Charles Brockden Brown's *Ormond* and the Representation of Cataract Surgery in the Early Republic

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Introduction

In the beginning of Chapter II of *Ormond*, *or the Secret Witness*, Charles Brockden Brown's second novel, Stephen Dudley, the father of the Novel's heroine Constantia, loses his sight entirely. It happens soon after he found himself cheated by Craig the imposter and was bereft of his wife : "[h]e was imperfectly recovered from the shock occasioned by the death of his wife, when his sight was invaded by a cataract. Its progress was rapid, and terminated in total blindness" (51)[1].

In fact, so called "the opening events" of the novel is definitely informed by Stephen's various losses and dispossessions. First, in the very beginning of the narrative, we are told that the death of Stephen's mother "had rendered his society still more necessary to old gentleman" (40), that is, his father. Next comes the father's death, which "introduced an important change in his situation," a change which compels him to abandon "an attachment to the pencil" (39) and to engage in his father's former business, a pharmacy. This "new path" (40), however, is "too incongenial to his disposition" (40) and almost drives him melancholy, when Craig arrives at his shop as an apprentice. After five years' service, then, the clerk brings Stephen "the total ruin of his fortune" (50) by embezzling almost all of the Dudleys' savings. This inventory of privation is completed finally by his wife's sudden death followed by his loss of sight.

Stephen thus seems to enter into the novel only to lose. The fact that he is finally killed by Ormond's command might emphasize Stephen Dudley as the novel's sole loser. And owing to this apparent insignificance, Stephen Dudley has been left unnoticed for a long time. There has been almost no critical attempt centered on the father of the heroine, and even the "Historical Essay" of the bi-centennial edition of *Ormond*, which usefully highlights the critical trend of the novel, pays little attention to Stephen Dudley, while giving substantial explanations on such characters in the novel as Ormond, Constantia, Sophia, or Helena[2]. In this essay, however, I will argue that he deserves more careful scrutiny and try to show an alternative view on Brown's second novel.

Stephen Dudley certainly appears insignificant in the novel, but it is just a matter of appearance. First to be noticed is that in *Ormond* there is a subplot of vengeance in which Stephen Dudley, the man of loss otherwise, plays a central roll and achieves a hidden triumph. We have to remember the fact that even after murdered, he is still alive as a sort of spirit in Constantia. After "[t]he first transports of grief [of his father's death] having subsided," Constantia convinces that "her father had only changed one form of being for another; that he still lived to be the guardian of her peace and honour, to enter the recesses of her thought, to forewarn her of evil and invite her to good" (213). Seen in this light, Stephen is revenged on the commander of his death at the climax of the novel when Constantia happens to stab Ormond to death. Thus, Constantia's accidental murder of Ormond can be read as the unexpected achievement of Stephen's vengeance. Ii is unexpected because Constantia denies her intention of vengeance right after his father's death. Speculating on "[w]ho could be the performer of so black a deed" in the case of his father's murder, the narrator states that her speculation derives "not from the thirst of vengeance, but from a mournful curiosity" (214). And a penknife, her weapon to stab Ormond, is telling in this context because it definitely reminds the reader of Stephen's reluctant "service as a writer in a public office" right after his financial ruin brought by Craig (50); at that time, there was no choice left for him but relying on

"facilities and elegancies of his penmanship" (50). Hence, to the reader who attends more to the destiny of Stephen Dudley, the climax of the novel can eloquently speak more of him.

Thus, detailed reading of Stephen Dudley brings us the other reading of *Ormond* than has been attempted by the former critics. What follows is a similar critical attempt centered on Stephen Dudley to explore the mode of representation that is peculiar to *Ormond* and the first professional novelist in the United States, Charles Brockden Brown.

