

THE DIVIDED SELF IN BROWN, POE, AND MELVILLE

A Thesis
by
KATELYN DAWN COOLEY

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KATELYN DAWN COOLEY
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APPROVED BY:

Dr. Colin Ramsey
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

Dr. Grace McEntee
Member, Thesis Committee

Dr. Bill Brewer
Member, Thesis Committee

Dr. James Ivory
Chairperson, Department of English

Dr. Edelma D. Huntley
Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

THE DIVIDED SELF IN BROWN, POE, AND MELVILLE (December 2010)

Katelyn Dawn Cooley, B.A., University of Rio Grande

M.A., Appalachian State University

Chairperson: Colin Ramsey

Many critics have identified a sense of anxiety within the literary works of the Early National period. By using a hybrid of William James and Jaques Lacan's approaches to the "Divided Self," we see that this anxiety can be found internally, as key characters from Brown, Poe, and Melville display symptoms of a "Divided Self." Ultimately, all of the "Divided Selves" present in these key texts resolve into pseudo, if not actual, suicidal subjects. By applying James and Lacan's schemas to these texts, we gain a new appreciation for their psychological complexity and sophistication.

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Introduction

The Early National and Antebellum periods in American history, roughly spanning the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, were marked by drastic changes, both delightful and devastating, in America's social and cultural geography. During this period, Americans were struggling to develop a new national identity. As Christopher Looby writes, "Nations are not born, but made" (1). Looby explains the weight of America's status as the first "new" nation, "the first modern nation deliberately fabricated *de novo*, founded in self-conscious performative act," as one that necessarily calls into focus the "artificiality and historical contingency of the nation" (3). One of the many side effects of America's self-making was uncertainty and anxiety. Jay Fliegelman, in *Prodigals and Pilgrims*, explains the American Revolution as an act of anti-patriarchal revolution, and his schema portrays America as a self-orphaned nation, one thus with no model or guide. As Fliegelman writes, "A secure world had been made insecure and that...is the price of having become 'free'" (Fliegelman 240).

This insecurity that Fliegelman identifies as the price of freedom is evident in the literature of the period. The Gothic, Gothic influenced, and Romantic literature of this period expresses the anxiety associated with determining and understanding what it meant to be an American. For instance, as historian and editor Phillip Van Doren Stern observes in his introduction to *The Portable Poe*, "it is only as an *American* author that [Poe] can be understood. He lived in the age of antimacassars and slavery, of lace valentines and covered wagons, of old-fashioned chivalry and new-fangled railroads"

(xvi, emphasis mine). Van Doren Stern's description of Poe's "Americanism" shows us the world of contradictions that an Early National period American found himself inhabiting. Moreover, the very revolutionary spirit that America needed to win independence became problematic once the war was won, as the leftover feeling for rebellion and revolt echoed through the new America's backcountry. The very rebellious passion that the 13 colonies needed to fight for independence became anxiety producing and potentially terrifying to the people of the new United States. Sacvan Bercovitch gets to the crux of that terrifying transitional period, finding evidence through the literature, writing that: "[Americans'] terror is evident everywhere in the literature [including]...Gothic novels...Federalist jeremiads..." (134). As Bercovitch suggests, American anxiety is a regular presence in much of the literature of the Early National and Antebellum periods, and said anxiety is often depicted through characters that suffer a breakdown, a descent into individual madness and personal ruin. America's fear of the revolutionary impulse is thus dramatized in the fiction of the Early National and Antebellum periods.

Thus we find in the literature of these eras a common motif of individual destruction and despair, a motif replete with anxiety, a motif that is suggested through characters that portray characteristics of a divided self. This thesis will examine the "Divided Self" as it is reflected in key characters in the works of Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe and Herman Melville. In examining the motif of the Divided Self as we find it in Brown's *Wieland* and *Edgar Huntly*, Poe's "Bernice," "William Wilson," and "The Fall of the House of Usher," and Melville's *Moby Dick*, I will apply a hybrid of William James and Jacques Lacan's theories of the Divided Self, and, more

particularly in the case of Lacan, the “perpetually suicidal subject.” The characters that dramatize the Divided Self in these texts all resolve into self-destructive, pseudo, if not actual, suicidal subjects, which demonstrates how psychologically sophisticated these works are despite predating James, Lacan, and of course, Freud.

Chapter I: American Anxiety and the Divided Self of William James and Jacques Lacan

William James, nineteenth century American philosopher, psychologist and author of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, provides a vital approach for understanding the anxiety-ridden Divided Selves found in the works examined in this thesis. In writing about the relationship between psychology and religion, James first uses the term “Divided Self” to explain the conflict experienced by an individual who is torn between two things that are mutually exclusive or counterintuitive. James asserts that some individuals are born “with an inner constitution which is harmonious and well balanced from the outset,” while others are “oppositely constituted; and are so in degrees which may vary from something so slight as to result in a merely odd or whimsical inconsistency, to a discordancy [sic] of which the consequences may be inconvenient in the extreme”¹ (140, 141). Those who are born “harmonious” are termed “healthy souls” while those who experience discord are known as “sick souls.” Of the latter, James writes, “Their spirit wars with their flesh, they wish for incompatibles, wayward impulses interrupt their most deliberate plans, and their lives are one long drama of repentance and of effort to repair misdemeanors and mistakes” (141). For James, the Divided Self is synonymous with what he calls the “religious melancholy” and “conviction of sin” that, he argues, play such a central part in Protestant Christianity. James goes on to quote St. Paul, “What I would do, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do” (143). James thus

¹ This phrase “inconvenient to the extreme” is worth noting. In the discussion of Lacan below we see that what James imagines as ‘inconvenient’ is an understatement for the murder/suicide Lacan uncovers.

portrays the Divided Self as an individual that is plagued by the warring of two wills, one of which tends towards self-destruction, or at least, negative actions: “The man’s interior is a battle-ground for what he feels to be two deadly hostile selves, one actual, the other ideal” (143).

In Lecture IX of *Varieties*, “Conversion,” James takes the progress of the Divided Self to what he perceives as its natural end: the unification of the two divided halves via an often “religious” conversion. “To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance,” James writes, “are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided...becomes unified and consciously right, superior, and happy...” (157). For James, the act of unification is necessarily an act of conversion; one half of the Divided Self must be converted, must give in to the sway of the other. He writes that “the process of unification, when it occurs...may come gradually, or it may occur abruptly; it may come through altered feelings, or through altered powers of action; or it may come through new intellectual insights or through experiences which we shall later have to designate as ‘mystical’” (146). Whatever brings about the change, it is a change that necessitates a power struggle between the two wills.

James, citing the work of his contemporary and author of *The Psychology of Religion* Edwin D. Starbuck, ultimately goes on to show that division and conversion, while potentially problematic, are necessary steps for individual growth and maturation. The symptoms of the division in the adolescent and religious subject are, as James writes, the same: “a sense of incompleteness and imperfection; brooding, depression, *morbid*

introspection,² and sense of sin; anxiety about the hereafter; distress over doubts and the like” (164). And just as the symptoms of the conflict are the same for the religious and adolescent subject, so are the signs of the cure: “a happy relief and objectivity, as the confidence of the self gets greater through the adjustments of the faculties to the wider outlook” (164). James surmises that Starbuck’s conclusion is the only logical conclusion: “Conversion is in its essence a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child’s small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity” (165). In James’ understanding then, experience of anxiety, as evidenced in the themes of division, madness and disintegration, is a necessary step in the maturation and formation of an individual identity.

In James we have not only one of the earliest discussions of the Divided Self, but also one of the more concrete discussions of an individual afflicted by the internal warring of two wills. The Jamesian Divided Self works particularly well for examining the work of Charles Brockden Brown on many levels. First, the Jamesian pseudo-religious Divided Self is easily identified in the character of Theodore Wieland. James is writing in religious terms and *Wieland* is, among other things, a novel marked by the religious fanaticism of its main character. In addition, the Jamesian Divided Self is characterized not only by conversion but also by the internal struggle that necessitates the conversion. James quotes St. Augustine’s account of the moments leading up to his conversion, “I was on the point of resolve. I all but did it, yet I did not do it...hesitating to die to death, and live to life” (144). In Augustine’s struggle, James finds a “perfect description” of the divided will, a will that is not only divided but also caught at an

² This “morbid introspection” will be a running theme as we see characters retreat into themselves right before the terrible act of murderous conversion is carried out.

excruciating standstill. Lewis Pericles, in “James’ Sick Souls,” writes, “until they find conversion, William James’ divided selves are virtually incapable of action” (252). This very feeling of being so completely caught between the two wills that the subject is practically paralyzed can be best identified in the character of Clara Wieland.

Having established the central aspects of a Jamesian Divided Self, we turn to a more contemporary scholar of the subject, Jacques Lacan, for a more complex expansion of the ideas first denoted in James. For Lacan, division is not a phase to be associated with adolescence, but instead a flaw inherent in all humans from infancy and the advent of what he calls The Mirror Stage. It is only when the infant recognizes himself in the mirror’s reflection that he becomes aware that he has a *total* form. Lacan writes, “We have only to understand the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term; namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image...” (Lacan, “A Selection” 2). The mirror image, Lacan writes

would, moreover, have to be called the “ideal-I”... in the sense that it will also be the root-stock of secondary identifications, this latter term subsuming the libidinal normalization functions. But the important point is that this form situates the agency known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in *a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible* for any subject individual, or rather that will only asymptotically approach the subject’s becoming, no matter how successful the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve, as *I*, his discordance with his own reality. (76, emphasis my own).

Where James identified the two halves (the ideal and the actual) as correlating with the advent of religion and adolescence, Lacan implies that humans always possess both an idealized and actual experience of the self. Lacan's Mirror Stage, like James' adolescent *conversion*, is a vital and necessary step in human maturation, yet it also presents a terrible and *irreconcilable* conflict³ as the child begins to first experience a discord between perception and desire. The child perceives him/herself to be complete and possess a mastery over his body, yet he still experiences a fragmented existence. What has occurred in the infant's identification with his mirror image is, to use Lacan's French term, *meconnaissance* (as Bruce Fink translates it in the first complete English translation of *Ecrits*, the function of misrecognition). Lacan writes, "It is in this erotic relationship, in which the human individual fixates on an image that alienates him from himself, that we find the energy and the form from which the organization of the passions that he will call his ego originates" (92). When the child fixates on his image, his "ideal-I," he thus misrecognizes and is alienated from himself. For Lacan, this misrecognition characterizes the ego/I and it is, as Lacan scholar Sean Homer explains, the function of the ego to continue constructing "the illusions of coherence and mastery" (25). By acknowledging the inherent truth of the fragmented and illusory identity (which the ego must work to deny with its illusions of cohesion), Lacan paves the way for understanding the self as a self that is always divided. Bruce Fink, in his work *The Lacanian Subject*, describes it this way: "The splitting of the I into ego (false self) and unconscious brings into being a surface, in a sense, with two sides: one that is exposed and one that is hidden" (45). This exposed side, of course, is the ideal, the illusory whole and mastered

³ It is important to note that for James, *conversion* marks the maturation; for James the *division* itself is a necessary step to maturation.

self that is so appealing in the mirror. The hidden self, then, is the fragmented and experienced self, which the ego must work to suppress at the risk of being usurped and exposed as the false illusion it truly is. As Fink writes, for Lacan, “the divided subject...consists entirely in the fact that a speaking being’s two ‘parts’ or avatars share no common ground: they are radically separated...” (45).

