SANDRA GILBERT AND SUSAN GUBAR

Looking Oppositely: Emily Brontë's Bible of Hell

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above:
But to the girdle do the Gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's darkness,
There is the sulphurous pit...

—*King Lear*

It indeed appear'd to Reason as if Desire was cast out, but the Devils account is, that the Messiah fell. & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss

—William Blake

A loss of something ever felt I—
The first that I could recollect
Bereft I was—of what I knew not
Too young that any should suspect

A Mourner walked among the children
I notwithstanding went about
As one bemoaning a Dominion
Itself the only Prince cast out—

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Elder, Today, a session wiser
And fainter, too, as Wiseness is—
I find myself still softly searching
For my Delinquent Palaces—

And a Suspicion, like a Finger
Touches my Forehead now and then
That I am looking oppositely
For the site of the Kingdom of Heaven—
—Emily Dickinson

Frankenstein and *Wuthering Heights* (1847) are not usually seen as related works, except insofar as both are famous nineteenth-century literary puzzles, with Shelley's plaintive speculation about where she got so "hideous an idea" finding its counterpart in the position of Heathcliff's creator as a sort of mystery woman of literature. Still, if both Brontë and Shelley wrote enigmatic, curiously unprecedented novels, their works are puzzling in different ways: Shelley's is an enigmatic fantasy of metaphysical horror, Brontë's an enigmatic romance of metaphysical passion. Shelley produced an allusive, Romantic, and "masculine" text in which the fates of subordinate female characters seem entirely dependent upon the actions of ostensibly male heroes or anti-heroes. Brontë produced a more realistic narrative in which "the perdurable voice of the country," as Mark Schorer describes Nelly Dean, introduces us to a world where men battle for the favors of apparently high-spirited and independent women.[1]

Despite these dissimilarities, however, *Frankenstein* and *Wuthering Heights* are alike in a number of crucial ways. For one thing, both works *are* enigmatic, puzzling, even in some sense generically problematical. Moreover, in each case the mystery of the novel is associated with what seem to be its metaphysical intentions, intentions around which much critical controversy has collected. For these two "popular" novels—one a thriller, the other a romance—have convinced many readers that their charismatic surfaces conceal (far more than they reveal) complex ontological depths, elaborate structures of allusion, fierce though shadowy moral ambitions. And this point in particular is demonstrated by a simpler characteristic both works have in common. Both make use of what in connection with *Frankenstein* we called an evidentiary narrative technique, a Romantic story-telling method that emphasizes the ironic disjunctions between different perspectives on the same events as well as the ironic tensions that inhere in the relationship between surface drama and concealed authorial intention. In fact, in its use of such a technique, *Wuthering Heights* might be a deliberate copy of *Frankenstein*.

Not only do the stories of both novels emerge through concentric circles of narration, both works contain significant digressions. Catherine Earnshaw's diary, Isabella's letter, Zillah's narrative, and Heathcliff's confidences to Nelly function in *Wuthering Heights* much as Alphonse Frankenstein's letter, Justine's narrative, and Safie's history do in *Frankenstein*.

Their common concern with evidence, especially with written evidence, suggests still another way in which *Wuthering Heights* and *Frankenstein* are alike: more than most novels, both are consciously literary works, at times almost obsessively concerned with books and with reading as not only a symbolic but a dramatic—plot-forwarding—activity. Can this be because, like Shelley, Brontë was something of a literary heiress? The idea is an odd one to consider, because the four Brontë children, scribbling in Yorkshire's remote West Riding, seem as trapped on the periphery of nineteenth-century literary culture as Mary Shelley was embedded in its Godwinian and Byronic center. Nevertheless, peripheral though they were, the Brontës had literary parents just as Mary Shelley did: the Reverend Patrick Brontë was in his youth the author of several books of poetry, a novel, and a collection of sermons, and Maria Branwell, the girl he married, apparently also had some literary abilities.[2] And of course, besides having obscure literary parents Emily Brontë had literary siblings, though they too were in most of her own lifetime almost as unknown as their parents.

Is it coincidental that the author of *Wuthering Heights* was the sister of the authors of *Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey*? Did the parents, especially the father, bequeath a frustrated drive toward literary success to their children? These are interesting though unanswerable questions, but they imply a point that is crucial in any consideration of the Brontës, just as it was important in thinking about Mary Shelley: it was the habit in the Brontë family, as in the Wollstonecraft-Godwin-Shelley family, to approach reality through the mediating agency of books, to read one's relatives, and to feel related to one's reading. Thus the transformation of three lonely yet ambitious Yorkshire governesses into the magisterially androgynous trio of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell was a communal act, an assertion of family identity. And significantly, even the games these writers played as children prepared them for such a literary mode of self-definition. As most Brontë admirers know, the four young inhabitants of Haworth Parsonage began producing extended narratives at an early age, and these eventually led to the authorship of a large library of miniature books which constitutes perhaps the most famous juvenilia in English. Though in subject matter these works are divided into two groups—one, the history of the imaginary kingdom of Gondal, written by Emily and Anne, and the other, stories of the equally imaginary land of Angria, written by Charlotte and Branwell—all four children read and discussed all the tales, and even served as models for characters in many. Thus

the Brontës' deepest feelings of kinship appear to have been expressed first in literary collaboration and private childish attempts at fictionalizing each other, and then, later, in the public collaboration the sisters undertook with the ill-fated collection of poetry that was their first "real" publication. Finally Charlotte, the last survivor of these prodigious siblings, memorialized her lost sisters in print, both in fiction and in non-fiction (*Shirley*, for instance, mythologizes Emily). Given the traditions of her family, it was no doubt inevitable that, for her, writing—not only novel-writing but the writing of prefaces to "family" works—would replace tombstone-raising, hymn-singing, maybe even weeping.[3]

That both literary activity and literary evidence were so important to the Brontës may be traced to another problem they shared with Mary Shelley. Like the anxious creator of *Frankenstein*, the authors of *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* lost their mother when they were very young. Like Shelley, indeed, Emily and Anne Brontë were too young when their mother died even to know much about her except through the evidence of older survivors and perhaps through some documents. Just as *Frankenstein*, with its emphasis on orphans and beggars, is a motherless book, so all the Brontë novels betray intense feelings of motherlessness, orphanhood, destitution. And in particular the problems of literary orphanhood seem to lead in *Wuthering Heights*, as in *Frankenstein*, not only to a concern with surviving evidence but also to a fascination with the question of origins. Thus if all women writers, metaphorical orphans in patriarchal culture, seek literary answers to the questions "How are we fal'n, / Fal'n by mistaken rules ...?" motherless orphans like Mary Shelley and Emily Brontë almost seem to seek literal answers to that question, so passionately do their novels enact distinctive female literary obsessions.

Finally, that such a psychodramatic enactment is going on in both *Wuthering Heights* and *Frankenstein* suggests a similarity between the two novels which brings us back to the tension between dramatic surfaces and metaphysical depths with which we began this discussion. For just as one of *Frankenstein*'s most puzzling traits is the symbolic ambiguity or fluidity its characters display when they are studied closely, so one of *Wuthering Heights*'s key elements is what Leo Bersani calls its "ontological slipperiness."[4] In fact, because it is a *metaphysical* romance (just as *Frankenstein* is a *metaphysical* thriller) *Wuthering Heights* seems at times to be about forces or beings rather than people, which is no doubt one reason why some critics have thought it generically problematical, maybe not a novel at all but instead an extended exemplum, or a "prosified" verse drama. And just as all the characters in *Frankenstein* are in a sense the same two characters, so "everyone [in *Wuthering Heights*] is finally related to

everyone else and, in a sense, repeated in everyone else," as if the novel, like an illustration of Freud's "Das Unheimlische," were about "the danger of being haunted by alien versions of the self."[5] But when it is created by a woman in the misogynistic context of Western literary culture, this sort of anxiously philosophical, problem-solving, myth-making narrative must—so it seems—inevitably come to grips with the countervailing stories told by patriarchal poetry, and specifically by Milton's patriarchal poetry.

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Milton, Winifred Gérin tells us, was one of Patrick Brontë's favorite writers, so if Shelley was Milton's critic's daughter, Brontë was Milton's admirer's daughter.[6] By the Hegelian law of thesis/antithesis, then, it seems appropriate that Shelley chose to repeat and restate Milton's misogynistic story while Brontë chose to correct it. In fact the most serious matter *Wuthering Heights* and *Frankenstein* share is the matter of *Paradise Lost*, and their profoundest difference is in their attitude toward Milton's myth. Where Shelley was Milton's dutiful daughter, retelling his story to clarify it, Brontë was the poet's rebellious child, radically revising (and even reversing) the terms of his mythic narrative. Given the fact that Brontë never mentions either Milton or *Paradise Lost* in *Wuthering Heights*, any identification of her as Milton's daughter may at first seem eccentric or perverse. Shelley, after all, provided an overtly Miltonic framework in *Frankenstein* to reinforce our sense of her literary intentions. But despite the absence of Milton references, it eventually becomes plain that *Wuthering Heights* is also a novel haunted by Milton's bogey. We may speculate, indeed, that Milton's absence is itself a presence, so painfully does Brontë's story dwell on the places and persons of his imagination.

That *Wuthering Heights* is about heaven and hell, for instance, has long been seen by critics, partly because all the narrative voices, from the beginning of Lockwood's first visit to the Heights, insist upon casting both action and description in religious terms, and partly because one of the first Catherine's major speeches to Nelly Dean raises the questions "What is heaven? Where is hell?" perhaps more urgently than any other speech in an English novel:

> "If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable.... I dreamt once that I was there [and] that heaven did not seem to be my home, and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights, where I woke sobbing for joy."[7]

Satan too, however—at least Satan as Milton's prototypical Byronic hero—has long been considered a participant in *Wuthering Heights*, for "that devil Heathcliff," as both demon lover and ferocious natural force, is a phenomenon critics have always studied. Isabella's "Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not is he a devil?" (chap. 13) summarizes the traditional Heathcliff problem most succinctly, but Nelly's "I was inclined to believe ... that conscience had turned his heart to an earthly hell" (chap. 33) more obviously echoes *Paradise Lost*.

Again, that *Wuthering Heights* is in some sense about a fall has frequently been suggested, though critics from Charlotte Brontë to Mark Schorer, Q. D. Leavis, and Leo Bersani have always disputed its exact nature and moral implications. Is Catherine's fall the archetypal fall of the *Bildungsroman* protagonist? Is Heathcliff's fall, his perverted "moral teething," a shadow of Catherine's? Which of the two worlds of *Wuthering Heights* (if either) does Brontë mean to represent the truly "fallen" world? These are just some of the controversies that have traditionally attended this issue. Nevertheless, that the story of *Wuthering Heights* is built around a central fall seems indisputable, so that a description of the novel as in part a *Bildungsroman* about a girl's passage from "innocence" to "experience" (leaving aside the precise meaning of those terms) would probably also be widely accepted. And that the fall in *Wuthering Heights* has Miltonic overtones is no doubt culturally inevitable. But even if it weren't, the Miltonic implications of the action would be clear enough from the "mad scene" in which Catherine describes herself as "an exile, and outcast ... from what had been my world," adding "Why am I so changed? Why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words?" (chap. 12). Given the metaphysical nature of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine's definition of herself as "an exile and outcast" inevitably suggests those trail-blazing exiles and outcasts Adam, Eve, and Satan. And her Romantic question—"Why am I so changed?"—with its desperate straining after the roots of identity, must ultimately refer back to Satan's hesitant (but equally crucial) speech to Beelzebub, as they lie stunned in the lake of fire: "If thou be'est he; But O ... how chang'd" (*PL* l. 84).

Of course, *Wuthering Heights* has often, also, been seen as a subversively visionary novel. Indeed, Brontë is frequently coupled with Blake as a practitioner of mystical politics. Usually, however, as if her book were written to illustrate the enigmatic religion of "No coward soul is mine," this visionary quality is related to Catherine's assertion that she is tired of "being enclosed" in "this shattered prison" of her body, and "wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there" (chap. 15). Many readers define Brontë, in other words, as a ferocious pantheist/transcendentalist, worshipping the manifestations of the One in rock, tree, cloud, man and

woman, while manipulating her story to bring about a Romantic *Liebestod* in which favored characters enter "the endless and shadowless hereafter." And certainly such ideas, like Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, are "something heterodox," to use Lockwood's phrase. At the same time, however, they are soothingly rather than disquietingly neo-Miltonic, like fictionalized visions of *Paradise Lost*'s luminous Father God. They are, in fact, the ideas of "steady, reasonable" Nelly Dean, whose denial of the demonic in life, along with her commitment to the angelic tranquility of death, represents only one of the visionary alternatives in *Wuthering Heights*. And, like Blake's metaphor of the lamb, Nelly's pious alternative has no real meaning for Brontë outside of the context provided by its tigerish opposite.

The tigerish opposite implied by *Wuthering Heights* emerges most dramatically when we bring all the novel's Miltonic elements together with its author's personal concerns in an attempt at a single formulation of Brontë's metaphysical intentions: the sum of this novel's visionary parts is an almost shocking revisionary whole. Heaven (or its rejection), hell, Satan, a fall, mystical politics, metaphysical romance, orphanhood, and the question of origins—disparate as some of these matters may seem, they all cohere in a rebelliously topsy-turvy retelling of Milton's and Western culture's central tale of the fall of woman and her shadow self, Satan. This fall, says Brontë, is not a fall *into* hell. It is a fall from "hell" into "heaven," not a fall from grace (in the religious sense) but a fall into grace (in the cultural sense). Moreover, for the heroine who falls it is the loss of Satan rather than the loss of God that signals the painful passage from innocence to experience. Emily Brontë, in other words, is not just Blakeian in "double" mystical vision, but Blakeian in a tough, radically political commitment to the belief that the state of being patriarchal Christianity calls "hell" is eternally, energetically delightful, whereas the state called "heaven" is rigidly hierarchical, Urizenic, and "kind" as a poison tree. But because she was metaphorically one of Milton's daughters, Brontë differs from Blake, that powerful son of a powerful father, in reversing the terms of Milton's Christian cosmogony for specifically feminist reasons.

Speaking of Jane Lead, a seventeenth-century Protestant mystic who was a significant precursor of Brontë's in visionary sexual politics, Catherine Smith has noted that "to study mysticism and feminism together is to learn more about the links between envisioning power and pursuing it," adding that "Idealist notions of transcendence may shape political notions of sexual equality as much as materialist or rationalist arguments do."[8] Her points are applicable to Brontë, whose revisionary mysticism is inseparable from both politics and feminism, although her emphasis is more on the loss than on the pursuit of power. Nevertheless, the feminist nature of her concern with neo-Miltonic definitions of hell and heaven, power and powerlessness, innocence

and experience, has generally been overlooked by critics, many of whom, at their most biographical, tend to ask patronizing questions like "What is the matter with Emily Jane?"[9] Interestingly, however, certain women understood Brontë's feminist mythologies from the first. Speculating on the genesis of A. G. A., the fiery Byronic queen of Gondal with whose life and loves Emily Brontë was always obsessed, Fanny Ratchford noted in 1955 that while Arthur Wellesley, the emperor of Charlotte Brontë's fantasy kingdom of Angria, was "an arch-Byronic hero, for love of whom noble ladies went into romantic decline.... Gondal's queen was of such compelling beauty and charm as to bring all men to her feet, and of such selfish cruelty as to bring tragedy to all who loved her.... It was as if Emily was saying to Charlotte, 'You think the man is the dominant factor in romantic love, I'll show you it is the woman.'"[10] But of course Charlotte herself understood Emily's revisionary tendencies better than anyone. More than one hundred years before Ratchford wrote, the heroine of *Shirley*, that apotheosis of Emily "as she would have been in a happier life," speaks the English novel's first deliberately feminist criticism of Milton—"Milton did not see Eve, it was his cook that he saw"—and proposes as her alternative the Titan woman we discussed earlier, the mate of "Genius" and the potentially Satanic interlocutor of God. Some readers, including most recently the Marxist critic Terence Eagleton, have spoken scornfully of the "maundering rhetoric of *Shirley*'s embarrassing feminist mysticism."[11] But Charlotte, who was intellectually as well as physically akin to Emily, had captured the serious deliberation in her sister's vision. She knew that the author of *Wuthering Heights* was—to quote the Brontës' admirer Emily Dickinson—"looking oppositely / For the site of the Kingdom of Heaven" (J. 959).

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Because Emily Brontë was looking oppositely not only for heaven (and hell) but for her own female origins, *Wuthering Heights* is one of the few authentic instances of novelistic myth-making, myth-making in the functional sense of problem-solving. Where writers from Charlotte Brontë and Henry James to James Joyce and Virginia Woolf have used mythic material to give point and structure to their novels, Emily Brontë uses the novel form to give substance—plausibility, really—to her myth. It is urgent that she do so because, as we shall see, the feminist cogency of this myth derives not only from its daring corrections of Milton but also from the fact that it is a distinctively nineteenth-century answer to the question of origins: it is the myth of how culture came about, and specifically of how nineteenth-

century society occurred, the tale of where tea-tables, sofas, crinolines, and parsonages like the one at Haworth came from.

Because it is so ambitious a myth, *Wuthering Heights* has the puzzling self-containment of a *mystery* in the old sense of that word—the sense of mystery plays and Eleusinian mysteries. Locked in by Lockwood's uncomprehending narrative, Nelly Dean's story, with its baffling duplication of names, places, events, seems endlessly to reenact itself, like some ritual that must be cyclically repeated in order to sustain (as well as explain) both nature and culture. At the same time, because it is so prosaic a myth—a myth about crinolines!—*Wuthering Heights* is not in the least portentous or self-consciously "mythic." On the contrary, like all true rituals and myths, Brontë's "cuckoo's tale" turns a practical, casual, humorous face to its audience. For as Lévi-Straus's observations suggest, true believers gossip by the prayer wheel, since that modern reverence which enjoins solemnity is simply the foster child of modern skepticism.[12]

Gossipy but unconventional true believers were rare, even in the pious nineteenth century, as Arnold's anxious meditations and Carlyle's angry sermons note. But Brontë's paradoxically matter-of-fact imaginative strength, her ability to enter a realistically freckled fantasy land, manifested itself early. One of her most famous adolescent diary papers juxtaposes a plea for culinary help from the parsonage housekeeper, Tabby—"Come Anne pilloputate"—with "The Gondals are discovering the interior of Gaaldine" and "Sally Mosely is washing in the back kitchen."[13] Significantly, no distinction is made between the heroic exploits of the fictional Gondals and Sally Mosely's real washday business. The curiously childlike voice of the diarist records all events without commentary, and this reserve suggests an implicit acquiescence in the equal "truth" of all events. Eleven years later, when the sixteen-year-old reporter of "pilloputate" has grown up and is on the edge of *Wuthering Heights*, the naive, uninflected surface of her diary papers is unchanged

> ... Anne and I went our first long journey by ourselves together, leaving home on the 30th of June, Monday, sleeping at York, returning to Keighley Tuesday evening ... during our excursion we were Ronald Mcalgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Angusteena, Rosabella Esmalden, Ella and Julian Egremont, Catharine Navarre, and Cordilia Fitzaphnold, escaping from the palaces of instruction to join the Royalists who are hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans.... I must hurry off now to my turning and ironing. I have plenty of work on hands, and writing, and am altogether full of business.[14]

Psychodramatic "play," this passage suggests, is an activity at once as necessary and as ordinary as housework: ironing and the exploration of alternative lives are the same kind of "business"—a perhaps uniquely female idea of which Anne Bradstreet and Emily Dickinson, those other visionary housekeepers, would have approved.

No doubt, however, it is this deep-seated tendency of Brontë's to live literally with the fantastic that accounts for much of the critical disputation about *Wuthering Heights*, especially the quarrels about the novel's genre and style. Q. D. Leavis and Arnold Kettle, for instance, insist that the work is a "sociological novel," while Mark Schorer thinks it "means to be a work of edification [about] the nature of a grand passion." Leo Bersani sees it as an ontological psychodrama, and Elliot Gose as a sort of expanded fairytale.[15] And strangely there is truth in all these apparently conflicting notions, just as it is also true that (as Robert Kiely has affirmed) "part of the distinction of *Wuthering Heights* [is] that it has no 'literary' aura about it," and true at the same time that (as we have asserted) *Wuthering Heights* is an unusually literary novel because Brontë approached reality chiefly through the mediating agency of literature.[16] In fact, Kiely's comment illuminates not only the uninflected surface of the diary papers but also the controversies about their author's novel, for Brontë is "unliterary" in being without a received sense of what the eighteenth century called literary decorum. As one of her better-known poems declares, she follows "where [her] own nature would be leading," and that nature leads her to an oddly literal—and also, therefore, unliterary—use of extraordinarily various literary works, ideas, and genres, all of which she refers back to herself, since "it vexes [her] to choose another guide."[17]

Thus *Wuthering Heights* is in one sense an elaborate gloss on the Byronic Romanticism and incest fantasy of *Manfred*, written, as Ratchford suggested, from a consciously female perspective. Heathcliff's passionate invocations of Catherine ("Come in! ... hear me" [chap. 3] or "Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad" [chap. 16]) almost exactly echo Manfred's famous speech to Astarte ("Hear me, hear me ... speak to me! Though it be in wrath...").[18] In another way, though, *Wuthering Heights* is a prose redaction of the metaphysical storms and ontological nature/culture conflicts embodied in *King Lear*, with Heathcliff taking the part of Nature's bastard son Edmund, Edgar Linton incarnating the cultivated morality of his namesake Edgar, and the "wuthering" chaos at the Heights repeating the disorder that overwhelms Lear's kingdom when he relinquishes his patriarchal control to his diabolical daughters. But again, both poetic Byronic Romanticism and dramatic Shakespearean metaphysics are filtered through a novelistic sensibility with a surprisingly Austenian grasp of social details, so that *Wuthering Heights* seems also, in its "unliterary" way, to reiterate the feminist psychological concerns of

a *Bildungsroman* Brontë may never have read: Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. Catherine Earnshaw's "half savage and hardy and free" girlhood, for example, recalls the tomboy childhood of that other Catherine, Catherine Morland, and Catherine Earnshaw's fall into ladylike "grace" seems to explore the tragic underside of the anxiously comic initiation rites Catherine Morland undergoes at Bath and at Northanger Abbey.[19]

The world of *Wuthering Heights*, in other words, like the world of Brontë's diary papers, is one where what seem to be the most unlikely opposites coexist without, apparently, any consciousness on the author's part that there is anything unlikely in their coexistence. The ghosts of Byron, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen haunt the same ground. People with decent Christian names (Catherine, Nelly, Edgar, Isabella) inhabit a landscape in which also dwell people with strange animal or nature names (Hindley, Hareton, Heathcliff). Fairytale events out of what Mircea Eliade would call "great time" are given a local habitation and a real chronology in just that historical present Eliade defines as great time's opposite.[20] Dogs and gods (or goddesses) turn out to be not opposites but, figuratively speaking, the same words spelled in different ways. Funerals are weddings, weddings funerals. And of course, most important for our purposes here, hell is heaven, heaven hell, though the two are not separated, as Milton and literary decorum would prescribe, by vast eons of space but by a little strip of turf, for Brontë was rebelliously determined to walk

> ... not in old heroic traces
> And not in paths of high morality.
> And not among the half-distinguished faces,
> The clouded forms of long-past history.

