

Research on the Contagion Model and Community Construction in Charles Brown's Novels

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Abstract: In the 1790s, with the influx of strange immigrants and violent conflicts, how to deal with the tension between sympathetic communities based on resonance and "non-citizens" who make different voices has become an increasingly concerned issue for American intellectuals. As the first American novelist who fully realized the limitations of Locke's rational faculty and discussed it, Charles Brockden Brown took the "yellow fever" that broke out in 1793 as the breakthrough point. At first, he used the epidemic disease to amplify the defects of the sympathetic community. Hence, he revealed its inapplicability in the United States, and then took contagions as a metaphor, and conceived another more inclusive community model based on various strange and external factors.

Keywords: Contagion Model; Sympathy; Rhizome; Community Construction; Charles Brockden Brown

1. INTRODUCTION

Till the 1980s, Charles Brockden Brown, the first professional writer in the history of American literature, was regarded as a "secondary artist". Artistic achievements of his works *Arthur Mervyn*, *Memories of the Year 1793* (1803), *Edgar Huntly*, *Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799) and *Ormond* and *The Secret Witness* (1799) were characterized as unable to compare with "the great aesthetic creation of later generations" (Waterman, 2009). However, with the gradual rise of early literary studies in the American Republic, Charles Brown began to be known as a diagnostician of his culture (Barnard et al., 2004). Yellow fever is a common element in his works, and is no longer just a simple mapping of Brown's own experience. To deal with the contradiction between "strangers and newcomers" and the sympathetic community based on "emotional resonance" in the last decades of the 18th century, Brown took advantage of the cognitive crisis caused by yellow fever from the perspective of sensory experience (Kafer, 1992; McCORMACK, 1983). First, he took a skeptical attitude towards Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral sentiment* (1759) and questioned the stability of the sympathetic community. Then he conceived a community model characterized by mobility and openness like contagions, trying to connect all kinds of people who were wandering in

the United States at that time with unknown origins and did not know each other to maintain the unity and stability of the new Republic.

2. COGNITIVE CRISIS AND DISINTEGRATION OF SYMPATHETIC COMMUNITY

Norman Grabo mentioned the time of the year 1793 in *Historical Essay* (1980) for Arthur Mervyn, the bicentennial edition of Kent State University, and his other research monograph on Brown, *The Coincidental Art of Charles Brockden Brown* (1981). From August to November 1793, a very serious yellow fever broke out in Philadelphia, and about one-tenth of the population-more than 5,000 people were killed in this plague (Brown, 1977; Foster et al., 1998). During four months, the whole city was shrouded in death, and the streets were almost empty. In Benjamin Rush's words, "If everything is growing at this time, grass will grow on the streets", and occasionally several pedestrians "covered their faces with vinegar handkerchiefs and dared not communicate with each other"(Crain, 2008). Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why in the 1790s, the discussion about plague in literature and philosophy gradually flourished. Early American intellectuals, such as Matthew Carey, William Currie and Benjamin Rush, all wrote books after the outbreak of the plague. On the one hand, they aimed to record the outbreak and consequences of yellow fever historically. On the other hand, they also compared real diseases with metaphorical diseases-greed and subversive radicalism. Charles Brown also took part in this common rhetoric in the 18th century, and he linked the plague with the disintegration of social norms, that is the sympathetic community. During the revolutionary period, American revolutionaries put forward American exceptionalism from the perspective of emotionalism. Thomas Jefferson, in *The Declaration of Independence* (1776), particularly emphasized that "sensitivity and insensitivity" are the biggest differences between the North American people and the tyrants who destroyed "human nature itself". They are convinced that compared with the British, the virtuous Americans have a purer emotional bond, and they can be friendly and help each other better than anyone else. This repeated emphasis on emotional ties, on the one hand, rationalizes the American people's defection from the suzerain from a moral point of view. On the other hand, it tries to build a community relationship based on emotional resonance to consolidate the stability of the federal government, which is called "sympathy" by social philosophers such as Adam Smith. Adam