Thus, the main difference between James and Lacan is the individual’s awareness of his interior duality. For James, an individual is a “Divided Self” when he is aware of the division, when he is plagued by the bad feelings which are symptoms of the internal battle taking place between his two divided wills. For Lacan, however, all selves are “Divided Selves,” even when the division is so severe that the two halves are unaware of each other. The divided individual misrecognizes his true self (the experienced, fragmented self), to the extent that he is unaware that there even exists an “other” self, thus alienating himself *from himself*, as his perceptions are valued over his reality. When the subject is unaware of his internal warring of two wills, he cannot consciously work to convert or reconcile one or the other.

This Lacanian mindful unawareness is identified in characters who act unconsciously, that is, characters who are so thoroughly divided that they remain unaware of the existence and the actions of their “other” selves. Brown’s Edgar Huntly and Clithero, along with Melville’s Ahab, all fall victim to sleepwalking. Poe’s narrator in “Bernice” also falls victim to his unconscious or other self when he enters a trance-like state, waking only to wonder what it is that he has done. For Poe and Melville, these moments of unconscious action are related to the subject’s unconscious desire for unity and reconciliation, but in Lacan’s schema, the fulfillment of desire is fatal.

For Lacan, desire is something beyond basic human need; it is something that cannot and *should not* be satisfied for the individual subject. Lacan calls the object of desire the *objet petit a* (translated as “the cause of desire” and the “object-cause” by Fink and Homer, respectively). There is no actual object in the object of desire, the *objet petit a* is the act of desiring which creates desire. In a sense, there is an ideal-thing which has caused desire and want, yet desire continually circles around said ideal-thing, never arriving at or encountering the object-cause, but circling in a perpetual cycle of desiring. The advent of the object-cause, as we will see, ultimately leads to, and perhaps demands, the subject’s destruction, as Poe’s narrators and Melville’s Ahab all meet their pseudo or actual suicidal end with the fulfillment of their desires.

To understand how the advent of the object-cause comes about, we must understand the relationship between the *objet petit a* and the drive as a self-destructive process. Defining the Freudian drive, Jean Laplace and Serge Leclair offer a definition we can work with: the drive is “a constant force of biological nature, emanating from organic sources, that always has as its aim its own satisfaction through the elimination of the state of tensions which operates at the source of the drive itself” (qtd in Homer 75). In essence, the drive seeks to satisfy itself by eliminating the very tensions that birthed it. For the purpose of this thesis, the tension is the result of James’ “warring wills” and Lacan’s two selves. The drive seeks to satisfy itself by eliminating its source, a suicide of the mind. While for James, it can be argued that the satisfaction is achieved through the conversion of the troublesome will, for Lacan, desire and drive cannot *ever* be satisfied. Desire and drive are integral to the self; they must continue to circle and never achieve satisfaction; they work to keep the divided individual in centripetal balance, always in

motion, always unaware, always poised. At the moment that the balance is thrown off, the ideal and the actual must acknowledge the other, leading to the destruction of the self as the tethers of ignorance are untied.

And here, ultimately, is the key difference between James and Lacan's concepts of the Divided Self. Where James saw unification of the Divided Self as possible and practical, only imagining the worst-case scenario as "inconvenient in the extreme," Lacan sees *death* as the only outcome for this war of the wills. Where James sees conversion, Lacan sees (self)murder. The Divided Self, or in Lacanian language, the perpetually suicidal subject, is applicable to the literary analysis of this thesis as a self that desires and is driven toward its own destruction. The division which births the realization of the Divided Self stems from the rupture between the ideal-*I* and the actual-*I*, between what is perceived and what is experienced. For William James, the Divided Self begins and ends with this rupture; the individual is aware of the discordance and works to mediate the battle between his two wills. For Lacan, however, the process is much more complicated and much more violent.

The texts I have chosen to explore in this thesis are all works in which major characters display symptoms of the Divided Self, as defined both by James and Lacan. While the texts are examined chronologically, they also serve as a study in progression. In Charles Brockden Brown's novels, *Wieland* and *Edgar Huntly*, I will argue that the title characters best exemplify the Divided Self in the Jamesian sense, that is, they are characters who are plagued by the warring of two wills. In Edgar Allan Poe's short stories "Bernice," "William Wilson," and "The Fall of the House of Usher" I will show not only the warring of wills but also the acts of Jamesian conversion and Lacanian

murder of the “other” self. With Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, I will examine the suicidal relationship of desire and drive as manifest in the relationship between Ahab and the white whale. Finally, I will argue that though these texts display Divided Selves at different stages, ultimately all can be best understood as the perpetually suicidal subjects of Lacan’s Divided Self. While James provided an invaluable framework for understanding the Divided Self, it is Lacan who explicitly identifies the violent end only hinted at in James’ “conversion,” and it is precisely this violent end which demonstrates how psychologically sophisticated these works are, despite predating James, Lacan, and of course, Freud. Indeed, these works tend to underscore the national anxiety and the search for identity that so many critics have argued characterize this period in American literature and history.

Chapter II: A Jamesian War Between Divided Wills in Brown's *Wieland* and Edgar Huntly

Wieland; or the Transformation. An American Tale

First published in 1789, *Wieland* describes a well-to-do and well-educated family plagued by a shocking past. An epistolary novel narrated by Clara Wieland, *Wieland* begins with the death of her father and then follows with terrible murders committed by Clara's brother Theodore. Theodore, it turns out, possesses the same religious fanaticism of his father (a character who literally spontaneously combusts), yet attempts to tame that religion with reason, until he can no longer reconcile the two. He gives in to a divine if murderous madness by the novel's close.

The elder Wieland, we learn, came to America with the intent of ministering to the Native Americans. We also learn that the elder Wieland had developed his own brand of religion that he feels called to share with the Indians. After failing to reach and convert them, he begins to practice his personal brand of religious devotion simply in solitude, in a temple he has built on his property. This temple is constructed three hundred yards from his house on top of a large rock. The temple is "no more than a circular area...whose flooring was the rock, cleared of moss and shrubs, and exactly leveled, edged by twelve Tuscan columns and covered by an undulating dome" (18). The elder Wieland retreats to this temple twice every twenty-four hours to worship alone, for one hour at twelve noon and one hour at twelve midnight.

But despite his strict adherence to personal worship, all is not well with the elder Wieland. His failure to convert the Indians results in his sense of failure in serving his deity. As the elder Wieland becomes withdrawn and overcome by sadness, Clara, as the narrator, explains his troubled state: “his peace of mind was flown, in consequence of deviation from his duty” (19). Feeling as though he has missed out on an opportunity to fulfill a command from his deity, he suddenly finds himself “no longer permitted to obey” (19). In his religious melancholy, the elder Wieland exhibits characteristics of a Jamesian Divided Self. James, in writing about the discord that is symptomatic of a warring of wills, writes, “if the individual be of tender conscience and religiously quickened, the unhappiness will take the form of moral remorse and compunction, of feeling inwardly vile and wrong, and of standing in false relations to the author of one’s being and appointer of one’s spiritual fate” (142). The elder Wieland exhibits characteristics of the Jamesian Divided Self in both his sense of failure, his feeling of “standing in false relation” to his deity and his resignation to punishment. Along with this sense of failure comes a terrible sense of doom as he hints to his wife that the end of his life is drawing near. The elder Wieland is haunted by thoughts of his impending death; he is “haunted by the belief that the kind of death that awaited him was strange and terrible” (20). These feelings of divine failure and impending doom appear to be affirmed when the elder Wieland spontaneously combusts in mid-worship at midnight one evening. The scene of this shocking and strange event is described as “a cloud impregnated with light” (25). There appears to be a fire of sorts, yet no part of the temple is actually burning and the fire ceases its static burn when a family member arrives on the scene. What little the elder Wieland can recall of the mysterious events before he perishes furthers his belief

that this flame was a religious experience. As he recalls it, he was in the midst of silent reflection, when, “with thoughts full of confusion and anxiety, a faint gleam suddenly shot athwart the apartment. His fancy immediately pictured to itself, a person bearing a lamp” (26). The elder Wieland turns to examine the source of the light when “his right arm received a blow from a heavy club...a very bright spark was seen to light upon his clothes. In a moment, the whole was reduced to ashes” (26). After the elder Wieland is found, naked and terribly burned except for the hair on his head and the slippers on his feet, it is only a matter of days before he dies and a matter of months before his wife follows him to the grave, leaving their children orphans.