1. Stephen Dudley's Recovery from Blindness

As we have just seen, Stephen Dudley is not a true loser in *Ormond*. This can be also proved by the most curious events in the novel: his recovery from blindness. Before he is killed by Ormond, he regains his sight, which totally subverts his role as a man of loss. In the end of Chapter XVII, Stephen Dudley restores his sight by "[a] surgeon of uncommon skill" (179) brought by Ormond. As is often the case with Brown's novel, we are unexpectedly told that his case "was by no means remediless (179)" and that he was treated by "the necessary operation" to restore "the enjoyment of light" (179).

So far, Stephen Dudley's recovery has been rarely mentioned. The critics of *Ormond* often comments exclusively on the blindness of Stephen Dudley, and their attention have been centered only on its figurative effect. "Dudley's wife dies", Paul S. Levine explains, "and the grief-stricken Dudley goes blind," adding that "[i]n a world of hypocrites the trusting individual suffers from a kind of blindness" (32). Michael T. Gilmore observes that "[t]he characters in *Ormond* are impoverished by unpredictable occurrences beyond their control——in Mr. Dudley's case, in being embezzled and going blind——and they are enriched by similarly accidental events" (651). After his blindness, argues Norman S. Grabo, "[a]ll Dudley can do is talk about what he sees in his mind." It is clear that central to these critics is the traditional image of the blind. "The blind person," points out Mosche Barasch, "is understood primar-

ily as unfortunate, disabled, a human being deprived of what has always been considered the most precious gift man has received" (147). Backed by this assumption, former critics' are just varied in metaphoric interpretation of the seemingly singular event of Stephen's life.

All of them, however, do not pay attention to the peculiarity of the Stephen Dudley's case. Of course, the mere fact of Stephen's blindness might endow *Ormond* the place in the tradition of literary works that treat the blind. But if so, its place will not be in the mainstream. Traditionally, the blind as a literary motif is never be cured except in the case of miracle, and therefore the cause of the blindness cannot be specified (Twersky ; Lowenfeld). To this the case of Stephen Dudley is the perfect opposite. His blindness is doubly idiosyncratic in the sense that he gets blind with specific cause and cured later.

It must be noted here also that the critical myth about Brown's ambiguity that certainly derived from Leslie Fiedler has diverted the former critics' attention from the peculiar aspect of Stephen Dudley's blindness. But, as Donald A. Ringe rightly suggests, in *Ormond* the reader can see "the use Brown makes of realistic detail to establish the social environment in which his characters move" (46). For instance, the narrator tells us quite specifically that Constantia in the sheer poverty relied on "Indian meal" that "was procurable at ninety cents per bushel" (81). In fact, this information has a direct source in Court Rumford's publication that Brown reviewed in the *American Review*, the magazine he edited. Or, it is well-known fact that in depicting plague stricken Philadelphia Brown relies on many contemporary factual sources and witnesses (Kraus 360-68). Concerning this point, Bryan Waterman argues along with Michael T. Gilmore and Michael Warner that "factuality" of Brown's novel can be read as his "sincere attempt to disseminate medical and moral facts" in the early republic's circulation of knowledge. Basically agreeing with their arguments, hereafter I would also suggest that Stephen's case is another good example of "factuality" in *Ormond* which has definite effects on the progress of the narrative and the politics of the Early republic.

2. The Narrative and the Pathology

Though long have been past unnoticed, until he totally lose his sight the narrative sequence of the opening events keep pace with the invasion of cataract into his eyes. The image of cataract definitely underlies the opening narrative.

Here, it is of use to review a pathological history of a cataract as an eye disease. A cataract, even today's "one of the world's leading causes of blindness," can be simply defined as "a loss of transparency, or clouding, of the normally clear lens of the eye" (Shulman 1). The word itself is derived from Greek one which stands for "down-rushing, a down rushing bird, a portcullis, waterfall" (*OED*). As this etymology suggests, from ancient ages onward it was widely believed that cataracts should be formed by "evil liquids" or "humor" flowing into the eye (Shulman 2). The notion of the opacity of the lens, on which current pathology basically is based, was not confirmed until mid-seventeenth century when a German doctor Warner Rolfink published his theory (Shulman 2).