Smith's theory of sympathy in the *Theory of Moral sentiment* (1759) refers to "putting yourself in the other person's shoes and simulating the suffering of the other person in imagination. We entered his body and then became him in some way", and then produced a kind of "sympathy" that was basically consistent with the original feelings." "Although the degree of consistency is not as good as that of twins, at least we are like brothers; it is enough to be able to do this." This kind of emotional resonance can unite people and enhance the cohesion of the whole community. "A harmonious society is born here." To ensure that the sympathized party is truly sympathetic, he put forward the concept of internal spectator. On the one hand, the internal spectator can put himself in the position of those individuals who are showing emotions through the leap of imagination. It also exists in each individual in the form of monitoring. By examining itself at any time, it fundamentally controls emotions to meet the standards of "decency"(Bonar, 1926). Smith insists that uncalibrated emotions are invalid. He thinks that internal spectators can make an individual not become rational and elegant because he has a sympathetic response. However, just as in 1759, two years after the publication of the *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, Adam Ferguson, a friend and colleague of Adam Smith, questioned whether sympathy is just a new way of saying social identity (Mossner, 1960). Are internal spectators reliable? Can an individual really penetrate the superficial phenomenon of sadness or joy of others to correctly perceive an unknown and completely unrelated stranger?

In most of Brown's works, one point he has repeatedly discussed is that in a world full of strangers, without reliable information or personality references, it seems difficult for people to draw accurate conclusions with their senses. For example, the death of Baxter mentioned in *Ormond* reflects Brown's concern about the unreliability of the senses. Baxter, the husband of Sarah, a washerwoman often employed by Constance, was curious about his French neighbor. "At midnight," he chose to "sit alone on the fence, silently and motionless, staring at the dark and dreary house"(Brown, 2009). Then he saw a "pale, emaciated and haggard" young lady coming out of the house. She dragged something wrapped in a sheet, and the shroud fell off during the action, revealing his neighbor's "unfortunate pale and terrible face of Monros". Baxter was frightened and left in a hurry. Then the next day, even though he had no actual contact with Ursula, the young lady and Monros, he actually developed symptoms of yellow fever and died after struggling for eleven days. When analyzing the image of "Baxter sitting on the fence", Christoffersen thinks that this is a kind of "representative American" created by Brown (Weldon, 1995).

He swayed from side to side between various political forces in the late 18th century, but in fact, Baxter's gaze is also worth pondering. For Baxter, who is staring at his neighbor's house, although Monros lives just "fifty paces away" from him, he does not know that Ursula is not Monros's daughter. They are not related by blood. Ursula is not the "petite" lady Baxter thought. There is no evidence that Monros died of yellow fever. It can be said that what Baxter perceived by his senses was all the wrong information. It was precisely because he relied too much on his senses that the unfortunate Baxter not only knew nothing about the truth but even died.

In addition to holding a skeptical attitude towards the perfection of human rational function popular at that time, Brown often introduces those very confusing liars and strangers into the narrative of novels. For example, Wilberg in *Arthur Mervyn* made full use of his language skills and skillfully manipulated the feelings of onlookers, which puzzled Mervyn as a witness: "I can hardly convince myself that this is the same person." The same is true of Thomas Craig in *Ormond* (Brown, 2019). Although he looks very frank and humble, the background information he provides is false, and the money he gives to Constance is also false. After gaining the trust of the Dudley family, he began to misappropriate public funds, and the reputation and wealth of the Dudley family were ruined. Ormond is a master of camouflage. As a duplicitous person, we cannot figure out Ormond's real motivation. He is "a monster with a face" and "like yellow fever, he is the embodiment of evil: lurking in secret and difficult to find". He seems to be extremely harmless and wears a sincere mask to wander around. "It seems to be everywhere. Like a plague passing through the body's defense, Ormond has also invaded people's minds." By digging into other people's privacy to collect other people's information to achieve their intrigue, "he is a personification of the plague and a murderer who kills indiscriminately" (Ostrowski, 2004). In addition to these typical characters, Mervyn's father was misled by Betty, Mervyn's stepmother, and forced Mervyn to leave; Mervyn himself was cheated by Wohlers and Wilberg successively; Mervyn's sister was also seduced by a teacher named Colville and eventually committed suicide. Mrs. Fielding's deception by Villars and other plots clearly show that in Brown's view, the social emotional expression has a performance nature, and sympathy under this premise is unreliable. It can be obtained by some means and methods. As Douglas Anderson said, what seems to be the most personal and intrinsic thing in Brown's works reflects the anxiety prevailing in society at that time (Anderson, 1991). Indeed, Brown's skepticism refutes the view that internal

spectators can build emotional resonance through the "leap" of imagination, but it is actually a response to the background of that time.