On the contrary, surveying that history and its implications, she came to the revisionary conclusion that "the earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling / Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell."[21]

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If we identify with Lockwood, civilized man at his most genteelly "cooked" and literary, we cannot fail to begin Brontë's novel by deciding that hell is a household very like Wuthering Heights. Lockwood himself, as if wittily predicting the reversal of values that is to be the story's central concern, at first calls the place "a perfect misanthropist's Heaven" (chap. 1). But then what is the traditional Miltonic or Dantesque hell if not a misanthropist's heaven, a site that substitutes hate for love, violence for peace, death for

life, and in consequence the material for the spiritual, disorder for order? Certainly Wuthering Heights rings all these changes on Lockwood's first two visits. Heathcliff's first invitation to enter, for instance, is uttered through closed teeth, and appropriately enough it seems to his visitor to express "the sentiment 'Go to the Deuce.'" The house's other inhabitants—Catherine II, Hareton, Joseph, and Zillah, as we later learn—are for the most part equally hostile on both occasions, with Joseph muttering insults, Hareton surly, and Catherine II actually practicing (or pretending to practice) the "black arts."[22] Their energies of hatred, moreover, are directed not only at their uninvited guest but at each other, as Lockwood learns to his sorrow when Catherine II suggests that Hareton should accompany him through the storm and Hareton refuses to do so if it would please *her*.

The general air of sour hatred that blankets the Heights, moreover, manifests itself in a continual, aimless violence, a violence most particularly embodied in the snarling dogs that inhabit the premises. "In an arch under the dresser," Lockwood notes, "reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses" (chap. 1). His use of *haunted* is apt, for these animals, as he later remarks, are more like "four-footed fiends" than ordinary canines, and in particular Juno, the matriarch of the "hive," seems to be a parody of Milton's grotesquely maternal Sin, with her yapping brood of hellhounds. Significantly, too, the only nonhostile creatures in this fiercely Satanic stronghold are dead: in one of a series of blackly comic blunders, Lockwood compliments Catherine II on what in his decorous way he assumes are her cats, only to learn that the "cats" are just a heap of dead rabbits. In addition, though the kitchen is separate from the central family room, "a vast oak dresser" reaching "to the very roof" of the sitting room is laden with oatcakes, guns, and raw meat: "clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham." Dead or raw flesh and the instruments by which living bodies may be converted into more dead flesh are such distinctive features of the room that even the piles of oatcakes and the "immense pewter dishes ... towering row after row" (chap. 1) suggest that, like hell or the land at the top of the beanstalk, Wuthering Heights is the abode of some particularly bloodthirsty giant.

The disorder that quite naturally accompanies the hatred, violence, and death that prevail at Wuthering Heights on Lockwood's first visits leads to more of the city-bred gentleman's blunders, in particular his inability to fathom the relationships among the three principal members of the household's pseudo-family—Catherine II, Hareton, and Heathcliff. First he suggests that the girl is Heathcliff's "amiable lady," then surmises that Hareton is "the favoured possessor of the beneficent fairy" (chap. 2). His phrases, like most of his assumptions, parody the sentimentality of fictions that

keep women in their "place" by defining them as beneficent fairies or amiable ladies. Heathcliff, perceiving this, adds a third stereotype to the discussion: "You would intimate that [my wife's] spirit has taken the form of ministering angel," he comments with the "almost diabolical sneer" of a Satanic literary critic. But of course, though Lockwood's thinking is stereotypical, he is right to expect some familial relationship among his tea-table companions, and right too to be daunted by the hellish lack of relationship among them. For though Hareton, Heathcliff, and Catherine II are all in some sense related, the primordial schisms that have overwhelmed the Heights with hatred and violence have divided them from the human orderliness represented by the ties of kinship. Thus just as Milton's hell consists of envious and (in the poet's view) equality-mad devils jostling for position, so these inhabitants of Wuthering Heights seem to live in chaos without the structuring principle of heaven's hierarchical chain of being, and therefore without the heavenly harmony God the Father's ranking of virtues, thrones, and powers makes possible. For this reason Catherine sullenly refuses to do anything "except what I please" (chap. 4), the servant Zillah vociferously rebukes Hareton for laughing, and old Joseph—whose viciously parodic religion seems here to represent a hellish joke at heaven's expense—lets the dogs loose on Linton without consulting his "maister," Heathcliff.

In keeping with this problem of "equality," a final and perhaps definitive sign of the hellishness that has enveloped Wuthering Heights at the time of Lockwood's first visits is the blinding snowfall that temporarily imprisons the by now unwilling guest in the home of his infernal hosts. Pathless as the kingdom of the damned, the "billowy white ocean" of cold that surrounds Wuthering Heights recalls the freezing polar sea on which Frankenstein, Walton; the monster—and the Ancient Mariner—voyaged. It recalls, too, the "deep snow and ice" of Milton's hell, "A gulf profound as that *Serbonian* Bog ... Where Armies whole have sunk" and where "by harpy-footed" and no doubt rather Heathcliff-ish "Furies hal'd / ... all the damn'd / Are brought ... to starve in Ice" (*PL* 2. 592–600). But of course, as *King Lear* implies, hell is simply another word for uncontrolled "nature," and here as elsewhere *Wuthering Heights* follows *Lear's* model.

Engulfing the Earnshaws' ancestral home and the Lintons', too, in a blizzard of destruction, hellish nature traps and freezes everyone in the isolation of a "perfect misanthropist's heaven." And again, as in *Lear* this hellish nature is somehow female or associated with femaleness, like an angry goddess shaking locks of ice and introducing Lockwood (and his readers) to the female rage that will be a central theme in *Wuthering Heights*. The femaleness of this "natural" hell is suggested, too, by its likeness to the "false" material creation Robert Graves analyzed so well in *The White Goddess*. Female nature

has risen, it seems, in a storm of protest, just as the Sin-like dog Juno rises in a fury when Lockwood "unfortunately indulge[s] in winking and making faces" at her while musing on his heartless treatment of a "goddess" to whom he never "told" his love (chap. 1). Finally, that the storm is both hellish and female is made clearest of all by Lockwood's second visionary dream. Out of the tapping of branches, out of the wind and swirling snow, like an icy-fingered incarnation of the storm rising in protest against the patriarchal sermon of "Jabes Branderham," appears that ghostly female witch-child the *original* Catherine Earnshaw, who has now been "a waif for twenty years."

* * *

Why is Wuthering Heights so Miltonically hellish? And what happened to Catherine Earnshaw? Why has she become a demonic, storm-driven ghost? The "real" etiological story of *Wuthering Heights* begins, as Lockwood learns from his "human fixture" Nelly Dean, with a random weakening of the fabric of ordinary human society. Once upon a time, somewhere in what mythically speaking qualifies as pre-history or what Eliade calls "illo tempore," there is/was a primordial family, the Earnshaws, who trace their lineage back at least as far as the paradigmatic Renaissance inscription "1500 Hareton Earnshaw" over their "principal doorway." And one fine summer morning toward the end of the eighteenth century, the "old master" of the house decides to take a walking tour of sixty miles to Liverpool (chap. 4). His decision, like Lear's decision to divide his kingdom, is apparently quite arbitrary, one of those mystifying psychic *données* for which the fictional convention of "once upon a time" was devised. Perhaps it means, like Lear's action, that he is half-consciously beginning to prepare for death. In any case, his ritual questions to his two children—an older son and a younger daughter—and to their servant Nelly are equally stylized and arbitrary, as are the children's answers. "What shall I bring you?" the old master asks, like the fisherman to whom the flounder gave three wishes. And the children reply, as convention dictates, by requesting their heart's desires. In other words, they reveal their true selves, just as a father contemplating his own ultimate absence from their lives might have hoped they would.

Strangely enough, however, only the servant Nelly's heart's desire is sensible and conventional: she asks for (or, rather, accepts the promise of) a pocketful of apples and pears. Hindley, on the other hand, the son who is destined to be next master of the household, does not ask for a particularly masterful gift. His wish, indeed, seems frivolous in the context of the harsh world of the Heights. He asks for a fiddle, betraying both a secret, soft-hearted desire for culture and an almost decadent lack of virile purpose. Stranger still

is Catherine's wish for a whip. "She could ride any horse in the stable," says Nelly, but in the fairy-tale context of this narrative that realistic explanation hardly seems to suffice,[23] for, symbolically, the small Catherine's longing for a whip seems like a powerless younger daughter's yearning for power.

Of course, as we might expect from our experience of fairy tales, at least one of the children receives the desired boon. Catherine gets her whip. She gets it figuratively—in the form of a "gypsy brat"—rather than literally, but nevertheless "it" (both whip and brat) functions just as she must unconsciously have hoped it would, smashing her rival-brother's fiddle and making a desirable third among the children in the family so as to insulate her from the pressure of her brother's domination. (That there should always have been three children in the family is clear from the way other fairytale rituals of three are observed, and also from the fact that Heathcliff is given the name of a dead son, perhaps even the true oldest son, as if he were a reincarnation of the lost child.)

Having received her deeply desired whip, Catherine now achieves, as Hillis Miller and Leo Bersani have noticed, an extraordinary fullness of being.[24] The phrase may seem pretentiously metaphysical (certainly critics like Q. D. Leavis have objected to such phrases on those grounds)[25] but in discussing the early paradise from which Catherine and Heathcliff eventually fall we are trying to describe elusive psychic states, just as we would in discussing Wordsworth's visionary childhood, Frankenstein's youth before he "learned" that he was (the creator of) a monster, or even the prelapsarian sexuality of Milton's Adam and Eve. And so, like Freud who was driven to grope among such words as *oceanic* when he tried to explain the heaven that lies about us in our infancy, we are obliged to use the paradoxical and metaphorical language of mysticism: phrases like *wholeness*, *fullness of being*, and *androgyny* come inevitably to mind.[26] All three, as we shall see, apply, to Catherine, or more precisely to Catherine-Heathcliff.

In part Catherine's new wholeness results from a very practical shift in family dynamics. Heathcliff as a fantasy replacement of the dead oldest brother does in fact supplant Hindley in the old master's affections, and therefore he functions as a tool of the dispossessed younger sister whose "whip" he is. Specifically, he enables her for the first time to get possession of the kingdom of Wuthering Heights, which under her rule threatens to become, like Gondal, a queendom. In addition to this, however, Heathcliff's presence gives the girl a fullness of being that goes beyond power in household politics, because as Catherine's whip he is (and she herself recognizes this) an alternative self or double for her, a complementary addition to her being who fleshes out all her lacks the way a bandage might staunch a wound. Thus in her union with him she becomes, like Manfred in his union with his sister

Astarte, a perfect androgyne. As devoid of sexual awareness as Adam and Eve were in the prelapsarian garden, she sleeps with her whip, her other half, every night in the primordial fashion of the countryside. Gifted with that innocent, unselfconscious sexual energy which Blake saw as eternal delight, she has "ways with her," according to Nelly, "such as I never saw a child take up before" (chap. 5). And if Heathcliff's is the body that does her will—strong, dark, proud, and a native speaker of "gibberish" rather than English—she herself is an "unfeminine" instance of transcendently vital spirit. For she is never docile, never submissive, never ladylike. On the contrary, her joy—and the Coleridgean word is not too strong—is in what Milton's Eve is never allowed: a tongue "always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same," and "ready words turning Joseph's religious curses into ridicule... and doing just what her father hated most" (chap. 5).

Perverse as it may seem, this paradise into which Heathcliff's advent has transformed Wuthering Heights for the young Catherine is as authentic a fantasy for women as Milton's Eden was for men, though Milton's misogynistically cowed daughters have rarely had the revisionary courage to spell out so many of the terms of their dream. Still, that the historical process does yield moments when that feminist dream of wholeness has real consequences is another point Brontë wishes us to consider, just as she wishes to convey her rueful awareness that, given the prior strength of patriarchal misogyny, those consequences may be painful as well as paradisal. Producing Heathcliff from beneath his greatcoat as if enacting a mock birth, old Mr. Earnshaw notes at once the equivocal nature of Catherine's whip: "You must e'en take it as a gift of God, though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil" (chap. 4). His ambivalence is well-founded: strengthened by Heathcliff, Catherine becomes increasingly rebellious against the parodic patriarchal religion Joseph advocates, and thus, too, increasingly unmindful of her father's discipline. As she gains in rebellious energy, she becomes Satanically "as Gods" in her defiance of such socially constituted authority, and in the end, like a demonic Cordelia (that is, like Cordelia, Goneril, and Regan all in one) she has the last laugh at her father, answering his crucial dying question "Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?" with a defiantly honest question of her own: "Why cannot you always be a good man, Father?" (chap. 5) and then singing him, rather hostilely, "to sleep"—that is, to death.

Catherine's heaven, in other words, is very much like the place such a representative gentleman as Lockwood would call hell, for it is associated (like the hell of *King Lear*) with an ascendent self-willed female who radiates what, as Blake observed, most people consider "diabolical" energy—the creative energy of Los and Satan, the life energy of fierce, raw, uncultivated being.[27] But the ambiguity Catherine's own father perceives in his "gift of God" to

the girl is also manifested in the fact that even some of the authentically hellish qualities Lockwood found at Wuthering Heights on his first two visits, especially the qualities of "hate" (i.e. defiance) and "violence" (i.e. energy), would have seemed to him to characterize the Wuthering Heights of Catherine's heavenly childhood. For Catherine, however, the defiance that might seem like hate was made possible by love (her oneness with Heathcliff) and the energy that seemed like violence was facilitated by the peace (the wholeness) of an undivided self.

Nevertheless, her personal heaven is surrounded, like Milton's Eden, by threats from what she would define as "hell." If, for instance, she had in some part of herself hoped that her father's death would ease the stress of that shadowy patriarchal yoke which was the only cloud on her heaven's horizon, Catherine was mistaken. For paradoxically old Earnshaw's passing brings with it the end to Catherine's Edenic "half savage and hardy and free" girlhood. It brings about a divided world in which the once-androgynous child is to be "laid alone" for the first time. And most important it brings about the accession to power of Hindley, by the patriarchal laws of primogeniture the real heir and thus the new father who is to introduce into the novel the proximate causes of Catherine's (and Heathcliff's) fall and subsequent decline.

* * *

Catherine's sojourn in the earthly paradise of childhood lasts for six years, according to C. P. Sanger's precisely worked-out chronology, but it takes Nelly Dean barely fifteen minutes to relate the episode.[28] Prelapsarian history, as Milton knew, is easy to summarize. Since happiness has few of the variations of despair, to be unfallen is to be static, whereas to fall is to enter the processes of time. Thus Nelly's account of Catherine's fall takes at least several hours, though it also covers six years. And as she describes it, that fall—or process of falling—begins with Hindley's marriage, an event associated for obvious reasons with the young man's inheritance of his father's power and position.

It is odd that Hindley's marriage should precipitate Catherine out of her early heaven because that event installs an adult woman in the small Heights family circle for the first time since the death of Mrs. Earnshaw four years earlier, and as conventional (or even feminist) wisdom would have it, Catherine "needs" a mother-figure to look after her, especially now that she is on the verge of adolescence. But precisely because she and Heathcliff are twelve years old and growing up, the arrival of Frances is the worst thing that could happen to her. For Frances, as Nelly's narrative indicates, is a model young lady, a creature of a species Catherine, safely sequestered in

her idiosyncratic Eden, has had as little chance of encountering as Eve had of meeting a talking serpent before the time came for her to fall.

Of course, Frances is no serpent. On the contrary, light-footed and fresh-complexioned, she seems much more like a late eighteenth-century model of the Victorian angel in the house, and certainly her effect upon Hindley has been both to subdue him and to make him more ethereal. "He had grown sparer, and lost his colour, and spoke and dressed quite differently," Nelly notes (chap. 6); he even proposes to convert one room into a parlor, an amenity Wuthering Heights has never had. Hindley has in fact become a cultured man, so that in gaining a ladylike bride he has, as it were, gained the metaphorical fiddle that was his heart's desire when he was a boy.

It is no doubt inevitable that Hindley's fiddle and Catherine's whip cannot peaceably coexist. Certainly the early smashing of the fiddle by the "whip" hinted at such a problem, and so perhaps it would not be entirely frivolous to think of the troubles that now ensue for Catherine and Heathcliff as the fiddle's revenge. But even without pressing this conceit we can see that Hindley's angel/fiddle is a problematical representative of what is now introduced as the "heavenly" realm of culture. For one thing, her ladylike sweetness is only skin-deep. Leo Bersani remarks that the distinction between the children at the Heights and those at the Grange is the difference between "aggressively selfish children" and "whiningly selfish children."[29] If this is so, Frances foreshadows the children at the Grange—the children of genteel culture—since "her affection [toward Catherine] tired very soon [and] she grew peevish," at which point the now gentlemanly Hindley becomes "tyrannical" in just the way his position as the household's new *paterfamilias* encourages him to be. His tyranny consists, among other things, in his attempt to impose what Blake would call a Urizenic heavenly order at the heretofore anti-hierarchical Heights. The servants Nelly and Joseph, he decrees, must know their place—which is "the back kitchen"—and Heathcliff, because he is socially nobody, must be exiled from culture: deprived of "the instruction of the curate" and cast out into "the fields" (chap. 6).

Frances's peevishness, however, is not just a sign that her ladylike ways are inimical to the prelapsarian world of Catherine's childhood; it is also a sign that, as the twelve-year-old girl must perceive it, to be a lady is to be diseased. As Nelly hints, Frances is tubercular, and any mention of death causes her to act "half silly," as if in some part of herself she knows she is doomed, or as if she is already half a ghost. And she is. As a metaphor, Frances's tuberculosis means that she is in an advanced state of just that social "consumption" which will eventually kill Catherine, too, so that the thin and silly bride functions for the younger girl as a sort of premonition or ghost of what she herself will become.

But of course the social disease of ladyhood, with its attendant silliness or madness, is only one of the threats Frances incarnates for twelve-year-old Catherine. Another, perhaps even more sinister because harder to confront, is associated with the fact that though Catherine may well need a mother—in the sense in which Eve or Mary Shelley's monster needed a mother/model—Frances does not and cannot function as a good mother for her. The original Earnshaws were shadowy but mythically grand, like the primordial "true" parents of fairy tales (or like most parents seen through the eyes of preadolescent children). Hindley and Frances, on the other hand, the new Earnshaws, are troublesomely real though as oppressive as the step-parents in fairy tales.[30] To say that they are in some way like step-parents, however, is to say that they seem to Catherine like transformed or alien parents, and since this is as much a function of her own vision as of the older couple's behavior, we must assume that it has something to do with the changes wrought by the girl's entrance into adolescence.

Why do parents begin to seem like step-parents when their children reach puberty? The ubiquitousness of step-parents in fairy tales dealing with the crises of adolescence suggests that the phenomenon is both deep-seated and widespread. One explanation—and the one that surely accounts for Catherine Earnshaw's experience—is that when the child gets old enough to become conscious of her parents as sexual beings they really do begin to seem like fiercer, perhaps even (as in the case of Hindley and Frances) younger versions of their "original" selves. Certainly they begin to be more threatening (that is, more "peevish" and "tyrannical") if only because the child's own sexual awakening disturbs them almost as much as their sexuality, now truly comprehended, bothers the child. Thus the crucial passage from Catherine's diary which Lockwood reads even before Nelly begins her narration is concerned not just with Joseph's pious oppressions but with the cause of those puritanical onslaughts, the fact that she and Heathcliff must shiver in the garret because "Hindley and his wife [are basking] downstairs before a comfortable fire ... kissing and talking nonsense by the hour—foolish palaver we should be ashamed of." Catherine's defensiveness is clear. She (and Heathcliff) are troubled by the billing and cooing of her "step-parents" because she understands, perhaps for the first time, the sexual nature of what a minute later she calls Hindley's "paradise on the hearth" and—worse—understands its relevance to her.