Among the various forms of cataracts, the most popular kind is that which develops with aging process. Indeed, "[i]n its early stages a cataract is not a disease at all, but a normal part of aging" (Shulman 1). Other than this, there are congenital cataracts and cataracts brought by an accident such as a severe blow on eyes.

Except an accidental case, a cataract hardly causes painful effects on eyes. To this the late eighteenth century America was perhaps familiar. *Encyclopaedia; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*, one of the earliest reference sources in this side of the Atlantic that appeared in a year before *Ormond's* publication, observes that a cataract can be distinguished from the other eye diseases that have "the evident marks which these affection produces, as well as by the pain attending their beginning" (136). "It commonly begins," the *Encyclopaedia* goes, "with a dimness of sight; and this generally continues a considerable time before any opacity can be observed in the lens." Yet, once the

progress starts, it will possibly bring serious damage on eyes. "As the disease advances the opacity become sensible" and it "gradually increases till the person either becomes entirely blind, or can merely distinguish light from darkness" (136). This is definitely true to the case of Stephen Dudley.

In fact, Brown's wording shows us the possibility that he is more or less versed in the then basic pathology of a cataract as described in the *Encyclopaedia*. The narrator tells us that Stephen Dudley's "sight was invaded by a cataract" and "[i]ts progress was rapid" (51). It seems that here, choosing the words "invaded" and "rapid" instead of "surprised" and "sudden," the narrative seems to be true to the pathology of a cataract. What the narrator depicts here is that, though Dudley's blindness seemingly comes quite abruptly, this is after all the matter of appearance. The description tells us nothing about how *suddenly* the disease comes from outside into Dudley's body; but it does tell us about how *rapidly* it damaged his eyes from inside.

Once taking into the account of the pathology of a cataract, then, Dudley's two catastrophic losses in the opening event are getting overlapped. Based on the pathology, it can be safely said that the progress of Stephen's cataract was already going on silently but firmly while Craig was penetrating into the family business of the Dudleys'. And the functions of both are quite similar in two points. First, they both seep into the innermost places (the Dudleys' family business or Dudley's eye) unnoticed and make catastrophes (bankrupt or total blindness). Second, their progresses are so silent and lasting that when they cause catastrophes it seems as if they come all of a sudden. The narrator tells that Dudley's "misfortune had not been foreseen" (49), even though he is "prone to suspect" Craig at the last stage of his infiltration (48). Ironically enough, while the unforeseeable trick is going on, Dudley is losing his physical capacity to see.

3. Enlightening the Blind

After Dudley was deprived of “the light of heaven” (51), no reader can really predict he recovers his sight. “Condemned to *eternal* dark (51, emphasis added),” he is characterized to be the one who is not willing to depend upon charity from others. “To live upon the charity,” the narrative goes, “or to take advantage of the compassion of his friends, was a destiny far worse than any other” (50) for him, even after his financial ruin. And one of Constantia’s tasks regarding his father is “to rescue him, by the labour of her hands, from dependence on public charity” (58). Indeed, he is “too proud to solicit the forbearance of” (76) M’Crea, who, in the midst of the pestilence, comes to the Dudleys to get the rent on behalf of the landlord, M’crea’s nephew, who recently died of the yellow fever.

But the reader is finally betrayed. Stephen Dudley, unbelievably, accepts Ormond’s offer to cure his blindness. Strangely enough, he decides to “live upon a charity” without any reasoning. Though it accompanies “considerable difficulty,” he is finally “prevailed upon to undergo necessary operation” to cure his blindness (179). This is, for sure, quite puzzling in terms of the consistency of the novel’s characterization of Stephen Dudley ; in fact, one can regard the “difficulty” that accompanies in persuading him as a fragment of the consistency of his characterization.