First of all, at the end of the 18th century, with the outbreak of yellow fever, Philadelphia, which was swept by yellow fever, lost its natural feelings of fear. The wife was abandoned by her husband and the children were abandoned by their parents. People were knocked down by disease in the street; pedestrians fled; they were not allowed to go back to their homes and could only swallow their last breath in public places. The terrible death of skin caused by contagions, such as yellowing, vomiting, fever and internal bleeding, has caused great panic. They are eager to find effective treatment methods. Medical scientists have also launched a heated discussion on this. However, due to the lack of relevant medical knowledge, no one can have an effective understanding of this disease even if the death toll keeps increasing. Then the plague of "no one knows" triggered a cognitive crisis. Some American intellectuals, represented by Brown, began to express doubts about the ideological system inherited from Enlightenment Rationalism. Since individuals cannot know yellow fever by sensory perception and gain "experience", does it mean that the highly sought-after human rational function at that time is not so perfect? The spectator who Smith said can ensure that his thoughts reach the standard of being able to examine others has a limitation. Furthermore, as far as Philadelphia is concerned, by 1790, it had accommodated about 10,000 Americans, thousands of French immigrants and more than 3,000 African-Americans, and even added about 3,000 Irish immigrants every year (Kafer, 2004). Smith's spectator exists as a kind of "examination". Although its purpose is to ensure that it can reach the standard of examining others and maintain "dignity", this in turn makes the sympathetic response like a script. It requires people to have consistent and predictable feelings when facing a certain phenomenon or thing. That is to say, only when everyone's inner "spectators" reflect similarly can they communicate with each other. However, in fact, in Philadelphia, USA at the end of the eighteenth century, there is no way to ensure that individuals in a mixed society have the same feelings for the same things. This is the relationship between Mervyn and the Hadwin family in Arthur Mervyn. Although Mervyn felt "returned to a long-lost and loving home" when he got along with the Hadwin family, he began to imagine how much joy it would bring if he could go to Philadelphia to bring Wohlers back to the farm. Their troubles and sorrows will all disappear because of his return! How happy I will feel when I see them overjoyed! " To realize his vision, Mervyn went to Philadelphia on his own. This series of thoughts he has

done is not based on anyone else's emotional reaction except his own, because he takes it for granted that if the Hadwin family were in his place, they would also make this choice. However, he just projected his imaginary reaction to this situation, that is, "joy", on other members of this community. He did not realize that people's reactions in the emotional field were unpredictable. The conclusion presupposed that there was no difference in emotional reactions among community members. This easy assumption did more harm to this community: Hadwin, who went to town with him, got yellow fever; Susan died of tuberculosis; and finally, the farm fell into the hands of others. At this point, Brown is trying to make it clear that it is difficult to define the expression of certain emotions as a standard, especially in the big environment of American cities at that time. There are all kinds of people gathered in the urban space of Philadelphia, and we do not know their origins, conduct and purposes. We cannot guarantee that the internal "spectators" feel false feelings that are not non-performing. We cannot be sure that there will be emotional resonance between individuals.

3. ARTHUR MERVYN IN CONTAGION MODEL

Based on the tragic experience of the Hadwin family, Brown questioned Adam Smith's hypothesis that sympathy is an unbreakable bond and the basis for the unity of the community. The limitation of sympathy identification lies in that we cannot guarantee that in the face of the same phenomenon, the reactions of internal onlookers are all the same, and the community based on sympathy is unstable. When people ask it to accommodate some differences and diversity, it will collapse. This is why to maintain the stability of the emotional community linked by sympathy, some intellectuals in the early days of the Republic maintained an exclusive and vigilant view of those who might pose a threat to the sympathetic community with unknown origins and motives. Rebecca Rush, in her work *Kelroy* (1812), warned readers to keep in touch with "those people whose sources are unknown; keep your distance from people who do not know how to start a business. In *The Power of Sympathy* (1996), William Hill Brown reminds readers to beware of external forces that may "flood in from all directions" to manipulate their rational function (Arner, 1973; Davidson, 1975). However, it is worth noting that although Brown often depicts the United States as a new country threatened by foreign forces in his novels, he does not regard immigrants as only a negative factor that needs to be excluded because of destroying the sympathetic community in

the United States at that time, like Rush. In his works, instead, we can see that Brown, with the help of the disintegration of a family and after questioning the sympathetic community, skillfully chose a metaphor like yellow fever and created a contagion model. He made a series of innovative narratives in subjectivity and collective association and thought about how to deal with the problem of different cultures from another angle (Barnard et al., 2020; Dimock, 1992).

