia.<sup>viii</sup> The silent sleepwalkers of *Edgar Huntly* offer a unique insight into

this dynamic, as the madness attributed to both the protagonist Edgar and Clithero reflects not only a pathologization of “abnormal” sexual behavior, but also a dramatization of the means through which deviant behavior is punished.

In the last twenty year there has been a renewed interest in the early American republic in both the fields of history and literature, generating new studies of Charles Brockden Brown, as his novels are often read for insights into the changing culture or political unconscious of the nation. Leslie Fiedler’s critique of *Edgar Huntly* in *Love and Death in the American Novel* remains a key criticism in this field, and Fiedler’s description of the novel as “an initiation story, the account of a young man who begins by looking for guilt in others and ends finding it in himself” continues to spark intense debate.<sup>ix</sup> One prominent discourse surrounding *Edgar Huntly* explores the narrative as reflective of the social and political complexities resulting from westward expansion as settlers faced renewed conflict with the indigenous population. Paul Downes in “Sleep-Walking Out of the Revolution: Brown's ‘Edgar Huntly’” explores the multi-potential of the Indian figures of the story beyond a role as a gothic chimeras by suggesting, “the Lenni-Lenape who inhabit Brown’s gothic wilderness can be thought of in terms of aristocratic anachronism and primeval violence or as a testament to the persistent possibilities of the revolutionary impulses that had so recently been put to work on behalf of the Euro-Americans.”<sup>x</sup> It is by focusing on the symbolic potential of the Indians that Downes is able to illuminate the impact they had upon the narrative: their violent actions reflect not only fears of safety, but also the political concerns surrounding what characteristics could be used to define a citizen of the new American republic. After all, as Justine S. Murison explains in “The Tyranny of Sleep: Somnambulism, Moral

Citizenship, and Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*," social elites of the late eighteenth century were highly concerned with losing control of society, which is reflected through the automatic movements of the sleepwalker.<sup>xi</sup> At the same time scholars also read the body and mechanism of the sleepwalker not as reflective of political turmoil, but instead symptomatic of unconscious desires within Edgar that propel him towards acts of depravity and destruction. *Edgar Huntly* is written from Edgar's perspective, after its events have taken place, as letters to Mary Waldengrave, provoking scholars to question his innocence, as he killed not only Indians, but also Mrs. Sarsefield's unborn child. Dana Luciano in "*Edgar Huntly* and the Novel's Reproductive Disorder" notes that throughout Edgar's writing he continually strives to replicate his own emotional state for his reader, which eventually causes Mrs. Sarsefield to miscarry after hearing about Clithero's deranged mental state. Luciano reads this dynamic as reflective of a reproductive disorder that Edgar himself symbolizes as he stands between dependent and independent manhood, unsure of his future not only as a citizen of the republic, but also as a heteronormative man. Thus the actions of the somnambulist continues to incite new readings into *Edgar Huntly*. Edgar himself notes, "There is always some significance in the actions of a sleeper" (77). That is why it seems appropriate to examine not only the effects of Edgar's distorted ramblings, but also the cause. From this perspective, it seems unavoidable to admit that there is a homoerotic potential at the core of *Edgar Huntly* that propels and causes his sleepwalking. This interjection is not to denounce other explanations of this phenomenon, but instead raise awareness that this reading is not only plausible, but also historically *possible*.

This is not entirely a novel reading of *Edgar Huntly*; other scholars have noted the homosocial potential within Edgar. Kate Ward Sugar, drawing upon the writings of Erasmus Darwin, reads Edgar's actions as revealing a conflict between contemporary understandings of masculinity that praise both rational thought and feminine sentimentality.<sup>xii</sup> This theme is reflected in Caleb Crain's *American Sympathy*, where he notes the theme of sympathy and friendship plays a constant role in Brown's fiction. In the case of *Edgar Huntly*, Crain captures the stunting effect of these emotions, as "Sympathy for the dead will kill you because it prevents you from telling new stories to connect you to the world."<sup>xiii</sup> Exploring the link between friendship and sentimentality is essential to the impressive scholarship on *Edgar Huntly*, yet the dynamic between homoeroticism, madness, and the development of social control remains removed from the realm of historic possibility. Even Stephen Shapiro, while acknowledging a reformation of sodomy from a forbidden act into a prohibitive identity in the eighteenth century, reads *Edgar Huntly* through a symbolic framework, understanding Edgar's violence as indicative of an aggression produced by an internal conflict rooted in his sexual identity.<sup>xiv</sup> In order to expand upon this scholarship, I suggest that we turn our attention to the historical, social, and political transformations that Brown experienced in order to highlight the ways in which historicism can create space for queer possibilities that are often thought of as anachronistic for the period.

It would be problematic to suggest that *Edgar Huntly* is a perfect representation of the past as Brown's gothic novel's distort not only reality but literary genres as well, but at the same time to reduce the text to a singular understanding of history warps and occludes the queer potential that exists within the narrative. "Heteronormativity assumes

a foundational position,” writes Jonathan Goldberg and thus in a period of social and sexual anarchy it seems problematic to silence a potentiality due to what scholars may call ahistorical or anachronistic.<sup>xv</sup> This paper is interested in exploring sexuality prior to the iconic year of 1870 that Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* used to mark as the temporal shift in which the sodomite became the homosexual, a year which also marks the creation of the heterosexual as the “natural” expression of human sexuality.<sup>xvi</sup> What seems to be missing in this narrative is the need for the sodomite to be understood in secular terms prior to this conversion. John Boswell in *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* writes, “The word ‘sodomite’ occurs twice in the King James translation of the Old Testament in contexts which imply sexual sins” and though these were poor translations they illuminate how the concept of the sodomite functioned within a religious framework as being symbols of unnatural sexuality and behavior.<sup>xvii</sup> If the sodomite was to become the homosexual, then, this required not only separating this term from other unnatural acts, but also an expansion of justifications and discourse to pathologize and demonize this behavior. Secularism plays a crucial role in this endeavor as the Enlightenment’s belief in “nature” reinforced hegemonic understandings of human sexuality, while at the same time employing scientific discourse to make this process appear natural. This reaffirmed the sodomite’s unnatural nature and by doing so making its actions punishable in a secular and rational society. One sign of this transformation can be found in William Bradford Esquire’s treatise *An Enquiry How Far the Punishment of Death is Necessary in Pennsylvania*, published in 1793. This document, written by a future Supreme Court Justice, worked to reform the death penalty, which included addressing the ways in which the state punished individuals for “crimes against nature.”

In a rather peculiar moment, Bradford suggested that instead of a religious or mystical explanation for this behavior, madness was the cause.<sup>xviii</sup> This presumption of a natural order, in which the sodomite is rendered “unnatural,” is not novel as sexual acts since the Middle Ages have been understood in this binary of natural and unnatural.<sup>xix</sup> Instead, what is unique is Bradford’s need to justify the incarceration of those who commit “crimes against nature.” That is why Bradford described the sodomite as *sui juris*, reflecting a lack of intellectual competence, which not only disenfranchised the figure but also reflected an innate depravity that he connects to a loss of reason. This development marks a key change in the eighteenth century, as no longer was “God,” or some external force, the cause of madness. Now the individual was blamed for this illness, forcing society to develop new ways to explain these apparently irrational acts.<sup>xx</sup> It is this explosion of causality that I believe captures an aspect of the secularization of American society, as no longer would providence be sufficient in explaining disruptive occurrences. Now every event from war to love required increased scrutiny, as individuals searched for the external or internal forces that shaped and disrupted reality.

In *Edgar Huntly*, Waldegrave’s death is often seen as the initial disruption to the narrative; however, I would also like to suggest that Clithero’s arrival in the story is as chaotic as the loss of Edgar’s dearest companion. After all, Edgar, after encountering Clithero, closes himself off from other possible lines of enquiry into Waldegrave’s murder—such as the actions of a rogue Indian or beast. This transforms this gothic mystery into a convoluted story of revenge. It is during Edgar’s pilgrimage to Waldegrave’s grave that he first encounters Clithero in the grips of somnambulism. This experience strikes Edgar as peculiar, as he fixates, on the sleepwalker, noting “A figure,

robust and strange, and half naked, to be thus employed, at this hour and place, was calculated to rouse up my whole soul” (9). This use of the word “rouse” is highly suggestive of the awakening of some deep emotion, and it provokes the reader to speculate what Edgar actually felt. We cannot forget that when Edgar first sees Clithro he is naked. This is not to suggest that only desire could have been produced in this moment, but rather to highlight the ambiguity that remains in place. It is this co-occurrence of an unspeakable reaction and a highly erotic encounter that suggests a homoerotic desire within Edgar. Edgar’s passion awakens in response to Clithero’s male form, and it operates in conflict with Edgar’s intense obsession with the memory of Waldegrave, which haunts him through his narrative.

It is the goal of this thesis then, to explore *Edgar Huntly* as a narrative that weaves the dangers of sodomy to sleepwalking, suggesting an implicit relationship among madness, illness, and same-sex desire. In order to fulfill this goal this project will employ a queer historicist approach, which aims to engage with the ambiguity of Brown’s work to reveal insights into the early American republic. This is done in the hopes not to impose a cohesive structure upon the narrative, but instead to embrace the state of flux that characterized the end of the eighteenth century and is mirrored in Brown’s gothic fiction. In particular, this reading draws upon the work of scholars like Mark Kann and Richard Godbeer who argue that this period not only experienced a sexual revolution, but also intense anxiety as enlightenment rhetoric eroded the patriarchal social order that American society had up to this point relied upon.<sup>xxi</sup> In response to this growing tension these historians note that the actions of elites to reinforce the social order was often done through discourses of gender and sexuality. In the case of

the homosocial, Godbeer notes that by the beginning of the nineteenth century romantic male friendship, which had once been hailed as a means to restore the nation, had become illicit.<sup>xxii</sup> This intense policing of the homosocial resulted in a deafening silence surrounding the potential for same-sex desire, which to me reveals a tension that is embedded in both *Edgar Huntly* and the historical framework that produced this piece of fiction. The sodomite, molly, and rake were not only characters of fiction, but have been documented as well known-identities in Philadelphia due to the transatlantic print culture of the eighteenth century.<sup>xxiii</sup> Thus it is by exploring *Edgar Huntly* as a narrative engaged with the danger and causes of sodomy that we are able to see hints not only of the development of the social forces used to constrain sexuality, but also the development of epistemological forces used to identify and define people as abnormal through madness. In order to illuminate this dynamic it will require insight into contemporary understandings of how the secular reshaped the eighteenth century and how this expansion of etiology is clearly shown in *Edgar Huntly* through competing discourses surrounding the causes of somnambulism. It is then possible to see how madness and sexuality are remade through this development, which is illuminated by Brown's use of the sleepwalker's body as it pantomimes and reflects desires that rebuke the "natural" "secular" perceptions of "sanity" and "sexuality" in order to capture the rather queer nature of the human experience.

In order to construct this argument we will need to have a strong grasp of the novel *Edgar Huntly* and an array of theoretical and historical insights that elucidate this queer potential at the heart of the novel. To begin this process we will engage with a brief synthesis of the current debates surrounding the concept of secularism. This is done in

order to show how Brown employed this dynamic throughout *Edgar Huntly* to coax out the horrors that exist within the “natural” world. Secularism will also provide us with a new way to understand how madness in *Edgar Huntly* is produced more from social perceptions than actual signs of mental instability. This social dynamic captures how the medical discourse of madness in the early American republic functioned as a tool to replicate and reinforce patriarchy, instead of actually identifying mental illness. Madness thus becomes the locator through which we will be able to understand how Edgar’s somnambulism is tied to an inability to address his homoerotic desires for the characters Waldegrave and Clithero. Edgar’s restoration to reason thus takes on a sinister nature then as rationality becomes connected to heterosexuality, which is enforced upon him by the patriarch Sarsefield. Through somnambulism, Brown is able to capture the grotesque horrors that existed within the early American republic as the nation’s reconfiguration of sexual and social mores radically altered homosociality, laying the groundwork for a new means to control human sexuality.