In view of Brown’s choice of a cataract as the cause of Dudley’s blindness, however, the cure can be predictable even from the outset. In the late eighteenth century, blindness caused by a cataract already became the disease that can be radically cured. This is owing to the establishment of a newly invented method of removing cataracts, which is called “extraction”. Before that, there had been sole method of cataract surgery, which is called “depression” (or, sometimes, “couching”). While surgeons just “push the cataract down out of the line of sight” (Shulman 76) in the old procedure, in the new method they extract the clouded

lens itself. This prevents the return of cataracts, which was the worst feature of the method of depression. Thanks to this advantage, the new method was enthusiastically welcomed.

The method of extraction was first adopted by French doctor Petit in 1708. However, when English surgeon William Cheselden removed cataracts for the first time from a born blind in 1728, his choice was couching, not extraction. The method of extraction was not prevailed due to its difficulty and the lack of proper tools until Doctor at French court Jacques Daviel improved the method and tools. Daviel first performed the extraction in 1745 when he failed in the usual procedure of depression and was forced to remove the whole lens of his patient. The method, unexpectedly for him, effected well on the patient's eyes. In next 11 years he did 384 successful operations (out of 434 cases) with the extraction, which he exclusively adopted after 1750 (Shulman 76 ; Degenaar 59). The development culminated four years after Daviel's first attempt, when another French scientist Reaumur extracted cataracts for the first time from the eyes of a born blind (Barasch 150).

Reaumur's case provoked the intense curiosity of Denis Diderot, one of the leading philosophers of the Enlightenment (see esp. Riskin 52-3). Indeed, the early eighteenth century devotion to the treatment of the blind caused by cataracts was driven not merely by practical and medical interests ; it was also motivated by more speculative excitements among philosophers of the age. There was an well-known epistemological enigma known as "Molyneux's Problem" that attracted many intellectuals' attention in the Enlightenment. The problem can be epitomized as this : if a person born blind gains his sight by successful surgery, does this person recognize a cube and a sphere only by his sight? As Barasch suggests, the matter was highly hypothetical before the curability of the born blind was confirmed ; but especially after Daviel and Reaumur, the question became experimental (150).

It is not the present paper's task to follow the long debate on Molyneux problem, but here I would like to make sure the point that the mid -eighteenth century that first saw the radical curability of the blindness

caused by a cataract was the conjuncture in which the blind turned out to be the object of experiment. Blindness was no more the object of speculation that accompanied by various mystification and superstition.

Harry Levin once asserted that Brown "was completely committed to the postulates of the Enlightenment" (21). And what he calls Brown's delight "in rationalistic explanations of apparently supernatural phenomena" (21) defines Brown's involvement in the Enlightenment project of desacralization of the world, which, I argue, is embodied in the description of the cataract surgery in *Ormond*. And in this sense, Stephen Dudley's perfect recovery makes a foothold which keep *Ormond* within the framework of the Enlightenment agenda.

It is confirmed that Brown could read French and was familiar with French *philosophes* who advocated the assumption of the intellectual radicalism of the Enlightenment (Kraus 318). As W. M. Verhoeven reveals, Hocquot Caritat, the New York publisher of *Wieland* and *Ormond*, was "a major source for the ideas of the *philosophes* for Brown," and, as Brown himself admitted, he could understand French so that he "traversed…some thousands of pages of the immense compilations of Diderot and D'Alembert" (Clark 69).

Now, if what Brown wanted to present us by Stephen Dudley's case is the blind that is disenchanted in the Enlightenment, it is rather natural to assume that he is cured by the method of extraction, the advanced technology brought by the Enlightenment. And this assumption can gain various supports from medical sources contemporary with *Ormond*.

There were at least two texts――the one is medical, and the other is encyclopedic――specifically referring to the cataract operation contemporary with *Ormond*, from which we can receive strong support to infer the method treating Stephen Dudley's case. Viewed chronologically, the first was the entry in *Encyclopaedia; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature* (1798), and the second was the inaugural dissertation by Frederic Seip submitted to the medical faculty of University of Pennsylvania (1800), both of them were published in Philadelphia.