In Arthur Mervyn, yellow fever is not just a disease. From Brown's description of the process of human contagion as "men were seized", it can be seen that the plague in his works can directly enter the individual and control it. Emotions also have this characteristic in his view. When those terrible rumors about yellow fever were rampant, "auditors were all influenced by it." Whenever this rumor is embellished or further corroborated by new testimony, the listener will be as white as a sheet. He will have difficulty breathing because of anxiety. His whole body will be cold with blood, and his stomach will seem to be paralyzed...Some people are surrounded by overwhelming depression, while others will fall into insomnia panic..." These panic feelings spread like a plague, with no obvious origin and no fixed destination. However, they just move around within social groups. Some people become increasingly depressed and suffer from insomnia and anxiety at night. Others become pale and have difficulty breathing, just like the plague, which infected them. By endowing emotions with the characteristics of fluidity and openness similar to the plague, Brown created a contagion model, which made it possible for emotions to spread among subjects. In this model, emotions can flow freely between people, and the protagonist Mervyn is a typical representative of this social model. For Mervyn, as a young man from the countryside who is "wet behind the ears, unable to receive a complete education...with a narrow vision", he has neither friends to rely on nor money to support him, nor can he fully understand the strange and rapidly changing environment in Philadelphia. Hence, he has no way to gain a stable and rational concept, that is, experience, by reflecting on the external environment, and is unable to judge whether a person is really trustworthy. Nor can he conform to the convention in Philadelphia to prove that he meets the standard of "decency". Therefore, Mervyn refuses to presuppose the absolute emotional response and set some standards. However, he advocates giving the same emotional response to everyone, whether friends or enemies, with a friendly attitude and building emotional ties with it with a random and open attitude. Although this social way may impact those sympathetic communities based on deeper emotional resonance, such as

the disintegration of the Hadwin family mentioned above, it is especially suitable for those social environments where cultural differences prevail. When he met Philip, who occupied Hadwin Farm, the grumpy and selfish uncle was able to communicate with Mervyn reluctantly because Mervyn fully accepted the potential fundamental differences between the two people. He consciously adopted a performing posture and communicated with him with "affinity", regardless of differences or commonness: "Love and being loved; I sincerely exchange feelings with all kind and amiable people...On any occasion, I have no qualms about expressing my every feeling and every experience. Any listener will find that I am willing to tell. Any narrator will find that I am willing to listen. Everyone can get my sympathy and goodwill without taking the initiative to ask for it, but I also ask for goodwill and sympathy from everyone." Mervyn's emotional connection is intuitive, spontaneous and indoctrinating. He wants to "exchange" and "mix" with others, instead of distancing others from himself. He used "love and being loved" to summarize all social relations, that is to say, to love like a subject and to be loved like an object. He ignored the boundary between subject and object with an open attitude.

Mervyn not only adheres to the principle of openness in building emotional ties with others but also wanders back and forth in his father's farm, Philadelphia, Telford's home, Wilberg's home, Hadwin's farm, Dr. Stevens' home and other places. As he said: "I am lost in thought; as usual, I did not care much about the form. I entered the house and walked into the living room without prior notice. " Let's leave aside whether it is ethical for him to break into other people's homes, living rooms and bedrooms, but as far as this kind of behavior is concerned, Mervyn really got a lot of effective information that is beneficial to his development by mistake. When he first came to Philadelphia to go to his father's neighbor, Mr. Capper, he was tricked and locked in a strange bedroom. Although he became a "victim of malicious tricks", he accidentally heard a plot by a man named Setford and his wife to defraud 30,000 dollars from a man named Nabo, namely Welbeck. Similarly, it was only after breaking into Welbeck's house that Mervyn learned of Welbeck's plot to illegally embezzle Clemenza's brother's estate. In the end, he even got to know Mrs. Fielding because he broke into Mrs. Villars's house, and then entered the upper class of Philadelphia.