Despite the horror connected to the elder Wieland’s temple, the grown children still frequent the stone structure, often with Theodore’s wife Catherine and her brother Henry Pleyel (also Clara’s love interest). This temple, built by the elder Wieland in the neoclassical style, is converted by the children from a temple of religious devotion into a temple of reason. Theodore, Clara and their friends place a bust of Cicero inside the temple and spend their time there together discussing Enlightenment philosophy. As neoclassical or Enlightenment thinkers, the Wielands and their friends place value on reason, believing in the power of rationality to make sense of and order the empirical sense-data about the world. In a moment foreshadowing the division Theodore will undergo, it is at this very temple to reason that Theodore first hears the disembodied Voice. This disembodied voice is actually the thrown voice of another character, Carwin. Carwin throws his voice and impersonates other members of the Wieland circle, causing confusion and chaos throughout the novel. The Voice takes on the qualities of Theodore’s wife when she is inside, impersonates a rendezvous between Clara and Carwin himself,

pretends to be multiple murderers hiding in Clara's closet, and takes on the qualities of a supernatural entity commanding the Wielands. It is this Voice which ultimately causes Theodore's division of sense and reason, which wreaks havoc on the insular little family throughout the rest of the novel. For instance, as he ascends the hill to the temple, Theodore first hears the Voice:

Half way to the rock, the moon was for a moment hidden from us by a cloud. I never knew the air to be more bland and more calm. In this interval I glanced at the temple, and thought I saw a glimmering between the columns. It was so faint, that it would not perhaps have been visible, if the moon had not been shrowded. I looked again, but saw nothing. (42)

The glimmer he spies between the temple columns is eerily reminiscent of the burning cloud his uncle spotted in the temple the night of the elder Wieland's death. After seeing the mysterious light, Theodore continues to make his way up the hill to his father's temple. When he is little more than halfway up the hill, he hears a voice, "distinct" and "powerful" (43). Wieland identifies the voice as that of his wife, although louder than usual, as it commands him: "Stop, go no further. There is danger in your path" (43). Given his father's strange and inexplicable burning inside the temple, it is no surprise that Theodore heeds the voice and returns home to his companions. The Voice appears to be warning Theodore away from a fate similar to his father's pseudo-religious death. As Theodore relates the incident to his friends, he says, "What could I do? The warning was mysterious. To be uttered by Catharine at a place, and on an occasion like these, enhanced the mystery. I could do nothing but obey. Accordingly, I trod back my steps, expecting that she waited for me at the bottom of the hill. When I reached the bottom, no

one was visible” (43). Despite the strangeness of hearing his wife’s voice in such a strange location and at such an unnatural volume, Theodore obeys, but is perplexed at Catharine’s absence.

Upon returning to the house and his companions, Theodore is understandably troubled to find his wife present. “One thing,” he says to Plyel, “is true; either I heard my wife’s voice at the bottom of the hill, or I do not hear your voice at present” (42). For Theodore, there is no other option other than the two he has just proposed. Either what happened outside was truth and what he finds inside the house is, by default, a lie, or what happened outside was a lie and what happens inside the house is truth. These seemingly mutually exclusive realities will come to represent the two wills which Theodore must struggle with as in a Jamesian conversion. While Theodore appears to be using reason, he is ultimately not factoring in all of the variables, namely his own fallibility. Theodore does not once consider that he was mistaken in his recognition of the Voice, even though by his own admission it was unusually loud to be his wife’s. Unfortunately for Theodore, this faulty logic will be his downfall as he is unable to reconcile the two mutually exclusive truths.

In seeking to understand the Wielands as Enlightenment thinkers, that is, individuals who place so much value on reason, we turn to the work of Charles C. Bradshaw. Bradshaw, in “The New England Illuminati: Conspiracy and Causality in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*,” writes that “with their relationship to their parents and Old World ties severed, the siblings abandon themselves to a naïve trust in the power of reason” (364). Bradshaw goes on to say that “as a product of Enlightenment rationalism, *Wieland* exemplifies a dangerous mix of self-reliance and religious

devotion...dependent as he is upon the accuracy of the sensory data he interprets" (373). As Clara considers the explanations offered by Plyel, that Theodore's senses were deceived, her heart sinks: "I could not bear to think that his senses should be the victims of such delusion...If the senses be depraved, it is impossible to calculate the evils that may flow from the consequent deductions of understanding" (45). For the Wielands, the sensory data and reason must be in harmony for a self to continually function, that is, for a self to be able to make reliable and accurate deductions of understanding.

Sense and reason can here be usefully seen as the Jamesian two wills which war for control of Theodore in Brown's novel. When sense and reason are out of order, as Theodore's sense and reason now appear to be, an individual subject can fall into total ruin. His subjectivity deteriorates into fragments under the stress of the ill-reconcilability of what Theodore thinks are the only two, and mutually exclusive, possibilities. Ultimately Theodore Wieland will attribute divinity to that which he experiences but cannot explain, as he undergoes a Jamesian conversion that doesn't last, which results in a fatal division of his self into two incompatible and mutually exclusive selves.

Like Theodore, Clara also experiences an internal war of possibilities. Her exposure to Carwin causes Clara to wrestle to separate what she knows now (i.e. what she has experienced) of the man with what she first thought (i.e. what she perceived) of the stranger. In a beautiful narrative device that makes us consider again the relationship between senses and reason, Clara sees Carwin, then hears him, and finally, meets him in person. With her eyes, Clara observes a man rough in every way, rustic and travel weary. She describes him as "ungainly and disproportioned", with a "careless" pace and "awkward [sic] gait" (62). Clara proceeds to make less than favorable assumptions about

this stranger, “drawing from outward appearances, those inferences with respect to the intellectual history of this person, which experience affords to us” (62-3). As Clara surmises, “there was nothing remarkable in these appearances”—yet Carwin turns out to be quite remarkable.

When Clara first hears Carwin conversing with her servant, hidden from view, she imagines another man altogether. She hears a voice that is described as “not only mellifluous and clear, but the emphasis was so just, and modulation so impassioned” that she imagines it would melt a heart of stone (64). Clara is shocked to see the origins of this magnificent voice is none other than the rustic stranger she had observed earlier in such an unflattering light. She admits that her “fancy had conjured up a very different image. A form and attitude, and garb, were instantly created worthy to accompany such elocution; but this person was, in all visible respects, the reverse of this phantom” (65). While the man is unappealing to the eye, he leaves a “vivid and indelible” image in her mind (65). Clara finds herself confronted with her own failure of the senses—both her eyes and her ears have now deceived her. While the encounter between Clara and Carwin seems but a minor point in the overarching tragedy of *Wieland*, it is emblematic to how the novel dramatizes the unsettling of a subject’s psychic unity when he or she is confronted by the inexplicable and the unknown. Just as Theodore must determine if he heard the voice of his wife outside, even when he immediately sees her inside, so must Clara reconcile her two distinct and contradictory impressions of Carwin. With Clara, however, we are given a vital insight. When faced with two incompatibles, we see that she begins to lose certainty, and with that loss of certainty comes a crippling inability to identify the truth. As she later confesses about Carwin, “I could not deny my homage to

the intelligence expressed in [his face], but was wholly uncertain, whether he were an object to be dreaded or adored, and whether his powers had been exerted to evil or to do good” (85). Clara’s inability to *know* Carwin’s character and intentions is the first proverbial crack in Clara’s perceived unified self. By oscillating between fear and adoration of the man, Clara has begun to entertain two mutually exclusive truths. Either Carwin is a bad man or he is a good man, but he cannot be both.

Clara encounters further cause to call into question her perceptions of reality later in the text when a whisper by her ear causes her to leap from her bed in fear. Clara rises to investigate the cause of her disturbance, only to hear two voices conversing inside her closet. Clara is horrified to hear the men plotting her murder and runs from the house, collapsing on the threshold of her brother’s house. Theodore and his family are disturbed from slumber by a voice that urges them, “Awake! Arise! Hasten to succor one that is dying at your door!” (72). After Clara is found outside Theodore’s front door, Pleyel and Theodore return to her house to uncover the source of her terror. After inspecting Clara’s home, the men proclaim that Clara’s encounter must have been a dream. Faced with their disbelief that she actually heard something, Clara considers the role of the Voice thus far:

Was I really deceived in imagining that I heard the closet conversation? I was no longer at liberty to question the reality of those accents which had formerly recalled my brother from the hill; which had imparted tidings of the death of the German lady to Pleyel; and which had lately summoned them to my assistance. (73)

Clara, faced with the inability to dismiss the Voice as unreal, wonders still, “how was I to regard the midnight conversation?” (73).

Just as Theodore had to determine if he did or did not hear his wife's voice on his way to the temple, so must Clara question the reliability of her senses. She finds herself in the same dangerous territory she feared for her brother upon his first encounter with the Voice: "If the senses be depraved, it is impossible to calculate the evils that may flow from the consequent deductions of understanding" (45). Clara is now faced with the possibility that her own senses are depraved, that she has been deceived by her own sensory perceptions. Clara, like Theodore, has come to represent a Jamesian Divided Self, struggling to make sense of two incompatible truths, caught between two incompatible wills. James writes, "unhappiness is apt to characterize the period of order-making and struggle" that characterizes the Divided Self (142).

Clara's inability to reconcile what she experiences with what she perceives, her failure to make order of the world around her render her, in James' terms, "incompletely unified" (James 140). Clara's doubt about what she believes can be said to be true leads to more than just an overly anxious mind. On more than one occasion, Clara finds herself physically immobilized by her mental confusion. After Clara first sees the man behind the enchanting voice, she is disappointed by the discrepancy between the image in her mind and the image before her; she does not simply sit and ponder her disappointment, but instead "throws" herself into a chair and sinks into "a fit of musing" (65). When Carwin returns, Clara is caught in "painful" embarrassment and appears to again collapse into thought, as she says it was "some time" before she could "recover [her] wonted composure" (65). When Clara later hears the Voice awakening her from a dangerous dream, she is unable to distinguish between wakefulness and sleep (76). Clara, when commanded by the Voice to "HOLD!" before opening her closet door one evening, finds

herself “utterly bereft of understanding” (105). After discovering Carwin in her closet, and hearing the confession of his planned assault on her honor, Clara throws herself into a chair and loses herself in thought yet again.

At this point in the novel, Clara’s physical inactivity is directly tied to her work to reconcile the apparently mutually exclusive views of reality her senses are creating in her consciousness. As the next chapter opens, Clara finds herself aroused not from deep thought, but from a “stupor” (120). In her discovery of Catharine’s corpse and Wieland’s maniacal state, Clara finds herself “deprived” and “mute,” unable to speak or act. This relationship is ultimately one in which her mental exertions render her physically incapacitated as she is effectively paralyzed by her internal struggle. Lewis Pericles writes that a “sense of helplessness” and the “lack of willpower” characterize the Jamesian Divided Self that is most susceptible to conversion, in the case that conversion is something that is outside of the subject’s control, it is something which ultimately happens *to* the individual (251). Thus, in Clara’s conflicted state, she is paralyzed by a sense of her own inability *to know*, waiting instead, for something to happen *to* her.

While Clara struggles to make order she finds herself unable to act because she can commit to neither “truth.” Clara does not explicitly exhibit the self-loathing and despair inherent in St. Paul’s lament, yet her paralysis is a form of self-condemnation. In James’ discussion of St. Augustine’s conversion, he identifies a “perfect description of the divided will” in the inability of the “higher will” to explosively overcome the lesser (144). In James’ terms then, the Divided Self is best characterized by the struggle, the struggle we see so clearly in Clara’s physical immobility. For Clara, though, her two

wills are the will to believe what reason tells her must be true struggling against what her senses have shown her to be true.