## CHAPTER 2: THE SECULAR AND CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN'S GOTHIC NOVEL

Quest. 1. *What is that Abominable Uncleanness, which crieth in the ears of the Lord of Hosts, and hastneth divine Vengeance?*

*Answ.* It is expressed by and comprehended under those two terms, *Fornication*, and *going after strange flesh*, Jude ver.7. *Fornication* being taken in a large sense, comprehends not only *Whoredom* and *Self-pollution*, but also *Adultery*, Matt. 5.32. and *Incest*, 1 Cor.5.1. *Going after strange flesh*, comprehends *Sodomy* and *Bestiality*. These are the severall sorts of Abominable Uncleanness, which cry for Vengeance.

*The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into*, Samuel Danforth<sup>xxiv</sup>

Samuel Danforth composed *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into* in 1674 in response to the discovery and execution of Benjamin Goad for his crime of bestiality. Goad's sexual transgression was not the first case of bestiality in colonial New England, but it provoked great anxiety among his community as the action prompted a search not only for the cause, but also for a cure. William Bradford in *Of Plymouth Plantation* also had to address a case of bestiality in his community that occurred in 1642, but he was able to place the blame for this transgression upon the "many unworthy people" who had crept into the colony.<sup>xxv</sup> The literary difference between Danforth's sermon and Bradford's history is rather apparent; however, despite their differences both texts share a similar cosmological worldview that places God at the center of their universe. David Hall in *World of Wonder; Days of Judgment* writes, "religion was embedded in the fabric of everyday life. It coloured how you thought about your children and your parents. It entered into perceptions of community, and of the world that lay beyond New England," placing God at the center of their universe as both the arbiter of justice and the force that propelled human history.<sup>xxvi</sup> God's position of power compelled Danforth and his community to exterminate individuals who committed acts of "Carnal Uncleanness"

“Because the sin of Uncleanness is a bold and presumptuous *Violation* of the holy *Law* and blessed *Commandment* of God.”<sup>xxvii</sup> At the same time, though, the story of Benjamin Goad raises a key question: who is to blame? After all, Danforth’s sermon creates a narrative in which Goad succumbed to this base desire as he “often attempted Buggery with several Beasts, before God left him to commit it: at last God gave him over to it, and he continued in the frequent practise thereof for several Moneths.”<sup>xxviii</sup> Throughout his sermon, Danforth though does not blame God for Goad’s transgressions, but instead justifies the execution of this man by suggesting that innate depravity or demonic influences played a key role in his perverted sexual desires. In the face of such behavior, Danforth reinforces the hegemony of his community by stressing the needs to educate children properly, for children to not only to obey God but also their elders, for parent to punish and discipline those who commit social and sexual transgression, but more importantly to turn to the divine for salvation and protection. Faith and prayer are presented by Danforth as key to protecting oneself from demonic influences for “There is a difference of evil Spirits, some are more wicked then others, *Mat* 12. 45. but the worst kindes may be cast out by Fasting and Prayer, *Matth.* 17.21.”<sup>xxix</sup> Sermons such as this provide the foundation for the nationalistic narrative that the American colonies in the seventeenth century were on the periphery of European culture and thought, which provides a stark contrast as the eighteenth century saw the colony not only become a nation, but did so by turning to secular thought for justification as they fought and won their independence.

Written after the American Revolution, William Bradford Esquire’s identified both sodomy and bestiality as “crimes against nature,” reflecting a similar dynamic to

Danforth's category "going after strange flesh." Yet Danforth's justification is rooted in biblical scripture, while Bradford turns to madness to explain why anyone would not have sex with a woman, writing that "In a country where marriage take place so early, and the intercourse between the sexes is not difficult, there can be no reason for severe penalties to restrain this abuse. The wretch, who perpetuates it, must be in a state of mind which may occasion us to doubt, whether he be *sur Juris* at the time; or, whether he reflects on the punishment at all."<sup>xxx</sup> The narrative that American society progressed from religious demagoguery, epitomized in Danforth's sermon, to a society ruled by secular, rational, thought becomes problematic as Bradford's treatise reflects a conservatism that is highly similar to Danforth's. This traditional impulse can best be seen through changing perceptions of sexuality for while the eighteenth century and its revolutionary ideology may have resulted in a sexual revolution in the early American republic, yet we cannot forget that elites, religion, medicine, and the law continued to police and regulate sexual activity. A transformation occurs in this span of time as we see a major shift in understanding sexual deviancy from a religion framework in which external forces influence and allow for said transgressions to a paradigm in which the acts become unnatural and indicative of a loss of reason. This continued need to police sexuality captures the clear terror that unregulated sexuality posed to certain segments of society. The point of this observation though is not to suggest that the state is a puppet of religion, but rather challenge the perception that secularization results in the exorcism of religious forces, leading to the universal emancipation of humanity. Instead it seems more apt to understand a more ambiguous and complex relationship between religion and the secular as the boundaries between the two are blurred in this period. Therefore, in this section I

shall explore how the ambiguity between the natural and the supernatural is a key characteristic of Brown's gothic novels, which continually work to illuminate the boundaries of the secular, revealing the limitations of human reason in the face of unnatural desires and impulses.

This understanding of secularism as an interaction between the religious and the non-religious as opposed to the removal of religion from the public sphere has grown out of recent scholarship that has worked to problematize our modern understanding of the phenomenon. Joan Wallace Scott in "Secularism and Gender Equality" challenges the myth that the secular ideal is *the* catalyst for social and political equality. To illustrate this claim Scott turned to the French Revolution and the ways in which women were excluded from the public sphere due to their gender, which was justified not by religious taboos, but due to a "natural" weakness within the female body. Scott notes that eighteenth century French discoursed used femininity as the mirror for masculinity, presenting women as *naturally* domestic and religious in order to inscribe the male form with the natural traits of reason and by doing so giving men a biological justification for their control of political discourse. "Nature" thus became the new source of legitimacy to support social regulations that religion once held, which Scott explains as a result of secularism. "Secularists" Scott writes, "removed God as the ultimate intelligent designer and put 'nature' in his place. Nature was conceived not as an outside force, but as an essence that could be inferred from all living things, humans included. To act according with nature was to fulfill one's inherent capacities and, for humans, these were determined by sex."<sup>xxxix</sup> It is through Scott's analysis of the French Revolution that she is able to capture how the secular in fact instead of rethinking gender reinforced this social

construct and by doing so illuminates how the female form remained a highly contested locus of social discourse as religion and secularism fought to control and regulate sexuality. While Scotts' analysis focused on women her insight into the ways in which discourse produced the concept of "nature" provides us with a framework to understand how this became a tool to regulate male sexuality as sodomy remained unnatural, but now within a secular framework. Scott is just one scholar who is rethinking secularism, and it is by exploring the writings of Charles Taylor and Talala Asad that we shall be able to create a more cohesive understanding of the secular and how it can be help us rethink *Edgar Huntly* and the ways in which Brown employed the body of somnambulist.

Secularism, according to Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*, is often understood in relation to how it can influence either a location or the ways in which people interact, which usually translates into the belief that the public sphere is a space free from religious influence or intervention. Taylor problematizes this perception though by pointing out how western European nations, while understood as secular, retain aspects of religion in public spaces.<sup>xxxii</sup> This apparent contradiction propels Taylor to suggest a third way in which we can think about secularism, moving away from physical phenomena towards a paradigmatic form of analysis. It is through "beliefs" that Taylor is able to mark a historical trajectory that "takes us from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others."<sup>xxxiii</sup> This is not to suggest that science replaced religion or that the supernatural became antagonistic to the secular; instead Taylor is more interested in the ways in which the secular altered the lived experiences of people. This paradigm shift opens up new ways to explore secularism, as this approach fixates on

the ways in which people lived as opposed to more structural dynamics. It is by reading past events like demonic possession through experience that Taylor is able to avoid casting the past as irrational, while also highlighting the lack of alternative etiologies. Taylor writes that “The great innovation of the West was that of immanent order in Nature, whose working could be systematically understood and explained on its own terms, leaving open the question whether this whole order had a deeper significance, and whether, if it did, should we infer a transcendent Creator beyond it.”<sup>xxxiv</sup> This reading of the secular did not replace God or the supernatural, but expanded the cosmological worldview that dominated Western thought prior to the eighteenth century. This decentering of the world, Taylor, explains allowed for the creation for democracies as this ideology restructured power dynamics as revolutionary ideology gave value to the lives and actions of “people” who had once lacked status and power. Unintentionally this discourse also produced a power struggle at the center of this political structure as it challenged and thus removed the omnipotent power, often monarchs or God, who had ordered and maintained social balance.<sup>xxxv</sup> While this shift in political structure ushered in the modern concept of the state, it also placed greater emphasis on cohesion and mutual trust in order for society to function, which in eighteenth century America was produced not only by the state, but also by a shared protestant faith and Anglo culture. This dynamic then points us towards the need to pay closer attention to the context and social forces at work as these influence the boundaries and perceptions that divide the secular from the religious, but also shows the ways in which both are employed in maintaining the stability of society.

This shift towards a greater sensitivity concerning historical peculiarities and divergences is what propels contemporary scholars to rethink the secular not as a singular occurrence, but rather plural heterogeneous phenomena. This dynamic was introduced in Talala Asad's *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* through Asad's deconstructionist approach to studying secularism. It is in Asad's search to sketch out what an anthropology of the secular might look like that he interjects, "In my view the secular is neither singular nor stable in its historical identity, although it works through a series of particular oppositions."<sup>xxxvi</sup> It is this dialectic approach to the study of secularism, which expands upon the cosmological transformation that Taylor suggests that makes Asad's interjection helpful as he directs his readers to think of the secular not as a universal, but as a heterogeneous dynamic that is performed and constantly reproduced to create a false consistency. This is similar to Judith Butler's insight "that there is a sedimentation of gender norms that produce the peculiar phenomenon of a natural sex."<sup>xxxvii</sup> It is only through repetition and reinforcement then that the "naturalness" of a certain gender develops, which can also be said for the "secular." After all "*there is no public sphere of free speech at an instant,*" writes Asad, directing us towards the reality that the concept of the public and private spheres are socially and temporally dependent as these parameters develop and change over time. For example, the coffee houses of London in the seventeenth century, which became emblematic of the public sphere in British society, were made over time and became a unique location that offered the opportunity for *certain* classes, ideas, and genders to interact. Of course such spaces are never truly "open" to everyone, which further stresses the need to understand historical sensitivities that produce and regulate the concept of public-secular sphere in

relation to the religious-private spheres. In my opinion though it seems more appropriate to think of these two spaces not as separate, but as overlapping for the coffee house despite being public were spaces in which many private acts could also occur. If we think about secularism then through this mindset it becomes clear how religion also overlaps and influences the secular despite their perceived incompatibility. This is not to suggest that religion is an infectious pathogen that is slowly destroying the secular, but rather that this returns us to Asad's perception that these two forces are in constant dialogue. Asad writes, "The Space that religion may properly occupy in society has to be continually redefined by law because the reproduction of secular life with and beyond the nation state continually affects the discursive clarity of that space."<sup>xxxviii</sup> This understanding of the secular/religious dynamic not as a dichotomy, but as shifting boundaries, challenges and destabilizes many of the myths that underpin the privileged position of modern secularism as the great liberator of humanity.

At the same time Asad points us towards the needs to pay closer attention to how these two discourses respond to the other as they illuminate the paradox at the heart of the eighteenth century as secularism captures the faith in reason that the period propagated, while religion points us towards the power of the irrational that became inscribed upon the masses by social elitists as the century concluded. Sexuality is not removed from this process, as the "nature" secularism produced created and privileged certain types of sexual acts as natural, while categorizing acts outside of this framework as unnatural. This points us towards a larger conflict between social and ideological forces, which I believe are at the heart of Brown's gothic writing, capturing a unique characteristic of his gothic narratives as Brown rejected the supernatural for uncanny natural phenomenon,

which captures the intersectionality between the rational and the irrational, the natural and the unnatural, the heterosexual and the homosexual.