They are not original accounts in the sense that they recorded any finding or invention in the United States ; but they are accumulations of the knowledge then available on the cataract operation. And this helps us understand the depth and width of the framework in which the nature of disease and its treatment were articulated, the framework of knowledge that was shared by an encyclopedic description, a medical dissertation, and a novel.

Referring to and comparing the two methods of operation, both sources supply the good reason to figure out how Stephen Dudley was treated. First, *Encyclopaedia* is thus making clear about to what case the method of extraction should be adopted :

> The proper time for the operation [of extraction] is when the opacity of the lens is so considerable as to prevent from his ordinary occupation. When this is not the case, or the patient has the use of one eye, it ought not to be performed, as it is always attended with some degree of danger. (*Encyclopaedia* 136)

As we can recall, Stephen Dudley's blindness is so "total" (51) that it "prevent[s] him from his ordinary occupation." "He was," the narrator tells us right after Dudley became blind, "now disabled from pursuing his usual occupation" (51). This means he could be "the case" for the extraction here. And the dissertation by Seip, who was seemingly a strong advocate of the method of extraction, can add another proof. He criticizes those who adhere to the depression :

> It is certainly no uncommon thing to find surgeons still persisting in the method they have first adopted, urging it as a reason, that they can perform it in such a manner. (Seip 15)

If Dudley's operation were done by the method of depression, which was "no uncommon" and with which many surgeons of the time were "still persisting," then there was no need for Ormond to take the

trouble to call in a surgeon. Rather, what makes Ormond contact this "surgeon of uncommon skill" who "had lately arrived from Europe" (179) was the very difficulty of the operation, which was, as *Encyclopaedia* puts it, "attended with some degree of danger."

Indeed, other various contemporary sources also show the fact that the method of extraction was usually done even in the late eighteenth century Europe by itinerants because of its difficulty. A treatise published in 1791 in London admits that the extraction "has in England, as in Germany, been chiefly confined to the hands of Itinerants," who "certainly acquire a dexterity which is but seldom to be met with among regular-bred surgeons" (Richter 5). Another short paper with the purpose of explaining "to the young surgeon the Extract of the Cataract", which was published in 1793 also in London, acknowledges that "[p]rofessional men…have sometime shrunk from this operation on account of the peculiar difficulties with which it is attended" (vi). As a result, "the person afflicted by this disease, has been compelled to apply either to some traveling Oculist, who is seldom much interested in the welfare of his patient…" (Bischoff vi). "A surgeon of uncommon skill" who was "lately arrived from Europe" (179) to cure Dudley's cataract, even though he came to Philadelphia "for purposes widely remote from his profession" (179), happens to play a role of this itinerant or traveling oculist, relying on whom people in the eighteenth century were obliged to remove cataracts.

Lastly, it can also be pointed out that the timing of the Stephen's surgery does make perfect sense in the contemporary guideline of the operation. *A Treatise on the Disease of the Eye*, the first textbook of ophthalmology written by American published in 1823, warns doctors that "[t]he operation should never be undertaken during the prevalence of any epidemic." This endorses the narrative progress from Stephen's blindness to the cataract surgery well after the pestilence of Philadelphia. The period of operation is arranged so that Stephen can get through the pestilence without danger of complications from yellow fever.

4. The Representation of Cataract Surgery in the Early Republic

Stephen Dudley's treatment is described thus perfectly within the contemporary framework of knowledge about cataract surgery. In other words, the novel's description of the surgery has a firm foothold in the factual knowledge. But the anecdote is not only informed by mere factuality but also by the symbolic and ironic meaning, when viewed in the perspective of Ormond's apparent affiliation with a secret society. Ormond's "political projects," the narrative explains, "are likely to possess an extensive influence on the future condition of the Western World" (126). According to Mary Chapman, this suggests his affiliation with the Bavarian Illuminati, an organization similar to freemasonry that is supported by radical intellectuals all over Europe and is supposed to be the hidden cause of French revolution (126–27 n.1).