While Clara has lost the ability to identify and commit to a singular truth, and with it the ability to act, Theodore gives himself over completely to the unknown. He gives over the use of his body and mind in pursuit of a relationship with the divine. While Theodore's mind is reluctant to do what the Voice commands him, he finds his body carrying out the murderous instructions in spite of his subjective will. In his confession to the court, Theodore describes the events that led to the murder of Catherine:

I was dazzled. My organs were bereaved of their activity...I opened my eyes and found all about me luminous and glowing. It was the element of heaven that flowed around. Nothing but a fiery stream was at first visible; but, anon, a shrill voice from behind called upon me to attend....As it spoke, the accents thrilled to my heart. 'Thy prayers are heard. In proof of thy faith, render me thy wife. This is the victim I choose. Call her hither, and here let her fall.' (194)

While Clara has remained enmeshed in the warring of two wills, Wieland is the victim of an all too successful conversion, giving no second thought to the pseudo-religious will which now controls him. Through the murder of his wife and children, through his confession and incarceration, up to his escape and attempt on Clara's life, Wieland has been working under the guidance of his senses, obeying the inexplicable Voice that his reason cannot account for. Theodore gives himself wholly to the truth he perceives in his sensory relation to the "divine" Voice. He does not attempt to argue or reason with the Voice that demands the death of his wife and children. He is not even swayed by Clara's

revelation of Carwin's ventriloquist abilities and his confession to being the occasional author of the disembodied voice. Wieland has evolved from a man defined by his logic and reason into a man for whom reason holds no sway. While he admits that Carwin may have been the vessel of deception, he continues to believe that his murderous actions were divinely inspired. "The minister is evil," he tells Clara, "but he from whom his commission was received is God" (262). As Wieland readies himself to sacrifice his sister, he again hears the Voice, as it commands him "TO HOLD!" (265).

Clara recognizes the voice and the language as that of Carwin, yet Wieland does not know that Carwin has remained in the house. Carwin, impersonating divinity, reproaches Wieland: "Man of errors! cease to cherish thy delusion: not heaven or hell *but thy senses* have misled thee to commit these acts. Shake off frenzy, and ascend into rational and human. Be lunatic no longer" (266, emphasis my own). It is when the Voice tells Theodore that his senses have deceived him that his conversion fails. His senses, which he had valued as true, have now proven faulty and invalid through their own medium, and have fallen away to reveal a man who has willfully committed himself over to mania, and murdered his wife and children. In the war within Wieland, he has given in to the wrong side—he has given himself to sense when reason should have prevailed. And now he finds himself "weighted to earth by the recollection of his own deeds; consoled no longer by a consciousness of rectitude, for the loss of offspring and wife—a loss for which he was indebted to his own misguided hand" (267). A "beam" infiltrates Theodore's mind as he is suddenly motivated to end his worrisome confusion and the terrible reality. Wieland has been deceived by his senses and is revealed as the unwitting author of his own destruction. He cannot live with this failed conversion, and in the fatal

moment, he grabs the fallen weapon Clara intended for her own protection and plunges the knife into his neck, his life “instantly escap[ing] with the stream that gushed from the wound” (268).

Theodore and Clara Wieland, as they struggle to make sense of their respective conflicting wills, represent Jamesian Divided Selves, but they are not the only characters in Brown’s fiction who display the Jamesian characteristics of the Divided Self. Brown’s *Wieland* is typically published with the unfinished prequel, *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*. We can only assume that Brown intended to answer or at least provided clues to the extent of Carwin’s role in the *Wieland* tragedy, but even as it remains unfinished, it offers an interesting look into the machinations of the novel proper’s unintentional villain. This fragment of Carwin’s history establishes two crucial things about the potential villain, the origins of his strange talent and his relationship to his talent. Carwin represents a Divided Self in the Jamesian sense that he, like the *Wielands*, experiences a warring of wills. Carwin’s “biloquism,” that is, his ventriloquism, is marked both by Carwin’s secrecy and solitude as well as his conflicting feelings regarding the use of his talent.

Carwin, we learn, is the second son of a Pennsylvania farmer, who dreams of a different life. His father believes that “all beyond the capacity to read and write was useless or pernicious” while Carwin is oppositely constituted: “My senses were perpetually alive to novelty, my fancy teemed with visions of the future, and my attention fastened upon every thing mysterious or unknown” (*Memoirs of Carwin* 276). Carwin’s thirst for knowledge is met with disdain, fear, and punishment by his family, leading him to invent schemes and secrets for hiding his academic pursuits.

This initial hiding symbolizes a division of Carwin as he now must hide a part of himself from his family. This division of Carwin is furthered when he first discovers his strange vocal talent of ventriloquism. Gale Temple in “Carwin the Onanist?” argues that the bilquist’s talent is evidence of “a turn inward,” and while she argues that this is an erotic turn, it is also a reflection of the morbid introspection James and Starbuck identified as a sign of an unhappy and Divided Self. When Carwin first hears the echoes of his own voice, he is enchanted and delighted by the idea of a voice that is like his own. Temple points out that what ultimately draws Carwin to explore this vocal talent is “a desire to hold a conversation with his own spectral *double*” (4). Carwin, through his desire to converse with himself, continues to further his internal divide, physically dividing himself from where he is and where he is heard. Instead of being plagued and distraught by two conflicting wills, Carwin seems to enjoy his duplicity, taking pleasure in the opportunities afforded to him by his dual nature.

As Carwin’s story progresses, his vocal talent causes further division as it becomes a secret which serves to separate him from those he wishes to be united with, namely, the character of Ludloe. As Ludloe offers Carwin the chance to be part of a prestigious, secret society, he informs Carwin that a requirement of membership is full and absolute disclosure. Carwin, musing over the process, knows that “any particle of reserve or *duplicity*” would cost him his life (*Memoirs of Carwin* 320, emphasis my own). In considering his relationship thus far with Ludlow, we see that Carwin can be read as a Jamesian Divided Self: “Hitherto I had been guilty of concealment with regard to my friend—I had entered into no formal compact, but had been conscious of a kind of tactic obligation to hide no important transaction of my life from him. This consciousness

was the source of continual anxiety” (320). It is the *consciousness* of his duality that bothers Carwin, and thus it is an awareness of his internal struggle which renders him a Divided Self. Carwin wishes to be part of Ludloe’s society, he feels badly for withholding his bivocal talent, yet he cannot bear the thought of giving up his secret.

We further see Carwin’s conflicted nature in his confessions to Clara in the novel proper, some years after he has left Ludloe’s company. In relating his role in the tragic events to Clara, Carwin claims that it is only after a coincidental encounter with her at the summer house that he realized how dangerous his talent is, and renews his vow to “abstain from the use of it in future” (*Wieland* 239). Yet, as he tells Clara, he is “destined perpetually to violate [his] resolutions” (*Wieland* 239). As Carwin continues to reveal the deceptions he has been responsible for, he portrays himself as acting “involuntarily and by a mechanical impulse” (*Wieland* 244). Carwin’s own inability to control himself and his inability to explain the cause of what he has set into action certainly make him an ambiguous villain. He, like Clara and Theodore, is a Divided Self. Carwin, through his concealment of his secret, is controlled by it. He is controlled by the negative will within him that has found an outlet through this “other” voice.

While predating the work of William James, this reading of Brown’s characters reveals how psychologically sophisticated *Wieland* truly is. By using the work of James to examine the conflicting wills at work within each character, we can thus understand the anxiety inherent within the novel, an anxiety that is furthered with the ambiguous nature of both Theodore’s aural delusion and Carwin’s true nature. While Clara and Carwin are caught in the turmoil and stasis of their conflicting wills, Theodore cannot, after his brief taste of unity via conversion, return to the cycle of the sick soul seeking

unity and thus chooses to end his own life. Theodore, Clara, and Carwin all possess an awareness of their own internal struggle as they struggle to make sense of and order their internal discordances. This awareness is characteristic of a Jamesian Divided Self, and in Brown's novel *Edgar Huntly* we encounter both a Jamesian Divided Self and a Lacanian Divided Self so divided that the subject is completely unaware of his internal struggle and his "other" self.

Edgar Huntly; or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker

Edgar Huntly, like *Wieland*, is a novel about the dangers of the unknown and the unknowable. As Scott Bradfield writes in *Dreaming Revolution*, "there is something infinitely regressive about Brown's plot which is both psychologically disturbing and narratively unsatisfying. A reader does not progress through Brown's novel so much as become mired in their expanding atmosphere of paranoia and indeterminacy..." (24). In *Wieland*, we never learn the full truth behind Theodore's aural delusions; we never learn exactly to what extent Carwin has been responsible for the tragedy that beset the Wieland family or what led Theodore to believe so firmly in "the Voice." In a similarly regressive fashion *Edgar Huntly* opens with the title character searching for the murderer of his friend Waldegrave, but it is not long before Edgar has lost sight of this end as he becomes continually distracted and displaced. As Bradfield says, "Edgar never really solves anything or gets anywhere—at least not through his own conscious volition. In fact, Edgar rarely knows where he is or what he is doing..." (24). Edgar must invent explanations for the inexplicable situations he finds himself in, but these explanations are continually wrong. As Bradfield writes, in Edgar's search for the truth "Edgar never really learns anything substantial so much as he realizes how complicated and

inconclusive knowing can be” (24). By the novel’s end, Edgar has run from the very friends who are searching for him after mistaking them for enemies, and he has murdered countless Natives on the false assumption that they are his captors and his family’s murderers.

Importantly, Edgar Huntly, like Theodore Wieland, never even entertains the idea that he could be wrong in his assumptions about the truth. Unlike Theodore, however, Edgar’s *internal divide* is so deep that he simply does not have the room for doubt afforded to Theodore. Where Theodore ultimately chooses, in James’ terms, to “convert,” Edgar never has the chance for conversion. In the Jamesian tradition, the inconclusive nature of Edgar’s search for truth represents the painful and unproductive stasis of a Divided Self earlier identified in Clara Wieland. In the Lacanian tradition of the Divided Self, however, Edgar represents a self so deeply divided that the two halves of his subject are completely unaware of each other. This is dramatized by his central characteristic: he is a sleepwalker. That is, in *Wieland* Theodore and Clara both represent individuals who are aware of their respective internal wars, but *Edgar Huntly* introduces a character who is *unaware* of his internal divide. Thus the motif of the sleepwalker is perhaps the ultimate dramatization of the dangers present when an individual possesses internal dual wills which characterize a Divided Self.