This observation is not entirely novel when it comes to Brown; however, my argument is unique, as it connects this queer nature to shifting understandings of causality and human sexuality. From *Weiland's* use of ventriloquism to *Arthur Mervyn's* plague filled Philadelphia, Brown's gothic novels engage with forces that can both be explained *and* resist any concrete explanation, producing an unresolvable ambiguity within the narrative. This uncertainty between the boundaries between the natural and supernatural are not just found within Brown's writing, but are reflective of the ambiguity that developed in the eighteenth century with the rise of new empirical forms of analysis and religious movements. In order to study *Edgar Huntly* through a lens of secularism, I wish to reinforce that we should not understand the secular as an absence of religion, but rather the expansion of an epistemological framework that resists the reader's drive to distinguish a clear dichotomy between fantasy and reality, considering that this is deliberate feature of Brown's writing. Furthermore, in order to understand how the tensions between the secular and religious function as a force within the novel, I will have to focus our attention upon the bodies of the characters because the human body is often the locus in which we can see the conflict between religious and secular discourse. This dialectic is seen when characters question if they were motivated by internal or external forces, which ultimately problematize the certainty of anything within the framework of the narrative. For example, if we were to explore Brown's use of Yellow Fever in *Arthur Mervyn* it is easy from a modern mindset to understand the illness as being caused by a pathogen; however, if we employ a lens of secularism that is consistent

with eighteenth century medicine and culture it becomes clear that this epidemic could be explained in many ways from migration to miasma. Disease thus takes on an almost supernatural quality in *Arthur Mervyn*, and if we turn to the writings of William Currie from 1793 we see that he castigates those people who believed that they could become infected just by breathing the “polluted” air, writing “any apprehension of an infectious disease from this source, can only be excused in those who have not had suitable opportunities of better information.”<sup>xxxix</sup> Thus Brown’s use of illness as an uncanny phenomenon shows an adept awareness of the psychological horror that plagues can cause, because, despite the interjection of scientific or medical discourse, knowledge cannot remove the potential fear that comes from an unseen danger. Brown pushes the terror of his stories to new heights though for while “The incidents related are extraordinary and rare,” as confessed in his advertisement for *Weiland*, Brown makes it clear that the events are still *possible*. This observation of secularism in Brown’s gothic novels is not to suggest that he was the only American gothic writer to employ the secular in this way. Leonora Sansay’s *Secret History; or The Horrors of St. Domingo* creates a similar dynamic by using the Haitian Revolution to explore the horrors that exists within the family unit, which is often concealed by patriarchy as it labors to control not only female agency, but also reproduction. Abby L. Goode, in her reading of the *Secret History*, focuses on the uncanny phenomena that highlight what she calls “gothic fertility” as the ecology of the narrative mirrors the reproductive disarray that haunts the novel.<sup>xl</sup> Madness has a similar function though in *Edgar Huntly* and in order to illuminate the clear conflict between the natural and supernatural explanations that occur throughout the novel I believe we should first explore how Brown describes Clithero’s first descent

into somnambulism. Through this reading my intention is to capture the debate between secular and religious understandings of sleepwalking, which is done in order to capture the form of secularism set forth in Brown's novel. This shift though is done ultimately to point us towards a movement away from purely supernatural understandings of anomalies towards more natural explanations, which will ultimately help us understand how the silent body of the sleepwalker became a stand in for the unspeakable desire that we understand today as homoerotic.

In *Edgar Huntly*, there are two competing discourses that explain the cause of somnambulism, either Brown describes it as mysterious phenomena caused by an external force or the result of some internal, almost mechanical, propulsion. This conflict is clearly seen in *Edgar Huntly* through the history of Clithero as we see contradictory explanations for his actions, which I read as reflective of Edgar's secular ideology influencing Clithero's own narrative. This is because that power to explain the narrative ultimately lies in Edgar as he is both author and observer, which while problematic due to his own somnambulism captures the ways in which the secular discourse discounts Clithero's more supernatural understandings of his disease. Brown's use of this plot device points to both an irony and critique of reason that is the heart of *Edgar Huntly*, almost predicting Foucault's later proclamation in *Madness and Civilization* that "The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence," while occluding the potential for the irrational within every individual.<sup>xli</sup> In *Edgar Huntly* we see that Edgar is constantly reinscribing the meaning and cause of Clithero's somnambulism and by doing so effectively silencing Clithero in his own narrative. Edgar proclaims after hearing

Clithero's story that "He judges wrong and is therefore miserable" (64). This is not to suggest that Edgar is falsifying his re-telling of Clithero's narrative, but rather that he has composed the text in a deliberate manner to provoke an emotional response within the reader. This is made clear in Edgar's introduction to his story by declaring to the reader, "Thous wilt catch from my story every horror and sympathy which it paints" (6). Due to this constructed and planned nature I am suggesting that instead of reading the etiological conflict that unravels in Clithero's history as cognitive dissonance that we should read it as Edgar's own influence upon the narrative as he ultimately controls the manner in which it is told. If we accept these ideological inconsistencies as Edgar's influence upon Clithero's history then not only does it allow us to observe Edgar's secular influence upon the narrative, but also show how secularism later in the novel inscribes a moral degeneracy upon the unconscious body of the sleepwalker.

Clithero's personal history is revealed through the course of five chapters that provides the reader with an account of Clithero's descent into somnambulism. While this story, within a story, is told the narrative continually challenges not only Edgar, but also the reader, to reflect on not only on Clithero's actions but their own as well. This etiological gauntlet is thrown when Clithero castigates Edgar declaring, "You, like others, are blind to the most momentous consequences of your own actions. You talk of imparting consolation. You boast the beneficence of your intentions. You set yourself to do me a benefit. What are the effects of your misguided zeal, and random efforts?" (25). This question in many respects is lost by the end of *Edgar Huntly*, but taken in hindsight it captures a key meditation at the heart Brown's narrative because it is through Clithero's history that he is able to reveal that reality resists the production of clear cut causality. An

influence that is made apparent as the language employed to describe Clithero's somnambulism switches between natural, almost medical like language, to supernatural explanations, making the reader's judgment imprecise as they try to determine the authenticity of Clithero's narrative.

Clithero's story, a story within a story, is narrated through Edgar a decision by Brown that further heightens the influences and ambiguities that surround *Edgar Huntly* as a whole, undermining the period's blind faith in reason's ability to determine reality's veracity in the face of natural ambiguities. Clithero proclaims at the beginning of his tale that "The dæmon that troubled me at first is still in the fruition of power" (26). Despite Clithero's clear use of the supernatural to explain his behavior we also see him describe his somnambulism as "mechanical," "as if my senses had been hushed in sleep, while the powers of locomotion were consciously exerted to bear me to my chamber" (54-55). Thus we see Clithero switch between an external demonic influence to explain his behavior to an internal force that is caused by a loss of reason. Due to this conflicting etiological understanding of somnambulism it seems not unlikely for Clithero to ask himself, "Was it I that hurried to the deed?" Yet Clithero ultimately rejects this explanation and as a result responsibility, turning towards his original explanation, "No. It was the dæmon that possessed me. My limbs were guided to the bloody office by a power foreign and superior to mine" (59). Moments such as this can be found not only in *Edgar Huntly*, but in other gothic novels written by Brown.<sup>xlii</sup> Such refusal to define causality, I contend, illustrates the influence of secularism not only reflecting changes in the perceptions of the human body, but also in society as well. After all, if we consider the implications of a supernatural force propelling the sleepwalker, can they be held

accountable for their actions? Yet if we reject the mystical and instead fixate on internal forces, this requires an innate faith in human reason that is problematic, as anyone could succumb to madness at any point in time. The magnitude of this conundrum seems to be understood by Edgar when he confesses that after hearing Clithero's story, "My judgment was, for a time, sunk into imbecility and confusion" (63). The narrative leaves Edgar to meditate not only on its technical ambiguities within of the narrative, but also the ultimate question as to who is responsible for Clithero's actions. Brown exploits this uncertainty in order to illustrate the limitations of human reason in relation to reality, while also showing the antagonistic response that ambiguity provokes within humanity as the perceived abnormality of the somnambulist becomes viewed through a secular framework of deviancy.

This hostile response is made apparent when Edgar eventually inscribes criminality upon the body of Clithero through his mastery of the narrative. Edgar's characterizations then captures the dangerous potential that exists within a sleepwalker's body as well as the unreason located within the vessel. At the same time we see that Edgar does not exonerate himself from this abnormality, because he himself, while composing the letter that makes up the bulk of the novel, records his own descent into somnambulism as an unnatural experience. This makes Edgar's initial diagnosis of the sleepwalker peculiar as he writes, "The incapacity of sound sleeps denotes a mind sorely wounded. It is thus that atrocious criminals denote the possession of some dreadful secret" (11). This suggests that the phenomenon is directly related to some knowledge so depraved that the mind represses it to such an extent that only through sleep can the body respond to this psychic trauma. A similar explanation is made after Clithero's personal

history is revealed, when Edgar declares Clithero's "crimes originated in those limitations which nature has imposed upon human faculties," which while mitigating Clithero's guilt still suggests that there is a criminality that causes his actions (64). Thus although Edgar understands Clithero's illness through a secular framework he still perceives the behavior as something deviant and thus dangerous to society. The body of the somnambulist thus becomes not only the source of some internal disturbance, but also a pathogen for the stability and health of society.

The potential danger the sleepwalker possessed is reinforced through the reproductive chaos that Clithero causes at the conclusion of the novel, which I will return to in the next section of this paper. For now I wish to focus upon this understanding of the somnambulist as a disruptive force as being similar to early modern perceptions of the sodomite as being a locus of depravity that unleashes chaos upon the world. Both madness and non-reproductive sexual acts share the same underlying potential to disrupt the established social order that is understood as "natural" because these actions or identities reveal the artificiality of hegemonic society, illuminating the structures that push people toward actions that reproduce and reinforced societal cohesion. After all, we cannot ignore the criminality that is affixed to Clithero's person, but not Edgar's. A difference that captures a divergence in the treatment of the insane in *Edgar Huntly*, while also illuminating the cultural fault lines within the narrative as Edgar's homicidal rampage that follows his return to consciousness is found socially acceptable, but Clithero's behavior is so dangerous that it requires him to be incarcerated without due process. Sarsefield, as both physician and patriarch, captures Clithero's depravity by characterizing him as "a madman whose liberty is dangerous, and who

requires to be fettered and imprisoned as the most atrocious criminal” (193). Madness and criminality thus become connected through Sarsefield’s mandate provoking us to consider what makes Clithero so dangerous, which is why it seem crucial not to understand Clithero himself, but rather what he symbolized. Yet we need to understand this occurrence not as a demonic possession, but rather an internal one that compels the abnormal behavior of the lunatic, justifying the incarceration and displacement of these queer individuals. It is by understanding that *Edgar Huntly* is written in the midst of a cultural paradigm shift that makes our secular framework illuminating as we can see through Brown’s engagement with madness not only the influences of Benjamin Rush, but also European physicians such as John Locke and Philippe Pinel. For *Edgar Huntly* shows that despite medical discourses’ benevolent gesture to unchain the lunatic and treat them humanly through the “moral method,” we can see that behind this façade is the transformation of madness from a mere occurrence to a sign of moral degeneracy, which like the sodomite had to be contained in order to ensure the future of American society and the “natural order” that it depended upon.