When critics analyze Mervyn, "some people regard him as the prototype of Adam in the United States - an innocent young man whose noble character runs through his life, and he has been rewarded for it - while others think that he is a villain, an opportunist and a 'liar with one mouth

and two tongues" (Elliott, 1981). As a controversial figure, whether Mervyn is a hero or a villain, is he pushed forward by the social environment at that time, or is he the kind of hero who can follow the trend and succeed with the disguise of ignorance? Michael Davitt Bell is inclined to the latter. He thinks that Mervyn has been pursuing self-interest in his behavior, although he verbally claims that he has never had bad intentions (Schieck, 1982). Christoffersen, on the other hand, did not adopt an extreme attitude. He thought Arthur himself was both a hillbilly and a liar, an accomplice of a peeping tom, a child and an adult, a palindrome and a mystery. Indeed, perhaps the success of Mervyn's role lies in his uncertainty, mobility and openness. From Mervyn, we can see that in the face of those elusive factors, Brown thinks that instead of taking an evasive and exclusive attitude towards them, it is better to try to manipulate this uncertainty. Like yellow fever, he can move around with an aggressive attitude to actively obtain knowledge and information conducive to self-development. Correspondingly, the community relationship advocated by Mervyn is also open, which we can call a contagion model. In this model, emotions can spread freely across those imaginary boundaries like a plague. Differences can also be accepted by communities that are not strictly based on binary versus vertical logic in an open attitude.

4. MARRIAGE CONTRACT OF GENDER INVERSION AND RHIZOME

The above-mentioned open and non-exclusive attitude is maintained towards the non-homogeneous factors in the community. To better cope with the social environment with unclear ontology and rapidly changing population structure, Brown further pondered the inclusion and acceptance of different cultures through the marriage between Mervyn and Mrs. Aksa. When discussing Mervyn's choice of refusing to marry Eliza and choosing Mrs. Fielding as his wife many scholars often think that this is a conservative political proposition put forward by Brown. Or they will understand this plot as a manifestation of Mervyn's egoism with the gradual development of commercial capital (St. Clair, 1996). Whereas, the author tries to put forward another analysis angle here, whether Brown wants to discuss such a question with the help of Mervyn's choice: What are the rules for people to sign marriage contracts with each other in a worldwide social environment?

For Arthur Mervyn, at the beginning, he was looking forward to building

a family with Eliza, who was born elegant and delicate. As he said, "I used to imagine my wife and children with the most enthusiastic imagination ... Since I was in contact with this girl, my fragmented thoughts have been concentrated and focused. At this time, I have a specific form and appearance in front of me, and a sweet and pleasant voice echoes in my ear, because her face, her manner, her manners and my soul have reached unprecedented satisfaction." But when Mervyn realized that he was an "immature" individual, "considering that I was not deeply involved in the world, I failed to receive a complete education, and I had a narrow vision", he began to think about whether Mrs. Aksa, who had rich "experience" in the world, was really the right person to conclude a marriage contract compared with Eliza. In fact, Eliza had rich and delicate feelings but was also inexperienced and "sometimes stupid". He thinks so because she can make up for her "naivety and immaturity" and make him realize "great progress" in his development. But it is worth noting that Mervyn's choice seems to follow the principle of complementarity in contract marriage. In other words, one party can obtain some parts of the other party by signing a marriage contract, thus making up for its own "lack"(Murray, 2015). However, if we carefully explore the gender orientation of Mervyn and Aksa in this marriage and the psychological state of the characters, we can find that Brown's marriage contract at this time.

First of all, when referring to Mrs. Aksa, Brown said that she is similar to both Moors and Gypsies, with Portuguese descent, British descent and Jewish descent. The secret of this descent is really hard to hide, as Mervyn said: My dear mother, your eyes really tell me a secret. I almost thought they were talking to me. The stories they told were so strange that I almost forgot to be surprised at the strangeness hidden behind the stories. What stories did they tell? Maybe I made a mistake. I may have been deceived by a sweet talk, or confused by two words with similar meanings, but I swear with my life, I think they are saying that you are a Jew. At this point, her face was immediately covered with a layer of deep sorrow and confusion. She put her hand over her eyes, tears came out and she sobbed. Aksa's reaction illustrates the fact that her Jewish ancestry is an excluded existence, and even though she wants Mervyn to "know nothing about her, just believe what he sees". Mervyn still guessed her life story, which means that even though Aksa has moved from Europe to North America. The secret history hidden in her continues to affect her social performance, unlike Eliza, who is "lacking".