To further investigate the motif of the sleepwalker and the contemporary understanding of the actual condition during Brown’s time, and thus the general understanding of somnambulism that influenced Brown, we turn to Brown’s contemporary Benjamin Rush, and his *Lectures on the Mind*. To begin with, Rush identifies sleep as a “passive” state of the senses and the mind (624). At the close of his

lecture to the medical students at the University of Pennsylvania, Rush offers this provoking observation of the state of a sleeper:

Where now is that memory which was filled a few hours ago with ancient and modern knowledge? Where is that imagination that traversed the globe in the twinkling of an eye? Where is that understanding that combined in constant acts of judgment and reasoning? And where is that will, and where are those passions, that diffused their influence through every feature of the face, and every muscle of the body? They are all in a state of complete annihilation, as if they had never existed, or were never to exist again. (673)

It is in this passive state, this state in which the conscious will of the awake self seems to itself be “annihilated,” that a once peaceful and restorative mind becomes something much more problematic. Passive is all good and well until there is, as it were, something else that influences or exerts itself on this passive state. Rush identifies these problematic occurrences as preternatural and morbid in nature. What makes the sleepwalker almost supernatural is the ambiguity of him/herself. As Rush observes, “Their actions are most commonly irregular...performing works contrary to their habits; but their actions are sometimes regular and rational” (665-666). A sleepwalker is just as likely to act like himself as he is to *not* act like himself. In this passive state of sleep, it is unknown which will of the individual, which side of the self will prevail and show its proverbial face.

While it is just as likely that the sleeper will appear normal and act in a manner familiar and habitual to his wakeful state, Rush spends considerably more time discussing the instances in which the sleepers act “directly opposed to their ordinary principles and

habits” (667). Rush continues his discussion of the somnambulist, remarking that what is truly fascinating is the sleepwalker’s inability to remember what he has done upon waking. Rush connects these episodes to the traits of the insane, stating, “madmen frequently remember nothing of what passed when they were deranged; but when they relapse, they distinctly remember the former subjects of their derangement” (672). Thus, for Rush, it is as if the sleepwalker possesses two lives, one they live while awake, and the other, while asleep. As Rush observes, it appears “indeed as if they [sleepwalkers] depend upon two minds; but they may be explained, by supposing they were derived from preternatural or excessive motions in different parts of the brain, inhabited by one and the same mind” (670). Essentially, Rush is suggesting that while the sleepwalker of course only possesses one brain, that singular brain is active in two wholly different ways, creating a physical prototype for the philosophically Divided Self of William James. In Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* somnambulism functions as a signifier of the Divided Self, the self that is overtaken by the *other* self, acting without the conscious consent of the waking self.

Sleepwalkers, when sleepwalking, act as though the conscious person has ceased to exist and some “other” self appears to take over the physical body. Justine S. Murison, in “The Tyranny of Sleep Somnambulism: Moral Citizenship and Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly*” points out, “Rush propounds here a common idea that somnambulists were *divided selves*, unable to provide testimony about their own disease” (248, emphasis my own). *Huntly*, then, is a novel that focuses on the terrifying potential inherent in the body, controlled by one mind, committing acts of which the *other* mind is unaware. This mindful unawareness speaks to a Lacanian division of the self, a division

so deep that the two halves can be completely unaware of each other, as played out in Edgar Huntly's complex and convoluted search for the truth.

Turning to the novel, we see that both the hero and the villain appear to be Divided Selves. The villain and the hero are both afflicted with sleepwalking and they represent the Jamesian and Lacanian characterization of a Divided Self, respectively. Edgar Huntly begins the action of the novel observing a field hand from a neighboring farm engaged in some suspicious nighttime activities. Huntly first spies Clithero digging, half clothed, by some elm trees. Taking into consideration the time of night and the digger's state of dress, Huntly concludes that the man is a "sleeper" (Brown 13). Huntly cannot fathom what is spurring the man to dig around underneath trees at midnight, musing,

The incapacity of sound sleep denotes a mind sorely wounded. It is thus that the atrocious criminals denote the possession of some dreadful secret. The thoughts, which considerations of safety enables them to surpress or disguise during wakefulness, operates without impediment, and exhibit their genuine effects when the notices of sense are partly excluded, and they are shut out from a knowledge of their intire condition. (Brown 13)

Huntly already perceives that sleepwalking denotes a "wounded" individual, and that the act of sleepwalking reveals a "truth" about the sleeper. With such convictions, Huntly concludes that Clithero must be the murderer of his recently deceased friend, Waldegrave. Convinced of these convictions, Huntly follows Clithero and eventually attempts to garner his confession to the murder of Waldegrave. However this is only the first of many times that Huntly will find himself to be wrong in his convictions. Clithero is innocent of Waldegrave's murder, yet confesses to another crime.

Clithero is the first character in *Huntly* to be identified as a Jamesian Divided Self, in a tradition not too far from that of Theodore Wieland. In his past, Clithero confides to Huntly, he was engaged to Clarice, the beautiful daughter of his patroness, Mrs. Lormier. The benevolent patroness had a twin brother, Arthur Wiatte, who was as terrible as she was kind. In spite of their differences, Mrs. Lormier believes that her fate is directly tied to that of her brother. Clithero, through a series of unfortunate events, finds himself responsible for the death of the evil Wiatte through an act of self-defense. Now, indoctrinated with Mrs. Lormier's tales of intertwined fates, he finds himself not only fearful of the repercussions for Wiatte's death at his hand but also obsessed with the fate of Mrs. Lormier. Unconsciously, Clithero acts. Like one in a trance, he inexplicably finds himself at his residence and going to Mrs. Lormier. As if steered by another, Clithero goes into her chambers and picks up a conveniently placed dagger. Standing in her room, Clithero feels as though he is simply a vessel of fate, acting to bring about a necessary end. In an echo of Theodore Wieland, Clithero tells Huntly, "It was the daemon that possessed me. My limbs were guided to the bloody office by a power foreign and superior to mine" (84).

Clithero here experiences the power of his internal warring wills; while he harbors no ill will towards his patroness, he finds himself inexplicably motivated, as if by a "daemon," to kill her. Lewis Pericles, in "James's Sick Souls," identifies this very sense of loss of control as symptomatic of a self on the brink of a "conversion." He writes, "the sense of helplessness and lack of willpower allow the sick soul to submit to a higher power capable of transforming it...The remarkable fact about the experience of conversion is that it seems to happen *to* someone...the convert is essentially a spectator"

(251, emphasis my own). While James, writing in religious terms, saw conversion as religious in nature, we can gather from Theodore Wieland and Clithero that the power which brings about “conversion” is not always higher in the religious and moral sense, but a simple sense of strength. Whichever will is stronger will be the one that “converts” the other, and, as we see here, it is the darker will in Clithero that has in this moment taken control. At the end of the novel Huntly reveals to Clithero that Mrs. Lormier still lives, and we see that the darker will, the “daemon” that spurred Clithero to the bloody office is still in residence as Clithero is again overtaken by his conviction that Mrs. Lormier must die. Clithero, aware of his internal struggle as he witnesses his own unwillful actions in Mrs. Lormier’s chambers remains a Jamesian Divided Self, down to his terrible conversion to murderous madman at the novel’s close.

Edgar Huntly proves to be the first truly Lacanian Divided Self as he remains almost blissfully unaware of his own divisions. Even after he discovers that he has been the very fiend who has “robbed” and “kidnapped” himself, he does not find in himself the guilt of which he first identified sleepwalking to be a symptom. After waking in the wilderness with no recollection of how he got there, Huntly observes the Indian camp nearby, complete with white female prisoner, and deduces that he must have been kidnapped and left for dead by the same party. Believing this to be true, Huntly begins a successful and impressive one-man rescue and revenge mission, murdering many of the natives he (incorrectly) holds responsible for his capture and rescuing the female prisoner along the way. When Huntly realizes that his family is safe and he has simply wandered off into the woods in his sleep, there are no repercussions for his violent actions.

Although Huntly best characterizes a Lacanian Divided Self, there appears to be

little to no internal struggle. Huntly's sleeping actions, other than being secreted from his waking self, it seems are not out of character. Huntly reasons that he hid the manuscript in his sleep because he was worried about it and that he wandered into the woods because he was thinking about Clithero's whereabouts. Huntly effectively projects the internal source of his trouble (his sleeping self's antics) onto the external, the Indians. Thus, Huntly's struggle is not with himself throughout the novel, but with the perceived enemy. In the Lacanian sense, Huntly has *misrecognized* himself in the identify of the thief and the kidnapper. And, in the Lacanian tradition, it is the function of this *misrecognition* to essentially keep the two selves separate via the illusion of cohesion and unity. Once Huntly returns home, however, and his sleepwalking is revealed, his division is also apparent to himself and to the reader. It is in Huntly's post-revelation musings we see the conflict and the anxiety which his unconscious actions have now aroused in his mind, "Disastrous and humiliating is the state of man! By his own hands is constructed the mass of misery and error in which his steps are forever involved" (278). Thus the novel closes with Huntly's sudden awareness of his interior duality when his misrecognition of himself is revealed by a well-meaning friend.

Edgar Huntly, then, is a novel about the dangers of the unknown and the unknowable within the psyche. In this work, Brown has given us both a Jamesian Divided Self in the villain Clithero, and a Lacanian Divided Self in Edgar. Clithero, acting as if possessed by a demon, is aware of his internal duality and has tried, unsuccessfully, to avoid the baser, more violent urges of his lesser will. Edgar, however, has remained unaware of his duality up until the novel's close. Edgar's final musings on the state of man speak to the anxiety, which, now revealed, haunts the character as he is

left wondering at man's own unconscious actions. The mindful unawareness of Edgar Huntly as a trait of the Lacanian Divided Self is also present in the work of Edgar Allan Poe, as we encounter characters who are overcome by trances and find themselves at the mercy of a force outside of themselves. In Poe, we will also examine the advent of the object cause and the fatal fulfillment of desire.

Chapter III: Jamesian Conversion and Lacanian Self-Murder in Poe's "Bernice," "William Wilson," and "The Fall of the House of Usher"

In these select works of Edgar Allan Poe, we find elements of both a Jamesian and Lacanian Divided Self. In the Lacanian tradition, Egaeus, the narrator of "Bernice," finds himself at the mercy of an unknown and other self when he awakens from a trance, much like Brown's sleepwalkers. In both "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "William Wilson," we encounter a Divided Self that is dramatized as two separate but dependent entities. In "Usher," we will see how Roderick and Madeline function as mirror images, both acting to bring about the death of the other in a dramatization of the Lacanian cycle of desire and drive. We will also examine this Lacanian cycle of desire and drive as present in "William Wilson." All of these characters commit acts of violence that can best be understood in the terms of Lacan's fatal desire fulfillment, resolving in actual or pseudo-suicidal selves.