**CHAPTER 3: “THEY CALLED ME MAD, AND I CALLED THEM MAD AND  
DAMN THEM, THEY OUT VOTED ME”:** MADNESS, MASCULINITY AND  
*EDGAR HUNTLY*

Here I more deliberately reviewed the incidents that had just occurred. The inference was just, that the man, half-clothed and digging, was a sleeper: But what was the cause of this morbid activity? What was the mournful vision that dissolves him in tears, and extorted from him tokens of inconsolable distress? What did he seek, or what endeavor to conceal in this fatal spot? The incapacity of sleep denotes a mind sorely wounded. (11)

*Edgar Huntly*, Charles Brockden Brown

Throughout *Edgar Huntly*, Edgar continually reinforces the theme that some internal force propels the body of the sleepwalker, making his actions deliberate, even if they appear irrational, reflecting a secular etiology that fixates on an internal disturbance as being the root cause of the ailment. One such moment is when Edgar reflects upon the crying body of the sleepwalking Clithero and ponders, “What was the mournful vision that dissolves him in tears, and extorted from him tokens of inconsolable distress?” (11). This insight into the movements of the insane pushes for a more secular understanding of madness, fixating on an internal force that disrupts reason, but does not totally disconnect the body from the mind. Brown’s observation into the somnabulist’s behavior is similar to Philippe Pinel’s own insight that “the idea of madness should by no means imply a total abolition of mental faculties,” which justified his call for a need to reconsider the nature of the irrational and more importantly their treatment.<sup>xliiii</sup> This is perhaps where I diverge from other scholarship on *Edgar Huntly* because while I believe madness is certainly a part of the narrative, I also believe it is often misdiagnosed. Scholars seem to read unnatural and grotesque acts as symptomatic of the irrational, instead of looking at the gaps and incoherencies that occur within the novel’s structure. Slavoj Žižek in *The*

*Sublime Object of Ideology* notes that the repressed secret that mars both the analysis of dreams and commodities can only be revealed through form, “the ‘secret’ to be unveiled through analysis is not the content hidden by forms (the form of commodities, the form of dreams) but, on the contrary, *the ‘secret’ of this form itself.*”<sup>xliv</sup> This fixation on form I believe forces us to reflect more on Brown’s deliberate choices as opposed to the red herrings that his gothic novels contain. Moments such as Edgar’s somnambulistic ramblings and Clithero’s suicide are just two examples within *Edgar Huntly* that capture such unusual stylistic choices, which also happen to be told through Sarsefield’s point of view. These peculiar moments I believe capture unique insights into not only what propels the movements and actions of the somnambulist, but more importantly illuminate the secular way in which madness is used to police masculine behavior. It is by reading the sleepwalker as disrupting the masculine dream of society that it captures why the figure must be restored to rationality or expelled from it. As Foucault wrote, “[Madness] conceals beneath error the secret enterprise of truth.”<sup>xlv</sup> An axiom that pushes this study of *Edgar Huntly* to look beyond the political discourse of the period and the fear of Indians’ attacks, towards a more secular understanding of madness that looks at the actions that provoke dynamic social reprisal against the irrational within the framework of the novel, scrutinizing these moments as illuminating the connections between madness, sexuality, and deviant male behavior.

Madness is often thought of as a natural or unnatural occurrence within the human species that can be easily identified; however, Edgar’s reflection upon the origin of Clithero’s somnambulism suggests a more complex understanding of the phenomena as he searches for the “cause” of this abnormal behavior. Edgar’s etiological framework

reveals, though, a belief that only duress could cause this ailment, which he wrongly deduces as being caused by Clithero's guilt for killing Waldengrave. This insight into Edgar's mind subverts the perceived idea of madness as being a natural occurrence and instead points towards a more constructed aspect of the ailment, making insanity reflective of social mores more so than psychological abnormalities. Mental illness thus becomes a potent form of social control, which was changing in the early American republic as secular discourse reshaped religion's role in understanding madness, subverting its dominance in favor of a medical discourse that claimed mastery over irrationality. In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault fixates on the explosion of discourse that remade sexuality and human behavior in the wake of the Reformation, forcing individuals to constantly confess to every sexual thought and desire. With the rise of psychiatry and bourgeoisie culture, Foucault notes a transformation: people began to move away from the religious priest to a trained physician in order to fulfill this impulse to "confess." This dynamic mirrors many of Foucault's other works as his overarching historical narrative points towards a secularization of power in the eighteenth century that produced the "carceral archipelago" suggested in *Discipline and Punish*. Schools, hospitals, and other institutions made up this archipelago and produced a new, empirical way to discipline human behavior, constructing the categories of the "normal" and "abnormal" through systemized data. "All the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individuals, to brand him and to alter him," writes Foucault, as these discourses created both the concept of a "natural" and an "unnatural" human body.<sup>xlvi</sup> In eighteenth century America, though, there was no clear demarcation that distinguished sanity from insanity, as one's mental status had less to do with their

individual's thoughts or actions and more to do with their community's social mores. Madness, prior to the eighteenth century, was often understood as a divine or supernatural affliction. But as Mary Ann Jimenez notes in *Changing Faces of Madness* in the wake of revolution, "The moral content of madness had not been emptied; instead, it was increasingly based on reason and natural law rather than theology; it rested on a new secularized notion of sin."<sup>xlvii</sup> The mad man thus became deviant not only because of their behavior, but because some internal failing caused their madness, a development that pushed society to turn to physicians instead of priests. This rise in a secular notion of madness increased the need to police this irrational force as it became a new way to localize and identify an individual as abnormal and thus morally suspect. At the same time this secularization of insanity reinforced the perceived relationship between masculinity and rationality, while making madness a tool to chastise and control male behavior, often connecting sexual deviancy with irrationality.

Madness in the eighteenth century was radically reshaped by secularism as this paper has already alluded to, making the individual the cause of their insanity as opposed to any external force. However, despite the period's push to understand the lunatic through more secular discourse we cannot ignore the fact that to punish and confine the mad man first required a communal response that identified the individual as such. Since the middle of the eighteenth century, European discourse about madness began to speculate that an excess of passions resulted in abnormal mental functions. Louis C. Charland notes that in the eighteenth century there existed a wide range of medical literature that worked to distinguish the dangerous "passions" from more natural "emotions." Charland, drawing upon the work of Vincenzo Chiarugi, explains that the

difference between the two is primarily determined by its impact and duration. Charland writes, “[Emotions], moreover are simpler in their constitution than [passions], which are said to be effects (*effete*) of [emotions] that persist beyond the initial ‘first movement’ that is the emotion, and are diffused throughout the body.”<sup>xlviii</sup> Charland notes that passions were problematic for John Locke because “passions tend to fix and focus the activities of the Mind on a fixed unchangeable object,” which disrupts and makes rational discourse impossible.<sup>xlix</sup> Charland’s discussion of John Locke’s contribution to the periods understanding of madness seems apt, as Locke wrote in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that while the “idiot’s” lacks reason, “...*mad Men*, on the other side seem to suffer by the other Extreme. For they do not appear to me to have lost the Faculty of Reasoning: but having joined together some *Ideas* very wrong, they mistaken them for Truths.”<sup>1</sup> This distinction is critical as it supported the “moral treatment” championed by physicians like Pinel who understood insanity not as a divine act, but rather a mental deviation, which while placing blame upon the lunatic also provided them with the potential for a cure. This secular discourse of madness though could be used to label any deviant behavior as irrational, which could be used to silence political dissent.

Political concerns over the stability and cohesion of the nation pushed American elites and physicians to turn to the medical discourse of passions as a way to demonize the power of the masses that had once been necessary for the success of the American Revolution. In *Federalist Paper no. 10* James Madison argues that the danger of “factions” lies in fact that they can be moved by chaotic passions writing, “By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest,

adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.”<sup>li</sup> This deliberate use of the term “passions” by Madison demonizes not only the power of the mob, but also the reasons that motivates their actions as he suggests that they are not rooted in reason, but rather in irrationality. Madison’s solution to the threat posed by factions was either to destroy “the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests,” the first option being unacceptable in the minds of the American people.<sup>lii</sup> In order to stabilize the nation there was a clear need in the minds of elites to discipline and regulate the American populous, enforcing uniformity and moderation, while demonizing those who refuse to submit to this normalizing force. Mark Kann in *A Republic of Men* notes how masculinity was utilized in such a way, policing male behavior in order to ensure men performed properly in the public sphere. For example, prisons became a space that not only removed men from the public sphere but also emasculated them, “Their sole hope for reclaiming self-respect and social status was to cooperate with reformers who urged them to use solitude to repent, suppress passion, and learn useful trades.”<sup>liii</sup> It is only once reformed and restored to reason, or rather molded to fit social mores, can the criminal, or lunatic, return to society. This perspective of masculinity and madness allows us to see how Brown’s use of medical discourse reveals to the reader a potential horror that resided behind the apparent morality and benevolence of Sarsefield’s actions, considering he seems to be motivated by a clear desire to ensure the future and stability of his family, undermining the “moral treatment” propagated by contemporary physicians.

*Edgar Huntly* illuminates this dynamic through the novel's plot and structure as both implement aspects of the moral treatment introduced by physicians like Pinel and Benjamin Rush. Yet Sarsefield's overwhelming influence in the narrative's conclusion allows Brown to show the reader how the power of medical discourse was implicitly linked to the prerogatives of American patriarchs, suggesting a conflict of interest that undermined the medical developments that the period proclaimed as humane. The *traitement moral* was developed in Europe in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by physicians who believed that insanity to be derived from passions and in order to remedy these disorders pushed for a reconfiguration of how society understood and treated the insane. Pinel called for empathy in the face of madness, writing in his *Memoir of Madness*, "The excessive sensitivity that characterizes very talented persons may become a cause for their loss of reason," calling for the creation of asylums in order to treat and restore these individuals to sanity, which also happened to remove these unproductive members of society from circulation.<sup>liv</sup> In *Edgar Huntly* the return of Sarsefield not only brings into the narrative a figure that is endowed with the power of a patriarch and educator, but also the influence of a physician. This inclusion of a symbol of medical authority seems too peculiar not to be a deliberate decision by Brown, as the character embodies a pinnacle of power that was associated with male self-mastery, providing Edgar with a male figure to emulate and by doing so conform to social perceptions that defined sanity. A similar need for an absolute figure to restore order is laid out by Benjamin Rush in his *Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon the Diseases of the Mind*, writing that the purpose of asylums was "not to feed nor clothe the body, nor yet to cure one of its common disease: it is to restore the disjointed or debilitated faculties of the

mind of a fellow creature to their natural order and offices, and to revive in him the knowledge of himself, his family, and his god.”<sup>lv</sup> The comparison between the physician and the patriarch is made apt, as their authority within their domains is absolute. Both are given the tasks of not only upholding the natural order that organizes society, but also to punish their charges that transgressed these bounds. Despite being written in 1812, Rush’s observations are reflective of his numerous years acting as a physician and educator in Philadelphia, where he transmitted these ideas to a whole generation of doctors. Furthermore, Rush’s essay *An Inquiry Into the Influence of Physical Causes Upon the Moral Faculty* reflects a similar concern with abnormal behavior, suggesting “moral depravity” is the product of a temporary loss of reason. “Virtue” Rush writes, “is the soul of a republic. To promote this, laws for the suppression of vice and immorality will be as ineffectual, as the increase and enlargement of jails.”<sup>lvi</sup> Rush’s solution to this national threat was through education as a means of not only indoctrinating future citizens of the early American republic, but also to normalize the violence used in the name of discipline. Rush’s clear belief in the need to regulate and control abnormal and disruptive behavior illuminates Brown’s own characterization of Sarsefield, whose benevolent nature disappears in his final encounter with Clithero. This event not only captures Sarsefield’s ability to control the state, but also points towards a cultural fault line that madness threatened to disrupt. For the madness lurking within Clithero’s body has the potential to disrupt the natural reproduction of society, making his insanity ultimately disruptive to the masculine norms that empowered white men to maintain and control society.