Flung into the kitchen, "where Joseph asseverated, 'owd Nick' would fetch us," Catherine and Heathcliff each seek "a separate nook to await his advent." For Catherine-and-Heathcliff—that is, Catherine and Catherine, or Catherine and her whip—have already been separated from each other, not just by tyrannical Hindley, the *deus* produced by time's *machina*, but by

the emergence of Catherine's own sexuality, with all the terrors which attend that phenomenon in a puritanical and patriarchal society. And just as peevish Frances incarnates the social illness of ladyhood, so also she quite literally embodies the fearful as well as the frivolous consequences of sexuality. Her foolish if paradisaical palaver on the hearth, after all, leads straight to the death her earlier ghostliness and silliness had predicted. Her sexuality's destructiveness was even implied by the minor but vicious acts of injustice with which it was associated—arbitrarily pulling Heathcliff's hair, for instance—but the sex–death equation, with which Milton and Mary Shelley were also concerned, really surfaces when Frances's and Hindley's son, Hareton, is born. At that time, Kenneth, the lugubrious physician who functions like a medical Greek chorus throughout *Wuthering Heights*, informs Hindley that the winter will "probably finish" Frances.

To Catherine, however, it must appear that the murderous agent is not winter but sex, for as she is beginning to learn, the Miltonic testaments of her world have told woman that "thy sorrow I will greatly multiply / By thy Conception ..." (*PL* 10. 192–95) and the maternal image of Sin birthing Death reinforces this point. That Frances's decline and death accompany Catherine's fall is metaphysically appropriate, therefore. And it is dramatically appropriate as well, for Frances's fate foreshadows the catastrophes which will follow Catherine's fall into sexuality just as surely as the appearance of Sin and Death on earth followed Eve's fall. That Frances's death also, incidentally, yields Hareton—the truest scion of the Earnshaw clan—is also profoundly appropriate. For Hareton is, after all, a resurrected version of the original patriarch whose name is written over the great main door of the house, amid a "wilderness of shameless little boys." Thus his birth marks the beginning of the historical as well as the psychological decline and fall of that Satanic female principle which has temporarily usurped his "rightful" place at Wuthering Heights.

* * *

Catherine's fall, however, is caused by a patriarchal past and present, besides being associated with a patriarchal future. It is significant, then, that her problems begin—violently enough—when she literally falls down and is bitten by a male bulldog, a sort of guard/god from Thrushcross Grange. Though many readers overlook this point, Catherine does not go to the Grange when she is twelve years old. On the contrary, the Grange seizes her and "holds [her] fast," a metaphoric action which emphasizes the turbulent and inexorable nature of the psychosexual *rites de passage* *Wuthering Heights* describes, just as the ferociously masculine bull/dog—as

a symbolic representative of Thrushcross Grange—contrasts strikingly with the ascendancy at the Heights of the hellish female bitch goddess alternately referred to as "Madam" and "Juno."[31]

Realistically speaking, Catherine and Heathcliff have been driven in the direction of Thrushcross Grange by their own desire to escape not only the pietistic tortures Joseph inflicts but also, more urgently, just that sexual awareness irritatingly imposed by Hindley's romantic paradise. Neither sexuality nor its consequences can be evaded, however, and the farther the children run the closer they come to the very fate they secretly wish to avoid. Racing "from the top of the Heights to the park without stopping," they plunge from the periphery of Hindley's paradise (which was transforming their heaven into a hell) to the boundaries of a place that at first seems authentically heavenly, a place full of light and softness and color, a "splendid place carpeted with crimson ... and [with] a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers" (chap. 6). Looking in the window, the outcasts speculate that if they were inside such a room "we should have thought ourselves in heaven!" From the outside, at least, the Lintons' elegant haven appears paradisaical. But once the children have experienced its Urizenic interior, they know that in their terms this heaven is hell.

Because the first emissary of this heaven who greets them is the bulldog Skulker, a sort of hellhound posing as a hound of heaven, the wound this almost totemic animal inflicts upon Catherine is as symbolically suggestive as his role in the girl's forced passage from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange. Barefoot, as if to emphasize her "wild child" innocence, Catherine is exceptionally vulnerable, as a wild child must inevitably be, and when the dog is "throttled off, his huge, purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth ... his pendant lips [are] streaming with bloody slaver." "Look ... how her foot bleeds," Edgar Linton exclaims, and "She may be lamed for life," his mother anxiously notes (chap. 6). Obviously such bleeding has sexual connotations, especially when it occurs in a pubescent girl. Crippling injuries to the feet are equally resonant, moreover, almost always signifying symbolic castration, as in the stories of Oedipus, Achilles, and the Fisher King. Additionally, it hardly needs to be noted that Skulker's equipment for aggression—his huge purple tongue and pendant lips, for instance—sounds extraordinarily phallic. In a Freudian sense, then, the imagery of this brief but violent episode hints that Catherine has been simultaneously catapulted into adult female sexuality *and* castrated.

How can a girl "become a woman" and be castrated (that is, desexed) at the same time? Considering how Freudian its iconographic assumptions are, the question is disingenuous, for not only in Freud's terms but in

feminist terms, as Elizabeth Janeway and Juliet Mitchell have both observed, femaleness—implying "penis envy"—quite reasonably *means* castration. "No woman has been deprived of a penis; she never had one to begin with," Janeway notes, commenting on Freud's crucial "Female Sexuality" (1931).

> But she *has* been deprived of something else that men enjoy namely, autonomy, freedom, and the power to control her destiny. By insisting, falsely, on female deprivation of the male organ, Freud is pointing to an actual deprivation and one of which he was clearly aware. In Freud's time the advantages enjoyed by the male sex over the inferior female were, of course, even greater than at present, and they were also accepted to a much larger extent, as being inevitable, inescapable. Women were evident social castrates, and the mutilation of their potentiality as achieving human creatures was quite analogous to the physical wound.[32]

But if such things were true in Freud's time, they were even truer in Emily Brontë's. And certainly the hypothesis that Catherine Earnshaw has become in some sense a "social castrate," that she has been "lamed for life," is borne out by her treatment at Thrushcross Grange—and by the treatment of her alter ego, Heathcliff. For, assuming that she is a "young lady," the entire Linton household cossets the wounded (but still healthy) girl as if she were truly an invalid. Indeed, feeding her their alien rich food—negus and cakes from their own table—washing her feet, combing her hair, dressing her in "enormous slippers," and wheeling her about like a doll, they seem to be enacting some sinister ritual of initiation, the sort of ritual that has traditionally weakened mythic heroines from Persephone to Snow White. And because he is "a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway," the Lintons banish Heathcliff from their parlor, thereby separating Catherine from the lover/brother whom she herself defines as her strongest and most necessary "self." For five weeks now, she will be at the mercy of the Grange's heavenly gentility.

To say that Thrushcross Grange is genteel or cultured and that it therefore seems "heavenly" is to say, of course, that it is the opposite of Wuthering Heights. And certainly at every point the two houses are opposed to each other, as if each in its self-assertion must absolutely deny the other's being. Like Milton and Blake, Emily Brontë thought in polarities. Thus, where Wuthering Heights is essentially a great parlorless room built around a huge central hearth, a furnace of dark energy like the fire of Los, Thrushcross Grange has a parlor notable not for heat but for light, for "a pure white ceiling bordered by gold" with "a shower of glass-drops" in

the center that seems to parody the "sovran vital Lamp" (*PL* 3. 22) which illuminates Milton's heaven of Right Reason. Where Wuthering Heights, moreover, is close to being naked or "raw" in Lévi-Strauss' sense—its floors uncarpeted, most of its inhabitants barely literate, even the meat on its shelves open to inspection—Thrushcross Grange is clothed and "cooked": carpeted in crimson, bookish, feeding on cakes and tea and negus.[33] It follows from this, then, that where Wuthering Heights is functional, even its dogs working sheepdogs or hunters, Thrushcross Grange (though guarded by bulldogs) appears to be decorative or aesthetic, the home of lapdogs as well as ladies. And finally, therefore, Wuthering Heights in its stripped functional rawness is essentially anti-hierarchical and egalitarian as the aspirations of Eve and Satan, while Thrushcross Grange reproduces the hierarchical chain of being that Western culture traditionally proposes as heaven's decree.

For all these reasons, Catherine Earnshaw, together with her whip Heathcliff, has at Wuthering Heights what Emily Dickinson would call a "Barefoot-Rank."[34] But at Thrushcross Grange, clad first in enormous, crippling slippers and later in "a long cloth habit which she [is] obliged to hold up with both hands" (chap. 7) in order to walk, she seems on the verge of becoming, again in Dickinson's words, a "Lady [who] dare not lift her Veil / For fear it be dispelled" (J. 421). For in comparison to Wuthering Heights, Thrushcross Grange is, finally, the home of concealment and doubleness, a place where, as we shall see, reflections are separated from their owners like souls from bodies, so that the lady in anxiety "peers beyond her mesh— / And wishes—and denies— /Lest Interview—annul a want /That Image—satisfies." And it is here, therefore, at heaven's mercy, that Catherine Earnshaw learns "to adopt a double character without exactly intending to deceive anyone" (chap. 8).

In fact, for Catherine Earnshaw, Thrushcross Grange in those five fatal weeks becomes a Palace of Instruction, as Brontë ironically called the equivocal schools of life where her adolescent Gondals were often incarcerated. But rather than learning, like A. G. A. and her cohorts, to rule a powerful nation, Catherine must learn to rule herself, or so the Lintons and her brother decree. She must learn to repress her own impulses, must girdle her own energies with the iron stays of "reason." Having fallen into the decorous "heaven" of femaleness, Catherine must become a lady. And just as her entrance into the world of Thrushcross Grange was forced and violent, so this process by which she is obliged to accommodate herself to that world is violent and painful, an unsentimental education recorded by a practiced, almost sadistically accurate observer. For the young Gondals, too, had had a difficult time of it in their Palace of Instruction: far from being wonderful Golden Rule days, their school days were spent mostly in

dungeons and torture cells, where their elders starved them into submission or self-knowledge.

That education for Emily Brontë is almost always fearful, even agonizing, may reflect the Brontës' own traumatic experiences at the Clergy Daughters School and elsewhere.[35] But it may also reflect in a more general way the repressiveness with which the nineteenth century educated all its young ladies, strapping them to backboards and forcing them to work for hours at didactic samplers until the more high-spirited girls—the Catherine Earnshaws and Catherine Morlands—must have felt, like the inhabitants of Kafka's penal colony, that the morals and maxims of patriarchy were being embroidered on their own skins. To mention Catherine Morland here is not to digress. As we have seen, Austen did not subject her heroine to education as a gothic/Gondalian torture, except parodically. Yet even Austen's parody suggests that for a girl like Catherine Morland the school of life inevitably inspires an almost instinctive fear, just as it would for A. G. A. "Heavenly" Northanger Abbey may somehow conceal a prison cell, Catherine suspects, and she develops this notion by sensing (as Henry Tilney cannot) that the female romances she is reading are in some sense the disguised histories of her own life.

In Catherine Earnshaw's case, these points are made even more subtly than in the Gondal poems or in *Northanger Abbey*, for Catherine's education in doubleness, in ladylike decorum meaning also ladylike deceit, is marked by an actual doubling or fragmentation of her personality. Thus though it is ostensibly Catherine who is being educated, it is Heathcliff—her rebellious alter ego, her whip, her id—who is exiled to a prison cell, as if to implement delicate Isabella Linton's first horrified reaction to him: "Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar" (chap. 6). Not in the cellar but in the garret, Heathcliff is locked up and, significantly, starved, while Catherine, daintily "cutting up the wing of a goose," practices table manners below. Even more significantly, however, she too is finally unable to eat her dinner and retreats under the table cloth to weep for her imprisoned playmate. To Catherine, Heathcliff is "more myself than I am," as she later famously tells Nelly, and so his literal starvation is symbolic of her more terrible because more dangerous spiritual starvation, just as her literal wound at Thrushcross Grange is also a metaphorical deathblow to *his* health and power. For divided from each other, the once androgynous Heathcliff and Catherine are now conquered by the concerted forces of patriarchy, the Lintons of Thrushcross Grange acting together with Hindley and Frances, their emissaries at the Heights.

It is, appropriately enough, during this period, that Frances gives birth to Hareton, the new patriarch-to-be, and dies, having fulfilled her painful function in the book and in the world. During this period, too, Catherine's

education in ladylike self-denial causes her dutifully to deny her self and decide to marry Edgar. For when she says of Heathcliff that "he's more myself than I am," she means that as her exiled self the nameless "gipsy" really does preserve in his body more of her original being than she retains: even in his deprivation he seems whole and sure, while she is now entirely absorbed in the ladylike wishing and denying Dickinson's poem describes. Thus, too, it is during this period of loss and transition that Catherine obsessively inscribes on her windowsill the crucial writing Lockwood finds, writing which announces from the first Emily Brontë's central concern with identity: "a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton" (chap. 3). In the light of this repeated and varied name it is no wonder, finally, that Catherine knows Heathcliff is "more myself than I am," for he has only a single name, while she has so many that she may be said in a sense to have none. Just as triumphant self-discovery is the ultimate goal of the male *Bildungsroman*, anxious self-denial, Brontë suggests, is the ultimate product of a female education. What Catherine, or any girl, must learn is that she does not know her own name, and therefore cannot know either who she is or whom she is destined to be.

It has often been argued that Catherine's anxiety and uncertainty about her own identity represents a moral failing, a fatal flaw in her character which leads to her inability to choose between Edgar and Heathcliff. Heathcliff's reproachful "Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy?" (chap. 15) represents a Blakeian form of this moral criticism, a contemptuous suggestion that "those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained."[36] The more vulgar and commonsensical attack of the Leavisites, on the other hand—the censorious notion that "maturity" means being strong enough to choose not to have your cake and eat it too—represents what Mark Kinkead-Weekes calls "the view from the Grange."[37] To talk of morality in connection with Catherine's fall—and specifically in connection with her self-deceptive decision to marry Edgar—seems pointless, however, for morality only becomes a relevant term where there are meaningful choices.

As we have seen, Catherine has no meaningful choices. Driven from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange by her brother's marriage, seized by Thrushcross Grange and held fast in the jaws of reason, education, decorum, she cannot do otherwise than as she does, must marry Edgar because there is no one else for her to marry and a lady must marry. Indeed, her self-justifying description of her love for Edgar—"I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says" (chap. 9)—is a bitter parody of a genteel romantic declaration which shows how effective her education has been in indoctrinating her with the literary

romanticism deemed suitable for young ladies, the swooning "femininity" that identifies all energies with the charisma of fathers/lovers/husbands. Her concomitant explanation that it would "degrade" her to marry Heathcliff is an equally inevitable product of her education, for her fall into ladyhood has been accompanied by Heathcliff's reduction to an equivalent position of female powerlessness, and Catherine has learned, correctly, that if it is degrading to be a woman it is even more degrading to be *like* a woman. Just as Milton's Eve, therefore, being already fallen, had no meaningful choice despite Milton's best efforts to prove otherwise, so Catherine has no real choice. Given the patriarchal nature of culture, women must fall—that is, they are already fallen because doomed to fall.

In the shadow of this point, however, moral censorship is merely redundant, a sort of interrogative restatement of the novel's central fact. Heathcliff's Blakeian reproach is equally superfluous, except insofar as it is not moral but etiological, a question one part of Catherine asks another, like her later passionate "Why am I so changed?" For as Catherine herself perceives, social and biological forces have fiercely combined against her. God as—in W. H. Auden's words—a "Victorian papa" has hurled her from the equivocal natural paradise she calls "heaven" and He calls "hell" into His idea of "heaven" where she will break her heart with weeping to come back to the Heights. Her speculative, tentative "mad" speech to Nelly captures, finally, both the urgency and the inexorability of her fall. "Supposing at twelve years old, I had been wrenched from the Heights ... and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that time, and been converted at a stroke into Mrs. Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange, and the wife of a stranger: an exile, and outcast, thenceforth, from what had been my world." In terms of the psychodramatic action of *Wuthering Heights*, only Catherine's use of the word *supposing* is here a rhetorical strategy; the rest of her speech is absolutely accurate, and places her subsequent actions beyond good and evil, just as it suggests, in yet another Blakeian reversal of customary terms, that her madness may really be sanity.

* * *

Catherine Earnshaw Linton's decline follows Catherine Earnshaw's fall. Slow at first, it is eventually as rapid, sickening, and deadly as the course of Brontë's own consumption was to be. And the long slide toward death of the body begins with what appears to be an irreversible death of the soul—with Catherine's fatalistic acceptance of Edgar's offer and her consequent self-imprisonment in the role of "Mrs. Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange." It is, of course, her announcement of this decision to Nelly, overheard by

Heathcliff, which leads to Heathcliff's self-exile from the Heights and thus definitively to Catherine's psychic fragmentation. And significantly, her response to the departure of her true self is a lapse into illness which both signals the beginning of her decline and foreshadows its mortal end. Her words to Nelly the morning after Heathcliff's departure are therefore symbolically as well as dramatically resonant "Shut the window, Nelly, I'm starving!" (chap. 9).

As Dorothy van Ghent has shown, windows in *Wuthering Heights* consistently represent openings into possibility, apertures through which subversive otherness can enter, or wounds out of which respectability can escape like flowing blood.[38] It is, after all, on the window ledge that Lockwood finds Catherine's different names obsessively inscribed, as if the girl had been trying to decide which self to let in the window or in which direction she ought to fly after making her own escape down the branches of the neighboring pine. It is through the same window that the ghost of Catherine Linton extends her icy fingers to the horrified visitor. And it is a window at the Grange that Catherine, in her "madness," begs Nelly to open so that she can have one breath of the wind that "comes straight down the moor" (chap. 12). "Open the window again wide, fasten it open!" she cries, then rises and, predicting her own death, seems almost ready to start on her journey homeward up the moor. ("I could not trust her alone by the gaping lattice," Nelly comments wisely.) But besides expressing a general wish to escape from "this shattered prison" of her body, her marriage, her self, her life, Catherine's desire now to *open* the window refers specifically back to that moment three years earlier when she had chosen instead to close it, chosen to inflict on herself the imprisonment and starvation that as part of her education had been inflicted on her double, Heathcliff.

Imprisonment leads to madness, solipsism, paralysis, as Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*, some of Brontë's Gondal poems, and countless other gothic and neo-gothic tales suggest. Starvation—both in the modern sense of malnutrition and the archaic Miltonic sense of freezing ("to starve in ice")—leads to weakness, immobility, death. During her decline, starting with both starvation and imprisonment, Catherine passes through all these grim stages of mental and physical decay. At first she seems (to Nelly anyway) merely somewhat "headstrong." Powerless without her whip, keenly conscious that she has lost the autonomy of her hardy and free girlhood, she gets her way by indulging in tantrums, wheedling, manipulating, so that Nelly's optimistic belief that she and Edgar "were really in possession of a deep and growing happiness" contrasts ironically with the housekeeper's simultaneous admission that Catherine "was never subject to depression of spirits before" the three interlocking events of Heathcliff's departure, her "perilous illness," and her

marriage (chap. 10). But Heathcliff's mysterious reappearance six months after her wedding intensifies rather than cures her symptoms. For his return does not in any way suggest a healing of the wound of femaleness that was inflicted at puberty. Instead, it signals the beginning of "madness," a sort of feverish infection of the wound. Catherine's marriage to Edgar has now inexorably locked her into a social system that denies her autonomy, and thus, as psychic symbolism, Heathcliff's return represents the return of her true self's desires without the rebirth of her former powers. And desire without power, as Freud and Blake both knew, inevitably engenders disease.

If we understand all the action that takes place at Thrushcross Grange between Edgar, Catherine, and Heathcliff from the moment of Heathcliff's reappearance until the time of Catherine's death to be ultimately psychodramatic, a grotesque playing out of Catherine's emotional fragmentation on a "real" stage, then further discussion of her sometimes genteelly Victorian, sometimes fiercely Byronic decline becomes almost unnecessary, its meaning is so obvious. Edgar's autocratic hostility to Heathcliff—that is, to Catherine's desirous self, her independent will—manifests itself first in his attempt to have her entertain the returned "gipsy" or "ploughboy" in the kitchen because he doesn't belong in the parlor. But soon Edgar's hatred results in a determination to expel Heathcliff entirely from his house because he fears the effects of this demonic intruder, with all he signifies, not only upon his wife but upon his sister. His fear is justified because, as we shall see, the Satanic rebellion Heathcliff introduces into the parlors of "heaven" contains the germ of a terrible disease with patriarchy that causes women like Catherine and Isabella to try to escape their imprisonment in roles and houses by running away, by starving themselves, and finally by dying.

Because Edgar is so often described as "soft," "weak," slim, fair-haired, even effeminate-looking, the specifically patriarchal nature of his feelings toward Heathcliff may not be immediately evident. Certainly many readers have been misled by his almost stylized angelic qualities to suppose that the rougher, darker Heathcliff incarnates masculinity in contrast to Linton's effeminacy. The returned Heathcliff, Nelly says, "had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man, beside whom my master seemed quite slender and youthlike. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army" (chap. 10). She even seems to acquiesce in his superior maleness. But her constant, reflexive use of the phrase "my master" for Edgar tells us otherwise, as do some of her other expressions. At this point in the novel, anyway, Heathcliff is always merely "Heathcliff" while Edgar is variously "Mr. Linton," "my master," "Mr. Edgar," and "the master," all phrases conveying the power and status he has independent of his physical strength.