"The Fall of the House of Usher"

Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" revolves around the narrator's visit to the titular House of Usher and his subsequent relationship with its inhabitants. In many ways, this story is a story about doubles; Scott Peeples writes that "Poe uses doubling to suggest the tragic nature of his central character" (84). These doubles can be read as the two selves of the Divided Self, fractured and projected as two distinct and separate bodies or entities. The first and most obvious double in the short story is the physical "House of Usher" and the individuals who bear the name Usher. The appearance of the mansion, as we shall see, is symptomatic in its relationship to the state of its

inhabitants. The narrator has been summoned to this “mansion of gloom” by a letter from his childhood friend Roderick. According to the narrator, the letter “gave evidence of nervous agitation” and “spoke of acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder” which oppressed Roderick (200). The mansion itself is in a state of disorder and decay, arousing in the narrator terrible feelings of gloom and foreboding. The narrator describes the mansion thusly:

No portion of the masonry had fallen’ and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones....Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn. (201-2)

The house, in all of its ancient disarray, serves as a double for Roderick. As Charles May observes in *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study of the Short Fiction*, “like his house, there is also an ‘inconsistency’ about Usher, an ‘incoherence,’ a sense that the parts do not fit together” (105). The crack in the physical house is barely perceptible, whereas the proverbial crack in the person of Roderick is much easier to observe. The description the narrator offers of Roderick is grossly divisive, which echoes the inconsistency of the physical house. His description literally breaks Roderick’s appearance down into fragments and parts:

an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin

and very pallid...a nose of delicate Hebrew model, but with a breath of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity... (Poe 202-3)

By describing his companion in these pieces, the narrator is already subtly drawing our attention to the fragmented nature and the divisions that Roderick experiences and embodies. This reading of Roderick as fragmented is furthered when the narrator observes the extreme variance in his behavior; he is alternatively vivacious and sullen, his voice varies “from a tremulous indecision...to [a] species of energetic concision” (203). Roderick, in both behavior and appearance, is then a caricature of the Divided Self – a subject conflicted and torn between extremes. Roderick, however, is not the only inhabitant of the decaying house. He eventually confesses to the narrator that his own deteriorating state is not the sole cause of his melancholy. He tells the narrator that the “severe and long-continued illness” and impending death of his twin sister, Madeline, “his sole companion for long years—his last and only relative on earth,” resides with him and has contributed to his sense of gloom (204). Peeples writes, “as twins...the Ushers are doubles of each other, which increases our sense of the family’s isolation and narcissism....Thus, as Roderick watches his sister die, he feels as if he is witnessing his own death” (85).

I would argue, however, that the relationship between Roderick and Madeline is much more than the relationship between doubles. Instead, Roderick and Madeline can be read as an extensive dramatization of the Divided Self—two halves of the same whole. Perhaps there is no better dramatization of the Divided Self than a subject split into two

similar and connected yet independent bodies. David Ketterer offers a reading that supports this theory. Ketterer, in “‘Shudder’: A Signature *Crypt*-ogram in ‘The Fall of the House of Usher,’” takes a linguistic approach to Poe’s text, identifying a theme of reflexivity and mirror symmetry throughout. Ketterer identifies the significance of the letter *d* as it is doubled in the word “shudder” (which appears six times in the text, more than any other word) and as the third letter of both Madeline and Roderick’s names. Ketterer furthers a Lacanian reading of the tale when he asks us to image the double *ds* as mirror images of one another, creating a “figure...of a circle that is bisected by a vertical line, a whole divided into two equal halves” (197). This, according to Ketterer, only serves to further the symbolic relationship of the doppelgangers or doubles present in the text. In the twin siblings we have perfect *mirror* images, independent of each other in body but codependent in nature. Both are afflicted by illness, both are the other’s only remaining companion and, as Roderick believes, both are linked by “sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature” (211).

The Usher’s family history of isolation also gives cause to understand the twins as two halves of a singular whole. Our narrator learns that “the stem of the Usher race...had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always...so lain” (200). This suggestion of a family history of incest coupled with the Usher’s isolation from the rest of the world suggests that Roderick and Madeline are almost a singular being in both genetics and habit. As Peebles writes, “even when Roderick looks at the only significant other in his life, he may as well be looking in a mirror” (85). In the Lacanian tradition, the image in the mirror is the “illusory whole.” Roderick is slowly watching his mirror image fall apart

and die, forcing him to acknowledge his own imminent demise.

If we read Roderick and Madeline not simply as doubles but as two representational halves of a singular Divided Self, then Madeline's death takes on a new meaning. Given that she is Roderick's "mirror image," we can assume that he is also *her* mirror image. Thus, each sees in the other their "illusory" whole self, a recognition that falters as they watch each other descend into illness and fragmented frailty. In the Lacanian tradition, the acknowledgement or realization of the other self (the advent of the object-cause) leads into the fatal cycle of desire. Once the subject is aware that he possesses two selves, he works to unite the two. Yet, as the earlier discussion of Lacan shows, the fulfillment of this desire is fatal. Both siblings work to bring about the death of the other, playing out the Lacanian cycle of desire and drive in which the subject seeks to eliminate the very tensions that birthed the cycle.

Madeline's death and subsequent return from the grave for Roderick can be understood as a dramatization of the Lacanian Divided Self as both siblings act to ensure the death of the other. Despite the love and affection he has professed, Roderick has entombed his sister alive. He has heard her stirrings and scratching at the coffin, yet he has remained silent. In light of Roderick's earlier profession that he "*must* die," it appears now that he has acted rather indirectly. Madeline's pseudo-death, or Roderick's ineffectual murder attempt, now appears to be both a weird Jamesian conversion of the "other" and also a Lacanian act of self-murder. In the final scene Madeline escapes from her untimely grave, if only to take her brother back with her:

there DID stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of Lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some

bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame...with a low moaning cry, [she] fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated. (216)

Madeline's return for Roderick and the house's subsequent collapse can be read as the fatal implosion of a fulfilled desire characteristic of the Lacanian Divided Self, a self which, through violent acts, brings about an actual or pseudo suicide.

“William Wilson”

“William Wilson,” like “The Fall of the House of Usher” (both published in 1839), presents a character who encounters and then engages with his own double. The title character William Wilson presents a narrative that is marked from the beginning as a Lacanian Divided Self; “At an age when few children have abandoned their leading-string,” Wilson says, “I was left to the guidance of my own will, and became, in all but name, *the master of my own actions*” (217, emphasis my own). This self-reliance of Wilson as a child suggests the very illusion of coherence and mastery inherent in Lacan's Mirror Stage. This illusion of control, coupled with the arrival of another almost identical William Wilson into the original William Wilson's life and the resulting pseudo-suicidal duel between the two men, contains elements of both a Jamesian and Lacanian Divided Self.

From his first appearance in the text, the second William Wilson serves as a foil for the narrator's illusion of control (or in Lacan's words, coherence and mastery). Interestingly, it is not the eerie similarity of the second Wilson that perplexes the original Wilson so much as it is the disruption of control that the second Wilson represents. The

narrator first introduces the second Wilson by explaining that he is the “exception” to the reaches of his popular influence. He goes on to say that “Wilson’s rebellion was to me a source of the greatest embarrassment” and “I secretly felt that I feared him” (220). The second William Wilson is then a threat to the narrator’s illusion of control. In Lacan’s Mirror Stage, the disruption of the subject’s whole perceived self necessitates an acknowledgement of a fractured and experienced self. In a dramatization of Lacan’s Divided Self, the narrator, after losing his illusory whole image, engages in a struggle with the second William Wilson in an effort to regain what he has lost. Suddenly displaced, the narrator finds himself a fractured subject, working to regain his previously perceived unity. This struggle for unity is exemplary of the Jamesian warring of wills, yet the struggle results in a Lacanian perpetually suicidal subject.

According to the narrator, the two Wilsons are engaged in a competitive friendship. They are constant companions, but there is also an element of violent competition between the two boys as described by the narrator. Indeed, many of the encounters between the two are described as moments of attack. The second William Wilson not only inspires feelings of inferiority in the narrator, but he also proves himself to be morally superior when he reveals the narrator to have cheated a “friend” out of a large amount of money. This behavioral discrepancy between the two Wilsons suggests a Jamesian Divided Self, in that the two Wilsons represent both a lesser and a higher will, one of which must be converted. Peoples writes that “the two Wilsons appear to be rival components within a single personality, which it is up to the narrator—the ‘conscious’ Wilson—to reconcile” (80). This reconciliation, however, proves to be fatal.

In the final encounter between the two William Wilsons, the original Wilson accosts and challenges his double to a sword fight. The narrator quickly bests his foe and is momentarily distracted. As he turns back to his victim, Wilson imagines for a minute that the room has changed and he is now staring not at his slain foe, but at his own bloody reflection. This moment of terror quickly passes as the narrator sees again the second Wilson. The slain Wilson speaks, and the narrator feels as though he is listening to himself:

You have conquered and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead—dead to the World, to Heaven, and to Hope! In me didst thou exist—and in my death, see by his image, which is thine own, how utterly thou has murdered thyself. (232)

By murdering the second (and admittedly superior) Wilson, the original Wilson has now doomed himself to a living death as he recognizes his own face in the dying face of his enemy.

“Bernice”

Incomplete deaths are a running theme in Poe’s work; often the dead are *not* actually dead, and even more frequently the dead do not *remain* dead. Poe’s Bernice appears to be dead when she is in fact not. In “Bernice,” we also find a dramatization of the Lacanian Divided Self, as the narrator Egeus finds himself fixated on a fatal object, the *objet petit a*, Bernice’s teeth. “Bernice” finds our narrator, Egeus, engaged to his cousin, the title character. The two shared a childhood, growing up together (yet differently) in a Jamesian picture of those who are differently constituted. He is ill and

despondent (James' sick soul) while she is the picture of grace and vigor (James' healthy soul).