By understanding Sarsefield as an embodiment of rational and socially acceptable masculine behavior, it becomes clear how moments often understood as symptomatic of Edgar's insanity, such as his homicidal rampage against raiding Indians, can in fact be read not as irrational, but instead as a perversion of male behavior. This fixation on the relationship between power and madness is done not out of some paranoid disdain for the medical profession, but rather to show how silence pervades *Edgar Huntly*. Not only are sleepwalkers mute throughout the narrative, but any irrationality is exiled to the periphery of the narrative only to be later recounted and sanitized through the physician Sarsefield. While Edgar himself may be horrified by these acts of violence they can be read as conforming to socially accepted uses of force because these actions caused no serious repercussions for Edgar. In fact, Edgar escape any litigation for his violent acts and is able to finally marry and by doing so gain sexual access to a woman, which was a key requirement of patriarchy in American society. This fate is radically different from Clithero, as he is designated as insane and as a result faces such a ferocious reaction that he is pushed to suicide, an action that further presented him as a perversion of masculine behavior. Clithero's own thought process in this narrative is impossible to recover, as his thoughts are only hinted at through Sarsefield's account. Despite the silence that may be forced upon the body of somnambulist, it is clear that Brown does not totally annihilate the agency of Clithero or Edgar, as their sleeping bodies are still able to express themselves through movement and expression. Only through external observation though can meaning be elucidated to the actions of the sleepwalker, showing the dialectic aspect that shapes and produces madness.

This social aspect of madness explains why, despite Edgar's own distress over his actions, he faces no reprisal from his community as they remained within the normal bounds of socially accepted behavior. Furthermore we see that Sarsefield makes it clear to Edgar that his behavior within his community was not understood as insanity, but rather that of a "sleeper," explaining, "None but a man, insane or asleep, would wander forth so slightly dressed, and none but a sleeper would have disregarded my calls. This conclusion was generally adopted, but it gave birth in my mind to infinite inquietudes" (166). This moment brings the secular dynamic already observed in *Edgar Huntly* to the fore, as Sarsefield does not bring forth any supernatural or mystical etiologies for Edgar's behavior, but instead understands his behavior as a result of psychological disturbances. A development that shows a social transformation, as perceptions of madness moved away from supernatural explanations towards a more expansive secular etiology that identified the individual as the cause of their ailment. Sarsefield's explanation hints that his diagnosis was not determined alone, but rather that it was the product of a communal response. This reaction to Edgar's behavior did not demonize him, but instead provoked anxiety and concern within Sarsefield as a paternal figure to Edgar. Thus while Edgar judges himself harshly, for his actions, we see that Edgar faced no legal or social repercussions for his acts of violence, while Clithero's very existence provokes within Sarsefield such terror and anxiety that he must be either confined or destroyed, despite committing no crime.

Violence is a constant occurrence throughout *Edgar Huntly*, but it is the body and actions of the lunatic that provokes societies' rage as these individuals subvert the social mandate to procreate, which explains why Clithero was destroyed while Edgar was able

to stay alive. To understand this dynamic we need to understand how Clithero's actions hold immense symbolic power, as his presence unravels the "natural" fantasy that is relied upon in order to continue the illusion of intergenerational transmission of culture and property that reproduction upheld. This ideology is engrained within society as a process that continually demands and provokes its continuation in the name stability and cohesion, becoming the ouroboros that Lee Edelman describes as reproductive futurism. Edelman argues that this fantasy is "The central prop and underlying agency of futurism, fantasy alone endows reality with fictional coherence and stability, which seem to guarantee that such a reality, the social world in which we take our place, will survive when we do not."<sup>lvii</sup> While Edelman's analysis may seem anachronistic, as his approach relies upon Lacanian psychoanalysis, his argument points us towards the crucial role the family played in the early American republic. Shirley Samuels reiterates this point writing, "National concerns were portrayed as domestic dilemmas, since to preserve the nation it was conceived necessary to preserve the family as a carefully constituted unit."<sup>lviii</sup> The family unit thus holds an absolute importance in the symbolic language of the eighteenth century in the early American republic as it not only was the space in which men showed their mastery over their wives and children, but also where women educated their children to become citizens of the republic. Just as Clithero is identified as a lunatic we also see that he can be classified as another deviant of the period: the bachelor. The bachelor, like the lunatic and sodomite, shared similar affinities as symbols of disarray for all three figures "procreate nothing of public value," deviating from the social responsibility expected by society.<sup>lix</sup> Mark Kann's work on "the grammar of manhood" notes that "The Bachelor symbolized the dangers of democracy and the

corruption of patriarchy,” which is so dramatic that it unsettled the very foundation of society by disintegrating the norms and expectations that unified this imagined community.<sup>lx</sup> Perceived perversion of reason thus links the madman and bachelor together as the two symbols also imply deviant sexual behavior, considering anything beyond heteronormative marriage fit this criteria. Clithero’s suicide and insanity thus illuminate the complex ways in which the sexual, social, and political all become enmeshed into the movements and actions of the somnambulist, as his body becomes a specter of the irrational that not only effects the familial unity, but also as the authority and power of the patriarchy.

The monstrosity of the “lunatic” Clithero captures this radical response to the discord associated with his insanity, but also marks a change in social response to deviancy. The agreed assumption, “Clithero is a maniac. This truth cannot be concealed,” captures how madness functions as a new discourse to explain what a century ago would have been perceived as a divine phenomenon (192). Sarsefield’s account of his wife’s miscarriage reflects a highly rational, almost systematic, perception of causality explaining, “The effects have been what might have been easily predicted. Her own life has been imminently endangered and an untimely birth, has blasted my fondest hopes. Her infant, with whose future existence so many pleasures were entwined, *is dead*” (194). The divine plays no role in this etiological phenomenon as Sarsefield’s account blames this event entirely on Edgar’s “rashness” and the terror of Clithero’s deranged state. “SUDDEN fear has generally violence effects,” writes William Buchan in the popular *Domestic Medicine*, as this emotion Buchan notes can cause epileptic fits or the death of women during childbirth.<sup>lxi</sup> Brown’s cogent construction between failing to perform the

social role expected of men and reproductive disarray has been noted by Dana Luciano, but while her focus has been primarily on masculine mores I am more interested in exploring madness as a secular discourse to castigating male behavior. Karen Weyler argues that in early American novels in the case of women “madness” “acts as a special kind of marker, as a function coding, to signal moral failings as fornication and adultery.”<sup>lxii</sup> Weyler is right in her analysis that madness in Brown’s fiction functions as more of a piece of the plot than a mere punishment; however, we cannot forget that both Weiland and Clithero are either incarcerated or pushed to suicide by the end of both novels. Only Edgar escapes this fate, which as Luciano argues shows his abdication to the patriarchal hierarchy; he conforms to social expectations by adopting contemporary masculine norms. Edgar’s castigation by Sarsefield for his role in Euphemia’s miscarriage, while gentle, shows Sarsefield’s enforcement of not only a certain male behavior but also a fixed way of thinking, “You acted in direct opposition to my council, and to the plainest dictates of propriety. Be more circumspect and more obsequious for the future”(194). This moment of gentle correction stands in sharp contrast to Clithero’s mistreatment, but shows Sarsefield’s actions to ensure Edgar’s conformity when it came to his epistemology.

While Edgar may have submitted to Sarsefield’s dictates, we can see how Clithero continues to disrupt the male mastery of Sarsefield, considering Sarsefield blames Clithero for his child’s death. The act of suicide though is perhaps the most insulting of all of Clithero’s actions because it undermines Sarsefield’s reason and authority, considering “no apprehensions were entertained of his escape in such circumstances.” Even when Clithero was about to be recaptured we see “[Clithero] forced

himself beneath the surface, and was seen no more” (194). In this account Clithero’s death Sarsefield only refers to him as “the lunatic,” which seems to reflect a clear desire to frame these actions as that of the irrational, but Sarsefield himself later admits that through his death Clithero “has saved himself from evils, for which no time would have provided a remedy” (194). When we read the final letter in this light we see a conflict arise between Sarsefield’s clear logical account of his wife’s miscarriage in relation to the disruptive suicide that challenges the mental framework of the piece, as Clithero’s actions while labeled as irrational speak to a desire to resist the social conformity being enforced by Sarsefield. An action that further binds together the irrational with masculine degeneracy that undermines the authority of patriarchy as madness becomes a tool in Brown’s fiction to explain in more secular terms male behavior that deviated from social expectations.

It is by observing the communal response to both Edgar and Clithero that we see a clear policing of norms and social expectations, which while damning of Clithero point towards Sarsefield’s intervention to restore Edgar to sanity. Acting as arbiter of truth, Sarsefield castigates the excessive and irrational thoughts of Edgar by proclaiming, “are you mad—What has filled you with these hideous prepossessions?” (162). This ability to restore Edgar to reason captures not only the secular perception of madness that developed in the period, but also its faith in restoring the jumbled mind of the lunatic to its proper order. The power of madness to act as an explanation for any male misconduct is not just seen in Brown’s fiction, but also in cases of rape, as William Bradford writes, “this offense, arising from the sudden abuse of a natural passion, and perpetuate in the phrenzy of desire.”<sup>lxiii</sup> This use of madness thus not only becomes a way to protect the

patriarchal power that dominated the early American republic, but also allowed for a secular discourse that could be employed to regulate male sexuality. This use of madness as a way to identify and discipline male behavior hints towards a change in the history of sexuality as we see the porous nature of the lunatic captures the secular drive to isolate and dissect their behavior. Edgar's body in the midst of sleep thus hints towards this perceived change in human sexuality as the autonomous movement of the somnambulist points us towards an unspeakable homoerotic desire for Clithero. It is by scrutinizing the emotions and passions that propelled Edgar to succumb to this mysterious disease that we shall be able to note Brown's hints towards this potential same-sex desire and shows societies clear need to prevent it from becoming anything more than an act of irrationality.

### CHAPTER 3: THE SLEEP OF REASON BRINGS FORTH THE SODOMITE

“I love him with a virgin’s fondness. His faults are virtues in my eyes, —but is he all perfection?. Is he all that I desire? I would he were, and yet how irrational the wish, since though he were all that I desire him to be, he would not, in consequence, be more perfect than at present”

-Letter to Joseph Bringhurst, Jr. from Charles Brockden Brown, June 9<sup>th</sup> 1792

An irrational wish, a desire for another man, virginal fondness— these titillating details found in correspondence between male friends to a modern reader almost screams of homoerotic desire, as the ornate language suggests that Charles Brockden Brown loved another man. To support this reading, though, would rely upon a modern romantic etiology that connects love to sexual activity. To discount this potential in the name of historical accuracy, however, reflects a conservatism that is highly problematic when trying to excavate the history of same-sex desire. In *Overflowing of Friendship*, Richard Godbeer writes that “we cannot simply assume that men who loved one another must have wanted to have sex, let alone that they actually did so.”<sup>lxiv</sup> At the same time, though, for historicists to simply follow the groundwork laid by historians transforms the entire endeavor into a call and response form of discourse, reducing literature’s role to mere mimicry. In response to the zeal of Fredric Jameson’s call to “always historicize,” Valerie Rohy writes, “The anachronism named as ahistorical is not bound, in other words, to an essentially conservative work of identification and self-affirmation; it need not project cherished values backward and repeat what we already know.”<sup>lxv</sup> This potential of historicism reflects what Sedgwick would describe as a “paranoid reading,” considering “paranoia is anticipatory,” producing a paradoxical temporality that both informs the past, present, and future. Paranoia, as Sedgwick notes, labors to prevent “a bad surprise,” which in literature can ultimately cut oneself off from new readings that exist beyond

what is already known.<sup>lxvi</sup> This is perhaps the greatest bind for the historicist, as the methodology both requires historic knowledge and insight, which can unintentionally blind an individual to new intriguing points of view that may exist outside of contemporary historical discourse. Yet that does not mean that what a modern scholar sees in an early modern text is not necessarily there; theoretical approaches have the potential to illuminate what already exists within a text. Queer theory as a methodological approach thus offers insight into human sexuality prior to its perceived crystallization, unhinging the normal and cohesive historical narrative that is continually produced by discourse and by doing so opens up space for surprise in both literary and historic endeavors. Queer discourse in this endeavor, in particular, is key to understanding how *Edgar Huntly* contains a homoerotic core that reflects a change in American society as secular discourse required additional justifications in order to maintain the perception that the act of sodomy was unnatural, reinforcing a dynamic that privileges what we today call heterosexuality. This transformation is key in order to understand how coitus evolved from an act of biological reproduction into a systematic arrangement of society and knowledge that normalized and produced the concept of sexuality in the nineteenth century.