And if Ormond is a member of the Illuminati, the doctor who removes the cataract of Stephen Dudley can also be one because he is introduced in the novel as "one of the numerous agents and dependants of Ormond" (179). Taking this context into account, the Illuminati doctor who, relying on the advanced medical technology bred in the Enlightenment, brings "the light of heaven" (51) back to Stephen Dudley could be symbolic in the sense that Stephen Dudley's recovery is brought by the combination of lights—the Illuminati and the Enlightenment.

But when we go more specific, the situation gets more complicated. The point to be observed hereafter is not simply that a member of the Illuminati helps *cure* the blindness ; but that the Illuminati doctor helps *extract* the cause of the disease. Viewed in this perspective, the treatment of Stephen Dudley by the supposed member of the secret society takes on ironical meaning. In fact, the significance of his recovery, the most curious event about Stephen Dudley, will never wholly be understood without considering Brownian irony that is working throughout the anecdote.

As we have confirmed above, the doctor cures Stephen Dudley

probably by extracting the "evil" (179), the cataract. But the problem here is that the doctor is a member of the Illuminati, which was considered to be the social evil at the time of *Ormond's* publication when the Federalist government was in operation. People of the Federalist persuasion at that time generally believed that the Illuminati should be removed—that is, extracted–from the United States.

According to Vernon Stauffer, in 1798, a year before *Ormond's* publication, Jedidiah Morse in his sermon on 9 May for the first time referred to the possibility that members of the Illuminati are already in the United States (10–11). The Illuminati peril in the Early Republic inaugurates around here and the situation soon became hysteric (Stauffer 103). On 29 November in the same year and 25 April in the following, Morse repeatedly warned that the members of the Illuminati were making dangerous living that could threaten the social order of the United States (Morse [1798] 22 ; [1799]17). Timothy Dwight, a well–known theologian and the then president of Yale College, also said in his Independence Day sermon of 1798 "The Duty of Americans at the Present Crisis" that the purposes of the Illuminati are "the overthrow of religion, government, and human society civil and domestic" (13). They, he insists, "insinuated themselves into every place of power and trust" (13).

It is in such a situation that Brown, who was well acquainted with both of those Federalist ministers (Kraus 435), published *Ormond*. In fact, as Marshall Smelser points out, the years from 1798 to 1799 were the age of crisis, fear, and hate, in which the ruling Federalists and opposing Republicans competed each other (Smelser 412). And the conflict culminated in the enforcement of a series of the Alien and Sedition Acts in June–July 1798, which aimed to check "internal invasion" (qtd. in J. C. Hamilton 18) of the foreign powers. The first article of Alien Friends Act (An Act Concerning Aliens), for example, declares thus : "any treasonable or secret machinations against the government thereof, to depart out of the territory of the United States.[3]" Here, "any treasonable or secret machinations against the government" clearly involves the Illuminati, who, Federalists believed, threatened the order of the government

and attempted to subvert the polity by supporting the Republicans, or more specifically, Thomas Jefferson.

It is not the present paper's task to follow the details of this heated debate[4]. Rather, here, I would like to emphasize that the logic of Federalist's foreign policy and that of cataract surgery share the same posture : both of them try to remove or extract the internal evil[5]. The Federalist government's intension to extract the evil out of the body politic perfectly overlaps the doctor's performance of extracting a cataract, or the evil, from the body of Stephen Dudley. In short, the doctor's performance represents the political performance of the Federalist. And the point is that the doctor who extracts a cataract in *Ormond* can himself be the evil—a member of the Illuminati—that should be extracted from the body politic of the United States.

Here lies, I argue, the most effective irony in *Ormond*. The subject of surgical extraction in the novel is at once the object of removal in view of contemporary politics. The subject and the object are merged into each other so that the action of the doctor in the novel satirizes, or even nullifies, the value of the xenophobic policy of the Federalist government. The mere fact that the Illuminati doctor is already within the United States is detestable for Federalists, but it is even more so when that doctor "with uncommon skill" perfectly cures the blindness by extracting the evil, by the very act encouraged by Federalists. The doctor is thus defying the government by showing that the evil—that is, himself—is already in the United States and can remove the cataract—another evil—easily. Performing what the government fails to do, he proves the defect of the Federalist government and teaches them the right way to deal with the evil which is already in the body/politics.