In the eerie scene that leads to the novel's intense climax, Egaeus perceives himself to be alone, but is startled to find Bernice standing before him. The two engage in a silent contemplation of each other, which culminates with her dreadful, tooth-filled smile. In this moment we witness Egaeus entering into the Lacanian erotic relationship of fixation. He names his desire in Bernice's mouth:

The eyes were lifeless, and lusterless, and seemingly pupil-less, and I shrank involuntarily from their glassy stare to the contemplation of the thin and shrunken lips. They parted: and in a smile of peculiar meaning, *the teeth* of the changed Bernice disclosed themselves slowly to my view. Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that having done so, I had died! (145)

For Egaeus, the fixation on Bernice's teeth becomes the fixation that, in the Lacanian tradition, alienates the subject *from himself*. As Egaeus obsessively contemplates Bernice's teeth, we see in his obsession a deep longing for perfection and unity. He fixates on their excessive, perfect whiteness and the smooth un-fractured surface: "not a shade on their enamel—not an indenture in their edges" (145). In his ravings about the teeth, Egaeus claims, "I felt that their possession could alone ever *restore* me to peace, in giving me back my reason," outlining his own awareness of the division inherent in his malady and his quest to reconcile his division through the possession of the erotically fixated object (146, emphasis my own). As Egaeus sits and thinks about the teeth, he is interrupted with the news that Bernice has died. The night of Bernice's interment, Egaeus

wakes suddenly from a trance-like state. Egaeus experiences a Lacanian terror of the unknown and other self, disturbed by his lack of recollection: “of that dreary period...I had no positive—at least no definite comprehension. Yet its memory was replete with horror—horror more horrible from being vague, and terror more terrible from ambiguity” (147). In this moment, we clearly see the horror of the unknown that plagues so many of these narrators. In Lacanian terms, we can see this horror of the unknown as a fear of the other and mostly unknown self. Egaeus, haunted by the echoes of a female shriek, is paralyzed by the possibilities: “I had done a deed—what was it? I asked myself the question aloud, and the whispering echoes of the chamber answered me, ‘*what was it?*’” (147). Still trying to determine what it is he has unknowingly done, Egaeus takes in his surroundings. He is disturbed to see the family’s physician box on the desk, along with a volume of poetry he doesn’t remember retrieving, open to a page reading: “*Dicebant mihi sodales si sepulchrum amicae visitarem, curas meas aliquantulum fore levatas*” which is translated as, “My companions told me I might find some little alleviation of my misery, in visiting the grave of my beloved” (147). Egaeus’ inability to know what it is that he has done casts him as a Lacanian Divided Self. Similar to Brown’s sleepwalkers, Egaeus, up until this point, has been unaware both of the existence of an *other* self and what this other self has done.

To return to the narrative, Egaeus is interrupted by the knock of a servant who bears disturbing news; Bernice’s grave has been violated, and she has been found “a disfigured body, enshrouded, yet still breathing, still palpitating, still *alive!*” (147). It is only when the servant points to Egaeus’ clothes, covered in mud and gore, and takes him by the hand, imprinted with the mark of fingernails, that Egaeus begins to realize what he

has done. Egaeus' horror is palpable as he bounds towards the family's medical box, spilling the contents on the ground in a frenzy: "with a rattling sound, there rolled out some instruments of dental surgery, intermingled with thirty-two small, white, and ivory looking substances" (147). What Egaeus has done is fulfill his desire. He, or rather his *other self*, has sought to possess the Lacanian *objet petit a*, the object and cause of his desire, Bernice's teeth. At the narrative's close, Egaeus is staring horrified at the teeth on the floor. In this final moment, faced with the physical evidence of the fulfillment of his desire, Egaeus must confront the reality of his two selves and the horror for which his other self is responsible. Egaeus, like William Wilson and the narrator of "Usher," has committed an act of violence, which, while not actually ending his life, has inarguably and negatively disrupted his existence.

Chapter IV: The Lacanian “Perpetually Suicidal Subject” in Melville’s *Moby Dick*

Among other things, Herman Melville’s epic whaling novel *Moby Dick* is concerned with the boundaries around the construction of the “self” and its relationship to “the other.” In *Moby Dick*, we encounter two extensive dramatizations of a Lacanian Divided Self, in both Ishmael and Queequeg, and in Ahab and Moby Dick. As Paul Brodtkorb Jr. notes in the landmark essay “Selfhood and Others” in *Ishmael’s White Way: A Phenomenological Reading of “Moby Dick,”* characters such as Queequeg, as foreign to Western eyes as they are, always remain outside the understanding of readers, until we, along with the narrator Ishmael, seem “to *become* the other” (671). For Brodtkorb, what Melville’s use of theatrical soliloquies (along with the overheard thought or conversation) reveals, however, is not “essential selfhood” but an awareness that “an exterior role...has interior components; and, most typically, that what comprises the interior is self-divided, in process, debating with itself even as it creates masks and roles to conceal its tenuous balance” (671). In all of Brodtkorb’s talk of interior divides and becoming the “other,” we cannot help but be reminded of Lacan’s Divided Self, specifically the function of the ego to continue constructing “the illusions of coherence and mastery” to preserve the space which separates the ideal self from the *other* self. Bruce Fink, in his work *The Lacanian Subject*, states, “the self *is* an other” (1, emphasis my own). Fink’s statement provides an interesting perspective on Brodtkorb’s reading of the characters’ efforts at knowing and becoming the “other.” Using Fink’s reading of Lacan, we can see how in attempting to know and become the “other,” the subject may

be, in actuality, attempting to know and become his *other self*. To understand how we can read Melville's *Moby Dick* through Lacan's schema, we can look at the first character to appear in the novel, Ishmael.

Ishmael and Queequeg

The novel's famous introductory sentence, "Call me Ishmael" rhetorically suggests a number of complex questions about the solidity or divisions in the identity of the novel's narrator (Melville 18). Is our narrator *really* Ishmael? If so, why does he ask us to *call* him Ishmael? Are there other names our narrator has gone by? If so, why has he chosen to be called Ishmael for the purpose of the story to come? Does this suggest a desire to escape a previous identity? Has he been, as it were, more than one "self"? Whatever the case, the ambiguous opening line serves many purposes for the investigation of selves and divided selves. To begin, the narrator, as a subject/self is making his self-determined identity "marked" by demanding he be called Ishmael. The "I" of the narrator must pre-exist the sign of the name, Ishmael, and in self-determining the sign by which the reader is to know his identity, the narrator is, to some extent, objectified; he becomes something less of a subject and more of an object. He does not choose to say, "My name *is* Ishmael," which would have suggested that the sign of his identity, his name, was "given," a signifier assigned by others and thus more strongly suggesting who the narrator has been and is, rather than suggesting that he has a new and self-determining identity. Also, Ishmael does not offer readers the even stronger connection of his name to all that he is, by saying "I *am* Ishmael," nor does he foreground the role of the others in the tradition of signifying by naming with, "I am *called* Ishmael." In short, by insisting that the reader "call him" Ishmael, Melville's narrator suggests that

his subjectivity is quite complicated, and it destabilizes the reader's own sense of the boundaries of Ishmael's identity.

However, much of those suspicions prove to be unwarranted, as Ishmael plays out in the simplest dramatization of the Divided Self. Ishmael unknowingly encounters and befriends his other self in the character of Queequeg. The relationship between the two can be read as an extensive dramatization of the Divided Self. They, like Poe's twins, are two physically separate individuals, yet they begin to merge into a singular symbiotic organism. The two men, while drastically different, seem to recognize something familiar in each other. Thrown together by chance into sharing a room at an inn, the two take naturally to one another, almost as if each sees part of himself in the other. Importantly, each man sees something he desires in the other. Ishmael admires Queequeg's fearlessness and freedom, noting that he is a man who looks as though he "had never cringed and never had had a creditor" (55). Queequeg, on the other hand, is enthralled by Ishmael's familiarity with and knowledge of the new cultural world he has joined.

Queequeg, in a moment pivotal to this reading of the relationship between the two men, presses his forehead against Ishmael, claps him around the waist and pronounces that the two are "married" (56). Ishmael explains that in Queequeg's custom, the two are bosom friends, and that Queequeg would "gladly die for me" (56). The matrimonial language employed here and later in the chapter gives further cause to read the relationship between the two men as an extensive dramatization of a Divided Self. By "marrying," the two have in effect become the "one" so often described by marriage vows. But this matrimonial language of devotion is not the only cause for reading the two thusly. Ishmael, perplexed at the religious difference between the two, wonders how to

reconcile their differences: “And what do I wish that this Queequeg would do to me? Why unite with me in my particular Presbyterian form of worship. Consequently, I must then unite with him in his; ergo, I must turn idolator” (57). By identifying the necessity for a unity with Queequeg, and then voluntarily converting to complete the unification, Ishmael has enacted a conversion that calls to mind James’ Divided Self. The two men, previously alone, seem to have found each other by fate and found, in each other, a destiny of sorts.

However we cannot ignore that the two men remain unequal, even as they are now symbiotically united. Queequeg, in all of his cannibal glory, is maintained throughout the novel as the lesser other. He is not the narrator, he is not privileged, he does not speak his own story—we experience Queequeg only through Ishmael. We cannot ignore how Queequeg retains his otherness though his tattooed body, his place as a harpooner, and his position as a subject always out of place and alienated from his own people. It is precisely Queequeg’s indisputable otherness that prevents the two men from recognizing each other as their respective *other self*. Because Ishmael never realizes Queequeg is his other *self*, there is never the vicious circle of desire and drive that leads to the suicidal extinguishment of the other self. Thus, while it appears that Ishmael has undergone a Jamesian conversion, there remains a Lacanian divide in Ishmael’s unawareness.

Yet if Ishmael is unaware, it appears that Queequeg is all too aware, as he ominously prepares for his death, even ordering the construction of a coffin, in chapter 110 “Queequeg and his Coffin.” In chapter 10, Queequeg tells Ishmael that he would gladly die for him, and at the novel’s close, it appears that that is in fact what has

happened, and ultimately, what *had* to happen. In the final chapter of the novel, Moby Dick has destroyed the ship. It sinks into a swirling vortex, taking Queequeg and most of the crew with it. In the Epilogue, Ishmael explains how he alone has survived the sinking of the *Pequod*:

...I was then, but slowly, drawn towards the closing vortex...Round and round, then, and ever contracting towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of the slowly wheeling circle...I did revolve...the black bubble upward burst; and now, liberated...the coffin life-buoy shot lengthwise from the sea, fell over, and floated by my side. Buoyed up by that coffin, for almost one whole day and night, I floated... (427)

In the novel's final scene, then, we understand that for Ishmael to live, Queequeg, the unmistakable "other" in the relationship, had to die. The relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg, then, seems like the best-case scenario for the reconciliation of a Divided Self in the Jamesian tradition. The two discover in each other something they each desire and begin to function as a set, "married" as they are to each other. In both the Jamesian and the Lacanian tradition, however, it is necessary for one will or self to give in to or be killed off by the other. In Lacan, this occurs via the destructive cycle of desire and drive, a cycle that is fueled by the recognition of the division. This cycle, while absent in the relationship of Queequeg and Ishmael, can be seen in the swirling vortex that kills Queequeg but spares Ishmael. What is missing from the Ishmael and Queequeg relationship, then, is the Lacanian advent of the object-cause, an event that can best be seen in the relationship between Captain Ahab and Moby Dick.