Despite more scientific understandings of human sexuality prevalent in modern society, in which a turn to “natural,” “biological,” or “psychological” etiologies explain this reproductive instinct, in the eighteenth century this impulse was understood primarily through a religious framework. With God deemed the ultimate arbiter for social order and law, western society developed a wide range of socially acceptable and forbidden sexual acts. Perhaps the most visible symbol of abnormal sexuality was the sodomite, and, as

scholars like Thomas Foster, Alan Bray, and Michael Rocke have shown, the sodomite throughout western history has provoked a wide range of responses as its symbolic meaning has evolved over time.<sup>lxvii</sup> Though criminal cases of sodomy were relatively rare in eighteenth century America, the figure of the sodomite existed prior to the American Revolution and functioned as a symbol of social and sexual disarray. Often, the figure was endowed with an almost demonic aura. In Thomas Foster's analysis of the 1751 satirical poem "In Defense of Masonry," he notes, "The charge of sodomy turned the image of the Freemason as manly participants in orderly civic rituals upside down."<sup>lxviii</sup> This perception of the sodomite as inverting the natural order continued well into the final years of the eighteenth century as Jonathan Edwards Jr.'s 1794 sermon "The Necessity of the Belief of Christianity" directly addressed the issue of sodomy. In this sermon Edwards denounced the Ancient Greeks and Romans for their acceptance of "unnatural vices," which Edward argues were supported by the state and social order. More importantly, Edward's sermon illuminates a rather problematic ideological conflict of the eighteenth century as he notes the Greek philosopher Diogenes "was remarkable for indulging himself in the most abominable practices openly," provoking Edward's to speculate, "Does not the forementioned deistic maxim of the following nature directly lead to the same abominable practices?"<sup>lxix</sup> While clearly castigating the deistic cosmology, Edward's insight points to a clear conundrum: is sodomy natural? Due to the nature of a sermon we cannot know for sure how people responded to this provocation; however, this question makes apparent a need for a new way to demonize sodomy that was not justified entirely on biblical exegeses, while maintaining the understanding of the sodomite as an unnatural aberration. After all, if the secular world were to rely on the

belief of nature as an observable truth it would need a new way to police male sexuality that conformed to the rational worldview the Enlightenment had propagated but was still in line with the social and sexual mores of the world that existed prior to this intellectual movement.

Madness, as a discourse, fulfills this need as it reinforces the social taboos of the eighteenth century, while following the secular impulse to create laws and norms that were guided by reason and not religious demagoguery. John Locke's understanding of the lunatic as not lacking reason, but rather suffering from a distorted logic provided the period with a theoretical schema to understand the sodomite not as a monster, but rather as someone needing correction. When writing on the nature of "wrong judgments" Locke notes, "But whatever false notions, or shameful neglect of what is in their power, may put Men out of their way to Happiness, and distract them, as we see, into so different courses of life, this yet is certain, that Morality, established upon its true Foundations, cannot be determined the Choice in any one, that will but consider."<sup>lxx</sup> What stands out in Locke's analysis of judgment is that his thinking reflects both a religious and secular understandings of reason, but also a sense of a correct path in life, which to defy reflects a lack of rationality. Whether it is "God" or "Nature," Locke explains there exists an overarching level of "Divine Law," which in many respects is a highly heteronormative paradigm within Locke's reasoning as he fixates on a sense of rationality and desire that fits in with a normative replication of seventeenth century society. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner define heteronormative as "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged."<sup>lxxi</sup> Locke and his contemporaries, while

arguing for this sense of an overarching natural law, codify and reflect a heteronormative understanding of social replication and order as heterosexual coitus is understood as the natural sexual act, while non-reproductive acts are perceived as unnatural. Secular discourse thus clearly became a tool to reinforce, privilege, and normalize what we would today call heterosexuality. Despite appearing anachronistic, this observation fits well with William Bradford Esquire's own reasoning when it came to understanding "crimes against nature" as he explained, "In a country where marriage take place so early, and the intercourse between the sexes is not difficult, there can be no reason for severe penalties to restrain this abuse. The wretch, who perpetuates it, must be in a state of mind which my occasion us to doubt, whether he be *sur Juris* at the time; or, whether he reflects on the punishment at all."<sup>lxxii</sup> This reasoning, like Locke's belief in an overarching natural or divine law, points to a need to regulate non-reproductive acts to the mental landscape of the irrational because to accept that a man would engage in such acts while of sound mind undermined the epistemological framework produced by the era, disrupting the heteronormative coherence that was relied upon to stabilize and expand the early American republic. Thus in order to avoid addressing this potential Bradford projects the act of sodomy as lacking any reason or reflection, transforming the sodomite into the antithesis of "Enlightenment" and the enemy of rational thought.<sup>lxxiii</sup>

Sexuality is a highly contested discourse that in periods of social and political instability is fixated upon in order to displace social anxiety, which in the early American republic resulted in the increased need to regulate and scrutinize sexual activity.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Doron S. Ben-Atar and Richard D. Brown point to renewed interest in policing the boundaries that defined "natural sex" in the early American republic, as John Farrell and

Gideon Washburn were sentenced to death for bestiality in the late 1790s though “there was no apparent social logic to these prosecution.”<sup>lxxv</sup> Like the Salem Witch Trials that marred the end of the seventeenth century, this renewed interest in policing behavior reveals a deeper social anxiety that manifested itself in a variety of ways. Cathy N. Davidson makes this deft argument in *Revolution in the Word* as she argues that novels became a vehicle to address the ways in which the American Revolution disrupted the domestic sphere. Building upon Davidson, Karen Weyler explores how “the novel foregrounds sexual and economic desires and explores ways to regulate the manner in which they are expressed and gratified.”<sup>lxxvi</sup> Brown, as a writer is highly engaged in exploring and illuminating these tensions in his gothic novels as *Edgar Huntly* clearly addresses a wide range of social concerns from Indian relations to the characteristics required for the nations citizenry. At the same time, this thesis has suggested, there is something highly sexual about *Edgar Huntly*; erotic depictions of male bodies, intimacy, and desire linger throughout this gothic tale. More importantly, *Edgar Huntly* take place not within the confines of the domestic sphere, but within a quasi-public wilderness. Edgar’s rambles take place on the frontier of society, reflecting an ever-present danger of the homoerotic existing at the margins of the homosocial. Edgar’s somnambulism thus takes on greater meaning, as Sarsefield’s intervention not only cures Edgar of his sleepwalking, but also pathologizes and destroys Edgar’s objects of same-sex desire. The novel thus privileges and normalizes heterosexuality as the natural form of human sexuality, making heteronormative acts the only rational choice in order to satisfy one’s sexual appetite.

At the core of the somnambulist, according to Edgar Huntly, is a secret that is so dreadful that the mind represses it. Yet in sleep, when reason is replaced with dreams, the body reacts without knowledge, revealing aspects of this unspeakable truth that is hidden from the person's own consciousness. Sedgwick notes that the "unspeakable" in gothic literature, "was a near-impenetrable shibboleth for a particular conjunction of class and male sexuality."<sup>lxxvii</sup> Sedgwick's research focused primarily on English gothic novels, but it would be problematic to ignore a similar dynamic at work in *Edgar Huntly*. Edgar's encounter with the somnambulist Clithero is framed with such erotic depictions that it almost seems impossible to discount a homoerotic potential. *Edgar Huntly* begins as a story of revenge, as Edgar explains "Methought that to ascertain the hand who killed my friend, was not impossible, and to punish the crime was just," pushing Edgar to search for this unknown assailant (7). This quest for revenge soon became an obsession as Edgar returned to the scene of Waldengrave's death many times. The geography of this location, is described in a highly sexual manner as a phallic elm marked the location which had such a strong influence upon Edgar that his "pulse throbbed as [he] approached it," making it difficult not to perceive this tree as a metaphor for an engorged penis that provoked within Edgar awe and confusion (9). Stephen Shapiro notes, "*Edgar Huntly* fuses anatomy, geography, and knowledge about the secret place of homoerotic contact to idealize Norwalk as a fulfilling refuge in contrast to Edgar's Solebury home, named as the place where one's soul feels as it is enduring a living burial."<sup>lxxviii</sup> It seems no surprise then in this space so highly charged with homoerotic imagery that Edgar would discovered a human apparition, half naked and illuminated by moon light. This erotic setting seems appropriate for a gothic novel; however, Brown fixes Edgar's male

gaze upon the unconscious body of another man, using revenge as a pretense to engage in this act of “Repeated and closer scrutiny” (9). Edgar’s inspection of Clithero’s form is so thorough that it hinges on voyeurism as he writes, “Something like flannel was wrapt round his waist and covered his lower limbs. The rest of his frame was naked” (9). Though Edgar did not see Clithero’s genitals in this observation, as some fabric obscured them, this detail makes it difficult not to speculate that Edgar’s gaze may have intentionally or unconsciously desired to see this piece male of anatomy. While this theory can be easily dismissed as a deliberate reading of a homoerotic subtext, we cannot ignore that it is clearly apparent in this moment of the novel. This scene seems extremely significant for Edgar as his description of Clithero notes, “A figure, robust and strange, and half naked, to be thus employed, at this hour and place, was calculated to rouse up my whole soul” (9). What emotion was exactly aroused by Edgar’s observation is open to speculation as Edgar never clarifies this detail, but it becomes difficult not to read his reaction to Clithero’s male form as anything but homoerotic, considering that later in the novel Edgar’s sleepwalking body searched for Clithero’s form as if he desired to embrace him. Edgar while conscious was able to track Clithero to a maze of limestone caverns, where he later mysteriously awakes after sleepwalking as some internal force propelled him to his location associated with Clithero. Edgar made this desire to touch Clithero quiet clear when he first encountered him writing, “I was prompted to advance nearer and hold his hand but my uncertainty as to his character and views” stopped him from doing so (10). Thus the conscious Edgar was able to stop himself from touching the highly sexualized body of the sleepwalker Clithero only to be later compelled to search for him while in the grips of somnambulism. Yet if this illness is caused by anxiety over some

secret being revealed we need to return to Edgar's original object of obsession and desire, Waldengrave, in order to illuminate how this phenomenon is connected to an anxiety tied to homoerotic desire and its revelation.

The impact that Clithero has upon *Edgar Huntly* is radical, and his appearance reshapes the narrative radically, but despite the rupture produced by this character we cannot ignore how the memory of Waldegrave was so powerful that Edgar described them as "provocations and to remembrance and grief that I desired to shun" (78). This mourning, while perhaps normal, becomes suspect when we take into account the terror that Edgar experienced when their correspondences disappeared, suggesting a connection between Edgar's descent into somnambulism and whatever these letters contained. Kept "in a secret drawer," these letters were locked in a cabinet designed to be undetectable, concealed in a closet in order to protect Waldegrave's memory and Edgar from slander. While Edgar describes these letters as simply chronicling Waldegrave's philosophical evolution, documenting Waldengrave's return to orthodoxy due to as his engagements with Mr. S- (who is most likely Sarsfield), Edgar's role in this exchange is silenced, making himself the receptive partner in this intellectual exchange. Edgar's irrationality, desire to conceal, and his passive role in this exchange makes these letters highly suspect, as if Edgar wishes to repress something inappropriate. While we cannot be sure if these letters described a tryst or are just chronicled their friendship, one thing we can determine is that they had such emotional and psychical value for Edgar that he could not destroy them nor censor them because to do so "would be to mutilate and deform them," connecting these texts to the body and memory of the person who had initially sent them (89-90). We can suspect something illicit is contained in these letters due to the lengths

Edgar went to in order to conceal them. This fear pushed Edgar to conceal them in his closet, making it difficult not see this choice as alienating with Sedgwick's own epistemological "closet." In *The Epistemology of the Closet* Sedgwick explains that the "closet" is not so much a physical space, but rather a way in which people are forced to conceal information about themselves in order to avoid antagonistic responses, repressing knowledge that is usually highly sexual in nature. Sedgwick writes, "Revelation of identity in the space of intimate love effortlessly overturns an entire public systematic of the natural and the unnatural, the pure and impure."<sup>lxxix</sup> Edgar concealed these letters in his bedroom, which was an intimate space that Edgar and Waldengrave could have shared without raising an eye, but if they had been discovered would have disrupted not only their families but their entire community as well. Thus when these letters are stolen it becomes easy to see why Edgar describes this development as "a supposition not to be endured. Yet ominous terror haunted me... This event so inexplicable and so dreadful, threw my soul into a kind of stupor or distraction" (91). The use of the word "distraction" is extremely important here because the term in the eighteenth century was a euphemism to describe someone mentally ill, reflecting Edgar's own perception of his mental state.<sup>lxxx</sup> If "The incapacity of sound sleep denotes a mind sorely wounded," the terror caused by the loss of Waldengrave's letters seem to be the root cause of Edgar's somnambulism, as it is later revealed that Edgar while sleep walking stole and buried these documents at the elm that marked his grave (11). While one can make alternative readings for the cause of Edgar's sleepwalking it seems difficult not to consider that some unspeakable homoerotic desire is at the root of this unnatural occurrence. If we understand Edgar as having the desire to, or has, engaged in sodomy then Edgar becomes

a locus of what society designates as “unnatural,” which explains the almost surreal experiences that followed his return to consciousness as feminine symbols of nature lashed out against him in an attempt to destroy this abomination.