Furthermore, in the traditional marriage contract, men often exchange their experience with women's sensitivity and affection, but Mervyn

presents many feminine qualities in his book. He is as affectionate as the heroine in sentimental novels and even says with tears that he is "just a woman". For Aksa, Mervyn is willing to call her "mother", but judging from the way she abandoned her son, she is not a woman with rich motherhood. Her appearance is not excellent compared with Eliza's. "She has Moorish brown skin, gypsy eyes and short stature like a dwarf." Therefore, it can be said that in this marriage contract, Mervyn brings women's sensibility and dependence. Aksa brings men's experience and property. However, as an American citizen, Mervyn lacks typical male personality and influence, but he finally crossed the native class and succeeded in the upper-class circles in Philadelphia. Therefore, on the whole, there is still a male trait in him. This will conflict with Aksa, who also symbolizes men, to some extent, because Mervyn's part with traditional male characteristics will still want to follow the traditional marriage contract. Aksa's masculinity, racial identity and lack of ideal appearance and posture all make her lose the qualification to match the citizens of the United States Republic.

Therefore, when Mervyn faced Aksa, he was both afraid and happy. "I am a little half-insane, and fear and hope, joy and horror are strangely mixed to make me mentally confused." When he realized that he was going to marry Aksa, he was "under the control of an unknown fear. He became "in a trance"; his "unholy" ideas made him feel "confused; insanity; he falls into gloom." He experienced a "temporary loss of reason". He was defeated by "madness" and "confusion and fear" and enveloped by a feeling of "shame" and "sin". That is to say, Mervyn accepted such a marriage with different cultures with a kind of confusion and pain. In addition to Mervyn, we can also feel the protagonist's inadaptability to different cultures in Constantia Dudley in Ormond. It's just that Constantia resisted even more fiercely. She killed Ormond who tried to force her to accept a different culture with a knife. However, from Brown's description of the rape she is about to suffer as "an inevitable and unchangeable rule", we can see that Brown thinks that this kind of tolerance and integration of different cultures will produce "confusion and fear". However, this trend is inevitable. How to deal with the contradiction between these "rejection reactions" and the inevitable invasion of different cultures? Is there any other way to connect and unite the individuals represented by Mervyn, who endanger the sympathetic community because of openness, and the immigrants represented by Aksa, who have lost their qualification to participate in the emotional community because of the "redundancy" of different cultures?

In Edgar Huntly, Brown takes Clithero Edny's family as an example to think about this issue. Unlike the community linked by sympathy and the adapted marriage contract, Brown tried to conceive another form of community, whose components are not so much independent individuals as copies of each other. Clarice, the illegitimate daughter of Euphemia Lorimer, was brought up by Mrs. Lorimer, and she became very similar to Mrs. Lorimer, just like a mold. "Nature seems to smooth out all the differences between them except their age." Clithero, as the adopted son of Mrs. Lorimer, also seems to be no different from Mrs. Lorimer's son in the story. Even after he got engaged to Clarice and became Mrs. Lorimer's nominal "son", the nameless son disappeared into the story and was never mentioned again. In the family of Clithero, it seems that each individual is not indispensable existence. Even to maintain the stability of the whole community, they can be exchanged and replaced. This kind of substitute community relationship is very similar to the Indian custom. In *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1998), it is mentioned that in the Indian's view, "if one of the family members is killed or captured in battle, and they happen to catch another prisoner at this time, they will hand him over to the nearest relative of the deceased or the lost person, ... to fill it. They regard me as their own sister and one of their female compatriots. The significance of the existence of individuals in this community lies in filling the gap in community relations, thus ensuring the stable operation of the community as a whole. In this case, because any individual can be completely replaced, does the existence of a single individual seem meaningless? (Brown, 2018; Fisher, 1986)

Brown, therefore, further emphasized and explained the relationship between individuals and other individuals. Mrs. Lorimer often feels that there is an "unusual partnership" between herself and Clarice's father, that is, her twin brother. She believes that the death of one of them will naturally lead to the death of the other. Brown called this relationship "a kind of sympathy", a kind of sympathy that "influence is independent of rational communication". In other words, individuals and individuals will have a similar feeling as if without foundation, although the degree is low, this feeling can link them together. Jennifer J. Baker analyzed this emotional connection from the perspective of the credit economy. Marianne Noble also affirmed the existence of this "emotion" independent of reason from the perspective of agnosticism. This article will mainly start with the Umwelt proposed by Giorgio Agamben in *The Open: Man and Animal* (2004) to explain the relationship between people proposed by Brown. Agamben mentioned the animal tick in *The Open: Man and Animal*. After