Ahab and Moby Dick

The novel makes explicit the connections between the maniacal Ahab and the object on which he is intently fixated, the white whale. Physically, the two are both wizened and old, battle-scarred, and hobbled by previous injuries. While harpoons have scarred the whale, Ahab bears both a mysterious scar and a scar from Moby Dick. In his first encounter with the whale, Moby Dick bit off the lower half of Ahab's leg. Ahab's physical state blends his bodily identity with that of his fixation; he wears a prosthetic peg leg made from the bone of a sperm whale, an almost cybernetic symbiosis of whale and human, which suggests Ahab's dependence on the object of his fixation. To further understand how Ahab and the whale are connected and can be read as a dramatization of a Divided Self, we must look to the moment and the marks of conception, the moment when Ahab was divided and recognized, in his division the object of his fixation in Moby Dick.

Ahab's whalebone leg is not the only physical connection he has with the monstrous whale. Ahab's mysterious scar serves two purposes. First, it ties him to the whale as they are both marked by an unnatural and disturbing whiteness. Second, the scar literally divides Ahab. When we, through Ishmael, first lay eyes on Captain Ahab, it is a horrific moment. Ishmael observes: "He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them....Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, til it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, *lividly whitish*" (109, emphasis my own). Ahab's white scar, likened to the branding lightning leaves on ravaged trees, is mysterious in its origin and in its reach. As

our narrator ponders, “Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say” (109). Ishmael is so enthralled with Ahab’s terrible mark that his attention is only drawn second to the “barbaric white leg” of a sperm whale jawbone on which Ahab stands (109). Ahab, in all of his physical manifestation of division, is a self who simply cannot deny his own fragmented nature. Forced to acknowledge and live a fragmented existence, in the Lacanian sense, Ahab has named his desire and is, in his attempt to catch Moby Dick, attempting the act of self-violence that Lacan identified as the only outcome from the fulfillment of a subject’s desire.

To understand how Ahab became fixated on the whale, we turn to the first violent encounter between the two. Ahab’s attack plays out recklessly as he seizes the line-knife from his broken prow and “dash[es] at the whale, as an Arkansas duelist at his foe, blindly seeking with a six inch blade to reach the fathom deep life of the whale” (157). In the very moment that Ahab lunges to reach that “fathom deep” life source of the whale, he is turned on and broken by the creature. In the blind fury of Ahab’s actions, the whale acts, taking away Ahab’s leg in his deformed jaw. From this moment, our narrator shares, Ahab has

...cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam on before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, til they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. (156)

Ahab, in identifying *his own* maladies and curses with the whale, has done two things. First he has, through the projection of his own failures and hate, come to identify the whale as a symbol of his own dissatisfaction, effectively identifying the whale as an other, failed, self: “all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale’s white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart’s shell upon it” (156). Through his conviction that the monstrous whale must die, Ahab has also come to identify the whale as the object of his desire, the *objet petit a* of Lacan, the thing which *should not* be realized. Ahab, in identifying not only his physical handicap with the whale, but also all of his “intellectual and spiritual exasperations” has found the object-cause of his desires. In naming Moby Dick as the source of the tensions he now aims to alleviate, the source of the wrongs in his life, Ahab thus enters into the Lacanian cycle of desire and drive as the white whale swims on before him. It is from this encounter that Ahab can never recover. He cannot unlearn the existence of the monstrous whale just as he cannot unlearn what it felt like to have two legs. Now that he has broken into the Lacanian cycle of desire and drive, now that he is enmeshed within it, he has no choice but to see it through to its terrible end.

After Ahab’s terrible encounter with the whale, he withdraws into himself as he physically recovers, sinking further into his private mania: “Ahab and anguish lay stretched in one hammock...his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad” (156). Ahab’s madness reaches a crescendo and he is physically restrained by his shipmates until it appears he has regained sanity. His shipmates rejoice at his apparent recovery, but Ahab is not truly recovered: “Ahab, in his

hidden self, raved on” (157). Ahab is “gnawed within and scored without” and obsessive in his search for the white whale (158).

In searching for the murderous monster, Ahab dramatizes the suicidal nature of the Lacanian Divided Self. Ever since that first encounter with Moby Dick, Ahab has been on a suicide mission. He incessantly plots his course and tracks the whale. Ahab is never free from his obsessive desire, enmeshed as he is within the Lacanian cycle of desire and drive: “Ah, God! what trances of torment does that man endure who is consumed with one unachieved revengeful desire. He sleeps with clenched hands; and wakes with his own bloody nails in his palms” (169). Ahab’s existence is so wrapped up in the tracking and killing of the whale that even “the very throbbing of his life-spot became insufferable anguish” (169). Our narrator tells us of Ahab’s torturous nightmares by which his very *soul* tries to escape, saying

this Ahab that had gone to his hammock was not the agent that so caused him to burst from it in horror again. The latter was the eternal, living principle or soul in him; and in sleep...it spontaneously sought to escape from the scorching contiguity of the frantic thing... (170)

Even in these nightmarish spectacles, Ahab is like the horrid white whale, as he is described as “a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light...but without an object to color, and therefore a blankness in itself” (170). Ahab is so enmeshed in the Lacanian cycle of desire and drive that in his passive, sleepwalking state, he appears blank and terrible like the very object of his obsession.

For Ahab then, the quest for Moby Dick is at once the quest to murder the other self (all the evils and personal frustrations the whale represent to him) and the quest to

regain the lost portion of himself as symbolized by his missing leg. Here, finally, we have a correlation between James and Lacan, the need for reconciliation and the need for murder, manifested in one desire. Ahab, in his quest for the whale, is trying to put to rest the myriad of demons that haunt him, that drive him from his bed at night. As he tells the carpenter, “when I come to mount this leg thou makest, I shall nevertheless feel another leg in the same identical place with it; that is, carpenter, my old lost leg, the flesh and bone one, I mean. Canst thou not drive that old Adam away?” (360). Ahab, in his fractured and crippled body, cannot help but feel the ghost of unity and wholeness, the ghost-limb of his leg is a symbol and a reminder of his past life, his life before the whale and the mania, his existence as a whole and ideal self. In Ahab’s hunt for Moby Dick, we see the Lacanian resolution of a Divided Self as Ahab embodies not a man plagued by an internal struggle, but a man driven towards his own destruction via the advent of the object-cause in his identification of Moby Dick as a failed, *other* self. When Ahab goes to meet the monster for a final time, he knows he will not be coming back.

Chapter V: Some Conclusions

Throughout these texts we have identified some commonalities present within characters who are Divided Selves: the warring of two wills, the divide between the ideal and the actual or the perceived and the experienced, and the sometimes violent urge to reconcile the two selves or wills. For James, when the subject is aware of his two incompatible wills, he works to unify the two via an act of conversion, such as in Brown's Theodore Wieland. For Lacan, the subject is *unaware* of the duality, the "ideal-*I*" works to continually keep the illusory whole functioning as if it is the *only* self of the subject. This deep and complete division is dramatized in characters committing involuntary and unconscious actions, such as in Edgar Huntly's sleepwalking and Egaeus' trance. When the subject is confronted with his duality, he seeks to eradicate the tension inherent in the conflict of the duality. By seeking to eradicate the tension, the subject breaks into the cycle of desire and drive, a cycle that only ends with an act of violence. This violent act is often an act of pseudo, if not actual, suicide. Where James sees conversion and a happy end, Lacan sees murder and a necessary death, what we can call the Lacanian imperative.

Not all of the characters we have examined as Divided Selves meet with a violent end. It is only the characters that have *actively sought unity* that find themselves acting out the Lacanian imperative. Edgar Huntly remains alive and comparatively well at the close of Brown's novel because he has not yet sought to unify his two selves. Theodore Wieland, William Wilson, Egaeus, Roderick and Madeline Usher and Captain Ahab, all

meet with or commit acts of violence because they have tried to alleviate the tensions caused by a fractured identity. The Lacanian imperative death is sometimes spoken, as with the Roderick Usher's "I *must* die." Other times it is enacted, as with Ahab's suicidal hunt for Moby Dick. Perhaps the best relationship in which to find the Lacanian imperative is in the relationship where it seems least likely—the relationship between Queequeg and Ishmael. While the two men achieved a sense of unity via their "marriage" and subsequent companionship, Queequeg remained unmistakably the "other." The two, while seeming to escape the disastrous cycle of desire and drive by not identifying the *other* in each other, still enact the Lacanian imperative, as we see Queequeg's death (the coffin) necessary for Ishmael's survival.

In these select works, I have identified characters that display symptoms of a Divided Self by applying the schema of both William James and Jaques Lacan. In doing so, I have identified an element of violence associated with the Divided Self, as all resolve into self-destructive, pseudo, if not actual, suicidal subjects, best characterized as a Lacanian perpetually suicidal subject. This element of violence offers an interesting way to examine and consider the terror that Bercovitch identified in early American literature, as well as the uncertainty and anxiety that Fliegelman called the "price of having become 'free'" (240). This insecurity is evident in the self-born terror and violence I've identified in the characters that can be read as Divided Selves. By identifying the character of the Divided Self, we have only begun to examine and appreciate the level of psychological sophistication and complexity within the work of Brown, Poe and Melville.

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VITA

Katelyn Dawn Cooley was born in Marietta, Ohio on January 10th 1986. She attended Washington State Community College of Marietta, Ohio, while enrolled at Frontier High School in New Matamoras, Ohio. After graduating with a high school degree and an Associates Degree in 2004, Ms. Cooley transferred into the University of Rio Grande (Ohio) where she had the opportunity to study religion for a semester at Trinity University of Carmarthen, Wales. She was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree in 2007. Ms. Cooley initially spent one year at Wake Forest University as a part-time student in the Master's of Arts in Liberal Studies program before transferring to Appalachian State University in 2008.

While attending ASU, Ms. Cooley worked in the University Writing Center and as a Teaching Assistant in the English department. The M.A. was awarded in December of 2010. Ms. Cooley plans to continue teaching English and is entertaining the idea of pursuing a second M.A. with a focus in Religious Studies.