Conclusion

Cataract surgery was done without anesthesia at the time of *Ormond*'s publication (see fig. 1 below). In this sense, the surgery itself can primary be defined as a scene highly charged with Gothicism. But

the present paper revealed furthermore. First of all, it demonstrated that the novel's description of the surgery was completely within the contemporary medical frame of reference. This led us to the hitherto unnoticed fact that the infiltration of Craig into the Dudleys overlapped the invasion of a cataract in Dudley's eye. Second, and most important, this paper pointed out that the description of the surgery could possibly had political effects in the Early Republic right before 1800, when the heated competition between Federalists and Republicans was at the climax. The fact that Stephen Dudley's cataract is extracted by the foreign doctors who can be the object of removal in the contemporary policy of the Federalist government caricatures almost laughingly the government's policy itself. The performance of the Illuminati doctor implies the deficiency of the Federalist government.

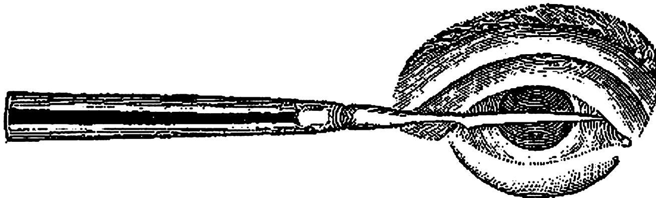

Fig. 1 *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* (1753)

Charles Brockden Brown declared in "To the Public" of *Edgar Huntley*, which is published also in 1799, that while the other American authors write about "[p]uerile superstition and exploded manners; Gothic castles and chimeras," he himself describes "[t]he incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of western wilderness" so as to provoke the sympathy in American readers. This statement, as Yagi Toshio once pointed out, can be regarded as the "declaration of independence of the American novel" (79). However, while it means, for sure, to proclaim the independence, it also confirms the American novel's dependence on Gothic tradition of Europe, because here the things American—"Indian hostility" or "the perils of Western wilderness"—are no more than the counterparts of Gothic tradition in the other side of the Atlantic. The

statement is, therefore, not on a whole creation of American tradition, but on an adaptation and reception of European tradition. After all, Brown's independence is inevitably ambivalent. It is characterized by the separation from Europe, but the separation itself is dependent on the consistency with Europe. Brown's ambivalence thus involves the disconnection from Europe based on the connection to Europe, or vice versa.

Stephen Dudley's cataract surgery embodies this Brownian ambivalence of the Americanness in the Early Republic. The surgery is a trace that connects the novel which is considered to be the least Gothic among Brown's to Gothic tradition from Europe; it can also find its place in the project of the Enlightenment to demystify the blind; furthermore, it represents ironically the xenophobic policy of the Federalist government. The description of the surgery is thus at once European and American. It is Gothic, factual, and representational.

The performance of the Illuminati doctor, who comes from Europe to the Early Republic and into the text of *Ormond*, provides *Ormond* with such a wide range of significance and dis/connects the newly born nation to the other side of the Atlantic. It is in this unremitting performance of dis/connection that one can find the achievement not only of *Ormond*, but also of Charles Brockden Brown as the first American professional author.

NOTES

1) Hereafter the text of *Ormond* is based on *Ormond, or the Secret Witness*. Ed. Mary Chapman (Ontario, Canada: Broadview Literary Texts, 1999).
2) Seven articles on *Ormond* were published after 2000, but none centers on Stephen Dudley.
3) For the whole text of the Law, see "An Act Concerning Aliens" (25 June 1798; Stat 2. 58)
4) For the detailed account of the controversy over the Acts, see Smith and Miller.
5) For more specific reference, see as foloows: "[I]t shall be lawful for the President of the United States, whenever he may deem it necessary for the

public safety, to order to be removed out of the territory thereof."

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