“Nature,” as this paper has argued, is not an organic and essentialist category, but rather the product of eighteenth century discourse that reinforced the social mores of the hegemon, making it difficult not to read the panther that assaulted Edgar as a symbol of nature assaulting the unnatural sodomite. This conflict takes place in the limestone caverns of the Norwalk, a development that illuminates Brown’s own gothic innovations as he transformed the womb like dungeon of European gothic novels into this natural formation. The dungeon, according to Leslie Fiedler, functions as way to illuminate that “Beneath the crumbling shell of paternal authority, lies the maternal blackness, imagined by the gothic writer as a prison, a torture chamber—from which the cries of kidnapped *anima* cannot be heard.”<sup>lxxxix</sup> To Fiedler the dungeon, or in this case the cave, is directly linked to the female body, making this conflict symbolic of natural reproduction trying to destroy the sodomite that threatened this process. This scene is indicative of Abby L. Goode’s concept of “gothic fertility” as the local ecology reflects the larger theme of political and social concerns over non-normative sexuality, which the sodomite, and in this case Edgar, symbolize.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Tortured by his own body we see how the natural impulse to eat and drink pushed Edgar to eat “the linen of my shirt between my teeth,” making Edgar “pondered on the delight I should experience in rending some live animal to pieces, and drinking its blood and grinding its quivering fibers between my teeth” (110). These cravings produced by intense hunger, while perverse by eighteenth century standards of civility, are at the same time natural, reflecting a more base impulse at the

heart of man as the instinct to survive can alter one's behavior. This reading seems more plausible when we consider that after Edgar contemplates an act of self-harm, in order to draw forth his own blood, he discovered "the eyes of a panther" (111). The panthers within *Edgar Huntly* are noted as unusual for the area, but at the same time, seem to function as antibodies to the pathogen of sodomy, making its assault upon Edgar symbolic of this larger conflict between the natural and unnatural forces within the world. In this clash, though, by chance Edgar is able to call forth the necessary energy, despite his fatigue, to "penetrate the scull and the animal fell, struggling and shrieking, on the ground," killing the panther and the feminine nature it represented (112). This moment of victory was fleeting as "One evil was now removed, only to give place to another" as Edgar's hunger pushed him to turn to this slain feline as a source of nourishment engaging in some grotesque act of cunnilingus as he consumes raw flesh and drank warm blood to satisfy his appetite (112). This violation of the female body provided Edgar with the necessary strength to survive the carnage that followed this surreal experience. This reading, while symbolic, I believe captures the clear conflict between the natural world against the forces perceived as unnatural by society. While we cannot determine if Edgar engaged in sodomy, it remains clear that he is at least highly suspect, making him thus a potential threat to heteronormativity. It is only by ensuring his incorporation into the structure of patriarchy that Edgar is able to survive this narrative as marriage forces him to direct his sexual energy towards a socially acceptable object of desire, while placing him under the careful and scrutinizing eyes of the physician and patriarch Sarsefield.

Marriage in the early American republic functioned more than just as a means of creating political, economic, and social unions; it served also as a means to control and

regulate male sexuality, as it subdued selfish underproductive desires and directed men towards productive and rational sexual behavior. In “Thinking Sex,” Gayle S. Rubin writes that “There are certainly structural constraints that impede free sexual choice, but they hardly operate to coerce anyone into being a pervert. On the contrary, they operate to coerce everyone toward normality.”<sup>lxxxiii</sup> For men, marriage, according to Mark Kann, functioned as a way to regulate and ensure the proper replication of the social order that the bachelor and sodomite disrupted. In *Edgar Huntly* we see that with the return of Sarsefield Brown not only provides Edgar with a male figure to emulate, but also one who can provide him with the fiscal means and sexual access to establish himself as a patriarch.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Scholars have noted that Edgar, because he lacked land and an income, faced many difficulties in his venture to marry Mary Waldengrave. He would have been unable to sustain her without her disputed inheritance. That is why with the return of Weymouth, and his claims to be the rightful owner of her inheritance, Edgar writes, “But wedlock is now more distance than ever,” a move that Mark Edelman Boren reads as a part of Edgar’s plan to end their betrothal (105).<sup>lxxxv</sup> Boren’s analysis is helpful as he directs our attention to how Sarsefield not only provides Edgar with fiscal support, through his wife, but also hints towards the potential that Edgar would be able to marry Clithero’s former fiancé Clarice. Sarsefield makes this clear by noting, “[Euphimea] longs to embrace you as a son. To become truly her son, will depend upon your own choice and that of one who has the companion of our voyage” (175). While appearing benevolent, Sarsefield’s actions also have an ulterior motive for bringing Edgar into his familial kinship because it would allow him to continue to regulate and observe Edgar’s behavior. Taken into account this reinscribes Sarsefield’s ejaculation “Huntly, said he,

are you mad” with new meaning as it seems to castigate his entire life as Sarsefield’s return seems to contain an ultimatum through the promise of a new betrothed (162). Edgar must either choose to submit to the patriarchal social order symbolized by Sarsefield or forever be identified as an irrational mad man, unwed, who had to be contained or killed. At the same time as readers we cannot help but notice that Edgar’s socially acceptable choices of marriage (Mary and Clarice) are either socially or biologically linked with Edgar’s illicit objects of sexual desire (Waldengrave and Clithero). These women thus act as mere substitutes for Edgar’s inordinate passions as their union would not so much erase his desires, but instead try to redirect them. A dynamic that while superficial would reinforce the social order and continue the reproduction necessary for Sarsefield’s family and the nation state.

This reproductive realpolitik that flows throughout *Edgar Huntly* thus functions as a counter force to the homoeroticism that this paper has illuminated through Edgar’s thoughts, reactions, and actions, transforming this gothic novel into a conflict between rational heterosexuality and irrational homosexuality. This dynamic is made apparent as the distinctions between Clithero and Edgar is continually blurred— one continually becomes a substitute and mirror for the other. From somnambulism to their shared bachelorhood, each man constantly replaces the other throughout the course of *Edgar Huntly*, making their divergent endings illuminating of the novel and Brown’s insight into the changing social and political developments within the period. After all as Cathy N. Davidson notes that while novels are not history, they are products of their time and Brown has proven to be an astute observer of American society.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Thus while many scholars have read *Edgar Huntly* for insight into the political realm this paper has instead

focused more upon the ways in which intimacy in the early American republic was being reshaped by a wide range of discourses, reconfiguring sexuality in the wake of the sexual revolution that followed the American Revolution. What has interested this project, and thus diverges from other readings of *Edgar Huntly*, has been its interest in using the concept of secularism as a way to rethink madness as secular way to control human behavior, exploring how this discourse was required to reinforce traditional paradigms of human sexuality. Foucault made this point clear in *Madness and Civilization* writing, “if the eighteenth century perceived that there were among the confined—among the libertines, the debauched, the prodigal sons—certain men whose confusion and disorder were of another nature, and whose anxiety was irreducible, this perception was the result of the confined themselves.”<sup>lxxxvii</sup> The sodomite, though similar in some respects was different from the libertine and rake because while these figures may disrupt society and masculine norms, they were still understood as primarily engaging in natural sexual acts. The sodomite diverged from this paradigm, as his object of desire was another man, forcing the need to reconsider this apparition within society. Secularism as described by this paper points us towards a way to understand the sodomite being reconfigured through a binary of rational/irrational and natural/unnatural. A dynamic that aligned the sodomite with irrationality and against nature, conforming to “the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God,” which the nation had used to justify not only its formation, but also its rebellion.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

Brown, while unable to predict the future of American society, captures in *Edgar Huntly* not only the horrors of same-sex desire, but more importantly the lengths a community would go to in order to ensure the sodomite would not become a natural

figure in society. The homoerotic potential that this paper has located as an internal aspect of Edgar while not evident in Clithero can be suggested as they mirror the other as they both have unspeakable secrets. Clithero's history notes Euphemia's command to "Keep your motives to yourself," which, while directed at another romantic transgression (loving a person of a different class), reflects another similarity that these two somnambulists shared (38). Both men externalize repression as their bodies are compelled to move towards actions and movements that seem irrational in a society that requires uniformity and stability. Clithero in his search for the truth as to the fate of Euphemia, reflects not the lack of reason that Locke suggested of the idiot, but rather the grotesque logic of the mad man, warning Edgar "if she be dead, I shall make *thee* expiate" (192). This exchange is what made Edgar exclaim, "Clithero is a maniac. This truth cannot be concealed" as his threat to Edgar not only challenged his honor, but also reflected the fear of patriarchal American society, as their hegemony could not be maintained in the face of disruptive males who erode the discourse that sustained their privileged position in society (192). It is by identifying Clithero then as the enemy of the rational man whose liberty is so dangerous that he must be exiled to that asylum that one can see a similar process at work in Edgar's own reconfiguration at the novel's ending.

Subtle in comparison to Clithero's dramatic end it seems peculiar not to note how Edgar's transgressions and ramblings though forgiven result with an abdication of liberty and agency as he is placed under the watchful eye of the patriarch Sarsefield. Brown's ability to play with doubles thus captures the minute differences that separated Edgar from the life Clithero would have had in the asylum for both would be placed, and would remain, under the eyes of a physician for many years, which would have ultimately

proven ineffective. In Sarsefield's account of what Clithero's life would have been if he had not pushed himself to suicide he notes, "He has saved himself from evils, for which no time would have provided a remedy, from lingering for years in the noisome dungeon of a hospital" (194). Brown's suggestion that the physician would be unable to restore Clithero to reason seems too peculiar not to be an unintentional interjection by Brown as it challenges the period's faith in the medical treatment for the insane. What's more Clithero's status as Edgar's doppelgangers suggests that marriage might not restore and control Edgar's unspeakable sexual desires. This is an extremely progressive reading of human sexuality, as Brown's gothic fiction destabilizes the cohesive heteronormative world of both his narrative and points to the constructed nature of normative social and sexual practices.