analyzing it, Jakob von Uexküll thinks that ticks cannot feel the nature that we can feel, and there are only two classifications in its world. One is "all mammals containing fat sacs" that emit "the smell of butyric acid". That is, objects from which they cannot draw blood for survival, this kind of perceptual environment centered on "butyric acid" is called "the Umwelt" by Uexküll. Creatures only have existential significance in the world around or around. That is to say, organisms generally occupy the environment, while ticks are different. As a kind of "creature completely dependent on its relationship with the surrounding environment", it defines another life form. Ticks are ticks when they establish an ecological connection with the source of life. Mrs. Lorimer in Brown's works is very similar to this kind of tick that "can only live in it and live for it". She cannot live without her perceptual environment, that is, the world surrounded by "instant" sympathy. The meaning of her existence is to form a connection with her brother, and if this connection is cut off, her existence will lose its value. Thus, when Clithero accidentally killed her brother, Clithero also tried to kill her, because for a community, without the existence of her brother, Mrs. Lorimer has become a much useless part, which is why she feels that one of the two people dies. Hence, she "naturally" will also "contribute to the death of the other". This form of community based on "connection" conforms to many principles in the "rhizome" theory and is a multi-directional network and woven structure. Different from the contract society, the community under the rhizome "they are just lines" has no established components, and does not require every individual in the community to meet some specific standards, because its nature is not determined by vertices or connection points. It is itself a network composed of flowing lines, starting from the connection points themselves, spreading and flowing around like rays. This fluidity is related to connecting individuals.

The traditional tree-like thinking mode, such as "development" or "progress" often mentioned in the enlightenment culture, and Locke's white metaphor, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari said, are "repeatedly starting from scratch, looking for the starting point or foundation". They have misunderstood the concept of "flow". In contrast, this form of community proposed by Brown is not so much people-oriented, but rather similar to the existing mode of weeds, Indians or epidemics. For example, the yellow fever in Arthur Mervyn will seize any opportunity to spread outward with an invasive feature until it exceeds the scope of the original occupation. In this process, individuals in the community can also reorganize constantly in the convergence and conflict with others(Giorgio

& Kevin, 2004; Gould, 2007; Mizruchi, 1996; Windell, 2021).

With the combination of Mervyn and Aksa, Brown proposed a marriage and family that allowed cultural differences. To solve the inevitable contradiction between "mixing" and "rejection", he took the Lorimer family as an example to build a community form that did not make established requirements on the components. He valued the connection between individuals, where individuals existed in the relationship with others, or existed because of their relationship with others. The author borrows some principles from the rhizome put forward by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and further refines this form of community based on "connection" into a diffused network community. This kind of community spreads everywhere like a contagion. It can not only accommodate unfamiliar cultural factors but also absorb them as part of the community and continue to integrate themselves. Then it can finally successfully develop and spread.

5. SUMMARY

Since yellow fever began to invade the northeastern coastal areas of the United States in the 1760s, and then the plague broke out in Philadelphia in the 1990s, this discussion linking the infectivity of the disease with the establishment of a sympathetic community and the shaping of citizenship has always existed. Under this social background, Brown used yellow fever as a metaphor in Arthur Mervyn, Ormond and other works (Pfister, 1991). He imagined and participated in the conception of complex ideal individuals and communities in the United States at the end of the 18th century. Under the impact of yellow fever, when sympathy, pity, contract and other factors that can maintain social cohesion are gradually weakened, Brown put forward what John Locke thought was a "small country". That is, a family based on a marriage contract is not completely applicable to the United States. Therefore, by constantly reconfiguring the individualistic cultural materials, he constructed a network community model that can constantly integrate itself and adapt to cultural diversity by using the substitute method. Of course, the concept of community put forward by Brown does not mean to completely deny Adam Smith's sympathetic community and Locke's rational individual. Instead, they make us imagine in another way of thinking, a larger information and emotional loop, and a more inclusive community form, which can expand outward at any time with an invasion like a plague, it can also connect different individuals and

transform them into a mixed organism(Cohen, 2012). This community model, which emphasizes openness and mobility, as well as the interconnection between people, is more suitable for the United States at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century than the community model based on the individualism paradigm, which must follow unified related principles.

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