In fact, as Milton also did, Emily Brontë demonstrates that the power of the patriarch, Edgar's power, begins with words, for heaven is populated by "*spirits* Masculine," and as above, so below. Edgar does not need a strong, conventionally masculine body, because his mastery is contained in books, wills, testaments, leases, titles, rent-rolls, documents, languages, all the paraphernalia by which patriarchal culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. Indeed, even without Nelly's designation of him as "the master," his notable bookishness would define him as a patriarch, for he rules his house from his library as if to parody that male education in Latin and Greek, privilege and prerogative, which so infuriated Milton's daughters.[39] As a figure in the psychodrama of Catherine's decline, then, he incarnates the education in young ladyhood that has commanded her to learn her "place." In Freudian terms he would no doubt be described as her superego, the internalized guardian of morality and culture, with Heathcliff, his opposite, functioning as her childish and desirous id.

But at the same time, despite Edgar's superegoistic qualities, Emily Brontë shows that his patriarchal rule, like Thrushcross Grange itself, is based on physical as well as spiritual violence. For her, as for Blake, heaven kills. Thus, at a word from Thrushcross Grange, Skulker is let loose, and Edgar's magistrate father cries "What prey, Robert?" to his manservant, explaining that he fears thieves because "yesterday was my rent day." Similarly, Edgar, having decided that he has "humored" Catherine long enough, calls for two strong men servants to support his authority and descends into the kitchen to evict Heathcliff. The patriarch, Brontë notes, needs words, not muscles, and Heathcliff's derisive language paradoxically suggests understanding of the true male power Edgar's "soft" exterior conceals: "Cathy, this lamb of yours threatens like a bull!" (chap. 11). Even more significant, perhaps, is the fact that when Catherine locks Edgar in alone with her and Heathcliff—once more imprisoning herself while ostensibly imprisoning the hated master—this apparently effeminate, "milk-blooded coward" frees himself by striking Heathcliff a breathtaking blow on the throat "that would have levelled a slighter man."

Edgar's victory once again recapitulates that earlier victory of Thrushcross Grange over Wuthering Heights which also meant the victory of a Urizenic "heaven" over a delightful and energetic "hell." At the same time, it seals Catherine's doom, locking her into her downward spiral of self-starvation. And in doing this it finally explains what is perhaps Nelly's most puzzling remark about the relationship between Edgar and Catherine. In chapter 8, noting that the love-struck sixteen-year-old Edgar is "doomed, and flies to his fate," the housekeeper sardonically declares that "the soft thing [Edgar] ... possessed the power to depart [from Catherine] as much as

a cat possesses the power to leave a mouse half killed or a bird half eaten." At that point in the novel her metaphor seems odd. Is not headstrong Catherine the hungry cat, and "soft" Edgar the half-eaten mouse? But in fact, as we now see, Edgar all along represented the devouring force that will gnaw and worry Catherine to death, consuming flesh and spirit together. For having fallen into "heaven," she has ultimately—to quote Sylvia Plath—"fallen / Into the stomach of indifference," a social physiology that urgently needs her not so much for herself as for her function.[40]

When we note the significance of such imagery of devouring, as well as the all-pervasive motif of self-starvation in *Wuthering Heights*, the kitchen setting of this crucial confrontation between Edgar and Heathcliff begins to seem more than coincidental. In any case, the episode is followed closely by what C. P. Sanger calls Catherine's "hunger strike" and by her famous mad scene.[41] Another line of Plath's describes the feelings of selflessness that seem to accompany Catherine's realization that she has been reduced to a role, a function, a sort of walking costume: "I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself."[42] For the weakening of Catherine's grasp on the world is most specifically shown by her inability to recognize her own face in the mirror during the mad scene. Explaining to Nelly that she is not mad, she notes that if she were "I should believe you really *were* [a] withered hag, and I should think I *was* under Penistone Crag; and I'm conscious it's night and there are two candles on the table making the black press shine like jet." Then she adds, "It does appear odd—I see a face in it" (chap. 12). But of course, ironically, there is no "black press" in the room, only a mirror in which Catherine sees and repudiates her own image. Her fragmentation has now gone so far beyond the psychic split betokened by her division from Heathcliff that body and image (or body and soul) have separated. Q. D. Leavis would have us believe that his apparently gothic episode, with its allusion to "dark superstitions about premonitions of death, about ghosts and primitive beliefs about the soul ... is a proof of [Emily Brontë's] immaturity at the time of the original conception of *Wuthering Heights*." Leo Bersani, on the other hand, suggests that the scene hints at "the danger of being haunted by alien versions of the self."[43] In a sense, however, the image Catherine sees in the mirror is neither gothic nor alien—though she is alienated from it—but hideously familiar, and further proof that her madness may really equal sanity. Catherine sees in the mirror an image of who and what she has really become in the world's terms: "Mrs. Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange." And oddly enough, this image appears to be stored like an article of clothing, a trousseau-treasure, or again in Plath's words "a featureless, fine / Jew linen,"[44] in one of the cupboards of childhood, the black press from her old room at the Heights.

Because of this connection with childhood, part of the horror of Catherine's vision comes from the question it suggests: was the costume/face always there, waiting in a corner of the little girl's wardrobe? But to ask this question is to ask again, as Frankenstein does, whether Eve was created fallen, whether women are not Education's but "Nature's fools," doomed from the start to be exiles and outcasts despite their illusion that they are hardy and free. When Milton's Eve is for her own good led away from her own image by a superegoistic divine voice which tells her that "What there thou sees fair creature is thyself"—*merely* thyself—does she not in a sense determine Catherine Earnshaw's fall? When, substituting Adam's superior image for her own, she concedes that female "beauty is excell'd by manly grace /And wisdom" (*PL* 4. 490–91) does not her "sane" submission outline the contours of Catherine Earnshaw's rebelliously Blakeian madness? Such questions are only implicit in Catherine's mad mirror vision of herself, but it is important to see that they are implied. Once again, where Shelley clarifies Milton, showing the monster's dutiful disgust with "his" own self-image, Brontë repudiates him, showing how his teachings have doomed her protagonist to what dutiful Nelly considers an insane search for her lost true self. "I'm sure I should be myself were I once more among the heather on those hills," Catherine exclaims, meaning that only a journey back into the androgynous wholeness of childhood could heal the wound her mirror-image symbolizes, the fragmentation that began when she was separated from heather and Heathcliff, and "laid alone" in the first fateful enclosure of her oak-panelled bed. For the mirror-image is one more symbol of the cell in which Catherine has been imprisoned by herself and by society.

To escape from the horrible mirror-enclosure, then, might be to escape from all domestic enclosures, or to begin to try to escape. It is significant that in her madness Catherine tears at her pillow with her teeth, begs Nelly to open the window, and seems "to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she [has] just made" (chap. 12). Liberating feathers from the prison where they had been reduced to objects of social utility, she imagines them reborn as the birds they once were, whole and free, and pictures them "wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor," trying to get back to their nests. A moment later, standing by the window "careless of the frosty air," she imagines her own trip back across the moor to Wuthering Heights, noting that "it's a rough journey, and a sad heart to travel it; and we must pass by Gimmerton Kirk to go that journey! ... But Heathcliff, if I dare you now, will you venture? ... I won't rest till you are with me. I never will!" (chap. 12). For a "fallen" woman, trapped in the distorting mirrors of patriarchy, the journey into death is the only way out, Brontë suggests, and the *Liebestod* is not (as it would be for a male artist, like Keats or Wagner) a mystical but

a practical solution. In the presence of death, after all, "The mirrors are sheeted," to quote Plath yet again.[45]

The masochism of this surrender to what A. Alvarez has called the "savage god" of suicide is plain, not only from Catherine's own words and actions but also from the many thematic parallels between her speeches and Plath's poems.[46] But of course, taken together, self-starvation or anorexia nervosa, masochism, and suicide form a complex of psychoneurotic symptoms that is almost classically associated with female feelings of powerlessness and rage. Certainly the "hunger strike" is a traditional tool of the powerless, as the history of the feminist movement (and many other movements of oppressed peoples) will attest. Anorexia nervosa, moreover, is a sort of mad corollary of the self-starvation that may be a sane strategy for survival. Clinically associated with "a distorted concept of body size"—like Catherine Earnshaw's alienated/familiar image in the mirror—it is fed by the "false sense of power that the faster derives from her starvation," and is associated, psychologists speculate, with "a struggle for control, for a sense of identity, competence, and effectiveness."

But then in a more general sense it can surely be argued that all masochistic or even suicidal behavior expresses the furious power hunger of the powerless. Catherine's whip—now meaning Heathcliff, her "love" for Heathcliff, and also, more deeply, her desire for the autonomy her union with Heathcliff represented—turns against Catherine. She whips herself because she cannot whip the world, and she must whip something. Besides, in whipping herself does she not, perhaps, torment the world? Of this she is, in her powerlessness, uncertain, and her uncertainty leads to further madness, reinforcing the vicious cycle. "O let me not be mad," she might cry, like Lear, as she tears off her own socially prescribed costumes so that she can more certainly feel the descent of the whip she herself has raised. In her rebelliousness Catherine has earlier played alternately the parts of Cordelia and of Goneril and Regan to the Lear of her father and her husband. Now, in her powerlessness, she seems to have herself become a figure like Lear, mourning her lost kingdom and suicidally surrendering herself to the blasts that come straight down the moor.

Nevertheless, though her madness and its setting echo Lear's disintegration much more than, say, Ophelia's, Catherine is different from Lear in a number of crucial ways, the most obvious being the fact that her femaleness dooms her to a function as well as a role, and threatens her, therefore, with the death Frances's fate had predicted. Critics never comment on this point, but the truth is that Catherine is pregnant during both the kitchen scene and the mad scene, and her death occurs at the time of (and ostensibly because of) her "confinement." In the light of this, her anorexia,

her madness, and her masochism become even more fearsomely meaningful. Certainly, for instance, the distorted body that the anorexic imagines for herself is analogous to the distorted body that the pregnant woman really must confront. Can eating produce such a body? The question, mad as it may seem, must be inevitable. In any case, some psychoanalysts have suggested that anorexia, endemic to pubescent girls, reflects a fear of oral impregnation, to which self-starvation would be one obvious response.[47]

But even if a woman accepts, or rather concedes, that she is pregnant, an impulse toward self-starvation would seem to be an equally obvious response to the pregnant woman's inevitable fear of being monstrously inhabited, as well as to her own horror of being enslaved to the species and reduced to a tool of the life process. Excessive ("pathological") morning sickness has traditionally been interpreted as an attempt to vomit up the alien intruder, the child planted in the belly like an incubus.[48] And indeed, if the child has been fathered—as Catherine's has—by a man the woman defines as a stranger, her desire to rid herself of it seems reasonable enough. But what if she must kill herself in the process? This is another question Catherine's masochistic self-starvation implies, especially if we see it as a disguised form of morning sickness. Yet another question is more general: must motherhood, like ladyhood, kill? Is female sexuality necessarily deadly?

To the extent that she answers yes, Brontë swerves once again from Milton, though rather less radically than usual. For when she was separated from her own reflection, Eve was renamed "mother of human race," a title Milton seems to have considered honorifically life-giving despite the dreadful emblem of maternity Sin provided. Catherine's entrance into motherhood, however, darkly parodies even if it does not subvert this story. Certainly childbirth brings death to her (and eventually to Heathcliff) though at the same time it does revitalize the patriarchal order that began to fail at Wuthering Heights with her early assertions of individuality. Birth is, after all, the ultimate fragmentation the self can undergo, just as "confinement" is, for women, the ultimate pun on imprisonment. As if in recognition of this, Catherine's attempt to escape maternity does, if only unconsciously, subvert Milton. For Milton's Eve "knew not eating Death." But Brontë's does. In her refusal to be enslaved to the species, her refusal to be "mother of human race," she closes her mouth on emptiness as, in Plath's words, "on a communion tablet." It is no use, of course. She breaks apart into two Catherines—the old, mad, dead Catherine fathered by Wuthering Heights, and the new, more docile and acceptable Catherine fathered by Thrushcross Grange. But nevertheless, in her defiance Emily Brontë's Eve, like her creator, is a sort of hunger artist, a point Charlotte Brontë acknowledged

when she memorialized her sister in *Shirley*, that other revisionary account of the Genesis of female hunger.[49]

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Catherine's fall and her resulting decline, fragmentation, and death are the obvious subjects of the first half of *Wuthering Heights*. Not quite so obviously, the second half of the novel is concerned with the larger, social consequences of Catherine's fall, which spread out in concentric circles like rings from a stone flung into a river, and which are examined in a number of parallel stories, including some that have already been set in motion at the time of Catherine's death. Isabella, Nelly, Heathcliff, and Catherine II—in one way or another all these characters' lives parallel (or even in a sense contain) Catherine's, as if Brontë were working out a series of alternative versions of the same plot.

Isabella is perhaps the most striking of these parallel figures, for like Catherine she is a headstrong, impulsive "miss" who runs away from home at adolescence. But where Catherine's fall is both fated and unconventional, a fall "upward" from hell to heaven, Isabella's is both willful and conventional. Falling from Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights, from "heaven" to "hell," in exactly the opposite direction from Catherine, Isabella patently chooses her own fate, refusing to listen to Catherine's warnings against Heathcliff and carefully evading her brother's vigilance. But then Isabella has from the first functioned as Catherine's opposite, a model of the stereotypical young lady patriarchal education is designed to produce. Thus where Catherine is a "stout hearty lass" raised in the raw heart of nature at Wuthering Heights, Isabella is slim and pale, a daughter of culture and Thrushcross Grange. Where Catherine's childhood is androgynous, moreover, as her oneness with Heathcliff implies, Isabella has borne the stamp of sexual socialization from the first, or so her early division from her brother Edgar—her future guardian and master—would suggest. When Catherine and Heathcliff first see them, after all, Isabella and Edgar are quarreling over a lapdog, a genteel (though covertly sexual) toy they cannot share. "When would you catch me wishing to have what Catherine wanted? or find us [arguing] divided by the whole room?" Heathcliff muses on the scene (chap. 6). Indeed, so much the opposite of Catherine's is Isabella's life and lineage that it is almost as if Brontë, in contriving it, were saying "Let's see what would happen if I told Catherine's story the 'right' way"—that is, with socially approved characters and situations.

As Isabella's fate suggests, however—and this is surely part of Brontë's point—the "right" beginning of the story seems almost as inevitably to lead

to the wrong ending as the wrong or "subversive" beginning. Ironically, Isabella's bookish upbringing has prepared her to fall in love with (of all people) Heathcliff. Precisely because she has been taught to believe in coercive literary conventions, Isabella is victimized by the genre of romance. Mistaking appearance for reality, tall athletic Heathcliff for "an honourable soul" instead of "a fierce, pitiless wolfish man," she runs away from her cultured home in the naive belief that it will simply be replaced by another cultivated setting. But like Claire Clairmont, who enacted a similar drama in real life, she underestimates both the ferocity of the Byronic hero and the powerlessness of all women, even "ladies," in her society. Her experiences at Wuthering Heights teach her that hell really is hellish for the children of heaven: like a parody of Catherine, she starves, pines and sickens, oppressed by that Miltonic grotesque, Joseph, for she is unable to stomach the rough food of nature (or hell) just as Catherine cannot swallow the food of culture (or heaven). She does not literally die of all this, but when she escapes, giggling like a madwoman, from *her* self-imprisonment, she is so effectively banished from the novel by her brother (and Brontë) that she might as well be dead.

Would Isabella's fate have been different if she had fallen in love with someone less problematical than Heathcliff—with a man of culture, for instance, rather than a Satanic nature figure? Would she have prospered with the love of someone like her own brother, or Heathcliff's tenant, Lockwood? Her early relationship with Edgar, together with Edgar's patriarchal rigidity, hint that she would not. Even more grimly suggestive is the story Lockwood tells in chapter 1 about his romantic encounter at the seacoast. Readers will recall that the "fascinating creature" he admired was "a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of [me]." But when she "looked a return," her lover "shrunk icily into myself ... till finally the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses ... " (chap. 1). Since even the most cultivated women are powerless, women are evidently at the mercy of all men, Lockwoods and Heathcliffs alike.

Thus if literary Lockwood makes a woman into a goddess, he can unmake her at whim without suffering himself. If literary Isabella makes a man into a god or hero, however, she must suffer—may even have to die—for her mistake. Lockwood in effect kills his goddess for being human, and would no doubt do the same to Isabella. Heathcliff, on the other hand, literally tries to kill Isabella for trying to be a goddess, an angel, a lady, and for having, therefore, a "mawkish, waxen face." Either way, Isabella must in some sense be killed, for her fate, like Catherine's, illustrates the double binds with which patriarchal society inevitably crushes the feet of runaway girls.[50] Perhaps it is to make this point even more dramatically that Brontë has Heathcliff hang Isabella's genteelly named springer, Fanny, from a "bridle hook" on the night

he and Isabella elope. Just as the similarity of Isabella's and Catherine's fates suggests that "to fall" and "to fall in love" are equivalents, so the *bridle* or *bridal hook* is an apt, punning metaphor for the institution of marriage in a world where fallen women, like their general mother Eve, are (as Dickinson says) "Born—Bridalled—Shrouded— / In a Day."[51]

Nelly Dean, of course, seems to many critics to have been put into the novel to help Emily Brontë disavow such uniformly dark intentions. "For a specimen of true benevolence and homely fidelity, look at the character of Nelly Dean," Charlotte Brontë says with what certainly appears to be conviction, trying to soften the picture of "perverse passion and passionate perversity" Victorian readers thought her sister had produced.[52] And Charlotte Brontë "rightly defended her sister against allegations of abnormality by pointing out that ... Emily had created the wholesome, maternal Nelly Dean," comments Q. D. Leavis.[53] How wholesome and maternal is Nelly Dean, however? And if we agree that she is basically benevolent, of what does her benevolence consist? Problematic words like *wholesome* and *benevolent* suggest a point where we can start to trace the relationship between Nelly's history and Catherine's (or Isabella's). To begin with, of course, Nelly is healthy and wholesome because she is a survivor, as the artist-narrator must be. Early in the novel, Lockwood refers to her as his "human fixture," and there is, indeed, a durable thinglike quality about her, as if she had outlasted the Earnshaw/Linton storms of passion like their two houses, or as if she were a wall, a door, an object of furniture meant to begin a narration in response to the conventional sigh of "Ah, if only these old walls could speak, what stories they would tell." Like a wall or fixture, moreover, Nelly has a certain impassivity, a diplomatic immunity to entangling emotions. Though she sometimes expresses strong feelings about the action, she manages to avoid taking sides—or, rather, like a wall, she is related to both sides. Consequently, as the artist must, she can go anywhere and hear everything.

At the same time, Nelly's evasions suggest ways in which her history has paralleled the lives of Catherine and Isabella, though she has rejected their commitments and thus avoided their catastrophes. Hindley, for instance, was evidently once as close to Nelly as Heathcliff was to Catherine. Indeed, like Heathcliff, Nelly seems to have been a sort of stepchild at the Heights. When old Mr. Earnshaw left on his fateful trip to Liverpool, he promised to bring back a gift of apples and pears for Nelly as well as the fiddle and whip Hindley and Catherine had asked for. Because she is only "a poor man's daughter," however, Nelly is excluded from the family, specifically by being defined as its servant. Luckily for her, therefore (or so it seems), she has avoided the incestuous/egalitarian relationship with Hindley that Catherine has with Heathcliff, and at the same time—because she is ineligible for marriage into

either family—she has escaped the bridal hook of matrimony that destroys both Isabella and Catherine.

It is for these reasons, finally, that Nelly is able to tell the story of all these characters without herself becoming ensnared in it, or perhaps, more accurately, she is able (like Brontë herself) to use the act of telling the story as a strategy for protecting herself from such entrapment. "I have read more than you would fancy, Mr. Lockwood," Nelly remarks to her new master. "You could not open a book in this library that I have not looked into and got something out of also ... it is as much as you can expect of a poor man's daughter" (59). By this she means, no doubt, that in her detachment she knows about Miltonic fears of falling and Richardsonian dreams of rising, about the anxieties induced by patriarchal education and the hallucinations of genteel romance.[54] And precisely because she has such a keen literary consciousness, she is able ultimately to survive and to triumph over her sometimes unruly story. Even when Heathcliff locks her up, for example, Nelly gets out (unlike Catherine and Isabella, who are never really able to escape), and one by one the deviants who have tried to reform her tale—Catherine, Heathcliff, even Isabella—die, while Nelly survives. She survives and, as Bersani has also noted, she coerces the story into a more docile and therefore more congenial mode.[55]

To speak of coercion in connection with Nelly may seem unduly negative, certainly from the Leavisite perspective. And in support of that perspective we should note that besides being wholesome because she is a survivor, Nelly is benevolent because she is a nurse, a nurturer, a foster-mother. The gift Mr. Earnshaw promises her is as symbolically significant in this respect as Catherine's whip and Hindley's fiddle, although our later experiences of Nelly suggest that she wants the apples and pears not so much for herself as for others. For though Nelly's health suggests that she is a hearty eater, she is most often seen feeding others, carrying baskets of apples, stirring porridge, roasting meats, pouring tea. Wholesomely nurturing, she does appear to be in some sense an ideal woman, a "general mother"—if not from Emily Brontë's point of view, then from, say, Milton's. And indeed, if we look again at the crucial passage in *Shirley* where Charlotte Brontë's Shirley/Emily criticizes Milton, we find an unmistakable version of Nelly Dean. "Milton tried to see the first woman," says Shirley, "but, Cary, he saw her not.... It was his cook that he saw ... puzzled 'what choice to choose for delicacy best....'"