While Clithero may die at the end of *Edgar Huntly*, his actions and choices save him from the tyranny of heteronormativity that demands all men to behave and conform or face the violence of the asylum as its father like physicians corrects and controls its inhabitants. This insight bring new meaning to Brown's essay "What is Love?" which includes the telling line, "Love is often an error; an evil' it murmurs at obstacles that cannot be removed; it desires what cannot be obtained" (2). This is not to suggest that Brown was some repressed pre-modern homosexual, but rather that as an observer of human nature he is reflecting upon the early American republic's clear desire to regulate and control whom one could love, understanding that there exists numerous barriers to stop and redirect this emotional energy. Through *Edgar Huntly*, though, Brown is able to engage with a wide range of social, political and philosophical debates, as well as the tension surrounding human emotion and sentiment. Love propelled Edgar to search for

both Waldengrave's assailant and for Clithero's body, but violence and turmoil only follow Edgar as he tries to embrace the men that he has loved. Even in hindsight Edgar struggles to express through writing his complex experiences, and his letters produce multiple narratives, etiologies, and debates, making it impossible to produce a coherent and unified narrative. At the same time, it is through the violence and chaos that Brown is able to engage with this larger question about love between men. Irrationality both conceals this same-sex desire and makes this reading possible. Some may say that this reading is anachronistic, but I believe this thesis has pointed us towards a historical possibility that not only supports this reading, but also captures Brown's ability to understand the early American republic's need to secularize sexuality in such a way that it is removed from a state of nature and relocated within an empirical framework. This is the humor behind Brown's essay "What is Love?" He pushes the framework of the scientific method to its logical extreme and by doing so satirizes the blind rationality that propelled conformity in the name of "enlightenment" and "nature." Yet it is in *Edgar Huntly* that Brown first explores this dynamic and instead of humor Brown finds pure horror. His gothic tale captures not only the dark potential that eighteenth century sentimental friendship contained, but also the disciplining and restraining function of heteronormativity. For while Edgar survives and becomes a patriarch, we cannot forget that he was also *made* into a heterosexual. This transformation restrains and forbids a whole spectrum of human behavior, as Edgar can now only find emotional and sexual release in the arms of a woman. This development that makes Clithero's death all the more potent, as his suicide reflects a refusal to conform to this narrow perception of human behavior and sexuality. *Edgar Huntly* captures society's violent response to those

who defy this norm, forever identifying them as insane, while these lunatics, though exiled from society, maintain their sexual liberty.

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- <sup>i</sup> Charles Brockden Brown, "What Is Love?," *The Monthly Magazine and the American Review*, May 1800, 1.
- <sup>ii</sup> Gordon S Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1992), 8.
- <sup>iii</sup> Charles Brockden Brown prior to writing novels wrote in magazines under different pen names. In the case of his early work, "The Rhapsodist", Brown reflects both a desire to conceal his identity and at the same time demand acknowledgment for his work as the initials used after the five installments, when placed together, spelt "BROWN". Bertha Monica Sterns notes, "Examination of the [Rhapsodist] series shows that to each of the brief effusions that the mystery loving youth affixed not his name, but an initial" (100). Jared Gardner in his study of Brown, as he transitioned away from novels to periodicals, notes, "For Rowson, as for Brown, the turn to anonymous periodical work in the first decade of the nineteenth century was in large measure due to increasing doubts about the politics of the novel form" (136). Gardner's observation thus connects with Sterns as they both point to Brown's clear playful nature when it comes to being a writer who embraced the power of anonymity in periodicals, which helps support the argument made by the Charles Brockden Brown Electronic Archive that Brown was most likely the author of "What is Love?." Bertha Monica Sterns, "A Speculation Concerning Charles Brockden Brown," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 59, no. 2 (April 1935): 99–105; Jared Gardner, *The Rise and Fall of Early American Magazine Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2014).
- <sup>iv</sup> While many scholars turn to Michael Warner's introduction to *Fear of A Queer Planet* and his definition of "Queer" as, "a term defined against 'normal' and generated and precisely in the context of terror—has the effect of pointing out a wide field of normalization, rather than simple intolerance, as a site of violence," I find Lee Edelman's definition of "Queer," "queerness can never define an identity; it can only ever disturb one," illuminating for this project as it captures the power and terror that queerness can have upon the individual. Thus while Warner's fixates on using queerness to identify the norm, Edelman's use of the term points to a more productive framework for this project's analysis of the gothic novel *Edgar Huntly* as it disrupts the social norms that order society. Michael Warner, "Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet," *Social Text*, no. 29 (1991): 16. ;Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 17.
- <sup>v</sup> Gordon S Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (July 1982): 437.
- <sup>vi</sup> Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly; Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 3.
- <sup>vii</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 89-94.
- <sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>ix</sup> Leslie A Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), 157.
- <sup>x</sup> Paul Downes, "Sleep-Walking Out of the Revolution: Brown's Edgar Huntly," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 4 (July 1, 1996): 425.
- <sup>xi</sup> Justine S. Murison, "The Tyranny of Sleep: Somnambulism, Moral Citizenship, and Charles Brockden Brown's Edgar Huntly," *Early American Literature* 44, no. 2 (2009): 243–70.
- <sup>xii</sup> Kate Ward Sugar, "'A Wonderful Disease': Edgar Huntly, Erasmus Darwin, and Revolutionary American Masculinity," *James Dickey Review* 29, no. 1 (2012): 35–46.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Caleb Crain, *American Sympathy: Men, Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 135.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Stephen Shapiro, "'Man to Man I Needed Not to Dread His Encounter': Edgar Huntly's End of Erotic Pessimism," in *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 232.
- <sup>xv</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, "The History That Will Be," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 4 (1995): 7.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 43.
- <sup>xvii</sup> John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago etc.: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 98.

- <sup>xviii</sup> William Bradford, "An Enquiry How Far The Punishment of Death Is Necessary in Pennsylvania" (Philadelphia: T. Dobson at the Stone-House, No. 41, South Second-Street, 1793), 15-16.
- <sup>xix</sup> Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 314-332.
- <sup>xx</sup> Mary Ann Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness: Early American Attitudes and Treatment of the Insane* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1987), 70.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Mark E Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
- <sup>xxii</sup> Richard Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship Love Between Men and the Creation of the American Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Clare A. Lyons, "Mapping an Atlantic Sexual Culture: Homoeroticism in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (January 2003): 119-54.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Samuel Danforth, "The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into; Upon Occasion of the Arraignment and Condemnation of Benjamin God, for His Prodigious Villancy," ed. Paul Royster (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, January 1, 1674), 4.
- <sup>xxv</sup> William Bradford, "Of Plymouth Plantation," in *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 6th ed., vol. A (New York, N. Y.: Norton & Company, 2003), 191.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> David D Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1989), 3.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> *Ibid*, 6.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> *Ibid*, 11.
- <sup>xxix</sup> *Ibid*, 29-30.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Bradford, "An Enquiry...", 20.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Joan Wallace Scott, "Secularism and Gender Equality," in *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference* (New York, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 2013), 28.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 2.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> *Ibid*, 3.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> *Ibid*, 15.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Charles Taylor, "How to Define Secularism," in *Boundaries of Toleration*, ed. Alfred Stephan and Charles Taylor (New York, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 2014), 69.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 25.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York, N. Y.: Routledge, 1993), 524.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 201.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Currie William, "A Description of the Malignant, Infectious Fever Prevailing at Present in Philadelphia: With An Account of the Means to Prevent Infection, and the Remedies and Method of Treatment, Which Have Been Found Most Successful" (Philadelphia: T. Dobson at the Stone-House, No. 41, South Second-Street, 1793), 8.
- <sup>xl</sup> Abby L. Goode, "Gothic Fertility in Leonora Sansay's Secret History," *Early American Literature* 50, no. 2 (2015): 449-73.
- <sup>xli</sup> Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), x-xi.
- <sup>xlii</sup> Another example of Brown's ability to undermine the certainty of his characters reasons can be found in *Weiland* when Clara discovers that Carwin is a ventriloquist who admits to have "sporting with your terrors: I have plotted to destroy your reputation." Carwin when asked by Clara if he had caused her brother's delusions and homicidal actions he responds quickly, "I am not this villain" (181). Brown plays with this uncertainty further when Clara brings Carwin to Weiland's cell, thinking to herself "Carwin might be innocent" (201). A possibility that lends credence to Weiland's own explanation "If a devil has deceived me, he came in the habit of an angel. If I erred, it was not my judgment that deceived me, but my senses," which leaves the reader, like Clara herself, wondering what actually had befallen Weiland (205). Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or the Transformation* (New York, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 2009).

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- xlili Philippe Pinel, "Memoir on Madness: A Contribution to the Natural History of Man," trans. Dora B. Weiner, *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 149, no. 6 (June 1992): 729.
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- xlv Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 33.
- xlvi Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, N. Y.: Vintage Books, 1979), 199-200.
- xlvii Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness*, 29.
- xlviii Louis Charland, "The Distinction Between 'Passion' and 'Emotion'. Vincenzo Chiarugi: A Case Study," *History of Psychiatry* 25, no. 4 (December 2014): 479.
- xliv Louis Charland, "John Locke on Madness: Redressing the Intellectualist Bias," *History of Psychiatry* 25, no. 2 (2014), 147.
- <sup>1</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 161.
- <sup>li</sup> James Madison, "The Federalist Papers No. 10," Text, (December 29, 1998), [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/fed10.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp).
- <sup>lii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>liii</sup> Kann, *A Republic of Men*, 74-75.
- <sup>liv</sup> Pinel, "Memoir on Madness...", 728.
- <sup>lv</sup> Benjamin Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon the Diseases of the Mind* (Grigg and Elliot, 1835), 242-243.
- <sup>lvi</sup> Benjamin Rush, "An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits Upon the Human Body and Mind: With an Account of the Means of Preventing, And of the Remedies for Curing Them." (High Gravity Free Press, 2013), 27.
- <sup>lvii</sup> Edelman, *No Future*, 33-34.
- <sup>lviii</sup> Shirley Samuels, "Infidelity and Contagion: The Rhetoric of Revolution," *Early American Literature* 22, no. 2 (October 1, 1987): 187.
- <sup>lix</sup> Kann, *A Republic of Men*, 56.
- <sup>lx</sup> Ibid, 52.
- <sup>lxi</sup> William Buchan, Joseph Meredith Toner Collection (Library of Congress) DLC [from old catalog, and Marian S. Carson Collection (Library of Congress) DLC [from old catalog, *Domestic Medicine: Or a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines*. (Philadelphia: Printed for Joseph Cruikshank, Robert Bell, and James Muir, 1784), 112.
- <sup>lxii</sup> Karen A Weyler, *Intricate Relations Sexual and Economic Desire in American Fiction, 1789-1814* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 89.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Bradford, "An Enquiry How Far The Punishment of Death Is Necessary in Pennsylvania," 29.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship*, 7.
- <sup>lxv</sup> Valerie Rohy, "Ahistorical," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 1 (2006): 77.
- <sup>lxvi</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You," in *Touching Feeling* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 130.
- <sup>lxvii</sup> See: Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Thomas A Foster, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).
- <sup>lxviii</sup> Thomas A Foster, "Anti-masonic Satire, Sodomy, and Eighteenth-Century Masculinity in the 'Boston Evening-Post,'" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (January 2003): 182.
- <sup>lxix</sup> Johathan Edwards Jr., "The Necessity of the Belief of Christianity," in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), 1201.
- <sup>lxx</sup> Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 281.
- <sup>lxxi</sup> Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 548.
- <sup>lxxii</sup> Bradford, "An Enquiry How Far The Punishment of Death Is Necessary in Pennsylvania," Pg 20.
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> Immanuel Kant in his essay "What is Enlightenment" defined "enlightenment" as, "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding

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without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. *Dare to know! (Sapere aude.)* "Have the courage to use your own understanding," is therefore the motto of the enlightenment." Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?," trans. Mary C. Smith, 1784, <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Gayle Rubin, *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 138; Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*; Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> Doron S Ben-Atar and Richard D Brown, *Taming Lust Crimes against Nature in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 5.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Weyler, *Intricate Relations*, 2.

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 95.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Shapiro, "Man to Man . . .," 299.

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1990), 76.

<sup>lxxx</sup> Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness*, 22.

<sup>lxxxxi</sup> Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 132.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Goode, "Gothic Fertility in Leonora Sansay's Secret History," 449-451.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Rubin, *Deviations*, 176-177.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Kann, *A Republic of Men*.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> See: Mark Edelman Boren, "Abortographism and the Weapon of Sympathy in Charles Brockden Brown's Edgar Huntly; Or, Memoirs of A Sleepwalker," *Style* 43, no. 2 (2009): 165-193.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Cathy N Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 365.

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 224.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence," 1776.

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