This comment explains a great deal. For if Nelly Dean is Eve as Milton's cook—Eve, that is, as Milton (but not Brontë or Shirley) would have had her—she does not pluck apples to eat them herself; she plucks them to make applesauce. And similarly, she does not tell stories to participate

in them herself, to consume the emotional food they offer, but to create a moral meal, a didactic fare that will nourish future generations in docility. As Milton's cook, in fact, Nelly Dean is patriarchy's paradigmatic housekeeper, the man's woman who has traditionally been hired to keep men's houses in order by straightening out their parlors, their daughters, and their stories. "My heart invariably cleaved to the master's, in preference to Catherine's side," she herself declares (chap. 10), and she expresses her preference by acting throughout the novel as a censorious agent of patriarchy.

Catherine's self-starvation, for instance, is notably prolonged by Nelly's failure to tell "the master" what his wife is doing, though in the first place it was induced by tale-bearing on Nelly's part. All her life Catherine has had trouble stomaching the food offered by Milton's cook, and so it is no wonder that in her madness she sees Nelly as a witch "gathering elf-bolts to hurt our heifers." It is not so much that Nelly Dean is "Evil," as Q. D. Leavis scolds "an American critic" for suggesting,[56] but that she is accommodatingly manipulative, a stereotypically benevolent man's woman. As such, she would and does "hurt [the] heifers" that inhabit such an anti-Miltonic heaven of femaleness as Wuthering Heights. In fact, as Catherine's "mad" words acknowledge, there is a sense in which Nelly Dean herself is Milton's bogey, the keeper of the house who closes windows (as Nelly does throughout *Wuthering Heights*) and locks women into the common sitting room. And because Emily Brontë is not writing a revolutionary polemic but a myth of origins, she chooses to tell her story of psychogenesis ironically, through the words of the survivor who helped *make* the story—through "the perdurable voice of the country," in Schorer's apt phrase. Reading Nelly's text, we see what we have lost through the eyes of the cook who has transformed us into what we are.

But if Nelly parallels or comments upon Catherine by representing Eve as Milton's cook, while Isabella represents Catherine/Eve as a bourgeois literary lady, it may at first be hard to see how or why Heathcliff parallels Catherine at all. Though he is Catherine's alter ego, he certainly seems to be, in Bersani's words, "a non-identical double."[57] Not only is he male while she is female—implying many subtle as well as a few obvious differences, in this gender-obsessed book—but he seems to be a triumphant survivor, an insider, a power-usurper throughout most of the novel's second half, while Catherine is not only a dead failure but a wailing, outcast ghost. Heathcliff does love her and mourn her—and finally Catherine does in some sense "kill" him—but beyond such melodramatically romantic connections, what bonds unite these one-time lovers?

Perhaps we can best begin to answer this question by examining the passionate words with which Heathcliff closes his first grief-stricken speech

after Catherine's death: "Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!" (chap. 16). Like the metaphysical paradox embedded in Catherine's crucial adolescent speech to Nelly about Heathcliff ("He's more myself than I am"), these words have often been thought to be, on the one hand, emptily rhetorical, and on the other, severely mystical. But suppose we try to imagine what they might mean as descriptions of a psychological fact about the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine. Catherine's assertion that Heathcliff was *herself* quite reasonably summarized, after all, her understanding that she was being transformed into a lady while Heathcliff retained the ferocity of her primordial half-savage self. Similarly, Heathcliff's exclamation that he cannot live without his soul may express, as a corollary of this idea, the "gypsy's" own deep sense of being Catherine's whip, and his perception that he has now become merely the soulless body of a vanished passion. But to be merely a body—a whip without a mistress—is to be a sort of monster, a fleshly thing, an object of pure animal materiality like the abortive being Victor Frankenstein created. And such a monster is indeed what Heathcliff becomes.

From the first, Heathcliff has had undeniable monster potential, as many readers have observed. Isabella's questions to Nelly—"Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not is he a devil?" (chap. 13)—indicate among other things Emily Brontë's cool awareness of having created an anomalous being, a sort of "Ghoul" or "Afreet," not (as her sister half hoped) "despite" herself but for good reasons. Uniting human and animal traits, the skills of culture with the energies of nature, Heathcliff's character tests the boundaries between human and animal, nature and culture, and in doing so proposes a new definition of the demonic. What is more important for our purposes here, however, is the fact that, despite his outward masculinity, Heathcliff is somehow female in his monstrosity. Besides in a general way suggesting a set of questions about humanness, his existence therefore summarizes a number of important points about the relationship between maleness and femaleness as, say, Milton representatively defines it.

To say that Heathcliff is "female" may at first sound mad or absurd. As we noted earlier, his outward masculinity seems to be definitively demonstrated by his athletic build and military carriage, as well as by the Byronic sexual charisma that he has for ladylike Isabella. And though we saw that Edgar is truly patriarchal despite his apparent effeminacy, there is no real reason why Heathcliff should not simply represent an alternative version of masculinity, the maleness of the younger son, that paradigmatic outsider in patriarchy. To some extent, of course, this is true: Heathcliff is clearly just as male in his Satanic outcast way as Edgar in his angelically established way. But at the same time, on a deeper associative level, Heathcliff is "female"—on the level

where younger sons and bastards and devils unite with women in rebelling against the tyranny of heaven, the level where orphans are female and heirs are male, where flesh is female and spirit is male, earth female, sky male, monsters female, angels male.

The sons of Urizen were born from heaven, Blake declares, but "his daughters from green herbs and cattle, / From monsters and worms of the pit." He might be describing Heathcliff, the "little dark thing" whose enigmatic ferocity suggests vegetation spirits, hell, pits, night—all the "female" irrationality of nature. Nameless as a woman, the gypsy orphan old Earnshaw brings back from the mysterious bowels of Liver/pool is clearly as illegitimate as daughters are in a patrilineal culture. He speaks, moreover, a kind of animal-like gibberish which, together with his foreign swarthiness, causes sensible Nelly to refer to him at first as an "it," implying (despite his apparent maleness) a deep inability to get his gender straight. His "it-ness" or id-ness emphasizes, too, both his snarling animal qualities—his appetites, his brutality—and his thingness. And the fact that he speaks gibberish suggests the profound alienation of the physical/natural/female realm he represents from language, culture's tool and the glory of "spirits Masculine." In even the most literal way, then, he is what Elaine Showalter calls "a woman's man," a male figure into which a female artist projects in disguised form her own anxieties about her sex and its meaning in her society.[58] Indeed, if Nelly Dean is Milton's cook, Heathcliff incarnates that unregenerate natural world which must be metaphorically cooked or spiritualized, and therefore a raw kind of femaleness that, Brontë shows, has to be exorcised if it cannot be controlled.

In most human societies the great literal and figurative chefs, from Brillat-Savarin to Milton, are males, but as Sherry Ortner has noted, everyday "cooking" (meaning such low-level conversions from nature to culture as child-rearing, pot-making, bread-baking) is done by women, who are in effect charged with the task of policing the realm they represent.[59] This point may help explain how and why Catherine Earnshaw becomes Heathcliff's "soul." After Nelly as archetypal house-keeper finishes nursing him, high-spirited Catherine takes over his education because he meets her needs for power. Their relationship works so well, however, because just as he provides her with an extra body to lessen her female vulnerability, so she fills his need for a soul, a voice, a language with which to address cultured men like Edgar. Together they constitute an autonymous and androgynous (or, more accurately, gynandrous) whole: a woman's man and a woman *for herself* in Sartre's sense, making up one complete woman.[60] So complete do they feel, in fact, that as we have seen they define their home at Wuthering Heights as a heaven, and themselves as a sort of Blakeian angel, as if sketching

out the definition of an angel D. H. Lawrence would have Tom Brangwen offer seventy-five years later in *The Rainbow*:

> "If we've got to be Angels, and if there is no such thing as a man nor a woman amongst them, then ... a married couple makes one Angel.... For ... an Angel can't be less than a human being. And if it was only the soul of a man *minus* the man, then it would be less than a human being."[61]

That the world—particularly Lockwood, Edgar, and Isabella—sees the heaven of Wuthering Heights as a "hell" is further evidence of the hellish femaleness that characterizes this gynandrous body and soul. It is early evidence, too, that without his "soul" Heathcliff will become an entirely diabolical brute, a "Ghoul" or "Afreet." Speculating seriocomically that women have souls "only to make them capable of *Damnation*," John Donne articulated the traditional complex of ideas underlying this point even before Milton did. "Why hath the common opinion afforded women soules?" Donne asked. After all, he noted, women's only really "spiritual" quality is their power of speech, "for which they are beholding to their *bodily instruments*: For perchance an *Oxes* heart, or a *Goates*, or a *Foxes*, or a *Serpents* would speak just so, if it were in the *breast*, and could move that *tongue* and *jawes*."[62] Though speaking of women, he might have been defining the problem Isabella was to articulate for Emily Brontë: "Is Mr. Heathcliff a *man*? Or what is he?"

As we have already seen, when Catherine is first withdrawn from the adolescent Heathcliff, the boy becomes increasingly brutish, as if to foreshadow his eventual soullessness. Returning in her ladylike costume from Thrushcross Grange, Catherine finds her one-time "counterpart" in old clothes covered with "mire and dirt," his face and hands "dismally beclouded" by dirt that suggests his inescapable connection with the filthiness of nature. Similarly, when Catherine is dying Nelly is especially conscious that Heathcliff "gnashed ... and foamed like a mad dog," so that she does not feel as if he is a creature of her own species (chap. 15). Still later, after his "soul's" death, it seems to her that Heathcliff howls "not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears" (chap. 16). His subsequent conduct, though not so overtly animal-like, is consistent with such behavior. Bastardly and dastardly, a true son of the bitch goddess Nature, throughout the second half of *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff pursues a murderous revenge against patriarchy, a revenge most appropriately expressed by *King Lear's* equally outcast Edmund: "Well, then,/ Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land."[63] For Brontë's revisionary genius manifests itself especially in her perception of the deep connections among Shakespeare's Edmund, Milton's Satan, Mary

Shelley's monster, the demon lover/animal groom figure of innumerable folktales—and Eve, the original rebellious female.

Because he unites characteristics of all these figures in a single body, Heathcliff in one way or another acts like all of them throughout the second half of *Wuthering Heights*. His general aim in this part of the novel is to wreak the revenge of nature upon culture by subverting legitimacy. Thus, like Edmund (and Edmund's female counterparts Goneril and Regan) he literally *takes* the *place* of one legitimate heir after another, supplanting both Hindley and Hareton at the Heights, and—eventually—Edgar at the Grange. Moreover, he not only replaces legitimate culture but in his rage strives like Frankenstein's monster to end it. His attempts at killing Isabella and Hindley, as well as the infanticidal tendencies expressed in his merciless abuse of his own son, indicate his desire not only to alter the ways of his world but literally to discontinue them, to get at the heart of patriarchy by stifling the line of descent that ultimately gives culture its legitimacy. Lear's "*hysterica passio*," his sense that he is being smothered by female nature, which has inexplicably risen against all fathers everywhere, is seriously parodied, therefore, by the suffocating womb/room of death where Heathcliff locks up his sickly son and legitimate Edgar's daughter.[64] Like Satan, whose fall was originally inspired by envy of the celestial legitimacy incarnated in the Son of God, Heathcliff steals or perverts birthrights. Like Eve and her double, Sin, he undertakes such crimes against a Urizenic heaven in order to vindicate his own worth, assert his own energy. And again, like Satan, whose hellish kingdom is a shadowy copy of God's luminous one, or like those suavely unregenerate animal grooms Mr. Fox and Bluebeard, he manages to achieve a great deal because he realizes that in order to subvert legitimacy he must first impersonate it; that is, to kill patriarchy, he must first pretend to be a patriarch.

Put another way, this simply means that Heathcliff's charismatic maleness is at least in part a result of his understanding that he must defeat on its own terms the society that has defeated him. Thus, though he began his original gynandrous life at Wuthering Heights as Catherine's whip, he begins his transformed, soulless or Satanic life there as Isabella's bridal hook. Similarly, throughout the extended maneuvers against Edgar and his daughter which occupy him for the twenty years between Isabella's departure and his own death, he impersonates a "devil daddy," stealing children like Catherine II and Linton from their rightful homes, trying to separate Milton's cook from both her story and her morality, and perverting the innocent Hareton into an artificially blackened copy of himself. His understanding of the inauthenticity of his behavior is consistently shown by his irony. Heathcliff knows perfectly well that he is not really a father in the true (patriarchal) sense of the word,

if only because he has himself no surname; he is simply acting like a father, and his bland, amused "I want my children about me to be sure" (chap. 29) comments upon the world he despises by sardonically mimicking it, just as Satan mimics God's logic and Edmund mimics Gloucester's astrologic.

On the one hand, therefore, as Linton's deathly father, Heathcliff, like Satan, is truly the father of death (begotten, however, not upon Sin but upon silliness), but on the other hand he is very consciously a mock father, a male version of the terrible devouring mother, whose blackly comic admonitions to Catherine II ("No more runnings away! ... I'm come to fetch you home, and I hope you'll be a dutiful daughter, and not encourage my son to further disobedience" [chap. 29]) evoke the bleak hilarity of hell with their satire of Miltonic righteousness. Given the complexity of all this, it is no wonder Nelly considers his abode at the Heights "an oppression past explaining."

Since Heathcliff's dark energies seem so limitless, why does his vengeful project fail? Ultimately, no doubt, it fails because in stories of the war between nature and culture nature always fails. But that point is of course a tautology. Culture tells the story (that is, the story is a cultural construct) and the story is etiological: how culture triumphed over nature, where parsonages and tea-parties came from, how the lady got her skirts—and her deserts. Thus Edmund, Satan, Frankenstein's monster, Mr. Fox, Bluebeard, Eve, and Heathcliff all must fail in one way or another, if only to explain the status quo. Significantly, however, where Heathcliff's analogs are universally destroyed by forces outside themselves, Heathcliff seems to be killed, as Catherine was, by something within himself. His death from self-starvation makes his function as Catherine's almost identical double definitively clear. Interestingly, though, when we look closely at the events leading up to his death it becomes equally clear that Heathcliff is not just killed by his own despairing desire for his vanished "soul" but at least in part by another one of Catherine's parallels, the new and cultivated Catherine who has been reborn through the intervention of patriarchy in the form of Edgar Linton. It is no accident, certainly, that Catherine II's imprisonment at the Heights and her rapprochement with Hareton coincide with Heathcliff's perception that "there is a strange change approaching," with his vision of the lost Catherine, and with his development of an eating disorder very much akin to Catherine's anorexia nervosa.

* * *

If Heathcliff is Catherine's almost identical double, Catherine II really is her mother's "non-identical double." Though he has his doubles confused, Bersani does note that Nelly's "mild moralizing" seems "suited to the younger

Catherine's playful independence."[65] For where her headstrong mother genuinely struggled for autonomy, the more docile Catherine II merely plays at disobedience, taking make-believe journeys within the walls of her father's estate and dutifully surrendering her illicit (though equally make-believe) love letters at a word from Nelly. Indeed, in almost every way Catherine II differs from her fierce dead mother in being culture's child, a born lady. "It's as if Emily Brontë were telling the same story twice," Bersani observes, "and eliminating its originality the second time."[66] But though he is right that Brontë is telling the same story over again (really for the third or fourth time), she is not repudiating her own originality. Rather, through her analysis of Catherine II's successes, she is showing how society repudiated Catherine's originality.

Where, for instance, Catherine Earnshaw rebelled against her father, Catherine II is profoundly dutiful. One of her most notable adventures occurs when she runs away from Wuthering Heights to get *back* to her father, a striking contrast to the escapes of Catherine and Isabella, both of whom ran purposefully away from the world of fathers and older brothers. Because she is a dutiful daughter, moreover, Catherine II is a cook, nurse, teacher, and housekeeper. In other words, where her mother was a heedless wild child, Catherine II promises to become an ideal Victorian woman, all of whose virtues are in some sense associated with daughterhood, wifehood, motherhood. Since Nelly Dean was her foster mother, literally replacing the original Catherine, her development of these talents is not surprising. To be mothered by Milton's cook and fathered by one of his angels is to become, inevitably, culture's child. Thus Catherine II nurses Linton (even though she dislikes him), brews tea for Heathcliff, helps Nelly prepare vegetables, teaches Hareton to read, and replaces the wild blackberries at Wuthering Heights with flowers from Thrushcross Grange. Literary as her father and her aunt Isabella, she has learned the lessons of patriarchal Christianity so well that she even piously promises Heathcliff that she will forgive both him and Linton for their sins against her: "I know [Linton] has a bad nature ... he's your son. But I'm glad I've a better to forgive it" (chap. 29). At the same time, she has a genteel (or Urizenic) feeling for rank which comes out in her early treatment of Hareton, Zillah, and others at the Heights.

Even when she stops biblically forgiving, moreover, literary modes dominate Catherine II's character. The "black arts" she tries to practice are essentially bookish—and plainly inauthentic. Indeed, if Heathcliff is merely impersonating a father at this point in the story, Catherine II is merely impersonating a witch. A real witch would threaten culture; but Catherine II's vocation is to serve it, for as her personality suggests, she is perfectly suited to (has been raised for) what Sherry Ortner defines as the crucial

female function of mediating between nature and cultures.[67] Thus it is she who finally restores order to both the Heights and the Grange by marrying Hareton Earnshaw, whom she has, significantly, prepared for his new mastery by teaching him to read. Through her intervention, therefore, he can at last recognize the name over the lintel at Wuthering Heights—the name Hareton Earnshaw—which is both his own name and the name of the founder of the house, the primordial patriarch.

With his almost preternatural sensitivity to threats, Heathcliff himself recognizes the danger Catherine II represents. When, offering to "forgive him," she tries to embrace him he shudders and remarks "I'd rather hug a snake!" Later, when she and Hareton have cemented their friendship, Heathcliff constantly addresses her as "witch" and "slut." In the world's terms, she is the opposite of these: she is virtually an angel in the house. But for just those reasons she is Urizenically dangerous to Heathcliff's Pandemonium at the Heights. Besides threatening his present position, however, Catherine II's union with Hareton reminds Heathcliff specifically of the heaven he has lost. Looking up from their books, the young couple reveal that "their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw" (chap. 33). Ironically, however, the fact that Catherine's descendants "have" her eyes tells Heathcliff not so much that Catherine endures as that she is both dead and fragmented. Catherine II has only her mother's eyes, and though Hareton has more of her features, he too is conspicuously not Catherine. Thus when Edgar dies and Heathcliff opens Catherine's casket as if to free her ghost, or when Lockwood opens the window as if to admit the witch child of his nightmare, the original Catherine arises in her ghostly wholeness from the only places where she can still exist in wholeness: the cemetery, the moor, the storm, the irrational realm of those that fly by night, the realm of Satan, Eve, Sin, and Death. Outside of this realm, the ordinary world inhabited by Catherine II and Hareton is, Heathcliff now notes, merely "a dreadful collection of memoranda that [Catherine] did exist, and that I have lost her!" (chap. 33).

Finally, Catherine II's alliance with Hareton awakens Heathcliff to truths about the younger man that he had not earlier understood, and in a sense his consequent disillusionment is the last blow that sends him toward death. Throughout the second half of the novel Heathcliff has taken comfort not only in Hareton's "startling" physical likeness to Catherine, but also in the likeness of the dispossessed boy's situation to his own early exclusion from society. "Hareton seem[s] a personification of my youth, not a human being," Heathcliff tells Nelly (chap. 33). This evidently causes him to see the illiterate outcast as metaphorically the true son of his own true union with Catherine. Indeed, where he had originally dispossessed Hareton as

a way of revenging himself upon Hindley, Heathcliff seems later to want to keep the boy rough and uncultivated so that he, Heathcliff, will have at least one strong natural descendant (as opposed to Linton, his false and deathly descendant). As Hareton moves into Catherine II's orbit, however, away from nature and toward culture, Heathcliff realizes the mistake he has made. Where he had supposed that Hareton's reenactment of his own youth might even somehow restore the lost Catherine, and thus the lost Catherine-Heathcliff, he now sees that Hareton's reenactment of his youth is essentially corrective, a retelling of the story the "right" way. Thus if we can call Catherine II C^2 and define Hareton as H^2, we might arrive at the following formulation of Heathcliff's problem: where C plus H equals fullness of being for both C and H, C^2 plus H^2 specifically equals a negation of both C and H. Finally, the ambiguities of Hareton's name summarize in another way Heathcliff's problem with this most puzzling Earnshaw. On the one hand, Hare/ton is a nature name, like Heathcliff. But on the other hand, Hare/ton, suggesting Heir/ton (Heir/town?) is a punning indicator of the young man's legitimacy.

It is in his triumphant legitimacy that Hareton, together with Catherine II, acts to exorcise Heathcliff from the traditionally legitimate world of the Grange and the newly legitimized world of Wuthering Heights. Fading into nature, where Catherine persists "in every cloud, in every tree," Heathcliff can no longer eat the carefully cooked human food that Nelly *offers* him. While Catherine II decorates Hareton's porridge with cut flowers, the older man has irreligious fantasies of dying and being unceremoniously "carried to the churchyard in the evening." "I have nearly attained *my* heaven," he tells Nelly as he fasts and fades, "and that of others is ... uncoveted by me" (chap. 34). Then, when he dies, the boundaries between nature and culture crack for a moment, as if to let him pass through: his window swings open, the rain drives in. "Th' divil's harried off his soul," exclaims old Joseph, *Wuthering Heights*' mock Milton, falling to his knees and giving thanks "that the lawful master and the ancient stock [are] restored to their rights" (chap. 34). The illegitimate Heathcliff/Catherine have finally been replaced in nature/hell, and replaced by Hareton and Catherine II—a proper couple just as Nelly replaced Catherine as a proper mother for Catherine II. Quite reasonably, Nelly now observes that "The crown of all my wishes will be the union of" this new, civilized couple, and Lockwood notes of the new pair that "together, they would brave Satan and all his legions." Indeed, in both Milton's and Brontë's terms (it is the only point on which the two absolutely agree) they have already braved Satan, and they have triumphed. It is now 1802; the Heights—hell—has been converted into the Grange—heaven; and with patriarchal history redefined, renovated, restored, the nineteenth

century can truly begin, complete with tea-parties, ministering angels, governesses, and parsonages.

* * *

Joseph's important remark about the restoration of the lawful master and the ancient stock, together with the dates—1801/1802—which surround Nelly's tale of a pseudo-mythic past, confirm the idea that *Wuthering Heights* is somehow etiological. More, the famous care with which Brontë worked out the details surrounding both the novel's dates and the Earnshaw–Linton lineage suggests she herself was quite conscious that she was constructing a story of origins and renewals. Having arrived at the novel's conclusion, we can now go back to its beginning, and try to summarize the basic story *Wuthering Heights* tells. Though this may not be the book's only story, it is surely a crucial one. As the names on the windowsill indicate, *Wuthering Heights* begins and ends with Catherine and her various avatars. More specifically, it studies the evolution of Catherine Earnshaw into Catherine Heathcliff and Catherine Linton, and then her return through Catherine Linton II and Catherine Heathcliff II to her "proper" role as Catherine Earnshaw II. More generally, what this evolution and de-evolution conveys is the following parodic, anti-Miltonic myth:

There was an Original Mother (Catherine), a daughter of nature whose motto might be "Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law / My services are bound." But this girl fell into a decline, at least in part through eating the poisonous cooked food of culture. She fragmented herself into mad or dead selves on the one hand (Catherine, Heathcliff) and into lesser, gentler/genteeler selves on the other (Catherine II, Hareton). The fierce primordial selves disappeared into nature, the perversely hellish heaven which was their home. The more teachable and docile selves learned to read and write, and moved into the fallen cultured world of parlors and parsonages, the Miltonic heaven which, from the Original Mother's point of view, is really hell. Their passage from nature to culture was facilitated by a series of teachers, preachers, nurses, cooks, and model ladies or patriarchs (Nelly, Joseph, Frances, the Lintons), most of whom gradually disappear by the end of the story, since these lesser creations have been so well instructed that they are themselves able to become teachers or models for other generations. Indeed, so model are they that they can be identified with the founders of ancestral houses (Hareton Earnshaw, 1500) and with the original mother redefined as the patriarch's wife (Catherine Linton Heathcliff Earnshaw).

The nature/culture polarities in this Brontë myth have caused a number of critics to see it as a version of the so-called Animal Groom story,

like Beauty and the Beast, or the Frog Prince. But, as Bruno Bettelheim has most recently argued, such tales usually function to help listeners and readers assimilate sexuality into consciousness and thus nature into culture (e.g., the beast is really lovable, the frog really handsome, etc.).[68] In *Wuthering Heights*, however, while culture does require nature's energy as raw material—the Grange needs the Heights, Edgar wants Catherine—society's most pressing need is to exorcise the rebelliously Satanic, irrational, and "female" representatives of nature. In this respect, Brontë's novel appears to be closer to a number of American Indian myths Lévi-Strauss recounts than it is to any of the fairy tales with which it is usually compared. In particular, it is reminiscent of an Opaye Indian tale called "The Jaguar's Wife."

In this story, a girl marries a jaguar so that she can get all the meat she wants for herself and her family. After a while, as a result of her marriage, the jaguar comes to live with the Indians, and for a time the girl's family becomes friendly with the new couple. Soon, however, a grandmother feels mistrust. "The young woman [is] gradually turning into a beast of prey.... Only her face remain[s] human ... the old woman therefore resort[s) to witchcraft and kill[s] her granddaughter." After this, the family is very frightened of the jaguar, expecting him to take revenge. And although he does not do so, he promises enigmatically that "Perhaps you will remember me in years to come," and goes off "incensed by the murder and spreading fear by his roaring; but the sound [comes] from farther and farther away."[69]

Obviously this myth is analogous to *Wuthering Heights* in a number of ways, with alien and animal-like Heathcliff paralleling the jaguar, Catherine paralleling the jaguar's wife, Nelly Dean functioning as the defensive grandmother, and Catherine II and Hareton acting like the family which inherits meat and a jaguar-free world from the departed wife. Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the story makes these likenesses even clearer, however, and in doing so it clarifies what Brontë must have seen as the grim necessities of *Wuthering Heights*.

> In order that all, man's present possessions (which the jaguar has now lost) may come to him from the jaguar (who enjoyed them formerly when man was without them), there must be some agent capable of establishing a relation between them: this is where the jaguar's (human) wife fits in.
>
> But once the transfer has been accomplished (through the agency of the wife):
>
> a) The woman becomes useless, because she has served her purpose as a preliminary condition, which was the only purpose she had.

b) Her survival would contradict the fundamental situation, which is characterized by a total absence of reciprocity.

The jaguar's wife must therefore be eliminated.[70]

Though Lévi-Strauss does not discuss this point, we should note too that the jaguar's distant roaring hints he may return some day: obviously culture must be vigilant against nature, the superego must be ready at all times to battle the id. Similarly, the random weakening of Wuthering Heights' walls with which Brontë's novel began—symbolized by old Earnshaw's discovery of Heathcliff in Liverpool—suggests that patriarchal culture is always only precariously holding off the rebellious forces of nature. Who, after all, can say with certainty that the restored line of Hareton Earnshaw 1802 will not someday be just as vulnerable to the onslaughts of the goddess's illegitimate children as the line of Hareton Earnshaw 1500 was to Heathcliff's intrusion? And who is to say that the carving of Hareton Earnshaw 1500 was not similarly preceded by still another war between nature and culture? The fact that everyone has the same name leads inevitably to speculations like this, as though the drama itself, like its actors, simply represented a single episode in a sort of mythic infinite regress. In addition, the fact that the little shepherd boy still sees "Heathcliff and a woman" wandering the moor hints that the powerfully disruptive possibilities they represent may some day be reincarnated at Wuthering Heights.

Emily Brontë would consider such reincarnation a consummation devoutly to be wished. Though the surface Nelly Dean imposes upon Brontë's story is as dispassionately factual as the tone of "The Jaguar's Wife," the author's intention is passionately elegiac, as shown by the referential structure of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine-Heathcliff's charisma, and the book's anti-Miltonic messages. This is yet another point Charlotte Brontë understood quite well, as we can see not only from the feminist mysticism of *Shirley* but also from the diplomatic irony of parts of her preface to *Wuthering Heights*. In *Shirley*, after all, the first woman, the true Eve, *is* nature—and she is noble and she is lost to all but a few privileged supplicants like Shirley-Emily herself, who tells Caroline (in response to an invitation to go to church) that "I will stay out here with my mother Eve, in these days called Nature. I love her—undying, mighty being! Heaven may have faded from her brow when she fell in paradise; but all that is glorious on earth shines there still."[71] And several years later Charlotte concluded her preface to *Wuthering Heights* with a discreetly qualified description of a literal heath/cliff that might also apply to *Shirley's* titanic Eve:

> ... the crag took human shape; and there it stands, colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock: in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like; in the latter, almost beautiful, for its coloring is of mellow grey, and moorland moss clothes it; and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully close to the giant's foot.[72]

This grandeur, Charlotte Brontë says, is what "Ellis Bell" was writing about; this is what she (rightly) thought we have lost. For like the fierce though forgotten seventeenth-century Behmenist mystic Jane Lead, Emily Brontë seems to have believed that Eve had become tragically separated from her fiery original self, and that therefore she had "lost her Virgin Eagle Body ... and so been sown into a slumbering Death, in Folly, Weakness, and Dishonor."[73]

Her slumbering death, however, was one from which Eve might still arise. Elegiac as it is, mournfully definitive as its myth of origin seems, *Wuthering Heights* is nevertheless haunted by the ghost of a lost gynandry, a primordial possibility of power now only visible to children like the ones who see Heathcliff and Catherine.

> No promised Heaven, these wild Desires
> Could all or half fulfil,
> No threatened Hell, with quenchless fire
> Subdue this quenchless will!

Emily Brontë declares in one of her poems.[74] The words may or may not be intended for a Gondalian speech, but it hardly matters, since in any case they characterize the quenchless and sardonically impious will that stalks through *Wuthering Heights*, rattling the windowpanes of ancient houses and blotting the pages of family bibles. Exorcised from the hereditary estate of the ancient stock, driven to the sinister androgyny of their *Liebestod*, Catherine and Heathcliff nevertheless linger still at the edge of the estate, as witch and goblin, Eve and Satan. Lockwood's two dreams, presented as prologues to Nelly's story, are also, then, necessary epilogues to that tale. In the first, "Jabes Branderham," Joseph's nightmare fellow, tediously thunders Miltonic curses at Lockwood, enumerating the four hundred and ninety sins of which erring nature and the quenchless will are guilty. In the second, nature, personified as the wailing witch child "Catherine Linton," rises willfully in protest, and gentlemanly Lockwood's unexpectedly violent attack upon her indicates his terrified perception of the danger she represents.

Though she reiterated Milton's misogyny where Brontë struggled to subvert it, Mary Shelley also understood the dangerous possibilities of the outcast will. Her lost Eve became a monster, but "he" was equally destructive to the fabric of society. Later in the nineteenth century other women writers, battling Milton's bogey, would also examine the annihilation with which patriarchy threatens Eve's quenchless will, and the witchlike rage with which the female responds. George Eliot, for instance, would picture in *The Mill on the Floss* a deadly androgyny that seems like a grotesque parody of the *Liebestod* Heathcliff and Catherine achieve. "In their death" Maggie and Tom Tulliver "are not divided"—but the union they achieve is the only authentic one Eliot can imagine for them, since in life the one became an angel of renunciation, the other a captain of industry. Significantly, however, their death is caused by a flood that obliterates half the landscape of culture: female nature does and will continue to protest.

If Eliot specifically reinvents Brontë's *Liebestod*, Mary Elizabeth Coleride reimagines her witchlike nature spirit. In a poem that also reflects her anxious ambivalence about the influence of her great uncle Samuel, the author of "Christabel," Coleridge *becomes* Geraldine, Catherine Earnshaw, Lucy Gray, even Frankenstein's monster—all the wailing outcast females who haunt the graveyards of patriarchy. Speaking in "the voice that women have, who plead for their heart's desire," she cries

> I have walked a great while over the snow
> And I am not tall nor strong.
> My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
> And the way was hard and long.
> I have wandered over the fruitful earth,
> But I never came here before.
> Oh, lift me over the threshhold, and let me in at the door ...

And then she reveals that "She came—and the quivering flame / Sank and died in the fire."[75]

Emily Brontë's outcast witch-child is fiercer, less dissembling than Coleridge's, but she longs equally for the extinction of parlor fires and the rekindling of unimaginably different energies. Her creator, too, is finally the fiercest, most quenchless of Milton's daughters. Looking oppositely for the queendom of heaven, she insists, like Blake, that "I have also the Bible of Hell, which the world shall have whether they will or no."[76] And in the voice of the wind that sweeps through the newly cultivated garden at Wuthering Heights, we can hear the jaguar, like Blake's enraged Rintrah, roaring in the distance.

Notes

Epigraphs: King Lear, 4.6.126–30; The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plates 5–6; Poems, J. 959.

1. Mark Schorer, "Fiction and the Analogical Matrix," in William M. Sale, Jr., ed., Norton Critical Edition of *Wuthering Heights* (New York: Norton, 1972, revised), p. 376.

2. Winifred Gérin notes, for instance, that Mrs. Brontë wrote a "sprightly essay," entitled "The Advantages of Poverty in Religious Concerns," which her husband noted that he had "sent for insertion in one of the periodical publications" (Gérin, *Emily Brontë* [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971], p. 3). See also Annette Hopkin, *The Father of the Brontës* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press for Goucher College, 1958), passim.

3. Published instances of the Brontë juvenilia include Charlotte Brontë, *The Twelve Adventurers and Other Stories*, ed. C. W. Hatfield (London: Hodder, 1925); Charlotte Brontë, *The Spell*, ed. G. E. MacLean (London: Oxford University Press, 1931); Charlotte Brontë, *Tales from Angria*, ed. Phyllis Bentley (London: Collins, 1954); Charlotte Brontë, *Five Novelettes*, ed. Winifred Gérin (London: The Folio Press, 1971); Charlotte Brontë, *Legends of Angria*, compiled by Fannie E. Ratchford and William Clyde De Vane (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933); and Emily Jane Brontë, *Gondal's Queen: A Novel in Verse*, arranged by Fannie E. Ratchford (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955). Charlotte Brontë's most notable criticism of her sisters' work appeared in *Wuthering Heights, Agnes Grey, together with a selection of Poems by Ellis and Acton Bell*, Prefixed with a Biographical Memoir of the authors by Currer Bell (London: Smith, Elder, 1850).

4. Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, p. 203.

5. Ibid., pp. 203, 208–09.

6. Gérin, *Emily Brontë*, p. 47.

7. Norton Critical Edition of *Wuthering Heights*, p. 72. All references will be to this edition.

8. Catherine Smith, "Jane Lead: The Feminist Mind and Art of a Seventeenth-Century Protestant Mystic," forthcoming in Rosemary Ruether, ed., *Women and Religion*.

9. See Thomas Moser, "What is the matter with Emily Jane? Conflicting Impulses in *Wuthering Heights*," *Nineteenth–Century Fiction* 17 (1962): 1–19.

10. Fannie E. Ratchford, *Gondal's Queen*, p. 22. As Ratchford shows, many of Brontë's best poems were written as dramatic monologues for A.G.A. In addition, a number of critics have seen A.G.A. as a model for the first Catherine.

11. Terence Eagleton, *Myths of Power* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1975), p. 58.

12. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), pp. 214–16: "There is something almost scandalous, to a European observer, in the ease with which the (as it seems to us) almost incompatible activities of the men's house are harmonized. Few people are as deeply religious as the Bororo.... But their spiritual beliefs and their habits of every day are so intimately mingled that they seem not to have any sensation of passing from one to the other."

13. Ratchford, *Gondal's Queen*, p. 186.

14. Ibid., pp. 192–93.

15. See Q. D. Leavis, "A Fresh Approach to "*Wuthering Heights*," Norton Critical Edition, p. 313; Mark Schorer, "Fiction and the Analogical Matrix," p. 371; Leo Bersani, A *Future for Astyanax*, p. 203; Elliot Gose, *Imagination Indulg'd* (Montreal: McGill, Queen's University Press, 1972), p. 59.

16. Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 233.

17. Emily Jane Brontë, "Often rebuked, yet always back returning," in C. W. Hatfield, ed., *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp. 255–56. Hatfield questions Emily's authorship of this poem, suggesting that Charlotte may really have written the piece to express her own "thoughts about her sister" (*loc. cit.*), but Gérin discusses it unequivocally as a piece by Emily (Gérin, *Emily Brontë*, pp. 264–65).

18. Byron, *Manfred*, 2.4.134–48; see also Gérin, *Emily Brontë*, p. 46.

19. As we noted in discussing Austen, in a letter to G. H. Lewes (12 January 1848) Charlotte remarked that she had never read *Pride and Prejudice* until he advised her to, so it is unlikely that Emily had read any Austen, especially not the comparatively obscure *Northanger Abbey*.

20. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Pantheon, 1954).

21. The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, pp. 255–56.

22. To distinguish the second Catherine from the first without obliterating their similarities, we will call Catherine Earnshaw Linton's daughter Catherine II throughout this discussion.

23. The realistically iconoclastic nature of Catherine's interest in riding, however, is illuminated by this comment from a nineteenth-century conduct book: "[Horseback riding] produces in ladies a coarseness of voice, a weathered complexion, and unnatural consolidation of the bones of the lower part of the body, ensuring a frightful impediment to future functions which need not here be dwelt upon; by overdevelopment of the muscles equitation produces an immense increase in the waist and is, in short, altogether masculine and unwomanly" (Donald Walker, *Exercises for Ladies*, 1837, quoted in Cunnington, *Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 86).

24. See Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, and J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 155–211.

25. Q. D. Leavis, "A Fresh Approach to *Wuthering Heights*," p. 321.

26. For a brief discussion of androgyny in *Wuthering Heights*, see Carolyn Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Knopf, 1973), pp. 80–82.

27. There are thus several levels of irony implicit in Nelly's remark that "no parson in the world ever pictured heaven so beautifully as [Catherine and Heathcliff] did, in their innocent talk" (p. 48).

28. C. P. Sanger, "The Structures of *Wuthering Heights*," Norton Critical Edition, pp. 296–98.

29. Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, p. 201.

30. Even in his way of speaking-laconic, old-fashioned, oracular—old Mr. Earnshaw seems like a fairy-tale character, whereas Hindley and Frances talk more like characters in a "realistic" novel.

31. Eagleton does discuss the Lintons' dogs from a Marxist perspective; see *Myths of Power*, pp. 106–07.

32. Elizabeth Janeway, "On 'Female Sexuality,'" in Jean Strouse, ed., *Women and Analysis* (New York: Grossman, 1974), p. 58.

33. See Claude Lévi-Straus, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

34. Dickinson, *Letters*, 2:408.

35. Charlotte Brontë elaborated upon the terrors of "ladylike" education in *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*. For a factual account of the Cowan Bridge experience, see also Gérin, *Charlotte Brontë*, pp. 1–16.

36. Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plate 5.

37. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "The Place of Love in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*," in *The Brontës: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Ian Gregor (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 86.

38. See Dorothy van Ghent, *The English Novel: Form and Function* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), pp. 153–70.

39. As we noted in discussing the metaphor of literary paternity, Jean-Paul Sartre thought of books as embodiments of power, and it seems relevant here that he once called his grandfather's library "the world caught in a mirror" (Marjorie Grene, *Sartre*, p. 11).

40. Sylvia Plath, "The Stones," in *The Colossus* (New York: Vintage, 1968), p. 82. 41. Sanger, "The Structures of *Wuthering Heights*," p. 288.

42. Plath, "Tulips," *Ariel*, p. 11.

43. Leavis, "A Fresh Approach to *Wuthering Heights*," p. 309; Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, pp. 208–09.

44. Plath, "Lady Lazarus," *Ariel*, p. 6. 45. Plath, "Contusion," *Ariel*, p. 83.

46. See A. Alvarez, *The Savage God* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971). 47. Marlene Boskind-Lodahl, "Cinderella's Stepsisters," p. 352.

48. Ibid., pp. 343–44.

49. For a comment on this phenomenon as it may really have occurred in the life of Emily's sister Charlotte, see Helene Moglen, *Charlotte Brontë': The Self Conceived*, pp. 241–42.

50. See Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 48: "Even now China wraps double binds around my feet."

51. Dickinson, *Poems*, J. 1072 ("Title divine—is mine! / The Wife—without the Sign!").

52. Charlotte Brontë, "Editor's Preface to the New Edition of *Wuthering Heights* (1850)," Norton Critical Edition, p. 11.

53. Q. D. Leavis, "A Fresh Approach to *Wuthering Heights*," p. 310.

54. Interestingly, even in this speech the characteristic obsession of "Milton's daughters" with Greek and Latin recurs. The only books in the library she *hasn't* read, Nelly notes, are in "that range of Greek and Latin, and that of French," and even about those she can say that "those I know one from another" (p. 59).

55. Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, pp. 221–22.

56. Q. D. Leavis, "A Fresh Approach to *Wuthering Heights*," p. 321.

57. Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, pp. 208–09.

58. Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, pp. 133–52.

59. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in *Women, Culture, and Society*, p. 80.

60. The concept of "androgyny," as some feminist critics have recently noted, usually "submerges" the female within the male, but Emily Brontë's vision is notably gynandrous, submerging the male, as it were, within the female.

61. *The Rainbow*, "Wedding at the Marsh," chap. 5.

62. John Donne, "Problemes," VI, "Why Hath the Common Opinion Afforded Women Soules?"

63. *Lear*, 1.2.15–16.

64. Ibid, 2.4.57.

65. Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax*, pp. 221–22.

66. Ibid.

67. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?"

68. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, pp. 277–310.

69. Lévi–Straus, *The Raw and the Cooked*, pp. 82–83.

70. Ibid.

71. Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*, chap. 18.

72. Charlotte Brontë, "Editor's Preface," p. 12.

73. Jane Lead, *A Fountain of Gardens*, 2:105–07.

74. "Enough of thought, Philosopher," in *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë*, p. 220.

75. "The Witch," *Poem by Mary E. Coleridge*, pp. 44–45.

76. Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plate 24.

NANCY ARMSTRONG

Emily Brontë In and Out of Her Time

Although she wrote but one novel, Emily Brontë continues to carry on a precarious relationship with a nineteenth-century intellectual tradition that consistently endorsed humanistic values, either by advancing the claims of the individual, or by maintaining those of the community. The temptation for readers is to stabilize this relationship either by seeing Brontë as a Romantic reactionary who rejected the kind of fiction coming into vogue during the 1840's or by aligning her work with the utilitarian tradition that gave rise to literary realism. In attempting to pin down the genre of *Wuthering Heights*, however, the problem has not been resolved. It has only become more apparent: if, as Terry Eagleton claims, a drably spiritless form of realism displaces the "'pre-industrial' imaginative creativity" in Brontë's fiction, it is also true that "the real world" is eclipsed by an earlier Romantic form of the imagination, as J. Hillis Miller maintains.[1] How such politically and philosophically hostile positions can coexist in her sister's novel is the very question Charlotte Brontë tried—and with no little success—to defer in her preface to the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights*. By describing the author as one who combined the skills of a budding regional novelist with the powers of a full-blown visionary artist, Charlotte made Emily's novel, in effect, *sui generis*, the interaction of a remote social milieu with a unique personal

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vision.[2] From the earliest to some of the more recent of Brontë's readers, then, the effort has been to resolve the problem and not to clarify it.

Any attempt to classify the novel, even if this entails making it a kind unto itself, rests upon Heathcliff and how one describes his character. Most often such attempts proceed on the ground that he is full of meaning and that by finding the key to decode him one will also discover what familiar set of nineteenth-century categories makes the novel a coherent whole. To see Heathcliff in this way is to see him as a conventional mediator, however, and, if nothing else, the history of failed attempts at resolving the debate over the genre of *Wuthering Heights* testifies to the fact that this is precisely what Heathcliff is *not*. True, he calls forth and appears to validate both modes of Enlightenment thinking, those which continue to make themselves felt on into the nineteenth century in the conflict between utilitarianism and Romanticism, to name but one such manifestation. But in doing so, Heathcliff actually problematizes the literary categories that depend upon these oppositions, namely, the distinction between romance and realism. Thus it is due to the breakdown of such primary cultural differences in Brontë's fiction that the whole question of its genre arises.

Rather than understand Heathcliff as a "both/and" device for symbolically closing the gap between cultural codes, it is more accurate to consider him as an impossible third term, an empty category by which Brontë rejected the conventional alternatives for resolving a work of domestic fiction even while she could not imagine anything beyond these alternatives. Such a dilemma is not unique to Brontë, nor is it even a strictly literary one. This order of relationship between text and context can occur whenever history fails to provide the adequate materials for imaginative representation. In *The Political Unconscious* Fredric Jameson has described Hegel's historical situation in similar terms, as being one in which his thinking could go no further. Like any author of his age, Hegel could use only what linguistic materials were available in his cultural moment. He was, in this sense, a product of his time. To be dependent on these materials for his thinking was for Hegel to be caught "in an impossible historical contradiction," caught, as Jameson explains, "between the alternatives of Romantic reaction and bourgeois utilitarianism."[3] Rather than remain within the ideology of the moment, however, he projected an "impossible third term" beyond these historical alternatives, the notion of Absolute Spirit. But this, according to Jameson, does not make Hegel an idealist in any conventional sense. He is rather someone who felt the limits placed on the imagination by the concrete materials his culture gave him to work with even while he sought to make those limited materials represent the totality of cultural history.[4] He could represent what was beyond his power to imagine only by an act of negation

and so created an empty category that awaits manifestation at some future moment.

While the limitations of imagination felt by a young female novelist writing during the 1840's from a remote corner of Yorkshire could hardly be those of a Hegel, still, there are obvious parallels to be drawn between them. Through at least half of Brontë's novel, Heathcliff's rise into power dramatizes the apotheosis of the Romantic hero, his intrusion into and transformation of a convention-bound world. But at some point it becomes clear that Romantic conventions will no longer do as a way of negotiating the text and of understanding the world to which it refers. By making them manifest in an energetic new form, Heathcliff actually cancels out Romantic possibilities and reduces that system of belief to mere superstition. From this point on, not surprisingly, the novel proceeds according to norms and expectations that are much more characteristic of Victorian realism. The meaning of Heathcliff's desire for Catherine Earnshaw changes so as to place such desire beyond the bounds of middle-class thinking and therefore outside the discourse of domestic fiction. But just as certain as her awareness of change is Brontë's unwillingness to see this change as an improvement or gain rather than as a kind of trade-off, an exchange of psychosexual power for economic power in which each calls the value of the other into question.[5]

By taking the conventions of an earlier literature as the subject matter of a new kind of fiction, she demonstrates that fiction could no longer be written from the Romantic viewpoint and still be considered a novel. At the same time, the alternative offered to her as a novelist could not represent the totality of personal experience as she saw it. Out of this dilemma, we might imagine, came Heathcliff, who, in participating in both literary traditions, actually reveals the limitations of each. This is why he remains an enigma to readers, then, not because he is both noble savage and entrepreneur, but because he is ultimately neither. He only prefigures a time and discourse in which the boundary between self and society is no longer so necessary to the making of fiction.

i

Upon his first introduction as a "dark-skinned gypsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman" (p. 15), Heathcliff calls warring systems of meaning into play. As in this paradigmatic instance, it is never entirely certain whether gypsy features should be read as positive or negative, as befitting or contradicting an aristocratic appearance, for the potential is there for meaning to go one of two ways. In the social discourse of the age, the gypsy was naturally viewed with all the disdain and apprehension attending his utter

lack of social position. But literary tradition, on the other hand, had portrayed the gypsy in a sentimental light, associating the character type with the virtues and pleasures of uncivilized life and infusing it with an egalitarian ethos.[6] Heathcliff's dualism is not due, then, to a quirk of the author's personality, but rather to a conflict within middle-class thinking which condemned sensuality in the lower classes while placing enormous stock in the natural feelings and instincts of the common individual. It was out of precisely this conflict in the thinking of the time that the novel emerged as an elaboration of middle-class experience. Out of this conflict, too, came the virulent criticism, launched from the very beginning against the novel on the grounds that it falsified life. To the sensibility that located nobility in the most humble of men, Lawrence Stone, among others, has attributed the phenomenal appetite for biography and novels of sensibility that accompanied industrialization in England, but manifestations of this kind of sentimentality also proved one of the more irresistible targets for detractors of the fledgling literary form.[7] Particularly revealing in the angle of its attack, one review heaps scorn on the fiction of its day for portraying "in coarse colours the workings of more genuine passions in the bosom of Dolly, the Dairy-maid or Hannah, the housemaid."[8]

What can be said of the gypsy is also true of the aristocrat, the other half of the equation comprising Heathcliff's character. The proliferation of courtesy books and schools for instructing *nouveaux riches* in the taste and behavior of their social superiors, as well as the migration of businessmen from the city to country manors, indicates that the aristocracy was also viewed with a great deal of ambivalence.[9] It represented not only the chief obstacle to be overcome by the upward aspiring, but also the ideal to which one aspired in order to rise. In this respect, too, Heathcliff provides an unstable field of meaning, sometimes implying a natural superiority on his part over the degenerate Earnshaws, sometimes a natural degeneracy that merits his exclusion from their line. In associating aristocratic power with sadism and violence, neither this novel nor others before it—those of Richardson and Radcliffe come immediately to mind—were mirroring the actual relationship between the two classes. Even supposing there once were such clearly drawn battlelines between them, the conflict between the bourgeoisie and old aristocracy, as it was thematized in fiction, quickly became a way of talking about something else.[10] Above all it was a convenient means of projecting onto an earlier and largely imaginary social landscape the conflicts among middle-class factions sharply divided on issues of social and economic reform. The device pitted all those disparate groups comprising the readership against a monolithic Other, a representation of the aristocracy that could only exist as a belated form of feudalism. In the very act of airing differences, then, a novelist could also create a sense of homogeneity among the various interest groups

who saw themselves in what Defoe called "the middle estate." Because novels ultimately reconciled the contradictions within a single historical perspective and set of class interests, it seems only natural for groups of characters who appear to be hotly contending for power to unite in a single harmonious community at the end of a novel.

Perhaps the most telling evidence of the ideological homogeneity underlying eighteenth and early nineteenth-century fiction is the frequency with which the acquisition of power through competition entails an act of submission to some form of patriarchal power, aggressive individualism thus coming to serve and not threaten the more traditional idea of power. One feature novels so diverse as those of Defoe, Richarson, Fielding, Austen, or Scott have in common is the homage they pay to the notions of aristocratic taste and *noblesse oblige*. They simply relocate these values in the aspiring classes with which the protagonists are usually affiliated. The aim of such narratives seems only obvious, to resolve the conflict between hostile conceptions of power, one based on the *laissez-faire* principle and the other, on primogeniture, and their protagonists accordingly incorporate some of the positive features adhering to each. In many of the key respects, Heathcliff recalls these earlier protagonists who pit their virtue, instinct, or wit against conventionalized behavior and inherited power only to erase these differences once they have gained entry into the institutions oppressing them. When he is thrust upon the Earnshaws "as a gift of God, though its dark almost as if it came from the devil" (p. 38), when Nelly tells Heathcliff "he's fit for a prince in disguise" (p. 54), or when Catherine Earnshaw declares him to be "more myself that I am" (p. 72), the possibility is created for Heathcliff to become one of the Earnshaws in the manner of his heroic prototypes. But this is only because the Romantic assumptions are kept in play that he is—figuratively speaking—an aristocrat concealed beneath a barbarous exterior, that his desire has all the force of nature behind it, and that such a noble savage can eventually redeem the community by making manifest his desires within it.

But Heathcliff's character includes features besides those of a Romantic hero. These have an economic and political logic all of their own and acquire their rhetorical force from the association between gypsies and the laboring classes, a conception of man that stubbornly resists idealization.[11] We should recall that *Wuthering Heights* was written against the background of swelling industrial centers and Chartist uprisings that had reached alarming proportions by the forties, as had the hoards of migrant workers who were newly arrived on the English social scene.[12] Against such a background Heathcliff's Napoleonic features set him in direct opposition to the vested interests of the readership who would hardly be well served by any unleashing of popular energy or further democratizing of social authority.

Simply by giving his character a particular point of origin in the slums of a major industrial city rather than leaving the matter open to more romantic possibilities, Brontë made her protagonist capable of acquiring whatever negative meaning adhered to such a potentially hostile social element. In a realistic schema it follows, therefore, that father Earnshaw is not humane but demented for picking up a child, "starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb in the streets of Liverpool" and taking it into his family (p. 39). Heathcliff proves true to the worst implications of the type, furthermore, by enchanting the master's daughter, supplanting the legitimate son in the father's affections, and so breeding dissension in the family for a generation to come.

Brontë defers these obvious and timely possibilities for meaning, however, and allows her reader to sympathize with this character in defiance of middle-class norms. The novel begins by designating the year of its telling as 1801, which is to move the events of the story backwards by several decades into the previous century. Moreover, the story of the family's dissolution and restoration unfolds, as Charlotte reminds us in her preface, on the "wild moors of the north of England" (p. 9). Much like Scott's settings, this remote landscape endows a contemporary crisis with all the trappings of an archaic one and summons up a context in which Heathcliff's insurgency seems to justify the emergence of middle-class power. One finds, for example, the Earnshaws exercising power over the hapless orphan in a manner reminiscent of the villainous aristocrats in earlier fiction. If old man Earnshaw's policies seem rather capricious ("A Nothing vexed him, and suspected slights of his authority nearly threw him into fits," p. 41), the next generation is clearly perverse. Hindley Earnshaw exercises power out of class anger, fraternal rivalry, and thwarted sexual desire. His aim is to obstruct legitimate desires, those to which one is entitled by nature rather than rank, and he succeeds in twisting Heathcliff's spontaneous desire for Catherine into a lust for vengeance. At Thrushcross Grange, on the other hand, one finds the other half of Brontë's fictional world governed by a conspicuously genteel breed, the man of sensibility. But the very refinement that makes both Lockwood and the Lintons before him so much at home in the parlor and library proves utterly useless, even debilitating, and just as destructive as open tyranny in dealing with the crises generated by Heathcliff's desire. Heathcliff may be relatively powerless without the cultural accoutrements of a gentleman, but it is also true that men with little more than their education and good manners to fall back on founder stupidly amidst the social and emotional turbulence at Wuthering Heights. That such characters are virtually out of their element in the novel itself is demonstrated on more than one occasion, by Lockwood's pratfall in the Earnshaw's threshold, for instance, or by his

failure to acknowledge his own desire for the young Catherine Earnshaw as well as the truth in his dream of her mother. The Lintons demonstrate this same order of false consciousness whenever events require them to restrain their emotions humanely or to respond with genuine compassion.[13]

It is important to note that between them the heads of these families possess all the features necessary for a benevolent patriarchy that could reward natural merit while preserving established traditions. The problem lies in combining the features of the Lintons and Earnshaws to make such a harmonious whole. When broken down into the components of a brutal tyrant and ineffectual gentleman, the socioeconomic data of the novel create the double-bind situation that tears Catherine Earnshaw asunder. "Did it never occur to you," she explains to Nelly, "that if Heathcliff and I were married, we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power" (p. 73). Should she dare to enjoy immediate gratification, then Catherine would cut herself off from economic power. To acquire that power, however, she must forgo her desire for Heathcliff. An extraordinary act of sublimation or displacement of desire is therefore the precondition for entering into relationships at the Grange. Such a conspicuous lack of a narrative means for harnessing desire and exhausting it productively within a domestic framework is all we are given to sustain the belief that Heathcliff alone can reconstitute the family along more tolerable lines. By the end of the century, to be sure, Freud would have formulated the narrative model for substitution and sublimation that could resolve this dilemma. But in the absence of the narrative logic for bridging this gap between intolerable cultural alternatives we are left with the Romantic doctrine which says that a poor and uneducated individual may "conceal depths of benevolence beneath a stern exterior" (p. 89).

But the Romantic critique of rigidly hierarchical thinking can itself become subject to a critique, especially when its logic unfolds within the structure of a novel. There is the irony that Heathcliff can retain his role as the hero of the tale so long as he remains virtually powerless, the unwitting object of pathos. This in itself constitutes a departure from Romantic prototypes whose rebellion appears to advance the general good and bring about social reform. There is the further irony as well that even as an object of pathos Heathcliff is ruthlessly cur-like and therefore incapable of submitting to paternal authority. (The more primitive fear of separation from the maternal figure is what ultimately regulates his desire.) Nelly cautions him that this antisocial nature of his must be concealed if he hopes to succeed in bettering his position. "Don't get the expression of a vicious cur that appears to know that the kicks it gets are its deserts, and yet hates all the world, as well as the kicker, for what it suffers," she tells him (p. 82). That he can possess

these bestial qualities while still serving as the protagonist through at least half of the novel—through all of the novel, according to some—is also what differentiates this character from historically later counterparts, the entrepreneurs of Dickens's and Thackerary's fiction, for instance.

Heathcliff can no longer serve as the mediator if the novel has redefined the problem that needs mediation. Originally, this problem is clearly a matter of how to satisfy the claims of the individual within the categories of the existing social order. Heathcliff's acquisition of power can indicate neither the triumph of the individual nor the affirmation of the community, however, much less some reconciliation of the conflict between the two, for these become historically discontinuous viewpoints as the history of his rise into power unfolds. The impedance of the individual's claims for the sake of preserving class boundaries only seems to be the central conflict which the narrative needs to resolve. Once competition has been injected into the system and power has emerged from below, value shifts immediately to those institutions that have been dismantled in the process, as well as to the fictions swept away by the harsh facts of the economic struggle his rise entails. What once served as the novelist's answer to problems posed by her cultural milieu has evidently become the problem itself, and having been redefined, the problem must now be resolved by some other means. It is no longer a matter of how to gratify the individual in the face of social constraints; it has become a matter of how to maintain the values of the community in a competitive world.

In the second half of the novel, nature remains the repository of the authentic self and the constituent element in Heathcliff's character, but nature no longer serves as a source of benign possibilities. It resembles nothing quite so much as the inhumane battleground mapped out in Darwin's biology, the source of one's most perverse impulses as well as his will to power. As nature bares its teeth and claws at this point in the novel, the social order undergoes a corresponding change. A competitive principle rooted in the accumulation of capital provides the transforming agency that moves Heathcliff from the margins of society to its very center. Once there, he displays all the vices that have accompanied political power, the Lintons' sophistication, their veneer of civility, as well as the Earnshaws' brutality. It is money alone that empowers him to infiltrate the timeless institutions of marriage, inheritance, and property ownership and to shape these institutions to serve his own interests. Upon gaining possession of both the Heights and the Grange, Heathcliff initiates a new form of tyranny that undoes all former systems of kinship and erases the boundaries between class as well as between family lines.

Out of this dissolution of boundaries, however, a new division emerges. Catherine regards the change in Heathcliff as a splitting away of

his socioeconomic features from his emotions, a division that has drained away all his sensuality and lent a spiritual quality to their passion. "That is not Heathcliff," she insists, "I shall love mine yet; and take him with me—he's in my soul" (p. 134). Whenever it is that one finally makes the equation between Heathcliff's sexual desires and his worldly ambition, between his ambition and gross bestiality, it is then that the romance of individualism is punctured, the essentially competitive nature of Brontë's protagonist demystified, and the politics underlying sexual desire in the novel exposed. Accordingly, Heathcliff becomes the opponent and not the proponent of middle-class values, What residue still clings to him of earlier prototypes—noble savages, fiery rebels, and plucky rogues alike—is abruptly placed in the past or relegated to the realm of memory and fiction. This is none other than the bewildering situation into which Lockwood stumbles at the beginning of the novel, one where character cannot be understood unless one has the history of relationships that Nelly's gossip provides.

The kind of world that will come into being under Heathcliff's domination is what Catherine Earnshaw tries to make the bedazzled Isabel Linton recognize:

> "Tell her what Heathcliff is—an unreclaimed creature, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I'd as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter's day as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! It is deplorable ignorance of his character, child, and nothing else, which makes that dream enter your head. Pray don't imagine that he conceals depths of benevolence and affection beneath a stern exterior. He's not a rough diamond—a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic—he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man.... I know he couldn't love a Linton; and yet he'd be quite capable of marrying your fortune and expectations. Avarice is growing with him a besetting sin." (pp. 89–90)

In no uncertain terms does Brontë equate the Romantic doctrine of presence with "ignorance," a view of character which says that surface features point to meaning beyond the material manifestations of the self. The kind of fiction arising from this older notion of language, the self, and the world seems to fall into oblivion at this point in the novel, leaving the reader with a tangible sense of what the world is like with no spirituality in it. Resembling on a small scale Hegel's dismally spiritless "world of prose," this world, too, is one where "the individual human being must repeatedly, in order to preserve his own individuality, make himself a means for other people, serve their limited ends, and transform them into means in order to satisfy his own narrow

interests."[14] This failure of Romantic conventions to represent adequately the relationships comprising her narrative is Brontë's way of acknowledging the fact that fiction could no longer be written from a Romantic viewpoint and still be considered a novel.

So it is that in the second half of the novel, the conventions of earlier literature, thus dismantled, become the subject matter of a new kind of fiction. The structure of social relationships erected from the ruins of the old calls forth a cast of characters much more in line with Victorian norms and expectations. Not unlike those of Dickens and Thackeray, for that matter, Brontë's fictional world fast becomes a veritable bestiary of predators and victims wherein only the latter retain some vestige of their humanity. Conventionalized behavior rather than impulse or desire seems to be the true mark of one's character. Capitalism replaces a belated feudalism as the chief source of villainy, and competition is treated as a fact of life that converts sentient beings into objects in the marketplace. At the same time, an idealized notion of the long-banished aristocracy, still conveniently remote from a society operating according to the *laissez-faire* principle, comes to serve as the repository of ethical value. But Dickens and Thackeray do not change from one historical frame of reference to another. For all the inconsistencies swarming about in their cultural milieu, they operate consistently from within Victorian categories and paradigms. Brontë's novel, on the other hand, appears to fall into their world from another of necessity, as the idealist categories of Romantic discourse break down. Out of the pieces of earlier fiction then comes a new kind of narrative art where value no longer resides in the claims of the individual but rather in the reconstitution of the family. The result is that problems are posed and questions asked in one set of literary conventions that cannot be answered by the other, which is to say what most critical readings strive to deny, that this is an essentially disjunctive novel.

It is worthwhile, first, to consider how the original patriarchs acquire the force of nostalgia as they pass into obsolescence. Hindley Earnshaw's grand finale is an uncharacteristically selfless attempt to rescue the heirs of both houses from the villain usurping their authority. "I'll do you a kindness in spite of yourself," is his promise to Isabel, "and Hareton, justice!" (p. 145). In its utter futility, Hindley's wrath takes on some of the heroic aura that Heathcliff's has lost in its potency. Edgar Linton's deathbed scene similarly idealizes the past by recasting his rather lame gentility in the light of Christian beatitude. "All was composed," as Nelly describes the scene, "Catherine's despair was as silent as her father's joy. She supported him calmly in appearance; and he fixed on her his raised eyes that seemed dilated with ecstasy. He died blissfully...." (p. 225). So these figures of authority shed their social garb and merge with the sacred traditions of the past to create a

romance of culture. This is to represent culture as necessarily detached from social practices and relegated not only to the past but also to the tale whose business it is to preserve and transmit these traditions.

The second generation of characters comprises a social world devoid of culture in this limited sense. Though frail and victimized, for example, Linton Heathcliff is the least idealized of all Brontë's characters, unworthy even to serve as the object of pathos. The predacious tendencies of the father and the affectations of the mother—all that is "harsh" and "peevish" in these two extremes—combine to form a character that both parodies and fulfills his heritage. Lacking the bourgeois energy of the father, Linton is described as the "worst bit of sickly slip that ever struggled into its teens" (p. 195). Just as his weakness does not make him kind, neither does it imply any of the education and gentility that, in Edgar Linton's case, brought the constraints of a humanistic tradition along with them. "Linton can play the little tyrant well," Heathcliff points out, "He'll undertake to torture any number of cats if their teeth be drawn, and their nails pared" (p. 219). Given that the family history in this novel is also a genealogy of political myths, this grotesque combination of features can only represent what results from the interpenetration of capitalism and the process of dynastic succession. It is not true that one manner of distributing wealth amends or complements the other in this novel. Quite the contrary, when brought together in Linton Heathcliff, these forms of social authority prove mutually undercutting, contradictions surface, and the literary machinery that once reconciled them is thoroughly dismantled. We find, for example, that all the Gothic devices of abduction, rape, incest, and necrophilia enabling Linton to marry his cousin against her will are engineered by common law and empowered by acquired wealth. This is to foreclose any possibility of sweeping away the injustices of a degenerate aristocracy by the coming in of a new social order. A version of the middle-class hegemony itself is what perverts established traditions in the second half of Brontë's novel and brings Gothic devices to the service of realism instead of romance.

To turn the contemporary world into such a nightmare is to invert the procedures of earlier Gothic Fiction and anticipate the sensation novels that came into fashion during the 1860's.[15] By developing the character of Hareton Earnshaw, however, Brontë hit upon what may be considered a typically Victorian way out of the dilemma of a world thrown open to competition. Heathcliff's aggressive individualism plays itself out in a psychotic nightmare and historical cul-de-sac, but, as this becomes apparent, the story of an upward aspiring hero begins anew in an epicycle of the plot that originally brought Heathcliff into power. The second time around the emergence of power from below, so to speak, bears with it no traces of rebellion against paternal

authority. Rather than unleashing popular energy, this protagonist's rise entails the harnessing and exhaustion of subversive forms of desire. Hareton Earnshaw is quite literally a noble savage, for one thing, and although he, like Heathcliff, originally occupies a servile position, his rudeness cannot be construed as the gross sensuality of the laboring classes. It is the natural vigor of "the ancient stock." Much like the boy heroes spawned by Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown*, Hareton's rough and readiness lends itself readily to acculturation through the persuasive power of a pretty girl and the influence of the written word.[16] His mastery of the two houses and not Heathcliff s, significantly, signals an amalgamation of the ruling classes where there had been grave division (all their intermarriages having proved fatal). Nor does this unification entail any dissolution of social boundaries, but rather a situation, as Joseph calls it, where "the lawful master and the ancient stock had been restored to their rights" (p. 264). While Hareton's rise into power does represent the reform of an intolerably authoritarian society along more humanitarian lines, this reform is accomplished by means of a return to the past which restores the lines of inheritance and reconstitutes the family as it was prior to Heathcliff's intervention.

This kind of narrative resolution obviously won the immense popularity it did during the 1850's because it revised the fictional struggle between the bourgeoisie and the old aristocracy to accommodate later Victorian norms. The same middle-class interests could no longer be served by a fable in which the ruling class was defeated in the course of an industrial revolution. Quite the contrary, the struggle must now be represented as that of an entrenched middle class allied with the old aristocracy and beleaguered by the barbarians who were clambering to get in. The benevolent patriarchy towards which Brontë's narrative moves by reshuffling the features of character, reversing the relationships among individuals, and playing their story backwards and forwards ultimately denies the optimistic individualism that first set it in motion.

In contrast with the other characters in the novel, it is Heathcliff who embodies the contradiction produced as the novel shifts its frame of reference from one side of some historical faultline to the other. Once we dissolve the text back into this large context, it becomes clear why he seems to be several characters even though his name and competitive nature never vary. Against the background of a too rigid class structure where the individual appears to be radically undervalued, even such negative terms for the gypsy as "imp," "fiend," or "devil" can only recall his Romantic prototypes and lend him a positive value. By the 1840's, however, middle-class intellectuals were giving up on the individual as the guarantee of a reality superior to that designated by material facts. As Heathcliff's triumph over the institutions which had

been oppressing him turns into something on the order of a reign of terror, it seems clear that the individual's desire has been overvalued to the detriment of the community. Desire loses its salutary power, value is reinvested in traditions that bind family and class, and Heathcliff's demonic features, as the factor disrupting these traditions, take on an ominously literal meaning. A resolution for the novel is grounded on revisionary principles where love is no longer to be equated with natural desire, nor the community with nature itself:

> The intimacy between Hareton and young Cathy, thus commenced, grew rapidly, though it encountered temporary interruptions. Earnshaw was not to be civilized with a wish; and my young lady was no philosopher and no paragon of patience; but both their minds tending to the same point—one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed—they contrived in the end to reach it. (p. 249)

If this were truly the mediation and final note it seems to be, however, it is difficult to imagine readers having all that much trouble placing *Wuthering Heights* squarely within the mainstream of Victorian literature.[17] After all it is not that unusual for the protagonist of a novel to violate social boundaries as Heathcliff does. What is more, the social climbers of the fiction of the thirties and forties tend to differ from their earlier counterparts in this significant respect: lacking a pedigree, they cannot penetrate the old squirarchy without destroying it. Thus Heathcliff joins ranks with such characters as Dickens's Oliver Twist, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton, and Thackeray's Becky Sharp in this respect. For they also threaten to become usurpers, criminals, or tyrants in their own rights by pursuing individualistic goals, and their demonic features must also be neutralized before the social tensions in these novels can convincingly give way to social cohesion.

It appears that *Wuthering Heights* was caught in the same shifting winds of history as were other major novels of the period. It is easy to see how, on the one hand, novels that played out a fantasy of upward mobility provided the middle-class readership with a fable of its own emergence into power as Ian Watt has suggested.[18] During the thirties and forties, however, when the obvious evils of industrialism made that power seem less the stuff of utopian fantasy and more of a fact to be defended, we should not be surprised to find that aggressive individualism changes its meaning to play a villainous role in history. Directly counter to the readership's interests at Brontë's point in time, not only would such a protagonist provide a critique of middle class

policies but, in doing so, he would expose the roots of middle-class power as grounded in an amoral and competitive nature.

And this is not simply the wisdom of hindsight. Such a backside to Romantic ideology is evident in poems of despair like Wordsworth's "Elegaic Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle," for instance, or Keats's "To J.H. Reynolds Esq.," and it is seen still more clearly in novels whose narrative strategies undergo a similar reversal. Competitive mettle is devalued and power recentered in established bloodlines, just as it is in *Wuthering Heights*, when the orphaned Jane Eyre receives an inheritance prior to marriage with Rochester, an almost gratuitous gesture, or so it seems to many readers, at the point when her struggle for a social position is won. The same principle obtains in the long and perilous quest undertaken in the effort to document Oliver Twist's genteel lineage when his history is otherwise complete, the orphan's adoption into polite society secured, and all former threats to his well-being have been soundly eliminated. But nowhere, to my mind, is the origin of social authority more conspicuously transformed than it is in *Wuthering Heights*.

ii

How *Wuthering Heights* ultimately evades the kind of literary determinism I have been proposing becomes evident when the text has been mapped out against this background. Only then can we see how Brontë took issue with a public opinion that suppressed certain kinds of fantasy in order to sanction others as realistic. Even while playing to the expectations of her contemporaries, this novel, we find, maintains the relative independence of artistic play from the fluctuations of social history. This is not to say that *Wuthering Heights* transcends the limits of her materials or the whole set of suppositions that made it possible for one to think and write novelistically at her moment in history, yet Brontë does make it clear that in insisting on her freedom to imagine, she felt those very constraints. All the images of breaking out and of renewed confinement that characterize not only her work but Charlotte's as well may serve as metaphors for the self in a tradition-bound world, but they also function on a quite different level, as a way of acknowledging the problem in writing that arises when the conventions for representing the self in opposition to society will no longer do. The division of the semantic universe into parlor and heath, male and female, past and present, real and fictive obstructs the narrative process which depends upon making something new of all these deadlocks, and continuing the story therefore requires periodic acts of violence.

More telling, paradoxically, than what can be said are the seams and joints, chinks in the armor of realistic narration, that the author refuses to seal even by some violent conjunction. The omission of the one event on which hinge all changes of fortune in the novel gives us a clear indication of her departure from literary norms. We are told that during a three-year's absence Heathcliff miraculously changed and then reappeared, still savage at heart, bearing all the outward and visible signs of a gentleman. Yet this change itself must take place outside the province of literature. "Like a planet revolving around an absent sun," the novel reminds us, "an ideology is made of what it does not mention; it exists because there are things which must not be spoken of."[19] And what may not be brought into the open, in this case, is the very transformation that makes other novels so gratifying, the Napoleonic moment where the ruthless acquisitor and pretender to power becomes the redeemer and rightful claimant, a benevolent patriarch. Even though Brontë excludes the moment where this radical inversion of meaning takes place, the absence itself points to the discontinuity within the materials of her chosen genre as manifest in the character of the protagonist whose "development" usually smooths them away. It also points to the consistently competitive element in Heathcliff that is the more disturbing for the lack of a rational cause.

We are likely to become aware of this problem first as a rupture in the narrative flow. Nelly breaks off her story at the point where Heathcliff disappears, in response to which Lockwood implores, "With all my heart! Don't interrupt me. Come and take your seat here ... now continue the history of Mr. Heathcliff from where you left off, to the present day" (p. 80). This hunger for intelligibility is only whetted by the interruption in the story. It is never entirely satisfied. Even after the telling of the tale resumes, there remains a disturbing break in the chain of events comprising what Lockwood calls "the history of Mr. Heathcliff. "Significantly, Lockwood endeavors to mend the break by drawing upon a repertoire of novelistic devices meant just for this purpose but which must now be couched in the interrogative: "Did he finish his education on the continent? or escape to America, and earn honors by drawing blood from his foster country? or make a fortune more promptly, on the English highways?" (pp. 80–81). By cataloguing the permissible explanations for a rise in social position such as Heathcliff enjoys, Brontë makes her reader only too aware that the truth is neither in the novel nor among the conventions novelists use for diverting power into the hands of ordinary individuals. Implying a kind of ironic self-consciousness on the order of that permeating a work like *Tristram Shandy* or even *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, the very arbitrariness of the novelist's catalogue drains away its explanatory power, leaving behind the mere husks of words for us to play

with. By giving voice to the novel reader's expectations through Lockwood's relatively naive commentary, Brontë raises the questions such conventions were supposed to answer but in answering actually suppressed.

There is not only Heathcliff's strange disappearance from the text to deal with, but also his strange refusal to do so. The persistence of forms of Romantic supernaturalism in the novel disturbs the otherwise conventional ending and further separates the author's viewpoint from the beliefs and values she ascribes to the reader. In death Heathcliff becomes part of nature and, as such, continues to compete with Edgar Linton for possession of Catherine Earnshaw, only now for the privilege of mingling with her corpse through the process of their physical decomposition. Such demonstrated perversity notwithstanding, Brontë maintains nature's superiority to culture in certain respects, and she has Heathcliff pursue his desires through to their own sort of resolution. Counter to the beliefs of what Lockwood calls "the busy world," Heathcliff demonstrates the primacy of man's essential nature over and against a more modern notion of character that trusts to familiar roles and places material limits on the self. He has a "conviction" that spirits "can, and do exist, among us" and feels Catherine's ghostly presence as "certainly as you perceive a substantial body in the dark" (p. 229). That this is something more than a delusion on his part is indicated by Lockwood's similar encounter with her ghost, by Heathcliff's "frightful, life-like gaze of exultation" on his deathbed (p. 264), and by Nelly's testimony that "country folk, if you asked them, would swear on their Bible that he walks" (p. 265). Heathcliff's apotheosis as the demon lover of folklore and superstition exactly inverts the assumption of scientific thinking that nature remains securely locked within its rational categories. Contrary to Heathcliff's magical thinking, Lockwood's empiricism merely flattens characters into stereotypes and suppresses the desires that alone can revitalize a rigidly endogamous society. Essentially hostile to social categories of any kind, these aspects of character remain in the novel as the signs of absent desire. As such, they comprise a separate world of romance, a fantasy of power that is both obsolete and imminently threatening.

Viewed from this perspective, the process of domestication allowing the characters to fall more in line with familiar social roles in the manner of domestic realism does not constitute a mediation of the conflict between self and society so much as a contraction and fragmentation of the novel's original fantasy materials, a process of displacement that is the more sophisticated for baring its own devices. Like the Romantic poet, Brontë seems to locate value in the natural aspects of the self and conceive social roles as confining, but she also accepts a materialistic view of nature as the ultimate reality, never retreating as Keats did, for example, from a world "where every maw / The

greater on the lesser feeds evermore."[20] In confronting the Victorian dilemma of man's identification with this depraved nature, she refuses to soften the harsh facts of competition underlying human history or to countenance the possibility of amelioration by such means. Nature's utter hostility to humanistic values locates her fiction within a later Victorian context, that is clear. In maintaining sympathy for what is more primal in the self than rules whose business it is to constrain the individual, the author casts in her lot with artists of an earlier age.

In this way her writing carries on a precarious relationship with a nineteenth-century intellectual tradition that continuously endorsed humanistic values either by advancing the claims of the individual or by maintaining those of the community. The first metamorphosis of Heathcliff from a "gipsy brat" into someone who is "in dress and manners a gentleman" tells us that the Romantic tradition fails to answer adequately the questions posed by an industrialized world. But the second metamorphosis of Heathcliff from the social interloper, a *nouveau riche*, into the bogeyman of popular lore and superstition reveals that this is precisely what the novel must hide if it is to remain a novel: the subversive desire at the origins of middle-class power, hence the history of the discourse in which the novel itself participates. The second change in the rules governing the formation of character in the novel reroots economic power within a domestic world whose function is to harness competitive energy and convert desire into the means for some ulterior end. The presence of the supernatural is dangerous, in turn, because it antedates science and undermines the rational categories that domestic realism affirms. If Heathcliff's first metamorphosis tells us something cannot be spoken if the novel is to remain a novel, then the second uncovers the act of repression that has enabled Victorian fiction to emerge. With the division of the protagonist in two, the ascension of Hareton, and the return of Heathcliff as a ghost, the boundaries between romance and realism are reestablished in the novel, but the philosophically hostile positions of Enlightenment thinking achieve a disturbing kind of equivalence there as well.

Under circumstances such as these it becomes rather evident that the author of the novel, as Foucault would say, "is not simply an element of speech ... Its presence is functional in that it serves as a means of classification. A name," he explains, "can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts."[21] By situating her sister's name in circumstances that might explain away the peculiar discontinuities shaping *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte's biographical sketch and preface to the second edition perform this classificatory function where neither the novel itself nor Emily's pseudonym apparently could. It was Charlotte Brontë who separated *Wuthering Heights*

from her own fiction and Anne's, with which it was initially confused. It was Charlotte who cautioned the readership that "an interpreter ought always to have stood between her [sister] and the world" (p. 8) and thereby implied that Emily's was an essentially private language. Most criticism has followed in the path cut by this first attempt to detach *Wuthering Heights* from the literary categories of the 1840's by placing the author backwards or even forwards in history but rarely within her own moment in time. Nevertheless, these biographical constructions themselves must incorporate the paradox of male and female features of discourse, those of budding novelist, full-blown visionary and even the weary skeptic inscribed within her technique, as well as the biographical material for both a classic instance of hysteria and a case of aesthetic martyrdom on the order of Keats's. We should not be too surprised consequently to discover that despite the biographical mythology still clinging to the text its boundaries remain unstable and shifting, the viewpoints within it comprising the sort of discontinuities that emerge only from a series of texts, reversible and capable of speaking from several perspectives at once. In resisting our categories, however, *Wuthering Heights* allows one to see not only the transformations giving rise to a distinctively Victorian fiction, but also the radical act of forgetting that enables such discourse to exist.[22]

Notes

1. Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power, A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 12, and J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (New York: Schocken, 1965), p. 160. Also see Marilyn Butler's *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 178–88, for an informative description of the Romantic counter-revolution to Enlightenment individualism during the 1820's.

2. As if the Haworth environment were not a consummately literate one, Charlotte claims Emily wrote about "the inhabitants, the customs, the natural characteristics of the outlying hills and hamlets in the West-Riding of Yorkshire" without realizing they "are things alien and unfamiliar" to the reader (p. 9). At the same time, Charlotte insists that her sister's novel is not to be regarded as naive representationalism at all, at least where Heathcliff is concerned. He is the pure product of Emily's "creative gift," she explains, something of which the writer was "not always the master—something that at times strangely wills and works for itself." *Wuthering Heights*, ed. William M. Sale, Jr. (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 12. (All subsequent citations to *Wuthering Heights* and its prefatory materials are to this edition and have been included in the text.)

3. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Corneal Univ. Press, 1981), p. 51.

4. Jameson, The Political Unconscious, p. 53.

5. In his discussion of *Wuthering Heights*, Jameson, like Eagleton and Miller, assumes that Heathcliff embodies all the contradictory themes in the novel because he is "in reality a mechanism for mediating these themes," *The Political Unconscious*, p. 127. But any approach that proceeds according to this assumption, I maintain, will necessarily tip the scales toward romance or realism without clarifying the problem that has made any such resolution inherently limited and dissatisfying.

6. For an extended discussion of the gypsy's usage in nineteenth-century discourse, see John Reed's informative chapter on the subject in his *Victorian Conventions* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 362–400.

7. Lawrence Scone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1550–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 221–68, 325–405.

8. George Canning in *The Microcosm*, 26 (May 14, 1787), reprinted in *Novel and Romance, 1700–1800, A Documentary Record*, ed. Joan Williams (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 344.

9. See, for example, John E. Mason's *Gentlefolk in the Making* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), pp. 220–91, and Mark Girouard's *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 213–99.

10. Pertinent here is Lévi-Strauss's comparison between myth and "what appears to have largely replaced it in modern societies, namely, politics. When the historian refers to the French Revolution," he maintains, "it is always as a sequence of past happenings, a non-reversible series of events the remote consequences of which may still be felt at present. But to the French politician, as well as to his followers, the French Revolution is both a sequence belonging to the past—as to the historian—and a timeless pattern which can be detected in the contemporary French social structure and which provides a clue for its interpretation, a lead from which to infer future developments" ("The Structural Study of Myths," *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 209). That the battle between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie won by the latter during the course of an industrial revolution constitutes such a myth for the English is particularly clear in Alan MacFarlane's study, *The Origins of English Individualism*, which he concludes with these words: "What is absolutely clear is that one of the major theories of economic anthropology is incorrect, namely the idea that we witness in England between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries the 'Great Transformation' from a non-market, peasant, society where economics is 'embedded' in social relations, to a modern market, capitalist, system where economy and society have been split apart." Instead, MacFarlane's findings lead him to take Adam Smith at his word when Smith claimed he founded "classical economics on the premise of the 'rational' economic man, believing that he was describing a universal and long-evident type," *The Origins of English Individualism* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), p. 199.

11. According to Harry Payne's "Elite *versus* Popular Mentality in the Eighteenth Century," the qualities of "blood, magic, belief, and tradition," once ascribed to the ruling class, came to be associated with the laboring classes and taken as signs of their gross sensuality. This semiotic shift in the categories of class occurred at precisely the time when the ruling classes took it upon themselves to police, reform, and educate those socially less privileged. This new kind of contact with the masses is what, Payne surmises, bred awareness of their differences from an educated elite who prided themselves on "gentility, science, innovation, ... taste, and economic realism," *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, 8 (1979), 21.

12. For an important connection between gypsies and early emerging labor force, see Ralph Samuel's "Comers and Goers," *The Victorian City*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 110.

13. See Charlotte Brontë's dispute with the novel of manners in a letter written to W. A. Williams, in 1859. Here she berates Jane Austen rather unmercifully, contending that while her distinguished predecessor describes "the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well, ... the passions are perfectly unknown to her," *The Brontë's: Their*

Friendships, Lives, Correspondence, ed. T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (London: Oxford, 1932), III, p. 99.

14. Quoted in Fredric Jameson's *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press. 1971), pp. 352–53.

15. In her informative study of the little known "sensation novel," Winifred Hughes offers a description of it that could easily apply to much of the Brontës' fiction as well: "Although remarkably few examples of modern prose fiction can be characterized as 'pure' romance or 'pure' realism, one vision or the other normally dominates. The sensation novel, however, deliberately strains both modes to the limit, disrupting the accepted balance between them," *The Maniac in the Cellar, Sensation Novels of the 1860s* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p. 16.

16. See, for example, Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 141–60.

17. "The conclusion," says Terry Eagleton in reference to this relationship, "while in a sense symbolically resolving the tragic disjunctions which precede it, moves at a level distanced from those disjunctions to preserve their significance intact," *Myths of Power*, pp. 118–19. Having far more difficulty with the idea of mediation, Leo Bersani sees this gesture at closure as something of a betrayal or act of bad faith on the part of the author, "the expulsion of difference," as he puts it, that makes her novel resemble "other novels," *A Future for Astyanax, Character and Desire in Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 222. If we may take these two responses as indicative, it seems that in offering readers this form of traditional closure, what Brontë did was to create a transparently false sense of continuity among its materials and, at the same time, stir up yet one more discontinuity among those materials.

18. In *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian Watt argues that the popularity enjoyed by fiction and journalism was "not so much that Defoe and Richardson responded to the new needs of their audience, but that [being 'middle-class London tradesmen'] they were able to express those needs from the inside much more freely than would previously have been possible" (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1957, p. 59).

19. Pierre Macherey, "Lenin, A Critic of Tolstoy," A *Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 132.

20. *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, 2nd ed., ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 11. 94–95.

21. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), p. 123.

22. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Sixth Annual Brontë Conference, University of Leeds, 1981.